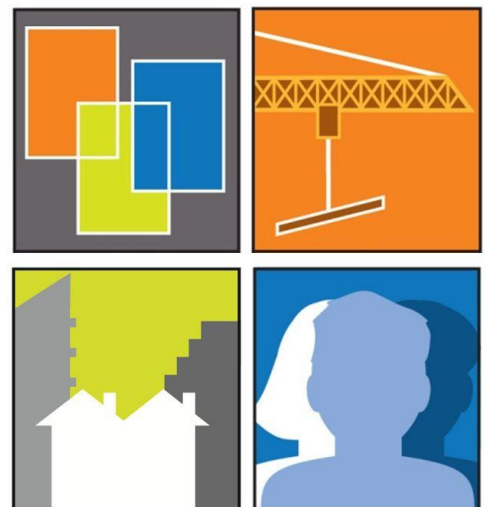


Toolkit of Strategies and Actions



Toolkit of Strategies and Actions

The following 24 strategies and associated actions are the Growing Transit Communities primary recommendations. They are the result of an 18-month process informed by research, analysis, and deliberation. The strategies address the three main regional goals for transit communities: to attract more of the region's residential and employment growth near high capacity transit, to provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes, and to increase access to opportunity for existing and future transit community members.



1. Establish a regional program to support thriving and equitable transit communities
2. Build partnerships and promote collaboration
3. Engage effectively with community stakeholders
4. Build capacity for community engagement
5. Evaluate and monitor impacts and outcomes



6. Conduct station area planning
7. Use land efficiently in transit communities
8. Locate, design and provide access to transit stations to support TOD
9. Adopt innovative parking tools
10. Invest in infrastructure and public realm improvements



11. Assess current and future housing needs in transit communities
12. Minimize displacement through preservation and replacement
13. Direct housing resources to support transit-dependent populations
14. Implement a TOD property acquisition fund
15. Expand value capture financing as a tool for infrastructure and affordable housing
16. Make surplus public lands available for affordable housing
17. Leverage market value through incentives
18. Implement regional fair housing assessment



19. Assess community needs
20. Invest in environmental and public health
21. Invest in economic vitality and opportunity
22. Invest in equitable mobility options
23. Invest in equitable access to high quality education
24. Invest in public safety in transit communities

The 24 strategies fall into four groupings:

- The **Foundation Strategies** recommend a regional and local framework for ongoing work to support transit communities. Modeled on the relationships and values at the heart of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, these strategies envision an ongoing regional effort involving a variety of partners and community members in decision making and implementation at all levels.
- The **Strategies to Attract Housing and Employment Growth** recommend actions to make great urban places that are attractive to households and businesses, remove barriers to development, and support development in emerging markets.
- The **Strategies to Provide Affordable Housing Choices** recommended actions to define and quantify housing needs, preserve existing and supply new housing choices, and capitalize on the value created by the private market, enhanced by transit investments, in order to achieve the broadest range of affordability in transit communities.
- The **Strategies to Increase Access to Opportunity** recommend actions to understand regional disparities in access to opportunity, identify existing and potential new resources and tools to meet community needs, and build support for equitable opportunities through education, coalitions, and leadership.

As a whole, these strategies are a call to action for partners across the region to intensify efforts to create great urban places and build equitable communities around transit. Fully recognizing the strong policy foundation embodied in existing regional and local plans, as well as the innovative work in implementing those plans by many local jurisdictions to date, the Partnership makes these recommendations as a challenge to do more than is being doing today.

The Recommended Strategies and Actions are also a call for more effective implementation through collaboration among governments, major stakeholders, and community members. There are roles for many different regional and local partners, each with a distinct jurisdiction, authority, and mission. Consistent with those roles, all are asked use the Strategies as a “playbook” for taking action to advance the regional vision of thriving and equitable transit communities in a manner that is a best fit to each community.

The Partnership’s goals are ambitious and set the bar high for all. There is need for new tools and resources to achieve these goals. The powerful regional coalition assembled for this effort should continue to work together to support legislative changes and new resources that expand the toolbox. Several strategies point to the need to amend state law to provide more options for public agencies. Others point to the need for funding, including for sustaining and expanding transit systems, for infrastructure, expanded and more effective subsidies for affordable housing, and resources to provide for community needs equitably throughout the region. Continued leadership and collaboration on these priorities is vital for this effort to succeed.

Foundation Strategies



The first five Foundation Strategies recommend a regional and local framework for ongoing work to support transit communities. Modeled on the relationships and values at the heart of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, these strategies envision an ongoing regional effort involving a variety of partners and community members in decision-making and implementation at all levels. The strategies detail the collaboration, engagement, evaluation, and monitoring necessary to support an effective regional effort. As an overarching set of recommendations, they apply across the board to all 24 strategies. For example, engaging community stakeholders (Strategy 3) is a priority wherever needs assessments, station area planning, and implementing regulations and programs are under consideration. These Foundation Strategies are therefore critical to implementing specific recommendations, as well as the broader goal of achieving thriving and equitable transit communities.

Recommended Strategies

1. Establish a regional program to support thriving and equitable transit communities
2. Build partnerships and promote collaboration
3. Engage effectively with community stakeholders
4. Build capacity for community engagement
5. Evaluate and monitor impacts and outcomes



Strategy 1: Establish a Regional Program to Support Thriving and Equitable Transit Communities

In order to carry out the goals and strategies envisioned by the GTC Partnership, a continued regional effort, based within PSRC and guided by an ongoing coalition of regional stakeholders, is needed to promote thriving and equitable transit communities in the region. This effort should be expanded beyond the light rail corridors that are the focus of the GTC Partnership's grant-funded work to include other high-capacity transit nodes in the region and to involve new partners across multiple sectors.

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 1.1. Provide staff support for the work of a GTC Partnership beyond the term of the current Sustainable Communities grant.
- 1.2. Support the continued work of an advisory committee of a variety of public and private stakeholders, including a full range of current GTC Partners who have committed to working together to advance this GTC Strategy. Roles for the advisory committee should include providing ongoing guidance to PSRC and other agencies and organizations on implementation, coalition building within the region, and support for state and federal legislation and funding needed to create and sustain thriving and equitable transit communities in the region.
- 1.3. Create a regional transit oriented development implementation program at PSRC with sufficient staffing and work plan to further the GTC Strategy and including actions in the areas of attracting growth, providing affordable housing, and improving equitable engagement and access to opportunity within transit communities.
- 1.4. Build on the foundation established through the GTC Affordable Housing Action Strategy and the PSRC's Housing Innovations Program with ongoing staffing of a regional housing affordability initiative focused on meeting the needs for housing in regional centers and other transit communities.
- 1.5. Expand the geographic scope of the GTC Partnership through implementation of the GTC Strategy beyond the three long-range light rail corridors to include current and planned transit communities around stations for commuter rail, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and other high-capacity transit investments in the region, as appropriate.
- 1.6. Collaborate with local governments and other stakeholders to explore options for regional designation of selected transit communities based on their potential to provide regional benefits and alignment with the GTC Strategy.
- 1.7. Establish a regional peer networking exchange for staff at cities, other public agencies, and relevant non-governmental organizations working on transit community development.

Transit Agencies

- 1.8. Participate as a member of a regional TOD implementation program advisory committee.
- 1.9. Continue to strengthen agency partnerships, policies, programs, and plans to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

Local Governments

- 1.10. Participate as a member of a regional TOD implementation program advisory committee.
- 1.11. Continue to strengthen local partnerships, policies, programs, and plans to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

Other Partners

- 1.12. Support and participate in an ongoing regional coalition for thriving and equitable transit communities, where applicable as a member of a regional TOD implementation program advisory committee.
- 1.13. Continue to strengthen partnerships, policies, programs and plans to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Regional programs and initiatives would apply to all current and potential transit communities around multiple modes of high-capacity transit in the region.



Strategy 2: Build Partnerships and Promote Collaboration

Partnerships throughout the region and across sectors will be critical to implementing the GTC Strategy. The GTC Partnership made progress toward bringing a variety of players in the region together around common objectives. As the regional effort continues, this partnership should be strengthened through stronger collaboration between existing members and the inclusion of new partners, such as more members of the private sector, economic development and education interests, and historically underrepresented populations.

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 2.1 Implement a regional TOD program as a collaboration involving growth management, transportation, economic development, and technical staff and resources at the PSRC. Continue to build on an integrated planning approach to transit community development as a model for other agencies in the region.
- 2.2 Provide a forum for coalitions of a variety of stakeholders from throughout the region to work collaboratively toward implementation of the GTC Strategy.
- 2.3 Conduct outreach to new partners and sectors in order to:
 - Raise awareness of regional and local benefits of TOD and equitable community development
 - Encourage contributions of new partners to successful implementation of the GTC Strategy
 - Reach out to local governments in additional high-capacity transit corridors
 - Focus on private sectors that have been underrepresented in the work of Growing Transit Communities, such as businesses and major employers, developers and land owners
- 2.4 Adapt for regional application the lessons learned on the topic of partnerships from the Growing Transit Communities demonstration projects in Northgate, Tacoma, and the East Corridor.

Transit Agencies

- 2.5 Continue and seek ways to improve collaboration with local governments, PSRC, and other transit agencies around transit system planning, development, and operations.
- 2.6 Explore options for public-private partnerships that result in development on available agency-owned properties, including options that encourage housing density and affordability in transit communities.

Local Governments

- 2.7 Build on the work of the GTC corridor Task Forces with continued collaboration among local governments and stakeholders in each transit corridor around promotion of equitable TOD.
- 2.8 Implement station area TOD strategies through interdepartmental collaboration. Weave recommended equitable TOD strategies into elements of comprehensive planning, capital facilities, and code development. Identify and eliminate barriers to implementation in existing processes and organizational structures.
- 2.9 Identify opportunities for public-private partnerships that further equitable TOD, using tools such as development agreements, transportation benefit districts, and community renewal.

Equity Network

- 2.10 Continue and expand the work of the Equity Network to include new partners in a broad coalition from across the region around a shared vision of equitable transit community development.

Foundations

- 2.11 Continue and expand the work of foundations to include new partners and strengthen coordinated investments in programs and strategies to support thriving and equitable transit communities.

Other Partners

- 2.12 Build upon the success of coalitions, such as the Equity Network and the Funders Collaborative, to form new or expand coalitions among key regional stakeholder groups. Potential coalitions include business community initiatives to foster place-based economic development in the transit corridors, sustainable builder and development groups, and the education community convening in support of equitable access to quality education across the region.

Recommended Actions

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- The need to build partnerships and promote collaboration applies to all transit communities region-wide.



Strategy 3: Engage Effectively with Community Stakeholders

Community engagement is an integral part of the way public agencies make and implement policies in our region. The GTC Partnership and the Equity Network have taken important steps to explore and apply innovative community engagement strategies to improve and expand those practices to more effectively include historically underrepresented populations, including low-income households and persons of color, early in the planning process and before decisions are made. This work has identified a toolbox of equitable community engagement strategies that include:

- Multilingual outreach and engagement
- Outreach through existing community groups and organizations
- Direct person-to-person outreach where people live and do business
- Support for meeting participation, such as childcare, refreshments, and convenient scheduling and locations
- Clarity of communications on scope and focus of engagement, expectations and process
- Visualization tools and other multi-media approaches
- Innovative models for effective engagement and long-term relationship building, such as trusted advocate and public outreach liaisons
- Building capacity and cultural competency within organizations and public agencies, such as through training and recruitment, in order to engage effectively with diverse constituencies

Successful implementation of the GTC Strategy will depend on effective, responsive and ongoing engagement with as broad a range of community members and stakeholders as possible with opportunities to influence policies and actions early and often throughout the public decision making process.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 3.1 Present the work of the GTC Partnership to both regional stakeholders and the public in a manner that is clear, concise, and free of excessive jargon. Emphasize major goals, actions, and benefits to the region and local communities.
- 3.2 Collaborate with a broad range of regional and community stakeholders to develop and disseminate guidance and provide technical support on best practices in equitable community engagement, incorporating lessons learned from the GTC Equity Grants Program.
- 3.3 Continue to develop and apply equitable community engagement strategies as part of regional policy development and implementation activities, including future updates to the adopted PSRC Public Participation Plan.
- 3.4 Explore and improve methods for direct citizen engagement in regional policy and planning processes, particularly for those who typically do not participate due to time, cultural or other barriers, through methods such as community advisory boards, working groups, focus groups, and roundtables.

Transit Agencies

- 3.5 Continue to develop and apply equitable community engagement strategies early and before decisions are made.

Local Governments

- 3.6 Continue to develop and apply equitable community engagement strategies as part of local comprehensive and station area planning and other decision-making affecting transit communities.

Equity Network

- 3.7 Engage with PSRC, local jurisdictions, and other agencies through active dialogue and implementation of strategies for equitable community engagement. The regional advisory committee could facilitate such engagement.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- The need for effective and complete community and stakeholder engagement applies across the region, especially in transit communities with concentrations of low-income households, persons of color, or other historically underrepresented groups.



Strategy 4: Build Capacity for Community Engagement

Capacity building provides community members with the knowledge, tools, and relationships to be able to have a say in decisions about their communities. The GTC Partnership's Equity Network Grant Program represents an innovative model to build the capacity of community based organizations to participate in planning processes and decision-making on behalf of their communities. Understanding and expanding upon the lessons learned from this program will facilitate the implementation of and build community support for the GTC Strategy.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 4.1 Collaborate with foundations and governmental agencies to identify and secure potential sources of funds for ongoing capacity building grants to community groups.
- 4.2 Continue to provide technical assistance, data, and information on current policy as a resource for community groups to effectively engage in regional and local policy decision-making. Incorporate lessons learned and tools developed by the GTC Equity Grants projects.
- 4.3 Provide a forum for ongoing regional coalitions, such as the Equity Network, to build capacity around regional equity issues, with a focus on non-governmental organizations and public-private partnerships.

Local Governments

- 4.4 Support community-based organizations through actions such as: convening community organizations, providing information about plans and projects in station areas, and offering staff support, meeting facilities, or funding for community organizations.

Foundations

- 4.5 Provide grants to community groups and other non-profits to build capacity within transit communities through community organizing, training, data, and networking opportunities.
- 4.6 Collaborate with PSRC and others to develop support systems, such as a regional information commons, for use by community groups as they engage in public policy processes.

Equity Network

- 4.7 Evaluate the long-term success of the Equity Grant Program in increasing capacity of community based organizations to be involved in planning processes and decision making.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- The need for effective and comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement applies across the region, especially in transit communities with concentrations of low-income households, persons of color, or other historically underrepresented groups.



Strategy 5: Evaluate and Monitor Impacts and Outcomes

The success of the GTC Strategy in supporting thriving and equitable transit communities will be realized over the long-term, underscoring the need to evaluate tools as they are implemented and monitor outcomes as they are realized in order to modify the strategies to strengthen success over time. Evaluation and monitoring efforts should focus on the three goal areas of the GTC Strategy: attract housing and employment growth, provide affordable housing choices, and increase equitable access to opportunity. As a complement to the monitoring efforts, public agencies should evaluate the equity impacts of policies and investments before they are implemented in transit communities.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 5.1 Develop a long-term work program to measure and evaluate the successes, impacts, and outcomes of the GTC Strategy in transit communities throughout the region. Leverage and build upon existing monitoring efforts, such as VISION 2040 monitoring and updated Regional Centers report.
- 5.2 Define a transit communities geography, and develop and monitor indicators of progress toward achieving transit community goals, such as housing and employment growth, housing affordability trends, and Opportunity Mapping measures.
- 5.3 Establish a schedule for regular reporting and engagement of regional partners in reviewing and responding to findings through refinements to the GTC Strategy.
- 5.4 Update the People + Place Implementation Typology to align with periodic required updates to local comprehensive plans.
- 5.5 Work with the Equity Network and other community stakeholders to develop a social equity evaluation tool to be available for use by public agencies throughout the region to measure the expected social equity impacts of proposed policies, programs, and investments. Use existing tools, such the Racial Equity Toolkit developed and used by the City of Seattle or the Equity Impact Review tools used by King County, as possible models for a regional tool.
- 5.6 Evaluate social equity impacts when considering new or updated regional policies and programs.

Transit Agencies

- 5.7 Monitor outcomes of transit investments and TOD-related programs, including transit system use and performance, and contribute relevant data to regional transit community monitoring.
- 5.8 Evaluate social equity impacts when considering new or updated policies and programs, consistent with applicable state and federal laws.

Local Governments

- 5.9 Monitor indicators of progress toward local goals for transit communities and contribute relevant data to regional TOD monitoring.
- 5.10 Evaluate social equity impacts when considering new or updated policies and programs.

Equity Network

- 5.11 Provide assistance in the development of evaluation and monitoring tools, including the social equity evaluation tool.

Priority Transit Communities for this Action Area

- The need for evaluation and monitoring of impacts and outcomes applies across the region.

Strategies to Attract Housing and Employment Growth



Goal: **Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth to high capacity transit communities.**

VISION 2040 calls for a compact pattern of growth within the Urban Growth Area, particularly in regional and subregional centers served by high capacity transit. The Growing Transit Communities work program has demonstrated that the region's light rail corridors alone have the potential to support this vision by attracting at least 25% of the housing growth and 35% of the employment growth expected in the region through the year 2040. Attracting additional TOD market demand to other regional corridors that are served by other types of high capacity transit is also essential.

To advance the Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040, promote economic development, and realize the multiple public benefits of compact growth around rapid transit investments, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Use a full range of tools, investments, and economic development strategies, to attract the potential demand for residential and commercial transit oriented development within transit communities consistent with and in furtherance of regional policies and plans, and
- Plan for and promote residential and employment densities within transit communities that support ridership potential and contribute to accommodating growth needs within each high-capacity transit corridor.

Additional transit communities along the region's other high-capacity transit mode corridors will also attract significant portions of future residential and employment growth.

Overview of Recommendations

Recommended strategies to attract housing and employment growth to transit communities reflect three overarching objectives:

Make great urban places that are attractive to households and businesses. The region can achieve the goal of attracting transit supportive development to station areas with a focus on building neighborhoods that offer safe, high quality urban living, including a critical mass of residential and commercial activity, easy access to local and regional jobs and opportunities, and a rich public realm. Tools to make this happen include not only traditional land use approaches and environmentally sustainable building practices, but also heightened integration of land use with transportation and targeted investments in a range of public assets that meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

Remove barriers to development. Regional market analysis has shown that demand for housing and commercial space located near rapid transit stations exists in all three light rail corridors. However, existing conditions in some locations are potential barriers to new market development, and include restrictive zoning capacity and other regulatory barriers (e.g., excessive parking requirements), and lack of essential public infrastructure. Removing regulatory barriers through regulatory review and local and regional tools to fund the most pressing infrastructure needs, is important in all transit communities regardless of market conditions, but particularly critical in those with emerging or strong markets.

Support development in emerging markets. Market analysis also shows that the light rail corridors include a large number of locations with weaker market conditions where regional accessibility by high capacity transit service may not alone be sufficient to attract new development. This represents a significant challenge for both local jurisdictions and the region. New development in emerging markets should be supported by tools and investments that increase value, reduce costs, and build on existing community assets and market potential.

Recommended Strategies

6. Conduct station area planning
7. Use land efficiently in transit communities
8. Locate, design and provide access to transit stations to support TOD
9. Adopt innovative parking tools
10. Invest in infrastructure and public realm improvements



Strategy 6: Conduct Station Area Planning

Station area planning is the process whereby local jurisdictions engage broad community interests to produce a unique vision for a transit community and a blueprint for regulations and investments that successfully attract residential and employment growth consistent with that vision. Each high capacity transit station area should have a dedicated plan, or policies within an existing plan, addressing a comprehensive range of topic areas, including many of the recommendations in the GTC Strategy. In particular, Strategy 11 and Strategy 19 call for in depth housing and community needs assessments that should be part of any comprehensive station area planning process.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 6.1. Amend plans and policies to establish transit communities as a key element of the regional growth strategy to concentrate new population and employment within urban areas in centers linked by a high capacity transit network.
- 6.2. Develop regional guidelines on best practice in station area planning.
- 6.3. Develop guidance and best practices on station area planning. Use PSRC policy and plan review processes to disseminate guidance on station area planning.
- 6.4. Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions and other agencies to support station area planning.
- 6.5. Create a competitive grant program to fund transit community implementation activities such as strategic planning, code development, feasibility analyses, or predevelopment design.
- 6.6. Adopt criteria for transportation project funding that incentivize local adoption of station area plans that are consistent with regional guidance.

Transit Agencies

- 6.7. Participate in local station area planning as an active partner with local jurisdictions and other public agencies and in conjunction with ongoing transit service planning.
- 6.8. Contribute agency resources, where feasible and appropriate, to station area planning efforts.
- 6.9. Implement a TOD strategy that addresses long-range system expansion and service provision, station design and access, property disposition, partnerships with other agencies and local government, and transit-supportive uses and densities.

Local Governments

- 6.10. Review existing plans and policies, when they are considered for periodic update, for consistency with regional guidance on station area planning and recommendations contained in the GTC Strategy.
- 6.11. Adopt station area plans and/or policies for all high capacity transit communities which are expected to attract significant new population or employment growth
- 6.12. Use the plan development and update process to identify and address potential regulatory barriers to equitable transit community development.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



Strategy 7: Use Land Efficiently in Transit Communities

Transit communities contain a limited amount of land to accommodate housing, workplaces, retail and services, open space and other public amenities. Attracting growth to transit communities starts with policies and regulations that use that resource wisely and allow sufficient compact development to meet growth and ridership goals along with public and private actions to support those investments.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 7.1 Collaborate with transit agencies and local governments to develop guidance for transit supportive densities. Amend policies and procedures, as appropriate, to include detailed guidance on transit supportive densities and uses, including recommended density ranges for transit communities within each high-capacity transit corridor. Density guidance should be informed by regional policy, current and potential service levels for the transit modes in each location, local plans, and land use and market characteristics.
- 7.2 Refine criteria for transportation project funding and station area plan implementation grants that incentivize zoning for achievement of transit supportive densities that are consistent with regional guidance.
- 7.3 Maintain a regional inventory of developable public lands located within transit communities and provide technical assistance to other public agencies in identifying opportunity sites for TOD.
- 7.4 Leverage existing agency resources to support ongoing evaluation of the supply and demand for residential and commercial development in transit communities.
- 7.5 Collaborate with transit agencies and local governments on continued efforts to align transit service and local land use decisions, such as through implementation of the Transit Service Overlay Zone concept.

Transit Agencies

- 7.6 Collaborate with regional and local governments to develop guidance for transit supportive densities. Continue efforts to align transit service and local land use decisions, such as through implementation of the Transit Service Overlay Zone concept.
- 7.7 Conduct analyses of TOD potential for properties under consideration for agency acquisition within transit communities.
- 7.8 Adopt land disposition policies and procedures that leverage agency property assets in order to encourage transit supportive densities and affordability in transit communities.
- 7.9 Identify agency owned opportunity sites for joint development and land assembly in transit communities.

Local Governments

- 7.10 Collaborate with regional governments and transit agencies to develop guidance for transit supportive densities. Adopt land use plans and zoning regulations that accommodate and promote transit supportive uses and densities that are consistent with regional guidance.
- 7.11 Align surplus lands disposition policies with local and regional TOD objectives.
- 7.12 Identify city or county owned sites with potential for joint development and land assembly for TOD projects.
- 7.13 Conduct a land supply and capacity analysis for each high capacity transit station area. Build upon existing work and resources, such as periodic *Buildable Lands* evaluations.

State

- 7.14 Adopt legislation to give public agencies greater flexibility in disposing of surplus lands for the purposes of transit oriented development in station areas, including the ability to discount property sale price where long-term housing affordability is provided.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



Strategy 8: Locate, Design, and Provide Access to Transit Stations to Support TOD

Decisions about the siting and design of transit facilities can have a significant impact on the potential for building transit communities within a given corridor. Current and future community members are best served and ridership potential is best supported where transit systems are designed to foster long-term TOD potential and connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 8.1 Consistent with existing regional policies and plans that call for integrating land use and transportation investments, refine regional policy guidance to clarify that, where possible, transit alignments and station location and design choices should promote TOD throughout the region, including in designated regional centers and other locations with potential for concentrated residential and/or employment uses.

Transit Agencies

- 8.2 Strengthen criteria for selecting transit alignments and station locations to include TOD potential alongside other criteria such as environmental impacts, costs, and ridership potential. TOD potential should reflect both existing and planned uses and densities within transit station areas.
- 8.3 Design and develop stations to include joint development, where feasible, with market rate and affordable residential, commercial, or civic and other public uses.
- 8.4 Design stations to provide multimodal access to transit, including on foot, bicycle, and via connections with other transit services.
- 8.5 Implement transit access and parking management strategies that support and encourage access via multiple modes of travel to the transit system, and that provide alternatives to automobile travel through approaches, such as: transit service connections to surrounding neighborhoods, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and demand management strategies (e.g., parking fees).
- 8.6 Where parking at transit stations is needed, support TOD potential through tools such as parking structure siting and design that complements walkable and active streets and public spaces, interim parking strategies including facilities that can be redeveloped with residential or commercial uses in the future, and shared parking with nearby uses.
- 8.7 Coordinate planning and capital investment activities with those of other public agencies, including other transit agencies, local governments, and state agencies such as WSDOT.

Local Governments

- 8.8 Collaborate with transit agencies on alignment of new transit facilities, station siting and design, and system access planning.
- 8.9 Adopt land use regulations and capital improvement plans that are consistent with and support transit corridor access strategies, to include zoning for transit supportive densities and funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- 8.10 Coordinate land use planning and capital investment activities with transit agencies, including items such as transit corridor access strategies, zoning for transit-supportive densities, and funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Communities with fixed guideway transit, such as light rail, streetcar, commuter rail
- Communities with multimodal transit centers
- Communities undergoing planning and implementation of new transit investments



Strategy 9: Adopt Innovative Parking Tools

Frequent and reliable transit service within walking distance of housing and commercial uses reduces the amount of parking needed as part of new development. Requirements for parking that are inflexible and exceed demand can drive up development costs and resulting prices and rents, and may render new development infeasible. A range of innovative parking tools are available for use in transit communities that are effective in supporting TOD while meeting the limited parking needs of a transit rich environment.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 9.1 Develop guidance on parking management best practices and innovative tools for use in transit station areas. Disseminate guidance on parking management through PSRC policy and plan review processes.
- 9.2 Collaborate with King County to further develop the data and tools included in the Right Size Parking project for application in transit communities throughout the region.
- 9.3 Establish criteria for transportation project funding that incentivize local adoption of comprehensive parking management strategies and innovative best practices (see 9.6).

Transit Agencies

- 9.4 Work with local governments and other transit agencies to coordinate implementation of access plans for transit stations and parking management strategies for station areas.

Local Governments

- 9.5 Adopt a district-wide management strategy for both on- and off-street parking as part of the station area plan or policies.
- 9.6 Adopt, where appropriate, innovative off-street parking management tools, such as:
 - Flexible or market-driven parking regulations
 - Reduced or eliminated parking requirements for special populations, such as seniors, and in locations with access to frequent transit
 - Limits on the maximum amount of parking that can be included in a development,
 - “Unbundling” the cost of parking from housing unit prices/rents
 - Shared parking facilities
 - Support for car sharing options
 - Transportation demand management
- 9.7 Where parking demand is high, adopt on-street parking management strategies, such as metered parking and residential parking zones.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



Strategy 10: Invest in Infrastructure and Public Realm Improvements

Local governments and private developers have identified insufficient infrastructure and community amenities as major barriers to new residential and commercial development in transit communities. For example, data indicate that many current and potential station areas within the light rail corridors lack the street networks, sidewalks, parks, and other public facilities desired for livable transit communities. A regional strategy to provide sufficient infrastructure and enhance the public realm includes creating new funding tools and targeting existing funds for maximum benefit. Provision of this infrastructure is an opportunity to achieve multiple environmental and health benefits.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 10.1 Among projects funded by PSRC, include transportation improvements that enhance the TOD orientation and market potential of existing and future transit communities, such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, street improvements that accommodate multiple modes and users, and projects that improve connectivity within a transit community.
- 10.2 In order to leverage existing and potential market demand for TOD, give priority to 1) projects located where current TOD orientation is low and market demand is transitional to very strong, and 2) projects located where current TOD orientation is high and current market demand is weak to moderate.
- 10.3 Provide regional guidance on street design and public realm improvements that have a positive environmental health impact and promote green building techniques in transit communities.
- 10.4 Continue to convene and support regional coalitions of public and private stakeholders to develop new and expanded financing tools for infrastructure and other public investments.

Transit Agencies

- 10.5 Collaborate with local governments, transit providers, and other public agencies to evaluate transit access and connectivity needs early in the planning and design process and to identify and fund station area infrastructure improvements.
- 10.6 Design transit facilities to connect to and complement adjacent land uses and public realm infrastructure.

Local Governments

- 10.7 Encourage new development through integrated capital facilities, land use, and economic development and investments.
- 10.8 Utilize, where appropriate, existing tools to fund infrastructure improvements, including value capture tools, local improvement districts, and local taxing authority.
- 10.9 Identify priority public improvements needed in transit communities, including transportation infrastructure, civic facilities, parks and open space, and other public realm enhancements. Amend policies, codes, or programs as may be necessary to support the acquisition or development of sites for such improvements.
- 10.10 Explore options for dedicated funding for improvements to the public realm in transit communities.

State

- 10.11 Adopt legislation authorizing new value capture financing tools for use by local jurisdictions to fund infrastructure improvements and affordable housing in transit communities.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities

Strategies to Provide Affordable Housing Choices



Goal: Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit.

Adopted regional policy recognizes housing as a basic human need and calls for local policies and tools that provide for an adequate supply of housing affordable at all income levels, to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents. Region-wide, affordable housing need is defined by current household incomes, where 18% of households earn between 50% and 80% of AMI, 12% earn between 30% and 50% of AMI, and 13% earn less than 30% of AMI. In transit communities, projected need for affordable housing is higher, especially for households in the lowest income range due to their greater reliance on transit. Depending on local market conditions, efforts to meet that need will focus on new housing, housing preservation, or combined strategies.

In order to meet a substantial portion of this need within walking distance of rapid transit services, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Use a full range of housing preservation tools to maintain the existing level of affordable housing within each transit community, and
- Use a full range of housing production tools and incentives to provide sufficient affordable housing choices for all economic and demographic groups within transit corridors, including new housing in the region's transit communities collectively that is proportional to region-wide need or greater to serve transit-dependent households.

These goals apply to the region's transit corridors collectively, and do not suggest a specific desired outcome for any individual transit community. Further, fully attaining these goals will require new tools, resources, and subsidies beyond those that exist today.

These affordable housing goals are based on regional income data and forecasts of TOD demand produced for the GTC Partnership by the Center for Transit Oriented Development. These strategies reinforce and expand upon existing tools and resources. Because housing goals for transit communities will not be fully attainable by governments and housing providers in the region without an increase in the total amount of available housing subsidy, the strategies also include coordinated efforts to secure new and increased resources.

Overview of Recommendations

Recommended strategies to provide housing choices reflect three overarching objectives. First, local jurisdictions should define and quantify housing needs for each transit community when undergoing station area or other planning processes. Understanding housing needs for all income levels and demographic groups identified in VISION 2040 is a necessary starting point for adopting the appropriate mix and scale of public and private sector tools. Second, with the paramount importance of preserving existing housing and supplying new housing choices in proximity to transit investments, a full range of resources should be made available, and in fact targeted, to transit communities. The toolbox includes regulations, incentives, requirements, subsidies, environmentally sustainable development techniques, and other programs. Finally, the overall housing strategy should to the extent possible capitalize on the economic value created by the private market, enhanced by transit investments, in order to achieve the broadest range of affordability in market rate housing and additional below market rate units.

Appropriate strategies and tools for particular transit communities may vary and should be informed by the local housing needs assessment and the transit community typology. For example, transit communities with high current levels of affordability may focus on maintaining housing choices through preservation. In communities with less current affordability, appropriate tools may focus more on new affordable housing production. In all cases, ensuring housing at all affordability levels is healthy and safe is essential.

For the purposes of these strategies, “affordable housing” includes subsidized and market-rate housing affordable to lower income households at various income levels, including 0%-30% of AMI, 30%-50% of AMI and 50%-80% of AMI, unless defined by a local jurisdiction’s housing needs assessment to also include housing affordable to higher incomes.

VISION 2040 uses the following household income categories and definitions to track regional housing affordability:

Middle: 80-120% of area median income

Moderate: 50-80% of area median income

Low: 30-50% of area median income

Very Low: Below 30% area median income

The names of these ranges differ from those used by HUD and others.

Recommended Strategies

11. Assess current and future housing needs in transit communities
12. Minimize displacement through affordable housing preservation and replacement
13. Increase housing resources to support transit-dependent populations
14. Implement a TOD property acquisition fund
15. Expand value capture financing as a tool for infrastructure and affordable housing
16. Make surplus public lands available for affordable housing
17. Leverage market value through incentives for affordability
18. Implement recommendations of regional fair housing assessment



Strategy 11: Assess Current and Future Housing Needs in Transit Communities

A transit community housing needs assessment determines the current and future demand for housing affordable to different income groups and provides the context for appropriate tools and programs to meet the housing needs. The assessment would be triggered by larger planning efforts, such as station area, subarea, or comprehensive planning. Housing needs assessments would be informed by regional and countywide guidance and technical assistance, and would in turn inform locally determined housing goals and strategies. The assessments should address, at minimum, housing needs for lower income households at various income levels, including 0%-30% of AMI, 30%-50% of AMI and 50%-80% of AMI.

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 11.1. Develop regional guidance on best practice in conducting a transit community housing needs assessment. The assessment should address housing supply and demand for households at all income levels identified in VISION 2040 as well as housing needs related to demographic groups, special needs populations, and workers at all income levels.
- 11.2. Provide data and support coordination among jurisdictions to ensure that housing goals and strategies complement one another and address cumulatively the regional housing goals for transit communities.
- 11.3. Develop guidance on the recommended format and content for a transit community housing needs assessment and plan. Disseminate such guidance through PSRC policy and plan review processes.
- 11.4. Amend transportation funding criteria to provide incentives for adoption of transit community affordable housing assessments, plans, and implementation tools.
- 11.5. Carry out VISION 2040 H-action-1, the development of a Regional Housing Strategy. As part of the strategy, specifically address housing supply and demand in transit communities.
- 11.6. Build on PSRC's existing Housing Innovations Program (HIP) website to include resources and models for affordable housing assessment, station area plans, and tools appropriate to preserve and increase affordable housing supply in transit communities.

Transit Agencies

- 11.7. Review and use available data on housing needs, including local housing needs assessments, in station area planning and TOD policy implementation. Incorporate results of housing needs assessments in TOD-related decisions, including the acquisition and disposition of properties.

Local Governments

- 11.8. Conduct a transit community housing needs assessment consistent with regional guidance.
- 11.9. Conduct an inventory of existing housing, including the cost, size, condition, and use of subsidies of existing units, as part of the housing needs assessment and use this information to identify potential sites for preservation and/or replacement.
- 11.10. Based on the findings of the housing needs assessment, and consistent with Countywide Planning Policies, adopt quantitative and qualitative affordable housing goals for lower income households at various income levels, including 0%-30% of AMI, 30%-50% of AMI and 50%-80% of AMI and a strategy to achieve goals as the transit community grows.
- 11.11. Plan for, preserve, and encourage the development of affordable housing in transit communities consistent with the housing element in the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan.
- 11.12. Plan for and encourage a range of housing types, designs, and tenure to meet the needs of a full range of demographic and household profiles. This may include rental and ownership housing, housing with universal design, higher density housing types, mid-density housing types (e.g., cottage, accessory dwelling units, and townhomes), housing units with two or more bedrooms to meet the needs of families.

Affordable Housing Providers

- 11.13. Contribute to housing needs assessments through data sharing and technical review.

Recommended Actions

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Any transit community undergoing station area or subarea planning



Strategy 12: Minimize Displacement through Affordable Housing Preservation and Replacement

Among the many challenges communities face in pursuing mutually supportive economic development and social equity objectives, the risk of displacement looms large. Many transit communities are home to existing low- and moderate-income households at potential risk of displacement due to increased market strength and gentrification that may accompany transit system development. Strategies to preserve the existing affordable housing stock in good condition or to replace affordable housing demolished due to new development can help minimize these displacement risks while accommodating new market-rate investment. Although preservation and replacement strategies were not a central component of the GTC Partnership work program, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work. The goal guiding this strategy is to ensure a “no net loss” of existing affordable housing units in transit communities.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 12.1. Expand the existing Housing Innovations Program to provide more detailed guidance and technical assistance to local governments and other regional partners on affordable housing preservation tools that can be used in transit communities.
- 12.2. Work with regional partners to develop data and methods to provide for an “early warning system” to identify properties in transit communities that contain affordable units that are at risk of displacement or conversion.
- 12.3. Work with local governments and housing providers to maintain a regional database of publicly subsidized housing stock.

Transit Agencies

- 12.4. Minimize the displacement of affordable housing. Where displacement occurs, assist where feasible in replacement of those units.

Local Governments

- 12.5. Conduct an inventory of existing affordable housing as part of the housing needs assessment and use this information to identify potential sites for preservation and/or replacement.
- 12.6. Use available tools and resources to encourage that both subsidized and market-rate affordable units that are lost due to redevelopment in a transit community are replaced with units at the same affordability level within that transit community.
- 12.7. Use incentive programs for developers to preserve or replace subsidized and market-rate affordable units. (See Strategy 17)

Affordable Housing Developers, Financiers, and Community Organizations

- 12.8. Adopt funding policies and criteria that support and encourage both development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities, where mobility and access to jobs and services is higher. Work with regional partners to identify and advocate for new dedicated funds and tools to support affordable housing preservation.
- 12.9. Pursue funding for rehabilitation of affordable housing stock, such as the federal Neighborhood Stabilization and Weatherization Assistance programs.
- 12.10. Create the capacity to acquire and hold land and buildings for future affordable housing development that includes preservation, using tools such as a regional TOD property acquisition fund (Strategy 14).

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with potential or immediate risk of displacement
- Transit communities with existing affordable housing stock



Strategy 13: Increase Housing Resources to Support Transit-Dependent Populations

There are currently several sources for affordable housing subsidy at the local, regional, and state levels. Targeting a portion of those funds to projects in transit communities can be a way to produce more affordable housing for transit-dependent populations. In addition, using tools such as Opportunity Mapping to inform housing subsidy allocations can help create greater access to high-opportunity neighborhoods for low-income households. The following actions will be most effective in conjunction with strategies to grow the overall amount of available resources for affordable housing, such as through housing levies or similar funding, value capture financing, and a TOD property acquisition fund.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 13.1 Amend plans and policies to call for investment of housing resources that support and encourage the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities.
- 13.2 Provide technical support to housing funders and developers in defining transit community nodes and boundaries for the purposes of making funding and programmatic decisions.

Local Governments

- 13.3 Adopt policies that support and encourage funding for the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities.
- 13.4 Expand the capacity of locally-generated housing funds, such as through support for development and passage of a local, sub-regional, or regional housing funding source.

Affordable Housing Funders and Developers

- 13.5 Adopt funding policies and criteria that support and encourage the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities, where mobility and access to jobs and services is higher.
- 13.6 Consider the People + Place Implementation Typology and Opportunity Mapping data when identifying locations within the region for new production and preservation investments.

Affordable Housing Advocacy Organizations

- 13.7 Build on the GTC Partnership to convene a regional coalition to call for new and expanded sources of housing subsidy beyond what is currently available from government and non-governmental sources.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Transit communities with limited stock of affordable units



Strategy 14: Implement a TOD Property Acquisition Fund

A TOD Property Acquisition Fund is a tool that has been used with success in other regions to provide financing for the purchase of properties within transit communities before increased land values make affordable housing development or preservation prohibitively difficult. There is strong and ongoing regional cross-sector support for establishing a fund in the central Puget Sound region. Developing and managing such a fund will require significant commitments from the public sector, as well as private foundations and housing development funders. The TOD Fund strategy was a central component of the GTC Partnership work program and is a high priority for implementation.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 14.1 Coordinate with and support the development and management of a regional fund to provide a revolving source of capital available for the acquisition of properties for the development and preservation of affordable housing in transit communities.
- 14.2 Explore options for using a portion of PSRC regionally managed funds to contribute public sector catalyst investments in a TOD property acquisition fund.

Transit Agencies

- 14.3 Explore options to contribute to public sector catalyst investments in a TOD property acquisition fund.

Local Governments

- 14.4 Explore options for contributing local funds as a portion of regional public sector catalyst investment in a TOD property acquisition fund.

TOD Fund Manager

- 14.5 Identify and recruit a broad range of potential contributors of startup capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.
- 14.6 Structure fund governance to maximize input and oversight from regional stakeholders.
- 14.7 Work with PSRC, transit agencies, and local governments to identify target locations and a range of loan products designed to meet the needs for capital in various phases of housing development.

Housing authorities, WSHFC

- 14.8 Explore options for contributing capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.

Local and National Foundations and Philanthropies

- 14.9 Explore options for contributing capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.

CDFIs and other private sector funders

- 14.10 Explore options for contributing capital to the TOD property acquisition fund.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with limited stock of affordable units
- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



Strategy 15: Expand Value Capture Financing as a Tool for Infrastructure and Affordable Housing

Public transit improvements increase the value of nearby properties. A portion of that added value may be captured to finance further public improvements. Developing such value capture financing strategies is a central component of the GTC Partnership work program and is a high priority for implementation in the region and across the state. In addition to various value capture tools currently available in the state, new tools should be considered to ensure that the potential displacement risk to low income households from rising property values is mitigated. Stakeholders should consider the potential benefits of new tools and target currently available tools for use in providing infrastructure and affordable housing in transit station areas.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 15.1 Provide regional guidance on best practices and technical assistance to local jurisdictions on the establishment and administration of value capture tools.
- 15.2 Include in a regional station area plan implementation grant program the option of funding selected feasibility studies for local implementation of value capture financing.
- 15.3 Continue to provide a forum for a coalition of regional stakeholders to advance new and expanded value capture tools in Washington State.

Transit Agencies

- 15.4 Support the development and use of value capture financing tools in order to increase transit ridership potential through new development.

Local Governments

- 15.5 Support affordable housing development in station areas through the use of existing tools for value capture financing that are authorized under Washington State law, including Community Revitalization Financing, Local Infrastructure Financing Tool, Local Revitalization Financing, Landscape Conservation and Local Infrastructure Program, and Local Improvement District.
- 15.6 Work with property owners and other stakeholders to explore value capture financing tools, as authorized by any future legislation, where market strength and property owner support exists, and major infrastructure projects and housing needs have been identified.

State

- 15.7 Adopt legislation authorizing new and expanded value capture financing tools that can be used to generate revenue for affordable housing and infrastructure investments in transit station areas.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



Strategy 16: Make Surplus Public Lands Available for Affordable Housing

Programming the future sustainable use of developable publicly owned surplus properties in transit communities creates a unique opportunity to improve housing options for low income residents and improve transit ridership. Best practices for the use of public lands for affordable housing include joint development, TOD development agreements between landowners and jurisdictions, discount sale, public-private land assembly, and the use of air rights above stations. Expanding state law and removing other legal or programmatic obstacles may facilitate broader use of these tools. A surplus public lands strategy was a central component of the GTC Partnership work program and is a high priority for implementation.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 16.1 Provide guidance on best practices and technical assistance to public agencies and potential private sector development partners.
- 16.2 Maintain a regional inventory of developable public lands in transit communities.

Transit Agencies

- 16.3 Develop policies and best practices related to the disposition of properties that support affordable housing production on surplus sites.
- 16.4 Conduct analysis of TOD potential for properties that are considered for acquisition (See Strategy 7.7).

Local Governments

- 16.5 Develop policies and employ best practices, where appropriate, related to the acquisition and disposition of properties that support affordable housing on surplus sites.

State

- 16.6 Adopt legislation that gives public agencies more flexibility in the disposition of public lands for the public purpose of providing increased affordable housing opportunities in transit station areas, such as through discounted sale, joint development, or other mechanisms.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities under any stage of light rail system development
- Transit communities with any other identified opportunities for development of surplus lands



Strategy 17: Leverage Market Value through Incentives for Affordability

Incentives help achieve affordability in rental and ownership housing development, in both multi-family and single-family projects. Statute allows jurisdictions to create required or optional incentive zoning programs for affordable housing when additional development capacity is provided through zoning changes or density bonus programs, thereby ensuring that new development contributes to maintaining and expanding the supply of affordable units. Additionally, other voluntary incentives, such as multi-family tax exemption or fee waivers, may also be used to encourage affordable housing production and preservation. Although developing incentive strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership work program, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 17.1 Provide guidance and technical assistance to support adoption, where appropriate, of incentives for affordable housing in transit communities. Provide ongoing staff support to a broad stakeholder effort to further develop tools for the effective use of required and optional incentive programs tied to an increase in development capacity, through research, education, and state and local statutory changes.
- 17.2 Include in a regional station area plan implementation grant program the option of funding selected feasibility studies for local implementation of required and optional incentive programs for affordable housing.

Local Governments

- 17.3 Conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the costs and benefits of potential land use actions and incentives. Based on the feasibility study, adopt regulations that leverage the provision of additional development capacity, such as density or height, to produce and preserve affordable housing units. There are a range of ways to implement such provisions that are sensitive to local conditions and markets. For example, requiring affordability in all developments when increased development capacity is granted outright, or voluntary provisions where additional development capacity is gained in exchange for providing affordable housing.
- 17.4 In all transit communities planning for residential growth, adopt additional incentives for private developers to include affordable units in new residential projects. In determining the appropriate mix of incentives for each community, consider market conditions, housing needs, and existing regulations. Incentives that should be considered for adoption in all transit communities include:
 - Reduced parking requirements for projects that include affordable units
 - Impact or permit fee waivers for projects that include affordable units
 - Use of multifamily tax exemption conditioned to provision of the longest-term and deepest affordability levels feasible
 - Expedited permitting for projects that include affordable units

Developers and Financiers

- 17.5 Contribute industry knowledge to the analysis and design of inclusionary and incentive tools by local jurisdictions.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Required or optional incentive zoning programs can be effective in transit communities undergoing updates to plans or regulations that result in added development capacity, especially in transit communities where market strength for TOD is emerging or strong. Additionally, incentive zoning programs may be more appropriate at a larger scale than the half-mile station area.
- Voluntary incentives can be effective in all transit communities where jurisdictions seek to attract residential growth to accompany existing or future high-capacity transit service.



Strategy 18: Implement Recommendations of Regional Fair Housing Assessment

Fair housing is housing that is available to anyone, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, family status, disability, or national origin, and free of barriers to housing choice in communities throughout the region. In order to foster compliance with the federal Fair Housing Act, communities receiving support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) community planning and development programs are obligated to affirmatively further fair housing. This means identifying barriers to fair housing choice and carrying out action plans to overcome the effects of these impediments. The objective is to eliminate housing discrimination and provide opportunities for inclusive patterns of housing occupancy. Communities must address fair housing for the “protected classes” listed above, and can choose to add in additional ones to this list and many corridor communities have chosen to do so. These policies need not be restricted to HUD assisted communities, but should be focused in all transit station areas where diversity and inclusiveness are vital.

PSRC has developed a Regional Fair Housing Group that is working with HUD’s guidance to conduct a Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) across the region. The FHEA will identify barriers to fair housing choice that reach across jurisdictional lines, and will identify areas of increasing segregation and racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty. The FHEA will highlight disparities in access to opportunity across the region and evaluate the equity of transit improvements across the region. Trends in discrimination cases, fair housing testing, mortgage lending practices, and capacity of fair housing enforcement agencies will be assessed. Action strategies of the FHEA will outline how different governmental and non-governmental partners can work across the region to remove barriers to fair housing. Tools to promote fair housing may include fair housing legislation, fair housing enforcement, mobility improvements, and zoning codes.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

18.1 Work with regional partners to identify barriers to fair housing choice, develop actions to address barriers, and implement recommendations of the FHEA.

Transit Agencies

18.2 Participate in the development of the FHEA and consider its final implementation recommendations during project planning and development.

Local Governments

18.3 Implement universal design principles with policies and regulations that meet or exceed federal and state standards to ensure that development and public spaces are accessible to people with disabilities and other special needs.

18.4 Promote fair housing practices in station areas through actions such as targeting fair housing outreach and educational resources to these areas, and building capacity of community groups to do outreach and education.

18.5 Participate in the development of the FHEA and its final implementation recommendations.

State

18.6 Adopt state legislation that prohibits housing discrimination against rental subsidy holders.

Housing Enforcement Agencies

18.7 Support fair housing planning in station areas with focused fair housing testing, enforcement, and education and outreach strategies in these areas

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Fair housing strategies are applicable to all transit communities in the region.

Strategies to Improve Access to Opportunity



Goal: Increase access to opportunity for existing and future residents of transit communities.

Adopted regional policy recognizes the need to address the diverse housing, transportation, and economic needs of current and future residents so that all people may prosper as the region grows. This requires special attention to communities that lack access to transportation choices, quality schools, and other social and physical neighborhood components that allow community members to thrive and succeed.

In order to more equitably meet the needs of all residents of the region, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Improve access to opportunity in the transit corridors through targeted investments that meet the needs of residents and businesses in communities with limited access to opportunity, targeted affordable housing investments in communities with good access to opportunity, and transit connections linking areas with good access to opportunity and areas with limited access to opportunity.
- Use a full range of community engagement strategies to increase the involvement of diverse and historically under-represented groups in transit community development, empower communities to influence decisions at all levels of government, and ensure opportunities for participation throughout decision-making processes.

Overview of Recommendations

Recommended strategies to increase access to opportunity reflect three overarching objectives:

Understand regional disparities and gaps along with local community needs that impact access to opportunity. The opportunity mapping analysis conducted by PSRC in consultation with the Kirwan Institute at the Ohio State University has revealed a widespread pattern within the region of inequitable access to educational, economic, transportation, environmental health, and neighborhood resources. While the overall opportunity score can inform regional priorities and approaches, additional local analysis and ongoing

monitoring and updating is needed in order to show which programs and investments should be targeted to each location in order to address identified disparities.

Identify existing and potential new resources and tools that may be used to meet community needs.

Each of the five opportunity areas identified in these strategies may be addressed by general purpose government, special purpose public agencies, non-profits, foundation support, and through other private sector investment. Effective approaches will leverage the potential for partnerships across sectors. Success will depend as well on balancing strategies to address overall community needs with place-based strategies that focus specifically on transit communities. By advancing work to define and measure equity within the region, the Growing Transit Communities Partnership has provided a foundation for these efforts.

Build support for equitable opportunities through education, coalitions, and leadership. In an era of limited resources, both public and private entities must demonstrate that their investments effectively meet the most pressing community needs. The commitment to invest in our communities can be bolstered first by raising awareness of regional disparities and the link between social equity and regional prosperity. Political support is built and sustained through broad-based coalitions, such as that assembled for the Equity Network, and also by policy makers and community leaders championing a regional vision of equity and equitable transit community development.

Recommended Strategies

19. Assess community needs
20. Invest in environmental and public health
21. Invest in economic vitality and opportunity
22. Invest in equitable mobility options
23. Invest in equitable access to high quality education
24. Invest in public safety in transit communities



Strategy 19: Assess Community Needs

The Puget Sound Regional Council has developed a framework and technical approach to measuring equitable access to opportunity within the region. Application of this tool, called opportunity mapping, to the region as a whole, including identification of many locations with an overall low level of opportunity across a spectrum of community needs, shows that more detailed analysis is warranted in many transit communities as a basis for making informed community investment decisions. Local governments, working with communities and other stakeholders, should assess equitable access to opportunity as part of larger planning processes, such as station area, subarea, or comprehensive planning. Community needs assessments should be informed by regional guidance and technical assistance, and could in turn inform goals and strategies to improve local access to opportunity and other social equity outcomes.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 19.1. Maintain, update regularly, and make available the opportunity mapping database as a regional resource for community development planning and investment.
- 19.2. Work with local jurisdictions to use the opportunity mapping score to identify neighborhoods needing further assessment at a local scale.
- 19.3. Collaborate with other agencies and the regional Equity Network, or its successor, to develop and make available to local governments a toolkit for community needs assessment that addresses the six opportunity areas of environmental and public health, economic vitality, mobility, education, and neighborhood quality of life.
- 19.4. Adopt guidelines for local station area planning that address access to opportunity and the potential need to conduct a community needs assessment.

Transit Agencies

- 19.5. Consider community needs assessments and opportunity mapping analyses in transit system development and long-range planning processes.

Local Governments

- 19.6. Incorporate the results of the regional opportunity mapping in local station area planning, and, where needed, conduct a more detailed local assessment of community needs.
- 19.7. Involve community members in developing a profile of community assets and needs around transit stations.
- 19.8. Incorporate into local practice lessons learned and models for community needs assessment developed through the GTC equity grants.
- 19.9. Inventory, and explore tools to create, maintain, and protect community anchors and gathering spaces, such as community centers, cultural centers, event spaces, and others, that nurture civic and social engagement.

Regional Equity Network and Advocacy Organizations

- 19.10. Collaborate with PSRC and other agencies in developing and disseminating community needs assessment tools for use by public and private sector.

Foundations and Social and Community Service Agencies

- 19.11. Use opportunity mapping and local community needs assessment findings in philanthropic strategies and service programming within the region.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Very low, Low, or Moderate access to opportunity per the opportunity mapping exercise
- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities



Strategy 20: Invest in Environmental and Public Health

How we design our cities has an immense impact on the health of people who live in them. Healthy communities include safe and healthy housing, opportunities for recreation and non-motorized travel, and are free from environmental or other negative health hazards. Evidence increasingly shows that land use and transportation planning decisions impact whether people can easily choose to be physically active, eat nutritious food, and live in safe and environmentally healthy places. Bringing public health into planning decisions is also a strategy for ensuring that all people and communities have the opportunities to make healthy choices regardless of their income, education, or ethnic background. In addition, accommodating more of the region's population growth in compact, complete and connected communities helps protect rural lands, farms, forests, and wildlife habitat from incompatible development, thereby preserving access to open space and a higher quality of life for the entire region.

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 20.1 Strengthen public health benefits as a criterion for promoting funding for projects in transit communities that enhance non-motorized options, such as walking and bicycling.
- 20.2 Collaborate with public health agencies in the region to develop and disseminate Healthy Transit Community Principles as an assessment and planning tool for local governments. The Northgate Healthy Community Principles may provide a model for a regional tool.

Transit Agencies

- 20.3 Encourage bicycling and walking by strengthening policies to encourage and fund safe non-motorized access to transit. (See Strategy 22)

Local Governments

- 20.4 Use Healthy Transit Community Principles as foundational element in station area planning and implementation.
- 20.5 Invest in infrastructure for non-motorized travel, to include sidewalks, trails, bicycle facilities, and safety features for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Prioritize active travel modes in facilities planning and capital expenditures.
- 20.6 Provide sufficient parks and open spaces that are accessible to and meet the needs of current and anticipated future transit community members.
- 20.7 Improve access to affordable, healthy food through land use and economic development strategies.
- 20.8 Promote healthy housing by mitigating the potential noise and air quality impacts of proximity to busy roadways, such as freeways, such as through proactive land use regulations and building codes.

Public Health Agencies

- 20.9 Site facilities in transit communities or include transit access criteria in facilities siting decisions, where practicable.

Regional Equity Network and Advocacy Organizations

- 20.10 Engage community members on the benefits of walking and bicycling in coordination with local planning efforts and funding decisions.
- 20.11 Identify and advocate for strategic investments in transit communities that can protect and improve community and regional public health and the environment.

Recommended Actions

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Health and Environment index



Strategy 21: Invest in Economic Vitality and Opportunity

Stakeholders across sectors call for greater coordination of economic development with high-capacity transit investments. While the economic development inherent to attracting growth will help support vibrant transit communities, additional strategies are needed to attract and retain existing and locally-owned businesses and to link transit community residents to family wage jobs. These economic development strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities work program, yet they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work.

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 21.1 Use the opportunity mapping analysis to guide implementation of the central Puget Sound region's Regional Economic Strategy wherever appropriate, such as through workforce development for residents of limited access to opportunity areas, employment opportunities in growth sectors, and transportation connections to employment centers.
- 21.2 Target outreach efforts for the Regional Economic Strategy's planned Action Plan for women and minority-owned businesses to include the Equity Network and businesses within current and planned light rail station areas.
- 21.3 Promote greater representation of small, locally- and minority-owned businesses on the regional coalition, the Prosperity Partnership.
- 21.4 Promote better integration with VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040 in the next update to the Regional Economic Strategy. Encourage place-based strategies that locate jobs in transit communities and increase access to living-wage jobs throughout the region.
- 21.5 Highlight in the next update to the Regional Economic Strategy the need to improve transit access to employment as a means to achieve both economic development and equity objectives.
- 21.6 Adapt for regional application the lessons learned and recommendations from the work on small business retention and attraction conducted for the East Corridor Implementation Support project.
- 21.7 Work with local jurisdictions and appropriate stakeholders to explore tools to increase access to family wage jobs, such as through economic development, community benefits agreements, living wage ordinances, and other innovative approaches.

Transit Agencies

- 21.8 Work with local jurisdictions, as part of required environmental review processes, to identify business types or districts within transit communities that may be affected by transit investments.
- 21.9 Develop and maintain policies to encourage local hiring and outreach to women and minority-owned businesses in bidding processes.
- 21.10 Use a range of locally appropriate and effective tools to promote small business retention in impacted business districts.

Local Governments

- 21.11 Work with transit agencies to identify business types or districts within transit communities that may be at risk of adverse impacts from transit facility development or from subsequent land use and market changes.
- 21.12 Adopt economic development strategies, including business planning and technical assistance, and business attraction, retention, and stabilization, in order to support small businesses near transit that serve neighborhoods and broader cultural communities.
- 21.13 Promote greater multi-sector commercial diversity and employment opportunities through innovative zoning policies to encourage variety in the types of buildings and commercial uses and spaces in mixed-use zones.

Local chamber of commerce, business associations, community development corporations, labor organizations

- 21.14 Provide proactive technical assistance and collaborate with public sector agencies to develop community-based strategies to support business attraction and retention in transit station areas.

Recommended Actions

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Current and planned light rail station areas or other regionally significant transit communities in need of strategies to promote business retention.
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Economic Health index



Strategy 22: Invest in Equitable Mobility Options

While high-capacity transit permits greater connectivity between the region's centers and transit nodes, there remains tremendous need to increase access to and funding for the high-capacity transit system for community residents and improve other mobility modes—such as local transit service, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure—within transit communities. The community engagement in current light rail station areas reveals that areas with greater immigrant populations are faced with greater impediments to accessing transit and the opportunity mapping analysis demonstrates that lower-income communities are correlated with needs for more mobility infrastructure investments. Improving mobility in these communities will open up greater access to education and employment, promote public health, and reduce transportation-related household expenses.

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 22.1 Ensure that regional transportation policies, plans, and funding criteria address social equity and the needs of transit dependent populations.
- 22.2 Use opportunity mapping to prioritize transportation infrastructure improvements to improve connectivity between residents of low-opportunity communities and locations with relatively high levels of employment, educational, and social opportunity.

Transit Agencies

- 22.3 Develop and maintain transit fares and programs, including the Regional Reduced Fare Permit, that provide affordable access to residents at all income levels.
- 22.4 Adopt programs and practices that make transit more legible, accessible, and usable to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- 22.5 Improve transit access for transit dependent populations, where funding permits and where supported by land uses, including frequent all-day service, bus service to fill service gaps that may be created between rail transit stops, and expanded local transit access to regional high-capacity transit.
- 22.6 Use opportunity mapping, or similar analyses, in transit service planning to provide enhanced transit connectivity between communities with good access to opportunity and residents of communities with limited access to opportunity.

Local Governments

- 22.7 Invest in facilities that increase connectivity and safety within transit communities, especially to transit stops and destinations frequented by communities of color, low-income residents, seniors, children, and people with disabilities.
- 22.8 Invest in programs that encourage residents of communities with limited access to opportunity to use non-motorized travel alternatives, such as bicycling programs, neighborhood walking maps, and safe routes to school efforts.

State

- 22.9 Adopt legislation providing greater options for local and regional governments to raise revenues for transit service.

Regional Equity Network and Advocacy Organizations

- 22.10 Build and maintain coalitions to advocate for state, regional, and local actions to increase funding for transit service in the region.

Recommended Actions

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Equitable Mobility index



Strategy 23: Invest in Equitable Access to High Quality Education

Access to a quality education is a critical building block to a thriving and successful life. Currently there is established disparity in access to quality K-12 schools and higher education opportunities across the region's communities, both in terms of physical access to educational institutions and the education quality of the institutions themselves. The recommended actions in this strategy focus on the former: land use and transportation investments that improve physical access to education institutions. Identifying solutions to education quality barriers will require coordination and action across jurisdictions and sectors. Although these education quality strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership work program and are not addressed directly in the GTC Strategy, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities. Future work in this area will need to involve stakeholders that include a broad spectrum of educational providers and community representatives.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

- 23.1 As part of the planned convening of higher education leaders to discuss whether higher education should be an identified industry cluster in the next update to the Regional Economic Strategy, address issues related to equitable access to higher education within the region.
- 23.2 Consider geographic targeting of job training programs and other vocational programs to communities with limited access to opportunity areas as part of implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy.

Transit Agencies

- 23.3 Consider the unique mobility needs of both students and staff at educational facilities.

Local Governments

- 23.4 Coordinate growth planning with education providers to promote the location of schools in proximity to transit and additional or expanded facilities in communities where new residential growth, especially households with children, is anticipated.

School Districts

- 23.5 Adopt policies and criteria that encourage new and expanded facilities in locations with a high level of transit service or planned for high-capacity transit in the future.
- 23.6 Incorporate local and regional growth plans and forecasts in facilities planning, including identifying potential school needs in transit communities.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Access to Quality Education index



Strategy 24: Invest in Public Safety in Transit Communities

Many stakeholders have identified public safety as a critical component of successful transit communities. A sense of public safety results from many factors, including real or perceived safety risk, quality and design of active and well-lit public spaces, and age and condition of buildings and housing stock. The recommended actions in this strategy focus on land use and transportation policies and investments that may enhance activity in public spaces and improve public safety. Such strategic community investments may help reduce neighborhood crime and increase community engagement. Although these strategies were not a central component of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership work program, they are critical to the long-term success of these communities and should be a focus area for future work.

Recommended Actions

Puget Sound Regional Council

24.1 Provide technical assistance and data where applicable to support local efforts to enhance neighborhood quality of life in transit communities.

Transit Agencies

24.2 Design transit stations as safe and inviting public spaces.

24.3 Provide for community safety through effective transit system policing.

24.4 Partner with community members and local public safety providers on facility design and transit security.

Local Governments

24.5 Incorporate design principles for improving activity and safety in public spaces, such as the current Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED), into land use codes and design guidelines for new transit community development.

24.6 Prioritize effective public safety patrols and response to transit communities with identified public safety needs to ensure the safety of both community residents and other transit station patrons.

Community and Cultural Organizations

24.7 Work with local governments and transit agencies to highlight community and enhancement opportunities and public safety needs.

Priority Transit Communities for this Strategy

- Transit communities with current high-capacity transit service or expected within 10 years, and other regionally significant transit communities
- Communities that score low on the Opportunity Mapping Neighborhood and Housing Quality index

