



The Growing Transit Communities Strategy

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Growing Transit Communities Partnership?

The Growing Transit Communities Partnership is an advisory body of diverse public, private, and nonprofit agencies and organizations working together to promote successful transit communities. The Partnership is funded by a three-year grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities and is housed at the Puget Sound Regional Council. The Partnership is developing recommendations for best practices and new tools and resources to address three overarching goals that advance adopted regional policy:

- **Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth near high-capacity transit**
- **Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit**
- **Increase access to opportunity for existing and future community members in transit communities**

Why equitable transit communities?

Building communities around high-capacity transit is a key strategy to promote a more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable central Puget Sound region. However, if current trends in residential and commercial development continue, the region will fall short of its goals to grow vibrant mixed-use centers. If growth does not address the needs of households and small businesses for affordable housing and commercial space, they will be displaced and excluded from the benefits of regional investment. If public improvements in transit communities do not make employment, education, healthy neighborhoods, and other opportunities more accessible to all households regardless of race, income, or national origin, then the region will have lost a chance for a more equitable future.

Why a coordinated regional effort?

While the region is already a recognized national leader on planning for sustainable development, the ongoing investment of more than \$15 billion in light rail and other forms of transit requires bold, coordinated action to ensure the greatest value from these investments is realized. Success means creating a region that can compete globally for jobs and investment, and is well positioned to attract scarce state and federal funds for transportation and community development. Success also means providing the tools, resources, and public support necessary to achieve a regional vision where compact growth, improved transit connections, and a range of community investments provide benefits fairly to all.

What is the Growing Transit Communities Strategy? How will it be implemented?

The Growing Transit Communities Strategy is a three-part implementation plan to promote thriving and equitable transit communities in the central Puget Sound region.

THE PLEDGE: *Regional Compact*

The **Regional Compact** affirms support for the Partnership's work and a commitment to work toward regional goals by implementing the Strategy. The Compact calls for a continuing regional effort involving the region's diverse partners. The Compact does not obligate partners to implement all recommendations, but rather to consider and adopt tools that fit best with community needs and available resources.

THE PLAYBOOK: *Recommendations & Typology*

The **Recommended Strategies and Actions** include 24 detailed recommendations that identify actions for public, private, and nonprofit partners. The strategies identify effective transit community development approaches, shaped by input from experts and the Partnership's corridor task forces and advisory committees. The strategies vary for different types of communities.

THE PLANS: *Individual Workplans*

The **Individual Workplans** are local government, agency, or organization specific work plans which define short- and medium-term actions that can implement the Strategy. The nature and format of the Workplans will vary to reflect the diversity of public and private partners, legislative and decision making processes, and actions adopted.

How do the Growing Transit Communities recommendations relate to state or regional policies and requirements?

The recommendations do not create new mandates for partners across the region; rather, they identify tools, resources, and incentives to help partners carry out what is already adopted regional policy in VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040, and in state requirements of the Growth Management Act. The Partnership's recommendations have been developed for regional and local governments, as well as a range of private, non-profit, and community partners. Adoption of the Partnership's recommendations will depend on appropriate legislative or board approval.

Is this just about light rail stations?

By promoting transit ridership, sustainable patterns of development, and equitable social outcomes, the Growing Transit Communities Strategy benefits the entire region. The Partnership has focused on 74 transit communities along the region's three long-range light rail corridors identified in Transportation 2040. This includes portions of 16 cities (Everett, Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace, Shoreline, Seattle, Mercer Island, Beaux Arts Village, Bellevue, Redmond, Tukwila, SeaTac, Kent, Des Moines, Federal Way, Fife, and Tacoma) and three counties (Snohomish, King, and Pierce). Other important transit nodes also exist throughout the region. Future work will expand the approaches developed by the Partnership to additional transit communities not in the three light rail corridors.

What is the Transit Community Typology and how does it guide implementation?

From the outset, the Partnership recognized that one set of strategies cannot address the diversity of communities that currently exist or are planned around the region's high-capacity transit investments. For this reason, the Growing Transit Communities Partnership has developed a *People + Place Implementation Typology* to link key implementation strategies to transit communities based on characteristics of the existing community. The Typology resulted in eight different types, each with priority strategies, that demonstrate the varying needs and opportunities present in different transit communities across the region.

Do the recommendations include updates to VISION 2040, Transportation 2040 or the Regional Economic Strategy?

The focus of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy is to develop tools and resources to help carry out existing regional policy. One first step will be integrating regional data and tools developed under this grant with the minor update to Transportation 2040 currently underway. As implementation of the Strategy proceeds in the coming years, PSRC may consider further refining or adding detail to its policies and plans to advance regional goals for transit communities. Any such amendments or policy changes will be subject to PSRC board approval.

Will the Growing Transit Communities Strategy affect project funding or plan certification through PSRC?

Transportation project funding can be an effective tool to support transit communities in the region. The Partnership has identified key infrastructure needs as well as opportunities to reward implementation of best practices throughout the region. The Strategy suggests adding greater detail or additional points to the current funding criteria used for competitive regionally-managed transportation funds or refinements to the local comprehensive plan certification review criteria. Adoption of changes to project funding or plan certification criteria would be subject to PSRC board approval.

What is the timeline for implementation?

The Partnership's Oversight Committee has authorized release of the draft Growing Transit Communities Strategy for public comment in May 2013, with final adoption scheduled for summer 2013. Growing Transit Communities staff will work with Consortium Members and other regional partners on the Regional Compact and the Local Implementation Agreements through the end of 2013. Looking beyond the end of the grant period in early 2014, implementation will continue through regional and local work plans.



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