Puget Sound Regional Council

TRANSIT ACCESS CHECKLIST & TOOLKIT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transit access refers to the ability of people to easily get to and use public transportation. Making sure that as many people as possible can easily get to and use transit will be fundamental to the success of the policy and planning decisions and major capital and operational investments in transit that the central Puget Sound region has made and will continue to make over the coming years.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) has been engaged in transit access work for the past several years, culminating in the release of a Transit Access Assessment in early 2016. The Transit Access Assessment identified 15 findings about transit access in the region, which were generated from a best practices and literature review, interviews with local elected officials from throughout the region, and the completion of case studies that examined transit access issues at eight major sites of transit service.

The Transit Access Assessment called for PSRC to create products that give all regional stakeholders the ability to assess transit access conditions and help to apply tools and strategies to improve access based on existing and anticipated needs throughout the region. The Transit Access Checklist and Toolkit are these products.

This Executive Summary describes the problems the Transit Access Checklist and Toolkit will help solve, introduces each product, and identifies next steps to use the Checklist and Toolkit and ultimately improve transit access across the central Puget Sound region.

WHAT PROBLEMS DO THE TRANSIT ACCESS CHECKLIST AND TOOLKIT HELP SOLVE?

The Transit Access Checklist and Toolkit aim to address two of the major findings from the Transit Access Assessment, specifically:

- **Context matters.** The quality of transit access depends on the interplay between urban form and the built environment, transit service, and parking characteristics that vary widely from place to place and are variable and dynamic over time. Without a comprehensive understanding of context, access investments can go undelivered or may poorly fit in a given location. There currently is no consistent, comprehensive, and transparent framework for understanding the transit access context at existing or planned major sites of transit service in the region.

- **Many actors, unclear roles.** In any given context, there will be multiple actors involved in the delivery of transit access investments. Local jurisdictions and transit agencies—often more than one— are major players, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), major institutions, residents, employers, and many other stakeholders play a role in providing access to transit in the region. But roles aren't always clearly defined, which means that stakeholder policies, priorities, and even capital projects aren't always aligned.

HOW DO THE CHECKLIST AND TOOLKIT HELP SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS?

The Transit Access Checklist and Toolkit help solve these problems by providing a framework for understanding a given context's transit access needs, issues, and opportunities and by organizing the tools available and the roles that local jurisdictions, transit agencies, and WSDOT play when it comes to delivering transit access improvements. In addition, transit access funding issues are identified. What follows is a brief description of each product:

- **Transit Access Checklist.** The Checklist provides a framework for conducting a 360-degree assessment of existing transit access conditions at any given location. Completing the Checklist involves answering a series of questions to identify relevant urban form, built environment, transit operating, and parking characteristics that cohere to create the existing transit access context. Importantly, the Checklist identifies the data and resources needed to answer these questions, which should be reviewed with all relevant stakeholders in any given location. The Checklist is intended for local jurisdiction and transit agency planners to help assess and understand in a collaborative fashion the access dynamics at play in specific locations.

- **Transit Access Toolkit.** The Toolkit identifies 60 distinct tools for improving transit access and organizes them across 8 strategic areas. The Toolkit will help stakeholders understand how each strategic area increases access to transit and the roles played by local jurisdictions, transit agencies, and WSDOT in implementing access improvements. The Toolkit also documents benefits, costs, common issues and challenges, and regional examples of all 60 access improvements identified.

- **Transit Access Funding Matrix and Key Findings.** Transit access improvements range in cost from small to significant, and are implemented by a variety of actors using a number of funding sources. The Transit Access Funding Matrix and Key Findings depicts uses, sources, and issues experienced by local jurisdictions, local transit agencies, Sound Transit, and WSDOT, and summarizes key findings with respect to funding transit access improvements.

WHAT'S NEXT?

With the passage of ST3 and the adoption of long range plans by transit agencies throughout the region, there is greater certainty regarding what transit will look like in the years to come and where the major sites of transit service are and will be. Given this certainty, making sure that as many people in the region as possible have high quality access to the regional transit network will be increasingly important. The Transit Access Checklist and Toolkit create an opportunity to improve our understanding of specific places when it comes to transit access, to help identify the roles of stakeholders in these places, and to identify the tools that will maximize transit access for everyone in the region.

PSRC will work with regional stakeholders to demonstrate the potential application of the Transit Access Checklist in diagnosing existing conditions, which will in turn suggest potential transit access improvements from the Transit Access Toolkit. PSRC will also work with stakeholders and the Transportation Policy Board to develop a regional transit access and parking strategy as part of the next update to Transportation 2040, anticipated to be adopted in spring 2018. This strategy will build on the foundation of the Transit Access Checklist and Toolkit and identify near- and long-term actions necessary to increase regional access to transit.