



February 2, 2026

Draft Regional Transportation Plan Comments
Josh Brown, Executive Director
Puget Sound Regional Council
1201 Third Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). WSDOT appreciates the work that the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) does to keep the region moving through its regional planning and funding efforts. We look forward to continuing our partnership with PSRC and the counties, cities, and transit agencies as the RTP is approved and implemented in the coming years. The following provides comments on key elements of the draft plan and several specific requests, followed by technical comments for your consideration.

General Comments

Supporting the Regional Growth Strategy and Multimodal Investments

WSDOT is pleased to see that the plan continues to support VISION 2040's *Regional Growth Strategy* that directs 65% of the region's population growth and 70% of its employment growth in community centers served by high-capacity transit. With an emphasis on expanding the transit system, the RTP anticipates a 90% increase in transit service hours, resulting in an increase in daily transit trips from 361,000 to over one million. The RTP also recognizes the importance of an integrated multimodal transportation network and identifies the development of a multimodal system that works for everyone as a foundation of the plan. All of this work will help PSRC implement its Climate Action Plan and help both PSRC and WSDOT advance their shared goal of providing safe, reliable multimodal travel options for all users.

Advancing the Financial Strategy

The RTP's financial strategy has been a major focus over the last two years and PSRC should be recognized for its outstanding work on this topic. PSRC was asked to take a more detailed look at what is needed to adequately fund plan investments in a way that doesn't overly burden the region's residents. PSRC developed four thoughtful investment scenarios as part of this work, representing distinct levels of investments and revenues for the board, committees, and the public to consider. It effectively facilitated conversations with PSRC board members regarding the difficult tradeoffs in each scenario necessary to align investments with revenues. In the end, PSRC was able to develop regional agreement on a new financial strategy with a more accurate picture of the region's investment needs, new anticipated revenue sources, and a framework that will adequately fund the region's investments in the new plan.

February 2, 2026

Mr. Josh Brown

Page 2 of 3

Maintenance and Preservation

We are pleased to see that the draft RTP aligns with WSDOT Highway System Plan's commitment to maintenance and preservation of the system. The RTP recognizes that there is currently a significant backlog in maintenance of the system, that the overall condition of the system has been declining, and current funding is not enough to meet the needs. The new plan commits to "fully funding the maintenance, preservation, and operations of the transportation system at the optimal state of good repair through 2050 (p.14, MP&O)," including Washington State Ferries' vessel fleet and terminals. It identifies maintenance and preservation as a cornerstone of plan investments, with nearly 60% of the plan costs through 2050.

New actions have also been added to the plan that commit PSRC to 1) monitoring overall investments levels for maintenance and preservation, 2) exploring new funding that can be dedicated to maintenance and preservation, 3) continuing to improve how it and partner agencies collect data, and 4) evaluating the condition of the system and estimate maintenance and preservation needs into the future. These are important elements that will allow PSRC and the region to continue to advance resiliency by maintaining and preserving the existing system.

Streamlining and Accessibility

WSDOT commends PSRC for the work it put into further streamlining the draft RTP. The update is more user friendly and easy to navigate and focuses on the actions and strategies needed to realize the future transportation system.

Specific Comments and Suggestions

Current and Future System Reports

- The Current System Report (Section 1F, page 48) notes that the Preliminary Service Development Plan is "outlining plans for future service enhancements to Amtrak Cascades." WSDOT requests that PSRC update this to reflect that it is "identifying potential alternatives for future service enhancements" to more accurately reflect the work being conducted.
- The Future Systems Report (page 18) states that WSDOT is currently in Step 2 of the Corridor ID and Development (CID) Program. Please update to reflect WSDOT is in Step 1 of the CID Program.
- WSDOT suggests PSRC consider including information on Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) and Urban Air Mobility (UAM) in the Future Transportation System Report, page 32. The AAM and UAM technologies use electric vertical takeoff and landing for aircraft, which can significantly change aviation in the region. For more information, see [WSDOT's Advanced Air Mobility Aircraft Plan](#) that was published in 2025.

On the Horizon Chapter

- WSDOT appreciates the new On the Horizon chapter and the opportunity to highlight many of the state's efforts within the central Puget Sound region. In reviewing the full draft RTP, there are several additional WSDOT efforts that would complement this new chapter. WSDOT staff will work with PSRC staff on these prior to final adoption of the plan.

February 2, 2026

Mr. Josh Brown

Page 3 of 3

Regional Capacity Project List

- WSDOT staff identified several projects in the Regional Capacity Project List that need minor updates or corrections. WSDOT Staff will follow up with PSRC staff to include additional information on these updates.

Safer Land Use

- WSDOT appreciates the work PSRC did on its Regional Safety Action Plan, and the corresponding section in the new *Foundation – Promote a Safe and Healthy Transportation System* document that reinforces the plan’s focus on it. Page 17 of this section shows “safer land use” as part of the Safe System Approach. However, the link provided directs users to the USDOT/FHWA Safe System Approach, which does not include safer land use as part of the federal approach. Consider connecting to WSDOT’s Safe System Approach, found in the [Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#) which does include Safer Land Use.

Additional Technical Comments

We have attached a table with additional technical comments and the corresponding sections of the plan or page numbers for PSRC to consider prior to plan adoption.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft RTP and look forward to continuing our conversations about building a safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation system in the central Puget Sound. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like to discuss any of WSDOT’s comments.

Sincerely,



Julie Meredith, PE
Secretary of Transportation

JM:mw

Enclosure: WSDOT Technical Comments

- cc: Mike Gribner, WSDOT
Steve Nevey, WSDOT
John White, WSDOT
JoAnn Schueler, WSDOT
Steve Roark, WSDOT
Robin Mayhew, WSDOT
Brian Nielsen, WSDOT
Kerri Woehler, WSDOT
Travis Phelps, WSDOT
Jeff Storrar, WSDOT
Matthew Kenna, WSDOT
Sheila Rogers, PSRC

Attachment A: WSDOT Technical Comments on PSRC's Draft Regional Transportation Plan

Comment #	Page No.	Chapter/Section	Comment
1	n/a	Freight Transportation/Major Freight Corridors/Waterway Corridors	Consider referencing the M5 Marine Highway as a freight corridor connecting to the Puget Sound maritime network.
2	n/a	Freight Transportation/Major Freight Corridors/Waterway Corridors	Consider including a discussion of the benefits of moving freight over water which include lower environmental emissions, reduced roadway congestion, less wear on roadway assets.
4	n/a	Freight Transportation/Truck Travel in the Region	SR 167 is highlighted as a significant investment in facilitating freight movement between Puyallup and the Port of Tacoma. WSDOT suggests also adding the SR 509 Completion Project to this highlight. Both projects complete critical missing links in Washington state's highway and freight network. These projects build important new connections to the state's ports, improve the movement of freight and reduce congestion on local roads and highways. Both projects have multimodal benefits and together create 13.8 miles of new bike/pedestrian paths and 4.5 miles of new sidewalks. The benefits of both projects could also be highlighted: - Improved travel times: Reduces traffic congestion on local roads and highways by completing connections and providing alternate routes to I-5. - Better freight connections: Completes critical freight links between the Puget Sound marine ports and the industrial areas of South King and North Pierce counties. - Increased airport access: Establishes a new southern connection between I-5 and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport for passengers and cargo.
5	n/a	Freight Transportation/Freight Issues and Needs/Truck Parking	It is important to recognize that truck parking is beyond the responsibility of any one jurisdiction or agency. The point could be enhanced with highlighting that 80% of truck parking inventory is currently provided by the private sector. (source: 2024 Truck Parking Implementation Plan) Also, consider clarifying the role PSRC envisions in supporting near-term actions or coordination, even if implementation details reside elsewhere.
6	n/a	Freight Transportation/Freight Issues and Needs/Maintenance and Preservation	Consider noting that maintenance of pavement in good condition saves 7 to 16 times the cost of rehabilitation or reconstruction when pavements are in worse condition (Source: 2022 Washington State Freight System Plan).
7	44	Current System Report, Sec. 1F	While the passenger rail distinctions noted in the draft plan are an accurate representation of what is in the US Code, commuter-focused rail systems around the country have been transitioning into all-day regional rail systems as an adaptation to post-pandemic travel patterns. Sound Transit is considering a regional service model for Sounder South, as discussed in the 2024 Sounder South Strategic Plan Update. It would be relevant to make this distinction in the RTP. We suggest consulting with Sound Transit to add some language about this.
8	47	Current System Report, Sec. 1F	First paragraph, suggest removing the last sentence. The Preliminary Service Development Plan was not an update of the 2006 Long-Range-Plan, and did not update costs or financial forecasts. While it included new information about current and expected travel behavior, it was not done as an update to the 2006 plan. Recommend instead saying, "The plan will be the starting point when WSDOT develops a Service Development Plan as part of the CID Program."
9	47	Current System Report, Sec. 1F	Second paragraph, suggest revising to say "High-speed rail is intended to complement Amtrak Cascades, providing a faster direct service than is feasible on the current system." It is clearer to state what it is intended to do, rather than what it is not intended to do.
10	18	Future System Report, Sec. 1F	In the first paragraph, we suggest mentioning that Amtrak Cascades will soon benefit from a \$200M investment in new, higher capacity, trainsets and a new \$300M facility in Seattle to maintain them.
11	18	Future System Report, Sec. 1F	Suggest adding language noting that WSDOT will be working to plan Amtrak Cascades and future high-speed rail service as integrated, complementary components of the statewide transportation system.
12	18	Future System Report, Sec. 1F	We suggest adding some discussion to this section about the opportunities for improving the integration of intercity passenger rail and regional/local transit systems. WSDOT is in the early stages of discussing with its partners how the schedules of Cascades and Sounder services can be more integrated. Potential opportunities include moving to "clock face" scheduling to make the schedules easier for travelers to understand, and also structuring the schedules to better facilitate transfers. Transfers between the services would become more important if Sound Transit transitions Sounder South to a regional rail service from the current peak-period focused commuter rail service they currently operate, as discussed in the 2024 Sounder South Strategic Plan Update. WSDOT is also starting to explore opportunities to introduce additional guaranteed bus connections, similar to the bus service. WSDOT offers to supplement train service to Cascades stations in Washington located north of Seattle. Some of these opportunities could make it easier to access Cascades service for people in the PSRC region who are not near an existing rail station. Improving connections between Cascades and regular local transit operations is another opportunity WSDOT is interested in exploring. This could include schedule coordination, integrated trip planning, and fare integration.
13	18	Future System Report, Sec. 1F	This plan should note that as the region develops new transit infrastructure, such as the planned Sound Transit extensions of the Link light rail system, establishing strong connections with passenger rail needs to be a priority.
14	18	Future System Report, Sec. 1F	Last paragraph, please add some language noting that WSDOT will be working to plan Amtrak Cascades and future high-speed rail service as integrated, complementary components of the statewide transportation system.
15	278	Regional Capacity Project List	Please change WSDOT Northwest Region to "WSDOT" as the sponsor.
16	9	Foundation – Maintain and Preserve the Existing System	Although covered in the report, it would be good to identify directly and up front that fully investing and maintaining investment in Preservation and Maintenance results in the long-term, lowest cost investment approach. Consider bringing forward the green call out box on page 6 of the Maintenance, Preservation, and Operations report.
17	16	Financial Report	There is an assumption that Move Ahead Washington legislation generates new revenue that equals the allocation of highway related investments (Transit and Active Transportation are covered through CCA). Suggest stating that assumption. For context, the current law funding reported by the TERFC only projects at most \$5.1B revenues in the MAW account when projected over 20-years and the 25-27 transportation budget reallocates \$1.3B in debt authorization, still leaving around \$3-4B potential new revenue or some other legislative decision needed. This may need to be factored into the "financially constrained" analysis at the beginning of the report.
18	20	Financial Report / WSDOT	Consider representing the 1,100 miles of facilities as 4,186 lane miles, this more accurately reflects the scale of WSDOT's preservation and maintenance requirements in the Puget Sound Region. For context, WSDOT also manages nearly 1,100 centerline miles in Quad County RTPO, but that represents only 2,783 lane miles of facilities. When further considering the volume of traffic and other factors, WSDOT will spend nearly 4 times more preserving PSRC facilities as QuadCo even though there are only 9 miles of difference in centerline measurements.
19	9	Maintenance, Preservation and Operations Report	Language may imply that WSDOT has work programmed all 900 bridges that require improvements for the seismic retrofit program. "WSDOT has identified bridges around the state in need of seismic retrofit and is working to make the required improvements to the more than 900 bridges that are part of the seismic retrofit program." Recommend replacing "working to make" with "prioritizing" or "allocating available resources to".
20	n/a	General	Suggest including a discussion of how the MTP/RTTP is consistent with the Highway System Plan, consistent with RCW 47.80.030(2).
21	36	Future Transportation System Report	I-5 Nisqually Delta Study Section, revise date for EA publication. WSDOT expects to publish EA report for public review in Summer of 2026, and not in early 2026.
22	10	Plan investment	Appreciate seeing increased investment in BRT and local routes, however, do not see public rideshare/vanpool being mentioned. Though not high capacity, rideshare is a capable solution to commuting to growth centers.
23	23	Foundation - Develop a Practical Financial Strategy	Suggest this section include fare projections to demonstrate commitment to keep them affordable and accessible to riders. For example, a statement like "these revenue sources allow us to keep fare affordable by keeping rate increases within inflation rate" or something like that.