



January 31, 2018

Puget Sound Regional Council
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, Washington 98104-1035

**Re: Comments to Draft / The Regional Transportation Plan - 2018
Recommending Enhancements to Transportation Technology ("2018 Update")**

Dear Puget Sound Regional Councilmembers,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan. As the voice of business on the Eastside, the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce represent employers of all sizes and sectors, each of which rely upon our regional transportation system to move people and goods daily. We find that our entire network, from highways of statewide significance to local arterials, is increasingly congested and the distinction between peak and off-peak periods is rapidly diminishing.

Not surprisingly, in our annual survey of CEO's last November, business leaders once again identified the daily congestion penalty, as the single greatest barrier they face in attracting and retaining talent in a tight labor market. Consequently, finding and implementing innovative transportation solutions, especially those which utilize emerging technologies, is our top public policy priority. However, the marketplace often leads the way and the public sector can be slow to respond, especially when it comes to reducing regulatory barriers.

To create a legal and policy framework supportive of innovation in the transportation sector, we offer the following observations and recommendations.

- 1) We strongly support the narrative contained in "Emerging Transportation Technology," on pages 16 - 18 of the 2018 Update. Specifically, we endorse the findings related to autonomous and connected vehicles, as well as shared mobility. *Recommendation: Now is the time to move beyond broad philosophical language and imbed these components directly into criterial for project selection, funding and implementation.*
- 2) We concur with the findings under Transportation Demand Management, pages 31 – 34, particularly "Transportation Technology and Operations," regarding the use of technology investments, as innovative approaches to operational challenges such as managing traffic flow. *Recommendation: Such tools should be utilized to maximize throughput for all modes, increase person trips and reduce travel time, rather than to reduce VMT or increase the level of service for one mode, at the expense of another.*
- 3) Similarly, we endorse "Implementation Actions" relating to Technology, as summarized on page 87 and more fully described in Appendix N, as follows:

- a. Establish a technology advisory committee. *Recommendation: Convene as soon as possible and include robust private sector participation;*
- b. Update the region's ITS Implementation Plan (RITSIP) to better reflect... projected changes due to emerging technologies. *Recommendation: Recruit subject matter experts from the technology industry to contribute to this effort;*
- c. Continue to enhance regional models to analyze the effect of autonomous and electric vehicles, shared mobility, and new technology on the transportation system and travel behavior. *Recommendation: Include these emerging modes in BKR traffic model screens for new projects.*
- d. Facilitate regional discussions to identify opportunities to support private sector projects and partnerships and the deployment of pilot programs. *Recommendation: We need innovative project development, funding and delivery models, which include private sector partners at every stage.*

While our comments have focused sections of the 2018 update relating to transportation technology, we know there are larger issues which will necessarily drive future updates to the Region's Transportation Plan. Of particular importance, we observe that while the Connecting Washington Package will invest billions in our region, there is no sustainable financial plan in place, to complete implementation of the adopted I-405 Master Plan.

There is a strong need for the identification of new resources at all levels, to construct additional lanes from Bothell to Lynwood. The 2018 Update does a commendable job of assessing the limits of current project funding in "Emerging and Ongoing Issues in Transportation Finance," and correctly points out that our reliance on the motor vehicle fuel tax, will no longer be adequate. In addition to consideration of new, technology-based revenue tools, we strongly urge PSRC to review local option financing tolls already available under state law, including but not limited to the transportation benefit districts (TBD) and the regional transportation investment district (RTID). Local and state elected officials alike, will look to PSRC for guidance as to which local option taxes would make the most sense for the Central Puget Sound Area.

Thanks for considering our feedback.

Sincerely,



Betty Capestany
President & CEO