



**Snohomish County**

**Executive**

**Dave Somers**  
*County Executive*

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Josh Brown, Executive Director  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
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**Re: Comments on 2018 Draft Regional Transportation Plan**

Dear Mr. Brown:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. Transportation in Snohomish County and the region is at a turning point. We have seen tremendous challenges with growth that has strained our transportation network. With Sound Transit's *Link* light rail and Community Transit's *Swift* bus rapid transit (BRT) we have an opportunity to address some of the county and region's most pressing problems. Sound Transit, WSDOT, local transit, local roads, sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure are all necessary and mutually dependent. The Regional Transportation Plan must be effective in providing for the inter-jurisdictional coordination needed to provide the needed infrastructure.

**Connecting and Integrating With Light Rail**

Within the time frame of this plan, Snohomish County will see the completion of the ST2/ST3 *Link* light rail, the largest regional infrastructure project since the building of I-5. The success of will depend on effective access to the expanded system. Snohomish County completed a study to identify corridor improvements providing east/west mobility and access to the future light rail stations. Some of these study recommendations are the in the plan and we support the inclusion of others.

- We appreciate the inclusion of projects to construct transit priority lanes on 128<sup>th</sup> St SW west of I-5 (project #5650) and to make interchange improvements at 1-5/SR 96 (project #1706). These projects are necessary to provide access to the planned *Link* station at Mariner and improve the *Swift* Blue Line service to the station. Because of its importance we would like to see the interchange project added to the "constrained" list.
- We also appreciate the inclusion of transit priority lanes on 164<sup>th</sup> SW (project #5649) to access the planned *Link* station at Ash Way and improve CT's planned *Swift* Orange Line service to the station.
- Missing from the list is the completion of transit priority lanes on 128<sup>th</sup> St SW/SR 96 east of I-5 to Mill Creek. This project is an extension of the 128<sup>th</sup> and SR 96 projects above and is also necessary to provide access to the planned *Link* station at Mariner and improve the *Swift* Blue Line service to the station.

Listed in Appendix G are many projects sponsored by various agencies that are or will be necessary to access light rail, but this reads like a list of uncoordinated needs. We suggest that PSRC take some additional steps to discuss how these transit, sidewalk, bikeway, and roadway projects integrate to provide a more effective whole. It is through this level of planning that project gaps and phasing mismatches can be shown. The regional plan could go even further by designating the agencies responsible for assuring that an integrated, multijurisdictional plan of access improvements is completed – together with specific measurable goals on how we get there.

### **Integrating State Highways**

Both the draft regional plan and *The State Facilities Action Plan*, contained in Appendix J, discuss the need for “filling the missing links in the highway system”. The state system is the backbone of the regional transportation system and completing and improving it is critical. Snohomish County suggests that PSRC and the WSDOT take the “action plan” a step further to clearly show how the state highway system integrates with local systems and HCT transit services to provide for a complete network connecting cities, HCT stations, and regional centers to implement the regional vision and to identify obvious gaps.

Over the years, WSDOT, has made significant progress in improving many highway corridors upon which our residents’ daily lives are so dependent. But there is still far to go for corridors such as US 2, SR 9, SR 522 and SR 531. The rapid rate of growth in Snohomish County population should indicate that the completion of these corridors be given priority.

SR 524 is another state highway that should be prioritized earlier on the constrained plan. This heavily traveled substandard highway connects the fast growing communities in southwest Snohomish County to I-5 and the future Lynnwood City Center light rail station. Community Transit has determined that the current roadway is not adequate to provide safe transit service. The three projects listed in the plan are shown to be completed in 2030 or 2040. This is between six and 16 years after the opening of the Lynnwood City Center *Link* station that it will provide access to. PSRC and WSDOT should reconsider the timing of these projects so that they are more in line with the opening of the Lynnwood City Center Station in 2024.

### **Regional Trails**

For many years Snohomish County has been committed to building an extensive regional trail system. Appendix G lists some of these important trail projects such as the Whitehorse Trail (project #2853) and two Centennial Trail projects (project #2822 and #2842). Snohomish County would like to revise and add to this list of regional trail projects. Snohomish County Parks will assist with the details.

- The plan should include a new trail project for completing the Centennial Trail South from the City of Snohomish to the Snohomish County line along the old BNSF Eastside Rail corridor. Snohomish County Parks can assist with details of the project.
- The name of the Centennial Trail Monroe – Duvall (project #2822) should be changed to the Snoqualmie Valley Trail.

- The name of the Centennial Trail Snohomish C/L – Monroe C/L (project #2842) should be changed to the Snohomish Valley Trail. The new extents should be Everett city line to the Snohomish city line. Snohomish County Parks can assist with further details of the project.

### Financing the Plan

As to be expected, paying for the plan will be a major challenge. Snohomish County suggests that the plan discuss the following finance issues.

- Local transportation mitigation fees vary widely between cities, counties, and the state. Few fee systems have provisions for high capacity transit. The regional plan could examine opportunities for revising the fees to support HCT.
- The Plan should also address Public/Private Partnerships (P3). This finance strategy may present some opportunities for financing many of the larger infrastructure projects in the plan. Addressing these opportunities may also position the region to take advantage of federal opportunities currently being discussed at the federal level.

### Other Comments

- The “Key Investments” map on Page 8 of the Executive Summary and Page 49 of the plan does not adequately depict the number of “key” projects than in Snohomish County. PSRC should consider revising this map
- The Vision 2040 Map on Page 2 of the Plan, while technically accurate, does not indicate the possibility of a MIC in Arlington or additional regional growth centers near future light rail stations, which are under active consideration by the PSRC. These centers will be part of upcoming Vision 2050 discussions and have a direct relationship to several projects in Appendix G.
- The Eastside Rail corridor from Woodinville to Snohomish is no longer being served by BNSF as is shown on Page 14 of Appendix J. Snohomish County has purchased this right of way and the rail service is provided by a short line service provider similar to the Ballard Terminal Railroad.

Snohomish County looks forward to participating further as this plan is finalized. Many of the same issues addressed in this plan will continue to be important as we look to 2050. Please consider these comments as you begin to develop future plans. Thank you for the consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Dave Somers  
County Executive

Cc:  
Steven Thomsen, Director, Snohomish County Public Works  
Tom Teigen, Director, Snohomish County Parks