



January 31, 2018

Josh Brown, Executive Director
Puget Sound Regional Council
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Draft Regional Transportation Plan

Dear Josh:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). I'd like to congratulate you on developing a well-crafted plan that guides future transportation investments in support of the region's growth strategy, Vision 2040. This important update to Transportation 2040 keeps the region's transportation strategy current by reflecting big strides the region has made addressing challenges in recent years while preparing for those yet to come. On behalf of Sound Transit, I'd like to make a few observations about the main strategies and priorities of the Draft RTP for your consideration as you work toward a final plan this spring.

Local roadway and transit improvements: Along with the major investments the State of Washington is making in the Puget Sound highway system, Sound Transit's continued expansion of the regional high capacity transit system is a linchpin to realizing the region's growth vision. But these are by no means the region's only transportation priorities. I am heartened to see the RTP's emphasis on bolstering our local transit and road systems that are so crucial to providing transportation capacity and choice for all travelers.

HOV lane performance: Improving and maintaining speed and reliability in the region's high-occupancy vehicle lanes is critical to keeping bus services fast and predictable for riders. Indeed, Sound Transit's forthcoming investment in bus rapid transit in the I-405 corridor is predicated on having HOV lanes that continue to provide a travel time advantage for transit. Bus rapid transit will only be successful if we can keep the HOV lanes flowing freely.

Transit system integration: Continued work by all of the region's transit agencies to coordinate and integrate each other's services and facilities is crucial to providing seamless travel options for our residents, workers and visitors. Sound Transit is committed to working with our transit partners and the PSRC to do even better as the transit system and ridership continues to grow.

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Josh Brown, Executive Director

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Building transit communities: With major pieces of the high capacity transit system now in place and a range of expansions underway, now is the time to direct more energy toward realizing the land use goals those investments are intended to support. The fast and reliable transportation available at high capacity transit stations provides unique opportunities to efficiently serve more people with less land. Sound Transit is committed to helping our station host communities leverage those opportunities wherever possible. Building the regional high capacity system sometimes results in land that can be repurposed after construction is complete, or opportunities for integrated development with our stations. Through our transit-oriented development program, we have put new emphasis on using those assets for good land use and housing affordability outcomes and will continue to work with our host communities to develop investments that fit with local and regional goals.

Improving I-5 operation: We know the demands on I-5 far outstrip its ability to serve all users efficiently and reliably. Sound Transit's current and planned investments in express bus and light rail service along I-5 provide important transportation capacity and travel choices that augment and support investments in the interstate. We fully support efforts to optimize the ability of this key transportation lifeline to move people and goods.

Technological change and innovation: The RTP does a nice job of balancing technological investment priorities. We agree that additional investment in technologies we already know are helpful to optimizing transit effectiveness -- like high occupancy vehicle and business access & transit lanes, transit signal priority, and hard-shoulder running -- should be pursued. We also agree that investing in new and emerging travel options, such as automated and connected vehicles, accommodations for share mobility services, and electrifying vehicle fleets needs to be prioritized so we can be ready for the future. Sound Transit is keenly interested in how these investments evolve and looks forward to working with PSRC and others to make them real.

Please let us know if you have questions about our comments, or if you would like to discuss further how PSRC and Sound Transit can work together to achieve the RTP's goals.

Sincerely,



Peter M. Rogoff
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Sound Transit Board
Don Billen, Acting Executive Director, PEPD
Matt Shelden, Director, Office of Planning & Innovation
Brooke Belman, Director, Office of Land Use Planning & Development
Trinity Parker, Manager, Regional Government & Community