



CHAPTER 1

background

Introduction

Destination 2030 is the Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the central Puget Sound region and the transportation element of VISION 2020, the region's growth management, economic and transportation strategy.

The Regional Council has developed this transportation plan to examine the region's transportation needs for the next 30 years and lay out a course to improve the transportation system to meet anticipated growth with systems and policies to support it. This plan, *Destination 2030*, provides a comprehensive statement of the region's future transportation needs as identified by cities, counties, the state and other agencies. It contains policies aimed at improving mobility and access, and defines both short- and long-term transportation strategies and investments to improve the region's transportation system.

The plan reflects a heightened awareness of how land in the region is developed and used and how land use is linked with transportation. It provides an understanding of the characteristics that create positive conditions for transit use, bicycle travel, pedestrian access, as well as the factors that create bottlenecks and chokepoints on our roads and bridges. It is a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for the region's transit, roadway, port, ferry, railroad, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs. The plan identifies future transportation improvements and discusses how to finance them.

This document explains current challenges and examines how proposed future investments influence the performance of the region's transportation systems. It discusses how to preserve and maintain existing systems and how to manage them to make them more efficient. The basic building blocks of *Destination 2030* are city, county, port and transit agency growth management and transportation plans, multi-county and countywide planning policies, and the Washington State Department of Transportation's Multimodal and Transportation System Plans. *Destination 2030* includes both short-term and long-term activities. It encourages partnerships among governments and between public and private interests, as well as goal setting and benchmark development for growth management and transportation performance.



Destination 2030 documents the impressive magnitude of proposed future investments from all existing local and state plans that seek to address the mobility needs for a 50 percent increase in population, and 60 percent increase in travel, over the next 30 years. The plan should be viewed as a starting-point for dialogue, among all communities and sub-areas of the region, that will assess the strengths and weaknesses of this projected future. Such a dialogue will help to focus actions in ongoing updates of local, regional, and state plans resulting in an improved future for the region's diverse communities. The planning and monitoring efforts of the Regional Council will support and assist jurisdictions and subarea planning groups to work together to further identify and clarify transportation solutions for deficiencies that are not yet addressed in *Destination 2030*.

Major Objectives of Destination 2030

The population of the central Puget Sound region is forecast to grow by over 1.5 million by the year 2030. During the same period, the regional economy will grow by nearly 735,000 new jobs. *Destination 2030* is intended to identify and address the region's long-range transportation needs arising from this growth, using the most pertinent and available information to respond to federal and state metropolitan planning requirements. To do this effectively *Destination 2030* pursues the following objectives:

- Support maintenance and preservation of existing transportation infrastructure and services as a high priority.
- Provide stronger links between the transportation system and land use development to encourage growth within defined urban growth areas with balanced investments in multimodal transportation improvements.
- Identify and prioritize projects, programs and policies to improve all modes of transportation and keep up with growth.
- Improve the region's financial capacity to fund needed investments.
- Tailor recommendations at the sub-regional and corridor levels, in recognition of the region's social, physical and cultural diversity.

BUILDING AND IMPROVING UPON THE 1995 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Destination 2030 contains improved guidance and tools to help implement the region's growth and transportation strategy, better relating the effects of land use to the performance of transportation facilities at regional and sub-regional scales. *Destination 2030* contains strategies for the following aspects of transportation planning:

- Expanded capacity for all transportation modes
- Growth and land use opportunities
- System management opportunities
- Programs to manage future growth of single-occupant vehicle travel
- Financial planning and more rational transportation pricing

The Regional Council's Transportation and Growth Management Policy Boards, comprised of elected and public officials, as well as regional business, labor, civic and environmental groups, agreed that the region's 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (1995 MTP) and its policies were still sound and should be maintained and strengthened rather than replaced in this plan update. The 1995 MTP is a well-balanced plan, but its lack of detailed guidance has made some of its policies difficult to implement. *Destination 2030* provides added detail and clarification. Among other improvements, the updated plan more clearly articulates a broad range



WHAT IS THE PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL?

The Puget Sound Regional Council is an association of cities, towns, counties, ports and state agencies that serves as a forum for developing policies and making decisions about regional growth management, economic and transportation issues in the four-county central Puget Sound region.

The Council is designated under federal law as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (required for receiving federal transportation funds), and under state law as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, for King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties. The Council's members include the four counties and 68 of the region's 82 cities and towns. Other statutory members include the three port authorities of Everett, Seattle and Tacoma, the Washington State Department of Transportation, and the Washington Transportation Commission. In addition, a memorandum of understanding with the region's six transit agencies outlines their participation in the Regional Council.

Associate members include the Puyallup Tribe of Indians and the Tulalip Tribes, the Port of Bremerton, Island County, Thurston Regional Planning Council, and the Evans School of Public Affairs — University of Washington.

Puget Sound Regional Council is a comprehensive planning agency that does not duplicate the activities of local and state operating agencies, but supports their needs with complementary planning and advocacy, and serves as a center for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information vital to citizens and governments in the region.



Mt. Rainier National Park

of roadway investments, enhances the description of the regional non-motorized network, identifies high capacity transit station locations, better describes the relationship of land use and transportation, discusses transportation pricing more thoroughly, and shows the benefits of transportation investments at the sub-regional level.

LINKING GROWTH AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

SUPPORTING THE REGION'S GROWTH STRATEGY

Transportation improvements and programs must be focused on establishing a more balanced transportation system, shifting emphasis from movement of vehicles to movement of people and goods. A balanced system provides travel options that include choices for private vehicles, public transit, ridesharing, walking, biking and various freight modes.

MAJOR PUBLIC POLICY COMMITMENT

VISION 2020 commits the region both to managing growth and efficiently providing public services and facilities. Regional transportation investments should emphasize transit, ride-sharing, demand management, completion of the regional roadway network, and the maintenance of current facilities.

VISION 2020, adopted in 1990 and updated in 1995, serves as the region's integrated long-range growth management strategy. It promotes the development of a coordinated transportation system that is integrated with and supported by the growth management strategy. It contains policies and strategies that address the following key components of regional growth and development: 1) urban growth areas, 2) contiguous and orderly development, 3) regional capital facilities, 4) housing, 5) rural areas, 6) open space, resource protection and critical areas, 7) economics, and 8) transportation. The multi-county planning policies for each of these eight components are intended to guide countywide and local planning efforts as required under the Growth Management Act.

The major focus of the region's growth strategy is to locate development in defined urban growth areas, creating compact communities that have a mix of employment, housing and activities. One benefit of these compact communities is more efficient delivery of public services, enabling new development to use existing or expanded infrastructure rather than requiring new facilities. This strategy is also designed to foster a greater mix of land uses and a more complete and efficient network of public streets, sidewalks and trails. Such land use supports an urban environment that facilitates walking, biking and transit use, thereby reducing dependence on auto travel. Another key component of this strategy is development of a regional high capacity transit system to link designated urban centers.

Other objectives served by this growth strategy are preservation of rural areas and conservation of forests and other natural resources. In rural areas, open space is maintained through low-density residential development and locating employment, housing and services in rural towns.

VISION 2020's multi-county planning policies, as required by the state's Growth Management Act, provide a framework for the transportation planning and investment decisions that shape *Destination 2030*. The plan is guided by growth management and economic policies as well as transportation policies. The multi-county framework and transportation policies that guided development of *Destination 2030* can be found in Appendix 1.

Legal Mandates

VISION 2020 and *Destination 2030* respond to Washington's Growth Management Act and conform to federal transportation planning requirements. The Growth Management Act requires long-range comprehensive plans that are prepared by cities and counties to be balanced with the transportation infrastructure that can support such development. They also must be compatible with the VISION 2020 growth and transportation strategies. As the state-required Regional Transportation Plan, *Destination 2030* meets substantive and procedural requirements of Section 47.80.030 of the Revised Code of Washington.



FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

THAT GUIDE DEVELOPMENT OF METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANS

- Plans must be developed through an open and inclusive process that ensures public input and seeks out and considers the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems.
- Plans must be for a period not less than 20 years into the future.
- Plans must reflect the most recent assumptions for population, travel, land use, congestion, employment and economic activity.
- Plans must be financially constrained, and revenue assumptions must be reasonable in that funds can be expected to be available during the time frame of the plan.
- Plans must conform to the Clean Air Act and its amendments, and to applicable State Implementation Plans for regional air quality .

THE SEVEN PLANNING FACTORS REQUIRED BY TEA-21

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and for freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

STATE FACTORS FOR REGIONAL GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES

Guidelines and Principles must address the following areas:

- Freight transportation and port access.
- Development patterns that promote pedestrian and non-motorized transportation.
- Circulation systems, access to regional systems, and effective and efficient highway systems.
- Transportation demand management.
- Present and future railroad right-of-way corridors.
- Intermodal connections.
- Concentrations of economic activity.
- Residential density.
- Development corridors and urban design that support high capacity transit.
- Ability of transportation facilities and programs to retain existing and attract new jobs and private investment to accommodate growth in demand.
- Joint and mixed use development.

Destination 2030 also addresses federal mandates that were first contained in the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (often referred to as ISTEA), and re-authorized in 1998 as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Like ISTEA, TEA-21 requires that urban regions link comprehensive planning programs with funding decisions for transportation projects. It also provides a context for linking transportation planning and programs with growth and development considerations.

The region's transportation plan is required to be formally reviewed and updated or revised every two years under state law and every three years under federal law. *Destination 2030* updates and gives detail to the region's 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

In addition, state legislation requires Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to work with local jurisdictions to establish regional guidelines and principles. These products assist local jurisdictions in developing their local transportation plans. The guidelines and principles also enable the Regional Transportation Planning Organization to determine whether the transportation elements in local plans are consistent with the regional transportation plan (RCW 47.80).

The multi-county framework policies, the transportation policies, and additional policies from VISION 2020 comprise the regional guidelines and principles for the central Puget Sound region.

It would be in the region's best interest to prepare a regional transportation plan even if there were no legal mandates to do so. Many of our most acute transportation problems and their potential solutions are regional in nature. Before we can begin to tackle these problems, we must conduct a comprehensive and collaborative examination of region-wide needs and costs. *Destination 2030* does that.

Developing the Plan

Destination 2030 was developed by the elected leaders of the Puget Sound Regional Council with the advice and involvement of business, environmental, and community interests. The public process relating to the plan development began with the issuance of a *Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement* in the fall of 1999, in accordance with provisions outlined in the State Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations (RCW 43.21.C; WAC 197-11). In response to public input and comment, a formal report was issued that outlined the scope of environmental review that would be undertaken to evaluate the region's new plan. A summary report describing the scope of environmental review was released in December 1999.

Beginning May 25, 1999, and continuing throughout 2000, the Regional Council engaged in early and continuous outreach efforts to inform the general public and decision-makers about the update scope and process, and to elicit comment and advice that would guide development of the plan. In the spring and summer of 2000, the Regional Council conducted five focus group meetings with planning and public works staff representing 25 jurisdictions. To encourage citizen comment and raise awareness about the plan update, the Regional Council held five public meetings throughout the region on alternatives for the plan, and made more than 240 presentations to civic, business and community groups. The Regional Council's website featured detailed information about the plan and its development process. The Council also employed direct mail, telephone calls, and display advertisements in daily regional newspapers to inform the public of opportunities to participate in the plan development process. In addition, videotapes of Regional Council board meetings were distributed for broadcast to community cable television stations throughout the region. In February 2001, the Regional Council partnered with KING TV to deliver a series of public service announcements to raise public awareness of the plan.



COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional Council planning processes involve ongoing consultation with numerous committees and task forces comprised of transportation, environmental, and planning experts and policy makers. These groups, as well as other public agencies, provide advice and counsel to the Regional Council's Growth Management and Transportation Policy Boards on matters of policy, projects and programs. The Policy Boards evaluate these recommendations and, in turn, provide guidance to the Regional Council's Executive Board which recommends final action to the General Assembly. In accordance with this policy development and review structure, numerous committees were involved in making recommendations during the *Destination 2030* planning process. These groups included:

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Group
- Eastside Transportation Partnership
- Integrated Investment and Finance Strategy Ad Hoc Subcommittee
- Intelligent Transportation Systems Advisory Panel
- Kitsap Regional Planning Council
- Pierce County Regional Council
- Regional Airport System Advisory Committee
- Regional Freight Mobility Round Table
- Regional High Occupancy Vehicle Policy Advisory Committee
- Regional Project Evaluation Committee
- Regional Staff Committee
- Regional Transportation Demand Management Action Committee
- Sea-Shore Transportation Forum
- Snohomish County Tomorrow
- South County Area Transportation Board
- Transit Operators Committee
- Transit Operators Staff Group
- Transportation Pricing Task Force



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with the adopted scope of environmental review, the Regional Council prepared *The Metropolitan Transportation Plan Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (DEIS), which was released on August 31, 2000 for public review and comment. The DEIS analyzed three planning alternatives that were intended to stimulate discussion, debate, and comment to help craft a preferred plan alternative. The alternatives ranged from completing a minimal number of projects to doing significantly more: more roads, more transit, better traffic management, better linkages between land use and transportation, and improved funding sources for transportation projects. The DEIS contained information that showed how the three future alternatives performed in terms of congestion relief, air quality and other measures. The Regional Council received a large volume of comments on the alternatives, covering a range of issues

and representing a cross section of the regional community. In total, 301 letters containing 1,378 individual comments were received, including 271 letters and e-mails from individuals. The comments can be grouped into four broad categories:

- Comments that expressed a desire to see a broader and more aggressive mix of transportation improvements – roads, transit, non-motorized, and demand management – than were represented by alternatives analyzed in the DEIS.
- Comments that asked about, supported, or opposed individual transportation projects or activities. This category contained the majority of comments, including comments regarding congestion relief and cost-effectiveness of investments.
- Comments that expressed concern about a wide range of issues arising from transportation demand modeling and data that were used for the document. Comments ranged from issues related to the Endangered Species Act and air quality, to requests for clarification of graphics used in the document.
- Comments that expressed a desire for a strong performance measure monitoring program, as well as increased accountability.

Public comments, along with responses, are reproduced in the *Destination 2030 Final Environmental Impact Statement*, released on March 14, 2000. The Regional Council's Growth Management Policy, Transportation Policy and Executive Boards considered these public comments, as well as the subcommittee input and guidance, in providing direction for the development of *Destination 2030*.

SUMMARY OF LEAST COST ANALYSIS

In the State of Washington, beginning in 2000, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations are required (RCW 47.80.030) to apply least-cost planning analysis to alternative transportation investment strategies. Within Washington Administrative Code (WAC 468-86-030 and WAC 468-86-080) least-cost planning is defined as "a process of comparing direct and indirect costs of demand and supply options to meet transportation goals and/or policies where the intent of the process is to identify the most cost-effective mix of options." Least-cost planning attempts to consider all of the resource costs associated with alternative investments, and to provide information relevant to decisions about investment selection and prioritization. Least-cost planning combines elements of strategic, systems level planning with the accounting framework of benefit-cost analysis.

The Regional Council applied the methods of least-cost planning analysis to the systems level transportation alternatives contained in the *Metropolitan Transportation Plan Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, published in August 2000. Other analysis might address a broader range of policy and investment questions. This type of analysis is not an exact science, and is subject to the influence of analytical uncertainty. It is not meant to be a substitute for common sense, or political judgement. It is meant to supplement the available information that can aid decision-makers as they face complex choices about alternative investments in future transportation systems. Least-cost analysis provides some insight into the cost effectiveness, and the cost components of different plan alternatives. The following major planning lessons can be drawn from the least-cost analytical exercise:

- Least-cost analysis tells us something about the cost effectiveness of alternative ways of serving a static number of trips but does not fully compare the marginal cost and marginal benefit of the different transportation system alternatives.
- Least-cost analysis of system level transportation alternatives can provide significant information relevant to the decision process.

- Least-cost principles can guide the development of the system elements of a preferred alternative.
- Systems level least-cost analysis of transportation planning alternatives is not a substitute for corridor, project, or program level benefit-cost analysis.

Least-cost analysis is concerned with changes in transportation systems, over the long run. Over time, all transportation costs are variable and are appropriately considered to be influenced by the types of transportation system decisions made. Significant findings from the least-cost analysis of system alternatives include the following:

- When faced with a large increase in the demand for trip-making, regional transportation systems begin to perform poorly if only small actions are taken to directly address additional travel demand.
- Addressing environmental and congestion problems through capital intensive supply side solutions is expensive.
- Programs that manage transportation systems for more efficiency and that offer opportunities to meet travel demand through shorter, higher occupancy, off-peak vehicle trips (or using no motorized vehicle at all) may significantly reduce costs beyond the projects and programs analyzed in the Draft EIS.
- In addition to capital infrastructure costs and congestion costs, one of the most critical variables relating to total transportation system costs (public and private) is the total vehicle miles traveled for all personal travel trips.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

A decade after Washington State adopted landmark growth management legislation, the central Puget Sound region still struggles with many of the more challenging consequences of vigorous growth and development. There is great uncertainty about how attempts to preserve treasured Puget Sound salmon species, and their habitat, will influence the future shape and character of the region. There is an increasing scarcity of resources that have historically been plentiful in the Pacific Northwest, such as energy, water, farmland and forest resources. Unless properly managed, urban development could eventually compromise the region's most valued asset, the dramatic natural environment that characterizes the Pacific Northwest. Transportation investments contained in *Destination 2030* are designed to directly support the region's long-range growth strategy, which in turn aims to focus growth in a manner that preserves and protects regional environmental quality.

The development of *Destination 2030* involved a broad analysis of potential environmental impacts, as well the identification of strategies to minimize and mitigate these impacts as appropriate. *The Destination 2030* Final Environmental Impact Statement was published under separate cover on May 10, 2001.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Since the 1995 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was adopted, the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration have renewed their commitments to assure that "environmental justice" is carried out in the programs they fund. (See Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and *Executive Order 12898*.) Environmental justice refers to the identification and assessment of disproportionately high and adverse effects of programs, policies or activities on minority and low-income population groups. Within the context of regional transportation planning, environmental justice considers the relative distribution of costs and benefits upon various segments of society from transportation investment strategies and policies.





The process to develop *Destination 2030* has included environmental justice considerations from the outset. The Regional Council set out to ensure that the burdens and benefits of implementing *Destination 2030* are not inequitably distributed across groups based on race, income, age, or disability. Environmental justice issues are integral to the Regional Council's public outreach efforts, and the analysis of infrastructure investments, accessibility, modal choice, traffic safety, growth management and community, congestion, noise, and air quality ensured that *Destination 2030* is consistent with the goals of *Executive Order 12898*. A full discussion of the key conclusions related to environmental justice that emerged in the development of *Destination 2030* is provided in Appendix 2.

AIR QUALITY

Parts of the central Puget Sound region are currently defined by the Environmental Protection Agency as maintenance areas for particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10), carbon monoxide (CO) and ground-level ozone (O3). Under federal and state air quality statutes and regulations, there are special requirements in maintenance areas to ensure that proposed transportation activities — plans, programs and projects — do not cause new, or contribute to existing air quality problems. Compliance with these statutes and regulations, referred to as conformity, requires analyses that demonstrate compliance with existing air quality control plans and programs.

Specifically, regional transportation plans, improvement programs and projects may not cause or contribute to new violations, exacerbate existing violations, or interfere with the timely attainment of air quality standards or the required interim emissions reductions towards attainment. Provisions of the conformity regulations establish the process by which the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and metropolitan planning organizations determine the conformity of highway and transit projects.

A positive finding of conformity is required by the Clean Air Act and its amendments, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Clean Air Washington Act. Positive conformity findings allow the region to proceed with implementation of transportation projects in a timely manner. In the absence of a positive conformity finding, only those projects which are exempt (such as safety or transit projects) will be allowed to proceed using federal transportation funds.

The modeled performance of *Destination 2030* programs and projects is well within healthy air quality limits, based on new guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency updating assumptions used to forecast air quality. The new guidance reflects the fact that cleaner fuels and cleaner engines are producing fewer emissions than what has been reflected in previous EPA formulas.

Air quality remains an important concern for the region. Federal air quality standards are one safeguard against the adverse health effects of pollution. *Destination 2030* reaffirms the commitment to maintain federal standards, and to continue to examine air quality as an important issue in the central Puget Sound region.

Formal conformity analysis and finding for the region's long-range transportation plan, *Destination 2030*, is included in Appendix 3.

On May 24, 2001 the U.S. Department of Transportation issued a determination that *Destination 2030* conforms with the air quality goals of the Washington State Implementation Plan (SIP).

