Item No. 3(c)(1)(i)
November 25, 2013

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_X_ Discussion

_X_ Information

SUBJECT: **PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL'S (PSRC) GROWING TRANSIT COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

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POLICY ISSUE: The Growing Transit Communities program is a three-year effort by PSRC that has resulted in a regional framework to support transit-oriented communities. This effort is consistent with the City of Bellevue's plans for development near transit stations, including Downtown and BelRed, and allows for stations where no land use changes are expected by local jurisdictions, such as South Bellevue. The City has the opportunity to support this regional agreement by adopting a resolution at a future meeting.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL: The purpose of this memo is to report on the completion and outcome of the Growing Transit Communities partnership, including elements of the project specific to the BelRed area, and to introduce the *Growing Transit Communities Compact.* No formal action is needed tonight. Staff will return in early 2014 seeking direction on whether or not Council wishes to take action in the form of a resolution in support of the *Growing Transit Communities Compact* and a statement of goals that provides a regional framework to support transit-oriented communities.

BACKGROUND

PSRC's grant-funded Growing Transit Communities program is drawing to a conclusion. Over the past three years, the program has developed a regional framework for supporting housing and economic development near transit stations and explored more detailed planning for the north, south and east transit corridors. Bellevue has been a long-time leader in planning for transit-oriented growth at appropriate locations within the City. The past planning efforts in Downtown Bellevue and BelRed were fundamental in supporting the development of regional strategies. Additionally, the work of the Growing Transit Communities program has helped further City objectives for the BelRed corridor through coordination with transit agencies, businesses, developers, and adjacent cities.

Over the course of the program, Councilmember Davidson served on the Oversight Committee, which has guided the project. Staff from the Department of Planning & Community Development have supported Councilmember Davidson and actively worked with PSRC staff on technical and collaboration efforts throughout the process. The PSRC's Transportation Policy Board and Growth Management Policy Board were periodically briefed on the Growing Transit Communities program. Bellevue has worked with PSRC from day one of the program to ensure that the work of the partnership would benefit the transit-oriented planning and implementation already occurring on the Eastside without negatively impacting established residential areas, like Surrey Downs and Enatai.

The Growing Transit Communities work has provided public engagement opportunities at a number of levels. A kick-off event was held in September 2011 with over 350 attendees. In October 2012, an Implementation Strategies Workshop was conducted with over 150 in attendance. A series of forums on topics such as equity and health and best practices in developing joint partnerships was also part of the project

Specifically on the Eastside, Bellevue planning staff and other representatives have been an integral part of the East Corridor Task Force. The Task Force focused on both providing feedback on region-wide products, as well as specific elements that support implementation of transit-oriented communities on the Eastside. All Task Force meetings were held in Redmond, Bellevue or Mercer Island, and were open to the public with opportunities for comment. PSRC also held a public open house at Highland Community Center and targeted meetings with businesses on the Eastside.

Council has been previously updated on the Growing Transit Communities partnership at meetings on February 27 and September 24, 2012, February 4, 2013, and most recently on October 28, 2013.

Toolkit of Strategies

One of the primary outcomes of the Growing Transit Communities partnership is a toolkit of recommended strategies and actions to assist cities and other agencies in supporting transit-supportive development. The toolkit includes 24 strategies and 204 detailed recommendations that identify specific steps cities, PSRC, transit agencies, and other partners may consider as tools to attract growth to transit areas and address housing affordability.

There is an understanding that some tools may work well in some locations and that each jurisdiction will make a determination as to what tools will work best for each station area. For example, it was recognized that different areas in the region are at very different stages of planning for and constructing light rail. Stations are already operating along a portion of the South Corridor and significant planning has occurred for the East Corridor; meanwhile some communities north and south have only just begun to plan for light rail service.

East Corridor Implementation Support

In addition to the regional framework and strategies, the Growing Transit Communities program explored more focused strategies to support implementation in the north, south and east corridors.

The work on the north and south corridors looked at issues such as pedestrian-scale design, barriers to redevelopment, and linking housing with employment centers. A portion of the project

focused on advancing the Seattle Northgate Urban Center plan for mixed-income transit-oriented development. The project resulted in an urban design framework for converting a surface park and ride lot into an affordable housing development. In the South Corridor, work supported the development of Tacoma's South Downtown subarea plan and planned action environmental impact statement (EIS) to help facilitate and streamline demonstration projects.

Recognizing the significant work already completed by Bellevue and Redmond for the BelRed and Overlake areas, **Phase 1** of the East Corridor work focused on researching and documenting strategies in four primary areas:

- Businesses retention and attraction
- Transportation connectivity
- Public and private partnership opportunities
- Affordable housing

Phase 2 of the East Corridor work focused on supporting BelRed and Overlake implementation efforts by looking at two specific concepts:

- How to support a potential transit-oriented development project integrated with Sound Transit's planned park and ride at the 130th Avenue station.
- The potential formation of an energy district at the Overlake Village station in Redmond. (An energy district would use a shared, high efficiency heating/cooling service among a group of buildings to lower overall energy consumption.)

In Bellevue, the work specifically investigated the feasibility of a joint development opportunity at the park and ride site planned for the 130th station. This work supported the City's and Sound Transit's efforts to both provide parking to serve the transit station and to support redevelopment consistent with the BelRed plan adopted in 2009. The intent of the 130th Avenue station work was to ask the question: In lieu of the surface parking lot currently planned by Sound Transit, could a public/private partnership create an integrated TOD/park and ride project that meets Sound Transit's objectives, increases ridership, creates a safer, more welcoming environment, and helps catalyze additional development around the station?

The East Corridor work has been instrumental in pulling together multiple parties, including Sound Transit, the City and PSRC, to explore the potential of this site jointly. While this work was performed as part of the Growing Transit Communities effort and managed by PSRC, Bellevue staff continues to be actively involved to help maximize the value of the effort for Bellevue.

The results of this first step in exploring a joint development concept at the 130th station are that an integrated TOD/park and ride appears to be feasible. Initial economic modeling shows that a joint TOD project would not increase Sound Transit's costs and would result in increased ridership while catalyzing additional development in the area. However, this would be a major change from Sound Transit's current design and there are numerous hurdles to achieving this alternative approach. The work to-date suggests that this is an opportunity worth pursuing.

Growing Transit Communities Compact

In addition to a range of strategies for advancing transit-oriented development, the Growing Transit Communities partnership established a central organizing framework – the *Growing*

Transit Communities Compact. The Oversight Committee approved the *Compact* at its meeting on July 12, 2013. The Committee took into account input received during the formal comment period from May 1 to June 7 along with feedback from the Corridor Task Forces and affordable housing and equity committees. The PSRC Executive Board approved the *Compact* at its meeting on September 26, 2013, and authorized its Executive Director to sign it.

The *Growing Transit Communities Compact* is a six-page statement of three broad goals that provide a regional framework for coordinating among multiple partners to support transit-oriented communities. It seeks to take advantage of and get the most out of the regional investment in light rail and other forms of high capacity transit. It speaks broadly to the region's ambitions to attract growth to transit areas, while recognizing that each station area is unique and that some strategies may work in some locations and not in others. It anticipates flexibility in pursuing strategies. The *Compact* does not obligate partners to implement all recommendations, but rather to consider and adopt tools that fit best within the community. It is not legally binding and does not alter local control of land use decisions.

The three foundational goals of the *Compact* are:

- *Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth to high capacity transit communities*
- *Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high capacity transit*
- *Increase access to opportunity for existing and future residents of transit communities*

The *Compact* defines the region's shared goals about serving transit hubs, their distinct land use characteristics, promoting thoughtful growth around stations, and creating a range of housing opportunities and increasing economic prosperity.

The *Compact*, while stating that cities, PSRC, and transit agencies all need to work together for our communities to be successful, also contains language that recognizes that land use decisions rest with local governments.

The background documents PSRC created as part of the program reflect Bellevue's plans for transit-oriented development in BelRed and Downtown. They also state that no land use changes are planned for the single-family residential areas. Regarding the South Bellevue station, it states:

> *No land use changes are envisioned for the South Bellevue area. The City of Bellevue has expressly stated that Transit Oriented Development is not appropriate at this station. Adopted policy TR-75.19 of the Bellevue Comprehensive Plan preserves the existing single family neighborhood and environmental critical areas.*

The Growing Transit Communities partnership originated with the joint application for federal grant funding by almost 40 cities and agencies, including Bellevue. To recognize the need and value of continued partnership and collaboration to succeed in successfully implementing the strategies of the Growing Transit Communities program, partner members are asked to sign the *Compact.*

Signing the *Compact* has a number of benefits. It signals to other agencies and partners Bellevue's interest in working toward shared goals. This has the potential to lead to future partnerships that could support the City's implementation efforts in Downtown and BelRed. It also signals to potential funding agencies Bellevue's support for regional transit and transit-

oriented development, which may help the City win future grant funds. The partnership has also had a direct benefit to the City in showing how collaborative exercises, like that used to explore development options at the 130th park and ride, can address the complex issues associated with developing light rail.

Staff is seeking initial Council thoughts on signing on to this regional *Compact*, which would be brought back for Council action at a future meeting. Staff suggests that a resolution to this end would recognize the consistency of the Growing Transit Communities program with the City's own plans for Downtown and BelRed, while also reaffirming that no land use changes are planned for Surrey Downs or Enatai.

Conclusion and Transition of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership

The Growing Transit Communities Oversight Committee met for the second-to-last time on October 18 to review East Corridor implementation, a draft Fair Housing Equity Assessment, and research on establishing a property acquisition fund. The Oversight Committee's final meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2014.

While the federal funding for the partnership ends at the end of 2013, PSRC recognizes value in continuing to coordinate to successfully implement and support transit communities. PSRC anticipates continued work in 2014 and 2015 related to housing and transit-oriented development issues and integrating concepts from the Growing Transit Communities partnership into the updates of the regional plans.

Next Steps for Bellevue

The City Council may consider whether to advance signing the *Growing Transit Communities Compact* as a member of the partnership. Staff is looking for preliminary thoughts and questions from the Council tonight and will bring this back for additional Council consideration at a future meeting. At Council's direction a draft resolution of support will be prepared for review.

ATTACHMENTS:

1) Invitation to Sign the Compact
2) Growing Transit Communities Executive Summary
3) Growing Transit Communities Compact

IN THE COUNCIL OFFICE:

East Corridor Phase 1 Report: Best Practices and Assessment of Station Areas

FOR REFERENCE:

The Puget Sound Regional maintains a website with additional information about the Growing Transit Communities partnership at:
http://www.psrc.org/growth/growing-transit-communities

PSRC has posted information about the East Corridor work, including past meeting summaries and presentations at:
http://www.psrc.org/about/advisory/gtc-committees/corridor-task-forces/east-corridor-task-force/

Growing Transit Communities

October 1, 2013

Dear Partners and Interested Parties,

The Growing Transit Communities Partnership, a broad coalition of stakeholders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, came together in 2010 to identify what will be needed to create the sustainable, equitable communities envisioned in adopted regional plans and supported by the region's commitment of nearly $20 Billion in high-capacity transit investments. These plans and investments present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape the region and ensure that transportation improvements support sustainable development and foster vibrant, healthy neighborhoods for all.

This summer, following an extensive 18-month collaborative process, the Partnership adopted the *Growing Transit Communities Strategy*. This document presents consensus approaches to how we want to develop in the region's high-capacity and high frequency transit areas, and what tools and resources we need to implement the region's adopted plans with a focus on three overarching goals:

- Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth near high-capacity transit
- Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit
- Increase access to opportunity for existing and future community members in transit communities

The goals and recommendations in the *Growing Transit Communities Strategy* are wide-ranging, developed with the recognition that some approaches may work in some locations but not in others, and that each partner retains flexibility to pursue the actions most appropriate to local needs and conditions. The region's continued success will require an ongoing, dedicated partnership of a wide variety of public, private, non-profit, and community stakeholders.

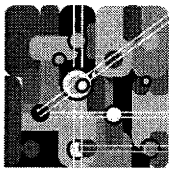
We invite you to be an implementation partner by signing the *Growing Transit Communities Compact*, a regional pledge for ongoing collaboration to implement the goals and strategies of the *Growing Transit Communities Strategy*. Only with the continued involvement from a broad spectrum of public, private and nonprofit agencies and organizations can we succeed in supporting and growing thriving and equitable transit communities across our region.

We look forward to working with you in this process. For more information, please contact Ben Bakkenta, Program Manager, Puget Sound Regional Council at bbakkenta@psrc.org or 206-971-3286.

Sincerely,

Josh Brown, Chair, Oversight Committee
Commissioner, Kitsap County

Tony To, Vice-Chair, Oversight Committee
Executive Director, HomeSight



Growing Transit Communities Strategy

Executive Summary

Our region has a shared vision for a sustainable future that will benefit our people, our prosperity, and our planet. VISION 2040, the central Puget Sound region's long-range plan for growth, transportation, and economic development, describes the commitments, actions, and stewardship needed over many decades by many stakeholders to achieve far-reaching goals. As the region grows to 5 million people—a more than 30 percent increase—by the year 2040, a key goal calls for growth within existing urban areas and especially in compact, walkable communities that are linked by transit.

The region's recent commitments to invest over $15 billion in high-capacity transit (light rail, bus rapid transit, express bus, streetcar, and commuter rail) present an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to locate housing, jobs, and services close to these transit investments, and to do so in a way that benefits surrounding communities. A region-wide coalition of businesses, developers, local governments, transit agencies, and nonprofit organizations—the Growing Transit Communities Partnership—spent three years working together to create solutions that will encourage high-quality, equitable development around rapid transit.

The Challenges

Growth, as envisioned in VISION 2040, should benefit all people by increasing economic development and access to jobs, expanding housing and transportation choices, promoting neighborhood character and vitality, and improving public health and environmental quality. But, this is easier said than done. In particular, this growth may magnify several challenges currently facing the region:

Living in and working in walkable, transit-served communities. Recent market studies show that there is significant unmet demand for housing and jobs located within walking distance of transit. Many people want to live and work in compact, complete, and connected communities, but investments in transit and in transit station areas have fallen behind. Attracting growth to transit communities will require policies to encourage more housing and jobs near transit along with investments in the infrastructure and services for a growing population.

Housing choices for low and moderate income households near transit. Forty-three percent of the region's households make less than 80 percent of the area median income. However, most new market-rate housing that is accessible to transit is unaffordable to these households. With new investment in transit communities, many lower-cost units are at risk of displacement. For the lowest income households, many of whom are transit dependent, the supply of subsidized housing is far short of the need. Building mixed-income communities that meet these needs will require improved strategies to minimize displacement, and preserve and produce diverse housing types affordable to a full range of incomes.

Equitable access to opportunity for all the region's residents. Analysis of indicators across the region reveals that too many people do not have access to education, employment, mobility, health, and neighborhood services and amenities. These community resources are the building blocks that create the opportunity to succeed and thrive in life. Transit communities, with their access to the region's jobs, institutions, and services are critical focal points for achieving greater equity for the region's diverse residents. As these communities grow through public and private investment, equitable development will require targeted community improvements and strategies to connect existing and future residents to greater regional resources.

Why Now?

In the last decade, central Puget Sound voters have approved a series of high-capacity light rail and other transit investments—a commitment of approximately $15 billion—that will serve the region's most densely populated and diverse communities for decades to come. These investments present an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to support and improve existing communities and meet regional goals through strategies to make great places for people to live and work. In order to do this, the region must:

Leverage transit investment to build sustainable communities. Transit investments, such as light rail, streetcars, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit, create value by connecting communities to the larger region. Transit communities are the best opportunity for the region to become more sustainable, prosperous, and equitable.

Create new resources and tools. Current resources available to governmental and non-governmental agencies alike are not enough. New tools and funding sources will be necessary to meet infrastructure, economic development, housing, and other community needs.

Work together across the region and across sectors. It will take collaboration among a wide spectrum of public, private, and nonprofit agencies and organizations working together to promote thriving and equitable transit communities. There are roles for everyone in this process.

The Strategy

How will this all be accomplished? The Growing Transit Communities Strategy calls for regional and local actions that respond to the challenges and opportunities in transit communities and represent major steps toward implementing the growth strategy in VISION 2040. The Strategy was developed by the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, an advisory body of various public, private, and nonprofit agencies and organizations working together to promote successful transit communities. The Growing Transit Communities Partnership, funded by a three-year grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities and housed at the Puget Sound Regional Council, established three main goals for the Strategy:

- *Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth near high-capacity transit*
- *Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit*
- *Increase access to opportunity for existing and future community members in transit communities*

Toolkit of Strategies and Actions

Twenty-four strategies, guided by a People + Place Implementation Typology, constitute the "playbook" for the Growing Transit Communities Strategy. From overarching regional approaches to local and individual actions, together these provide a set of coordinated steps toward ensuring a prosperous, sustainable, and equitable future.

The Strategy presents 24 strategies recommended by the Growing Transit Communities Partnership and includes specific actions for PSRC, transit agencies, local governments, and other regional partners. The recommendations address the three main goals for transit communities. As a whole, the strategies are a call to action for partners across the region to redouble efforts to create great urban places and build equitable communities around transit. Fully recognizing the strong policy foundation embodied in regional and local plans, as well as the innovative work in implementing those plans to date, the Partnership makes these recommendations as a challenge to do more than is being doing today.

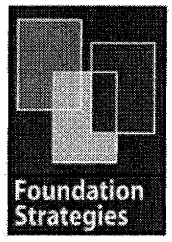
The Toolkit of Strategies and Actions fall into four groupings:

The **Foundation Strategies** recommend a regional and local framework for ongoing work to support transit communities. Modeled on the relationships and values at the heart of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, these strategies envision an ongoing regional effort involving a variety of partners and community members in decision making and implementation at all levels.

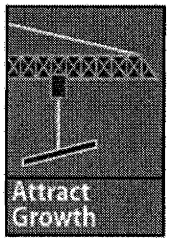
The **Strategies to Attract Housing and Employment Growth** recommend actions to make great urban places that are attractive to households and businesses, remove barriers to development, and support development in emerging markets.

The **Strategies to Provide Affordable Housing Choices** recommended actions to define and quantify housing needs, preserve existing affordable housing and supply new housing choices, and capitalize on the value created by the private market—enhanced by transit investments—in order to achieve the broadest range of affordability in transit communities.

The **Strategies to Increase Access to Opportunity** recommend actions to understand regional disparities in access to opportunity, identify existing and potential new resources and tools to meet community needs, and build support for equitable opportunities through education, coalitions, and leadership.

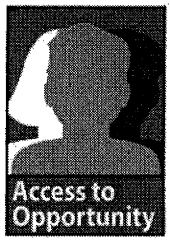


1. Establish a regional program to support thriving and equitable transit communities
2. Build partnerships and promote collaboration
3. Engage effectively with community stakeholders
4. Build capacity for community engagement
5. Evaluate and monitor impacts and outcomes



6. Conduct station area planning
7. Use land efficiently in transit communities
8. Locate, design, and provide access to transit stations to support TOD
9. Adopt innovative parking tools
10. Invest in infrastructure and public realm improvements

11. Assess current and future housing needs in transit communities
12. Minimize displacement through preservation and replacement
13. Increase housing support transit-dependent populations
14. Implement a TOD property acquisition fund
15. Expand value capture financing as a tool for infrastructure and affordable housing
16. Make surplus public lands available for affordable housing
17. Leverage market value through incentives
18. Implement regional fair housing assessment



19. Assess community needs
20. Invest in environmental and public health
21. Invest in economic vitality and opportunity
22. Invest in equitable mobility options
23. Invest in equitable access to high quality education
24. Invest in public safety in transit communities

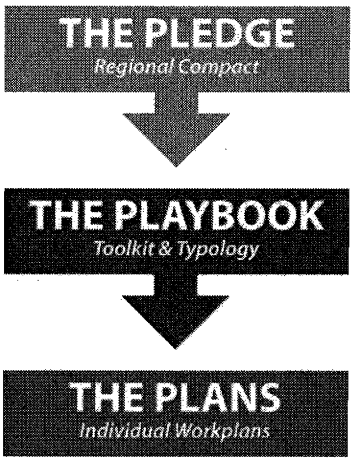
Successful implementation will require shared commitment and collaboration among governments, major stakeholders, and community members. There are roles for many different regional and local partners, each with a distinct jurisdiction, authority, and mission. Consistent with those roles, all are asked to use the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions as a "playbook"

for taking action to advance the regional vision of creating thriving and equitable transit communities in a manner that is a best fit to each community.

People + Place Implementation Typology

No two transit communities are alike. Accordingly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the strategies that will help a transit community thrive and grow with equitable outcomes for current and future community members. The Strategy presents the People + Place Implementation Typology as a regional framework for local implementation. Working with stakeholders from each of three major light rail corridors, the Growing Transit Communities Partnership analyzed conditions in 74 study areas as a basis for a set of locally tailored recommendations. Based on indicators of the physical, economic, and social conditions in each transit community, the results of this typology analysis suggest eight Implementation Approaches. Key strategies and investments address the needs and opportunities in different communities, while also advancing regional and corridor-wide goals. The Implementation Approaches and typology analysis are intended to complement and inform existing regional and, especially, local plans as they are implemented, evaluated, and refined in the coming years.

The Next Steps

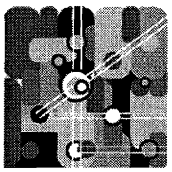


The Growing Transit Communities Strategy includes a three-part implementation plan to promote thriving and equitable transit communities in the central Puget Sound region. The **Regional Compact** affirms the support of a variety of partners from throughout the region for the Partnership's work and a commitment to work toward regional goals by implementing the Strategy. The **Toolkit of Strategies and Actions** and the **People + Place Implementation Typology,** as described above and detailed in the body of this report, include 24 recommended strategies, eight implementation approaches, and corridor specific priorities that will guide an evolving approach to transit communities. The **Individual Work Plans** are local government, agency, or organization specific work plans, to be developed individually and in consultation with PSRC staff, which define short- and medium-term actions that can implement the Strategy. The nature and format of the Individual Work Plans will vary to reflect the diversity of public and private partners, legislative and decision-making processes, and actions adopted.

By working together, the central Puget Sound region can achieve its vision for a sustainable future that advances our people, our prosperity, and our planet. The Growing Transit Communities Strategy lays out essential tools and actions to get us there.

Growing Transit Communities

September 2013. For more information on the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, please visit www.psrc.org.



Growing Transit Communities Compact

Preamble

VISION 2040 was approved as the central Puget Sound region's plan for sustainable development following a broad-based, collaborative planning process. Central Puget Sound region voters also approved a series of high-capacity light rail and transit projects—a commitment of approximately $15 billion—that will serve the region's most densely populated and diverse communities for decades to come. These investments present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shape the region's urban form and ensure that transportation improvements support sustainable development and foster vibrant, healthy neighborhoods for all.

Recognizing what this unprecedented opportunity means for the region and its residents, a broad coalition of stakeholders came together to identify what will be needed to create the sustainable, equitable communities envisioned in the region's plans. The result was the Growing Transit Communities Partnership.

The Growing Transit Communities Partnership produced the Growing Transit Communities Strategy as a tool to implement VISION 2040 and local comprehensive plans adopted under the state Growth Management Act, and which is supported by this Compact. Its goals and recommendations are wide-ranging, developed with the recognition that some tools and approaches may work in some locations but not in others, and that each partner retains flexibility and discretion in pursuing the strategies most appropriate to local needs and conditions. However, the envisioned outcomes, consistent with VISION 2040, require an ongoing dedicated partnership of many interests, including cities, counties, transit agencies, businesses and employers, housing authorities, public health agencies, affordable housing providers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and development interests.

And while the Compact is not legally binding and does not mandate adoption of any particular policies or actions, it expresses the need for many and diverse partners to work together over time to achieve its goals, recognizing that opportunities for success cannot be achieved unless we work together.

Therefore, as signatories to the Compact, we commit ourselves to working in partnership to achieve the goals and strategies in this Compact, while respecting the diversity of interests, perspectives, and responsibilities throughout the region.

***

Whereas *the central Puget Sound region has adopted VISION 2040, with the following vision statement:*

> *Our vision for the future advances the ideals of our people, our prosperity, and our planet. As we work toward achieving the region's vision, we must protect the environment, support and create vibrant, livable, and healthy communities, offer economic opportunities for all, provide safe and efficient mobility, and use our resources wisely and efficiently. Land use, economic, and transportation decisions will be integrated in a manner that supports a healthy environment, addresses global climate change, achieves social equity, and is attentive to the needs of future generations.*

and;

Whereas *the central Puget Sound region is expected to add 1.3 million people and 1.1 million jobs by the year 2040; and*

Whereas *VISION 2040 includes among its goals (1) maintaining a prosperous and sustainable regional economy by supporting businesses and job creation, investing in all people, sustaining environmental quality, and creating great central places, diverse communities, and a high quality of life, and (2) focusing growth within already urbanized areas to create walkable, compact, and transit oriented communities, and (3) meeting housing needs through preservation and expansion of a range of affordable, healthy and safe housing choices; and*

Whereas *the voters of the central Puget Sound region have committed to a $15 billion investment in light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit and local streetcar service that creates a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to plan for and support the growth of communities near high capacity transit; and*

Whereas *in 2010 the region adopted Transportation 2040, a long-range transportation plan designed to implement VISION 2040 that calls for implementation of an aggressive transit strategy to keep up with increasing population and employment growth, including completion of Sound Transit 2 projects, additional Link light rail extensions to Everett, Tacoma, and Redmond, and local transit service increases of more than 100 percent in peak periods and over 80 percent in off-peak periods; and*

Whereas *The Regional Economic Strategy recognizes that transportation investments must address the diverse needs of the region's economy and support key employment sectors, provide more convenient and varied transportation options, and improve travel reliability to maintain and enhance quality of life in the region for workers and support local businesses; and*

Whereas *approximately 45% of households currently residing in proximity to existing and planned light rail corridors are moderately or severely housing cost burdened; and*

Whereas *current income distribution for the region shows 13% of households earn between 0-30% of the area median income, 12% of households earn between 30-50% of the area median income, and 18% of households earn between 50-80% of the area median income; and*

Whereas *new market-rate housing trends and subsidized housing resources are not providing sufficient housing choices in transit communities for households earning under 80% of the area median income; and*

Whereas *the combined cost burden of housing plus transportation can be substantially reduced by locating affordable housing opportunities in proximity to transit; and*

Whereas *the report "Equity, Opportunity, and Sustainability in the Central Puget Sound Region" identifies a widespread pattern within the region of unequal household access to educational, economic, transportation, environmental health, and neighborhood resources; and*

Whereas *many communities that are now or may be served by high-capacity transit are home to low-income and minority households and small locally- and minority-owned businesses that are at a potentially higher risk of displacement due to a range of factors; and*

Whereas *transit-oriented development is a land use pattern with many social, economic, and environmental benefits, including more sustainable and efficient use of urban land, support for regional and local economies, reduced combined housing and transportation costs per household, and improved access and mobility for residents; and*

Whereas *the Growing Transit Communities Partnership, a diverse coalition of governmental and nongovernmental partners, was funded by a grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities for the express purpose of helping to implement VISION 2040 by leveraging regional transit investments to create thriving and equitable transit communities around light rail and other high-capacity transit stations; and*

Whereas *the Equity Network Steering Committee has defined equity to mean that all people can attain the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and enable them to reach their full potential; and*

Whereas *the Growing Transit Communities Partnership defines equitable transit communities as follows:*

> *Equitable transit communities are mixed-use, transit-served neighborhoods that provide housing and transportation choices, and greater social and economic opportunity for current and future residents. Although defined by a half-mile walking distance around high-capacity transit stations, they exist within the context of larger neighborhoods with existing residents and businesses.*
>
> *These communities promote local community and economic development by providing housing types at a range of densities and affordability levels, commercial and retail spaces, community services and other amenities integrated into safe, walkable neighborhoods.*
>
> *Successful equitable transit communities are created through inclusive planning and decision-making processes, resulting in development outcomes that accommodate future residential and employment growth, increase opportunity and mobility for existing communities, and enhance public health for socially and economically diverse populations*

Whereas *Growing Transit Communities Partners recognize that transit communities throughout the region will have unique roles, functions, and opportunities, and will develop with different uses at varying intensities; and*

Whereas *creating vibrant transit-oriented communities can be substantially advanced through the development of additional tools and funding for infrastructure improvements in communities along transit corridors; and*

Whereas *Growing Transit Communities Partners believe that progress toward creating equitable transit communities will depend on active participation from a full range of partners over the long term, including transit agencies, businesses, non-profit organizations, as well as local jurisdictions and the Puget Sound Regional Council; and*

Whereas *the Growing Transit Communities Partnership has developed a Toolkit of Strategies and Actions that recommend adoption of specific actions and tools by regional and local governments, by both public and private stakeholders, in order to create, grow, and enhance equitable transit communities throughout the region; and*

Whereas *updates to local comprehensive plans and development regulations, transit agency plans, and the refinement of regional growth and transportation plans present continuing opportunities to implement the Toolkit of Strategies and Actions;*

Now, therefore, the signatories to this Regional Compact:

Agree that the region's long-range growth management, economic, environmental, and transportation goals depend heavily on continued investment in more and better public transportation services ; and

Acknowledge the acute need for additional resources and tools to create and preserve affordable housing throughout the region; and

Recognize that cities and counties will require new resources to create the critical physical and social infrastructure that will support growth, including transportation, utilities, recreation, and public services; and

Agree that progress toward equitable transit communities requires a cooperative, regional approach with diverse partners across governmental and nongovernmental sectors that supports and builds upon existing and ongoing planning efforts by regional and local governments and transit agencies; and

Commit to build upon the work of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership through the promotion of equitable transit communities in light rail station areas and transit nodes located within the region's three long-range light rail transit corridors, and around transit nodes outside these corridors in other parts of the region; and

Recognize that each corridor is at a different stage of high-capacity transit system development, and that future stations may be identified and sited that should also be considered under this Compact; and

Understand that this Compact is designed to express the intent of diverse partners to work together toward common goals, with specific actions identified by partners appropriate to their roles and responsibilities; and

Recognize that the policies and programs promoted by the Growing Transit Communities Partnership may also benefit community development around other transit investments and corridors, including but not limited to bus rapid transit, streetcar, commuter rail, intercity express bus, and ferries; and

Support a continuing process of collaboration and coordinated action to advance the development of equitable transit communities, as guided by the following goals, signatories to this Compact will strive to:

Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth to high capacity transit communities.

VISION 2040 calls for a compact pattern of growth within the Urban Growth Area, particularly in regional and subregional centers served by high capacity transit. The Growing Transit Communities work program has demonstrated that the region's light rail corridors alone have the potential to support this vision by attracting at least 25% of the housing growth and 35% of the employment growth expected in the region through the year 2040. Attracting additional TOD market demand to other regional corridors that are served by other types of high capacity transit is also essential. To advance the Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040, promote economic development, and realize the multiple public benefits of compact growth around rapid transit investments, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Use a full range of tools, investments, and economic development strategies, to attract the potential demand for residential and commercial transit oriented development within transit communities consistent with and in furtherance of regional policies and plans, and
- Plan for and promote residential and employment densities within transit communities that support ridership potential and contribute to accommodating growth needs within each high-capacity transit corridor.

Additional transit communities along the region's other high-capacity transit mode corridors will also attract significant portions of future residential and employment growth.

Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit.

Adopted regional policy recognizes housing as a basic human need and calls for local policies and tools that provide for an adequate supply of housing affordable at all income levels, to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents. Region-wide, affordable housing need is defined by current household incomes, where 18% of households earn between 50% and 80% of AMI, 12% earn between 30% and 50% of AMI, and 13% earn less than 30% of AMI. In transit communities, projected need for affordable housing is higher, especially for households in the lowest income range due to their greater reliance on transit. Depending on local market conditions, efforts to meet that need will focus on new housing, housing preservation, or combined strategies.

In order to meet a substantial portion of this need within walking distance of rapid transit services, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Use a full range of housing preservation tools to maintain the existing level of affordable housing within each transit community, and
- Use a full range of housing production tools and incentives to provide sufficient affordable housing choices for all economic and demographic groups within transit corridors, including-new housing in the region's transit communities collectively that is proportional to region-wide need or greater to serve transit-dependent households.

These goals apply to the region's transit corridors collectively, and do not suggest a specific desired outcome for any individual transit community. Further, fully attaining these goals will require new tools, resources, and subsidies beyond those that exist today.

Increase access to opportunity for existing and future residents of transit communities.

Adopted regional policy recognizes the need to address the diverse housing, transportation and economic needs of current and future residents so that all people may prosper as the region grows. This requires special attention to communities that lack access to transportation choices, quality schools, and other social and physical neighborhood components that allow community members to thrive and succeed.

In order to more equitably meet the needs of all residents of the region, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:

- Improve access to opportunity in the transit corridors through targeted investments that meet the needs of residents and businesses in communities with limited access to opportunity, targeted affordable housing investments in communities with good access to opportunity, and transit connections linking areas with good access to opportunity and areas with limited access to opportunity.
- Use a full range of community engagement strategies to increase the involvement of diverse and historically under-represented groups in transit community development, empower communities to influence decisions at all levels of government, and ensure opportunities for participation throughout decision-making processes.

In order to maximize this historic opportunity, show regional leadership, and act as a national model of how diverse stakeholders can make transformative decisions that advance a region's goals for its people, its prosperity, and the planet, the signatories to this Compact pledge to work individually and collaboratively toward the goals described above, and toward the implementation of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, as appropriate to each jurisdiction and organization. PSRC will periodically convene representatives of Compact signatories as an Advisory Committee to evaluate the region's progress over time toward achieving equitable transit communities. PSRC's regional monitoring program will track progress of implementing and achieving the goals described in this compact.