



2015 Transit Integration Report



Puget Sound Regional Council
MAY 2015

		
 King County Water Taxi		 Pierce County Ferry System Public Works and Utilities Department
		
 RIDE THE WAVE		

Transit Integration Report / MAY 2015

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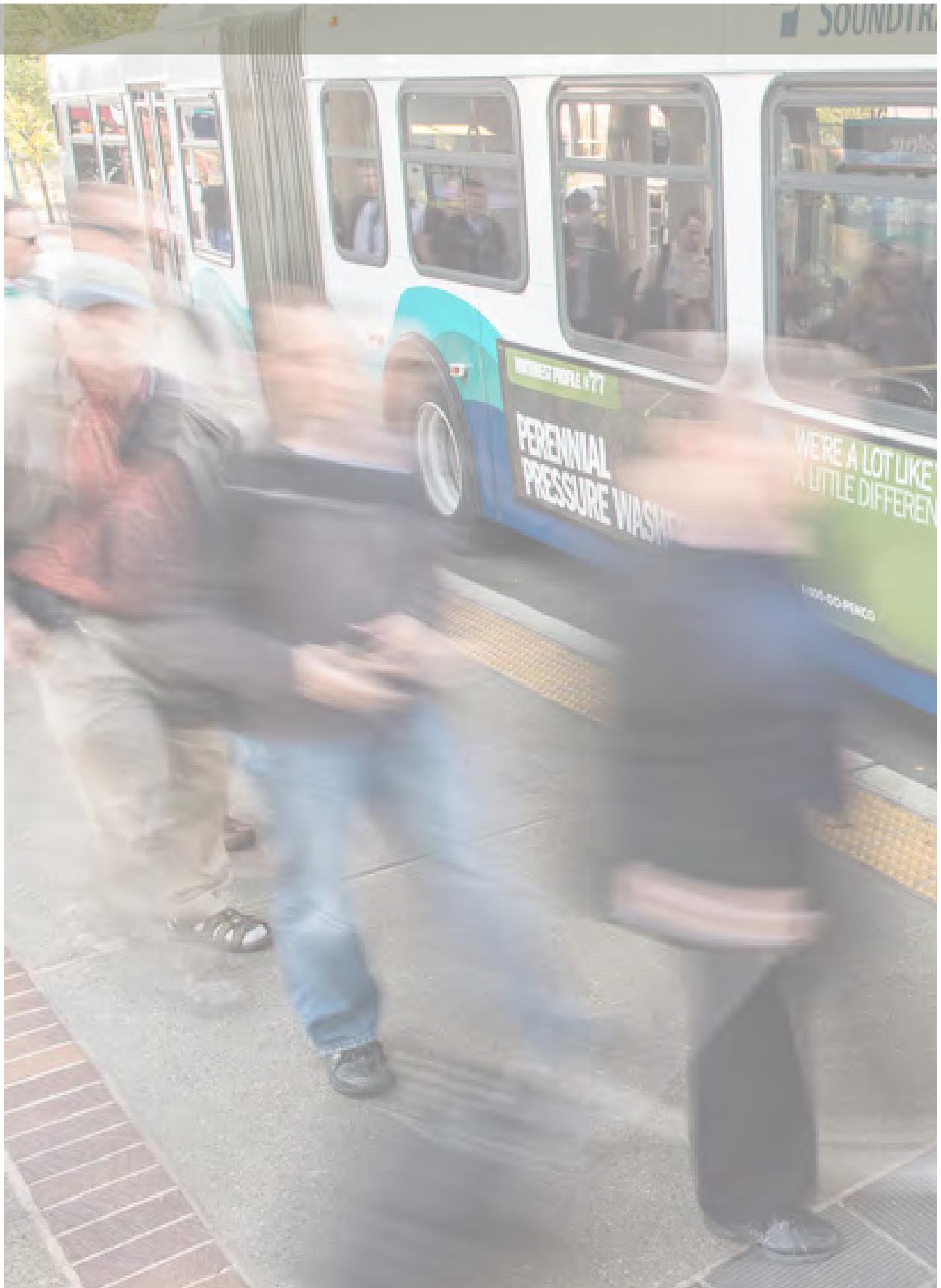
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PART I.

Introduction + Getting there together



Introduction + Report Purpose

When the Executive Board of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) directed staff to develop an annual report on transit coordination in the region in 2013, they did so while recognizing that there are supportable reasons for having multiple transit agencies. In setting this direction, PSRC's policy makers anticipated a growing emphasis on coordination and integration among and between transit agencies to maximize system efficiency, to stretch public transit resources, and to best serve transit riders regardless of the services they currently use.

PSRC's 2015 Transit Integration Report is influenced by an initiative announced in June 2014 by King County Executive and Sound Transit Board Chair Dow Constantine to bring together transit agencies in the central Puget Sound to better integrate collective projects and services. The release of *Getting there together*, a transit integration report that focused on King County Metro and Sound Transit, helped to amplify the message that close coordination and integration must be front and center for transit agencies in the region.

Getting there together relies on PSRC's annual Transit Integration Report to provide a measure of accountability on the progress of integration between the region's transit agencies. And while ongoing coordination has been strong for many years, now is the time to capture the momentum that exists and deliver a more efficient, high-performing regional transit system. Planning for integration will help the region stretch precious resources in the years ahead, and will give citizens of Puget Sound a more efficient transportation system.

PSRC's Transit Integration Report is also meant to raise awareness of ongoing coordination among transit agencies. Many diverse examples from all parts of the region are highlighted in the 2015 Report, and specific attention is paid to how these activities improve system performance or benefit the rider experience of using transit.

The 2015 Transit Integration Report begins by providing a brief recap of *Getting there together* and what's happened since its publication in September 2014. The second part of the Report describes recent and ongoing integration activities. The third part of the Report details a variety of integration activities that are currently underway and will begin influencing how the system works over the next several years.



Getting there together

With the Puget Sound region growing and changing, public transit is more important than ever. The challenge for transit agencies is to meet growing travel needs with a combination of sustainable funding and innovative approaches to providing transit service. Focused transit integration offers significant opportunities to realize efficiencies, deliver better transit service for riders, and ultimately get the best return on investment to taxpayers for their public transit dollars.

In mid-2014, Sound Transit and King County Metro launched an ambitious effort to further collaborate and coordinate services between transit agencies in the greater Puget Sound region and with the state. These actions, designed to achieve “efficiency dividends” that would provide more service with fewer resources, improve access and connections, add capacity, and have a positive impact on the environment were documented in the September 2014 *Getting there together* transit integration report.

The seeds for this integration work were planted many years ago. The region’s public transit agencies have a long history of collaboration among themselves and with state and local jurisdictions. Some remarkable successes of collaboration through the years include the introduction and success of the ORCA seamless payment card, shared use of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, cooperative service planning and facility use, operating and maintenance agreements for Regional Express bus service and Link light rail, and working with the Washington State Department of Transportation to maximize roadway capacity.

Getting there together focused on short-term, long-range, and customer-facing integration opportunities, and Metro and Sound Transit have been advancing the topics identified as follows:

- **Bus-rail integration.** Metro and Sound Transit have developed potential service plans for bus/rail integration through a public process called “Link Connections,” with the 2016 opening of Link light rail service north to Capitol Hill and the University of Washington.
- **Building for the future.** Sound Transit’s ST3 system planning and King County Metro’s long-range planning efforts are happening simultaneously and in an aligned schedule to maximize integration opportunities.
- **Capital projects.** Sound Transit and Metro are working collaboratively to plan, design, and construct future facilities that best accommodate bus and rail integration and maximize the customer experience at those facilities. Current efforts include U District and Roosevelt station area planning and Northgate station area transit-oriented development.
- **Customer experience.** Sound Transit and Metro are implementing a number of customer experience improvements, including providing cell service in transit tunnels and committing to open transit data that ultimately will make using transit easier for riders.

PSRC’s 2015 Transit Integration Report tells several of these stories as well as others that extend beyond these two agencies. Transit integration is a concept that takes the long view to optimize how the region’s transit agencies conduct business together, while also looking for opportunities to make changes in the way they serve customers and taxpayers today.

PART II.

Recent Integration Activities

This section describes specific transit integration activities that are either mostly completed or are ongoing in nature. Some even split the difference: the section on wayfinding depicts both a constant transit agency function and a specific examination of how wayfinding happens within the region. Transit agencies rely on a long history of coordination, and leverage many standing forums — including the Transit Integration Group and PSRC’s Transportation Operators Committee — to support collaboration and integration.

Rider Information

Wayfinding + Transit

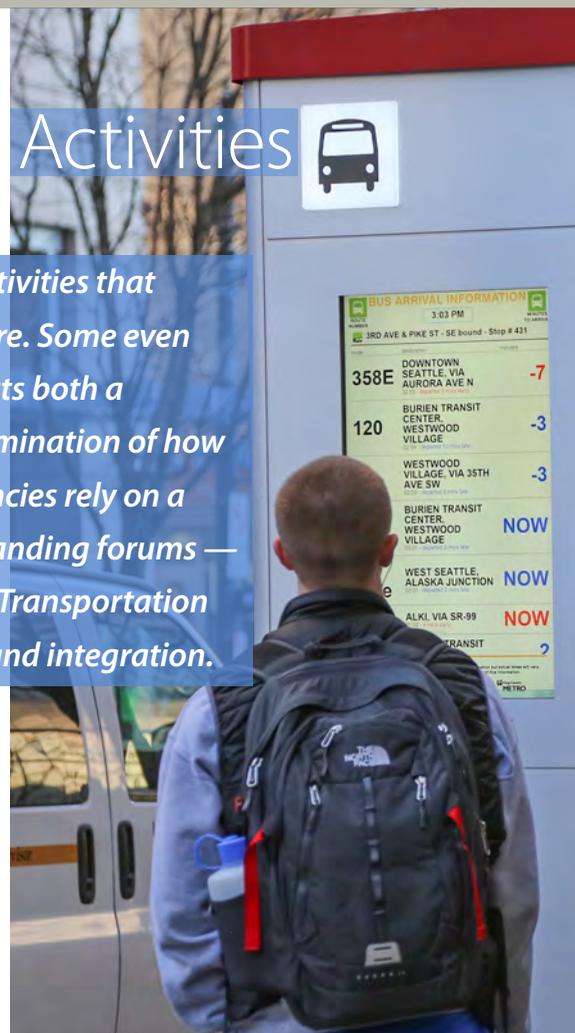
When PSRC staff presented last year’s Report to the Transportation Policy Board — which included a summary of wayfinding activities — they heard feedback that additional work needed to be done to determine gaps in wayfinding that might exist in the region.

In July 2014, PSRC convened a forum on wayfinding and transit. More than 40 attendees from transit agencies, local jurisdictions, and other regional stakeholders gathered to identify near-term issues and opportunities with respect to wayfinding, and how a regional approach can address these issues. The direction from this forum was for PSRC to work with those entities with the biggest influence on wayfinding and transit in the region to develop shared principles in support of a seamless and easy-to-use regional transit system.

PSRC staff worked closely with key staff from King County Metro, Sound Transit, the City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle, Community Transit, Pierce Transit, the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Downtown Seattle Association, and Visit Seattle to articulate shared principles for successful wayfinding in the region.

The following topics emerged as particularly noteworthy as the principles were developed:

- **Ongoing maintenance and clear ownership.** People often tend to notice wayfinding when it’s not working for them; if wayfinding is successful, it recedes into the urban environment. A challenge identified in this process was that major wayfinding elements, particularly in downtown Seattle, currently include incorrect and out-of-date information. Furthermore, there are multiple wayfinding systems and elements in downtown Seattle, often in close proximity to each other and sometimes with confusing and seemingly contradictory information.



The City of Seattle and downtown stakeholders are aware of this, and the Seattle Department of Transportation's coordinated street furnishings initiative may be an opportunity to address some of these existing wayfinding elements moving forward. If pursued, this initiative will seek to provide consistent street furnishings throughout downtown Seattle, potentially including wayfinding elements.

- **Maximize data sharing to improve the customer experience.** Wayfinding today is much more than static signs, as smartphones occupy a growing share of the mobile market and increasingly become wayfinding tools. Smartphones are also becoming the dominant means by which transit riders get information and trip planning services through websites and mobile apps like OneBusAway, the Puget Sound Trip Planner, and the Transit App.

Making the best, most useful transit data available to app developers makes using transit easier by giving riders the information they need — arrival information, trip plans — when they need it. Under a joint Metro and Sound Transit Open Transit Data Initiative, Sound Transit will act as a regional hub for publicly available transit schedule and real-time data, which will allow private developers the ability to create useful tools for riders. Metro and Sound Transit also recently corrected issues in their data that fixed route and stop naming issues associated with Link light rail, RapidRide, and the Seattle Streetcar in the OneBusAway app.

- **A phased approach.** Wayfinding updates typically occur when an agency or private developer is completing a capital project or receives a grant for a specific purpose or segment of the transportation system. Public agencies coordinate and collaborate when opportunities arise, but a wholesale change in regional wayfinding is simply not possible due to this incremental and opportunistic approach. What this effort helped clarify are near-term opportunities to build on the shared principles in a phased approach to improve wayfinding overall. Upcoming milestones like the opening of the First Hill Streetcar, the U Link extension, and the City of Seattle street furniture effort will allow for incremental improvements to the status quo, guided by those shared principles, and a chance to learn what's truly useful in helping people get from point A to point B on transit.

Transit agencies and local jurisdictions are constantly collaborating on wayfinding needs for transit riders, and will continue to do so in the future. Getting wayfinding right will mean an easy and seamless experience for transit riders, reducing the friction of taking transit and building confidence in the public that the region's transit system works.

Regional Wayfinding + Transit Principles

Ensuring that transit riders can easily find their way is a shared goal for transit agencies, local jurisdictions, and other transportation stakeholders in the region. While regular riders, occasional users of the transit system, and



visitors to the region all have distinct information needs, they share a common desire to get where they're going seamlessly and without confusion. By adhering to the following principles, transit agencies, local jurisdictions, and others responsible for wayfinding at key sites will help provide an easy experience for users no matter their familiarity with a particular system, city, or the region as a whole.

The regional wayfinding and transit principles are:

- Ensure that correct information is displayed on wayfinding elements.
- Ensure continuous maintenance of wayfinding elements by clearly identifying ownership, regularly removing out of date signage, and keeping existing signs clean.
- Use and facilitate a consistent visual language, including naming and symbology, to create more unification across regional transit system signage.
- Strive for a simple, clear, and intuitive approach that avoids creating confusion, excessive text, or a cluttered environment.
- Identify clearly major locations of transit service at their major entrance points and on maps.
- Provide for seamless integration between transit systems, multi-modal travel options, and nearby destinations.
- Maximize the usage of real-time travel information.
- Make information about service delays and disruptions available as soon as possible using a variety of communication means to reach the broadest number of riders.
- Centralize and make consistent travel information online related to trip planning, travel information, and last mile connections.
- Leverage existing apps and other mobile options for rider information and wayfinding.
- Commit to sharing data and maximizing its availability and use to improve the customer experience.

Puget Sound Trip Planner

In January 2015, King County Metro released the Puget Sound Trip Planner app, which provides regional cross-agency trip planning, access to route schedules, real time arrival information for King County Metro and select Sound Transit buses, links to agency alerts, and a comprehensive regional contacts list for local transit agencies.

Puget Sound Trip Planner includes data from 11 transit agencies in the Puget Sound region and is a tool for customer information to riders whenever they need it. King County Metro led the development effort, with testing assistance and input from Sound Transit. Other regional agencies were invited to join the effort to promote the app to their customers. The app is intended for everyone who rides transit in the central Puget Sound region: from regular riders to commuters to visitors using the system for the first time.

As of May 1, 2015, the Puget Sound Trip Planner app has been downloaded more than 17,000 times, has processed more than 93,000 trip plans, fulfilled more than 48,000 real time arrival requests, and helped riders look up more than 131,000 route schedules.

And while Metro is largely satisfied with the performance of the app thus far, there is still room for improvement. Future plans include adding more real-time arrival information for other transit agencies as it becomes available; adding Kitsap Transit route schedule and trip planning data; developing a Windows phone version of the app; and correcting route and stop location information for Link light rail, RapidRide, and Seattle Streetcar. Most of these improvements are expected to be rolled out in phases from now through the end of the year. Additional design and functionality improvements will be made based on user feedback.



Trip Planner
Transit Riding in the Puget Sound Region

data from

11 transit agencies

downloaded over

17,000 times

processed over

93,000 trip plans

fulfilled over

48,000 arrival requests

accessed over

131,000 schedules



Service Deployment

Adapting to Service Changes at King County Metro

Transit agencies have dealt with unstable revenues over the last several years that have resulted in major route restructures, service reductions (including the elimination of Sunday service in parts of the region), and overall uncertainty for near-term transit service planning.

In September 2014, King County Metro reduced its transit system by approximately 150,000 annual service hours. Through cost cutting, efficiency measures, lower diesel prices, and higher than projected sales tax collections, Metro was able to scale back the extent of these reductions, which were previously expected to be as high as 600,000 annual service hours.

Nevertheless, service reductions affect Metro's riders and impact the transportation system overall. In an effort to help mitigate the impacts of these reductions, Metro is working closely with its regional partners to identify opportunities for service investments. These efforts include:

- Partnering with Sound Transit to apply for a Washington State Department of Transportation Regional Mobility Grant that would provide additional commuter service on some of the region's busiest corridors, like I-5 in South King County and SR 522. This grant would invest approximately 6,600 annual service hours in Metro peak-only routes and Sound Transit express bus service to address overcrowding during commute hours.
- Expanding Metro's ability to work with communities on alternative service approaches. The King County Council allocated \$12 million in the 2015-2016 biennial budget to implement alternative transit service delivery demonstration projects, including community shuttles, ridesharing products, and community hubs. In the first six months of 2015, Metro will implement three community shuttles and deploy rideshare products with jurisdictional partners in Burien, Mercer Island, North Bend, and Snoqualmie. Metro and Sound Transit are also working together to identify opportunities to jointly develop additional demonstration projects.
- Establishing the Community Mobility Contracts program, which the King County Executive did in May 2014, gives cities a mechanism for contracting with King County Metro to invest in transit service.

Taking advantage of the Community Mobility Contracts program, the City of Seattle passed Proposition 1 in November 2014, which will generate upwards of \$40 million annually for service investments. Starting in 2015, Seattle will be investing 225,000 additional annual service hours (the equivalent of Everett Transit and Kitsap Transit combined) into routes that have at least 80% of their stops within city limits. The additional service aligns with the priorities for investments identified in Seattle's Transit Master Plan and Metro's Service Guidelines.

Starting with the June and September 2015 service changes, Proposition 1 funding will give Metro resources to improve route reliability (by adding time due to increased congestion), overcrowding (by adding new peak period trips), and frequency (by increasing service levels during the middle of the day and extending frequent service later in the evening). Proposition 1 investments will also improve RapidRide service by extending the C Line into South Lake Union and the D Line to Pioneer Square in March 2016.

In a constrained financial environment, partnerships allow King County Metro to provide as much service as possible to meet the growing demands of the region, and are instrumental in mitigating impacts when Metro service is reduced and maximizing opportunities when Metro service is expanded.

Tri-Party Partnership: Auburn, Metro, and Pierce Transit's Route 497

For more than five years, Pierce Transit, King County Metro, and the City of Auburn have worked together to provide integrated service from the Lakeland Hills neighborhood of Auburn to the Auburn Sounder station on route 497, which crosses the Pierce and King County line. This partnership provides the funding necessary to make this route happen.

Route 497 provides 14 trips — seven in the morning, seven in the afternoon — that are timed to meet Sounder train trips at the Auburn Sounder station. Ridership has grown steadily over the years this route has been in operation, reaching an annual ridership total of 50,000 in 2014. With nearly 200 daily boardings, this route alleviates the demand for parking at the already crowded Auburn Sounder station and provides riders along the route another option for accessing Sounder service besides driving.



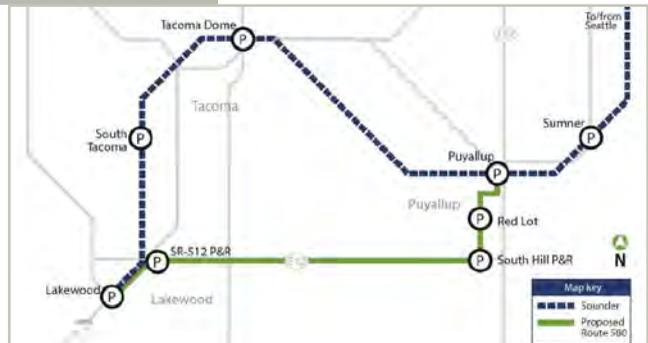
As part of the Tri-Party Partnership Agreement, Metro and Auburn each contribute 40% of the funding while Pierce Transit contributes 20% and operates the service.

In an era of increasing fiscal constraint for transit agencies and local jurisdictions, creative partnerships like the one that supports route 497 will be increasingly necessary to meet the diverse needs of the region's transit riders. With growing annual ridership and relief provided to an overused parking garage at the Auburn Sounder station, route 497 stands as a success story in coordinated transit service delivery.

As part of the Tri-Party Partnership Agreement, Metro and Auburn each contribute 40% of the funding while Pierce Transit contributes 20% and operates the service.

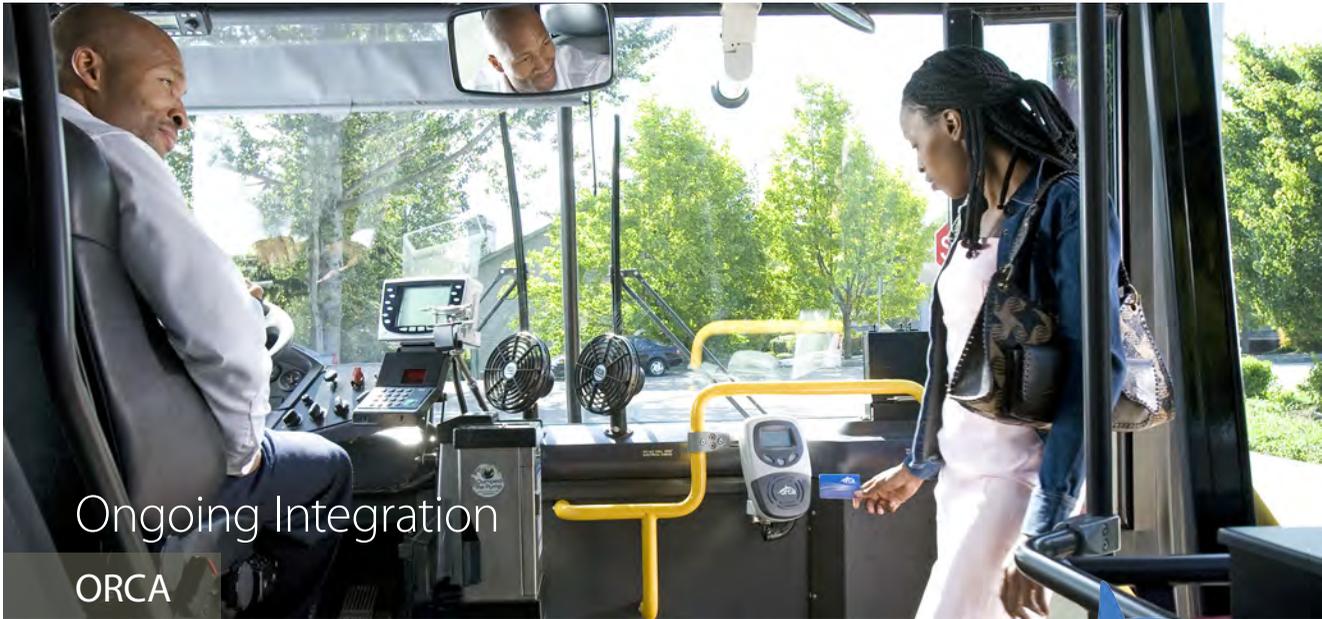
Connecting Communities and Commuters: Route 580

With increasing pressure in downtown Puyallup for parking and access to Sounder commuter rail, Sound Transit and Pierce Transit have collaborated to create a new express route — the 580 — to connect the communities of Lakewood and Puyallup. Route 580 will replace the current route 495 Sounder connector service that is operated by Pierce Transit between South Hill Mall Transit Center, South Hill Park and Ride, the Puyallup Fairgrounds Red Lot, and Puyallup Station.



Route 580 will begin operating in September 2015 and will operate 20 trips per day between the Lakewood and Puyallup Sounder stations, with intermediate stops at SR 512 Park and Ride, South Hill Park and Ride, and the Red Lot. This will be a peak period route with service designed to meet all Sounder trains, including the reverse-commute trains, and to provide additional opportunities for people to commute to Lakewood.

With the institution of 580, Pierce Transit will be able to reallocate the current route 495 service hours to other parts of the system. In addition, route 580 will provide a connection between Lakewood Station to Sounder on the trips that do operate to and from Lakewood Station by providing a connection to the train at Puyallup Station. In both cases, the introduction of route 580 maximizes resource deployment in transit in Pierce County and provides riders additional opportunities to use the transit system.



Ongoing Integration

ORCA

The region's transit agencies have coordinated on fare policies, products, and media for more than a decade, with the most well-known of these efforts being the ORCA ("one regional card for all") card — introduced in 2009 — which allows transit riders to use all systems seamlessly while allocating farebox revenue to the appropriate agency automatically.

While ORCA is the common brand for how people pay for transit trips in the region, the technology also allows for flexibility in how individual agencies deploy ORCA in response to riders' needs and agency-specific policies. Befitting a part of the system with a long history of integration, there are several stories to tell about regional fare coordination, including the new ORCA LIFT program, the introduction of a regional day pass product, a just-beginning ORCA data analysis grant, and work happening for the next generation of ORCA.

ORCA LIFT

Responding to the elimination of the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle in 2012 and the fact that Metro had raised fares in four consecutive years between 2008 and 2011, the King County Council established an advisory committee in 2012 to develop a low income fare program. Based on the findings of this committee, the King County Executive proposed an ordinance in January 2014 to increase Metro fares and establish a new low income fare category. In November 2014, the Sound Transit Board adopted the low income fare on Link light rail service, maintaining consistency with connecting local bus service.

Using the model established by Kitsap Transit, which has had a low-income fare since the roll-out of the ORCA program in 2009, King County Metro's low income fare — known as ORCA LIFT — is available to individuals who



Get where you need to go. For less.

The new ORCA LIFT card gets you everywhere you need to go, and saves you money while you're getting there.

- Save up to 50% on transit fare
- Works the same as a regular ORCA card
- Good for Metro Transit buses, ST Link light rail, Seattle Streetcar, King County water taxi, Kitsap Transit buses



earn less than 200% of the federal poverty level (currently \$23,340 for an individual). The fare is set at \$1.50 a ride, and riders who qualify must use an ORCA card and cannot pay with cash. The low income fare is good for 24 months after which participants must reapply to see if they are still eligible.

ORCA LIFT works on all Metro buses, Kitsap Transit buses, Sound Transit Link light rail, King County Water Taxi, and Seattle Streetcar. Metro has partnered with Public Health – Seattle & King County to administer the program, leveraging Public Health’s recent success at engaging lower-income residents and local community groups when it helped enroll more than 165,000 King County residents for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

As of early May 2015, more than 8,500 ORCA LIFT cards have been issued.

REGIONAL DAY PASS

Following a pilot program in 2014, the ORCA agencies are implementing a permanent Regional Day Pass program, intended to make it easier for visitors and tourists to use transit while in the region. Local residents can also purchase the Regional Day Pass anywhere ORCA cards are sold.

The Regional Day Pass would consist of two new products:

- An \$8 Regional Day Pass for adults, valid for unlimited rides on services with fares up to \$3.50; and
- A \$4 Regional Day Pass for ORCA Reduced Regional Fare Permit holders (seniors and riders with disabilities), valid for unlimited rides on services with fares up to \$1.75.

These fares would be in addition to the cost of an ORCA card, which is \$5 for adults and \$3 for seniors and riders with disabilities.

Both Regional Day Pass products will be accepted on bus, light rail, commuter rail, streetcar, and passenger only ferry services operated by Community Transit, Everett Transit, King County Metro, Kitsap Transit, Pierce Transit, and Sound Transit. The product will not be a valid fare payment for Washington State Ferries service.

Beginning in spring 2015, the ORCA Joint Board began soliciting for public comment on plans to implement the Regional Day Pass program. Following the public hearing on April 14, the Joint Board authorized the program, and Regional Day Passes will be available for purchase beginning June 1, 2015.

ORCA DATA ANALYSIS GRANT

The operational benefits of an electronic fare media system like ORCA — a pass that deducts the specific fare on whatever system a rider uses and then allocates that revenue to the appropriate operator — also creates the opportunity to utilize the same system to better understand transit travel behavior in the region.

Sound Transit, the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), and the Washington State Transportation Center at the University of Washington have partnered on a project to demonstrate how ORCA data can significantly benefit the transportation planning processes at transit agencies and at PSRC.

Of paramount importance to the project team and the ORCA Joint Board are data security and the protection of all ORCA users’ privacy. Before any data is shared, the project team is creating a rigorous data protection plan that will be vetted through the University of Washington’s Institutional Review Board to ensure the privacy and data security of all ORCA account holders.

The goal of this 18-month long project, which officially began in April 2015, is to demonstrate how modern data analytics can take advantage of existing large data systems to improve the selection and implementation of transportation plans, programs, and other activities to improve mobility in the region.



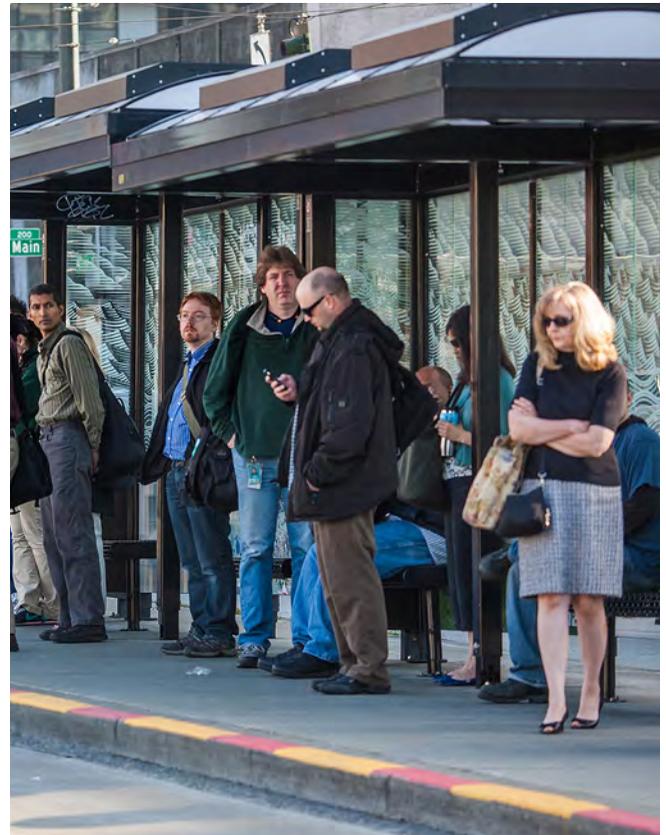
Downtown Seattle Transit Coordination

Downtown Seattle is arguably the most complex and constrained transportation operating environment in the region. With almost 240,000 jobs in the center city area, major destinations, and considerable residential and commercial development, the region depends on people traveling to and through downtown Seattle every day. Several projects are planned or underway that will significantly affect mobility in this vital part of the region.

Community Transit, King County Metro, the Seattle Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) are working together to ensure that the transit network — and the transportation system as a whole — performs well in supporting residential and employment growth. Major public and private investments coming online during the next decade require operational improvements. Coordination requires finding common ground to maximize the performance of the whole system.

In preparation for the 2016 opening of Sound Transit Link light rail at the University of Washington and to continue to address construction-related disruptions in downtown Seattle, the agencies have implemented an action plan for 2015 centered on the following issues:

- Making operational adjustments to the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel (DSTT) in preparation for continued operation of both light rail and buses in the tunnel. These adjustments include reducing the number of buses using the tunnel during peak hours to accommodate more frequent trains and enhancing passenger boarding at tunnel stations.



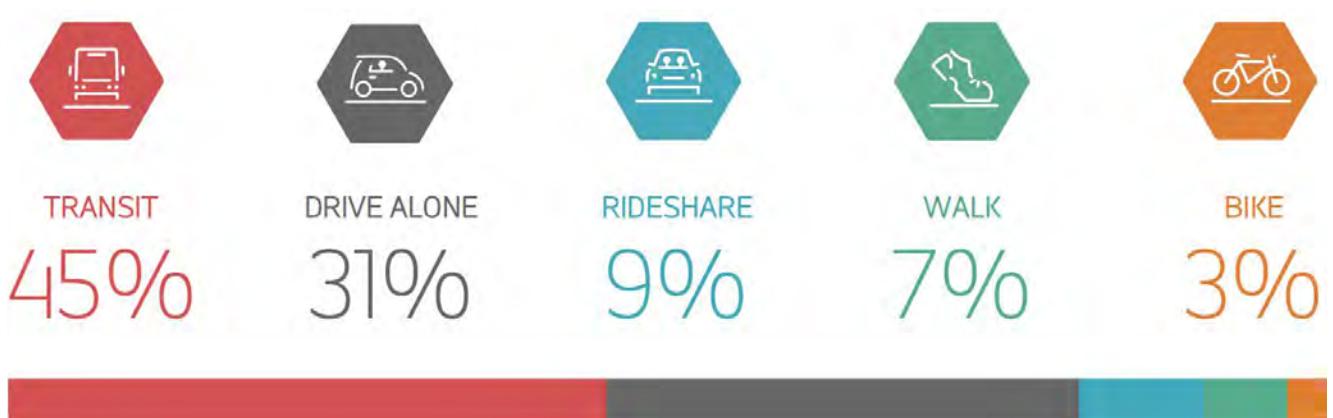


- Prioritizing movement for buses on downtown streets through transit priority treatments such as bus lanes and giving buses a head start at key intersections.
- Modifying transit service to optimize the use of downtown streets and ensure reliable service for transit customers.

To support this implementation, a multi-agency team is working to minimize impacts and keep the public informed of these changes as they move forward.

Agency coordination results in yearly action plans to address specific milestones around downtown development, major construction such as the SR 99 Tunnel Project, the Central Waterfront Project, and continued Link expansion. The vision of this effort is to keep transit the most convenient and reliable way to access downtown Seattle in support of a prosperous economy and a transforming transportation system.

How Commuters Get to Downtown Seattle



Source: 2014 Commute Seattle Mode Split Survey

PART III.

Integration Activities Underway

This section details major integration activities currently underway that are already or will soon begin impacting how people move around the region. And while expansion of light rail and the construction of new capital facilities will have more visible impacts, better managing existing resources and smart planning for long range needs will be just as influential to the success of the region's transit system.

System Expansion

Bus-Rail Integration for U Link Opening

The opening of light rail service to Capitol Hill and the University of Washington in early 2016 will bring significant changes to transit service in many parts of Seattle and will have ripple effects throughout the regional transit system. King County Metro and Sound Transit are working closely to prepare transit riders for this change by developing bus service alternatives that provide convenient connections with Link light rail, while resulting in a more efficient, more useful network that expands overall opportunities for transit travel.

Because most impact will be to its service, King County Metro is leading the development of service alternatives, working in close coordination with staff from Sound Transit, the Seattle Department of Transportation, the University of Washington (UW), and Children's Hospital. In addition, two citizen committees — a Sounding Board and the Eastside Advisory Group — are providing input to this process. Metro and Sound Transit have also solicited input from East King County cities and the Eastside's largest employer, Microsoft.



Between March 6 and March 31 2015, Metro and Sound Transit sought input on two conceptual service alternatives. One alternative focused on frequent service corridors while the other emphasized overall route coverage. Metro and Sound Transit engaged the public for feedback in a variety of ways, including electronic surveys and public meetings.

Feedback from the public and stakeholders, together with further evaluation of the concepts, will be used to develop a single alternative that will be released in May 2015, which will also include investments funded by the City of Seattle as part of Proposition 1. Following additional outreach on the final alternative, the King County Council and Sound Transit Board will take action in September or October 2015, with service changes taking place in early 2016 when U Link opens for service.

Bus and rail service integration will minimize duplication between services, increase service levels on high-demand routes, and optimize the frequency, speed, and reliability benefits of U Link through convenient inter-modal connections. Overall, transit service will easily access more major destinations and serve more riders with better schedule reliability. Ultimately, maximizing bus and rail integration when U Link opens should result in improved transit connections and provide expanded opportunities for reliable transit travel to and from UW, Capitol Hill, downtown Seattle, and the Eastside.

Passenger Only Ferry Hub at Colman Dock

The Seattle waterfront is busy with major and very visible construction projects between the work to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the construction of a replacement seawall. Receiving less fanfare, but equally crucial to the region's mobility is the ongoing environmental and design work happening on a major preservation project for Washington State Ferries (WSF) Colman Dock. Briefly, the project involves:



- Replacing the main WSF terminal building and developing seamless access to passenger ferry facilities directly to the south via a pedestrian bridge.
- Maintaining a connection to the Marion Street pedestrian overpass.
- Replacing the passenger only ferry facility as WSF expands their automobile holding area to the south.
- Seismic retrofits on pier structures and other environmental improvements.

Washington State Ferries is the lead agency on the overall project, and the King County Marine Division is leading the design and coordination for passenger only ferry facilities. Kitsap Transit is also closely monitoring the project. Having just completed a business plan, Kitsap Transit anticipates having three routes from Kitsap County terminating at the new passenger only hub.

The goal of this cooperative effort is to integrate vehicle and passenger ferry facilities into facility designs and to ensure that co-located passenger only ferry facilities are adequate for current and planned regional passenger only ferry service.

The current design and construction schedule envisions the Colman Dock passenger only facility to begin construction in the summer of 2017 with completion in 2019. Immediate benefits to users of the King County Water Taxi service to West Seattle and Vashon will be provided. A new passenger only facility will also support the potential operation of a Kitsap Transit passenger only ferry service, which would provide a new option for connecting Kitsap County and downtown Seattle.

The project will create a hub for passenger only ferry service on the downtown Seattle waterfront that is integrated with vehicle ferry service and closely located transit service in downtown Seattle. The project will also promote safe and efficient rider access to regional passenger only ferries.



System Management

Transit Access

When people can easily get to transit from their homes and from transit stops or stations to their final destinations, they are more likely to use transit to move around the region. That's why transit agencies have a strong interest in providing riders a variety of ways to access their services. Providing this access, however, is not solely a transit agency responsibility and depends on investments made by local jurisdictions and other stakeholders.

Several efforts to improve transit access throughout the region are underway or recently completed, and will provide new tools or strategies to get people to and from transit:

- **Non-motorized connectivity study.** This joint Sound Transit and King County Metro project presents new methods for analyzing bicycle and walking access to transit services, resulting in innovative new tools for evaluating the benefits of non-motorized access improvements. Project staff are currently working to train transit and local jurisdiction staff on how to use this tool as well as with the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to expand the tool's reach and applicability in future planning efforts.
- **Parking management pilots.** In early 2014, Sound Transit began implementing a parking management pilot intended to increase the number of transit riders per stall at crowded parking facilities. Pilot elements included parking permits, rideshare incentives, and real-time information on parking availability. While some of these elements continue to be tested, Sound Transit has decided to move ahead with developing a permanent parking permit program and outreach plan for Sound Transit facilities. This effort, which will consider issues including enforcement, pricing, format and technology, and regional coordination, will be brought before the Sound Transit Board in fall 2015.
- **Access to transit study.** Working with PSRC, King County Metro is conducting a two-year study of factors that influence the public's access to transit and how access might be improved. This study considers the role of infrastructure in providing access, how access needs are reported and funded, and regional coordination and policies on the topic. This effort will be a key resource in the ongoing development of Metro's long range transit plan, and a tool to use with jurisdictions on how to jointly improve access to transit.
- **Transit access assessment.** PSRC has convened a transit access working group to make recommendations on transit access in the next update to Transportation 2040. Current work is focused on conducting case studies of major sites of transit service (such as transit centers and park and rides) to assess regional transit access needs. The assessment will also examine a variety of strategies to improve transit access and ultimately match appropriate strategies with case study findings to develop solutions tailored to site-specific conditions.

Getting people to use transit is a shared priority of every transit agency in the region. And while transit access needs and strategies will vary depending on local characteristics, the lessons learned through these efforts will inform smart decision-making to maximize the number of people who can easily get to and use transit and increase peoples' travel options.

Coordinating to Improve Performance on I-5 between Everett and Seattle

Increased economic and residential growth is leading to significantly greater travel demand along the I-5 corridor between Everett and Seattle, which has added 20 minutes to the average commute trip in this corridor. High occupancy vehicle lanes, which are a core piece of transit's right-of-way, are performing substantially below standard, contributing to the fact that 25% of bus trips in this corridor are late. At the same time, there is greater demand for transit as reflected by more crowded buses, meaning there are many people standing for trips that last up to 80 minutes.



There are two primary ways to address this mobility challenge: increase the level of transit service provided on the corridor and improve transit flow. A successful resolution to the issues facing the corridor, therefore, requires collaboration among transit agencies, local road agencies, and the state. This collaboration is occurring and agencies are making progress toward improvements designed to boost transit's contribution to I-5 performance. These efforts focus on increasing transit ridership by addressing both levels of transit service and flow.

Since 2013, Community Transit and Sound Transit have added trips, buses, and service to accommodate longer and less predictable travel times, and both agencies will be adding additional time into their schedules to reflect the new reality. In fall 2015, Community Transit and Sound Transit will be taking delivery of higher capacity vehicles (such as double decker buses) to help reduce overcrowding.

As part of the ongoing coordination work mentioned earlier, Community Transit, King County Metro, the Seattle Department of Transportation, Sound Transit, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) are collaborating on near-term, achievable operational strategies and road modifications to improve transit speed and reliability between Everett and Seattle. One specific operational strategy is more mid-day storage and layover space for buses in downtown Seattle that would provide more operational flexibility to help mitigate the lack of a reliable transit path on I-5.

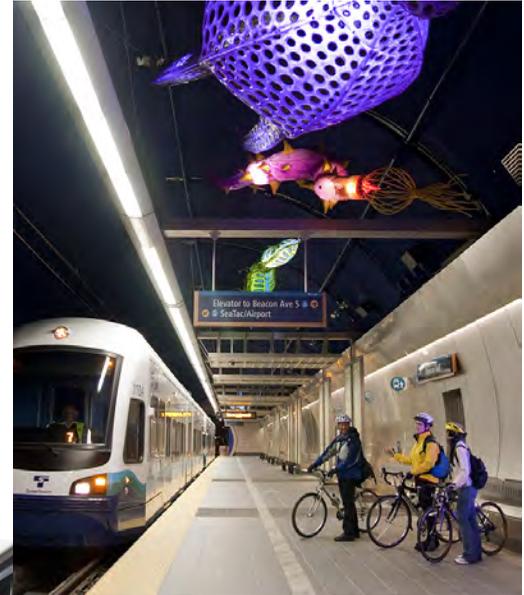
A work team comprised of experts from Community Transit, First Transit, Spokane Transit, and WSDOT developed a list of actions at an intensive workshop held in March 2015. Staffs from all participating agencies are now working to improve, refine, and implement many of these actions, some of which should be in place before the next transit service change in September 2015.

Providing a more reliable path for both in-service and out-of-service buses not only makes transit more attractive to commuters in the I-5 corridor, it also amplifies the effectiveness of transit investments in additional equipment and service by reducing the amount of money spent on buses sitting unproductively in traffic. Ultimately, these investments support the overall performance of the region's transportation system.

strategic planning group meet weekly to integrate these efforts with deliverables that will include:

- A blueprint for coordinated services with an evaluation structure and reporting timeline.
- Future network changes that will be reflected in Sound Transit's system plan and Metro's long-range plan.
- Coordinated technical development and public outreach plans.
- Integrated regional services shown together on a single map.

Riders can expect many benefits through improved integration, including increased connectivity across the regional transit system, better service frequency across agencies, and improved reliability in the trips riders take on transit. These improvements will make riding transit more attractive and effective for all users.



Long-Range Planning and a Regional Vision for Transit



As Sound Transit's system plan development gets underway, several of the region's transit agencies are also engaging in their own long-range planning activities. This creates an enormous opportunity to establish a regional vision for transit and develop a more integrated and rational network of services and capital investments that will result in enhanced mobility for the public.

The effects of the recession and subsequent recovery have clarified the need for long-range plans that can help guide decision-making when service reductions (or expansions) are under consideration. The long-range planning process itself is also helpful in that it requires that transit agencies work together.

In addition to Sound Transit’s long-range and system plan development (described more fully in the previous section), these transit agencies also have or are creating new long-range plans:



Community Transit is the early adopter when it comes to long-range transit planning in the region, completing theirs in 2011, using it to help guide investment decisions, and creating a measure of certainty for local jurisdictions about where transit service will be. The adoption of transit emphasis corridors and the future network of Swift bus rapid transit has helped guide the agency as it completes the planning work associated with the next Swift line. Community Transit plans to update their long-range plan in early 2016 to reflect changes in economic conditions since adoption in 2011.



As mentioned in the previous section, King County Metro’s long-range plan, which kicked off in early 2015, will result in a shared vision for transit in King County that describes an integrated network of transportation options, the facilities and technology that support those services, and the financial requirements necessary to build and maintain this system. Metro’s long-range plan development schedule aligns with Sound Transit’s system plan development. This effort is supported by a technical advisory committee (comprised of staff from the region’s transit agencies and local jurisdictions) and a community advisory group.



Pierce Transit is hard at work on their long-range plan, Destination 2040. Pierce Transit is collaborating closely with the jurisdictions they serve, their partner transit agencies, and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), with a draft document available for public review and comment in summer 2015 and adoption anticipated by the Pierce Transit Board of Commissioners in September 2015.



Kitsap Transit is just beginning the long-range planning process and is aligning it with the 2016 schedule for updating comprehensive plans in Kitsap County.



EVERETT TRANSIT

Everett Transit is the only municipally-operated transit agency in the region and, as such, is waiting until the City of Everett’s comprehensive plan is adopted before undertaking a long-range plan.



At a statewide level, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is expecting to complete an update to the Statewide Public Transportation Plan this year. Washington State Ferries also expects to embark on updating their long range plan following the 2015 legislative session.



Finally, PSRC is beginning a process to update the transit component of the region's long-range transportation plan, Transportation 2040. The first part of this effort is articulating a regional vision for transit in central Puget Sound and will build off all of these agency-specific plans to create a more rational future transit network.

Long-range transit planning will support smarter service and capital investments that will ultimately get more people where they want to go and create a more seamless, integrated transit system for users.



