

Section 3: Agencies in the Region

This section gives an overview of the transportation system in the Puget Sound region, including other transit agencies that operate in the area as well as state and regional entities involved in transportation. This section helps to demonstrate Metro's role in the region's transportation system and how agencies work together in the system.

Information you'll find in this section:

- Transit Agencies in the Puget Sound Region
- Sound Transit
- Puget Sound Trends
- King County and Transportation
- About the Washington State Department of Transportation
- WSDOT Programs and Metro Transit
- About the Puget Sound Regional Council

Links to Additional Resource Materials:

- Community Transit: www.commtrans.org
- Everett Transit: www.everett.wa.org/default.aspx?ID=290
- Kitsap Transit: www.kitsaptransit.org
- Pierce Transit: www.piercetransit.org
- Sound Transit: www.soundtransit.org
- Washington State Ferries: www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries
- Puget Sound Regional Council: www.psrc.org
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT): www.wsdot.wa.gov
- WSDOT 2007 Key Facts: www.wsdot.wa.gov/About/KeyFacts/

Transit Agencies in the Puget Sound Region

Community Transit provides bus service in Snohomish County, operating 33 local and 31 commuter bus routes, carrying 57% of all Snohomish-Seattle commuters to work and back. In 2008, there were more than 11.8 million passenger trips on Community Transit buses. The agency serves a 1,305 square mile area and the nearly 500,000 residents in that service area. Community Transit currently collects a 0.9% sales tax to fund transit service in Snohomish County. In November 2009, Community Transit opened Swift, a bus rapid transit system serving the busy Highway 99 corridor between Everett and Shoreline with frequent service every 10 minutes. For more information: <http://www.commtrans.org/>



Everett Transit offers transportation in the City of Everett, including fixed-route and paratransit bus service. Everett Transit is funded through 0.6% sales tax. In 2008, Everett transit carried over 2.5 million riders on its 16 fixed-bus routes. For more information: <http://www.everettwa.org/default.aspx?ID=290>

Kitsap Transit is a public transportation benefit area and has been providing public transportation service since 1983. Kitsap Transit is funded through a 0.8% sales tax and operates fixed-route, paratransit, vanpool, dial-a-ride service, worker/driver subscription bus service and foot ferry service. There are 43 fixed routes operating Monday through Friday, 15 of which are commute-hour only routes, timed to meet ferries and during the weekends, 20-24 routes are in service with hourly headways. In 2008, Kitsap Transit experienced a 5% increase in ridership, carrying 3.6 million passengers. For more information: <http://www.kitsaptransit.org/>

Pierce Transit is a public transportation benefit area corporation, formed in 1979, to serve Pierce County residents. Funding for Pierce Transit is provided by a 0.6% sales tax. Pierce Transit provides 52 local bus routes, paratransit service, vanpool and ridematching programs. The agency also operates 11 Sound Transit routes and intercounty express service to Seattle, Sea-Tac Airport, and Olympia in cooperation with Sound Transit and Intercity Transit (Thurston County). Pierce Transit's fixed route system serves a 414 square mile area with an estimated population of 767,000. In 2008, Pierce Transit carried nearly 19 million passengers. For more information: <http://www.piercetransit.org/>

Sound Transit was created by the Washington State Legislature to build mass transit that connects major regional job and housing centers in King, Snohomish and Pierce counties. Sound Transit services include Central and Tacoma Link light rail, Sounder commuter rail, and Sound Transit Regional Express bus routes. Sound Transit is funded through a 0.4% sales tax and a 0.3% motor vehicle excise tax within the three-county region (Snohomish, Pierce and King counties). Through voter approval of the Sound Transit 2 plan, Sound Transit will be expanding light rail service within King County and into Snohomish County, as well as expanding Sounder and Regional express service. More detailed information on this agency is included on the following page. For more information: <http://www.soundtransit.org>

Washington State Ferries operates the largest ferry system in the United States. The ferry system includes 10 routes, crossing Puget Sound connecting Seattle to Bremerton and Bainbridge, Edmonds to Kingston and reaching the San Juan Islands and British Columbia. Washington State Ferries carried over 22 million walk-on and auto passengers along their routes in 2009. For more information:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/>

Sound Transit

Adapted from Sound Transit website: www.soundtransit.org

Sound Transit was created by the state legislature to build a mass transit system that connects major job and housing centers in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties. In 1996, voters approved a plan that provides the foundation of that system – regional express buses, commuter rail and light rail. Then, in November 2008, voters in urban King, Pierce and Snohomish counties approved adding 36 miles of light rail to the nearly 16-mile system that opened in 2009. Voters also approved a 17 percent expansion of ST Express bus service and increases to Sounder commuter rail service¹. Today, Sound Transit carries more than 18 million riders a year on its trains and buses.



- ST Express buses connect the region's major job and population centers. In addition, new transit centers, park-and-ride lots and HOV access projects improve transit speed and service. Operation of express bus service is provided via contracts with Community Transit, and Pierce Transit, with King County Metro operating both light rail and express bus service².
- Sounder commuter trains run 74 miles every weekday between Everett and Tacoma. On the north line, four round-trips connect Everett, Mukilteo and Edmonds with Seattle. On the south line, nine round-trips run between Tacoma, Puyallup, Sumner, Auburn, Kent, Tukwila and downtown Seattle; a future extension south to Lakewood is scheduled to open in 2012.
- Tacoma Link light rail trains began running in downtown Tacoma in 2003 and ridership quickly exceeded expectations.
- In 2009, trains began running on the Link light rail line between downtown Seattle and SeaTac International Airport. A light rail extension north to the University of Washington is under construction and scheduled to begin carrying passengers in 2016³.

Ridership

Total ridership for 2009 was 18.8 million boardings, an increase of 17% compared with 2008⁴.

Boardings by Service Type	Fourth Quarter			Year-to-Date Through December			2009 Annual SIP Projections ¹
	2008	2009	%Δ	2008	2009	%Δ	
ST Express Bus	3,243,391	3,332,836	3%	12,528,887	12,896,712	3%	13.2 mil.
Sounder Commuter Rail	700,034	621,270	-11%	2,668,623	2,492,362	-7%	3.1 mil.
Central Link	N/A	1,270,864	100%	N/A	2,501,211	100%	2.4 mil.
Paratransit	N/A	15,437	100%	N/A	31,030	100%	60,000
Tacoma Link	232,300	220,859	-5%	930,632	889,320	-4%	0.9 mil.
Total Boardings	4,175,725	5,461,265	31%	16,128,142	18,810,635	17%	19.7 mil.
Average Weekday Bdgs	57,602	72,248	25%	55,953	63,719	14%	74,718

¹-Annual projections established in the 2009 Service Implementation Plan (SIP) starting third quarter include Central Link and Paratransit projections.

¹ Sound Transit: About Us. <http://www.soundtransit.org/About-Us.xml>

² Sound Transit 2009 Adopted Budget

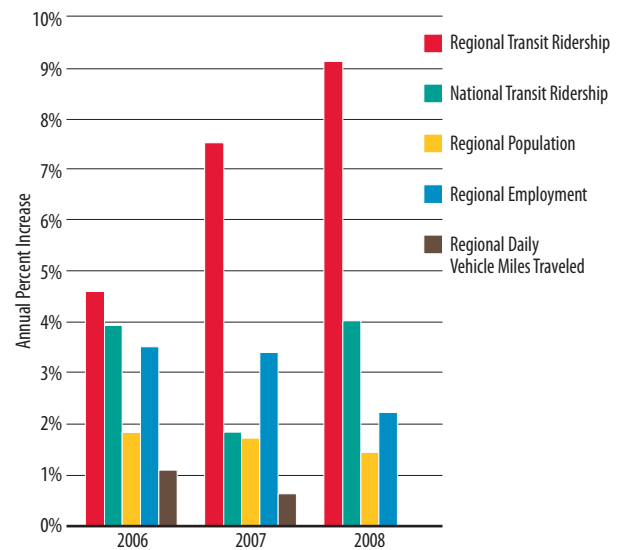
³ Sound Transit: About Us. <http://www.soundtransit.org/About-Us.xml>

⁴ Sound Transit 2009 Quarterly Ridership Report, <http://www.soundtransit.org/News-and-Events/Service-News/Quarterly-Ridership.xml>

Transit Ridership

During the last four years, transit ridership in the region grew a total of 23%, outpacing a strong national increase in transit ridership of 10%. This increase in transit ridership appears to be due to the large increase in gasoline prices. Transit ridership increased more than regional population, employment, transit service and highway usage by automobiles. Gasoline prices for the Seattle area were about \$2.45 in June 2005 and rose to about \$4.35 at the pump for a gallon of regular gas in June 2008, then fell sharply to below \$1.90 by the end of 2008 (seattlegasprices.com). The increase in regional transit ridership exceeded population growth of 5%, employment growth of 9% and transit service hours increase of 4% during the same four years (see Figure 1 and Table 1). Regional transit ridership grew 5% and 8% for 2006 and 2007, respectively, growing faster than regional daily vehicle miles traveled, which increased 1% for the same two years.

Figure 1. Annual Growth Trends



Sources: American Public Transportation Association Ridership Reports, Washington State Office of Financial Management, Washington State Employment Security Department, Washington State Department of Transportation Highway Performance Monitoring System

Table 1. Regional Annual Service Hours, 2005-2008

Year	King County Metro	Sound Transit Bus	Sound Transit Commuter Rail	Sound Transit Tacoma Link	Pierce Transit	Community Transit	Kitsap Transit	Everett Transit	Regional Total
2005	3,097,000	418,000	14,000	10,100	669,000	539,000	144,000	90,000	4,983,000
2006	2,968,000	424,000	17,000	10,200	670,000	551,000	135,000	101,000	4,875,000
2007	3,098,000	523,000	19,000	10,000	700,000	568,000	136,000	106,000	5,159,000
2008*	3,115,000	489,000	32,000	10,200	728,000	575,000	134,000	107,000	5,190,000
Percent Increase in Annual Service Hours from Previous Year									
2006	-4%	1%	21%	1%	0%	2%	-6%	12%	-2%
2007	4%	23%	12%	-2%	4%	3%	1%	5%	6%
2008*	1%	-7%	68%	2%	4%	1%	-1%	1%	1%
Percent Increase in Annual Service Hours, 2005-2008									
2005-2008	1%	17%	129%	1%	9%	7%	-7%	19%	4%

* Year 2008 service hours estimated.

Source: WSDOT Summary of Public Transportation 2007

PSRC collects transit ridership data from area transit agencies' monthly and quarterly ridership counts. These data are supplemented by annual WSDOT Summary of Public Transportation reports that are issued annually.

Transit ridership has increased for most of the region's transit agencies. Sound Transit bus ridership has increased 42%, due in large part to a 17% increase in service (see Table 1). Sounder commuter rail, which started in September 2000, increased its ridership by 110% over the last four years and grew 24% during 2008 (see Table 2). The Tacoma Link light rail, which started in January 2004 in downtown Tacoma, has experienced a 5% growth in ridership over the last four years.

Table 2. Regional Annual Transit Ridership, 2005–2008

Year	King County Metro	Sound Transit Bus	Sound Transit Commuter Rail	Sound Transit Tacoma Link	Pierce Transit	Community Transit	Kitsap Transit	Everett Transit	Regional Total
2005	98,957,000	8,816,000	1,268,000	885,000	12,263,000	7,853,000	3,672,000	1,957,000	135,671,000
2006	103,242,000	9,603,000	1,683,000	873,000	12,429,000	8,437,000	3,497,000	2,107,000	141,871,000
2007	110,600,000	10,689,000	2,157,000	919,000	13,323,000	9,059,000	3,486,000	2,228,000	152,461,000
2008	118,825,000	12,529,000	2,669,000	931,000	14,998,000	10,192,000	3,667,000	2,517,000	166,328,000
Percent Increase in Ridership from Previous Year									
2006	4%	9%	33%	-1%	1%	7%	-5%	8%	5%
2007	7%	11%	28%	5%	7%	7%	0%	6%	7%
2008	7%	17%	24%	1%	13%	13%	5%	13%	9%
Percent Increase in Ridership, 2005–2008									
2005–2008	20%	42%	110%	5%	22%	30%	0%	29%	23%

Source: Transit agency monthly and quarterly reports

Pierce Transit, Community Transit and Everett Transit ridership grew 22%, 30%, and 29% respectively, exceeding the regional average. Only Kitsap Transit showed no significant change in transit ridership over the past four years. This was mostly due to a substantial fare increase in February of 2006 and a smaller fare increase in August of 2008. There was also a small decline in service of 7% during the same time period.

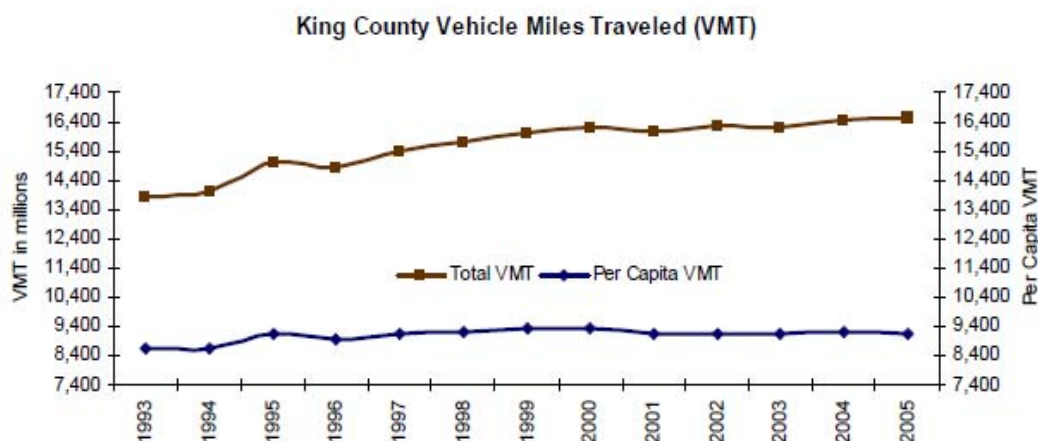
Copies of this *Trend* are available on the web at psrc.org or from the Information Center at 206-464-7532 or info@psrc.org. For more information, contact Mark Charnews at 206-971-3285 or mcharnews@psrc.org.

King County and Transportation

(Adapted from 2008 and 2009 King County Annual Growth Report)

Vehicle Miles Traveled

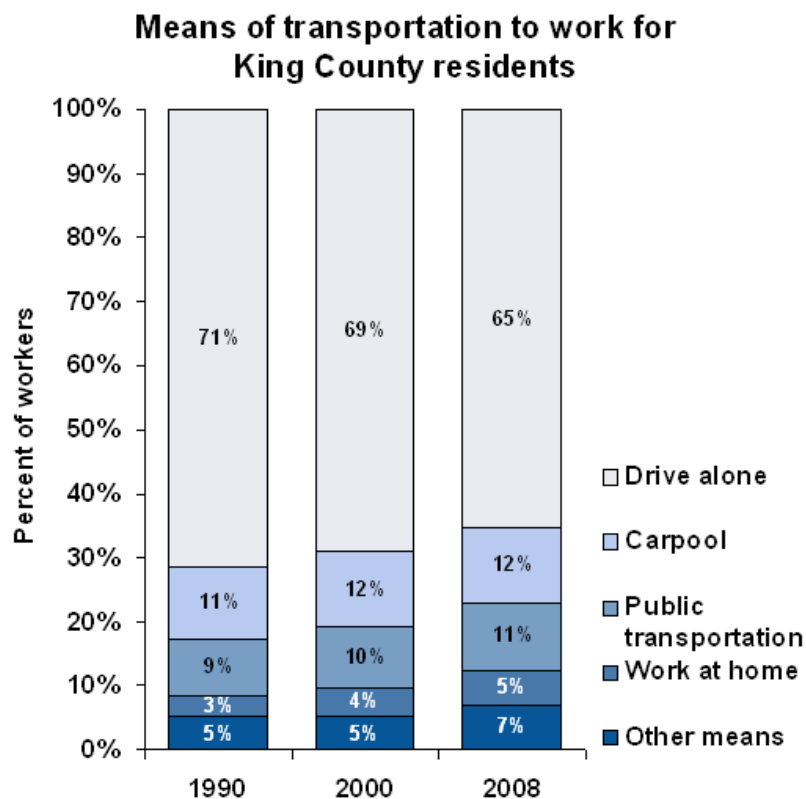
Total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) has crept ahead slightly since 1995. Per capita VMT has been on a nominal downward trend since 1999.



Percent of residents who commute by means other than single-occupancy vehicles

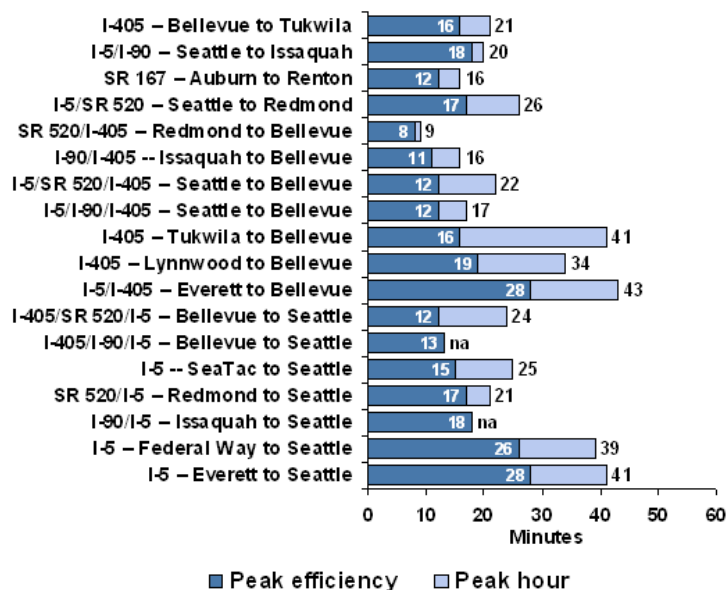
This indicator estimates the number of King County residents who use modes of transportation other than the single occupancy vehicle as a means of transportation to work.

- Percent of King County residents who use public transit as their means of transportation to work: 10.7% (2008)
- Percent of King County residents who carpool to work: 11.5% (2008)
- Percent of King County residents who walk to work: 4.4% (2008)
- Percent of King County residents who bicycle to work: 1.3% (2008)



Average commute lengths for major destinations in King County

Peak efficiency travel time and peak hour travel time for major morning commute routes (2008)



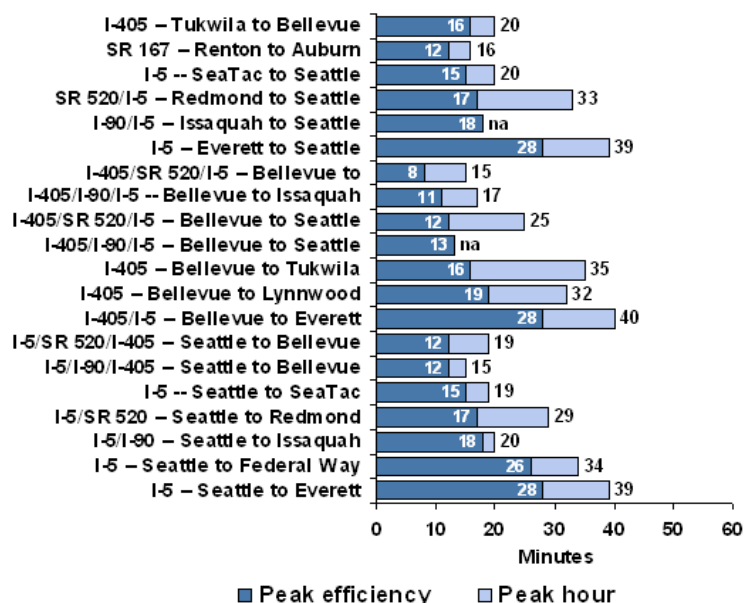
This indicator estimates the length of typical morning and evening commutes in King County; as compared with peak efficient commute length.

Commute times decline on most morning commute and evening commute routes from 2007 to 2008

- Disparity between peak efficient travel time and peak morning hour commute time from Tukwila to Bellevue on I-405: 156% (2008)
- Average speed of travel during morning hour commute from Tukwila to Bellevue on I-405: 20 m.p.h. (2008)

Last updated December 2009

Peak efficiency travel time and peak hour travel time for major evening commute routes (2008)



For more information on the 2008/2009 Annual Growth Report and Benchmark Highlights:

Annual Growth Report:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/strategy/PerformMgmt/KCGrowthReport.aspx>

Benchmark Highlights

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/exec/strategy/PerformMgmt/BenchmarkProgram.aspx>

About the Washington State Department of Transportation

(Adapted from WSDOT website: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/about/>)

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is the steward of a large and robust transportation system, and is responsible for ensuring that people and goods move safely and efficiently. In addition to building, maintaining, and operating the state highway system, WSDOT is responsible for the state ferry system, and works in partnership with others to maintain and improve local roads, railroads, airports, and multi-modal alternatives to driving.

WSDOT works towards achieving five goals: safety, preservation, mobility, environmental quality, and system stewardship. These goals are consistent with the statewide transportation policy goals established by the Legislature for all transportation agencies.

WSDOT, working closely with private contractors, is in the midst of delivering the largest capital construction program in our history—more than \$15 billion in projects, including 391 highway projects valued at \$11 billion. Currently, we are in year five of this twenty-year program.

As WSDOT delivers transportation services, we also work to preserve environmental quality. Programs such as stormwater treatment, construction site erosion control, fish passage barrier removal, wetland replacement, air pollution control, and adaptation to climate change are important to the future health and safety of citizens. Each helps protect priceless natural resources.

WSDOT's diverse programs and projects are supported by 7,200 full-time employees, including engineers, vessel captains, maintenance technicians, environmental specialists, planners, and many others. We take pride in our workforce and strive for excellence and integrity in everything we do.

WSDOT at a Glance:

- 18,389 state highway lane-miles
- 3,600 bridges, including the four longest floating bridges in the United States
- 47 safety rest areas
- 23 ferry vessels active in the largest vehicle-ferry system in the world
- 20 ferry terminals
- 24 million ferry passengers annually
- \$15 billion capital improvement program
- 7,200 full-time employees

WSDOT Programs and Metro Transit

The Washington State Department of Transportation is responsible for several programs and services that are important to King County Metro operations.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes are freeway lanes reserved for the use of carpools, vanpools and buses. WSDOT manages and builds Washington State's HOV lane system which, as of 2006, includes 195 miles of completed HOV lanes of a planned 300 mile HOV lane system. WSDOT also monitors and evaluates HOV lane speed, travel time reliability and person throughput on an ongoing basis¹.

HOV lanes improve the efficiency of the transportation system by carrying more people. HOV lanes provide a benefit to transit providers and bus riders by helping to maintain transit speed and reliability through several congested corridors. HOV lanes also improve the competitiveness of transit service and reduce vehicle miles traveled. Several routes in Metro's transit system use Interstate 5, Interstate 405, Interstate I-90 and State Route 520 HOV lanes to provide riders with a faster, more reliable trip to major destinations in the county including downtown Seattle, Bellevue, Redmond, and the University of Washington.

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is an umbrella term for strategies that encourage the use of carpools, vanpools, buses, bicycling and walking as well as discouraging single-occupant vehicle use. WSDOT manages several TDM programs including: Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Program, Rideshare Tax Credits, Vanpool grants, Regional Mobility grants, Park and Ride lots and construction mitigation².

- **CTR, Rideshare Tax Credits, Vanpool grants:** King County Metro plays an important role in several of these programs by providing employers with transit pass programs to help them meet requirements of the CTR law. Rideshare Tax Credits is a program through which Metro provides transit pass programs and vanpools, enabling employers to provide financial incentives for use of public transportation, vanpool or non-motorized transportation. The Vanpool grant program provides transit agencies throughout the state with the opportunity to expand vanpool fleets. Through this program, King County Metro has expanded its fleet of vanpools.
- **Regional Mobility grants** fund local government projects such as park and ride lots, peak hour transit service and projects that improve connectivity. Through the use of one of these grants, Metro expanded the Brickyard Park and Ride in east King County, improving access for users and providing additional stalls at this busy facility. In fall 2009, King County Metro also received a regional mobility grant to improve Route 245 service between Kirkland, Overlake and Eastgate/Factoria, investing peak-period frequencies improvements in this corridor

¹ 2007 WSDOT Key Facts: www.wsdot.wa.gov/HOV

² 2007 WSDOT Key Facts: www.wsdot.gov/TDM/TRPP

- **Park and Ride lot program** is managed by WSDOT. Park and ride lots are built, owned and operated by multiple agencies including Sound Transit, Metro and local jurisdictions. WSDOT's role in the process is to help develop partnerships to expand capacity of these lots and to locate the lots where they provide the most benefit for the transportation system. Park and rides are available throughout Metro's service area. As of the end of 2009 King County Metro had 130 operating Park and Rides within King County Metro Transit service area.
- **The Construction Mitigation program** encourages travelers to carpool, vanpool or take the bus to minimize construction-related congestion and maintain traffic flow. Metro is often a partner in construction mitigation programs, providing additional service in the affected corridor to encourage transit use. Over the past three years, King County Metro has collaborated with WSDOT to mitigate congestion impacts due to construction in the I-405 corridor. By agreement between the agencies, WSDOT funded additional transit service, which was designed and implemented by Metro. Two new routes were added - one between Kenmore and Overlake, and one between Totem Lake and Downtown Bellevue - and additional service was added to another existing route to provide more capacity and more attractive service as an alternative to driving through the construction area.

Electronic Tolling

WSDOT operates Good To Go!, a high-tech toll collection system that allows customers to pay tolls electronically. WSDOT is planning to implement this system on State Route 520 in spring 2011. Tolling the SR520 corridor is expected to have travel-time benefits for both transit and general purpose traffic and result in less congestion in the corridor. Increased transit service will provide a viable alternative to driving, giving all residents, including low-income groups, more opportunities to use fast and frequent transit service for cross-lake travel.

About the Puget Sound Regional Council

Adapted from Puget Sound Regional Council website: www.psrc.org

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, collectively known as the central Puget Sound Region. As the MPO the PSRC must conduct a metropolitan planning process according to federal guidelines in order for federal transportation funds to be distributed to the region.

Major Functions:

The major functions of the MPO are as follows

1. Develop a long-range transportation plan that:
 - Identifies transportation facilities, including major roadways, transit and multi-modal and intermodal facilities
 - Include a financial plan
 - Assess capital investments and other measures necessary to ensure the preservation of the system and make the most efficient use of the existing transportation facilities
 - Indicate proposed transportation enhancement activities.
2. Develop and maintain a transportation improvement program and allocate certain federal funds including Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), STP and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. Programs in the transportation improvement program must include all regionally significant projects, regardless of funding source. These projects must be consistent with the long-range plan.
3. Develop a congestion management process for the Puget Sound region.
4. Comply with all National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), and Clean Air Act regulations in the planning process and consult other environmental and resource agencies as appropriate.
5. Develop a unified planning work program for the region.

PSRC Mission and Plans:

The PSRC has defined its mission as “playing a key regional role in keeping central Puget Sound thriving as we grow. PSRC is committed to creating a great future for the region through planning for regional transportation, land use and economic development, under authority embodied in state and federal laws.”

In coordination with other local government, business and citizens the PSRC has develop the region’s strategy for addressing anticipated growth of population and employment through the Vision 2040 plan. Vision 2040 describes how and where the region can grow while also supporting the well-being of people and communities, economic prosperity and a healthy environment.

As a companion plan to Vision 2040 the PSRC is developing a new long-range transportation plan, “Transportation 2040” which will outline the investments and strategies needed to keep the region moving as we grow.

Along with the development and transportation plans of Vision and Transportation 2040, the PSRC, along with public and private groups is also helping advance a regional economic strategy that will enhance the region’s economic vitality through the “Prosperity Partnership.

PSRC Governance:

The PSRC is governed by a General Assembly and an Executive Board. Each member of PSRC is a voting member of the General Assembly, which meets at least annually to vote on major decisions, establish the budget, and elect new officers. The Executive Board is chaired by the PSRC President, meets monthly, and serves as the governing board. Both the General Assembly and Executive Board use weighted votes based on population to make decisions.



The Transportation Policy Board and Growth Management Policy Board include representatives of PSRC's member jurisdictions, tribes, regional business, labor, civic, and environmental groups, as well as voting members representing each caucus of the state Legislature. These boards make recommendations on key transportation and growth management issues to the Executive Board.

PSRC also supports the work of the region's Economic Development District, governed by a board composed of public and private members that meets quarterly to coordinate regional economic development planning.

More information on PSRC can be found on their website at:

<http://psrc.org/about>