TRANSPORTATION

The Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040 identifies a network of walkable, compact, and transit-oriented communities that are the focus of urban development, as well as industrial areas with major employment concentrations. In the Countywide Planning Policies, these communities include countywide designated Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers, and locally designated local centers. An essential component of the Regional Growth Strategy is an efficient transportation system that provides multiple options for moving people and goods into and among the various centers. Transportation system, in the context of this chapter, is defined as a comprehensive, integrated network of travel modes (e.g. airplanes, automobiles, bicycles, buses, feet, ferries, freighters, trains, trucks) and infrastructure (e.g. sidewalks, trails, streets, arterials, highways, waterways, railways, airports) for the movement of people and goods on a local, regional, national and global scale.

Goals and policies in this chapter build on the 1992 King County Countywide Planning Policies and the Multicounty Planning Policies in VISION 2040. Policies are organized into three sections:

- Supporting Growth – focusing on serving the region with a transportation system that furthers the regional growth strategy;
- Mobility – addressing the full range of travel modes necessary to move people and goods efficiently within the region and beyond; and
- System Operations – encompassing the design, maintenance and operation of the transportation system to provide for safety, efficiency, and sustainability.

**Overarching Goal:** The region is well served by an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that supports the regional vision for growth, efficiently moves people and goods, and is environmentally and functionally sustainable over the long term.

**Supporting Growth**

An effective transportation system is critical to achieving the Regional Growth Strategy and ensuring that centers are functional and appealing to the residents and businesses they are designed to attract. The policies in this section reinforce the critical relationship between development patterns and transportation and they are intended to guide transportation investments from all levels of government that effectively support local, county and regional plans to accommodate growth. Policies in this section take a multi-modal approach to serving growth, with additional emphasis on transit and non-motorized modes to support planned development in centers.

**Goal Statement:** Local and regional development of the transportation system is consistent with and furthers realization of the regional growth strategy.
T-1  Work cooperatively with the Puget Sound Regional Council, the state, and other relevant agencies to finance and develop a multi-modal transportation system that enhances regional mobility and reinforces the countywide vision for managing growth. Use VISION 2040 and Transportation 2040 as the policy and funding framework for creating a system of Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers linked by high-capacity transit, bus transit and an interconnected system of freeways and high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

T-2  Avoid construction of major roads and capacity expansion on existing roads in the Rural Area and Resource Lands. Where increased roadway capacity is warranted to support safe and efficient travel through the Rural Area, appropriate rural development regulations and effective access management should be in place prior to authorizing such capacity expansion in order to make more efficient use of existing roadway capacity and prevent unplanned growth in the Rural Area.

T-3  Increase the share of trips made countywide by modes other than driving alone through coordinated land use planning, public and private investment, and programs focused on centers and connecting corridors, consistent with locally adopted mode split goals.

T-4  Develop station area plans for high capacity transit stations and transit hubs. Plans should reflect the unique characteristics and local vision for each station area including transit supportive land uses, transit rights-of-way, stations and related facilities, multi-modal linkages, and place-making elements.

T-5  Support countywide growth management objectives by prioritizing transit service to areas where existing housing and employment densities support transit ridership and to Urban Centers and other areas planned for housing and employment densities that will support transit ridership. Address the mobility needs of transit-dependent populations in allocating transit service and provide at least a basic level of service throughout the Urban Growth Area.

T-6  Foster transit ridership by designing transit facilities and services as well as non-motorized infrastructure so that they are integrated with public spaces and private developments to create an inviting public realm.

T-7  Ensure state capital improvement policies and actions are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and support VISION 2040 and the Countywide Planning Policies.

T-8  Prioritize regional and local funding to transportation investments that support adopted growth targets.

Mobility
Mobility is necessary to sustain personal quality of life and the regional economy. For individuals, mobility requires an effective transportation system that provides safe, reliable, and affordable travel options for people of all ages, incomes and abilities. While the majority of people continue to travel by personal automobile, there are growing segments of the population (e.g. elderly, teens, low income, minorities, and persons with disabilities) that rely on other modes of travel such as walking, bicycling, and public transportation to access employment, education and training, goods and services. According to the 2009 American Community Survey, 8.7 percent of all households in King County had no vehicle available. For many minority populations, more than 20 percent of households in King County have no vehicle available to them. For certain minority groups (e.g. Asian-Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, and Native American) the percentage of households with no vehicle available is generally greater.

The movement of goods is also of vital importance to the local and regional economy. International trade is a significant source of employment and economic activity in terms of transporting freight, local consumption, and exporting of goods. The policies in this section are intended to address use and integration of the multiple modes necessary to move people and goods within and beyond the region. The importance of the roadway network, implicit in the policies of this section, is addressed more specifically in the System Operations section of this chapter.

**Goal Statement:** A well-integrated, multi-modal transportation system transports people and goods effectively and efficiently to destinations within the region and beyond.

**T-9** Promote the mobility of people and goods through a multi-modal transportation system based on regional priorities consistent with VISION 2040 and local comprehensive plans.

**T-10** Support effective management of existing air, marine and rail transportation capacity and address future capacity needs in cooperation with responsible agencies, affected communities, and users.

**T-11** Develop and implement freight mobility strategies that strengthen King County’s role as a major regional freight distribution hub, an international trade gateway, and a manufacturing area.

**T-12** Address the needs of non-driving populations in the development and management of local and regional transportation systems.

**T-13** Site and design transit stations and transit hubs to promote connectivity and access for pedestrian and bicycle patrons.

**System Operations**
The design, management and operation of the transportation system are major factors that influence the region’s growth and mobility. Policies in this section stress the need to make efficient use of the existing infrastructure, serve the broad needs of the users, address safety and public health issues, and design facilities that are a good fit for the surroundings. Implementation of the policies will require the use of a wide range of tools including, but not limited to:

- technologies such as intelligent transportation systems and alternative fuels;
- demand management programs for parking, commute trip reduction and congestion; and
- incentives, pricing systems and other strategies to encourage choices that serve a common good such as public health and environmental sustainability.

Goal Statement: The regional transportation system is well-designed and managed to protect public investments, promote public health and safety, and achieve optimum efficiency.

T-14 Prioritize essential maintenance, preservation, and safety improvements of the existing transportation system to protect mobility and avoid more costly replacement projects.

T-15 Design and operate transportation facilities in a manner that is compatible with and integrated into the natural and built environments in which they are located. Incorporate features such as natural drainage, native plantings, and local design themes that facilitate integration and compatibility.

T-16 Protect the transportation system (e.g. roadway, rail, transit, air, and marine) against major disruptions by developing prevention and recovery strategies and by coordinating disaster response plans.

T-17 Promote the use of tolling and other pricing strategies to effectively manage the transportation system, provide a stable and sustainable transportation funding source, and improve mobility.

T-18 Develop a countywide monitoring system to determine how transportation investments are performing over time consistent with Transportation 2040 recommendations.

T-19 Design roads and streets, including retrofit projects, to accommodate a range of motorized and non-motorized travel modes in order to reduce injuries and fatalities and to encourage non-motorized travel. The design should include well-defined, safe and appealing spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists.

T-20 Develop a transportation system that minimizes negative impacts to human health, including exposure to environmental toxins generated by vehicle emissions.
T-21 Provide opportunities for an active, healthy lifestyle by integrating the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in the local and regional transportation plans and systems.

T-22 Plan and develop a countywide transportation system that reduces greenhouse gas emissions by advancing strategies that shorten trip length or replace vehicle trips to decrease vehicle miles traveled.

T-23 Apply technologies, programs and other strategies that optimize the use of existing infrastructure in order to improve mobility, reduce congestion, increase energy-efficiency, and reduce the need for new infrastructure.

T-24 Promote the expanded use of alternative fuel vehicles by the general public with measures such as converting public and private fleets, applying incentive programs, and providing for electric vehicle charging stations throughout the Urban Growth Area.