Approved by the Executive Board February 16, 2023

Biennial Currency Review of the PRTPO Regional Transportation Plan

PRTPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was updated and adopted by the Executive Board in October 2019. Per a statutory requirement in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 47.80.030(2), PRTPO must review the RTP every two years for currency and forward this biennial review to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). That is the rationale for this 2023 biennial currency review.

2023 Statement of Currency

PRTPO's Regional Transportation Plan is current with all state requirements. It has continued to support the Executive Board's planning and decision-making processes these last two years. However, an update is warranted to ensure the RTP continues to provide strategic guidance to PRTPO in developing its annual work program into the future. This is the first RTP update since PRTPO transitioned to an independent, self-governing organization. This update will identify regional issues, opportunities, and strategies for further investigation. The update is underway and will be complete by June 30, 2025.

The next biennial review will occur in late 2025.

Biennial Review Documentation

PRTPO's biennial review involves two tests to assess whether the Regional Transportation Plan is still current and useful for its intended purpose:

1 – It continues to meet minimum RCW and WAC requirements

2 – It continues to support PRTPO's work program and decision-making activities

The following brief documents findings of these two tests and supports PRTPO's assertion that while the RTP continues to meet minimum RCW and WAC requirements, an update is warranted.

1. Meet Minimum RCW and WAC Requirements

Finding: PRTPO's Regional Transportation Plan continues to meet minimum state requirements.

Requirements spelled out in RCW 47.80.030 and in WAC 468-86-080 through 468-86-140 describe the elements of a statutorily compliant Regional Transportation Plan for state RTPOs. Numerous requirements are only applicable to large metropolitan areas. This biennial currency review of PRTPO's long-range plan looks for regionally significant changes in the last two years that render some or all of the required elements in the existing RTP out of compliance with those minimum requirements. Statutory requirements of the legislation and administrative code are summarized below.

a. Identify existing and planned facilities of regional significance

Have plans for new regionally significant facilities been developed in the last two years that were not included in the RTP?

No plans for new regionally significant facilities or services have been introduced in the last two years.

b. Establish level of service for state highways of regional significance

Have changes been made to LOS standards on state highways of regional significance in the last two years?

No changes have been made to established Level of Service standards on state highways of regional significance in the last two years. PRTPO continues to monitor WSDOT discussions about potential future changes to LOS on the state system through its Olympic Region partners.

c. Include a financial plan

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to the financial plan?

No significant changes to revenue sources have occurred in the last two years that can be reasonably forecasted in the RTP. There are unprecedented funding opportunities currently but no indication that this condition represents a permanent state of future revenue streams other than from emissions and carbon markets, which PRTPO cannot reasonably forecast. Similarly, an alternative to the gas tax is likely in the next 20-30 years but there is no way to reasonably estimate that for a long-range plan such as the RTP.

d. Promote preservation and efficiency of existing system

Have any changes in the last two years reduced the RTP's support for system preservation and efficiency?

No, the RTP continues to emphasize the importance of system preservation and efficiency.

e. Regional transportation goals and objectives

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to any of the RTP goals and objectives?

Current RTP goals and policies address all statutorily required elements of RCW 47.80 and are consistent with the GMA Comprehensive Plans of PRTPO's members. Goals and policies are widely used by members to demonstrate coordination between regional and local or tribal plans. The review and update currently underway may introduce some new objectives to guide PRTPO's strategic decision-making.

f. Regional transportation strategy

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to the regional transportation strategy?

No changes to the transportation strategy or fundamental approach to coordinated regional transportation planning have been introduced in the last two years. Any new insights from the update currently underway will be reflected in future documents.

g. Needs, deficiencies, data requirements, and assumptions

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to any of these elements?

- Existing regional transportation facilities and services
- Identification of regional transportation needs
- Forecasts of future travel demand
- Future regional transportation system deficiencies
- Common regional assumptions used for modeling purposes

No significant changes have undermined the inventory and long-range assessments of system needs. PRTPO does not conduct travel demand forecasting or modeling for the four-county region. PRTPO is exploring future uncertainties that may inform the regional assessment of regional transportation needs in the future.

h. Have new performance monitoring metrics been identified to augment traffic volumes and vehicle miles of travel (VMT), which the RTP already includes?

PRTPO has not adopted any new regional performance metrics in the last two years.

i. Have regional growth patterns and adopted land use plans changed sufficiently that the RTP is no longer consistent with local Comprehensive Plans?

No regionally significant changes to local land use plans were proposed in the last two years.

j. Least cost planning

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to PRTPO's least cost planning approach for the RTP?

PRTPO's advocacy for responsible, cost-effective strategies and investments, including emphasis on system preservation and multimodal efficiency, is still appropriate for the region.

2. Support for PRTPO Work Program and Decision-Making

Finding: While it continues to support work program direction, an update to PRTPO's Regional Transportation Plan will ensure it continues to support the Board's planning and decision-making processes over the next several years and better integrate it into the on-going regional transportation work program.

The second test to demonstrate currency of the existing RTP is whether it adequately supports the Executive Board in developing the regional transportation work program and in its decision-making processes. This test of the Biennial Currency Review is relevant to the RTP review and update currently underway. This is the first opportunity since becoming a self-directed organization for PRTPO to identify regionally significant issue areas for further follow-up and collaboration.

a. Work Program Support

The RTP supports the Board in directing planning activities identified in its Unified Planning Work Program. The following illustrates ways in which PRTPO's work program activities over the last two years were informed by four big RTP interests.

- **Funding Priorities Align with RTP Priorities:** PRTPO continues to support local efforts at building and operating an integrated multimodal transportation system with investments that support biking and walking, local and intercity bus travel, access to and from ferry terminals, and system preservation and safety. Project recommendations help to retrofit old highway-oriented infrastructure to accommodate all modes of travel and ensure access to services for people of all abilities. Education and information sharing increases awareness and support for vital programs.
- **Support Electric Vehicles and GHG Reduction:** PRTPO periodically convenes an EV Infrastructure Exchange Group to network with other stakeholders across the region while learning about some new topic or ZEV program. This has spawned follow-up activities for members and others including joint

grant pursuits, coordinated EV planning between tribes and PUDs, and even statewide activities regarding the Clean Fuel Standards program.

- **Increase Operational Efficiency of the Existing System:** PRTPO recognizes the need for a review of policies regarding the opening of the Hood Canal Bridge to let over-sized recreational sailboats to pass. PRTPO is working to obtain information that quantifies the delay and economic impacts associated with such openings. PRTPO is encouraging state and federal officials to work with the Coast Guard to ensure policies for recreational openings of the bridge align with state interests.
- **Make Efficient Use of Existing Resources:** PRTPO supports efforts to defederalize small local projects administered by rural agencies as a practical means of increasing cost-effective and timely project delivery. Through its work program PRTPO has facilitated federal funding training, educated legislators on the need for a more rational approach to managing the state's federal funds, and coordinated with members and allies to advance workable strategies.
- **Make Information and Opportunities for Engagement Accessible to All:** PRTPO maintains a website with the primary purpose of making regional information and resources readily accessible to members and the public. This includes some rudimentary online GIS capabilities that enhance communications, and development of a regional profile of population, socio-economic, and household travel characteristics to support on-going planning and information sharing. PRTPO meets annually with its legislative representatives to keep them apprised of regional activities and maintain open lines of communication and produces an annual information piece to support that effort. An important aim of the RTP update is to translate it to a more accessible online format, in furtherance of this objective.

While it has supported the Board's work these last two years, an update to the RTP at this time will ensure it continues to offer effective support into the future. Increasingly the Executive Board and Technical Advisory Committee are probing questions related to resilience, rural accessibility, new partnerships, and future uncertainties. This update will provide PRTPO with a strategic action plan to guide regional inquiries and collaborations around topics of far-reaching significance. The aim is to strengthen the relationship between the RTP and PRTPO's on-going work program and other planning activities.

b. Decision-making Support

Demonstration of how the RTP supports Executive Board decision-making is evident in Transportation Outlook priorities PRTPO develops annually to educate legislators about regional concerns. Topics can be traced back to underlying RTP goals and objectives that have guided this region for many years. All projects identified in the 2024 *Transportation Outlook* are also consistent with and supportive of the RTP.

One aim of the update currently underway is to strengthen linkages between the long-range regional plan and near-term education and planning activities. What shape that takes will be determined by PRTPO over the next 18 months.

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