

Growing Transit Communities:

A Corridor Action Strategy for the Central Puget Sound Region



PROGRAM PARTNERS

- A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH)
- City of Bellevue
- Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC)
- Community Development Collaborative/
Impact Capital Equity Partnership
- City of Everett
- King County
- King County Housing Authority
- North Seattle Community College
- Public Health – Seattle & King County
- Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
- City of Redmond
- City of Seattle
- Seattle Housing Authority
- City of Tacoma
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
- UW – Runstad Center
- ULI – Seattle District Council

With support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program, PSRC will coordinate an innovative new regional partnership joining cities, housing authorities, counties, public health agencies, affordable housing advocates, educational institutions and development interests.

The 3-year, \$5 million federal grant will support efforts to capitalize on the more than \$15 billion investment in new high capacity transit systems serving places where job and housing growth will be focused in the future. The new program — *Growing Transit Communities: A Corridor Action Strategy for the Central Puget Sound Region* — will support neighborhood planning for more sustainable communities around as many as 100 new transit centers that are expected in the region in the next 20 years. The new program will take a big picture approach, ultimately putting jobs and opportunity closer to where people live, while sustaining a healthy environment and a healthy economy in the decades to come.

This HUD Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities grant provides an opportunity to address some of the greatest barriers to implementing our regional plans — VISION 2040, Transportation 2040, the Regional Economic Strategy — and securing equitable outcomes. A significant goal of this program is to identify unique roles and opportunities associated with transit investments through the coordination and direct involvement of a wider array of stakeholders, both public and private.

The tools and templates in this new program will greatly improve the region’s capacity to foster compact, equitable development

where we want it, while providing affordable housing, reduced transportation costs, better environmental outcomes, and access to jobs for low-income households and communities of color in areas receiving major transit and housing investments.

The project team will be comprised of existing PSRC staff, new staff members funded by the grant, with additional support from a wide variety of local jurisdictions, agencies, organizations, and businesses.

Corridor Action Strategies. The new regional program will develop specific actions and tools support equitable, sustainable communities in the region's high capacity light rail corridors. Coordinated agreements between cities, employers, community groups and transit providers will lay out approaches to developing in areas associated with LINK light rail investments. Task forces will craft transit-oriented development compacts and identify specific steps to coordinate development, housing, jobs, and community amenities that will help attract transit-oriented development along the North, East, and South LINK light rail corridors. (Approximately \$2,000,000)

Key issues will be addressed to support these Corridor Action Strategies, including more effective community involvement in planning for change associated with major transit investments, tools for housing affordability, and better ways to visualize and communicate development options and impacts. On the ground demonstration projects will show what it means to develop a sustainable community. To confront these issues, the program will support:

- **A New Approach to Participation.** A Regional Equity Network will provide resources to promote equitable local community planning and engagement. Dedicated regional staff will help to mobilize residents and community groups representing diverse populations to participate in local planning and decision-making. Sub-grants will be available to community organizations to engage their communities. *(Approximately \$700,000)*
- **A New Emphasis on Affordable Housing.** An Affordable Housing Action Strategy will test, recommend, and implement local policies and financial tools to encourage and facilitate a wide variety of housing choices along light rail corridors. *(Approximately \$1,000,000)*
- **Innovative Tools and Demonstration Projects.** The program will develop new tools — including a computer visualization tool called *Decision Commons* — to assist local communities in planning, decision-making, and building local support for sustainable development. Catalyst demonstration and case study projects in light rail corridor neighborhoods (Northgate in Seattle, and Tacoma's South Downtown) will implement existing plans and serve as templates for sustainable development. In Tacoma, an innovative area-wide pre-development environmental review will identify how to address environmental and community issues, reducing risks for projects and implementation timelines. The Northgate project will unite workforce housing, enhanced multimodal access for transit users, and a range of bicycle and pedestrian improvements to tie in to the transit station and help transform the area into a full-fledged urban center. *(Approximately \$1,250,000 – Northgate \$500,000; Tacoma South Downtown \$500,000; Decision Commons \$250,000)*

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