

February 17, 2015

To: Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact Signatories
From: Sara Maxana, Principal Planner
Subject: Implementing the Growing Transit Communities Strategy in Local Comprehensive Plans

The Growing Transit Communities (GTC) Strategy is a framework of goals and actions that work toward a shared vision of thriving and equitable communities around the region's major transit investments. As a signatory to the Regional GTC Compact, your jurisdiction, like many others as well as PSRC itself, has committed to doing its part to advance the Strategy. The update to your comprehensive plan, which is due to be completed in June of this year, is an important opportunity to address the actions recommended in the GTC Strategy for local governments.

Many jurisdictions are nearing the end of their comprehensive plan update process. Hopefully the data, analyses, and recommendations in the GTC Strategy have been helpful in the development of those updates. This memo summarizes key GTC-related elements for inclusion in your plan and the support that the PSRC can provide through its Policy and Plan Review Process.

Recommended Provisions to Address the GTC Strategy

The Growing Transit Communities Strategy calls on the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to use the Policy and Plan Review Process to disseminate guidance and best practices on station area planning. The Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact acknowledges that "updates to local comprehensive plans...present continuing opportunities to implement the [GTC Strategy's] Toolkit of Strategies and Actions."

For jurisdictions with existing or planned high-capacity transit investments, such as light rail, commuter rail, streetcar, and bus rapid transit, the recommendations of the GTC Strategy can be addressed in several ways.

- 1) **Identify station areas around existing or planned transit stations.** The comprehensive plan should show the geography of the station area or areas and provide policy direction for station area planning, either contained in the comprehensive plan itself or through subsequent station area or subarea plans.
- 2) **Establish transit community goals** for station areas that further the goals set forth in the Growing Transit Communities Strategy: to attract growth to transit communities, to provide housing affordable to a full range of incomes, and to increase equitable access to opportunity for current and future transit community members.

- For example, a comprehensive plan might provide data on supply and need of housing located in transit station areas that is affordable at different income levels and establish a goal of increasing affordable housing units by 2031 to better meet the need.

3) **Adopt policies and provisions** that implement actions from the GTC Strategy that are appropriate to the existing conditions in each transit community. It is not expected that the comprehensive plan address all recommended actions. The People + Place Implementation Typology provides guidance on which strategies and actions best address the opportunities and challenges present in different community contexts. Further, the role of the plan can be to provide a policy framework and direction for ongoing implementation of the GTC Strategy through future actions, such as subsequent planning activities, code development, capital investments, and partnerships.

- For example, a comprehensive plan may address GTC recommended actions through policies and provisions that shape the built environment (such as transit supportive land uses and densities), support implementation tools and programs (such as parking demand management or affordable housing incentives), or plan for investments in capital facilities or infrastructure in transit communities.

Finally, for any local jurisdiction that has signed the Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact, the comprehensive plan should:

4) **Incorporate a statement**, possibly as part of a broader vision statement, which expresses support for developing thriving and equitable transit communities and a commitment to implementing the GTC Strategy.

- For example: “The City of X envisions that transit station area neighborhoods will grow into thriving and equitable communities that bring opportunity for existing and new residents and businesses. As a signatory to the Growing Transit Communities Regional Compact, the City of X is part of a coalition of jurisdictions, agencies, and non-governmental partners working together to promote equitable transit communities near the region’s high-capacity transit investments. At the local level, we will continue to support policies and investments that make our station area neighborhoods great places where all people can find opportunities to live and work.”

Next Steps

PSRC will work through the Policy and Plan Review Process to encourage the above recommendations be addressed in comprehensive plan updates. The [Plan Review Manual](#) provides details on the policy and plan review and certification process, background, and framework.

In addition to the high-level guidance above, PSRC staff will also provide references to tools and resources, including the [Growing Transit Communities Strategy](#), the [People + Place Implementation Typology](#), the [Transit-Supportive Planning Toolkit](#), the [Transit Supportive Densities and Land Uses Guidance Paper](#), the [Planning for Whole Communities Toolkit](#), and the [Creating Transit Station Communities Workbook](#). PSRC staff will also be available to provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions to help implement GTC Strategy actions in local comprehensive plans.

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