Duane Wakan, Senior Planner
Pierce Transit
3701 96th Street Southwest
Lakewood, WA 98499

Subject: Pierce Transit Destination 2040 update

To Mr. Wakan and the Pierce Transit Planning Department:

As the rider-advisory group for Pierce Transit, we of the Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) would like to offer the following thoughts and suggestions to the draft Pierce Transit's Destination 2040 Long Range Plan (LRP) update.

By 2040, Pierce County is expected to hold well over one million people. Public transit is a vital tool that the County needs to invest in and make better use of to handle this population while ensuring advances in climate action, mobility and access, economic equity, and social justice.

To ensure sustainable growth, none of the municipalities within the Public Transportation Benefit District (PTBA) will be able to rely on a predominantly automobile-centric development pattern in use through the 21st century. Transit riders and stakeholders want to see a positive and forward-moving course of action to facilitate social transportation, local/regional travel, & commutes - without driving alone.

A growing number of households in the County pay more than 45% of their income for housing and transportation combined. Residents need more options for affordable housing near amenities and to affordable transportation to maintain financial stability and invest in their respective futures. Transit offers families and individuals the ability to become single- or no-car households, saving thousands of dollars per year in vehicle ownership costs while reducing the impact on public infrastructures such as roads and parking structures.

CTAG’s primary purpose is to act as a forum for transit users within the PTBA. Most riders and/or members of the public do not possess the technical expertise and skill to respond to a plan of this type, scale, magnitude, or effect. CTAG members are familiar with how policies, plans, and actions within the LRP shall be carried out. We suggest that in LRP final iterations
include not only the requisite graphs, charts, and images, but use infographics to simplify concepts presented. This helps communicate the plan to a wider audience.

Those with mobility issues require a reliable and supportive method to develop and maintain their own independence. Pierce Transit can provide this support in the following ways:

- Maintaining a distinctive grid system where routes follow predictable paths, without sudden or inexplicable turns.
- Signs and maps at stops indicating which stops come next if they are not immediately clear.
- In addition to Travel Training, offer a Bus Buddies program, consisting of staff or volunteers, who teach and demonstrate rider etiquette, key travel habits, and comfort with transit utilization.

To enhance system access, we specifically recommend the change of the terminus for Route 2 in Tacoma from the current Commerce Street Transit Area to the Tacoma Dome Station. This would allow riders to seamlessly transfer between route 2 and routes continuing north to Federal Way, SeaTac Airport, downtown Seattle, and the University of Washington. It would also provide a quick transfer to the Sounder Train at Freighthouse Square. This reroute would save riders, especially those with mobility challenges, a significant amount of time and effort because they could directly transfer at the Tacoma Dome Station instead of backtracking to the Commerce Street Transit Area.

Lastly, we support a multi-pronged approach for additional policy and operational improvements to engage ridership and induce following regional best practices:

- Customer Information
  - Develop a long-range marketing plan to encourage ridership for the future and pair with other groups to help approach different micro-cultures that may not have experience or access to public transit
  - Standardize information relayed to ridership User Interface mobile applications
  - Improve quality of audio announcements on buses
  - Specify location of bus stops in audio announcements
  - The overhead announcement “Connections to other routes” does not describe which routes, which leads to new and experienced rider confusion
- Optimize use of internal reader board to describe the next stop, connecting routes, or nearby attractions

- **Fare Equity**
  - Offer fare-free service starting with low-performing routes to encourage ridership and transition to system-wide within 6 years of program start

- **Frequency**
  - Equitably address rural, suburban, and urban concerns for transportation

- **Legal & LEAN**
  - Approach the State Legislature to diversify the funding source for public transit
  - Work with the State to more specifically promote and encourage alternative transportation methods among the resident and tourist/visitor populations
  - Closely follow international transit/mobility trends and innovations, and implement where feasible

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity to have our voices included and the opportunity to work closely with the Pierce Transit staff on previous and future projects.

Sincerely,

The Community Transportation Advisory Group
May 14, 2020

Sue Dreier, CEO
Pierce Transit
3701 96th St. SW
Lakewood, WA 98499

Subject: Destination 2040 Long Range Plan Update

Dear Ms. Dreier:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Destination 2040 Long Range Plan Update. We understand that this is a supplement to the existing Plan rather than a full update, primarily intended to analyze the effects of raising the Pierce Transit sales tax rate from the current 0.6% to 0.9% within the existing Service Area. We are impressed by the service increases that would be realized if a tax increase is approved by voters. We are particularly supportive of the frequency improvements proposed in the unincorporated area, including Routes 1, 4, 45, 55 and 402.

We continue to partner with Pierce Transit on the SR 7 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project and are excited for revenue service to start in 2023. This service will allow for increased mobility in the higher density mixed-use development areas that we are planning in the SR 7 Corridor and the Centers that are connected by the route. We are also supportive of the future proposed BRT routes on SR 161 and 112th Street, as shown by proposed BRT Routes 4 and 5 in Figure 7-4. Thank you for the recognition of our Community Plans and urban development concepts within the document.

We appreciate that your staff revised previous drafts of the document in response to our verbal and E-mail comments over the past two months, which are now reflected in the April 10, 2020 version. Notably, we appreciate revisions on Page 45 that recognize the demographic diversity in the County, the addition of the speed and reliability discussion at the bottom of page 85, and clarification of the revenue figures on Page 88.

While not addressed in the document, we continue to be very supportive of expansion of the Service Area to include more of the Urban Unincorporated Area including the Frederickson Regional Manufacturing Center and the entirety of the 176th Street East corridor, which is planned for high-density residential and mixed land uses. The lack of transit service in these areas hampers the mobility of our residents and workers. Many of us in the industry were not aware of the decisions being made that led to the 2012 reduction of the Service Area and see it as step backwards in the development of our transportation system. There are very few retail services in the area where the boundary was retracted, so most residents in that area are likely paying the higher sales tax rate inside the service area for most of their purchases. We advocate for continued discussion between Pierce Transit, Pierce County about expansion of the Service Area. We request that the next comprehensive update of your
Long Range Plan include analysis of an expansion, unless an expansion to include Frederickson precedes the update of the Plan.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review and comment on Destination 2040. We look forward to our agencies’ continued partnership in transit planning and implementation. Any questions about this letter can be directed to Shawn Phelps, Senior Transportation Planner, at 253.798.3552, shawn.phelps@piercecountywa.gov.

Sincerely,

Dennis Hanberg, Director
Pierce County Planning & Public Works
June 3, 2020

Darin L. Stavish, Principal Planner
Pierce Transit
3701 96th St. SW
Lakewood, WA 98499

RE: Comments on Pierce Transit *Destination 2040* Long Range Plan Update

Dear Mr. Stavish:

Thank you for providing briefings to the Planning Commission in November 2019 and March 2020 on Pierce Transit’s *Destination 2040* Long Range Plan Update (LRPU). Also, given the extraordinary situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, thank you to Pierce Transit for extending the public comment period into June 2020.

The Planning Commission is charged by the City Charter with ensuring plan consistency with *One Tacoma*, the City’s Comprehensive Plan. It is the duty of the Commission to review planned regional transit improvements, such as the Sound Transit Long Range Plan Update the Commission reviewed in 2016 and currently the LRPU project, to ensure they are consistent with, and help realize, relevant goals and policies of the *One Tacoma* plan.

To ensure a coordinated approach to service provision, the *One Tacoma* plan includes policies to guide joint planning, setting of level of service standards, concurrency, and the integration of land use and transportation planning. From the Planning Commission’s perspective, this integration of City-Transit Agency long-range plans is necessary to ensure the long-term health and welfare of our community and to bring our community’s aspirations to fruition.

Based on our review of the LRPU, we offer the following comments for Pierce Transit consideration in finalizing the Plan:

1. **One Tacoma Plan Consistency.**
   The Planning Commission concludes that the LRPU broadly fulfills and is consistent with multiple policies outlined in the following elements of the *One Tacoma* plan:
   - Urban Form
   - Design + Development
   - Economic Development
   - Housing
   - Transportation

   Please see Attachment A for a reference of pertinent policies from the *One Tacoma* plan.

2. **System Network Prioritization.**
   The Commission concurs with the prioritization of span, frequency, and accessibility over new routing, with some exceptions (see below re: Underserved Areas and Priority Corridors). To
support increased transit use within our growing community we suggest that Pierce Transit
consider service improvements to make transit ridership the preferred option for our residents.
This could include: 1) expanding hours of operation on all routes, 2) increasing frequency on
current fixed routes to attract demand and support one-or-zero car households, 3) reducing
financial barriers to riding, and 4) providing additional shelters for existing transit lines.

3. **Equitable Access.**
The Planning Commission supports efforts to reduce fares and to improve equitable access to
transit and suggests that Pierce Transit consider joining Sound Transit, King County Metro, and
Community Transit in participating in the ORCA Lift low-income fare program or other targeted
fare reduction efforts.

4. **Reliability and Comfort.**
To improve reliability and convenience, the Commission asks that Pierce Transit consider BRT-
like improvements on all high frequency transit routes (20-minute service or better), such as off-
coach fare collection, additional shelters and improved weatherization, high capacity buses with
multiple loading doors, improved lighting, level boarding, signalization, and pedestrian
accessibility improvements.

5. **Frequent Transit Network (FTN).**
The Commission broadly supports the creation of a Frequent Transit Network (FTN). The Pierce
Transit Vision Scenario should identify a set of routes with 20 minute or better frequency that
will compose the Frequent Transit Network (FTN) with a focus on establishing routes that are 1) 
direct, 2) productive, and 3) offering opportunities for future density or future connections to
regional light rail service. The City of Tacoma is the designated Metropolitan Center of Pierce
County and as such, the Pierce Transit Vision Scenario should explicitly focus the first tier of the
High Frequency Network within the City, followed by expansion of the network to surrounding
communities, with a plan to phase in the network over time in response to latent demand.

6. **Multiple Route Options.**
Within Mixed-use Centers and Regional Growth Centers, we encourage Pierce Transit to provide
multiple route options that expand the range of destinations accessible from the Centers.

7. **Standardizing Routes and Operations.**
Standardizing Pierce Transit route service levels and practices would better support planning
coordination with the City of Tacoma.

8. **Underserved Areas and Priority Corridors.**
We encourage Pierce Transit to include the following corridors for expanded study and joint
planning. Please see Attachment B for specific summary and recommendations.
   - South 19th Street
   - Portland Avenue
   - Tacoma Avenue
   - Downtown Tacoma to Lakewood
   - Point Ruston
   - Proctor to Tacoma Mall
9. **Concurrence between Long Range Plans**

The Commission recommends a stronger commitment to concurrency between the Pierce Transit Vision Scenario and the *One Tacoma* plan, the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood Subarea Plan, the adopted Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) Transportation Plan, and Sound Transit 3 (ST3) in both planning and future implementation.

10. **Active Partnership and Collaboration**

The City of Tacoma and Pierce Transit have a long history of joint planning and collaboration and we encourage this ongoing partnership to implement the LRPU and continuously improve transit services for the people of Tacoma and Pierce County.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact Principal Planner, Stephen Atkinson, Planning and Development Services Department, at (253) 905-4146 or satkinson@cityoftacoma.org.

Sincerely,

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**Anna Petersen**  
Chair of Planning Commission  
(Representing “Environmental Community”)

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**Chris Karnes**  
Member of Planning Commission  
(Representing “Public Transportation”)

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**c:** Victoria Woodards, Mayor of the City of Tacoma and Chair of Pierce Transit Board  
Members of the Tacoma City Council  
Elizabeth Pauli, Tacoma City Manager  
Tacoma Planning Commission  
Tacoma Transportation Commission

**Attached:**  
Appendix A: City of Tacoma - Comprehensive Plan Policy References  
Appendix B: Underserved Areas and Priority Corridors
Appendix A

City of Tacoma – Comprehensive Plan Policy References

Reference:
https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/planning_and_development_services/planning_services/one_tacoma_comprehensive_plan

❖ Public Facilities and Services

➢ Policy PFS-1.4: Adopt by reference the capital facilities plans of the following providers of public facilities and services in Tacoma.
  ■ Parks: Metropolitan Park District
  ■ Schools: Tacoma School District
  ■ Transportation: Pierce Transit, Sound Transit and Washington State Department of Transportation

➢ Policy PFS–5.6: Use capital facility improvements within mixed-use centers to enhance and revitalize these areas, support compact development and encourage transit use.

❖ Housing

➢ Policy H–1.6: Allow and support a robust and diverse supply of affordable, accessible housing to meet the needs of special populations, to include older adults, and people with disabilities, and permanent, supportive housing for homeless individuals, especially in centers and other places which are in close proximity to services and transit.

➢ Policy H–3.3: Promote transit supportive densities along designated corridors that connect centers, including duplex, triplex, cottage housing, and townhouses.

➢ Policy H–4.4: Facilitate the expansion of a variety of types and sizes of affordable housing units, and do so in locations that provide low-income households with greater access to convenient transit and transportation, education and training opportunities, Downtown Tacoma, manufacturing/industrial centers, and other employment areas.

❖ Downtown

➢ Policy 2.3D.D: In neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown, parking should be coordinated with programs available in the downtown, including a transit pass program.

➢ Policy 2.3G.A: In collaboration with Pierce Transit and Sound Transit design transit stops and intermodal connections integrated with the public realm, providing gathering spaces and an improved end-to-end transit experience.

➢ Policy 2.3G.B: Work with Pierce Transit and other transit providers to ensure ride quality on public transit. New vehicles should be of modern design, clean, and universally accessible.

➢ Policy 2.3G.C: Transportation planning should be coordinated with land use decisions, with transit supportive land uses located near to major transit hubs.

➢ See also corridors in Downtown Tacoma: Planning for Transit Priority (p. DT-82)
❖ Transportation

➢ Policy T–1.4: Partner with Transit - Integrate land use and transportation planning, promote transit-oriented or transit-supportive development (TOD) and multimodal transit access, and ultimately improve the reliability, availability, and convenience of bus, streetcar, and light rail transit options for all users and modes through partnerships with public transit agencies, local and regional government, and other regional agencies to leverage resources.

➢ Policy T–3.2: Green Hierarchy - Elevate active travelers and public transit riders in the planning and design of streets using the Green Transportation Hierarchy

➢ Policy T–3.4: System Completeness - The City will build the transportation system, as defined in the most current project list in Appendix B of the TMP, at a rate equal or ahead of the pace of development during the planning horizon. This system completeness LOS standard is measured against the proportion of the transportation network that is constructed, and will be accompanied by performance measures that track the transportation system’s progress toward meeting the policy goals set forth in this document. Sample Performance Measures (for transit):
  ■ Presence of amenities at highly-utilized transit stops
  ■ Transit route speed and reliability
  ■ Provision of transit-accommodating treatments along major routes
  ■ Transit service frequency and headways

➢ Policy T–3.12: Transit Operational Efficiency - Support efficient transit operations through street and transit stop designs on transit priority streets that comply with standards and include transit-supportive elements for bus, streetcar, and light rail transit. See page 83 for potential transit-supportive elements

➢ Policy T–3.13: Encourage transit ridership by implementing pedestrian improvements near transit stops, conducting outreach to employers, and working with public transit agencies to identify strategies to improve the frequency and ridership of transit service, including bus, streetcar, and light rail, between high density residential areas and employment centers. These strategies would include locating transit stops / stations to maximize convenience of transfers between modes and/or connecting to other routes.

➢ Policy T–3.14: Create a Tacoma Streetcar Network that moves and connects people efficiently and effectively throughout the City focusing on connections to regional destinations, mixed use centers, and local and regional transit centers and routes.

➢ Policy T–4.4: Congestion Management - Decrease the use of SOVs and the environmental degradation associated with their use by encouraging and improving the appeal, convenience, and time competitiveness of travel by active modes, public transit, assistive devices, and ridesharing.

➢ Policy T–6.4: Support Mixed-Use Centers - Serve and support the existing MUCs and aid Tacoma in attracting new investments by giving high priority to those transportation facilities that serve these centers. Increase the livability of the MUCs by providing transportation choices and integrating amenities that create a safe and inviting environment for walking, bicycling, and taking public transit. Transportation facilities should include context-sensitive design that considers the unique needs of each neighborhood, such as on-street parking and public spaces.

➢ Policy T-6.8 Transit-Oriented Development: Promote TOD or transit-supportive development and provide incentives for development that includes specific TOD features.
Appendix B

Underserved Areas and Priority Corridors

- **High Capacity Transit Study for South 19th Street.** Pierce Transit should engage with the City of Tacoma, Sound Transit, and Metro Parks Tacoma in a high capacity transit study that covers the South 19th Street corridor between Tacoma Community College and St. Joseph Medical Center. The current Sound Transit Long Range Plan calls for an extension of Tacoma Link Light Rail to Tacoma Community College via South 19th Street for completion in 2039. Pierce Transit’s draft LRP update calls for including Bus Rapid Transit on the same corridor by 2040. The Planning Commission believes that a coordinated high capacity transit study on South 19th Street that identifies the alternatives along this corridor is warranted to reduce duplication of efforts and establish a sustainable transportation vision to accelerate the implementation of the transit vision for this corridor. The inclusion of Metro Parks Tacoma in such a study may prove important given the intent to site a major sports facility on the corridor.

- **High Capacity Transit Study for Portland Avenue.** Pierce Transit should engage with the City of Tacoma, Sound Transit, Metro Parks Tacoma, and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians on a high-capacity transit study of Portland Avenue from the proposed East Tacoma Light Rail Station south to the City limits. This past year the City rezoned multiple areas along this corridor to allow for low to high-density multifamily development. In addition, the Corridor includes two designated mixed-use centers, a direct connection to the Link Light Rail, as well as recent investments in the Emerald Queen Casino and the Eastside Community Center that will provide a regional draw to this corridor. A high capacity transit study for this corridor is a top priority for the City and such transit investments could catalyze growth and development in the City’s East Side.

- **Tacoma Avenue Service in the Downtown Regional Growth Center.** The Planning Commission believes Pierce Transit should investigate or study the need and potential for service along Tacoma Avenue in the Downtown Tacoma Regional Growth Center.

- **Downtown Tacoma to Lakewood High Capacity Transit Study.** The Planning Commission recommends that the City of Tacoma and Pierce Transit conduct a high capacity transit study for the Downtown Tacoma to Lakewood Bus Rapid Transit proposal. The proposed project is consistent with the One Tacoma Plan and supports the subarea planning work completed for the Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center.

- **Point Ruston.** Pierce Transit should investigate or study the need and potential for transit service to the Point Ruston Neighborhood Mixed-Use Center. One alternative worth studying would be a pilot deviation of Route 10 and/or 11 from Pearl Street along North 51st to the Main Street roundabout. Such a deviation may cost substantially less than standalone fixed route services.

- **North-South Connection between Proctor and Tacoma Mall.** There is no current transit route that directly connects the mixed-use centers of Proctor and the Tacoma Mall, thus many transit users must take two or more routes with connections in Downtown Tacoma. After frequency and span improvements to existing routes have been implemented, Pierce Transit should consider reestablishing a fixed route connection that links the Proctor, 6th Avenue, Tacoma Central and Tacoma Mall Mixed-Use Centers.
June 26, 2020

Tina Lee  
Planning Manager  
Pierce Transit  
3701 96th Street SW  
Lakewood, WA 98499

Subject: PSRC Comments on the draft Destination 2040 Pierce Transit Long Range Plan Update

Dear Ms. Lee,

Thank you for keeping us informed about your planning efforts and for providing an opportunity for the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to review a draft of the Destination 2040 Pierce Transit Long Range Plan Update. We appreciate the substantial amount of time and effort the agency has put into developing the plan to support an integrated transit system that reflects community values. As you know, VISION 2040 and the draft VISION 2050 plan emphasize the importance of a transit system that meets regional mobility needs and supports new growth. Locally-driven planning is an important step in outlining the community vision, assessing mobility needs, and understanding how local transit contributes to the overall regional system.

PSRC’s transit plan checklist is a useful tool for long range plans to address core issues in VISION 2040. There are many outstanding aspects of the draft plan that support our shared regional goals. Particularly noteworthy aspects include:

- Recognition of how the transit plan advances both regional and local growth management planning goals and objectives, including the draft VISION 2050
- Focus on coordination with local jurisdictions, other transit agencies, and state agencies
- Inventory of a spectrum of investments and options for decision-makers at different levels of funding investments
- Information about challenges and opportunities for public transit in light of new technologies and mobility options

The April 10, 2020 version of the draft long range plan advances regional policy in many important ways, though there are some items that should be considered for update or inclusion before the plan is finalized:

- **Bus rapid transit (BRT) investments.** Investments in high-capacity transit are critical for the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy to succeed in Pierce County. PSRC’s Growth Management Policy Board included changes to the draft VISION 2050 plan, as recommended by Pierce County and the city of Tacoma, on the basis that the South Hill unincorporated area would see high capacity transit investments in the future. BRT will be an important opportunity to provide fast and reliable transit connections throughout the Pierce Transit service area. However, Section 7 of the draft plan is unclear on which Pierce Transit BRT routes are included in the investment package. The narrative on page
85 and Figure 7-2 both indicate Pierce Transit is planning for three BRT routes. Starting on page 91, the narrative shifts to a discussion of five proposed BRT routes. The Pierce Transit long-range plan should include investments that support equitable transit-oriented development and are consistent with the recommendations in VISION 2050. The long-range plan should clarify which BRT investments are in the final package.

- **A Coordinated System: Integration with other modes and providers.** PSRC noted two topics covered under the description of Pierce Transit’s coordination efforts that could be improved, as follows:
  
  o **Pierce County Human Services Transportation Provider Coordination:** Pierce Transit identifies coordination with Sound Transit, neighboring transit agencies, WSDOT, and transportation network companies – highlighting two in particular: Uber and Lyft in Section 3. However, there is no information on how Pierce Transit coordinates with human service, private nonprofit and other transportation providers serving Pierce County communities, and particularly people with special transportation needs. Pierce Transit’s successful coordination with services such as Beyond the Borders and Key Peninsula Connects, and participation in coordination activities with the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC) are highlighted in the Pierce Transit’s 2019-2024 Transit Development Plan. This ongoing coordination and planning for future coordination should also be highlighted within Section 3.
  
  o **Ferry Service.** In Section 3, the draft plan explores several key regional connections and coordination considerations. The plan includes a summary of the 2018 Tacoma-Seattle Fast Ferry Feasibility Study and briefly mentions on Page 49 the Puget Sound Passenger-Only Ferry Study currently underway. In PSRC’s recent regional project selection competition, Pierce Transit was identified as a partner for a Kitsap Transit-sponsored downtown Seattle passenger-only ferry terminal. The draft plan could be improved to clarify how passenger-only ferry mode of transit fits into Pierce Transit’s plans, particularly as integrating with this mode of service could require additional resources unanticipated in the current draft plan.

- **Non-motorized access to transit.** In the assessment of current conditions, the draft plan discusses bike lanes, paths, and pedestrian trails (Pages 31-34). Based upon information contained in the narrative, it appears that “pedestrian trails” identified in the draft plan do not include sidewalks. The draft plan could benefit from inclusion of sidewalk connectivity and the importance of a complete sidewalk network to improving pedestrian access to fixed-route transit and decreasing demand on complementary ADA paratransit service, such as Pierce Transit’s SHUTTLE program.

- **Pierce Transit’s planning scenarios.** The draft plan articulates transit investments associated with a planning scenario assumption of 0.9% sales tax, an increase of 0.3% over Pierce Transit’s current sales tax rate. It would be beneficial to more clearly articulate which investments would occur under the current 0.6% sale tax authority. This would provide a clear contrast in planning scenarios.

PSRC staff appreciated the invitation to participate in the stakeholder process in the fall of 2019 and the opportunity to support the technical analysis of the draft plan. However, having additional engagement with Pierce Transit and jurisdictions during the development of the draft plan would have been valuable.
In the future, we would encourage more active engagement with the stakeholder committee during the planning process so that all parties can understand how the recommendations have taken shape.

Thank you again for providing an opportunity to review the draft plan. We are happy to help and review additional material as the plan moves through the adoption process. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Gil Cerise at gcerise@psrc.org or (206) 971-3053.

Sincerely,

Kelly McGourty
Director of Transportation Planning

cc: Gil Cerise, Program Manager
    Liz Underwood-Bultmann, Principal Planner