



**TO:** Mayor Marchione and City Council

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**DATE:** February 19, 2013

**SUBJECT: STAFF REPORT: CENTRAL PUGET SOUND GROWING TRANSIT COMMUNITIES PROGRAM – DRAFT REGIONAL COMPACT AND CORRIDOR ACTION STRATEGIES**

The purpose of this memo and staff report is to update and seek feedback from the City Council regarding the draft Growing Transit Communities (GTC) Regional Compact and Corridor Action Strategies.

#### **OVERVIEW**

In October 2010 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded \$4.9 million to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to support regional planning for more livable, prosperous, and sustainable communities in the central Puget Sound region. The funds were awarded through HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. Redmond is one of 18 founding partners for this program. Other founding partners in addition to the PSRC include: the cities of Seattle, Everett, Tacoma, and Bellevue; King County; A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH), King County Housing Authority, Seattle Housing Authority; Cascade Land Conservancy; Community Development Collaborative/Impact Capital Equity Partnership; North Seattle Community College; Public Health -Seattle and King County, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department; UW – Runstad Center; and the Urban Land Institute – Seattle District Council.

In its grant application to HUD, the member partners identified collaboration as a challenge and necessary means to implement regional and local visions for sustainable growth in the central Puget Sound region. With nearly 90 separate jurisdictions, six transit agencies, a wide variety of non-profit organizations, diverse neighborhoods and business communities, and other stakeholders, it is challenging to effectively align decision-making regarding growth and priorities across the region.

The HUD grant application identified “transit-oriented development compacts” as a mechanism to overcome this challenge. Progress on the grant program is to a point such that discussion is underway in each of the three GTC Task Forces - East, North and South and at the Oversight

Committee – regarding the form and function of a Regional Compact and more specific corridor action strategies.

The draft Regional Compact (Attachment A) is proposed as a voluntary tool to express the intent of the GTC partners to work together toward three common goals: to attract growth, provide housing choices, and increase access to opportunity for current and future residents along the region's high capacity transit corridors. The draft Corridor Action Strategies will provide recommended actions related to each of three goals that are intended for consideration by the Puget Sound Regional Council, transit agencies, local governments, and other partners. These strategies are intended to provide a menu of potential actions that partners throughout the region could take over time to make progress towards the goals.

The GTC Oversight Committee discussed the draft Regional Compact and the general structure and approach for the Corridor Action Strategies in January 2013. Puget Sound Regional Council staff is seeking comments on an initial draft of the Regional Compact by the end of February 2013. Regional Council staff will present an updated draft of the Regional Compact for further discussion at the April 2013 Oversight Committee meeting. By summer 2013 the Oversight Committee is expected to take action on a final Regional Compact and Corridor Action Strategies.

City staff and the City Attorney have reviewed the draft Regional Compact from the perspective of Redmond as a prospective signatory. The bullets below provide proposed overarching comments in order to clarify the purpose of the Regional Compact, better reflect the need for participation from the diversity of program partners, and clearly acknowledge that jurisdictions in the region will use a variety of approaches to make progress toward the goals.

- Refine the language to consistently convey that this is a document intended to express the intent of diverse partners to work together toward the common goals and that it is not *intended to commit the partners to take specific actions that would be binding on future councils.*
- Include a provision so that signatories can terminate participation at any time.
- Make it clear in the Regional Compact and with the Corridor Action Strategies that progress toward the goals will depend on participation from a diversity of partners, including transit agencies, business, and nonprofit organizations as well as local jurisdictions.
- Refine the definition for equitable transit communities to express that not all will be mixed-use. For example, the Overlake Transit Center station area is not expected to change from an employment intensive location to mixed-use.

Mayor Marchione and City Council

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- Be clear that the corridor action strategies are recommendations, provide examples, and are not intended to limit or prescribe use of specific approaches.
- Ensure that any followup requests for progress reports from local jurisdictions and other partners are designed to be as coordinated and focused as possible to minimize the time needed to respond.

Staff seeks the Council's feedback as to whether Redmond should provide other overall comments or questions regarding the draft Regional Compact and Corridor Action Strategies.

Please contact Lori Peckol, [lpeckol@redmond.gov](mailto:lpeckol@redmond.gov) with any questions or comments.

#### **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Draft Regional Compact Language – January 9, 2013

## **Growing Transit Communities Compact**

*Whereas* the central Puget Sound region has adopted VISION 2040, a long-range strategy to advance the ideals of our people, our prosperity and our planet by integrating land use, economic and transportation decisions in order to meet the needs of current and future generations, achieve economic prosperity with social equity, and support a healthy environment, including addressing global climate change; and

*Whereas* VISION 2040 includes among its goals (1) focusing growth within already urbanized areas to create walkable, compact, and transit oriented communities and (2) meeting housing needs through preservation and expansion of a range of affordable, healthy and safe housing choices; and

*Whereas* the central Puget Sound region is making a \$15+ billion investment in high-capacity transit that creates a once in a lifetime opportunity to plan for and support the growth of communities near transit; and

*Whereas* the central Puget Sound region is expected to add 1.3 million people and 1.1 million jobs by the year 2040; and

*Whereas* approximately 45% of households currently residing in transit communities are moderately or severely housing cost burdened; and

*Whereas* the combined cost burden of housing plus transportation can be substantially reduced by locating affordable housing opportunities within transit communities; and

*Whereas* the report “Equity, Opportunity, and Sustainability in the Central Puget Sound Region” identifies a widespread pattern within the region of unequal household access to educational, economic, transportation, environmental health, and neighborhood resources; and

*Whereas* transit-oriented development is a land use pattern with many social, economic, and environmental benefits, including more sustainable and efficient use of urban land, reduced combined housing and transportation costs per household, and improved access and mobility for residents; and

*Whereas* many communities that are now or may be served by high capacity transit are home to low-income and minority households and small locally- and minority-owned businesses that are at a potentially higher risk of displacement; and

*Whereas* the Growing Transit Communities Partnership was formed as a diverse coalition of governmental and nongovernmental partners that was funded by a grant from the federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities for the express purpose of leveraging regional transit investments to create equitable transit communities around light rail and other high capacity transit stations; and

*Whereas* the Partnership defines equitable transit communities as follows:

*Equitable transit communities are mixed-use, transit-served neighborhoods that provide housing and transportation choices and greater social and economic opportunity for current and future residents. Although defined by the half-mile walking distances around high-capacity transit stations, they exist within the context of larger neighborhoods with existing residents and businesses.*

*These communities promote local community and economic development by providing housing types at a range of densities and affordability levels, commercial and retail spaces, community services and other amenities integrated into safe, walkable neighborhoods.*

*Successful equitable transit communities are created through inclusive planning and decision-making processes, resulting in development outcomes that accommodate future residential and employment growth, increase opportunity and mobility for existing communities, and enhance public health for socially and economically diverse populations*

*Whereas* the Growing Transit Communities Partnership has developed Corridor Action Strategies that recommend adoption of specific actions and tools by regional and local governments, by both public and private stakeholders, in order to create, grow, and enhance equitable transit communities throughout the region; and

*Whereas* updates to local comprehensive plans and development regulations and the refinement of regional growth and transportation plans present continuing opportunities to implement the Corridor Action Strategies; and

*Whereas* the Growing Transit Communities Partnership staff will continue to explore appropriate implementation opportunities in these and other efforts at the local, regional and state level and with non-governmental organizations; and

*Whereas* the Partnership work plan includes staff assistance for signatories in the development and adoption of individualized action plans that describe in greater detail the specific steps that the jurisdiction or organization will undertake to make near-term progress toward the goals laid out in this Regional Compact and as guided by the Corridor Action Strategies.

**Now, therefore, the signatories to this Regional Compact:**

**Agree that progress toward equitable transit communities requires a cooperative, regional approach with diverse partners across governmental and nongovernmental sectors that supports and builds upon existing and ongoing planning efforts by regional and local governments and transit agencies; and**

**Commit to build upon the work of the Growing Transit Communities Partnership through the promotion of equitable transit communities in light rail station areas and around other transit nodes located within the region's three long-range light rail transit corridors; and**

**Recognize that each corridor is at a difference stage of light rail system development, and that future light rail stations may be identified and sited that should also be considered under this Compact; and**

**Recognize that the policies and programs promoted by the Partnership may also benefit community development around other transit investments and corridors, including but not limited to bus rapid transit, streetcar, commuter rail, intercity express bus, and ferries; and**

**Support a continuing process of collaboration and coordinated action to advance the development of equitable transit communities, as guided by the following goals:**

***Goal A: Attract more of the region's residential and employment growth to high capacity transit communities.***

*To advance the Regional Growth Strategy adopted in VISION 2040, and the multiple public benefits of compact growth around rapid transit investments, the signatories to this Compact will:*

- Strive to attract, using a full range of tools and investments, at least 25% of the housing growth and 35% of the employment growth expected in the region through the year 2040 within transit communities located along the long-range light rail transit corridors, and*
- Plan for and promote residential and employment densities within designated transit communities that support ridership potential and contribute to accommodating growth needs within each high capacity transit corridor.*

***Goal B: Provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit.***

*Adopted regional policy recognizes housing as a basic human need and calls for local policies and tools that provide for an adequate supply of housing affordable at all income levels, to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents.*

*In order to meet a substantial portion of this need within walking distance of rapid transit services, the signatories to this Compact will:*

- Use a full range of preservation tools to maintain the existing level of affordable housing and retain and expand opportunities for small local-serving businesses within each transit community, and*
- Use a full range of new production tools and incentives to provide sufficient affordable housing choices for all economic and demographic groups within transit corridors. Strive for affordability of new housing in transit communities as a whole that is proportional to region-wide need or greater to serve transit-dependent households, as follows: at least 15% of new housing units affordable to moderate-income households, at least 15% affordable to low income households, and at least 20% affordable to very low-income households.*

***Goal C: Increase access to opportunity for existing and future residents of transit communities.***

*Adopted regional policy recognizes the need to address the diverse housing, transportation and economic needs of current and future residents so that all people may prosper as the region grows. This requires special attention to communities that lack access to mobility choices, quality schools, and other social and physical neighborhood components that allow community members to thrive and succeed.*

*In order to more equitably meet the needs of all residents of the region, the signatories to this Compact will strive to:*

- Improve access to opportunity in the transit corridors through a) targeted investments that meet community needs in areas with low access to opportunity, and b) targeted affordable housing investments in communities with high access to opportunity.*
- Use a full range of community engagement strategies to increase the involvement of diverse and historically under-represented groups in transit community development, empower communities to influence decisions at all levels of government, and ensure opportunities for participation throughout the decision-making process.*

**In order to maximize this historic opportunity, show regional leadership, and act as a national model of how diverse stakeholders can make transformative decisions that advance a region's goals for its people, its prosperity, and the planet, the signatories to this compact pledge to work individually and collaboratively toward the goals described above, and toward the implementation of the Corridor Action Strategies, as appropriate to each jurisdiction and organization.**