

# Recommendation: Shift Puget Sound Regional Council Commute Trip Reduction Regional Plan Dates

## Recommendation

Support Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) request to change the dates of their regional commute trip reduction (CTR) plan by one year to align with the agency's regional transportation planning timeline as required under federal legislation.

## Situation

PSRC has requested to change the dates of its regional CTR plan to support integration into its regional transportation plan. The regional transportation plan is slated for approval by the PSRC General Assembly by May 2026. If adopted, the PSRC regional CTR plan cycle would be June 2026 – May 2030 followed by June 2030 - May 2034, etc.

This change would not apply to cities and counties in the central Puget Sound region, who would complete their commute trip reduction plans, as currently scheduled, by June 2025. PSRC would continue to convene transportation demand management and commute trip reduction practitioners and support collaboration in planning.

## Background

PSRC is on a four-year regional transportation planning cycle required under federal legislation. The current PSRC Regional Transportation Plan (2022-2050) was adopted by PSRC's General Assembly in May 2022. PSRC has just initiated board engagement on development of the next Regional Transportation Plan, scheduled for adoption in May 2026. PSRC integrates the regional commute trip reduction plan into their regional transportation plan. This integration includes consideration of transportation demand management in modeling, analysis, and policy direction. Prior to the COVID pandemic, development of commute trip reduction plans and the PSRC regional transportation plan were on the same four-year cycle. Development of the 2019-2023 commute trip reduction plans was suspended due to COVID. The new schedule of 2025-2029 puts the CTR plans and the PSRC regional transportation plan out of sync.

PSRC is significantly larger than the other regions throughout the state, with over 100 member organizations. PSRC is the only region to integrate its regional commute trip reduction plan into the regional transportation plan in this way. The other regions complete their regional commute trip reduction plans as stand-alone plans that influence other plans.

In fall and winter of 2022, the TDM Technical Committee, CTR implementers and WSDOT held extensive discussions about when to develop the next round of CTR plans. They considered three options and selected the third:

Option 1: Develop a two-year plan for 2023-2025

This option would have kept the CTR plans on the original approval cycle. The discussion group concluded that there was not enough time to complete even an abbreviated plan development process to reach approval by June 2023. Then everyone would need to begin work immediately on the 2025-2029 plan. This option was rejected.

Option 2: Develop a six-year plan for 2023-2029

This option would also have maintained the original approval cycle while allowing adequate time for the plan development process. The discussion group members felt that another six years, on top of the eight years since the last updates in 2015, was too long to go without new plans. This option was also rejected.

Option 3: Develop a four-year plan for 2025-2029 to be adopted by June 2025

This option would put the CTR plan cycle out of sync with the original cycle by two years. It was felt that it allowed adequate time for implementers to do a thorough job in developing the new plans, allowing them to reflect changed transportation conditions since pre-COVID. This option was selected.

## Assessment

Given the steady and aligned trajectory of commute trip and transportation demand reduction planning in the central Puget Sound region, the risk of any misalignment between local, regional, and state plans is unlikely to occur should this schedule shift be allowed. Further, organizations in the central Puget Sound region are well equipped to collaborate quickly and efficiently to address any issues that may arise. They have a long-established community of practice centered on transportation demand management and commute trip reduction.

PSRC's proposed commute trip reduction planning schedule, while different than other regions, is in alignment with the spirit of the Commute Trip Reduction Law, which emphasizes collaboration and inclusion of trip reduction in transportation planning. Further, while the final plan is scheduled for adoption by PSRC's General Assembly in May 2026, the draft plan is anticipated to be completed and released for public review and comment by December 2025.

## Contact

Carol Thompson  
Carol.Thompson@consultant.wsdot.wa.gov