Finding of Consistency Between the RTP and Mason Countywide Planning Policies

PRTPO finds the Regional Transportation Plan and Mason Countywide Planning Policies to be consistent. This report details the principles and guidelines that ensure ongoing consistency between local and regional plans in the Peninsula Region, in compliance with state policy.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with RCW 47.80.023(2) and (4), PRTPO must ensure its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is consistent with the countywide planning policies (CWPP) and local Comprehensive Plans of cities and counties across the region, and that those CWPP and Comprehensive Plans are consistent with the RTP. All plans should be consistent with state transportation policy and plans.

Maintaining consistency between local plans and the RTP helps ensure that transportation decisions and investments made by individual local agencies work together to support coordination between those agencies, and between those agencies and WSDOT. As defined in WAC 468-86-030, consistency means that local and regional plans are not incompatible, in order that they can support integration and interoperability of transportation systems across the region. Regional consistency in the Peninsula Region is concerned with coordinated transportation and land use strategies, multimodal transportation strategies, economic vitality, system safety, environmental health, system preservation, and interagency cooperation.

Long-standing principles and guidelines developed in accordance with RCW 47.80.026 shape locally adopted Countywide Planning Policies, Comprehensive Plans, and the Regional Transportation Plan. They reflect a regional transportation strategy that has guided coordinated planning in the Peninsula Region since 1995. Adherence to these principles aligns local plans and the RTP with statewide transportation policy and promotes a consistent approach to system planning across agencies.

REVIEW OF CORE PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR REGIONAL CONSISTENCY

The following principles and guidelines support coordinated transportation planning and decision-making in the Peninsula Region.[1] Compatibility between local and regional plans is the metric for consistency.

Principle 1: Encourage transportation-efficient development patterns appropriate for the intended land use

Guideline examples:

- Concentrate urban land uses in cities and urban growth areas where transit, walking, biking, and other alternatives to driving can be provided. Urban land uses include, but are not limited to, higher density residential development, economic centers, government services, and freight and industrial activities as provided for in local plans and zoning.
- Accommodate urban growth in development patterns that facilitate walking, biking, and transit access. This includes an interconnected network of streets that increases route choice and convenience for all

[1] The specificity of agency policies and strategies varies based on the legislative authorities of the agency (city, county, or RTPO), agency size (very small to modestly large), geography (urban, rural, or highly rural), and the nature of the policy plan (RTP, Countywide Planning Policies, or Comprehensive Plan). There is no single policy standard for adherence to these principles.

modes of travel as well as appropriate mixes of land use activities with urban densities and design standards that generate transit, walk, and bike trips.

- Restrict development in areas outside of urban growth areas or designated LAMIRDs *[Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development]* to rural land uses. Rural areas will remain predominately auto dependent due to the low-density pattern of rural land uses. Rural land uses include, but are not limited to, low density residential development, minor economic and service centers, government services, recreational and conservation activities, freight and industrial activities according to local plans, and agricultural and resource activities.
- Coordinate local plans and growth strategies to support effective, safe, and efficient operation of state highways.

Finding: *The Peninsula RTP Online and Mason Countywide Planning Policies regarding land use strategies are compatible*.

Principle 2: Increase convenient multimodal travel options for more people for more trips

Guideline examples:

- Street standards should accommodate all modes of travel safely and conveniently, in accordance with the associated intended land use. Such "complete street" standards will vary by place type, but in general:
  - Urban places should offer a growing network of sidewalks, bike lanes, transit facilities, crosswalks, and other design elements and speed controls to accommodate ever more multimodal travel as land use patterns evolve.
  - Rural places will remain predominately auto dependent. To the extent practical, roads, highways, and bridges should provide shoulders that can accommodate transit pullouts as well as walking and biking. A wider range of complete street treatments are appropriate in select rural areas where land use activities generate non-motorized trips, such as at trailheads, parks, schools, and in rural hamlets or LAMIRDs.

  Regardless of urban or rural setting, multimodal safety and ADA accessibility should inform local street standards.
- Provide for multimodal connectivity between local and state transportation networks.
- Engage transit providers as appropriate in coordinated transportation-land use planning, design, and decision-making.
- Consider the needs of people who don't drive due to age, income, or disability when designing facilities, developing services, and siting government buildings and human services facilities.

Finding: *The Peninsula RTP Online and Mason Countywide Planning Policies regarding multimodal transportation are compatible*.

Principle 3: Support local and state economic vitality

Guideline examples:

- Plan for the transportation needs of freight and industrial activities, including port access, as well as other economic activities that support local and state economies. Transportation facilities can and should stimulate economic activity and accommodate future growth in accordance with adopted land use plans.
- Provide for intermodal connectivity where appropriate that facilitates the movement of goods by truck, ship, and rail.

  Finding: *The Peninsula RTP Online and Mason Countywide Planning Policies regarding transportation's role in economic vitality are compatible*.

Principle 4: Make travel safer and more reliable for all

Guideline examples:

- Consider the travel needs and risks associated with all modes of travel when assessing system safety. Try to minimize all conflicts, particularly those between motorized and non-motorized forms of travel.
- Retrofit highways and streets built solely for motor vehicles to accommodate all modes of travel, especially within those areas where contemporary land use patterns are generating or intend to generate transit, walk, and bike trips.
- Incorporate safety strategies into local plans, striving for zero fatalities and serious injuries across the multimodal transportation system.
- Support modern measures as appropriate to minimize risk of serious crashes, such as roundabouts and other roadway design elements, speed reductions, access management, and active enforcement.
- Adopt WSDOT Level of Service standards for Highways of Statewide Significance and standards established in the RTP for all other state highways.

  Finding: *The Peninsula RTP Online and Mason Countywide Planning Policies regarding transportation safety and reliability are compatible*.

Principle 5: Reduce transportation's impact on the environment and human health

Guideline examples:

- Slow the demand for solo driving in order to reduce per capita growth in vehicle miles traveled and curb greenhouse gas emissions. A mix of travel demand management and land use strategies are applicable, depending on the need and character of each place.
- Promote active transportation options through community and infrastructure design as a means of supporting public health and quality of life.
- Support the retrofit of existing fish passage barriers and avoid creating any new ones.
- Provide for the needs of electric vehicles, the numbers of which will increase over time.

- Support expanded broadband access that reduces the need to travel at all

  Finding: *The Peninsula RTP Online and Mason Countywide Planning Policies regarding environment and human health are compatible*.

Principle 6: Maintain a state of good repair

Guideline examples:

- Recognize system preservation and asset management as priority investment needs. Work with the limited resources available to maintain system investments and keep life cycle costs low.

Finding: *The Peninsula RTP Online and Mason Countywide Planning Policies regarding system preservation are not incompatible, recognizing that system preservation is a feature of Comprehensive Plans and not Countywide Planning Policies*.

Principle 7: Cooperate with other governments in coordinated transportation planning and decision-making

Guideline examples:

- Participate in regional transportation planning activities as a member of the Peninsula RTPO.
- Maintain coordination between city and county agencies through the joint planning process.
- Engage with public transportation providers in coordinated planning.
- Cooperate with WSDOT in transportation and land use coordination affecting the state highway and ferry systems.
- Promote cooperation and coordination between tribal and non-tribal transportation planning efforts and investment decisions.

Finding: *The Peninsula RTP Online and Mason Countywide Planning Policies regarding regional cooperation are compatible*.

PRTPO conducted this review based on the adopted Mason Countywide Planning Policies, dated March 11, 2024, the Peninsula RTP Online updated in June 2025, and the principles and guidelines required under RCW 47.80.026. PRTPO has determined that those planning policies and the Peninsula RTP Online are compatible and consistent as per requirements of RCW 47.80.026(2) and 47.80.026(4), and with RCW 36.70A.210 which governs countywide planning policies. Consistency between these local and regional policies is an indicator of consistency between local and state transportation policies.

PRTPO's findings do not invalidate any growth management compliance findings from the Department of Commerce or the Growth Management Hearings Board. They are specific to rural concerns and have no bearing on consistency determinations by the Puget Sound Regional Council. Concerns or disputes with these consistency findings, along with evidence supporting the concern, should be brought to the attention of the PRTPO Coordinator and the Chair of the PRTPO Executive Board for consideration.

These consistency findings are effective June 20, 2025.