

# ***Creating Transit-Oriented Communities*** **-2009 Environmental Priority-**

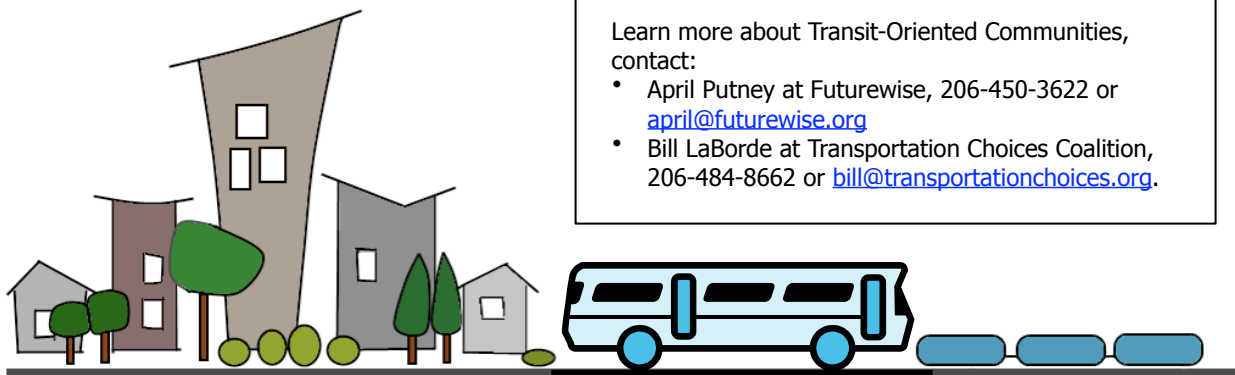
Washingtonians want to live in affordable, walkable communities connected by frequent, reliable transit. As our population grows, we are facing increased traffic congestion, diminished quality of life, and ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Transit-Oriented Communities would revise the state's transportation and land-use planning framework to assist local jurisdictions to plan for growth in a sustainable and climate-friendly way. The bill will provide incentives for cities and developers to create affordable, livable, transit-oriented development, increasing transportation choices

## **The Opportunity**

- Building compact, transit-oriented communities will create healthier, safer, affordable, and vibrant communities for Washington while reducing congestion, combating climate change and strengthening the economy.

## **The Solution**

- **Encourage urban regions to include climate change in transportation planning.** Transportation is the largest source of climate change emissions in Washington State. Fortunately the state has begun to take steps to reduce emissions from transportation by establishing benchmarks for driving less known as per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction. Now the state should make urban regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) accountable for meeting a portion of per capita VMT reduction targets. Cities and counties within those urban planning regions should help meet the VMT reduction targets set for the region.
- **Add climate change considerations to local land-use planning.** Cities and counties should help the state meet its climate change goals by including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in their comprehensive plans. Provide the tools and resources for cities and counties to plan for these reductions. Additionally cities and counties should adopt measures to increase walking, biking, and transit use in urban areas.
- **Create and encourage affordable, transit-oriented development (TOD).** TOD should be required near rail and bus rapid transit stations to include compact development, design standards, and plans for affordable housing. It should be strongly encouraged in urban centers and along corridors served by frequent transit. Incentives should be provided for cities and developers to create affordable, livable, transit-oriented communities that will give people real transportation choices.



### **Encourage urban jurisdictions to contribute to state's VMT reduction goal.**

- Update Regional Transportation Plans to include measures to reduce VMT for the urban Metropolitan Planning Organizations (Transportation Implementation Work Group - TIWG).
- Comprehensive plans should be consistent with MPO Regional Transportation Plans (Land Use and Climate Change Committee - LUCC & TIWG).

### **Encourage local jurisdictions to consider climate change in their growth management planning.**

- Modify environmental goal of the GMA to explicitly call for land-use and transportation patterns to be provided for that will aid the state in meeting its greenhouse gas reduction goal (LUCC & TIWG).
- Update countywide planning policies to include measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (LUCC).
- Local governments should provide level of service (LOS) standards for all available or planned modes of transportation and to encourage local governments to consider multimodal improvements or strategies in their transportation concurrency regulations (LUCC & TIWG).

### **Create and encourage transit-oriented development (TOD).**

- Require TOD in high-capacity transit station areas and encouraged in centers planned for intense development and along transit corridors with frequent service. Minimum densities shall be applied that are necessary to support transit, parking maximums (or at least no parking minimums), and other design review standards will also apply (based on TIWG).
- Enable greater use of programmatic-SEPA analysis inside urban centers with TOD by funding PERF. PERF criteria should be modified to allow for it be a revolving loan and to allow for late-comer fees to be charged for planning (LUCC & SEPA IWG).
- Inside TOD centers where a city does upfront SEPA analysis, developers can adopt the findings of the city's EIS and not be subject to individual SEPA challenges (LUCC & SEPA IWG).

### **Strengthen existing requirements to provide housing for all income groups.**

- Modify Housing Element to require that TOD centers include housing for those income levels likely to be employed in the center or accessible by a half hour transit ride (based on TIWG).

### **Invest in solutions.**

- Support the prioritization of existing infrastructure funds to areas promoting development and transportation choices that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil (LUCC).
- Fund PERF to enable greater use of programmatic SEPA (LUCC & SEPA IWG)
- Expand local funding options for infrastructure needs to accommodate a growing population inside urban TOD centers (LUCC).