Public Involvement Process for the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

January 2014
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The Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan is required by 23 USC Section 135, 23 CFR Parts 450 and 500, and 49 CFR Part 613 in order to receive federal surface transportation funds.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overview</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will we involve in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(STIP) and Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did WSDOT seek comments for this process?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What comments did WSDOT receive on the September 30, 2013 draft?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did WSDOT incorporate the comments?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of outreach does WSDOT engage in?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan?</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What steps will WSDOT follow in developing the next update to this plan?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What additional requirements must WSDOT follow?</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Title VI? How will WSDOT comply?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Environmental Justice? How will WSDOT comply?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Limited English Proficiency (LEP)? How will WSDOT comply?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What LEP populations may be affected by the plan?</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Factor Analysis for the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the key decision points for the plan?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How does WSDOT Propose to Encourage Public Participation?</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public meetings/workshops</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualization techniques</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polls/surveys</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public involvement materials</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted mailings, flyers, and email/listserv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using local media</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic access to information</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public notifications</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will WSDOT consider and respond to public comment?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does WSDOT ensure access for development of the STIP?</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the STIP Update Process? What is the STIP Amendment Process?</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendix</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 CFR 450.210 - Interested parties, public involvement, and consultation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication protocol between WSDOT and Washington tribes</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-metropolitan Local Official Consultation process</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

This document details how the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) involves the public in the development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). It provides a general framework for the public involvement process, and does not detail specific activities or timelines.

The Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan summarizes the current conditions of the transportation system and the 20-year system needs. This system includes state highways, ferries, rail, aviation, transit, marine ports and navigation, and bicycle facilities and pedestrian walkways.

WSDOT must follow requirements from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration when developing the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan required by 23 CFR parts 450 and 500; and 49 CFR Part 613.

The STIP is a four-year, fiscally constrained, prioritized program of transportation projects compiled by WSDOT and approved by the US Department of Transportation. It is required in order for the state to receive certain federal funds.

The following sections explain how WSDOT will provide opportunities for early and continuous public involvement in compliance with federal regulations in 23 CFR 450.210(a).

Check the WSDOT Statewide Transportation Planning website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning for:
- A Communications Plan that details where and when events will be held during the update of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan.
- Information about other WSDOT planning efforts.
- A Non-metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process (attached on page 21) which describes how WSDOT consults with Regional Transportation Planning Organizations.
- A Future Tribal Consultation Process to detail when and how WSDOT will involve Tribal Governments during the next update to the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan. This process will be developed in 2014.

Who will we involve in the STIP and Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan following this process?

At a minimum, the following parties will be involved. Consultation with Tribal governments and non-metropolitan local officials (Regional Transportation Planning Organizations) are covered in separate process documents as described in the appendix.

- The public
- Affected public agencies
- Representatives of public transportation employees
- Freight shippers

Public Involvement for Projects

WSDOT conducts public involvement for projects using similar, but different, methods. For more information on how you can get involved in projects, please contact the WSDOT region office where the project is located. You can find project and contact information at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects.
• Private providers of transportation
• Representatives of users of public transportation
• Representatives of users of pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities
• Representatives of the disabled
• Providers of freight transportation services
• Other interested parties

How did WSDOT seek comments for this process?

• Posted the draft on the WSDOT website for 45 calendar days
• Issued a statewide press release asking for comments
• Conducted an online survey of potential stakeholders
• Distributed the draft to WSDOT region offices and communications staff
• Distributed the document to external transportation planning agencies, including: Metropolitan Planning Organizations; Regional Transportation Planning Organizations; the Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (WITPAC); the Association of Washington Cities; the Washington State Association of Counties; and transit agencies
• Received and reviewed comments relating to the proposed process.

What comments did WSDOT receive on the September 30, 2013 draft?

WSDOT published a News Release on September 30, 2013, that included a link to the draft, the current plan, and the STIP. This release was distributed to WSDOT communicators located in WSDOT regions and project offices. Each communicator forwarded the News Release to local contacts, including newspapers, newsletters, television stations, radio stations, local governments, Metropolitan Transportation Organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, transit agencies, interest groups, public agencies, and interested parties.

A common theme of the comments was that the draft document was not detailed enough.

One specific comment was that WSDOT did not send the draft to the Tribal Transportation Planning Organization for review, as was stated on page 4 of the draft. Instead it was sent to the Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee and to a list of tribal planners.

How did WSDOT incorporate the comments?

WSDOT did not intend this document to be a detailed list of specific outreach events but rather the first step in developing a public outreach process. The Overview section was updated to clarify the purpose of this document and to explain our outreach process.

What types of outreach does WSDOT engage in?

The specific types of outreach that WSDOT engages in for planning include:

1. Asking the public their opinion on the methods and strategies – Draft Proposed Outreach Process
2. Incorporating comments – Final Outreach Process
3. Developing an Outreach Plan that includes:
   a. Tribal Government Consultation process that outlines the roles and responsibilities of WSDOT, Federal land management agencies, and Tribal Governments as per 23 CFR 450.210(c). This process is scheduled to be finalized in 2014.
   c. Media information that includes which media outlets will be contacted with what specific
information at what specific time(s) using the methods described in this document.
d. Public Involvement information using the methods described in this document that includes:
   • Number, location, date, and time of events and documents considered “vital” that will be translated as determined by the LEP analysis in this document
   • External and internal contact list
e. Long-range plan timeline
f. Contact information

What is the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan?

The Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (LRSTP) summarizes the current conditions and the projected 20-year needs of the statewide transportation system. This system includes state highways, county roads, city streets, ferries, airports, seaports, river ports, transit, freight rail, passenger rail, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Federal law requires each state to have a long-range statewide transportation plan in order to receive federal Surface Transportation Funds. Requirements are in federal law (23 USC Section 135) and federal regulations (23 CFR Parts 450 and 500, and 49 CFR Part 613).

Washington updates the LRSTP periodically. See WSDOT’s planning webpage at www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/ for more information.

What steps will WSDOT follow in developing the next update to this plan?

The Washington State Transportation Commission is required by state law to update a long-range policy plan every 4 years starting in 2010. The 2010 plan provided a policy update to the 2007-2026 LRSTP. The 2014 LRSTP will kick off the next update of the federally required plan and is expected to be completed in 2016. This update will follow the federally-compliant Public Involvement Process described in this document. Phase I will focus on the overarching policy framework. Phase II of the update will begin after guidance is received from USDOT related to performance measures and statewide planning. Once information is available, it will be posted on the WSDOT Planning webpage.

What additional requirements must WSDOT follow?

WSDOT must comply with all state laws and rules regarding public meetings and the use of state resources. Since WSDOT receives federal funds, we are required to comply with federal laws and regulations. The requirements that pertain to public involvement include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Presidential Executive Order 12898 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations”; and Presidential Executive Order 13166 “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency.” These federal requirements are often referred to as Title VI or Civil Rights/Nondiscrimination.

This document describes these requirements and how WSDOT proposes to address them in the development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan.
How will WSDOT comply with Title VI when developing the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan?

WSDOT develops and submits an agency-wide Title VI Plan to the US Department of Transportation that we will follow during the development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan.

Major activities from this plan include:

- Ensuring that all aspects of the transportation planning process operation are conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner and comply with all provisions of Title VI.
- Ensuring the full participation of all social, economic, and ethnic populations impacted by the Department’s transportation planning processes, by disseminating program information to minority media and ethnic and gender related organizations, and participating in roundtable meetings and other public forums in affected minority communities.
- Providing information in languages other than English when Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations of 5% or more, or more than 1,000 LEP persons have been identified in any given affected project area.
- Assisting the Title VI Coordinators in gathering and organizing the Statewide Transportation Planning Office (STPO) portion of the Annual Title VI Accomplishment and Update Report.
- Verifying that there is equal participation on Citizens Advisory Committees (CAC) by requesting the MPOs and RTPOs provide information pertaining to their selection criteria for CAC members and to furnish information on membership makeup (race, gender, and position within the organization) for evaluation.
- Visiting CAC meetings and public meetings to verify the level of participation of Title VI protected group members when offered in predominantly ethnic minority communities.
- Collecting data on gender, race, and national origin from public forum attendees.

What is Title VI?

Title VI refers to the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, its amendments, and federal guidance. Title VI prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Since WSDOT receives federal funds, we are required to comply with these laws.

What is Environmental Justice (EJ)?

Environmental justice seeks to lessen unequal distributions of environmental burdens (pollution, industrial facilities, crime, etc.), equalize benefits and balance access to nutritious food, clean air and water, parks, recreation, health care, education, transportation, safe jobs, etc., in a variety of situations. Self determination and participation in decision making are key pieces of environmental justice. Presidential Executive Order 12898 and USDOT and FHWA implementing orders set the standards for environmental justice for transportation projects. Environmental justice means minority and low income populations do not suffer disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from agency programs, policies, and activities.

How does WSDOT comply with Environmental Justice when developing the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan?

WSDOT receives federal funds from more than one federal agency and is required to follow each federal agency’s guidance for complying with Environmental Justice (EJ). The following steps are intended to comply with applicable guidance.

Generally, a Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan is a policy-level plan that does not contain
a list of projects recommended for funding and, therefore, does not have direct impacts to EJ populations. However, WSDOT is committed to ensuring that EJ populations are involved in the planning process. To ensure this, WSDOT proposes to:

- Use statewide demographic data to determine where EJ populations (minorities and low-income) live.
- Target our outreach events to ensure that EJ populations are given an opportunity to participate.
- Determine if the decisions made at the statewide policy level disproportionately impact EJ populations.
- Mitigate or minimize these impacts.

What is Limited English Proficiency (LEP)?

Presidential Executive Order 13166 “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency” requires federal agencies and recipients of federal funds to provide meaningful access to individuals that do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

How will WSDOT comply with Limited English Proficiency when developing the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan?


The plan includes guidance, legal requirements, lists of translation and interpreter services, demographic and language data, resources, and forms to distribute at public meetings.

What Limited English Proficiency populations may be impacted by the plan?

Federal guidance includes a four-factor analysis tool. This tool is used to determine what LEP populations may be impacted by a plan or project and if it’s reasonable to provide translation or interpreter services. While designed to be a flexible and fact-dependent standard, the starting point is an individualized assessment that balances the following four factors:

- The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the program or grantee.
- The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the program.
- The nature and importance of the program, activity, or service provided by the program to people’s lives.
- The resources available to the grantee/recipient or agency, and costs.

As indicated above, the intent of this guidance is to find a balance that ensures meaningful access by LEP persons to critical services while not imposing undue burdens on small business or small nonprofits.

Four-Factor Analysis for the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan

WSDOT conducted a four-factor analysis using data from the American Community Survey and analysis by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to determine languages that meet the 5% threshold on a county basis. Based on that analysis, STPO will translate vital documents into five languages for outreach events held in the counties listed below:

- Spanish - Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Adams, Yakima, Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties
- Chinese - King county
- Korean - King county
- Vietnamese - King county
- Tagalog - King county

WSDOT’s policy is to provide reasonable translation and interpreter services for any language requested – even if the language does not meet the population threshold. WSDOT’s Office of Equal Opportunity
reviews requests for translation and interpreter services and determines if the request is reasonable.

**What are the key decision points for the plan?**

The following key decision points will be announced on WSDOT's Planning website:
- Determination of the advisory team
- Determination of the scope of the plan
- Determination of public and stakeholder advisory groups
- Proposed policies
- Number and location of outreach events
- Draft plan
- Final plan

**How does WSDOT Propose to Encourage Public Participation?**

The following are examples of methods WSDOT will use. Specific information will be detailed in a Communications Plan developed when the LRSTP is updated.

**Public meetings/workshops**

WSDOT will request that discussions of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP are included on meeting agendas of agencies and stakeholder groups, including the Washington State Transportation Commission, MPOs, RTPOs, community groups, business associations, and other agencies and organizations with a transportation focus.

If additional public meetings are necessary, WSDOT may set up meetings solely to discuss the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and/or the STIP. These meetings will be held at low-or-no cost, accessible facilities and will be scheduled for reasonable times to facilitate public participation.

**Visualization techniques**

To the extent practicable, WSDOT will employ visualization techniques, which may include:
- Maps
- Charts
- Graphs
- Web content
- Slide shows
- Artist’s renderings
- Animation
- Videos

**Polls/surveys**

The Washington State Transportation Commission, in partnership with WSDOT, will conduct a web-based survey that will allow members of the community to provide input at a time and location of their choosing. The link will be available on the Project website, included in all materials, and mentioned at presentations.

Alternate techniques include telephone polls, electronic surveys through the internet or email, or hard-copy printed surveys distributed at meetings or by mail. WSDOT will set up a notification system for statewide planning that can be used for surveys. WSDOT will not access other email lists that the department maintains for other purposes. WSDOT can send surveys to established email lists that include local agencies, RTPOs, MPOs, WITPAC, TTPO, tribal planners, and state agencies.

In addition to using these existing lists, WSDOT will establish a Statewide Planning interested parties list by adding Statewide Planning to the Email/Text update list on WSDOT’s homepage at: www.wsdot.wa.gov/. Those who do not have internet access can call or write the Statewide Transportation Planning Office.
Public involvement materials

To minimize expense, WSDOT will attempt to minimize the use of printed materials. Where necessary, printed materials should be presented in reader-friendly format and should use visualization techniques as much as possible.

WSDOT tries to provide timely information about transportation issues and decision making processes simply, efficiently, concisely and correctly. Examples of materials used for public involvement include:

- Flyers
- Brochures
- Visualizations
- Maps
- Drawings
- Photographs
- Presentations
- Fact sheets
- Charts and Graphs
- Newsletters
- Websites

Publications

The Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan will be published on the WSDOT website and an email will be sent to the distribution list when materials are published. For those lacking internet access, hard copies can be requested from the Transportation Planning Office.

Targeted mailings, flyers, and email/listserv

Letters and/or postcards announcing updates to the LRSTP and the STIP may be sent to targeted audiences encouraging them to comment on the plan and/or program. Flyers may be developed and delivered to community organizations announcing updates.

Using local media

During the development of the LRSTP, meetings will be held at various location throughout the state. When locations have been chosen, local media will be notified. Some ways that WSDOT may notify local media:

- News release(s)
- Purchased advertising
- Written commentary pieces
- Display advertising
- Public service announcements
- Agency spokesman on public access or cable television programming
- Neighborhood or regional publications/newsletters
- Non-English publications in areas with LEP populations

Design Visualization before and “after” on SR 20
Electronic access to information

To the extent practicable, WSDOT will provide materials electronically to the widest possible audience. To achieve this, materials will be posted on the WSDOT Planning website and sent out by email. Materials may also be sent or posted to social media sites. WSDOT has an FTP site that can be used to transfer large files and a SharePoint site that can be used to accept comments.

Public notifications

Public notification may be through:
- Notices on the web
- Email
- Newsletters
- Announcements at public meetings
- Advertisements
- Local media
- Libraries
- Local groups
- Services for underserved populations
- Flyers
- Exhibits
- Twitter, Facebook, and the WSDOT Blog

How will WSDOT consider and respond to public comment?

To the extent practicable, WSDOT will review and consider all comments made on the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and associated public involvement materials. Responses will be made where reasonable and appropriate.
What is the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)?

Federal law requires each state to have a federally-approved Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in order for projects to be authorized for federal funding. The STIP is a four-year, fiscally constrained prioritized program of transportation projects that is compiled by WSDOT and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The STIP is a document that is also searchable online.

Types of projects include pavement overlays, roadway widening, bridge replacement or repair, signal systems, safety performance enhancements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit improvements. They can include, but are not limited to, improvements to the system or particular facilities located on state highways, county roads, city streets, tribal roadways, or transit systems. Funding is usually from a combination of federal, state, and local sources.

Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) include all federally funded projects and regionally significant projects that are submitted by tribes, cities, counties, the state, and transit providers to the MPOs and RTPOs. Before being included in a TIP, projects are presented publicly and the community is provided opportunity to participate as per the MPO/RTPO public participation processes. After approval, TIPs are submitted to WSDOT.

Each MPO develops a federally-required Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and a Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). The MTP is a 20-year transportation plan for state highways, county roads, city streets, and tribal roads in the MPO planning area boundary. Plans are required to be updated at least every four years in air quality nonattainment and maintenance areas and at least every five years for the others.

MTPs are approved by the MPO and then submitted to the Governor, FHWA, and FTA for informational purposes.

An MTIP is a list of transportation projects that are consistent with the MTP. The MTIPs are submitted to WSDOT for approval. If the MTIP is approved, the projects from the MTIP are included in the STIP without change. MPOs can, but are not required to, submit monthly updates to their MTIP for inclusion in the STIP. These are known as TIP amendments.

RTPOs are required by state law to periodically prepare and submit Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) and Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIPs) to WSDOT. WSDOT ensures the RTP and the RTIP are consistent with state law. If they are consistent, WSDOT includes these projects in the STIP. RTPOs can, but are not required to, submit monthly updates to their RTIP projects for inclusion in the STIP.

WSDOT receives the program of projects (called Transportation Improvement Programs) from two main sources: Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).

WSDOT encourages public participation throughout the entire STIP process. As comments are provided, WSDOT works with the MPOs and RTPOs to clarify any remaining concerns and provides a new STIP to FHWA and FTA for approval.

How does WSDOT ensure access for development of the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP)?

The STIP is a four-year prioritized program of projects. These projects have been identified through state, regional and local planning processes, as the highest priority for the available funding to preserve and improve the state’s transportation network.
Local agencies work through their metropolitan planning or regional transportation planning organizations and counties as appropriate, to include projects into their TIPs. Since these projects must be included in the STIP without change (23 CFR 450.216) the public involvement process for project selection is conducted by the agencies submitting the projects to the TIPs.

**What is the STIP Update Process?**

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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>MPOs submit TIPs to WSDOT</td>
<td>STIP public review comment period</td>
<td>WSDOT submits STIP to FHWA and FTA</td>
<td>FHWA and FTA approve STIP</td>
<td>WSDOT posts approved STIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>By October of each year</td>
<td>30 days (November)</td>
<td>By 12/25</td>
<td>Within 45 days of the draft STIP</td>
<td>Within 3 days of approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where to find it</td>
<td>MPO websites</td>
<td>WSDOT website</td>
<td>WSDOT website</td>
<td>WSDOT website</td>
<td>WSDOT website</td>
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**What is the STIP Amendment Process?**

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<th>6</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>MPO posts amended projects for comment</td>
<td>MPO submits final amendment to WSDOT for review for inclusion in STIP</td>
<td>MPO informs WSDOT of amendment</td>
<td>WSDOT forwards amendment &amp; recommendations for inclusion in STIP to FHWA/FTA</td>
<td>FHWA/FTA approve changes in the STIP</td>
<td>WSDOT posts the FHWA/FTA approval letter and projects to website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>3rd Friday Jan - Oct</td>
<td>Varies by MPO</td>
<td>Within 14 days</td>
<td>Within 14 days</td>
<td>Within 3 days</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Where to find it</td>
<td>MPO, RTPO and county websites and/or as described in their respective Public Participation Plan</td>
<td>Websites and/or as described in their respective Public Participation Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WSDOT website</td>
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Appendix
Definitions

Public Involvement Process

This is a broad framework that WSDOT must develop and ask for public review (required in 23 CFR 450.201(a)), follow (required in 23 CFR 450.214(k)), and then document (recommended for certification required in 23 CFR 450.218). This is the first step in developing a public involvement process that must be kept separate and discreet from other processes WSDOT develops to involve external customers. This process asks the public to comment on preferred strategies and methods that WSDOT could use to involve the public when developing the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP. Based on feedback gathered during this process, WSDOT can take step two. There is no required update cycle for this process.

Public Involvement and Consultation Plan

This is a specific plan that WSDOT develops before updating a transportation plan. This plan defines items such as: who will be involved, how WSDOT will contact them, how many and where public outreach events will be held, what stakeholders should be invited to participate, how stakeholders will be contacted, how governments will be consulted, etc.

• For the WTP 2035 (Phase I of the LRSTP update), the Washington State Transportation Commission hired a consultant to develop and implement this effort. The Transportation Commission will jointly scope this plan with WSDOT using the broad framework contained in the Public Involvement Process and the Public Involvement and Consultation Plan.

Communications Plan

This is the plan WSDOT develops before updating a transportation plan. It describes how WSDOT will communicate the update process. It includes specifics such as media contacts, interest groups, stakeholders, and interested parties.

• For the WTP 2035, the Washington State Transportation Commission hired a consultant to develop and implement this effort. The Transportation Commission will jointly scope this plan with WSDOT using the broad framework contained in the Public Involvement Process and the Public Involvement and Consultation Plan.

Public Outreach and Consultation Journal/Documentation

WSDOT will develop a journal of outreach activities conducted to document outreach, consultation, and coordination with stakeholders, the steering committee, advisory group, tribes, MPOs, RTPOs, transportation providers, other interested parties, and the public. The outreach journal will include documentation of Title VI and LEP activities.

Federal requirements

Federal regulations and agreements with FHWA and FTA require WSDOT to develop the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan (update to the 2007-2026 WTP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

• Federal law (23 USC Section 135) and federal regulations (23 CFR 450.210) require state departments of transportation to develop separate processes to follow during development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the statewide transportation improvement program. These processes are:
  a. One documented process to provide opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points. The public is defined as citizens and particular categories of stakeholders. (23 CFR 450.210(a)).
  b. A second documented process to “provide for non-metropolitan local official participation in the development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP that is separate and discreet from the public
involvement process” (23 CFR 450.210(b)).
c. Additional documented processes for consulting with Tribal and Federal land management agencies. “For each area in the State under the jurisdiction of an Indian Tribal government, the state shall develop the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP” by following documented “process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with Indian Tribal governments and Federal land management agencies in the development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP.” (23 CFR 450.210(c)).

State requirements

- State law (RCW 47.01.071) requires the Transportation Commission to develop a transportation plan that sets the policy framework for public agencies with transportation responsibilities. The current plan is the WTP 2030 (separate from the 2007-2026 WTP) which received state funding and was developed to comply with state requirements. As such, this plan was not intended to, and does not meet federal requirements for a Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan. The Transportation Commission's public involvement requirements are in RCW 47.01.075 which require “At least every five years, the commission shall convene regional forums to gather citizen input on transportation issues” and in RCW 47.01.071(3) to “provide for public involvement in transportation designed to elicit the public's views both with respect to adequate transportation services and appropriate means of minimizing adverse social, economic, environmental, and energy impact of transportation programs.”
- State law RCW 47.06.040 requires WSDOT to develop modal plans and a statewide multimodal plan that “reflect public involvement”. WSDOT's plans are exempt from SEPA (WAC 468-12-800).

Non-Metropolitan Local Officials Consultation Process (23 CFR 450.210(b))

This describes how WSDOT will consult with Regional Transportation Planning Organizations during development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP. The current document was approved in 2011. It is required to be updated every five years.

Tribal Governments and Federal Land Management Consultation Process (23 CFR 450.210(c))

This describes how WSDOT will consult with Tribal Governments and Federal land management agencies during development of the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the STIP. Currently, WSDOT follows the Communication Protocol and the Consultation Protocol for Policy and Statewide Issues for tribal consultation. There is no required update cycle for this process.

Metropolitan Planning Cooperation (23 CFR 450.214)

The process WSDOT uses to cooperate with Metropolitan Planning Organizations is not required to be documented or formal. WSDOT assigns staff to each MPO to assist with compliance and coordination issues. In addition, WSDOT and MPOs meet quarterly with RTPOs to consult and coordinate activities.
WSDOT Contact Information:

Statewide Transportation Planning Office
For the Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan, Call or email us:
  • (360) 705-7962
  • statewideplanning@wsdot.wa.gov
Write us:
  • PO Box 47370, Olympia, WA 98504-7370
Go to our planning website:
  • http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/

Highways & Local Programs
For the STIP, call or email us:
  • (360) 705-7389
  • TaxS@wsdot.wa.gov
Write us:
  • PO Box 47390, Olympia, WA 98504-7390
Go to our STIP website:
  • http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/localprograms/

Office of Equal Opportunity contact information

Call or email us:
  • Statewide Title VI Coordinator, 360-705-7082, SultonJ@wsdot.wa.gov
  • Persons who are hard of hearing may call Washington State Telecommunications Relay Service (TTY) at 711
Write us:
  • Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) External Civil Rights Program PO Box 47314, 310 Maple Park, Olympia, WA 98504-7314
Go to our OEO website:
  • http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/EqualOpportunity/InternalCivilRights/titlevi.htm

(a) In carrying out the statewide transportation planning process, including development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP, the State shall develop and use a documented public involvement process that provides opportunities for public review and comment at key decision points. (1) The State's public involvement process at a minimum shall:
   (i) Establish early and continuous public involvement opportunities that provide timely information about transportation issues and decisionmaking processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties;
   (ii) Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP;
   (iii) Provide adequate public notice of public involvement activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;
   (iv) To the maximum extent practicable, ensure that public meetings are held at convenient and accessible locations and times;
   (v) To the maximum extent practicable, use visualization techniques to describe the proposed long-range statewide transportation plan and supporting studies;
   (vi) To the maximum extent practicable, make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information;
   (vii) Demonstrate explicit consideration and response to public input during the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and STIP;
   (viii) Include a process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services; and
   (ix) Provide for the periodic review of the effectiveness of the public involvement process to ensure that the process provides full and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate. (2) The State shall provide for public comment on existing and proposed processes for public involvement in the development of the long-range statewide transportation plan and the STIP. At a minimum, the State shall allow 45 calendar days for public review and written comment before the procedures and any major revisions to existing procedures are adopted. The State shall provide copies of the approved public involvement process document(s) to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes.
Tribal Communication Protocol

Between the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Tribal Governments with interests in Washington State.

Purpose:
The purpose of these protocols is to assist WSDOT staff when communicating with Tribal Governments and bring consistency to WSDOT’s consultation process. This Communication Protocol applies to all formal correspondence with Tribal Chairs. WSDOT and Tribes recognize that day-to-day contact occurs at the staff level.

WSDOT will send the following types of formal correspondence to Tribal Chairs with a cover letter:
- Consultation meeting requests
- Calls for projects / proposals for WSDOT funding programs or planning documents
- When seeking formal input on a project, policy, plan or program
- Submission of Tribal agreements, contracts and contract amendments
- Monitoring / site visit requests for Tribal contract compliance
- Invitations to participate in WSDOT-sponsored public events

Formal correspondence will be addressed in the following manner:
- Address line: The Honorable
- Salutation: Dear Chairman, Chairwoman, or President

When sending formal correspondence to Tribal Chairs, electronic copies should go to the following:
- The appropriate Tribal staff as identified by the Tribe
- For letters regarding statewide / policy issues going to all Tribes, also copy the Washington Indian Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (WITPAC) Delegates, Alternates and designated staff members
- Respective WSDOT staff according to internal protocol

Time sensitive information, such as funding opportunities, may be sent electronically to Tribal Chairs and appropriate staff by WSDOT Tribal Liaisons, Regional Administrators or Division Directors.

The WSDOT Government Relations Tribal Liaison will maintain a current distribution list of transportation contacts including: Tribal Chairs, WITPAC Delegates and staff contacts for Cultural Resources, Natural Resources, Planning, TERO and others as identified by each Tribe. The WSDOT Government Relations Tribal Liaison will work with individual Tribes at least once a year to identify and update contacts.
Implementation and Issue Resolution:
WSDOT will incorporate these protocols into its agency Executive Order on Tribal Consultation and conduct training to ensure that they are understood by WSDOT management and staff.

If a Tribe(s) becomes concerned that these protocols were not implemented, they are encouraged to contact the WSDOT Government Relations Tribal Liaison. The Tribal Liaison will facilitate a meeting of Tribal representatives and the WSDOT representative responsible for a specific consultation effort. If concerns are not fully resolved, the Tribal Chair may request a consultation meeting with the Secretary of Transportation.
Background

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) developed and adopted a Non-Metropolitan Consultation Process on February 17, 2006 in compliance with 23CFR450.210(b). This regulation requires each state to have a documented process “for consulting with local officials representing units of general purpose local government” during the development of the statewide transportation planning process and the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP). States are further required in 23CFR450.210(b)(1) to review this process and solicit comments every five years regarding the effectiveness of the consultation.

Section (c) of this CFR also requires consultation with tribes during the development of the statewide transportation planning process and the STIP, but that process will not be addressed in this document. The WSDOT Tribal Liaison is currently updating WSDOT’s protocol for consultation with tribes.

Formal Consultation Process

In Washington state, the transportation planning consultation process with non-metropolitan local officials takes place primarily through RTPOs - as established in Chapter 47.80 RCW:

1. RTPO – Statutory Authority
   The authority to form RTPOs was established in 1990 as a part of the state Growth Management Act. RTPOs are voluntary associations of local government (cities, counties, and transit districts) for the purposes of transportation planning (Chapter 47.80 RCW). RTPOs develop regional transportation plans and Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIPs). They have been active in the development of the 2007-2026 Washington Transportation Plan, the federally compliant, statewide, long-range transportation plan. The WSDOT Transportation Planning Office verifies that each RTPO conforms to statutory requirements through continuous plan coordination and grant management.

2. RTPO – Structure
   There are 14 RTPOs in Washington state. RTPO membership includes 38 of the 39 counties in the state. Per regulations, RTPOs in urbanized areas must be the same organization as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) designated for the area. Population counts in the 2000 Census resulted in the formation of three new MPOs. The formation of these new MPOs changed the distribution of RTPOs to include:
   - Two that are exclusively rural in nature (Northeast Washington RTPO and Quad-County RTPO)
   - Two that are mainly rural in nature but include an adjunct member county that has an urbanized area (Palouse and Peninsula), and
   - Ten that are affiliated with MPOs

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1 Consultation is defined as: “When one party confers with another identified party and, prior to taking action(s), considers that party’s views.”
Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process
Washington State Department of Transportation

3. RTPO – Membership
RTPOs must create transportation policy boards that include representatives of member cities, towns, and counties. These boards must allow other transportation stakeholders (major employers, port districts, transit districts, WSDOT Regions, and tribal governments) to participate in policy-making. While all RTPOs may provide voting membership on their executive boards to the Transportation Commission, WSDOT, and large public ports, those RTPOs containing counties with a population greater than one million must provide voting membership to those organizations. Generally, RTPO boards and policy and technical committees meet regularly—usually monthly or quarterly. Representatives of WSDOT and other state agencies regularly consult and coordinate with local elected and staff officials as a part of these meetings.

4. RTPO – State Funding
Since 1995, the legislature has provided an appropriation of at least $1.2 million per year for RTPO support. During the last statewide plan development process, the legislature appropriated an additional $1 million per fiscal year for RTPOs. During the current biennium, the legislature has appropriated $2.2 million per year to support RTPOs and their long-range transportation planning efforts.

5. RTPO – Consultation process
There are five core parts to the RTPO consultation process in Washington:
   a. WSDOT/MPO/RTPO Coordinating Committee meetings
      WSDOT facilitates quarterly meetings primarily made of staff representatives of all RTPOs. Any member can suggest issues or topics for discussion at these meetings. WSDOT executives and Washington State Transportation Commission members periodically attend these meetings and discuss issues that help frame statewide policy.
   b. RTPO – Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)/STIP process
      Each year the RTPOs directly enter data describing their selected projects from their regional TIP into a WSDOT database. This data is then forwarded for inclusion in the STIP. The RTIP process includes coordination and consultation with WSDOT regional staff, Highways and Local Programs, and the Transportation Planning Office to develop a coordinated program. In this process, RTPO members and staff have an opportunity to review WSDOT projects in their area.
   c. Statewide Transportation Planning
      RTPO policy board members (local elected officials) and technical committees (county, city, transit, port, and other staffs) provide key feedback on which state projects, programs, and policies should be proposed in statewide transportation plans and programs to meet and support local and regional needs. The statewide plans and programs providing this opportunity include, but are not limited to:
      
      i. Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan (federal requirement)
      ii. Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (federal requirement)
      iii. Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan (state requirement)
      iv. Statewide Policy Plan (state requirement for the Washington State Transportation Commission)
      v. Statewide modal plans (state requirement):
Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process
Washington State Department of Transportation

Rail Plan, Intercity Passenger Rail Plan, Passenger Rail Plan, Bicycle Facilities and Pedestrian Walkways Plan, Public Transportation Plan

vi. Strategic Highway Safety Plan (state requirement)

RTPOs were instrumental in developing the *2007-2026 Washington Transportation Plan*, fulfilling both federal and state requirements for a long-range and multimodal plan. During 2009, they participated in the development of the Aviation System Plan, Ferry System Plan, and Freight Rail Plan. In 2010, they participated in the *Strategic Highway Safety Plan (Target Zero)* and the *Highway System Plan*. RTPOs were also active in the development of the *Washington Transportation Plan 2030*, which is the Transportation Commission’s statewide transportation policy plan.\(^2\)

d. Individual RTPO meetings
WSDOT Region representatives interface regularly with the RTPOs. The Regional Administrator is typically a voting member of the Policy Board and the Region Planning Manager is typically a member of the RTPO Technical Advisory Committee. They routinely attend RTPO policy and technical meetings. Not all RTPOs have the same organizational structure, so committee participation varies.

WSDOT Region Planning Offices assist in the development and review of local and regional transportation plans and studies. They coordinate with RTPOs and others in developing, analyzing, and refining solutions for highway deficiencies. They review and coordinate study methodology and provide recommendations and input to local agencies (RTPOs) and local interest groups concerning land use actions, traffic mitigation, and future transportation improvements. They also coordinate with RTPOs and local jurisdictions in updating the Travel Demand Model, particularly for developing projects and studies.

Other Consultation Opportunities
In addition to the RTPO program, Washington state participates in a variety of statewide, non-metropolitan local official consultations, in compliance with 23 CFR 450.210(b):

- **Local Government Associations**
  Every five years WSDOT provides the Washington State Association of Counties and the Association of Washington Cities an opportunity to comment on the effectiveness of the Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process. Other organizations are also involved (Washington Association of County Officials), as appropriate.

- **Non-RTPO County**
  San Juan County, composed entirely of islands, is currently not a member of an RTPO. Its four largest islands are served by the Washington State Ferries (WSF, a division of WSDOT). These ferry routes are considered the only state highways in the county. The WSF established ferry advisory committees in the county. These committees consult and receive input on transportation planning and report back to WSF. Local elected officials appoint most members of these committees (WSF also uses Ferry Advisory Committees in other service areas). Funds

\(^2\) The WTP2030 does not replace the 2007-2026 WTP as Washington state’s federally compliant long-range plan.
for San Juan County are reserved in the RTPO grant program. Periodic dialogs have occurred regarding their joining an RTPO, but the consensus within the county appears to be that no change to current consultation procedures is needed.

- **Local Area Meetings**
  The Washington State Transportation Commission holds local area meetings around the state at least four times a year to gain an in-depth understanding of transportation issues important to various areas of the state. The information gathered helps the Commission to recommend policies and budgets. Although these meetings are not solely for non-metropolitan local officials, rural local officials consistently participate in them.

The commission is also required by state law to conduct regional forums to collect citizen input on transportation issues every five years. RCW 47.01.075 specifically states that:

> “(1) The transportation commission shall provide a public forum for the development of transportation policy in Washington state to include coordination with regional transportation planning organizations, transportation stakeholders, counties, cities, and citizens. At least every five years, the commission shall convene regional forums to gather citizen input on transportation issues. The commission shall consider the input gathered at the forums as it establishes the statewide transportation plan under RCW 47.01.071(4).

> (2) In fulfilling its responsibilities under this section, the commission may create ad hoc committees or other such committees of limited duration as necessary.

> (3) In order to promote a better transportation system, the commission may offer policy guidance and make recommendations to the governor and the legislature in key issue areas, including but not limited to:

  (a) Transportation finance;
  (b) Preserving, maintaining, and operating the statewide transportation system;
  (c) Transportation infrastructure needs;
  (d) Promoting best practices for adoption and use by transportation-related agencies and programs;
  (e) Transportation efficiencies that will improve service delivery and/or coordination;
  (f) Improved planning and coordination among transportation agencies and providers; and
  (g) Use of intelligent transportation systems and other technology-based solutions.”

- **Opportunity for process review**
  WSDOT conducted a sixty-calendar day period to allow non-metropolitan local officials to review and comment on the consultation process. The review period was from November 10, 2010 until January 14, 2011. Following this review, WSDOT assessed the recommendations, incorporated pertinent changes, and submitted the final process to FHWA and FTA prior to February 24, 2011.

- **Innovative Communication Technology**
  WSDOT has begun and continues to communicate vital traffic information and agency news using its Web site and social media tools on the Internet. Some examples of these technologies include:
Non-Metropolitan Local Official Consultation Process
Washington State Department of Transportation

- Blogger (wsdotblog.blogspot.com/) - A blog is a Web site, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. WSDOT engages the public by telling them about what we do, and allows readers to leave comments in an interactive format.

- YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/wsdot) - This is a video-sharing Web site where users can upload, view and share video clips. Videos allow WSDOT to show audiences footage of road conditions, storm damage, project simulations, or other events and activities in a visually compelling way.

- Twitter (www.twitter.com/wsdot) - This free networking and micro-blogging service allows its users to send and read other users’ text updates (known as tweets) of up to 140 characters in length. Our Twitter updates are sent to subscribers and received on their computer, cell phone, or mobile hand-held device. This real-time information enables the user to adjust their travel plans or routes accordingly.

- Flickr (www.flickr.com/photos/wsdot) - This is an image and video-hosting Web site, and online community platform. WSDOT posts photos and descriptions of high profile events, construction projects, and most recently, 2009 winter storm damage.

- Facebook (www.facebook.com/WSDOT) – This free interactive social media network is a way to stay up to date with WSDOT news via profile updates and photos. All you have to do is “Like” the WSDOT Facebook page, and you can keep tabs on what WSDOT is doing.

- RSS Feeds (www.wsdot.wa.gov/news/rss/) - RSS (Real Simple Syndication) is a way for you to keep up on your favorite news and information without having to visit the Web site to see what is new. This information is viewed through a RSS News Reader.

- **Sensitivity to Rural Areas Without Broadband Internet Access**

  WSDOT is aware of the communication barriers to rural areas of the state that currently do not have broadband Internet access. These identified cities will receive review instructions and feedback mechanisms via newsletters mailed through the post office.