

Housing and Transportation Affordability Initiative

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have a New Location Affordability Portal

The U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are heading the federal [Housing and Transportation Affordability Initiative](#) (HTA). The goal of the initiative is to give consumers a better understanding of the relationship between housing and transportation costs. To help achieve this goal the HTA developed the Location Affordability Portal. The Portal contains the following two tools:

- Location Affordability Index
- My Transportation Cost Calculator

These tools provide information on combined housing and transportation costs to help families, realty professionals, policymakers, and developers make more informed decisions about where to live, work, and invest. The portal also provides access to resources, research, and practices that can help families better understand that housing and transportation costs can have a significant impact on a household budget, especially when housing isn't located next to job centers, transit, or other public infrastructure.



Location Affordability Index

The [Location Affordability Index](#) (LAI) tool estimates the percentage of a family's income dedicated to the combined cost of housing and transportation in a given location. This tool provides for a diverse set of family profiles and the affordability for each one in a neighborhood, city, or region.

The LAI can help individuals, planners, and researchers better understand the costs of living in a given location by providing estimates on how much a particular household profile would pay within a given block group. The LAI can also provide maps and data tools to help communicate with the public about different development scenarios.

My Transportation Cost Calculator

To better identify and understand transportation and housing costs, and to customize data from the Location Affordability Index, [My Transportation Cost Calculator](#) provides location cost comparisons so families can make informed decisions about where to live, work, and play.

WSDOT's Work on Land Use and Transportation

WSDOT is working with local governments to better integrate local, regional and state land use and transportation planning. You may find out more about this effort on the Community Transportation Planning Office's (CTPO) [website](#) and the WSDOT Community Planning Portal [website](#) and [folio](#).

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Approaches to Housing and Transportation

There are multiple, promising approaches available to local and state governments to help manage and reduce the combined costs of housing and transportation. These approaches include:

- Preservation of existing affordable homes near job centers, public transit stations, and other places where transportation costs are low.
- Regulatory reforms that reduce the cost of creating new housing in location-efficient areas.
- Incentives or requirements to include affordable housing within new development in location-efficient areas.
- Mechanisms for ensuring long-term affordability.
- Policies that capture a portion of the value generated by public investments in location-efficiency to support affordable homes in these areas.
- Improvements to transit services and walkability for compact areas where housing prices are already relatively affordable so residents can rely less on autos.

Burlington Pilot Project

Early WSDOT Involvement in Local Planning Proves Effective

Early in 2013, the City of Burlington began a community planning effort focused on connecting their community, designing street improvements that encourage active transportation (bicycling, walking, etc.), and supporting redevelopment in the historic downtown and retail core. Because Burlington's retail core extends along Interstate 5 and the State Route 20 corridor bisects the city's historic downtown, the city invited WSDOT to participate in the planning process. WSDOT often reviews local plans after local governments draft them, to review potential impacts to the state transportation system and to identify opportunities to strengthen connections between state and local transportation and land use planning. However, WSDOT's Northwest Mt. Baker Office planning staff member, Elizabeth Sjostrom, decided to take a more active role in this community plan. This was in part because WSDOT wanted to pilot test a prototype of what is now the WSDOT Community Planning Portal, an online mapping system for sharing state transportation data with local governments to support local planning.

Sjostrom began attending the task force meetings, and found the early partnership valuable. "The Burlington pilot project reinforced the importance of early involvement in local planning. It was important for us to hear the community's needs so we could better address their transportation system requirements. WSDOT's facilities are only a part of the regional network, but many times the size and scale of our highways limits local options. For example, Burlington was interested in multimodal approaches to support an urban village concept. However, the need to cross a higher speed state highway was holding them back. We looked at strategically placing these connections so they would get priority when investments in the highway corridor were needed. We also discussed how to operate more efficiently and manage demand more effectively with the development of local road networks."

WSDOT learned from participating in the City of Burlington's planning process that:

- Providing good data about our state transportation system up-front helps communities understand the challenges and opportunities on our highway corridors.
- Participating early in the planning process helps WSDOT identify opportunities to better serve the community.
- Many solutions are possible and each has different costs and benefits.
- Understanding the options for the whole system, regardless of ownership, is key to making good decisions.

After experiencing the benefits of early involvement, WSDOT's Northwest Mt. Baker Office is planning to work proactively with the other local agencies in its area to share state transportation data and initiate a conversation with local leaders about the role of the state system in their communities.

If you have used WSDOT's Community Planning Portal, please send Kyle Miller (kyle.miller@wsdot.wa.gov) your stories on why it was used, what you liked/disliked about it and if it was useful.

Application for Local Planning And Community Accessibility (ALPACA)

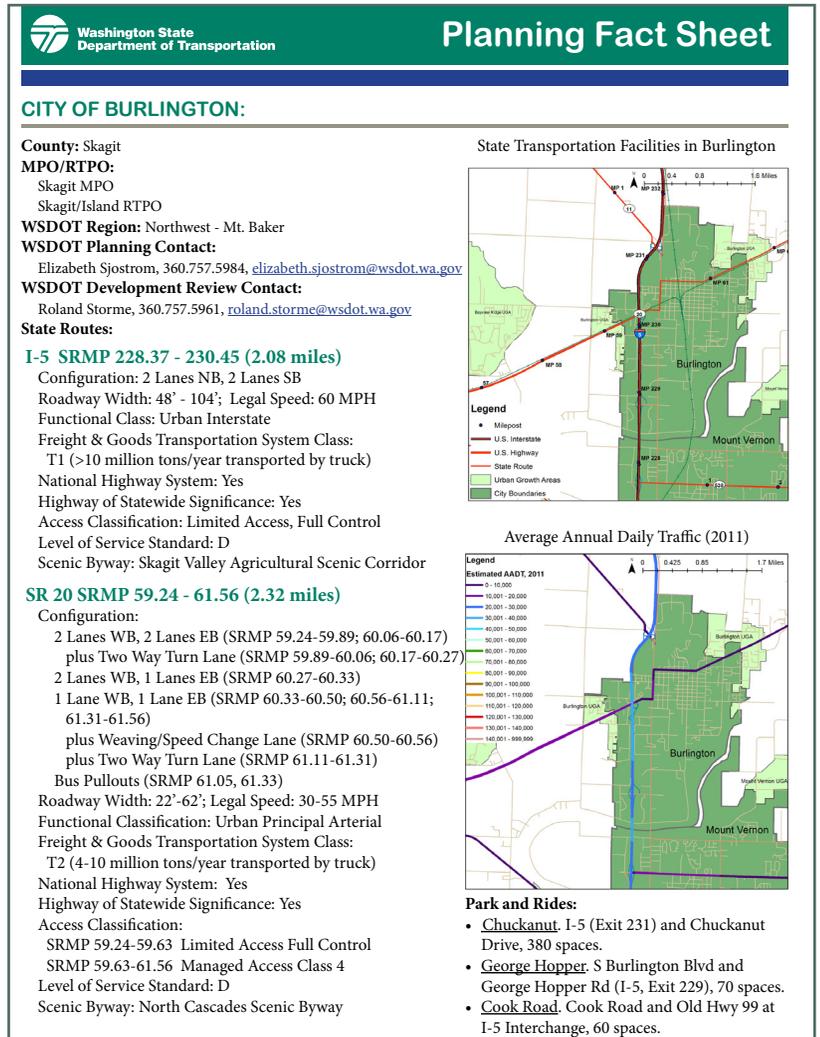
New GIS Web Based Tool for Everyday Users

The Application for Local Planning And Community Accessibility (ALPACA) is a new web-based tool that puts the power of GIS into the hands of everyday users. WSDOT's Public Transportation Division has been developing the ALPACA project as a way to assist sub-recipients of federal funds comply with Title VI non-discrimination requirements by showing users where limited English proficiency populations are located by county, tract and block group. Although initially conceived as a compliance tool, ALPACA may also appeal to audiences that are interested in enhancing public participation and community involvement by targeting outreach materials to underserved populations.

People interested in subareas within the state of Washington, can create their own sub-area data sets by selecting specific geographic areas for analysis. This is especially helpful in understanding the demographics of isolated populations and creating access to transportation for everyone; a key goal of public transportation.

ALPACA is now in the beta testing phase and is due for full launch in spring 2014.

If you have any questions about the ALPACA tool, please contact Evan Olsen at evan.olsen@wsdot.wa.gov or 360-705-6929.



WSDOT Community Planning Portal—Planning Fact Sheet for the City of Burlington

Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST)

WSDOT Participates in an INVEST Pilot

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed the Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool (INVEST) as a web-based collection of voluntary best practices and criteria transportation agencies can use to learn about sustainability of their own projects, plans, and programs. More information is available at the [INVEST website](#).

WSDOT was selected by FHWA in March 2013 to pilot test INVEST by evaluating the following three corridor plans and one project:

- SR 516 Corridor Planning Study.
- US 2 Corridor Planning Study.
- SR 520 Multimodal Corridor Planning Study.
- SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program—Unfunded Portion.

WSDOT found that INVEST could have value for both system planning and project development with some modification. If reviewed during the scoping of plans and projects, the INVEST framework could help transportation planners and engineers systematically identify and consider more sustainable practices.

WSDOT will share findings and suggestions for improving INVEST with FHWA. It will also continue to explore how a sustainability self-evaluation tool might apply to planning and project development.

WSDOT is the First Department of Transportation to Endorse the Urban Street Design Guide

The Washington State Department of Transportation is the first state DOT in the nation to officially endorse the new [Urban Street Design Guide](#), a publication that focuses on the complex needs of city streets and making them work for everyone.



"We not only endorse this guide, we're also working toward adopting it into our policies and processes," said state Transportation Secretary Lynn Peterson. "This guidance supports our strategic planning and practical design emphasis. It also builds on local partnerships and encourages early collaboration to ensure we are considering a community's unique transportation needs."

The National Association of City Transportation Officials developed the guidelines as a vision for city street design that considers all modes of travel. The guidance is based on designs tried and proven successful in urban areas including New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, and Houston.

For more information contact Nancy Boyd, WSDOT engineering policy advisor, 360.489.8525.

Planning Resources

- [Livability Fact Sheets](#). FHWA has a series of fact sheets explaining how communities benefit when livability is part of the transportation decision-making process. (Website)
- [The Beginning of the End of Level of Service?](#) DC. STREETS BLOG.org explains how changes to California law means level of service will no longer factor into the state's environmental review process in "transit priority areas" which incorporate sections of all the state's urbanized areas. (Website)
- [Transportation Planning for Operations: Quick Guide to Practitioner Resources](#). FHWA's brochure lists resources for the complex transportation challenge of planning for operations. (pdf 919 kb)
- [Placemaking](#). Project for Public Spaces provides placemaking information including training opportunities, services, projects, placemaking blog, and resources. (Website)
- [The Highway Functional Classification: Concepts, Criteria and Procedures, 2013 Edition](#). This guidebook describes the procedures and processes for assigning functional classifications to roadways and adjusting urban area boundaries. (pdf 2.7 mb)
- [Costs for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Infrastructure Improvements](#). FHWA and the Robert Wood Foundation provide meaningful estimates of infrastructure costs by collecting up-to-date information for pedestrian and bicycle treatments from states and cities across the country. (pdf 2.77 mb)
- [HCM Urban Streets Methodology](#). This webinar presented the Highway Capacity Manual's new more multimodal approach to LOS and provided case studies on the methodology. (pdf 3.99 mb)
- [Trip Generation Rates for Transportation Impact Analyses of Infill Developments](#). This NCHRP report provides a process for use when estimating vehicular trip generation in built-up urban areas, incorporating the effects of site-specific, local, and area-wide land use and transportation characteristics on estimates of vehicular trip generation for proposed infill development. (pdf 2.8 mb)

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Title VI Information:

It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinators, [George Laue](#) at (509) 324-6018 or [Jonte' Sulton](#) at (360) 705-7082.

ADA Information:

This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the WSDOT Diversity/ADA Affairs team at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.