As the most trade dependent state per capita in the U.S., the efficient transport of goods is essential to Washington’s economy. With 64.3 percent of freight in Washington transported by truck, it is crucial that drivers have safe and available parking options to support economic competitiveness. A survey of the national highway system, required by the federal 2012 Jason’s Law, found Washington has some of the most severe truck parking challenges in the nation.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is working to better understand and address truck parking issues across the state. WSDOT initiated this 2016 Truck Parking Study to better understand and address truck parking and rest facility issues within the state. This study builds upon WSDOT’s previous truck parking efforts from 2005 and 2008, and incorporates recent events and federal activities.

**SCOPE**

The types of truck parking considered in this study include ten-hour rest breaks, thirty-minute rest breaks, urban local delivery parking, truck storage and incident-based truck parking. In this study, WSDOT identifies key industry stakeholders, best practices from other states, factors influencing parking demand, truck parking supply and capacity, key truck parking issues and concerns, opportunities for improvements and next steps to continue truck parking efforts.

WSDOT also surveyed drivers in the state, and held multiple roundtable discussions and interviews of industry participants, to fully understand the issues drivers face.

**THE STATE OF FREIGHT AND TRUCK PARKING**

There are 14 high-volume truck freight economic corridors in Washington state, each carrying at least four million tons of freight each year. Washington’s economy is growing rapidly and freight is growing along with it; the state’s truck freight volume by weight is forecasted to grow 65 percent between 2015 and 2045, at an average annual growth rate of 17 percent. Continued growth in truck traffic volume is expected to put more pressure on current truck parking facilities. The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) named two Washington cities, Seattle and Auburn, in the top 25 most congested freight locations in the U.S.¹ Both cities experience significant freight bottlenecks and increased demand for parking. Washington also has five international border crossings, two of which the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) lists in the top 15 international border crossings with the slowest speeds. Congestion and slow border crossings decrease the productivity of truck drivers within their hours-of-service regulations, subsequently affecting demand for parking. Industry changes, such as just-in-time logistics, operational costs and driver detention, all have significant effects on truck parking demand. State and federal regulations can also influence demand, such as insurance requirements and hours-of-service protocols.

WSDOT engaged the trucking community throughout the development of this study, using tools such as an online survey, roundtable discussions and one-on-one interviews. The online survey received 1,118 responses, 84 percent of which were from truck drivers. WSDOT published the full survey results online as well as a summary of the survey highlights. Beyond the survey, WSDOT conducted five roundtable truck parking discussions in the cities of Tukwila, Tacoma, North Bend, Vancouver and Seattle. Truck drivers, trucking company representatives and port and government officials attended. Roundtable participants voiced concerns on many issues, including the upcoming electronic logging device mandate, disputes over responsibility for providing parking, their willingness to pay for parking, methods of communicating parking information, locations with disproportionate parking demand and environmental effects of truck parking.

WSDOT also reached out to regional WSDOT offices to gain a better understanding of how truck parking needs differ across the state. Each region had its own specific concerns, including issues with unofficial truck parking, overcrowding at safety rest areas and community and environmental concerns. Truck parking has other associated concerns related to safety, community and environmental issues. For example, insufficient truck parking may be a factor in truck crashes related to fatigued driving or unofficial parking. Drivers also said property damage, cargo theft and personal harm are all concerns related to lack of safe parking. Communities also listed concerns about the safety ramifications of locating parking facilities near their neighborhoods. Environmental concerns, especially related to truck idling emissions, are another common truck parking issue.

### KEY FINDINGS

Based on extensive outreach and engagement efforts, WSDOT identified key truck parking issues in Washington. Safety issues related to inadequate truck parking are a major concern; 46 percent of WSDOT survey respondents said they frequently drive fatigued as a result of insufficient parking. In addition, 59 percent of drivers frequently do not feel safe while parked overnight in Washington. WSDOT’s truck parking survey also found that Washington’s top three corridors with unmet parking demand are Interstate 5, Interstate 405 and Interstate 90. WSDOT found that parking issues are the most prevalent in urban areas, and at border crossings and mountain passes. WSDOT also determined that drivers’ parking preferences do not always match with actual use. For example, highway exit and entrance ramps are one of drivers’ least preferred parking options but are third most used. The truck parking shortage in Washington is likely getting worse, with demand increasing and supply potentially decreasing. Other key truck parking issues include trucking industry concerns, environmental effects, infrastructure constraints and communication and coordination needs.

### OPPORTUNITIES

WSDOT has identified several opportunities for truck parking enhancement, including infrastructure enhancements, institutional resources, and funding sources. These opportunities can be explored as a means of addressing truck parking concerns, particularly in locations with high truck parking demand. Infrastructure enhancements include emerging technologies, such as real-time parking availability systems, and innovative supply expansion options in both the private and public sector. Institutional opportunities enhance understanding of the state of truck parking through data gathering and research, as well as through the formation and continuation of key partnerships. Finally, identifying financial opportunities allows stakeholders to identify and pursue potential funding sources to enhance truck parking. For example, the Federal Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, USDOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants and the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) can all potentially be used to fund truck parking projects. There are also opportunities for truck parking to pay for itself. Both private and public entities can make investments in truck parking facilities that can be maintained through truck parking fees or other revenue.

### STATEWIDE TRUCK PARKING MAP

In order to help drivers and dispatchers locate parking options in Washington, WSDOT created a printable truck parking map. The map lists private truck stops, safety rest areas and weigh stations in Washington, as well as their corresponding amenities. The map, including any updates, is available on WSDOT’s website.

### NEXT STEPS

Truck parking will continue to be an issue in Washington and additional efforts will be needed beyond the scope of this study. No one entity can address this growing concern alone and it will take strong partnerships to meet this truck parking challenge. WSDOT will incorporate the research collected for this study into its 2017 Freight System Plan. In the future, WSDOT will continue current partnerships and establish new partnerships with state, federal and other public entities, industry associations, researchers and local communities to enhance understanding and work toward truck parking solutions.