

## WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

### BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the

APRIL 2005 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

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### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this discussion will be to continue Phase 2 workshop discussions with the Commission on the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) update. This month we will conduct two separate workshops. The themes for the first day are System Efficiencies and Bottlenecks and Chokepoints; the themes for the second day are Moving Freight and Building Future Visions. The issues will be discussed in the context of the demand-capacity imbalance observed on the transportation system (delay occurring on the system at peak periods when demand to use the system exceeds the capacity of the system).

### **ACTION/OUTCOME:**

Staff will seek Commission concurrence on the existing set of guiding principles and those areas where we have identified a gap in Commission policy.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The WTP is a blueprint for transportation programs and investment, adopted by the Transportation Commission and forming the policy and long-range plan for the state's transportation system. The WTP is required by state and federal law to be regularly updated. The Commission is scheduled to adopt the update currently underway later in 2005. It will cover the period 2007-2026 and will be the basis for a 10-year investment proposal (2007-2016) to the Legislature for 2007.

The WTP update has been framed around 9 strategic issues:

- System Preservation
- Safety
- Transportation Access
- System Efficiencies
- Bottlenecks and Chokepoints
- Building Future Visions
- Moving Freight
- Strong Economy and Jobs

- Health and the Environment

Phase 1 of the update has developed and analyzed data about the transportation system and its use, including current and expected future conditions, demand for the movement of people and goods, and the effects of the system on the economy and the environment. (See issue folios for summaries of Phase 1 analysis and investigation.)

## **DISCUSSION:**

The presentation will include a current timeline to complete the WTP (see attachment A). Staff will also describe the existing federal and state statutes and Commission policy that guide planning and prioritizing transportation investments (see attachment B) for the issues to be discussed. Attachment B depicts federal and state law and Commission policy that have been in place since the late 1980s and 1990s. These help guide the rest of the discussion.

Directions for possible statewide policies, strategies, and investment programs have emerged from Phase 1 analysis. There are four distinct decision points for the Commission in Phase 2:

- **Policy statements:** Continue existing policy, or propose new or changed Commission policy, or recommend a change to state or federal law.
- **Strategies:** How to implement Commission policy which will lead to investments.
- **Investments:** Either operating or capital programs, by category, that lead to projects.
- **Assumed financial capacity** for the 20-year period covered by the plan.

Staff have encapsulated these proposed policies, strategies, and investments as shown in Attachment C for the first WTP issues under discussion today.

The April workshops will focus on proposals for System Efficiencies, Bottlenecks and Chokepoints, Moving Freight, and Building Future Visions.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Concur on the “To Do” policy and strategy proposals—some are presently underway now and some are longer term efforts.

Concur on investment proposals to continue into later prioritization stages.

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