

Bottlenecks & Chokepoints

Guiding Principles (Statutory and Commission Policy) for Bottlenecks and Chokepoints

"The legislature intends that funding for transportation mobility improvements be allocated to the worst traffic chokepoints in the state. Furthermore, the legislature intends to fund projects that provide systemic relief throughout a transportation corridor, rather than spot improvements that fail to improve overall mobility within a corridor."
(RCW 47.05)

Relieve Congestion. Provide mobility for people and goods. **(RCW 47.05.010)**

It is the intent of the legislature that investment of state transportation funds to address deficiencies on the state highway system be based on a policy of priority programming having as its basis the rational selection of projects and services according to factual need and an evaluation of life cycle costs and benefits that are systematically scheduled to carry out defined objectives within available revenue. **(RCW 47.05.010)**

Improvement program to address congestion and increase mobility. **(RCW 47.05.030)**

Priority programming for the improvement program must be based primarily upon or consider congestion, delay, accidents, and the cost effective movement of people and goods. **(RCW 47.05.051)**

Commission:

Promote land use management, telecommunications and other innovative technologies as viable mobility options to reduce the impact of congestion on all system users.

Support limited strategic expansion to accommodate growth and reduce congestion when possible.

Use cost-benefit methodologies as key determinants in selecting mobility projects.

Develop good connections across interstate and international borders.

What Might This Mean?

- Bottlenecks and chokepoints present constraints on the potential capacity of transportation corridors and systems. These constraints can be often effectively relieved by spot investments that enhance capacity along and through an entire corridor.
- In general, when investment capacity is constrained, spot investments to ease bottlenecks and chokepoints will generally yield more cost-effective solutions than corridor-length capacity expansions.
- Bottleneck and chokepoint investments should be questioned, however, when their effect will simply be to relocate congestion to the next pinch-point in a system.
- The rationale for bottleneck and chokepoint investment is applicable to many types of transportation system, not just highways. The applicability to freight systems in general and rail and other commodity transportation systems (barges, pipelines) should be an important transportation investment consideration.
- In the State of Washington there are a number of prominent and costly transportation bottlenecks that merit close attention for corrective investment. These Include:
 - I-405 from Tukwila to Bothell
 - I-5 through Downtown Seattle
 - I-5 Columbia River Bridge in Vancouver
 - SR 520 Evergreen Point Floating Bridge across Lake Washington
 - I-90 in Spokane