

System Efficiencies

Guiding Principles (Statutory and Commission Policy) for System Efficiencies

Support US, state, and metro area economic vitality global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
(23 CFR 135)

Enhance transportation system integration and connectivity across and between modes statewide for people **(23 CFR 135)**

Reduce state urban highway congestion and average delay to be no worse than national mean. Per capita vehicle miles traveled shall be maintained at 2000 level. Non-auto share of commuter trips shall be increased in urban areas. **(RCW 47.01.012)**

Ongoing and systematic development of the highway transportation network.
(RCW 47.05.051)

Improve and integrate all modes to create a seamless transportation system.
(RCW 47.06)

Encourage innovation in reducing SOV commute trips by competitively distributing performance grants. **(RCW 70.94.996)**

Commission:

Corridors to operate with minimal delay and continual reduction in societal, environmental, and economic costs.

The transportation system operates effectively, efficiently, and predictably.

Consider, and implement where appropriate, operational changes that improve efficiency before expanding the existing transportation system.

Incorporate long-term operations needs to capital investment decisions.

Aggressively pursue access management to protect operations of existing and future systems.

Promote modal connections to provide seamless travel to the customer.

What might this mean?

- Investments that make the system more efficient are among the very best choices for gaining value from existing transportation assets. Usually, choices that make the existing system more efficient should be undertaken before choices to add new systems.
- New technologies will be an important source of efficiency gains. Goals and visions for efficiency must anticipate tomorrow's technologies as well as take advantage of today's. For highway systems, the expanding uses of in-vehicle technologies must be in the forefront of transportation system planning.
- Placing a price on the uses of all transportation systems – existing as well as new – will harness market mechanisms for achieving and consolidating efficiency gains. Because new system assets are so expensive, pricing mechanisms must be developed to help manage (as well as pay for) transportation systems as rapidly as new technology and public acceptance will permit. Transportation investment needs are frustrated, not advanced, by continuing the widely held societal perception that transportation infrastructure is a “free good.”
- New transportation assets must be planned on a life cycle cost basis and take account of up-front investments to promote efficiency wherever possible. Fuel efficiency, for example, must be a clear concern for new ferryboats, and upfront installation of “smart car/smart highway” technologies must be incorporated into new highway investment.
- Opportunities for modes of transportation to gain efficiency by linkage and connections to one another should be sought and taken where available.
- Non-dominant transportation modes (for example, walking or cycling to work or school, or intercity passenger rail or bus) may make important efficiency contributions to the system and otherwise contribute to the well being of communities (e.g., reductions in demand for land for streets and automobile parking). Long-term cost-effective investments in these areas may be attractive for the sake of efficiency.
- • Demand management strategies that improve system efficiencies (for example, incentives to reduce single occupancy vehicle needs, or support for land use patterns that take advantage of and support citizen's abilities to rely on efficient systems such as transit systems) are an important contributor to system efficiency.
- • Gains in system efficiency are closely linked to other policy goals. Improved safety, for example, is both an outcome or efficiency and a way to measure its progress. Efficiency in movement of goods in commerce serves economic productivity. More efficient systems support environmental and health goals for transportation planning.