

Implementing Transportation Efficiency: Local Government Needs



Background:

On April 29, 2014, Governor Inslee signed Executive Order 14-04, “*Washington Carbon Pollution Reduction and Clean Energy Action*.” The executive order directed the Departments of Commerce, Ecology, and Transportation to work with Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), counties, and cities to develop a new program of financial and technical assistance. The program would “...help local governments implement measures to improve transportation efficiency, and to update

their comprehensive plans to produce travel and land-use patterns that maximize efficiency in movement of goods and people, and reduce costs and greenhouse gas emissions.”

Transportation Efficiency Committee:

The Transportation Efficiency Committee met on October 13, October 31, and November 14. The participants identified gaps and obstacles in financial and technical programs. The agencies identified related work and resources already underway by the Washington State Departments of Commerce, Ecology, and Transportation. In response to the identified gaps and obstacles, the committee recommends:

Implementation Funding

- Fund existing state grant programs that support transportation efficient communities, including:
 - Complete Streets - a proposed grant program intended to improve conditions for all users on main street highways and local arterials
 - Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTECs) - encourage employees in dense employment or residential areas to ride the bus, carpool, walk, bike, telecommute, or otherwise avoid driving alone
 - Regional Mobility Grant Program - supports local efforts to improve transit mobility and reduce congestion on the most heavily traveled roadways
- Revise state grant program criteria to incentivize transportation efficient projects

Potential New Programs

- Pilot new approaches to transportation efficient communities around the state and measure benefits and outcomes after implementation (e.g. did lower emissions result from the action)

Clear, Consistent Messaging from the State

- Align state agencies’ messaging to avoid confusion over terms and objectives
- Fund system performance measurement and monitoring consistent with federal requirements
- Share data and best practices, such as:
 - [Your Community’s Transportation System—A Guide to Reviewing, Updating and Implementing your Transportation Element](#) (Commerce pdf 18 mb)
 - [Transportation Efficient Land Use](#) (MRSC Website)
 - [Community Planning Portal](#) (WSDOT ArcGIS Online Interactive Map)





KEY TAKEAWAYS

Consider regional-based funding that could help shape local government actions

Provide more funding for planning at all levels (requests for funds consistently exceed available funding)

Fund implementation of existing successful plans

Don't add regulations or emissions reduction targets beyond what already exists in state law

Recognize that a "one-size fits all" approach does not work due to rural and urban differences as well as the differences in characteristics between the eastside and the westside of the state

Ensure the Departments of Ecology, Transportation, and Commerce collaborate extensively to have consistent messaging

Use materials and tools focused on Washington state (not generic guidance that demonstrates transportation and land use connections at a nationwide-level instead of at the state-level)



Work and Resources Already Underway among the Partner State Agencies below:

- Washington State Department of Commerce is helping with comprehensive plan updates by providing grants, guidance, and best practices
 - [Planning for Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(EVI\)](#) (pdf 618 kb)
 - [Energy Aware Communities](#) (Commerce Website)
 - [Energy and Technology](#) (Commerce Website)
- Washington State Department of Ecology is coordinating state policies and practices to help the state meet its statutory greenhouse gas reduction targets and the Governor's commitment to growing green jobs
 - [Washington State Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory, 1990-2010](#) (Ecology Website)
 - [Climate Change](#) (Ecology Website)
 - [Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Increasing Transportation Choices for the Future](#) (pdf 8.0 kb)
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is providing an enhanced level of coordination with cities and counties that have comprehensive plan updates in 2015 (Central Puget Sound counties) by providing guidance, sharing information, and offering data and maps through its Community Planning Portal
 - [Growth Management Act \(GMA\) Comprehensive Plan Resources](#) (WSDOT Website)
 - [Transportation Funding Sources in Washington State](#) (pdf 272 kb)
 - [WSDOT Local Planning Resources](#) (pdf 367 kb)