



Executive Summary

An easement adopted in 2004 sets requirements for WSDOT's maintenance and improvement of SR 542 within the National Forest System lands. A key condition of the easement is the requirement that WSDOT complete a scenic byway management plan before proceeding with construction on the highway. In developing the plan, we have scrutinized the interagency coordination processes currently used for transportation project implementation and evaluated lessons learned so we can develop new methods that will work better in the future.

Background

Purpose of the plan

The Mt. Baker Scenic Byway Management Plan is a cooperative effort between WSDOT and the USFS, and is required for maintenance and capital improvements on National Forest System lands. It implements the 2004 easement and will address the interagency review process. The plan defines how coordination, communication and consultation between WSDOT and USFS will proceed on a wide range of issues stemming from transportation activities along SR 542. We want to clarify the roles of both agencies, capitalize on agency expertise and streamlined procedures, and set realistic expectations.

The Management Plan clarifies easement requirements in order to: 1) provide a framework for partnership opportunities between the agencies during program and project development; 2) expedite USFS approvals, particularly for maintenance and urgently needed repairs; and 3) manage expectations for how scenic byway-related treatments desired by USFS will be incorporated into needed capital improvements.

Plan objectives and anticipated benefits

- Fulfill the requirements of the 2004 easement.
- Facilitate realistic and predictable transportation projects, schedules and budgets.
- Allow better utilization of agency resources.
- Provide for early involvement of resource and regulatory agencies in the WSDOT project scoping and development process.
- Provide for joint-agency evaluation and early resolution of problems/issues.
- Provide for early identification and resolution of environmentally sensitive issues.
- Reduce duplication of efforts.



- Provide program continuity and a consistent approach for developing projects.
- Avoid revisiting decisions affecting routine maintenance activities that have been resolved early in this process.
- Encourage early and substantial participation on projects that require USFS expertise when concurrence is needed.
- Identify a process for when information is needed and what is adequate for each stage of the review process. Show that each agency's concurrence is consistent with its statutes and resolutions.
- Maximize the probability of projects receiving the appropriate permits and approvals from the participating agencies in a timely manner.
- Maximize the quality of the NEPA documentation process.

Key outcomes

- Clarify maintenance activities so they can proceed on a predictable timeline.
- Clarify interagency role in the transportation project development process.
- Identify opportunities to streamline and enhance environmental review.
- Identify guidelines and financing partnerships for aesthetic treatments along the corridor.

Organization of the report

Introduction

This section provides descriptive information about the roadway and easement objectives, and outlines the philosophy that will guide maintenance, operation and redevelopment of the roadway. It includes the identification of intrinsic values that make the corridor unique as well as discussions about easement-identified design features from the *Guidelines for the Mather Memorial Parkway*.

Management plans

This section includes four management plans intended to streamline routine actions and facilitate partnerships: 1) Maintenance operations management plan; 2) Capital project development plan; 3) Traffic and operations plan; 4) Integrated vegetation management plan.

Ongoing coordination

This section provides information that will guide future interagency coordination. It describes annual coordination meeting objectives and discussion points, prioritization of scenic byway corridor enhancements and the identification of appropriate funding opportunities to provide outside capital financing.



Appendix

Includes agreements, memorandums of understanding (MOU), and standards discussed throughout the plan.