



Plan Framework

This chapter provides background information about the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) contents, summarizes how it was prepared, and provides an orientation on where to find key information.

This plan is the result of data analysis and stakeholder collaboration intended to address transportation challenges facing Washington’s citizens and businesses. The WTP also fulfills federal and state requirements for a balanced and comprehensive transportation plan based on policy adopted by the Governor, the State Legislature, and the U.S. Congress.



“When I think of transportation, I think of safety, economic development, and a legacy for our children.”

Christine Gregoire, Governor

Purpose of the Plan

The primary purpose of the WTP is to guide transportation policy and investment decisions at all levels throughout the state. The WTP is also created to fulfill federal and state planning requirements.

As required by state law, this document has been prepared by the Washington State Transportation Commission. The Washington State Department of Transportation staff collaborated with the Commission in the preparation of the WTP and related materials. This update of the Washington Transportation Plan has taken place over a two-year period through a comprehensive planning process involving public agencies, advocacy groups, citizens, and solid data and policy analysis.

Federal and State Requirements

The federal requirements for this document are codified in the United States Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, § 135, (e)(1) states that:

Each State shall develop a long-range transportation plan, with a minimum 20-year forecast period, for all areas of the State, that provides for the development and implementation of the intermodal transportation system of the State.

Washington State Statute, RCW 47.06.030 Transportation policy plan, provides the state requirements for this document:

The commission shall develop a state transportation policy plan that (1) establishes a vision and goals for the development of the statewide transportation system consistent with the state’s growth management goals, (2) identifies significant statewide transportation policy issues, and (3) recommends statewide transportation policies and strategies to the legislature to fulfill the requirements.

Washington State Statute, RCW 47.01.071 (4) directs the Washington State Transportation Commission to prepare:

a comprehensive and balanced statewide transportation plan which shall be based on the transportation policy adopted by the governor and the legislature, and applicable state and federal laws. The plan must reflect the priorities of government developed by the office of financial management and address regional needs, including multimodal transportation planning.

Washington State Statute RCW 47.06.040 (2) requires that the Washington State Department of Transportation: develop a statewide multimodal transportation plan under RCW 47.01.071(3) and in conformance with federal requirements, to ensure the continued mobility of people and goods within regions and across the state in a safe, cost-effective manner. The statewide multimodal transportation plan shall consist of:

- (1) A state-owned facilities component, which shall guide state investment for state highways including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and state ferries; and
- (2) A state-interest component, which shall define the state interest in aviation, marine ports and navigation, freight rail, intercity passenger rail,

bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, and public transportation, and recommend actions in coordination with appropriate public and private transportation providers to ensure that the state interest in these transportation modes is met.

A primary emphasis for the plan shall be the relief of congestion, the preservation of existing investments and downtowns, ability to attract or accommodate planned population, and employment growth, the improvement of traveler safety, the efficient movement of freight and goods, and the improvement and integration of all transportation modes to create a seamless intermodal transportation system for people and goods.

The Planning Process

Planning the statewide transportation system has been carefully undertaken, as the task is vital to the well being of the state, our citizens’ quality of life, and the state’s economic vitality.

▶ “I appreciate the efforts to have this plan driven by factual data as opposed to what we think we know about our transportation system.”

**Page Scott, Director
Yakima Valley Conference of Governments**

The data analysis of the WTP is structured by issues that focus on core outcomes and future benefits desired. The long-range plan recognizes the inter-connectedness of the different modes and the key issues. This approach draws attention to the multiple benefits that programs and projects deliver.

Phase 1: Analysis and Assessment of Conditions

Early on, the Commission employed a framework for the WTP using these strategic issues. Being strategic from the onset means that the Plan is not a universe of all conceivable needs, but rather a methodical approach to investing where the benefits will be the greatest. The Department of Transportation identified nine issues in order to systematically assess the state’s needs. These nine key issues are:

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

Phase 2: Prioritizing the Needs

The Commission addressed the needs identified during the assessment of the key issues by defining the Five Investment Guidelines. To determine the most beneficial investments, the Commission prioritized the investment targets to establish the highest priorities.

Establishing Investment Priorities

The Commission considered existing policy and issue-based data analysis, and decided to create the WTP around the Five Investment Guidelines.

 **Prioritized Investment Guidelines**

- 1. Preservation**
- 2. Safety**
- 3. Economic Vitality**
- 4. Mobility**
- 5. Environmental Quality and Health**

The Five Investment Guidelines are the key to the Washington Transportation Plan. The Commission used these guidelines to select investment targets, which are described and structured in terms of these guidelines. The investments considered to be the High Priorities are presented in this plan, followed by the Remaining Priorities.

The Organization of the WTP:**Executive Summary****Part I. Introduction**

The first part of the Plan is provided by the Washington Transportation Commission and introduces the reader to the plan's underlying context.

Part II. The Plan for the Future

Part II of the plan analyzes, assesses, and recommends solutions to challenges for the future of transportation in Washington State.

Chapter A. Plan Framework

This section explains how the document is organized. It also provides guidance for obtaining additional and related information on-line for further in-depth research into planning process.

Chapter B. The Challenge

This chapter presents data and analysis conducted during the initial planning process. The statistics and

information in this section describe current conditions and projected changes in the transportation system over the next 20 years. The result is a forecast for Washington's future transportation needs.

Chapter C. Transportation Investments Underway

This chapter provides a detailed assessment of the investments currently underway and the benefits yielded. The investment targets described in this chapter are those that are already addressing the needs identified in Chapter A. The funding and implementation of these investment targets is the result of the successful passage of the Transportation Partnership Act and the Nickel Package by the Governor and the legislature.

Chapter D. Unfunded High Priorities

This chapter provides a detailed assessment of the strategic investment targets the Commission found to be the most critical and effective. These investment targets are prioritized into High Priorities and Remaining Priorities. The process of prioritization considered the benefits yielded, the Five Investment Guidelines, and existing state law and Commission policies.

Chapter E. Remaining Unfunded Priorities

This chapter describes the WTP's approach to meeting the challenges identified in previous chapters. It highlights the multiple benefits of these proposed investments, and represents additional investments

Chapter F. Policy Recommendations

This chapter contains recommendations for policies and strategies necessary to efficiently carry out the implementation of this plan. It identifies gaps in existing state law where further definition of the state's role is needed.

Chapter G. Measuring Progress

This chapter provides a sample of the measurements in place, as well as recommendations for additional measurements that provide a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of the WTP.

Part III. Focus on Transportation

This part of the plan provides a discussion of important factors influencing Washington’s future and describes the plan’s role in the context of these issues. This part describes the variables influencing transportation planning and policy. Policy development is an ongoing process; these issues will play a role in further implementation of the WTP as they are resolved.

Chapter A. Funding and Financing

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of financial costs and funding sources and mechanisms necessary to implement the identified targeted investments and make the most of Washington’s transportation system.

Chapter B. Policy Studies and Plans

This chapter presents a discussion of policy studies and plans directly related to this plan.

Chapter C. Governance and Partnerships

This chapter presents a discussion of the governmental programs and relationships that are critical to the effectiveness of the plan’s implementation.

Chapter D. Transportation and Land Use

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the relationship between land use and transportation; an ongoing and elusive puzzle that is the most complex and influential variable of transportation planning.

Part IV. Additional Information

Chapter A. Glossary

Chapter B. Maps

Chapter C. Acknowledgements



Do you want additional Information?

Additional Information on the WTP, resources, related documents, and full issue reports are on-line at the following website:

www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/wtp

From this website you can access detailed information and data used in the planning process through a link to the Data Library.