

## ***Part 2***

## ***Transportation Planning***

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### 200.01 Introduction

**Part 2** covers Transportation Planning as practiced in Washington State by WSDOT and other transportation planning agencies, and environmental considerations in Transportation Planning. It covers the legal and policy framework for Transportation Planning (and Project Scoping and Programming) and WSDOT's role in developing various transportation studies and plans. These include a variety of studies and plans for highways and ferries and other modes; local, metropolitan, and regional transportation plans; and the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP). The WTP includes system plans for all components of the state's transportation system that are owned by the state or in which the state has an interest. Additional information on transportation planning may be found at the WSDOT Transportation Planning Office Web site:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/>

### 200.02 Process Overview

Transportation Planning is the first phase of the WSDOT Transportation Decision-Making Process. **Figure 200-1** shows the relationship between Transportation Planning and the subsequent Project Scoping and Programming phase. **Figure 200-2** shows the state's overall Transportation Planning process, where the state's transportation providers, including WSDOT, coordinate on various transportation studies and then cooperate within the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (MPOs and RTPOs) that they belong to, to develop metropolitan and regional transportation plans, which in turn become a basis for parts of the WTP. During this process, WSDOT and other transportation providers conduct

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studies and develop plans to identify existing and future transportation needs and deficiencies, assess options, and propose policy, project, and/or program solutions to address these needs and deficiencies. Local government planning may include work on the transportation element of their comprehensive plans. WSDOT planning includes analyzing data on system condition and performance and preparing planning studies, some of which may not be concluded until the end of the Design and Environmental Review phase of the WSDOT Transportation Decision-Making Process (see **Chapter 220**).

**Figure 200-1: Transportation Planning Phase**

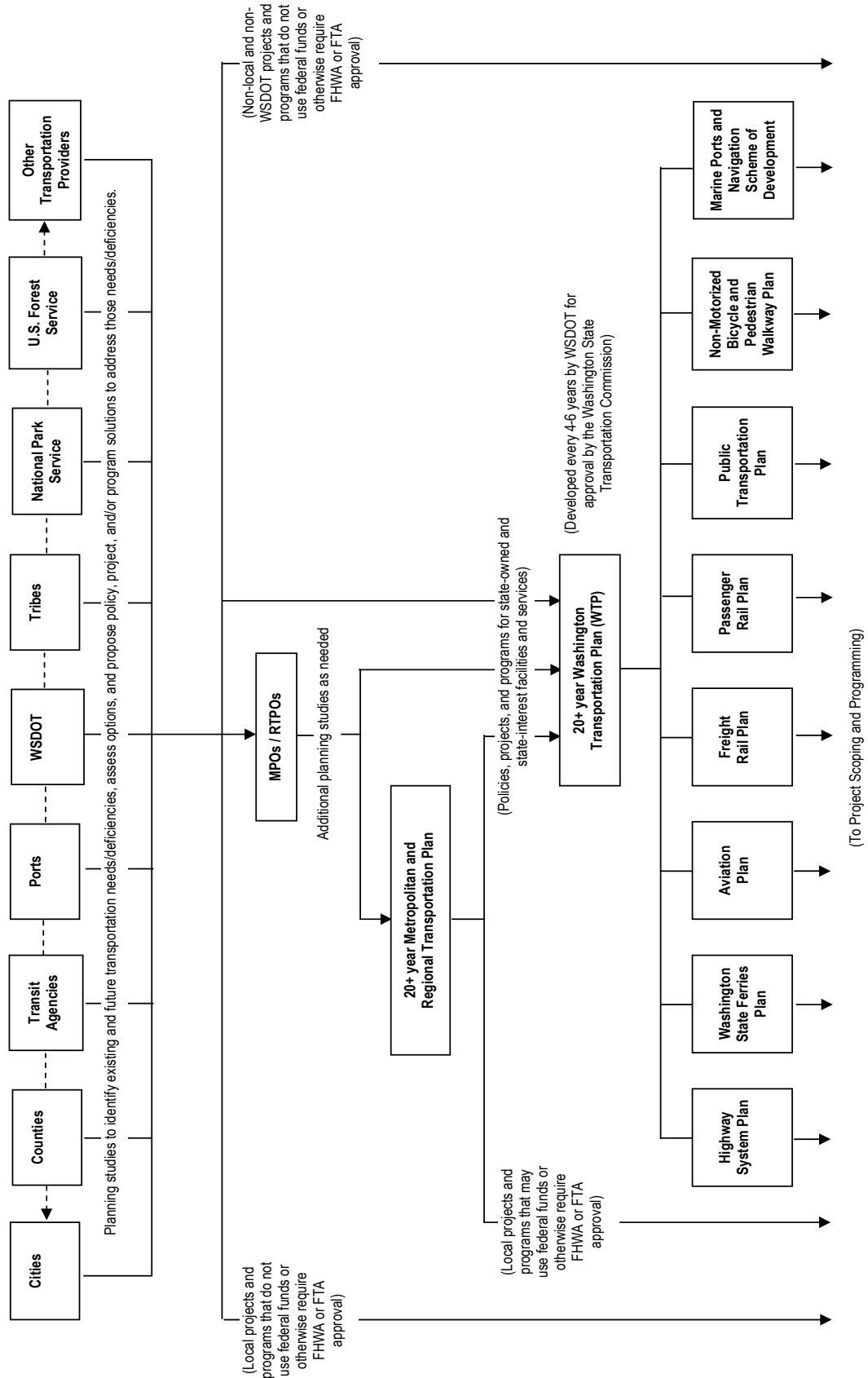
EPM Part 2				EPM Part 3
<b>Transportation Planning Phase</b>				<b>Project Scoping and Programming Phase</b>
Planning Studies by Transportation Providers	Coordination and Planning with MPOs / RTPOs	Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plans	Washington Transportation Plan (WTP)	

Then, as required by federal and state statutes, transportation providers work within the appropriate Metropolitan and/or Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to ensure that MPO and RTPO plans include all appropriate solutions for addressing local and state-owned and state-interest transportation facility and service needs that can potentially be implemented in the next 20-plus years. Finally, these solutions are incorporated into the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), either directly or by incorporation into various component system plans that are adopted by reference in the WTP. The WTP, which is updated every four to six years, also includes any other policies, projects, and/or programs that may be needed in the next 20-plus years to address other deficiencies in state-owned and state-interest transportation facilities and services, including highways, ferries, aviation, freight and passenger rail, and public transit.

**200.03 Organization of Part 2**

Following this overview of Transportation Planning, **Chapter 210** describes the legal and policy framework for transportation planning, which includes federal and state statutes and WSDOT policy. **Chapter 220** describes various types of transportation planning studies produced by WSDOT. **Chapter 230** describes how the transportation element of local comprehensive plans and metropolitan and regional transportation plans are developed and how they relate to state transportation planning efforts. **Chapter 240** discusses the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) and its component system plans.

Figure 200-2: Transportation Planning in Washington State



## 200.04 Environmental Considerations in Transportation Planning

In Transportation Planning, it is both possible and appropriate to begin considering the environmental consequences of any policy, project, and/or program for addressing transportation deficiencies. However, such consideration is not expected to be at the same level of detail as may be required by NEPA and SEPA for actions taken after Project Scoping and Programming. Conceptual planning of proposals that have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded is “categorically exempt” (from the detailed environmental impact analysis requirements of SEPA) as “Information collection and research” under Ecology’s SEPA Rules (WAC 197-11-800(17)).

### (1) *Early Consideration of Environmental Consequences*

WSDOT considers the environmental consequences of proposed solutions evaluated in its plans and studies and encourages other planning agencies to do the same. It may even be appropriate to rule out certain solutions that would meet the stated transportation objectives, but at an unacceptable or higher level of environmental degradation than other choices, especially if the results of a reasonable environmental degradation comparison can be documented. WAC 197-11-070 prohibits any action that would limit the choice of “reasonable alternatives” until after completion of the SEPA process. However, WAC 197-11-786 defines a “reasonable alternative” as “an action that could feasibly attain or approximate a proposal’s objectives, but at a lower environmental cost or decreased level of environmental degradation.”

### (2) *Use of Environmental Information*

A lot of environmental information, such as population and land use projection data, is typically collected and analyzed in the transportation planning process, and WSDOT maintains a GIS (Geographic Information System) “Workbench” and other sources of environmental data that can be used to identify and document potentially affected environmental resources. This information can then be used to identify opportunities to avoid or minimize environmental impacts of any alternative transportation solutions being considered, and potentially eliminate alternatives with unacceptable or greater environmental consequences. Also, for the statewide multi-modal transportation plan (WTP), RCW 47.06.040 directs WSDOT to identify and document potential affected environmental resources in coordination with relevant regulatory agencies, including local governments, and give the agencies an opportunity to review the environmental resource documentation.

For information on how to access the GIS Workbench, see:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Environment/GIS/workbench.htm>

For a list of current data sets, see WSDOT’s Web site:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/geodatacatalog/default.htm>

**(3) Documentation**

Environmental information and/or analyses used in the planning process, and environmental impact avoidance or minimization actions taken, should be thoroughly documented. This allows the information to be used again, or incorporated as evidence of mitigation, to expedite environmental review and permitting during the Design and Environmental Review and Environmental Permitting and PS&E phases of the WSDOT Transportation Decision-Making Process.

For guidance on how information, analyses, and products from the transportation planning process can be incorporated into the NEPA process under existing statutes and regulations, please see the following Web site:

☞ <http://nepa.fhwa.dot.gov/ReNepa/ReNepa.nsf/0/9fd918150ac2449685256fb10050726c?OpenDocument>

**200.05 Abbreviations and Acronyms**

Following are the key abbreviations and acronyms used in **Part 2**. Others are found in the general list in **Appendix A**.

CAA	Clean Air Act
CAFM	Computer Aided Facility Management
CAPP	County Arterial Preservation Program
CRAB	County Road Administration Board
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GMA	Growth Management Act
HSP	Highway System Plan
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RAP	Rural Arterial Program
RDP	Route Development Plan
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
SFTA	Strategic Freight Transportation Analysis
SIP	State Implementation Plan
STB	Surface Transportation Board
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (PL 105-178), as amended by the TEA-21 Restoration Act of July 22, 1998
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
WTP	Washington Transportation Plan

**200.06 Glossary**

See **Appendix B** for a general glossary of terms used in the EPM.

**200.07 Exhibits**

None.

## Chapter 210

- 210.01 Introduction
- 210.02 Applicable Statutes and Regulations
- 210.03 Policy Guidance
- 210.04 Technical Guidance
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### 210.01 Introduction

Transportation Planning, and Project Scoping and Programming, are driven to a large extent by federal and state requirements. WSDOT must comply with federal law because transportation is regulated by Congress as interstate commerce under the commerce clause of the Constitution. Furthermore, a substantial portion of WSDOT's budget comes from federal funds, and WSDOT must comply with various federal laws to receive and spend these funds. These funds and associated federal laws are administered by a variety of federal agencies including the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); and the Surface Transportation Board (STB).

State laws also govern transportation planning. WSDOT is a state agency and is funded through the state legislature. Numerous state laws govern WSDOT's planning activities.

This chapter reviews the primary federal and state legislation and WSDOT policy affecting transportation planning.

### 210.02 Applicable Statutes and Regulations

This section lists the primary statutes and regulations applicable to Transportation Planning. See **Appendix D** for a list of statutes referenced in the EPM.

(1) ***SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users***

SAFETEA-LU was enacted on August 10, 2005, as Public Law 109-59. It replaces the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998 as the authorizing legislation for federal surface transportation

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funding for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009. The full text of SAFETEA-LU may be found on the FHWA web site at:

☞ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/index.htm>

The Transportation Planning provisions of SAFETEA-LU include:

**(a) Statewide Transportation Planning (Sections 3006 and 6001)**

As a condition for receiving federal surface transportation funding, states are required to:

- Develop a long-range statewide intermodal transportation plan that covers at least 20 years and includes a discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain environmental functions affected by the plan.
- Develop statewide plans and programs for the development and integrated management and operation of intermodal surface transportation systems and facilities (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities).
- Coordinate statewide transportation planning with metropolitan transportation planning and statewide trade and economic development planning.
- Develop the transportation portion of the State Implementation Plan (for air quality) as required by the Clean Air Act.
- Develop a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that includes the Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) developed by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

**(b) Goals of Transportation Planning (Sections 3005 and 6001)**

SAFETEA-LU directs states to carry out a statewide transportation planning process that provides for the consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the United States, the States, nonmetropolitan areas, and metropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.

- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the State, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

FHWA guidance materials for implementing SAFETEA-LU, including its Section 6001 Transportation Planning provisions, are available at:

☞ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/reference.htm>

Other environmental provisions of SAFETEA-LU are discussed in **Chapter 410** and in various FHWA guidance documents at:

☞ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/index.htm>

## (2) **Clean Air Act**

Under the federal Clean Air Act (42 USC 7401 et seq.), each state must develop a state implementation plan (SIP) for controlling criteria air pollutants including those released by vehicles. USEPA recently set new standards for ozone and particulate matter, two pollutants partially caused by motor vehicles. There are transportation funding implications for “nonattainment” areas not meeting the standards. If a region in nonattainment does not show progress in moving towards attainment, federal transportation funds for non-exempt projects can be withheld under certain conditions. In addition, transportation projects requiring federal funding in nonattainment and maintenance areas must go through a federal “conformity” process and can have the funds withheld if they will further worsen air quality beyond allowed limits. For details, see **Section 425.02**.

## (3) **Statewide Multi-Modal Transportation Plan (RCW 47.06)**

Under this law, WSDOT is responsible for developing a statewide multi-modal transportation plan, in conformance with federal requirements. The plan is “to ensure the continued mobility of people and goods within regions and across the state in a safe, cost-effective manner.” In 2006, the Washington State Transportation Commission and WSDOT adopted the current Washington Transportation Plan for the years 2007 to 2026, in part to comply with this mandate. The WTP is updated on a regular basis, and the next update is scheduled to be completed in December 2010. The WTP is discussed further in **Chapter 240** and can be viewed online at:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/wtp/>

#### (4) **Growth Management Act**

The GMA (RCW 36.70A), adopted in 1990, requires cities and counties with significant population growth to prepare comprehensive plans composed of six elements including a transportation element. The transportation element must document the 20 year transportation infrastructure needs that are consistent with the other plan elements. The jurisdiction must show how it will pay for the level of services it is providing and any new facilities or service must be concurrent with the development driving the need. For details, see **Chapter 450**.

An implementation guidance manual, *Coordinating Transportation with Growth Management Planning* under 1998 legislation, HB 1487, the “level of service bill,” is available on the WSDOT Web site at:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/043A2A9F-8BB3-43B5-8679-65526C95DB17/0/CoordinatingTransportationandGrowthMngPlanning.pdf>

Both the GMA and statewide transportation planning statute require WSDOT to comply with local comprehensive plans and development regulations. The GMA requires local governments to develop a process for siting “essential public facilities,” which (according to RCW 36.70A.200) “include those facilities that are typically difficult to site, such as airports, state education facilities and state or regional transportation facilities as defined in RCW 47.06.140, state and local correctional facilities, solid waste handling facilities, and in-patient facilities including substance abuse facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, and secure community transition facilities as defined in RCW 71.09.020.”

RCW 47.06.140 (the statewide transportation planning statute) indicates that improvements to facilities and services of statewide significance identified in the statewide multimodal plan (i.e., WTP) are essential public facilities, and it says that the following transportation facilities and services are of statewide significance: the interstate highway system, interregional state principal arterials including ferry connections that serve state-wide travel, intercity passenger rail services, intercity high-speed ground transportation, major passenger intermodal terminals excluding all airport facilities and services, the freight railroad system, the Columbia/Snake navigable river system, marine port facilities and services that are related solely to marine activities affecting international and interstate trade, and high-capacity transportation systems serving regions as defined in RCW 81.104.015.

#### (5) **Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RCW 47.80)**

This statute was adopted as part of the GMA in 1990 to facilitate coordination and cooperation among state and local jurisdictions and establish a coordinated planning program for regional transportation systems and facilities throughout the state. It authorizes the creation of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) with multiple duties, not the

least of which are to prepare a regional transportation plan as set forth in the statute, as well as a six-year regional transportation improvement program, which must be updated at least every two years. RTPOs and Regional Transportation Plans are further discussed in **Chapter 230**.

**(6) Washington Clean Air Act (RCW 70.94)**

Washington adopted a Clean Air Act to implement requirements of the federal CAA and protect air quality in Washington. The Washington Clean Air Act provides authority to the Washington State Department of Ecology over air pollution sources and to develop the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality (SIP) and SIP amendments as mandated by the federal CAA. For details, see **Section 425.02**.

**(7) Salmon Recovery Act (RCW 77.85)**

This act, adopted in 1998, is an action plan from the Joint Natural Resources Cabinet. Its focus is new actions or modifications to existing activities that provide additional protection for salmon.

It is a combination of priority actions for short-term implementation and a scorecard to track implementation of strategies.

The act will lead to defined criteria and analysis that will be required on land use and road projects in the coming years. These will be folded in with any regional or state agreements on the 4(d) rule. For details, see **Chapter 436**.

### 210.03 Policy Guidance

The policy guidance summarized in this section is applicable to transportation planning. |

**(1) WSDOT Policy**

WSDOT policies are guiding principles to accomplish broad objectives and/or specific direction in support of the department's vision, mission, and goals, and they are established in the form of an Executive Order or Policy Statement, which must be authorized by the Office of the Secretary. A WSDOT Environmental Policy Statement issued by executive order that applies to transportation planning is provided at: |

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/policystatement.htm>

### 210.04 Technical Guidance

FHWA has some proposed rules, interim guidance, and other guidance documents available to help states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations implement Section 6001 of SAFETEA-LU. Look for the "Sec. 6001 - Transportation planning" portion of their Web page at: |

☞ <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/reference.htm>

**210.05 Exhibits**

None.

## **Chapter 220**      **WSDOT Transportation Planning Studies**

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- 220.01 Introduction
- 220.02 Transportation System Analyses
- 220.03 Highway Planning Studies
- 220.04 Ferry Planning Studies
- 220.05 Other WSDOT Planning Studies
- 220.06 Exhibits

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### **220.01 Introduction**

WSDOT conducts a variety of transportation planning studies, often in cooperation with other transportation providers and system users. Some WSDOT studies are undertaken to identify existing and future needs and deficiencies in state-owned transportation systems and evaluate policies, projects, and/or program solutions for addressing those needs and deficiencies. WSDOT also participates in studies of other transportation systems in which the state has an interest. The following types of studies are discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter:

- Transportation System Analyses
- Highway Planning Studies
- Ferry Planning Studies
- Other WSDOT Planning Studies

The results of these studies can lead to recommendations in local, metropolitan, and regional transportation plans, as discussed in **Chapter 230**, and the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), as discussed in **Chapter 240**. These plans all serve as a basis for Project Scoping and Programming, as discussed in **Part 3**. If a major study is needed for a potential project, however, WSDOT may seek funding through the Project Scoping and Programming process and conduct the study during the Design and Environmental Review process. A thorough analysis of potentially significant environmental impacts of various alternative solutions can then be performed, and a preferred alternative can be selected for further consideration and specification during the Environmental Permitting and PS&E phase of project development. Construction funding can then be pursued through the project programming process.

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## 220.02 Transportation System Analyses

On a regular or as needed basis, WSDOT conducts analyses of assets in the state's highway, ferry, and state airport systems to determine their current condition and their current and future level of performance (given population and economic trends), sometimes with and without various improvements. Any maintenance, preservation, and improvement needs or deficiencies are identified and evaluated. A more comprehensive assessment of any improvement needs, however, is often made through special studies described in Section 220.03 through Section 220.05.

Transportation system analyses are often made possible (or at least much easier) as a result of WSDOT's monitoring, database, and modelling systems that collect, maintain, and analyze data on roadway, bridge, ferry, and ferry terminal conditions; traffic, ridership, and travel demand and delay data; and speed and collision data. WSDOT also maintains database records of environmental deficiencies associated with its assets. Such deficiencies include culverts that block fish passage, roadways without adequate stormwater control, and roadways with chronic environmental problems like rockfall, landslides, flooding, or undercutting by rivers or streams.

Information on transportation system analyses of the state's highway system assets, including the WSDOT Highway Performance Monitoring System and other tools used to monitor the condition of the state's highways and/or evaluate current and future levels of performance, is available on the WSDOT Transportation Data Office Web site:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/tdo/aboutthetdo.htm>

## 220.03 Highway Planning Studies

WSDOT also conducts specific studies for individual highways, highway sections, and travel corridors. Such studies require a greater level of analysis and cooperation with interested parties to evaluate preservation and/or improvement options. In some cases, studies examine concepts for addressing the conditions and expectations for roads in the future. Some concepts may be eliminated from further consideration in later stages of planning and project development.

### (1) *Route Development Plans*

Route Development Plans (RDPs) are planning studies for an individual highway or part of a highway. Within the study area, existing and future deficiencies are identified and appropriate solutions proposed. The scope of the study focuses on analyses of geometric and operating conditions, traffic volumes and safety trends, environmental concerns, population and land-use changes, and right of way and other issues that might affect the highway and its adjacent communities. Proposed solutions may include several short and

long term alternatives. RDPs serve as the vision of the partners involved for how the study area should develop over time. They typically cover a 20-year planning horizon.

Setting the direction for routes within the state system provides WSDOT an opportunity to develop agreements with its partners, including tribal governments, local jurisdictions, regional and state organizations and agencies, communities, and the private sector. Public involvement is also key to the development of these plans, allowing concerns about access management and development review policies to be addressed. WSDOT also uses route development plans as a tool to define and address route continuity, if feasible.


When completed, an RDP is used to assist WSDOT, local agencies, and RTPOs with their plans and programs. RDPs are used to refine and update the Highway System Plan (HSP) by identifying potential projects. Completed RDPs are also utilized by WSDOT to communicate future route goals to stakeholders. Route development plans are intended to be living documents and should be updated periodically to keep pace with changing transportation needs. Like corridor study plans, RDPs are key elements in linking planning to program development and, ultimately, project delivery.

For more information on RDPs and route development planning activity, see the WSDOT Transportation Planning Web site at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/>

Click on Route Development Plans.

Or by direct link:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/RDP/>

## **(2) Corridor Study Plans**

The usual purpose of a corridor study plan is to determine the best way to serve existing and future travel demand within a travel corridor. These studies define alignment, mode(s), and facilities between activity centers or other logical termini. Corridor study plans typically respond to a specific problem, such as high accident locations and corridors, high levels of existing or future congestion, and significant land-use changes. They often involve more than one mode. These plans identify existing and future deficiencies and evaluate preliminary alternative solutions. The recommended preferred alternative usually includes a facility description including environmental, operational, and other impacts, with proposed mitigation, if applicable. Corridor planning is accomplished using a long-range outlook, at least 20 years and sometimes longer.

A corridor study plan may be broad in purpose and recommendations or provide a significant level of detail for a very specific purpose.

Typically an existing facility, such as a highway or a rail line, defines the axis of a corridor, and the corridor will extend beyond the facility right-of-way. The corridor may be relatively narrow or extend as much as five miles or more on either side of the axis. The corridor usually connects major destinations, such as two cities, or a major portion of the distance between those destinations. A corridor may also cover the length of an entire route.

A corridor may also be defined as a broad geographic area served by various transportation systems. These systems provide important connections between various regions for passengers, goods, and services. Studies of this magnitude might be defined as “Regional or Mega-Corridors” and address links among a network of facilities and systems, including rail, highway, transit lines, transit stations, bicycle paths, airports, and marine ports/terminals.

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) has provided guidelines for developing corridor studies in The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), Report 435, *Guidebook for Transportation Corridor Studies: A Process for Effective Decision-Making*. In addition to the steps of the planning process for corridor studies, the guidebook deals with the decision-making process and its relationship to NEPA, and it recommends training for core competencies in traffic pattern and volume modeling, public involvement and consensus building, economic analysis, financial analysis, and funding.

Benefits of corridor planning include:

- Resolution of major planning issues prior to the initiation of project development.
- Identification and possibly preservation of transportation right-of-way.
- Protection of transportation investments.
- Partnerships with diverse public and private agencies and organizations.

### **(3) Other Highway Planning Studies**

WSDOT may conduct other planning studies to identify highway preservation and improvement needs and deficiencies and evaluate alternative policy, project, and/or program solutions for meeting those needs and deficiencies.

#### **(a) Scenic Corridor Management Plans**

Like Route Development Plans and Corridor Study Plans, Scenic Corridor Management Plans provide an analysis of a corridor over a 20 or more year planning horizon. However, their purpose is to establish community-based goals and implementation strategies along a corridor, especially to promote tourism as part of the economy of an area. These plans also describe how to use community resources efficiently, how to conserve intrinsic qualities of the corridor, and how to enhance its value to the community.

Scenic Corridor Management Plans are developed under the federal Scenic Byway Program. They follow FHWA guidelines for a master planning process along a corridor, with a focus both within and outside of the highway right-of-way. For more information on Scenic Byways and WSDOT Scenic Byway planning activity, see:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/TA/ProgMgt/Byways/>

#### **(b) Spot and Location Studies**

Spot and location studies are used to address specific problems or deficiencies, such as safety or congestion problems, at a particular location, like a high accident location, or an interchange or intersection where traffic flow is a problem. They typically analyze alternative solutions, or the feasibility of a particular solution. Sometimes these studies are in response to legislative or other political interest and may have targeted funding.

Results may range from recommending a near-term solution analyzed for its feasibility, recommending a long-term solution coupled with a near-term solution, or recommending an alternative solution. If appropriate, such studies also follow the SEPA/NEPA process. Additional funding may be required to implement any long-term solution, but operational funding may be available to implement a near-term solution.

### **220.04 Ferry Planning Studies**

#### **(1) Ferry Terminal Master Plans**

Washington State Ferries occasionally prepares a new master plan or updates an existing master plan for a ferry terminal. This involves working with the community, other transportation providers, the metropolitan or regional transportation planning organization, and resource agencies. The process identifies preservation and/or improvements needs or deficiencies, assesses options for addressing those needs or deficiencies, including any environmental considerations, and recommends policy, project, and/or change-in-service solutions. WSF and community look at improvements that may be needed in overhead loading, terminal building, pick-up and drop-off areas, and access for public transit, bikes, and pedestrians.

#### **(2) Other Ferry Studies**

Washington State Ferries also uses origin/destination studies, and boat-wait, congestion, and delay studies to improve customer service. It has used a customer service survey to measure customer satisfaction with the ferry service and measure interest in potential new services and amenities aboard ferries and at their terminals.

## 220.05 Other WSDOT Planning Studies

### (1) *State Airport Studies*

WSDOT Aviation assesses the maintenance, preservation, and improvement needs at the 16 state-owned and/or operated airports in a variety of ways, one example being a pavement assessment. Airport layout plans are being developed to assess future preservation and improvement needs, including new or replacement paving, navigation aids, lighting, utilities, hangar storage, improved road access, and property acquisition.

### (2) *Aviation Studies*

WSDOT maintains a Washington State Aviation System Plan Airport Condition Assessment Database, which is periodically updated through airport management interviews and physical inventories to identify gaps and deficiencies in the airport system. The database includes information on intermodal connections, distance of highway access to the airport, land use, pavement conditions, airport facilities, and airport services.

This information is periodically used to determine how well the aviation system is performing, and identify actions necessary to direct the aviation system toward established goals, once a set of objectives for future performance have been identified. This is currently done in the process of updating the State Aviation System Plan, a component of the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP).

### (3) *Freight Mobility Studies*

WSDOT conducts a variety of studies and analyzes the conclusions of studies by other entities to identify freight system needs and deficiencies. Customer requirements and data-driven information provide the basis for recommended improvements to the state's freight system.

The WSDOT Draft Freight Report for the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) 2005 Update exemplifies this methodology and WSDOT freight mobility studies. The draft report and executive summary can be found at:

 [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/freight/images/WTP\\_FreightUpdate.pdf](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/freight/images/WTP_FreightUpdate.pdf)

The WSDOT Freight Office WTP methodology included:

- Over 200 one-on-one interviews with high-volume shippers and freight carriers
- Voice surveys of another 350 statewide customers
- Focus groups with key public and private partners
- Literature review of freight-dependent industries' requirements

- Truck surveys: origin-destination data on major statewide corridors
- Volume counts: truck trips, rail volumes, etc.
- Existing regional and national research studies and reports

In addition, WSDOT uses the Strategic Freight Transportation Analysis (SFTA) to provide data and direction for making investment decisions designed to improve freight mobility for the state's economic vitality. For more information on SFTA and WSDOT freight planning, see:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/freight/>

#### **(4) Freight and Passenger Rail Studies**

WSDOT conducts freight and passenger rail studies to identify needs and deficiencies on rail lines and for service. These studies assess the best options for addressing these needs or deficiencies, in some cases to satisfy the needs of a particular type of customer, like grain transporters. More information is online at:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail/>

#### **(5) Capital Facilities Studies**

WSDOT's Facilities Office uses field condition assessments to determine the condition, deficiency backlog, and operational suitability of each highway system support facility, and they maintain a Computer Aided Facility Management (CAFM) database and 10-year Capital Plan to identify and prioritize preservation and improvement needs and replacement and improvement schedules for those facilities.

## **220.06 Exhibits**

None.



230.01	Introduction
230.02	Local Comprehensive Plans
230.03	Metropolitan Transportation Plans
230.04	Regional Transportation Plans
230.05	Exhibits

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### 230.01 Introduction

This chapter describes transportation plans prepared by counties and cities, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), and WSDOT's role in working with these entities to coordinate local, metropolitan, regional, and state transportation planning.

### 230.02 Local Comprehensive Plans

Under the State's Growth Management Act (GMA), city and county comprehensive plans serve as basic building blocks for transportation planning. They define land uses and the transportation system needed to support those land uses over a 20-year planning period. Local comprehensive plans must include six elements, including transportation. The transportation element should integrate land use assumptions by identifying and developing:

- An inventory of land, water, and air transportation facilities.
- An analysis of impacts on other jurisdictions, and a feedback loop to reassess land uses that cannot be served with available funding. Each local jurisdiction planning under the GMA is required to identify the effect of its land use decisions on the state highway system.
- Current and future transportation needs.
- A realistic funding analysis.

Other key components are plans developed by special transportation districts, such as transit agencies and port districts. These plans define the needs and services to carry out these special purpose government missions.

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\*Web sites and navigation referenced in this chapter are subject to change. For the most current links, please refer to the online version of the EPM, available through the WSDOT Environmental Services Office (ESO) home page: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/>

The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) helps county governments meet their transportation planning responsibilities through direct technical support, research on current issues with framework plans, workshops, and discussion papers. More information is online at:

☞ <http://www.crab.wa.gov/>

WSDOT Regional Offices work with counties and cities when they update the transportation element of their comprehensive plans to coordinate state and local interests. They should also encourage local governments to consider potential impacts to state-owned and state-interest transportation facilities and services in Environmental Impact Statements prepared for a comprehensive plan or plan update.

### 230.03 Metropolitan Transportation Plans

In Washington, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) have a major role in transportation planning as required by federal statutes (23 USC 134 and 49 U.S.C. 1607). Each urbanized area with a population 50,000 or more must have such an organization to receive federal transportation capital or operating assistance. The purpose of an MPO is to provide a forum for cooperative transportation decision-making by local and state governments. The products of this ongoing cooperative, comprehensive transportation planning process are plans and programs consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urban area.

A map showing all Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations in the state is online at:

☞ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/Regional/>

Each MPO has a transportation policy committee of elected officials of the counties and cities in the area. The MPO may have a technical committee of staff from local public works and planning agencies. WSDOT is represented on the policy and technical committees concerning transportation in each MPO.

The MPO is required to prepare an annual work program that describes its planned transportation and transportation-related activities. The federal government provides part of the funds for these plans and studies, with the remainder from local sources.

The products of this urban planning process are:

- A metropolitan transportation plan for the area describing policies, strategies, and facilities or changes in facilities.
- A transportation improvement program (TIP) that is usually a six-year program of projects including an annual or biennial element.

- The annual or biennial element consists of a list of transportation improvement projects proposed for implementation during the first one or two years of the TIP.

## 230.04 Regional Transportation Plans

Regional transportation plans are developed by Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), which are forums for local governments and the State to coordinate the planning of regional transportation facilities and services, as authorized under Chapter 47.80 RCW. An RTPO is created through the voluntary association of local governments in a region. Member jurisdictions determine their own structures to ensure equitable representation among local governments and to allow flexibility across the state. A map showing all of the RTPOs and MPOs in the state is online at:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/Regional/>

A WSDOT RTPO Transportation Planning Guidebook is available online at:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/E5A25A1A-61E0-44E8-B000-AA546E5C3BE3/0/RTPOGuidebook.pdf>

**RTPO Membership and Designation** – Each RTPO must include at least one county and serve a population of at least 100,000. Regions may be formed in areas with less than 100,000 population if a minimum of three geographically contiguous counties are linked. RTPOs must include all counties in the region, and at least 60 percent of the cities and towns representing at least 75 percent of the population of the cities and towns, as well as tribal governments and school districts.

In areas where there are Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as required by the federal government, the RTPO and MPO must be the same organization. WSDOT verifies the designation of each RTPO to ensure that all state requirements are met.

Each RTPO must establish a Transportation Policy Board whose membership includes representatives from the member counties, cities and towns. Some RTPOs also include other transportation interests, such as major employers, WSDOT, transit providers, and port districts within the region. State legislators are ex officio members. RTPOs are encouraged to form Technical Advisory Committees.

RTPOs ensure consistency of the transportation element of local comprehensive plans with the Regional Transportation Plan.

**Lead Planning Agency** – RTPOs are required to designate a lead planning agency, which may be a regional council, county, city, town agency, or a WSDOT regional office. Of the 14 RTPOs that have formed, ten have MPOs as their lead planning agencies, two have economic development agencies, one has a WSDOT regional office, and one has a county public

works department. The key role of the lead planning agency is to provide staff support to the RTPO and to coordinate development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

**Developing the Regional Transportation Plan** – A key function of the RTPO is to develop a Regional Transportation Strategy that addresses alternative transportation modes and transportation demand management in regional corridors. The strategy includes recommended transportation policies consistent with the region’s growth strategies. The RTPO also develops a Regional Transportation Plan, guided by the Regional Transportation Strategy and countywide planning policies, guidelines, and principles. With the plan as a guide, RTPOs also develop regional transportation improvement programs (TIPs), in cooperation with WSDOT, public transit operators, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments. TIPs are proposed regionally significant transportation projects and programs and transportation demand management measures.

**230.05 Exhibits**

None.

- 240.01 Introduction
- 240.02 Plan Components
- 240.03 Exhibits

**Key to Icon**

🌐 Web site.\*

**240.01 Introduction**

Adoption of a comprehensive, balanced statewide transportation plan is one of the primary responsibilities of the Washington Transportation Commission under RCW 47.01.071. Washington's Transportation Plan (WTP) is a blueprint for transportation programs and spending for a 20-year period.

The WTP addresses transportation facilities owned and operated by the state: state highways, the Washington State Ferries, and state-owned airports. It also addresses facilities and services that the state has an interest in because they are vital to the entire transportation system. These are: public transportation, freight rail, intercity passenger rail, marine ports and navigation, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and aviation. System plans for each of these transportation modes are components of the WTP.

The WTP is developed with extensive public involvement and in cooperation with WSDOT Regions and divisions; MPOs and RTPOs; tribes; cities and counties; transit officials; and representatives of private carriers.

The WTP is updated every four to six years in response to changing federal and state legislation, updated growth and revenue projections, and emerging issues. The current WTP was adopted in November 2006, covering the period from 2007 to 2026. Component system plans are also updated at regular intervals.

For information on the WTP, the current update process, and corridor planning, see the WSDOT Web site:

🌐 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

Click on Transportation Plan (WTP).

Or by direct link:

🌐 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/wtp/>

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## 240.02 Plan Components

### (1) State Highway System Plan

The State Highway System Plan (HSP) provides service objectives and strategies for maintaining, operating, preserving, and improving our state highways. Updated every two years, the HSP defines service level objectives, action strategies, and costs.

The HSP describes the major highway programs including highway maintenance (Program M), traffic operations (Program Q), highway preservation (Program P), highway improvement (Program I), highway safety (Subprogram I2), economic initiatives (Subprogram I3), and environmental retrofit (Subprogram I4).

The objective of the environmental retrofit subprogram is to retrofit state highway facilities to reduce existing environmental impacts. The environmental retrofit program is in addition to WSDOT's commitment to mitigate environmental impacts of all highway system projects.

The environmental retrofit subprogram focuses on:

- **Noise Barriers** – Adding noise mitigation along state highways where neighborhoods are exposed to unacceptable noise levels as defined by federal statute.
- **Fish Passage** – Targeting the removal of fish barriers along state highways.
- **Stormwater Discharge** – Constructing new stormwater treatment facilities to treat runoff from untreated pavements.
- **Air Quality** – Implementing all transportation control measures identified in the SIP. Currently, there are no transportation control measures specifically identified in either the SIP or the HSP.
- **Chronic Environmental Deficiencies** – Addressing recent, frequent, and chronic maintenance and/or repair problems in the state transportation infrastructure that are causing impacts to fish and fish habitat.

For information on the state highway system, see WSDOT's Web site:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/HSP>

### (2) State Ferry System Plan

The State Ferry System Plan has three service objectives: ferry system maintenance, ferry preservation, and ferry system improvements. WSDOT also has prepared a Long-Range Ferry Plan for developing ferry capacity. Information on WSF is online at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Ferries/>

**(3) State Airport System Plan**

The State Airport System Plan has three service objectives: airport maintenance, airport preservation, and airport improvement. WSDOT manages 16 airports across the state that serve as staging areas for search and rescue operations and provide emergency landing sites for aircraft in distress.

**(4) Washington State Intercity and Rural-to-Urban Public Transportation Network Plan**

This upcoming plan will supersede the Washington Intercity Public Transportation Network Plan dated July 1999. The new plan will identify intercity public transportation needs and prioritize public investment on a network basis. Primary objectives of the plan include the identification and filling of service gaps, enhanced coordination and connectivity between public and private sector services, and the consistent assessment of unmet needs at the regional level.

**(5) Washington State's Long-Range Plan for Amtrak Cascades**

WSDOT's long-range master plan for the development of higher-speed intercity passenger rail service between Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, BC is being updated. The plan includes service goals, ridership and revenue projections, capital project descriptions and cost estimates, equipment requirements, and service increments that could be added over time if funding is available. The plan will be available at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Freight/Rail/default.htm>

**(6) Freight Rail System Plan**

The Freight Rail System Plan has three service objectives:

- Ensure adequate mainline freight capacity and safety and enhance access to and capacity of intermodal terminals.
- Preserve and enhance service on branch lines, promote continued service on light density lines, and preserve essential lines threatened with abandonment.
- Identify and preserve essential rail corridors for future rail service.

**(7) Marine Ports and Navigation System Plan**

The Marine Ports and Navigation System Plan has five service objectives:

- Increase Washington ports' share of the West Coast trade and support the development and growth of port related tourist activities.
- Ensure adequate landside access to and capacity of intermodal terminals.
- Ensure adequate waterside access to and capacity of transportation routes.

- Facilitate and support port actions and investments in port districts that increase speed and efficiency of intermodal transfers.
- Enable marine ports to continue to operate and expand within their shoreline locations while adequately protecting the natural environment.

**(8) Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan has two service objectives:

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Increase the use of bicycling and walking for transportation purposes, principally utilitarian and commuting trips and connections to intermodal facilities.

**(9) Aviation System Plan**

The Aviation System Plan has five service objectives:

- Ensure adequacy and improve general aviation facilities to meet current and future growth and demand in support of the state's trade and economic vitality.
- Promote the development of adequate air carrier airport facilities, both airside and landside to meet preservation, growth, and safety needs.
- Ensure the highest level of aviation safety.
- Provide emergency response capability and public safety through search and rescue and by maintaining, preserving, and improving a system of general aviation and commercial aviation services and facilities.
- Facilitate compliance by pilots, aircraft owners, and airport operators with state aviation regulations to ensure safe aviation and provide funding for general aviation services and facilities.

Information on the Aviation Division is online at:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Aviation/>

## 240.03 Exhibits

None.