



## Transportation Benchmarks (2002 - 2007)

- Historical Overview of RCW 47.01.012
- The 2002 – 2007 Transportation Benchmarks
- Amending RCW 47.01.012
- End of Benchmark Reporting

### Historical Overview of RCW 47.01.012

The Transportation Benchmarks were a set of legislatively-enacted policy goals that preceded the state’s six current transportation policy goals for transportation agencies (RCW 47.01.012). The benchmarks included specific policy goals and performance measures to evaluate annual transportation system performance. In 2000, the Governor appointed a Blue Ribbon Commission to evaluate whether transportation benchmarks would be effective for evaluating and improving transportation system performance. Their recommendations were then evaluated by the Washington State Transportation Commission in 2001. In 2002, the Legislature enacted engrossed substitute House Bill 2304, directing the Transportation Commission to develop benchmarks based on policy goals for the operation, performance of, and investment in the state’s transportation system.

### The Transportation Benchmarks

The Legislature set the following nine policy goals to be used in developing the benchmarks:

- Improving safety No interstate highways, state routes, and local arterials shall be in poor condition
- No bridges shall be structurally deficient, and safety retrofits shall be performed on those state bridges at the highest seismic risk levels Traffic congestion on urban state highways shall be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean
- Delay per driver shall be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean Per capita vehicle miles traveled shall be maintained at 2000 levels
- The non-auto share of commuter trips shall be increased in urban areas Administrative costs as a percentage of transportation spending shall achieve the most efficient quartile nationally
- The state’s public transit agencies shall achieve the median cost per vehicle revenue hour of peer transit agencies, adjusting for the regional cost of living

The Transportation Commission, working with WSDOT, adopted specific measures to evaluate the performance of the benchmarks that were enacted (see above). Beginning in 2003, WSDOT included an annual Benchmarks Report with its June 30th edition of the Gray Notebook. WSDOT then presented the annual report to the Transportation Commission to update its members on the state’s performance towards achieving the nine benchmarks.

### Benchmark Publications Submitted to the Washington State Transportation Commission

Title	Description	Date	File Size
Transportation Benchmarks Implementation Executive Summary	An overview of the development and implementation of the 2003 Benchmarks Report	August 2003	167 kb

Transportation Benchmarks Implementation Report	A Summary report on the implementation of Transportation Benchmarks codified in RCW 47.01.012	August 2003	1.5 mb
2003 Transportation Benchmarks Report	Excerpt from the March 31, 2003 Gray Notebook 9	May 2003	565 kb
2004 Transportation Benchmarks Report	Excerpt from the June 30, 2004 Gray Notebook 14	August 2004	477 kb
2005 Transportation Benchmarks Report	Excerpt from the June 30, 2005 Gray Notebook 18	August 2005	550 kb
2006 Transportation Benchmarks Report	Excerpt from the June 30, 2006 Gray Notebook 22	August 2006	374 kb

### Amending RCW 47.01.012 – Shifting from Benchmarks to Policy Goals

In 2005, a legislatively-created transportation audit board reviewed state transportation statutes, benchmarks, and other investment criteria with the goal of simplifying WSDOT's numerous investment instructions and reporting requirements. These include the nine Transportation Benchmarks, the Governor's Priorities of Government budgeting program (also known as POG), Performance Auditing, Government Management Accountability Program reporting (also known as GMAP), and legislatively mandated capital investment criteria. That study recommended that Washington state adopt a model based on the system of policy goals and objectives used by the state of Maryland to evaluate system performance. (For more information on the Maryland system, please see the Transportation Performance Measures Library)

The 2007 Legislature implemented the study's recommendations, and repealed the existing nine transportation benchmarks, establishing five policy goals that did not codify specific benchmarks and performance measures. The state's transportation policy goals for the planning, operation, performance of, and investment in, the state's transportation system include:

- **Preservation:** to maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services;
- **Safety:** to provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system;
- **Mobility (Congestion Relief):** to improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state;
- **Environment:** to enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment; and
- **Stewardship:** to continually improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

In 2010, the Legislature added a sixth policy goal to RCW 47.01.012:

- **Economic Vitality:** To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.

### End of Benchmark Reporting

When the Legislature repealed the Transportation Benchmarks after RCW 47.01.012 was amended in 2007, WSDOT discontinued their use. However, the Transportation Benchmarks and their annual reports remain a valuable asset when considering the state's historical performance, and are maintained here on this page. The Gray Notebook Subject Index contains references to all of the performance measures used in reporting between 2003 and 2006, available here.

[↑ top](#)