

West Plains Sub-Area Management Plan – Phase I, US 2 Vicinity

“Purpose and Need”

What are we striving to fix/address/prevent?

Land use development in the West plains vicinity is outpacing the available multi-modal transportation system in the area. Previous studies have indicated performance concerns (congestion) for the US 2 corridor in the Airway Heights area. There is a need, particularly in and around US 2, to collaboratively refine past study efforts and plan for potential “practical solutions” that can be jointly prioritized and programmed.

What is the study approach?

“Practical Solutions” is a WSDOT performance-based approach to transportation decision-making. This data-driven approach uses tools such as Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) solutions and performance measures to seek lower-cost approaches and efficiencies in addressing mobility gaps along US 2. This study effort will further refine and align past studies through the lens of “Practical Solutions”.

Community engagement is another important key factor in helping to develop Practical Solutions. Practical Solutions are found when stakeholders work together to identify approaches that are sustainable and innovative. The community and other potential affected interests will be engaged throughout the study.

The US 2 West Plains Sub-area Management Plan Phase 1, refines previous studies that have been completed in the West Plains area. This study addresses the mobility gaps (congestion) that have previously been determined, on US 2 between the US 2/ I 90 interchange and Fairchild Air Force Base entrance as well as looking at other possible parallel frontage road connections for 6th/12th and 18th/21st to help alleviate traffic loading directly onto the US 2 corridor.

During this study, a team involving local agency partners, tribes, Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Spokane Transit Authority, WSDOT (Eastern Region/Headquarters), and other stakeholders will review and explore the following:

- The current operation and function of the corridor segment
- The evolving development changes and resulting future corridor operation and function
- Features of the corridor that have been previously identified as “working well” and the “opportunities to improve” in and around the corridor.

What do we currently know about Phase I US 2 Vicinity?

The following **US 2 Corridor Functions** have been identified in previous studies:

- Provides primary access to Fairchild Air Force Base (FAFB).
- Provides primary access to Spokane Tribal Developments and Kalispel Tribal Developments.
- Provides primary access to Spokane International Airport.
- Connects to High/heavy industrial use areas.
- Serves as a major commuter route to and from Spokane.
- Provides access to recreational destinations and resort areas.
- Serves as a commercial freight route.
- Serves as the “Main Street” for the City of Airway Heights.

The following **US 2 Corridor Performance Concerns** have been identified in previous studies:

- In 2016 the WSDOT Corridor Initiative Study identified segments of the corridor experienced a 30% reduction of posted speed for a duration of one hour or more. This indicates there is congestion (reduction of travel time) along segments of the corridor. This results in diminishing travel response time for Fairchild Air Force Base and Emergency Services.
- The area around US 2, the only major east-west corridor is rapidly developing. Trips are expected to continue to increase with planned land use developments.
- The West Plains area was identified as an area with high probability of development, in a WSDOT funded University of Washington research report, “Land Development Risks Along State Transportation Corridors (September, 2013).
- The corridor is identified as having habitat connectivity issues.
- The corridor experiences heavy summer season and event traffic demand.
- The shared use path for bikes and pedestrians adjacent to US 2 only extends a portion of the corridor. North of US 2, approximately 78 % of the sidewalk and/or multi-use path is incomplete and south of US 2 approximately 70% of the sidewalk and/or multi-use path is incomplete (Rambo Rd. to Sunset Highway).

The following were identified as **Contributing Factors** that are potentially causing the current issues:

- A lack of local roadway network and connectivity moves traffic demand onto US 2.
- A lack of multi-modal options increases dependency of single occupancy vehicle trips.
- Land use development patterns.
- Ninety-five percent of people who work in the West Plains area, live outside the area. The 2015 inflow/outflow job counts from the US Census Bureau “On the Map” reported 11,115 people were employed within the West Plains area, with 10,553 living outside of the area.
- Development in this area is a regional emphasis area with high priority.

The following are **Planned Improvements and Objectives** for the Phase I - US 2 vicinity:

- Strategic left-turn restrictions along US 2 corridor.
- Evaluate safety performance.
- A High Performance Transit (HPT) corridor is planned for implementation within the next 15 years.
- Mobility Strategies
 - Connectivity of the local network.
 - The development of a parallel local roadway network (i.e.; 6th/12th and 18th/21st).
 - Managing congestion (person-throughput) along the corridor using the method of Practical Solutions.
 - Use Transportation System Management & Operations (TSMO) strategies to address concerns along the corridor.
 - Explore opportunities to enhance multi-modal options and connectivity (Transit, biking, walking) in and around the study area to decrease single occupancy vehicle trips and auto dependency, including Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies. Infill non-motorized facilities.
- Enhancing quality of life.
- Multi-modal safety.

What are the targeted study outcomes for the study?

- Develop a prioritized plan with potential funding mechanisms to address the transportation needs associated with projected land use growth.
- Based on past study efforts and analysis accomplished in this study, investigate and identify parallel corridors including the 6th/12th corridor and the 18th/21st corridor. Determine the local alignments and connections to the transportation system.
- Identify achievable “practical solutions” system improvements, including on and off the state network for prioritization, future programming, and implementation.
- Select strategies that result in predictability and reliability in travel time, emergency service response time, and Fairchild Air Force Base response time on the network based on respective performance metrics.
- Identify potential right of way needs.
- Analyze the impacts of land use development in the West Plains to US 2 and the regional network.
- Align previous studies/plans (the US 2 Lincoln County Line to I-90 Route Development Plan with the City of Airway Heights US 2 Safety-Revitalization Project)

What are the anticipated study deliverables?

- Collaboratively developed multi-jurisdictional “Purpose and Need” statement.
- Prioritized Programming and Implementation of the Plan.
 - List of all solutions considered.
 - Completed solution packages – Analysis results.
 - Planning level cost estimates. Explore maintenance and operations cost estimates based on available data.
 - Scenario-based prioritized programming list.
- Collaboratively developed “Methods and Assumptions” framework.
- Community Engagement consistent with WSDOT Community Engagement Plan and WSDOT’s Process for Consulting with Non-Metropolitan Local Officials, Tribes, and Federal Land Management Agencies.
- Contributing Factor Analysis
- An online “living” West Plains Area Management Plan – Phase I US 2: Study analysis, outcomes, and engagement will be accessible online. Data and information can be updated in the future as needed.
- The deliverables can be used as a resource for grant applications, WSDOT Basis of Design, local/regional prioritization, and maintenance and operation cost projections, etc.

What are the Guiding Principles for the study?

During initial collaboration with multi-jurisdictional partners, the following “Guiding Principles” for the study were identified:

- The study will review previously proposed identified and emerging solutions and explore “Practical Solutions” to mitigate the identified issues.
- Local agency partners, the Spokane Tribe, the Kalispel Tribe, Spokane Transit Authority, Spokane International Airport, Fairchild Air Force Base, and the Spokane Regional Transportation Council will collaborate in the all phases of the study. The partners will collaboratively review past studies and past Intersection for Approvals, County Urban Growth Area (UGA), zoning codes, comprehensive plans, corridor sketch, and other documents pertaining to the west plains.
- The community engagement will be inclusive and transparent. We will involve a wide array of perspectives, disciplines, and backgrounds in our outreach and decision making.
- Quantitative analysis will be used to confirm issues and advance potential solutions.



What would success look like for partnering jurisdictions transportation needs in and around the West Plains?

During initial collaboration with multi-jurisdictional partners, the following “Guidelines for Success” were identified:

(Bold text designates areas of highest importance as selected by the Technical Advisory Team)

- **Buy-in from local jurisdictions to support the outcome, being mindful of limited funding opportunities.**
- **Maintaining Fairchild response time.**
- **Quality of life improvements and Pedestrian and Multimodal Safety.**
- **Plan ahead of land use changes.**
- **Maintain reliability for trucking, freight and commercial uses along the corridor.**
- **Reliable alternate routes to serve regional and local travel.**
- **Support the downtown plan of Airway Heights.**
- Funding for maintenance and operations is achievable.
- Actionable solutions.
- Achievable practical outcomes/list of actionable solutions.
- Supports local agency land use plans, future trips and business development.
- Promotes active transportation options.
- Accommodate expected development.
- Concur with local and tribal plans.
- Consider the needs of the business community.
- Understanding of possible limits to growth due to funding constraints addressing network failures.
- Make sure that the process is inviting, open and available to everyone being engaged in the process.
- Memorandum of Understanding, supporting coordination and partnerships between all parties.



- Modes perform above or at expectation.
- Solution to match the problem (on the same scale).
- Solving congestion/mobility challenges on US 2.