

## Correlation of Region's Key Issues with Statewide Issues

### Washington Transportation Plan

The Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) 2007-2026 was adopted by the Washington State Transportation Commission in November of 2006. The purpose of this plan is to serve as a guide to provide strategies which will guide decisions and investment needed to develop Washington's transportation system for the future. The WTP was divided into two phases; the first phase collected data on the transportation system and documented existing conditions. This data was used to develop nine Key Statewide Issues which systematically assess the state's needs. The Statewide Key Issues are further summarized below:

- **System Preservation** - focus is on taking care of the existing transportation system - all modes - and doing it in a cost effective way, managing our assets with a "fix it first" attitude before it needs to be replaced.

*Fundamental Issue* - What will it take to make sure that the elements of the transportation system that we take for granted today will still be in place when we need them in two, six or twenty years?

- **Safety** - focus is on design features such as turn lanes, rumble strips, improved shoulders and roadsides for rural roads, maintenance activities like snow removal. Bike and pedestrian facilities can reduce the number of those types of accidents.

*Fundamental Issue* - How do we make transportation systems and facilities throughout the state safer for their users?

- **Transportation Access** - focus is on transportation for those who physically or financially can not provide for themselves. Strategies and issues revolve primarily around transit.

*Fundamental Issue* - Where basic transportation services are indispensable for all citizens' social engagement, how is a "safety net" for transportation needs to be provided every citizen in every community?

- **System Efficiencies** - focus is on getting the most out of our existing transportation investments through operational strategies, from basic maintenance activities to sophisticated technologies. Also includes park-and-rides for transit.

*Fundamental Issue* - How can we best work toward optimizing how efficiently we derive the benefits of our current transportation system facilities and those we are able to create in the future?

- **Bottlenecks and Chokepoints** - focus is on providing select capacity improvements that will help to get the most out of the transportation system in areas that are congested.

*Fundamental Issue* - What opportunities for investment in new facility and system assets can help address system chokepoints and bottlenecks, the most effective near-term solution through expanding capacity to move people and goods in shorter times and more reliable times?

- **Moving Freight** - for all modes of transportation this issues is critical to the Washington economy. Washington is a gateway for international markets. The importance of trucking, rail and waterways is emphasized.

*Fundamental Issue* - How are the special needs of freight movement to be incorporated into the state's transportation plan?

- **Strong Economy and Good Jobs** - Targeted transportation economic development projects should focus on retaining existing jobs or probably new jobs to help ensure success. WSDOT also indicates that the discussion for this issue is closely related to the discussions about Moving Freight and Bottlenecks and Chokepoints. Improving safety, reducing delay and lowering operating costs are basic user benefits.

*Fundamental Issue* - What investments in new facility and system assets can help support the state's economic vitality and strengthen the job picture?

- **Health and the Environment** - focus is on the impact that transportation systems have air quality, water quality, noise, etc. that influence human health and species protection. Such things as emissions, stormwater runoff, limiting vehicle miles traveled, etc. are included.

*Fundamental Issue* - How can transportation investments be developed, implemented and used in ways that at the same time enhance our citizens' transportation goals and our citizens' goals for healthy communities and a well-protected environment?

- **Building Future Visions** - this issue takes a longer look at transportation issues and facilities, even though funding levels are limited. Where are future facilities and what technologies are needed in order to address needs.

*Fundamental Issue* - What are the visions of transportation system futures - shared and unshared - that should shape today's transportation planning to help create pathways to the future?

More detailed research was conducted to better understand the WTP process and the statewide issues as identified through that process. Much effort has been expended by many state employees and others to reach out to understand the transportation issues and challenges facing the state of Washington. Three particularly pertinent documents with respect to the statewide issues and Washington's counties are:

- Summary of Statewide Key Issue Papers
- Interim Briefing to the Transportation Commission 4/22/2004
- Local Roadways: The County System 10/19/2004

Important things that WSDOT heard across the state indicates the following:

- County road levy and the current share of the gas tax cannot meet current funding needs.
- Most rural counties do not have an adequate tax base to fund general government needs let alone local transportation improvements.
- Local options cannot generate enough funds to provide for construction maintenance and preservation programs.
- Recent statewide initiatives have repealed local transportation funding tools.

The Washington Association of Counties also presented to the Transportation Commission a summary of issues, including:

- The current state funding programs through WSDOT, TIB and CRAB are not keeping up with the need.

- Counties are trying to balance competing needs between safety, preservation and maintenance and falling short on all three.
- Additional funding should be flexible enough to allow local elected's and professional staff to manage diverse demands.

The second phase of the WTP, involved identifying and prioritizing specific program investments and developing the plan update. As part of this phase, the Transportation Commission evaluated the nine key issues described above and developed "Five Investment Guidelines" which were used to select investment targets. The Five Investment Guidelines are described as follows:

1. **Preservation** - preserve and extend prior investments in existing transportation facilities and the services they provide to people and commerce;
2. **Safety** - target construction projects, enforcement and education to save lives, reduce injuries, and protect property;
3. **Economic Vitality** - *Strong Economy and Good Jobs, Moving Freight*: improve freight movement and support economic sectors that rely on the transportation system, such as agricultural, tourism and manufacturing;
4. **Mobility** - *Transportation Access, System Efficiencies, Bottlenecks and Chokepoints, Building Future Visions*: facilitate movement of people and goods to contribute to a strong economy and a better quality of life for our citizens;
5. **Environmental quality and health** - *Health and the Environment*: bring benefits to the environment and to our citizens' health by improving the existing transportation infrastructure.

Since there are several high-priority unfunded system needs state wide, the purpose of these five investment guidelines is to set overall priorities and form a basis of the WTP. In order to determine the most beneficial investment, the Commission prioritized them by the highest priorities.

#### **Explanation of Regional Issues to Statewide Issues Correlation**

Although regional issues facing the Palouse Region discussed above in some cases are unique to this region, they correspond well with the nine broad statewide issues that have been identified through the WSDOT Statewide Transportation Plan. Table 12 on the following page has been prepared to show the relationship of regional issues to the five investment guidelines used by the Transportation Commission in the development of policies and approaches addressing statewide transportation needs.

The regional issues shown in the left column of the table are discussed in the Key Issues section. Certainly there are other correlations between regional and statewide issues that can be made, or that may become more evident as time passes or more detailed studies are performed. However, for the purposes of this document, those relationships that appeared to be the strongest have been identified.

Table 12. Correlation of Regional Key Issues to Statewide Issues

Regional Key Issue	Five Prioritized Investment Guidelines								
	1. System Preservation	2. Safety	3. Economic Vitality	4. Mobility				5. Environmental Quality	
	Statewide Key Issue								
	System Preservation	Safety	Moving Freight	Strong Economy and Good Jobs	Transportation Access	System Efficiencies	Bottlenecks and Chokepoints	Building Future Visions	Health and the Environment
Maintenance and Preservation	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Safety	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Freight and Goods Transportation System	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Sub-Standard Roadways	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Funding	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Pullman By-Pass		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Pullman Airport Road	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Fleshman Way/SR 129 Interchange		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
US 12 in Clarkston	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Railroads	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Vitality and Importance of Snake River	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Bicycle/Pedestrian Accommodations		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Transit	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Airports/Air Service			✓	✓	✓			✓	
Stormwater	✓	✓							✓