

CHAPTER 2

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

VISION

After significant public outreach and coordination with numerous agencies, organizations, and individuals, Phase 1 established a vision for transportation in Washington State. The vision moves our state in the direction of a multimodal, coordinated, cost-effective, safe, and low-carbon transportation system. It also highlights what transportation does for the people of Washington: more than just movement.

FOCUS AREAS

Of the numerous topics that state policies and plans address, the four focus areas of Phase 2 encompass the unresolved statewide policy issues that are the most crucial for accomplishing the vision. Washington faces challenges and needs on other transportation topics, such as safety and environment, but already has plans and policies in place for these matters. The Phase 2 focus areas serve as the pillars of the plan to organize and prioritize the policy recommendations from Phase 1 that move Washington State toward the vision. Each focus area has associated action items, which are displayed in brief below and explained in detail in Chapter 5.

WTP VISION FROM PHASE 1

“By 2035, Washington’s transportation system safely connects people and communities, fostering commerce, operating seamlessly across boundaries, and providing travel options to achieve an environmentally and financially sustainable system.”

Maintain and Preserve Assets: There is inadequate funding to both maintain and expand the transportation system.



Manage Growth and Traffic Congestion: Past practices have led to congestion and inefficiency across the transportation network.



Enhance Multimodal Connections and Choices: Unreliable travel times and poor connections between different travel modes exist throughout the state and local jurisdictions.



Align the Funding Structure with the Multimodal Vision: Transportation funding is frequently divided into silos that cause confusion for users and make investments in the transportation network challenging.



Figure 3: Vision, Focus Areas and Action Items

THE VISION			
By 2035, Washington’s transportation system safely connects people and communities, fostering commerce, operating seamlessly across boundaries, and providing travel options to achieve an environmentally and financially sustainable system.			
FOCUS AREAS			
Maintain And Preserve Assets	Manage Growth and Traffic Congestion	Enhance Multimodal Connections and Choices	Align the Funding Structure with the Multimodal Vision
ACTION ITEMS			
MP1	MG1	EC1	FS1
Maintain, preserve, and operate assets to meet desired performance on multimodal transportation systems before funding expansion projects	Promote transportation-efficient communities by coordinating state agency technical assistance to enhance planning’s link to land use at all levels of government, the private sector, and other organizations	Work to achieve better travel time reliability and door to door multimodal connections for people of all backgrounds and abilities through continued application of practical solutions	Support funding flexibility to reduce barriers to creating an integrated multimodal system that achieves performance objectives
MP2	MG2	EC2	FS2
Support ways to help jurisdictions, transportation asset owners, and transportation service providers prepare for, respond to, and become resilient to emergencies and disasters	Prioritize access for people and goods instead of throughput for vehicles to improve multimodal options, livable communities, and economic vitality for people and businesses	Provide transportation facilities and services to support the needs of all communities, including populations with specialized needs, those in rural areas, and those who are under-represented, under-served, or disproportionately affected	Work to diversify and strengthen transportation revenue sources without compromising existing indebtedness
	MG3	EC3	FS3
	Research, evaluate, adapt to, and deploy technologies and innovations in all modes; share best practices	Adopt metrics for all modes to align with performance objectives	Address the constraints and opportunities for public-private partnership programs

RESILIENCY GIVEN UNCERTAINTY

Another key point for Phase 2 is acknowledging uncertainty in the future of transportation. Recent years have seen incredible advances in transportation technology with many more in development. Climate change and natural disasters are likely to cause more frequent and severe disruptions to our transportation system. Between 2017 and 2040, major disruptions may occur that will affect the demand for travel, the design and construction of infrastructure, and the way that we pay for transportation, among many other things.

Where many long range plans identify a desired future or analyze alternatives to reach a desired goal, Phase 2 acknowledges that the future is uncertain for transportation and embraces this uncertainty as part of the planning process. Borrowing an approach from the business world, Phase 2 undertook a scenario planning effort that fully explores the consequences of uncertainty in technology and climate. This approach ensures that Phase 2 is a resilient plan. Chapter 5 provides more detail on how resiliency is built into the action items.

Figure 4: Six Uncertainties



PERFORMANCE PROGRAM

Currently, the Washington State Legislature requires WSDOT to adopt a performance program to track how state funded transportation investments attains the transportation system policy goals in state law RCW 47.04.280. The goals are Economic Vitality, Preservation, Safety, Mobility, Environment, and Stewardship. WSDOT reports on how these goals have been attained in biennial attainment reports submitted to the state legislature and found at in the [2016 Biennial Transportation Attainment Report](#)¹. The 2016 Biennial Transportation Attainment Report concludes that improvements are being made, yet challenges remain. The challenges include increases in the number and rate of traffic fatalities and serious injuries, increases in traffic congestion and commuter delays, repairs needed for structurally deficient bridges and pavement.

Federal law “Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act” (MAP-21) requires states (WSDOT) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOS) to develop either joint or separate performance programs to track how federal transportation investments meet the national goals in [U.S. Code § 119](#)². The national goals are similar to the state goals in [RCW 47.04.280](#)³.

MAP-21 requires WSDOT to report on federal performance according to timelines set by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The final rules for the performance measures are not adopted at the same time which means that reporting deadlines are staggered. The first reporting deadline is August 2017 for safety performance measures. The state’s goals for safety performance is to reduce the number of serious injury crashes and the traffic fatality rate. [WSDOT’s 2016 Multimodal Safety Report](#)⁴ states that the trends for both crashes and fatality rates has increased rather than decreased from 2014 to 2015. The [Strategic Highway Safety Plan \(Target Zero\)](#)⁵ includes recommendations for how the state can meet its long term safety performance goals.

The next MAP-21 reports are for how well states are meeting their targets for pavement condition on roads in the National Highway System. The first report is due January 1, 2018 for the condition of interstate pavements. The next report is due January 1, 2020 for non-interstate roads in the National Highway System. Failure to meet targets could result in a loss of federal funding. For more information on the federal performance, see [FHWA’s Transportation Performance Management](#) web page⁶.

1 2016 Biennial Transportation Attainment Report. <http://wsdot.wa.gov/publications/fulltext/graynotebook/AR2016.pdf>

2 U.S. Code § 119: <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2007-08/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5412-SL.pdf?cite=2007%20c%20516%20s%203;> 23 U.S. Code § 119

3 RCW 47.04.280: <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2007-08/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/5412-SL.pdf?cite=2007%20c%20516%20s%203;> RCW 47.04.280

4 2016 Multimodal Safety Report: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/55C3AC74-3BE0-488B-A549-884E6907240F/0/MultimodalSafetyReport_2016.pdf

5 Strategic Highway Safety Plan (Target Zero): <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/SHSP.htm>

6 Transportation Performance Management: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/>

POLICY TOPICS COVERED IN OTHER PLANS

Phase 2 does not offer policy recommendations for safety because they have been developed in [Target Zero](#)⁷, the state's federally required Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Target Zero aims to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries to zero by the year 2030 by working with federal, state, and local agencies to implement strategies for Education, Enforcement, Engineering, Emergency Response, and Leadership/Policy. Statewide, the number of traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the first half of 2016 was stable compared to the first half of 2015. Phase 2 will coordinate with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission during implementation of both plans to support complementary efforts.

Because Phase 2 does not include projects, it does not discuss environmental mitigation strategies. WSDOT and partners maintain regular contact with federal, state, and local environmental regulatory agencies to ensure proper permits and regulations are followed during the project development process. Projects that require federal approval or receive federal funding may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)⁸ review process. Projects that require state approvals or permits may be subject to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)⁹ review process. NEPA and SEPA reviews address potential adverse impacts to the natural and built environment. The natural environment includes fish and wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, water quality, and air quality. The built environment includes cultural resources, historical resources, and the transportation system. WSDOT and partners engage the public on specific projects during many stages, including environmental review.

7 Target Zero: <http://targetzero.com/>

8 Federal Highway Administration: <https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/index.asp>

9 Washington State Department of Ecology: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/e-review.html>