

CHAPTER 5

REACHING THE VISION

HOW WILL WE GUIDE OURSELVES MOVING FORWARD?

With the challenges facing Washington’s transportation system, the project team and partners identified four focus areas that consistently rose to the top as crucial to reaching the vision. These topics came up consistently as key findings from Phase 1, the Voice of Washington State survey, and data review and analysis from other plans. This chapter provides information on the focus areas, the action items that support them, and the steps and partners that will accomplish them.

Figure 12: Reaching the Vision



MAINTAIN AND PRESERVE ASSETS

There is inadequate funding to both maintain and expand the transportation system. Jurisdictions in Washington struggle to upkeep their transportation facilities from increasing demand on their networks due to population growth, increased economic activity, and emergency incidents.

MP1: Maintain, preserve, and operate assets to meet desired performance on multimodal transportation systems before funding expansion projects.

Various transportation assets around the state are deteriorating to the point where it will be more cost-effective to replace rather than repair them. For example, the ferry fleet continues to age faster than it is being recapitalized. To successfully reach the vision, communities need an emphasis on maintenance and preservation programs to extend the life of assets and minimize costs over the lifecycle of the system.



Action Steps:

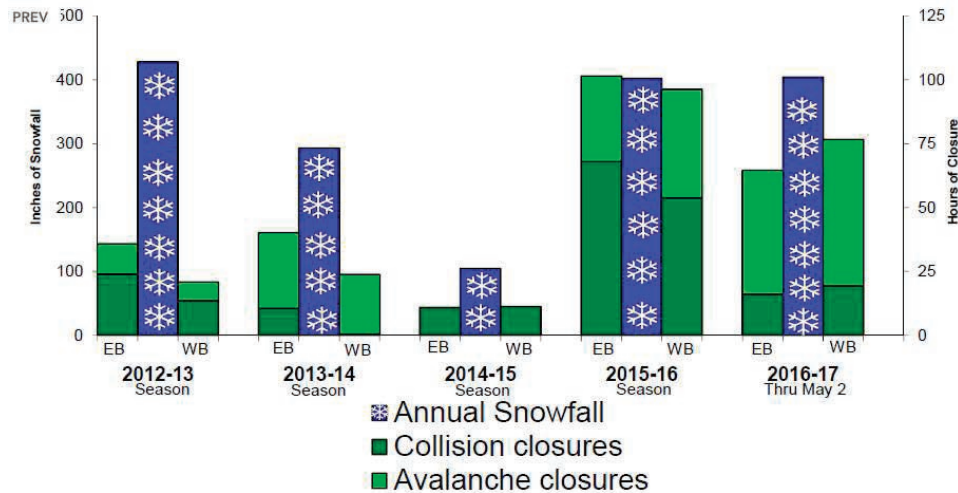
- Identify funding streams from all levels of government that feed into maintenance, preservation, operations, and capacity expansions.
- Work with all parties involved to establish desired performance for multimodal transportation systems.
- Better align funding streams with performance through practical solutions to focus on maintenance, preservation, and operations.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, Association of Washington Cities, Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, County Road Administration Board, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, MPOs, RTPOs, Tribal Transportation Planning Organization, Transportation Improvement Board, Washington Public Ports Association, Washington Roundtable, Washington State Association of Counties, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Transit Association

MP2: Support ways to help jurisdictions, transportation asset owners, and transportation service providers prepare for, respond to, and become resilient to emergencies and disasters.

Emergency and disaster response exercises have revealed gaps to achieving a unified response. All jurisdictions, transportation asset owners, transportation service providers, and emergency responders in Washington must be ready to act in a coordinated manner for safe and timely response to emergencies and disasters.

Figure 13: I-90 Snoqualmie Pass Snowfall and Highway Closures



Action Steps:

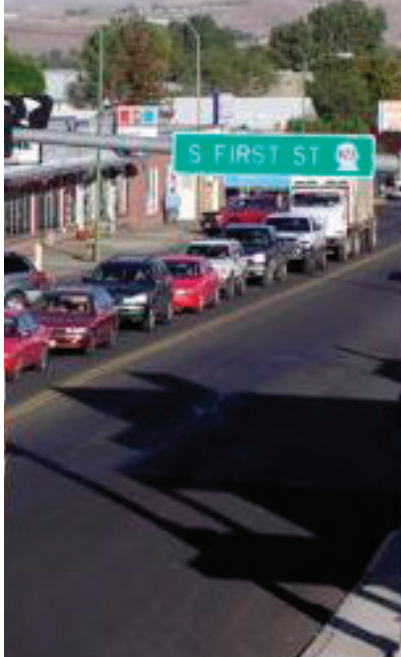
- Review how planning can support efforts to address Resilient Washington recommendations and actions.
- Ensure that resource sharing and interagency emergency coordination memorandums of understanding and agreements between local, regional, and state transportation agencies are complete and up-to-date and that key personnel are aware of their existence and potential uses.
- Assess data about potential transportation needs in the event of an emergency or disaster, identify gaps and opportunities, and recommend improvements.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, County Road Administration Board, equipment rental companies, Federal Emergency Management Administration, Federal Highway Administration, local governments, professional associations, transit agencies, Washington State Department of Commerce, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Governor's Office, Washington State Military Department, Washington State Patrol

MANAGE GROWTH AND TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Past practices have led to congestion and inefficiency across the transportation network, and we are on the cusp of significant technological advances. Many communities around Washington State are running out of space to build more roadway capacity. Nevertheless, keeping people and goods moving is critical to Washington's thriving economy and people.

MG1: 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.



Development patterns in many areas of the state result in greater demand on limited transportation networks. This demand and the traffic congestion it often causes lead to negative outcomes for the health of Washington's citizens, environment, and economy. The state Growth Management Act encourages communities and state agencies to work together to manage growth effectively.

Action Steps:

- Explore ways to further encourage adoption of strategies that promote transportation-efficient communities.
- Implement strategies that support efficient development patterns, designs, and access to land use.
- Share data, policy briefs, training materials, best practices, and other resources.
- WSDOT will participate in Ruckelshaus Center growth management studies.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, Association of Washington Cities, Bicycle organizations, MPOs, pedestrian organizations, RTPOs, transit agencies, Tribal Transportation Planning Organization, Washington Clean Air Agencies, Washington Public Ports Association, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Department of Transportation

MG2: Prioritize access for people and goods instead of throughput for vehicles to improve multimodal options, livable communities, and economic vitality for people and businesses.

Commonly used measurement methods for vehicle throughput ignore the number of passengers and value of goods being transported. The multimodal transportation system can offer access for people and goods in many ways, often more efficiently. Decision makers need better data and tools to support livable communities and economic vitality for people and businesses.

Action Steps:

- Identify methods, data, and tools to measure access for people and goods.
- Evaluate the application of access measures in different transportation planning and decision-making processes.
- Explore connections between established levels of service and ability for condensed growth
- Develop, disseminate, and adopt best practices for measuring access.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, Association of Washington Cities, Bicycle organizations, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Pedestrian organizations, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, Transit Agencies, Tribal Transportation Planning Organization, Washington Clean Air Agencies, Washington Public Ports Association, Washington Roundtable, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Department of Transportation

MG3: Research, evaluate, adapt to, and deploy technologies and innovations in all modes; share best practices.

New transportation technologies and innovations frequently affect travel more quickly than government is able to keep up. Governments and transportation innovators

need to coordinate efforts more closely in order to smoothly incorporate appropriate advances to the multimodal system.



Action Steps:

- Research trends in emerging technologies and innovations.
- Determine related transportation system needs.
- Identify opportunities for technologies and innovations to address these needs.
- Deploy technologies and innovations or execute pilot projects to test them; provide and circulate recommendations to interested parties.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, bicycle organizations, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, other state DOTs, pedestrian organizations, private sector companies, Seattle Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Governor's Office, Washington State Transportation Center (TRAC)

ENHANCE MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS AND CHOICES

Unreliable travel times and poor connections between different travel modes exist throughout the state and local jurisdictions. There are over 400 agencies and jurisdictions responsible for transportation in Washington. Efficient operation and coordination between these various parties are crucial to providing reliable travel opportunities for all users.

EC1: 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.

Travel times and connections for multiple modes can be unreliable for trips both short and long. From freight and logistics companies scheduling deliveries to commuters deciding when to leave for work, predictable movement of people and goods is crucial for a healthy statewide transportation system.

Action Steps:

- Propose metrics to track travel time reliability and multimodal connections for all users.
- Develop case studies and best practices for applying practical solutions.
- Increase our understanding of how practical solutions can improve reliability and multimodal connections.
- Create template for reporting the effect on travel time reliability and multimodal connections.



Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, County Road Administration Board, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, local governments, transit agencies, Washington Public Ports Association, Washington State Department of Transportation

EC2: 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.

Jurisdictions, transportation agencies, and service providers around Washington are at different stages of accommodation for users with special transportation needs. An individual living with good access to transportation has more opportunities than someone reliant on limited options, and these connections become more important as the cost of housing in centrally located areas increases. All users need the ability to access and utilize the multimodal transportation network.

Action Steps:

- Document ongoing needs of populations with special transportation needs, those in rural areas, and those who are under-represented, under-served, or disproportionately affected.
- Determine ongoing needs of transportation service providers and asset owners to support these populations.

- Establish and document measurable strategies to improve access for these populations. For example, examine the jobs/housing balance.
- Track the implementation of strategies to provide facilities and services that support the needs of these populations; share leading practices.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, Federal Transit Administration, Local governments, Non-profit organizations, Transit Agencies, Transportation service providers, Tribal Transportation Planning Organization, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Transit Association

EC3: Adopt metrics for all modes to align with performance objectives.

Metrics for evaluating investments in multimodal transportation are evolving and have not yet been established in Washington.

While community needs and priorities differ, accepted ways of measuring progress toward these priorities can ensure that all jurisdictions are able to achieve their performance objectives.

Action Steps:

- Research evaluation methods, including identification of investments that affect active transportation.
- Establish metrics and evaluation programs.
- Determine steps for adopting metrics into policy documents.
- Recommend, implement, and disseminate evaluation metrics.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, Association of Washington Cities, bicycle organizations, local governments, MPOs, pedestrian organizations, RTPOs, Transportation Improvement Board, Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Department of Transportation

ALIGN THE FUNDING STRUCTURE WITH THE MULTIMODAL VISION

The current funding structure often prevents jurisdictions from working together to achieve performance objectives. For example, a commuter who gets to work different ways on certain days could require a transit pass, a ferry pass, a toll transponder, a parking permit, transportation



service memberships, and more. And behind all of these options are a different operator and funding stream. The inflexibility of these payment systems and the funding mechanisms behind them present challenges for the future.

FS1: Support funding flexibility to reduce barriers to creating an integrated multimodal system that achieves performance objectives.

Transportation funding is frequently divided into silos that cause confusion for users and make investments in the transportation network challenging.

Action Steps:

- Identify common circumstances where restrictions exist that prevent use of available funds.
- Document opportunities and risks to providing flexibility in use of these funds.
- Recommend steps to improve funding flexibility that includes links to travel time reliability, performance, connections, and modal choice.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, bicycle organizations, local governments, MPOs, pedestrian organizations, RTPOs, Washington Public Ports Association, Washington Roundtable, Washington State Association of Counties, Washington State Department of Commerce, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Governor’s Office, Western Federal Lands Highway Division

FS2: Work to diversify and strengthen transportation revenue sources without compromising existing indebtedness.

Gas tax revenues are predicted to decrease in the future due to increased fuel efficiency and vehicles powered by alternative fuels. Bond repayments are legally tied to future gas tax revenues, so jurisdictions statewide will need reliable and sustainable revenue sources that do not compromise existing indebtedness.

Action Steps:

- Explore alternative transportation funding strategies.
- Assess how different funding methods impact users, potential transportation revenues, and existing indebtedness.
- Propose funding options that can strengthen and diversity our transportation funding structure.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, Association of Washington Cities, County Road Administration Board, Federal Highway Administration, MPOs, National Association of Aviation Officials, private sector companies, RTPOs, transit agencies, Washington Roundtable, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Office of Financial Management, Washington State Transportation Commission

FS3: Address the constraints and opportunities for public-private partnership programs.

Public agencies and private sector companies indicate interest in public-private partnerships generally, but few of them currently move forward. With transportation funding continuing to devolve from the federal level to states and local jurisdictions, there may be increased interest in public-private partnerships.

Action Steps:

- Determine common constraints and opportunities for public-private partnerships.
- Develop strategies to overcome or address these constraints to public-private partnerships.
- Identify areas of opportunity where public-private partnerships can address transportation needs.

Potential Partners: Association of Washington Business, Federal Highway Administration, local governments, private sector companies, professional associations, Washington Roundtable, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Office of Financial Management, Washington State Transportation Commission



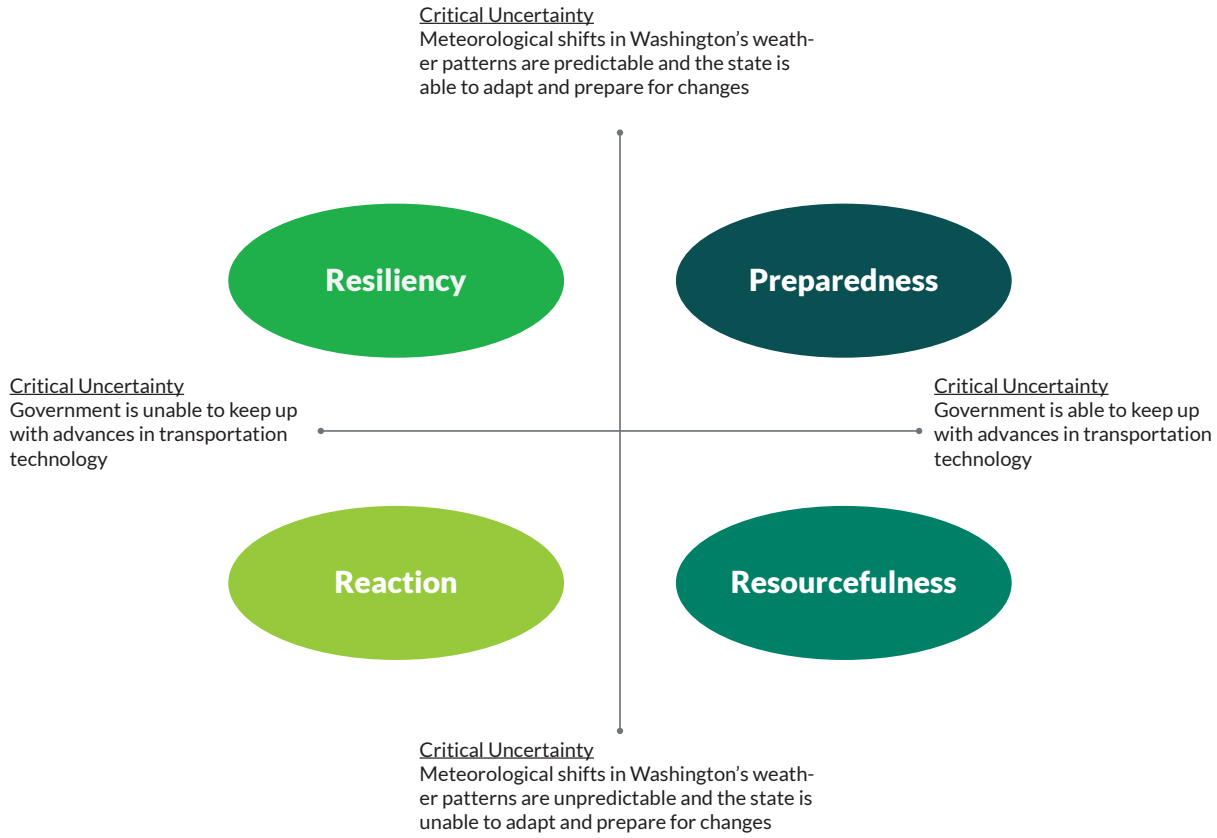
BUILDING A RESILIENT PLAN

Governor's Executive Order 14-04, the Washington Carbon Pollution Reduction and Clean Energy Action, directed WSDOT to utilize scenario planning when updating the Washington Transportation Plan. Scenario planning provides a framework for preparing the state for an uncertain future. The scenario planning process undertaken in Phase 2 illustrates which action items will move Washington toward the vision under all scenarios and which may only be useful in certain cases.

The two critical uncertainties that Phase 2 explore for scenario planning are climate change / natural disasters and technological advances. These uncertainties frame the scenario planning process as shown in Figure 14. Through exploring the potential future of transportation in Washington under each of these scenarios, the project team and partners created four scenarios:

- Resiliency
- Preparedness
- Resourcefulness
- Reaction

Figure 14: Scenario Planning Matrix



FHWA Scenario Planning webpage: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/scenario_and_visualization/scenario_planning/

The scenario planning process and the action items combine to make Phase 2 a resilient plan by ensuring that steps the project team and partners take toward the vision are robust across multiple futures. An action item is robust in a scenario if it is feasible in the circumstances, effective at moving toward the vision, and relevant to the context. While assembling the list of action items, the project team and partners prioritized choices that proved robust under multiple scenarios. Figure 15 illustrates the robustness of each action item across the scenarios. Note that some action items are less robust than others, but still highly important for the success of Phase 2.

Table 5: Robustness Checklist

Focus Areas	Scenarios			
	Resiliency	Preparedness	Resourcefulness	Reaction
MP1	✓	✓	✓	✓
MP2	?	✓	✓	?
MG1	✓	✓	✓	✓
MG2	✓	✓	✓	✓
MG3	x	✓	✓	x
EC1	x	✓	x	x
EC2	✓	✓	✓	✓
EC3	x	✓	✓	x
FS1	✓	✓	✓	x
FS2	x	✓	x	x
FS3	✓	✓	✓	✓

More information on scenario planning is available in Appendix D and on the [FHWA Scenario Planning web page](#).

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