

Chapter 47.06 RCW
STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

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Environmental review of transportation projects: RCW 47.01.290.

RCW 47.06.010 Findings. The legislature recognizes that the ownership and operation of Washington's transportation system is spread among federal, state, and local government agencies, regional transit agencies, port districts, and the private sector. The legislature also recognizes that transportation planning authority is shared on the local, regional, and state levels, and that this planning must be a comprehensive and coordinated effort. While significant authority for transportation planning is vested with local agencies and regional transportation planning organizations under the growth management act, the legislature recognizes that certain transportation issues and facilities cross local and regional boundaries and are vital to the statewide economy and the cross-state mobility of people and goods. Therefore, the state has an appropriate role in developing statewide transportation plans that address state jurisdiction facilities and services as well as transportation facilities and services of state interest. These plans shall serve as a guide for short-term investment needs and provide a long-range vision for transportation system development. [1993 c 446 § 1.]

RCW 47.06.020 Role of department. The specific role of the department in transportation planning must be, consistent with the policy goals described under RCW 47.04.280: (1) Ongoing coordination and development of statewide transportation policies that guide all Washington transportation providers; (2) ongoing development of a statewide multimodal transportation plan that includes both state-owned and state-interest facilities and services; (3) coordinating the state high capacity transportation planning and regional transportation planning programs; (4) conducting special transportation planning studies that impact state transportation facilities or relate to transportation facilities and services of

statewide significance; and (5) assisting the transportation commission in the development of the statewide transportation plan required under RCW 47.01.071(4). Specific requirements for each of these state transportation planning components are described in this chapter. [2007 c 516 § 9; 1993 c 446 § 2.]

Findings—Intent—2007 c 516: See note following RCW 47.01.011.

RCW 47.06.040 Statewide multimodal transportation plan. The department shall develop a statewide multimodal transportation plan under *RCW 47.01.071(3) and in conformance with federal requirements, to ensure the continued mobility of people and goods within regions and across the state in a safe, cost-effective manner. The statewide multimodal transportation plan shall consist of:

(1) A state-owned facilities component, which shall guide state investment for state highways including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and state ferries; and

(2) A state-interest component, which shall define the state interest in aviation, marine ports and navigation, freight rail, intercity passenger rail, bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways, and public transportation, and recommend actions in coordination with appropriate public and private transportation providers to ensure that the state interest in these transportation modes is met.

The plans developed under each component must be consistent with the state transportation policy plan and with each other, reflect public involvement, be consistent with regional transportation planning, high capacity transportation planning, and local comprehensive plans prepared under chapter 36.70A RCW, and include analysis of intermodal connections and choices. A primary emphasis for these plans shall be the relief of congestion, the preservation of existing investments and downtowns, ability to attract or accommodate planned population, and employment growth, the improvement of traveler safety, the efficient movement of freight and goods, and the improvement and integration of all transportation modes to create a seamless intermodal transportation system for people and goods.

In the development of the statewide multimodal transportation plan, the department shall identify and document potential affected environmental resources, including, but not limited to, wetlands, stormwater runoff, flooding, air quality, fish passage, and wildlife habitat. The department shall conduct its environmental identification and documentation in coordination with all relevant environmental regulatory authorities, including, but not limited to, local governments. The department shall give the relevant environmental regulatory authorities an opportunity to review the department's environmental plans. The relevant environmental regulatory authorities shall provide comments on the department's environmental plans in a timely manner. Environmental identification and documentation as provided for in RCW 47.01.300 and this section is not intended to create a private right of action or require an environmental impact statement as provided in chapter 43.21C RCW. [2002 c 189 § 4; 1998 c 199 § 1; 1994 c 258 § 5; 1993 c 446 § 4.]

***Reviser's note:** RCW 47.01.071 was amended by 2005 c 319 § 5, changing subsection (3) to subsection (4).

Captions not law—1994 c 258: See note following RCW 36.70A.420.

RCW 47.06.043 Technical workers—Skill enhancement. The state interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan must include a plan for enhancing the skills of the existing technical transportation workforce. [2003 c 363 § 204.]

Findings—Intent—2003 c 363 §§ 201-206: See note following RCW 49.04.141.

Part headings not law—Severability—2003 c 363: See notes following RCW 47.28.241.

RCW 47.06.045 Freight mobility plan. The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include a freight mobility plan which shall assess the transportation needs to ensure the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of goods within and through the state and to ensure the state's economic vitality. The department shall coordinate with the freight mobility strategic investment board throughout the process of the department's periodic update of the state's freight mobility plan and provide opportunities for the board to review and provide feedback on the plan. [2023 c 167 § 6; 1998 c 175 § 10.]

RCW 47.06.050 State-owned facilities component. The state-owned facilities component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall consist of:

(1) The state highway system plan, which identifies program and financing needs and recommends specific and financially realistic improvements to preserve the structural integrity of the state highway system, ensure acceptable operating conditions, and provide for enhanced access to scenic, recreational, and cultural resources. The state highway system plan shall contain the following elements:

(a) A system preservation element, which shall establish structural preservation objectives for the state highway system including bridges, identify current and future structural deficiencies based upon analysis of current conditions and projected future deterioration, and recommend program funding levels and specific actions necessary to preserve the structural integrity of the state highway system consistent with adopted objectives. Lowest life-cycle cost methodologies must be used in developing a pavement management system. This element shall serve as the basis for the preservation component of the six-year highway program and the two-year biennial budget request to the legislature;

(b) A highway maintenance element, establishing service levels for highway maintenance on state-owned highways. The highway maintenance element must include an estimate of costs for achieving those service levels over twenty years. This element will serve as the basis for the maintenance component of the six-year highway program and the two-year biennial budget request to the legislature;

(c) A capacity and operational improvement element, which shall establish operational objectives, including safety considerations, for moving people and goods on the state highway system, identify current

and future capacity, operational, and safety deficiencies, and recommend program funding levels and specific improvements and strategies necessary to achieve the operational objectives. In developing capacity and operational improvement plans the department shall first assess strategies to enhance the operational efficiency of the existing system before recommending system expansion. Strategies to enhance the operational efficiencies include but are not limited to access management, transportation system management, demand management, and high occupancy vehicle facilities. The capacity and operational improvement element must conform to the state implementation plan for air quality and be consistent with regional transportation plans adopted under chapter 47.80 RCW, and shall serve as the basis for the capacity and operational improvement portions of the six-year highway program and the two-year biennial budget request to the legislature;

(d) A scenic and recreational highways element, which shall identify and recommend designation of scenic and recreational highways, provide for enhanced access to scenic, recreational, and cultural resources associated with designated routes, and recommend a variety of management strategies to protect, preserve, and enhance these resources. The department, affected counties, cities, and towns, regional transportation planning organizations, and other state or federal agencies shall jointly develop this element;

(e) A paths and trails element, which shall identify the needs of nonmotorized transportation modes on the state transportation systems and provide the basis for the investment of state transportation funds in paths and trails, including funding provided under chapter 47.30 RCW.

(2) The state ferry system plan, which shall guide capital and operating investments in the state ferry system. The plan shall establish service objectives for state ferry routes, forecast travel demand for the various markets served in the system, develop strategies for ferry system investment that consider regional and statewide vehicle and passenger needs, support local land use plans, and assure that ferry services are fully integrated with other transportation services. The plan must provide for maintenance of capital assets. The plan must also provide for preservation of capital assets based on lowest life-cycle cost methodologies. The plan shall assess the role of private ferries operating under the authority of the utilities and transportation commission and shall coordinate ferry system capital and operational plans with these private operations. The ferry system plan must be consistent with the regional transportation plans for areas served by the state ferry system, and shall be developed in conjunction with the ferry advisory committees. [2007 c 516 § 10; 2002 c 5 § 413; 1993 c 446 § 5.]

Findings—Intent—2007 c 516: See note following RCW 47.01.011.

Finding—Intent—2002 c 5: "The legislature finds that roads, streets, bridges, and highways in the state represent public assets worth over one hundred billion dollars. These investments require regular maintenance and preservation, or rehabilitation, to provide cost-effective transportation services. Many of these facilities are in poor condition. Given the magnitude of public investment and the importance of safe, reliable roadways to the motoring public, the legislature intends to create stronger accountability to ensure that

cost-effective maintenance and preservation is provided for these transportation facilities." [2002 c 5 § 408.]

Captions not law—Severability—2002 c 5: See notes following RCW 47.04.280.

RCW 47.06.060 Aviation plan. The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include an aviation plan, which shall fulfill the statewide aviation planning requirements of the federal government, coordinate statewide aviation planning, and identify the program needs for public use and state airports. [1993 c 446 § 6.]

RCW 47.06.070 Marine ports and navigation plan. The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include a state marine ports and navigation plan, which shall assess the transportation needs of Washington's marine ports, including navigation, and identify transportation system improvements needed to support the international trade and economic development role of Washington's marine ports. The department shall coordinate with the freight mobility strategic investment board throughout the process of the department's periodic update of the state marine ports and navigation plan and provide opportunities for the board to review and provide feedback on the plan. [2023 c 167 § 7; 1993 c 446 § 7.]

RCW 47.06.080 Freight rail plan. The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include a state freight rail plan, which shall fulfill the statewide freight rail planning requirements of the federal government, identify freight rail mainline issues, identify light-density freight rail lines threatened with abandonment, establish criteria for determining the importance of preserving the service or line, and recommend priorities for the use of state rail assistance and state rail banking program funds, as well as other available sources of funds. The plan shall also identify existing intercity rail rights-of-way that should be preserved for future transportation use. [1993 c 446 § 8.]

RCW 47.06.090 Intercity passenger rail plan. The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include an intercity passenger rail plan, which shall analyze existing intercity passenger rail service and recommend improvements to that service under the state passenger rail service program including depot improvements, potential service extensions, and ways to achieve higher train speeds.

For purposes of maintaining and preserving any state-owned component of the state's passenger rail program, the statewide multimodal transportation plan must identify all such assets and provide a preservation plan based on lowest life-cycle cost methodologies. [2002 c 5 § 414; 1993 c 446 § 9.]

Finding—Intent—2002 c 5: See note following RCW 47.06.050.

Captions not law—Severability—2002 c 5: See notes following RCW 47.04.280.

RCW 47.06.100 Bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways plan. The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include a bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways plan, which shall propose a statewide strategy for addressing bicycle and pedestrian transportation, including the integration of bicycle and pedestrian pathways with other transportation modes; the coordination between local governments, regional agencies, and the state in the provision of such facilities; the role of such facilities in reducing traffic congestion; and an assessment of statewide bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs. This plan shall satisfy the federal requirement for a long-range bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways plan. [1993 c 446 § 10.]

RCW 47.06.110 Public transportation plan. The state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include a state public transportation plan that:

- (1) Articulates the state vision of an interest in public transportation and provides quantifiable objectives, including benefits indicators;
- (2) Identifies the goals for public transit and the roles of federal, state, regional, and local entities in achieving those goals;
- (3) Recommends mechanisms for coordinating state, regional, and local planning for public transportation;
- (4) Recommends mechanisms for coordinating public transportation with other transportation services and modes;
- (5) Recommends criteria, consistent with the goals identified in subsection (2) of this section, for existing federal authorizations administered by the department to transit agencies; and
- (6) Recommends a statewide public transportation facilities and equipment management system as required by federal law.

In developing the state public transportation plan, the department shall involve local jurisdictions, public and private providers of transportation services, nonmotorized interests, and state agencies with an interest in public transportation, including but not limited to the departments of commerce, social and health services, and ecology, the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the office of the governor, and the office of financial management.

The department shall submit to the senate and house transportation committees by December 1st of each year, reports summarizing the plan's progress. [2017 3rd sp.s. c 25 § 41; 2005 c 319 § 124; 1996 c 186 § 512; 1995 c 399 § 120; 1993 c 446 § 11.]

Findings—Intent—Part headings—Effective dates—2005 c 319: See notes following RCW 43.17.020.

Findings—Intent—Part headings not law—Effective date—1996 c 186: See notes following RCW 43.330.904.

Environmental review of transportation projects: RCW 47.01.290.

RCW 47.06.120 High capacity transportation planning and regional transportation planning—Role of department. The department's role in high capacity transportation planning and regional transportation planning is to administer state planning grants for these purposes, represent the interests of the state in these regional planning processes, and coordinate other department planning with these regional efforts, including those under RCW 81.104.060. [1993 c 446 § 12.]

RCW 47.06.130 Special planning studies—Cost-benefit analysis.

(1) The department may carry out special transportation planning studies to resolve specific issues with the development of the state transportation system or other statewide transportation issues.

(2) The department shall conduct multimodal corridor analyses on major congested corridors where needed improvements are likely to cost in excess of one hundred million dollars. Analysis will include the cost-effectiveness of all feasible strategies in addressing congestion or improving mobility within the corridor, and must recommend the most effective strategy or mix of strategies to address identified deficiencies. A long-term view of corridors must be employed to determine whether an existing corridor should be expanded, a city or county road should become a state route, and whether a new corridor is needed to alleviate congestion and enhance mobility based on travel demand. To the extent practicable, full costs of all strategies must be reflected in the analysis. At a minimum, this analysis must include:

(a) The current and projected future demand for total person trips on that corridor;

(b) The impact of making no improvements to that corridor;

(c) The daily cost per added person served for each mode or improvement proposed to meet demand;

(d) The cost per hour of travel time saved per day for each mode or improvement proposed to meet demand; and

(e) How much of the current and anticipated future demand will be met and left unmet for each mode or improvement proposed to meet demand.

The end result of this analysis will be to provide a cost-benefit analysis by which policymakers can determine the most cost-effective improvement or mode, or mix of improvements and modes, for increasing mobility and reducing congestion. [2002 c 5 § 404; 1993 c 446 § 13.]

Effective date—2002 c 5 §§ 401-404: See note following RCW 47.05.010.

Captions not law—Severability—2002 c 5: See notes following RCW 47.04.280.

RCW 47.06.140 Transportation facilities and services of statewide significance—Level of service standards. (1) The legislature declares the following transportation facilities and services to be of statewide significance: Highways of statewide significance as designated by the legislature under chapter 47.05 RCW, the interstate highway system, interregional state principal arterials including ferry connections that serve statewide travel, intercity

passenger rail services, intercity high-speed ground transportation, major passenger intermodal terminals excluding all airport facilities and services, the freight railroad system, the Columbia/Snake navigable river system, marine port facilities and services that are related solely to marine activities affecting international and interstate trade, key freight transportation corridors serving these marine port facilities, and high capacity transportation systems serving regions as defined in RCW 81.104.015. The department, in cooperation with regional transportation planning organizations, counties, cities, transit agencies, public ports, private railroad operators, and private transportation providers, as appropriate, shall plan for improvements to transportation facilities and services of statewide significance in the statewide multimodal transportation plan. Improvements to facilities and services of statewide significance identified in the statewide multimodal transportation plan, or to highways of statewide significance designated by the legislature under chapter 47.05 RCW, are essential state public facilities under RCW 36.70A.200.

(2) The department of transportation, in consultation with local governments, shall set level of service standards for state highways and state ferry routes of statewide significance. Although the department shall consult with local governments when setting level of service standards, the department retains authority to make final decisions regarding level of service standards for state highways and state ferry routes of statewide significance. In establishing level of service standards for state highways and state ferry routes of statewide significance, the department shall consider the necessary balance between providing for the free interjurisdictional movement of people and goods and the needs of local communities using these facilities. When setting the level of service standards under this section for state ferry routes, the department may allow for a standard that is adjustable for seasonality. [2009 c 514 § 3. Prior: 2007 c 516 § 11; 2007 c 512 § 2; 1998 c 171 § 7.]

Findings—Intent—2009 c 514: See note following RCW 36.70A.085.

Findings—Intent—2007 c 516: See note following RCW 47.01.011.

Finding—Intent—2007 c 512: "The legislature finds from the 2006 Washington state ferries financing study that the state has limited information on state ferry users and markets. Accurate user and market information is vital in order to find ways to maximize the ferry systems' current capacity and to make the most efficient use of citizens' tax dollars. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature that Washington state ferries be given the tools necessary to maximize the utilization of existing capacity and to make the most efficient use of existing assets and tax dollars. Furthermore, it is the intent of the legislature that the department of transportation adopt adaptive management practices in its operating and capital programs so as to keep the costs of the Washington state ferries system as low as possible while continuously improving the quality and timeliness of service." [2007 c 512 § 1.]

Highways of statewide significance: RCW 47.05.022.