



How can Cities and Counties include State Transportation Projects in their Planning?

March 2015



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- As WSDOT updates its long-range plan, local governments can refer to their metropolitan and regional transportation plans (MTP and RTP) for information about planned improvements to the state transportation system, whether funded or not
- WSDOT is committed to improving communication and planning coordination with local governments
- To stay current, local governments should work with WSDOT planners to identify any corridor or subarea plans that have been updated since the adoption of metropolitan or regional transportation plans
- WSDOT region planning offices can also help local governments with additional information about projects and data
- Local governments might consider sensitivity testing by running their travel models with and without unfunded state projects

What information is WSDOT providing to local agencies for their comprehensive plan updates?

Between 2015 and 2018, many local governments planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) are updating their long-range comprehensive plans. As part of these updates, local governments often ask WSDOT what its plans are for the state transportation system. City and county planners use WSDOT's information to develop their travel forecasts, needs assessments, and multiyear financing plan.

In previous plan updates, local governments have used the *Highway System Plan* (2007-2026) or previously published WSDOT corridor studies to access information about the state's planned projects. However, because WSDOT is implementing its strategic plan, [Results WSDOT](#), some of these planning documents do not reflect current agency policy. *Results WSDOT* represents a shift in the way we do business and affects how we plan for a multimodal transportation system. It incorporates emphasis on greater community involvement and partnerships, agency efficiency and innovation, and a multimodal approach to transportation system capacity. We are also implementing [Moving Washington Forward: Practical Solutions](#) which consists of [least cost planning](#) and [practical design](#) approaches. These approaches focus on clarifying the purpose and need of potential investments, building flexibility into design standards, and engaging our community partners to identify the most cost effective and efficient multimodal solutions.



US 203 Carnation

What current planning documents can local governments refer to regarding WSDOT's plans for the state transportation system?

As WSDOT updates its long-range plans, local governments can refer to their MTP and RTP for information about planned improvements to the state transportation system, using these plans' financially constrained project lists for travel forecasts, and for constructing a multiyear financing plan if available. Some MTP's and RTP's may contain lists of projects that are not financially constrained. Local governments can use these lists when doing unconstrained modeling and for identifying needs.

What other factors should local governments consider when coordinating local, regional, and state transportation planning?

- To stay current, local governments should work with WSDOT planners to identify corridor or subarea plans that have been updated since the adoption of MTPs or RTPs.
- WSDOT will engage local governments, the community and other stakeholders in the update of future statewide, corridor, and subarea transportation plans. When adopted, local governments may refer to these plans for more information about state investments in transportation. All new plans will be driven by the *Washington Transportation Plan 2035–Phase 2* (see sidebar).
- The legislature commits state funding for transportation in two-year budgets, therefore any projects planned outside the current biennium are not certain to be funded.
- Each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) makes its own decisions regarding what projects to assume complete in long-range plans.
- The fiscally constrained plans of MPOs have the most rigorous guidelines for determining which projects to include in financially constrained lists, but MPOs can still exercise considerable judgment. For example, new or increased tolls, taxes, user fees, or grants may be considered reasonably expected revenue sources if state and local officials support the new revenue assumptions and document the steps needed to secure the funds.
- WSDOT region planners are available to discuss state transportation projects in MTPs or RTPs that may seem uncertain. Local governments might consider sensitivity testing on unfunded state projects in MTPs or RTPs by running their travel models with and without the projects. This will help to inform their decision on whether or not to assume the projects are complete in their models.
- If a state transportation project listed in a MTP or RTP is not funded, and if failure to construct it within the planning period would cause safety or mobility issues that local governments find unacceptable, they may consider identifying the project in their plan as a need instead of assuming the project is complete in the model. The multiyear financing plan should identify sources other than state funds to address the need.

How do I contact MPOs, RTPOs, or WSDOT?

There is an [MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Directory \(pdf 415 kb\)](#) available for MPO and RTPO contacts.

However, please **do not use** the WSDOT contacts in this document, but instead use the directory of [WSDOT GMA Contacts \(pdf 93 kb\)](#) for your comprehensive plan inquires.

For general GMA questions, contact Karena Houser at 360.705.7876 or email her at karena.houser@wsdot.wa.gov.

For an electronic version of this document, please visit: www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/community/GMA.

Timeline for the *Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) 2035–Phase 2*:

- **2015—Update modal plans (aviation, ferries, public transportation, and highway system) and engage local officials, tribes, and the public**
- **2015-2016—Review and comment on MAP-21 rules for performance measures and targets**
- **2016 and perhaps 2017— Conduct internal and external outreach to discuss strategies to implement the modal plans and the WTP 2035**



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