



# Palouse Regional Transportation Plan - 2004

Prepared for:

Palouse  
Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Prepared by:



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# Palouse Regional Transportation Plan

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## Introduction

On January 16, 1991, the Board of Commissioners of Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield Counties, by resolution, formed the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) under the provisions of the 1990 Growth Management Act (SHB 2929) and designated the Palouse Economic Development Council (PEDC) as its lead planning agency. These three counties are included in the South Central Region of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).

The PRTPO was created so that the region could use its resources more efficiently to meet growing transportation needs. This Regional Transportation Plan is a result of the organization evaluating these needs.

In the summer of 2003 boundaries of planning regions in eastern Washington were adjusted, with the Spokane Regional Transportation Planning Council taking on additional responsibilities of coordination with Kootenai County, Idaho because that metropolitan area continues to grow. As a result, Whitman County joined the Palouse RTPO as a voting member and contributor to the regional transportation planning process. As such, the Eastern Region of WSDOT, Port of Whitman and Whitman County cities also participate in the regional process. The four county Palouse RTPO study area is shown in Figure 1.

Also of note is the fact that the Lewiston-Clarkston area of Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington, including the City of Asotin surpassed 50,000 population at the 2000 decennial census. Along with this level of population comes the added opportunity and responsibility to provide a Metropolitan Planning Organization to ensure that transportation plans are coordinated and approve all expenditures of federal funds for transportation improvements.

The PRTPO is advised by a Regional Transportation Policy Board and a Technical Advisory Committee. The PRTPO is made up of duly elected officials that represent each jurisdiction within the four county region. They represent regional jurisdictions, ports districts, the U.S. Forest Service, private business, and the Department of Transportation. The TAC is manned by staff that are technically proficient in planning or engineering that represent each jurisdiction. Current membership of the RTPO Policy Board and Transportation Advisory Committee is included in Appendix A.

The preparation of this RTP involved meetings in March and April in each county with elected representatives with opportunity for public input. Meetings were also held with the county engineers and other staff and input sought from various city representatives and Port districts. Separate meetings were held with both the South Central and Eastern Regions of the Washington State Department of Transportation. A meeting with the full PRTPO Board was also held to provide an update on the key issues heard at earlier meetings and to discuss goals and policies of the PRTPO.

Figure 1. Palouse Region Study Area - map

**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

## Goals and Policies

Goals and policies were originally approved and adopted in 1992 after the formation of the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization. In conjunction with this update, Goals and Policies were revisited and discussed by the PRTPO Board. Goals and Policies to be pursued in the region were reordered and expanded upon as follows:

**GOAL # 1:** Provide multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and are coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans while optimizing the use of resources devoted to transportation improvements to provide a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

**POLICY 1.1:** While developing the Regional Transportation Plan, the PRTPO shall insure that the plan will reflect the link between transportation facilities (roads, buses, trains, aviation, paths, waterways, and trails) and land use.

**POLICY 1.2:** The PRTPO shall pursue improvements to mitigate geometric and other deficiencies in order to provide the safest roadway system possible.

**POLICY 1.3:** Where practical, the PRTPO shall maintain Level of Service "C" on all rural regional roadway facilities and Level of Service "D" on all urban facilities of regional significance.

**POLICY 1.4:** Where possible, the PRTPO shall preserve the ability to move freight by rail, barge and air in order to encourage multiple opportunities for the movement of freight in and through the region to minimize expenditures to maintain the roadway system.

**POLICY 1.5:** The PRTPO shall provide, where practical and meaningful, safe places for bicycle and pedestrian travel in order to encourage opportunities for non-motorized travel.

**POLICY 1.6:** The PRTPO shall maintain and improve, where possible, access to recreational opportunities and other events in order to enhance the quality of life for residents of the region as well as to promote tourism opportunities for visitors to the region.

**POLICY 1.7:** The PRTPO shall place a high priority towards safety projects.

**POLICY 1.8:** The PRTPO shall generally place priority on maintenance and preservation first and new construction second.

**GOAL # 2:** Encourage development in areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

**POLICY:** The PRTPO shall plan and make provisions for public facilities and services, such as transportation, so that they will be available at the same time as new people and jobs arrive within the region.

**GOAL # 3:** Encourage economic development throughout the region that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of the region, especially unemployed and disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capability of the natural resources, public services, and public facilities.

**POLICY:** The Regional Transportation Plan shall promote economic development and manage growth to serve the needs and vision of the region.

**GOAL # 4:** Protect the environment and enhance the planning area's high quality of life, including air and water quality and the availability of water.

**POLICY:** The Regional Transportation Plan shall protect the environment, as best possible, as follows: a) provide for protection of critical areas such as wetlands and natural resource land which have long-term commercial significance, b) reduce air pollution when feasible, c) reduce transportation related sources of water contaminants, d) provide for context sensitive design and practices, and e) support growth within areas that can adequately absorb the growth.

**GOAL # 5:** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the transportation planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

**POLICY:** The PRTPPO shall provide for meaningful citizen involvement in the regional transportation planning process.

## Land Use Assumptions

### Existing Land Uses

Existing and proposed land uses are an integral component of transportation planning. The Growth Management Act requires that the transportation element implemented be consistent with the land use element of the local comprehensive plan.

It can be shown that land use and transportation are inter-related and that land use activities largely determine the travel demand and desire. When different land uses are segmented or separated, length of trips tend to increase. These longer trips are usually served more conveniently by the automobile thus reducing the use of transportation alternatives, such as walking or transit to meet mobility needs.

Sustained economic development and growth within a region is desirable because of the economic benefits that increased employment and a larger tax base can bring. However, while growth can contribute to the health of a region's economy, it can also have negative impacts. Unmanaged, fast rates of growth can have severe impacts on the ability of a community to provide needed infrastructure and services. The costs of growth can include worsening levels of traffic congestion, decline in air quality, degradation of infrastructure and overall degradation of the quality of life.

The need to maintain economic viability and, at the same time, quality of life is a challenge. Some components which contribute to a desirable quality of life include job employment opportunities, a healthy environment with clean air, and recreation opportunities. An efficient, safe transportation system also contributes to the quality of life for residents of a region and can act as an attraction for economic development.

The Palouse Region is heavily dependant on agricultural activity throughout. Many grains and vegetables are produced and shipped throughout the world. Lumber is also harvested and transported from the region.

Very few population centers exist for a region of it's size, and only the City of Clarkston in Asotin County and the City of Pullman in Whitman County have populations that exceed 5,000 and are considered urbanized. In fact, Pullman, home of Washington State University, with a population of approximately 25,000 makes up over one-third of the population of the region.

### Population Trends

From the 1950's to the 1990's, Columbia and Garfield Counties have lost population. Population has declined because of the lack of job opportunities. As farms became more mechanized, less labor was needed and there were no alternative jobs available in the area. Therefore, people moved from the area in order to find work. During the 1990's however, although meager, these two counties showed some population growth.

Asotin and Whitman Counties have gained population consistently over the last several decades. Asotin County has gained population because of job availability in the Lewiston-Clarkston Valley. The Ports of Clarkston, Lewiston, and Wilma have created many job opportunities over the past 40 years. Large firms, such as the Potlach Corporation and Blount Inc., have consistently provided jobs for the area. Although the importance and contribution

of agriculture is evident throughout the region, Whitman County population and economic diversity is influenced by Washington State University in Pullman.

Tables 1 and 2 show population census data as well as future forecast projections. Forecast populations for counties are prepared by OFM, however, for cities the forecasts assume a constant percentage of county population for comparison only. Experience over the past several years has been that rural towns have not increased in population to a large extent.

**Table 1: Historical Population by Jurisdiction**

<i>County Municipality</i>	<i>Year of Incorporation or Formation</i>	<u>Decennial Census Data</u>				<u>Estimate</u>
		<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>
<b>Asotin County</b>	1883	13799	16823	17605	20551	20600
Asotin	1890	637	946	981	1095	1115
Clarkston	1902	6312	6903	6753	7337	7290
<b>Columbia County</b>	1875	4439	4057	4024	4064	4100
Dayton	1881	2596	2565	2468	2655	2715
Starbuck	1905	216	198	170	130	130
<b>Garfield County</b>	1881	2911	2468	2248	2397	2400
Pomeroy	1886	1823	1716	1393	1517	1515
<b>Whitman County</b>	1871	37900	40103	38775	40740	41000
Albion	1910	687	631	632	616	620
Colfax	1873	2664	2780	2761	2844	2825
Colton	1890	279	307	325	386	395
Endicott	1905	333	290	320	355	255
Farmington	1888	140	176	126	153	145
Garfield	1890	610	599	544	641	610
LaCrosse	1917	426	373	336	380	370
Lamont	1910	88	101	93	106	105
Malden	1909	219	209	189	215	210
Oakesdale	1890	447	444	346	420	415
Palouse	1888	948	1005	915	1011	1010
Pullman	1888	20509	23579	23478	24948	25300
Rosalia	1894	569	572	552	648	650
St. John	1904	575	550	499	548	518
Tekoa	1889	808	854	750	754	820
Uniontown	1890	310	286	280	345	335

Source: Washington State Office of Finance and Budget, 2003

**Table 2: Population Forecasts by Jurisdiction**

<i>County Municipality</i>	<u>Census</u>	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Future</u>			<u>Forecasts</u>	
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Asotin County</b>	20551	20600	21466	22582	23569	24650	25671
Asotin	1095	1115	1203	1266	1321	1382	1439
Clarkston	7337	7290	8164	8589	8964	9375	9763
<b>Columbia County</b>	4064	4100	3914	4000	4150	4126	4092
Dayton	2655	2715	2483	2537	2632	2617	2596
Starbuck	130	130	164	167	174	173	171
<b>Garfield County</b>	2397	2400	2436	2510	2596	2668	2734
Pomeroy	1517	1515	1582	1630	1686	1732	1775
<b>Whitman County</b>	40740	41000	40445	41149	42342	43651	44856
Albion	616	620	645	656	675	696	715
Colfax	2844	2825	2854	2904	2988	3081	3166
Colton	386	395	346	352	363	374	384
Endicott	355	255	333	338	348	359	369
Farmington	153	145	145	148	152	157	161
Garfield	641	610	613	623	641	661	679
LaCrosse	380	370	374	381	392	404	415
Lamont	106	105	100	101	104	107	110
Malden	215	210	209	212	218	225	231
Oakesdale	420	415	411	418	430	443	456
Palouse	1011	1010	988	1005	1034	1066	1096
Pullman	24948	25300	24180	24601	25314	26097	26817
Rosalia	648	650	598	608	626	645	663
St. John	548	518	539	548	564	581	597
Tekoa	754	820	806	820	844	870	894
Uniontown	345	335	311	317	326	336	345

Source: Washington State Office of Finance Management

## Housing

The change in the number and occupancy of housing over time compared to population change during that same time period can provide either corroborative or transitional support for identifying trends in population growth.

A significant factor to consider in looking at housing data for the region is the high percentage of housing in unincorporated areas of the four counties. In a rural area, the dispersal of residences over a wider area may increase the need for development of new or improved access facilities.

**Table 3: Housing Units by Structure type for Cities and Counties**

County Municipality	2000				2003			
	Total	One Unit	Two or More Units	MH/TR/ Spec*	Total	One Unit	Two or More Units	MH/TR/ Spec*
<b>Asotin</b>	9,111	6,400	1,448	1,263	9,311	6,500	1,466	1,345
Unincorporated	5,257	3,807	488	962	5,449	3,909	506	1,034
Incorporated	3,854	2,593	960	301	3,862	2,591	960	311
Asotin	440	340	51	49	449	346	51	52
Clarkston	3,414	2,253	909	252	3,413	2,245	909	259
<b>Columbia</b>	2,018	1,581	156	281	2,096	1,604	182	310
Unincorporated	751	565	6	180	794	587	6	201
Incorporated	1,267	1,016	150	101	1,302	1,017	176	109
Dayton	1,181	963	149	69	1,217	965	175	77
Starbuck	86	53	1	32	85	52	1	32
<b>Garfield</b>	1,288	970	65	253	1,296	971	65	260
Unincorporated	548	415	4	129	556	415	4	137
Incorporated	740	555	61	124	740	556	61	123
Pomeroy	740	555	61	124	740	556	61	123
<b>Whitman</b>	16,676	8,814	6,306	1,556	17,176	8,986	6,585	1,605
Unincorporated	2,861	2,467	44	350	2,883	2,473	40	370
Incorporated	13,815	6,347	6,262	1,206	14,293	6,513	6,545	1,235
Albion	315	160	24	131	317	162	24	131
Colfax	1,357	851	429	77	1,377	858	431	88
Colton	152	135	4	13	156	137	4	15
Endicott	169	142	0	27	171	142	0	29
Farmington	64	55	0	9	63	54	0	9
Garfield	288	191	24	73	285	191	24	70
Lacrosse	187	151	7	29	191	151	7	33
Lamont	38	25	2	11	40	25	2	13
Malden	108	86	1	21	109	86	1	22
Oakesdale	194	165	2	27	195	166	2	27
Palouse	471	369	33	69	472	369	33	70
Pullman	9,398	3,220	5,648	530	9,834	3,371	5,931	532
Rosalia	272	204	25	43	280	203	25	52
St. John	279	211	18	50	285	218	16	51
Tekoa	363	273	40	50	361	271	40	50
Uniontown	160	109	5	46	157	109	5	43

\* Mobile Homes Trailers/Specials  
State of Washington, Office of Financial Management, Forecasting Division, June 30, 2003

## Employment

A major factor that is used as a determinate for land use impacts on transportation is employment. Increases in the employment base of an area can be used as a gauge of the growth of the area and emerging needs for access to and from the workplace. Transportation models in urban transportation planning use “home to work” trips as the basic component when measuring the potential loads that transportation systems must bear in the future. While rural areas lack the magnitude of scale required to calibrate such modeling tools, employment data can still be useful to identify and project needed transportation improvements.

The location and concentration of jobs in a region can produce severe constraints on transportation facilities. Further study could be helpful when determining the basis for job location and concentration and provide information on development trends that will change transportation needs in the future.

**Table 4: Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment Rate by County 1990 - 2002**

Asotin County					Garfield County				
Year	labor force	employ-ment	Unemployment		Year	labor force	employ-ment	Unemployment	
			#	rate				#	rate
1990	9375	8902	473	5	1990	1060	1029	31	2.9
1991	9396	8822	574	6.1	1991	1019	993	26	2.6
1992	10008	9470	538	5.4	1992	1058	1022	36	3.4
1993	10337	9792	545	5.3	1993	1105	1036	69	6.2
1994	10732	10349	383	3.6	1994	1033	983	50	4.8
1995	11243	10760	483	4.3	1995	1023	978	45	4.4
1996	11689	11159	530	4.5	1996	1082	1035	47	4.3
1997	12178	11738	440	3.6	1997	1079	1040	39	3.6
1998	12500	11996	504	4	1998	1078	1035	43	4
1999	12341	11927	414	3.4	1999	1087	1046	41	3.8
2000	11722	11182	540	4.6	2000	1144	1096	48	4.2
2001	11454	10912	542	4.7	2001	1139	1097	42	3.7
2002	11832	11115	717	6.1	2002	1183	1132	51	4.3

**Table 4: Civilian Labor Force and Unemployment Rate by County 1990 - 2002  
(continued)**

Columbia County				
Year	labor force	employ-ment	Unemployment	
			#	rate
1991	1340	1162	178	13.3
1992	1424	1217	207	14.5
1993	1537	1303	234	15.2
1994	1513	1344	169	11.2
1995	1481	1292	189	12.8
1996	1421	1198	223	15.7
1997	1462	1297	165	11.3
1998	1504	1332	172	11.4
1999	1512	1338	174	11.5
2000	1508	1340	168	11.1
2001	1373	1219	154	11.2
2002	1338	1191	147	11

Whitman County				
Year	labor force	employ-ment	Unemployment	
			#	rate
1991	17202	16897	305	1.8
1992	17396	16989	407	2.3
1993	17934	17514	420	2.3
1994	17902	17549	353	2
1995	18192	17806	386	2.1
1996	18825	18391	434	2.3
1997	19208	18866	342	1.8
1998	19212	18831	381	2
1999	19070	18724	346	1.8
2000	19222	18799	423	2.2
2001	18506	18048	458	2.5
2002	19177	18709	468	2.4

Source: Washington State Department of Labor

### Anticipated Growth Areas by County

The PRTPO considered existing land use and tried to visualize how these land uses might change over the next twenty years. By considering past growth and population trends, the PRTPO concluded that the following areas should incur up to moderate growth over the next 20 years:

#### ASOTIN COUNTY:

1. Parts of Sections 21 & 28 in T11N of R46E, adjacent to US 12 in the City of Clarkston (residential)
2. Part of Section 30 in T11N of R46E, near Ben Johnson Road and Evans Road west of Clarkston (residential)
3. Parts of Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, & 18 in T10N of R46E, near Peola Road southwest of the City of Clarkston (residential)
4. Parts of Sections 24, 25, & 26 in T11N of R45E west of Evans Road west of the City of Clarkston (industrial)

#### COLUMBIA COUNTY:

1. City of Dayton: Cameron & Cottonwood Streets (industrial & recreation), the Suffield property in North Dayton (residential), and the south 4th street area (residential).

2. The Harlem area west of Dayton - city limits to Patrick's Mobile Home Park (residential).
3. The North Touchet area (residential & recreation).
4. The area adjacent to US 12 north of Dayton (residential).
5. The area in the county that parallels the Dayton city limits between the Patit Creek Road and Mustard Hollow Road (residential).
6. The Patit Creek Road area to the first 90 degree curve (residential & industrial).
7. Parts of Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 23 in T9N of R40E on Eckler Mountain.
8. The area from Lyons Ferry to the mouth of the Tucannon River (recreation & industrial).
9. The Tucannon area from the Powers Road to Starbuck (recreation & industrial).
10. The Tum-a-Lum area in parts of Sections 5, 9 & 16 in T10N of R41E (recreation).
11. The Huntsville area north of US 12 in Section 6 in T9N of R 38E (residential).

GARFIELD COUNTY:

1. The area east of Pomeroy to Pataha (industrial & residential).
2. Parts of Sections 26, 27, 28, 33, 34 & 35 in T10N of R42E (recreation) east of Mountain Road near the Umatilla National Forest.

WHITMAN COUNTY:

1. Pullman area: within ½ to 1 mile of the Pullman City limits (residential)
2. Pullman-Moscow Corridor: along SR 270, from Pullman to the Idaho border (commercial and industrial)
3. Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport area (light industrial)
4. Locust Grove Industrial Park: North of Pullman on Pullman Albion Road (light industrial) - plat pending
5. Port of Wilma Industrial Park: on SR 193, northwest of Clarkston (heavy industrial) - platted
6. Colfax Airport Industrial Park (heavy industrial) - platted

## Regional Transportation System

The four counties of Asotin, Columbia, Garfield and Whitman that comprise the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) recognize the importance of a multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods. This includes roadway networks for passenger cars, buses and trucks. Bicycle and pedestrian systems, transit services and airports serve needs for the movement of passengers as well as some freight. Barging services move significant amounts of freight through the region via the Snake River. Short line railroads meet a significant need and provide linkages to the rest of the state and country to move important agricultural products from the region to outside markets.

### Regionally Significant Roadways

There are many miles of county roadways in the region as well as local roads that are operated and maintained by the cities in the region. Due to the topography of the region there are many roadways that have significant grades. There are also many roadways that have frequent significant horizontal alignment changes to follow valleys. The challenges that arise from such roadways are not insignificant in that they pose maintenance and safety issues. Each of the counties in the region have stewardship of some roadways that have some or all of the following characteristics: gravel surface, narrow lanes, small or non-existent shoulders, no guardrails, seasonal restriction.

Typically roadways are functionally classified within each jurisdiction as to the type of service provided. The table below summarizes the mileage of state highways by functional classification and total miles of county roadways. Roadway mileage within cities is not included.

**Table 5: Summary of Functionally Classified Roadway Mileage by Jurisdiction**

Functional Class	Asotin	Columbia	Garfield	Whitman	TOTAL
County Roads	398.05	504.08	451.61	1,914.15	3,267.89
Collector State Highways	--	15.02	--	145.42	160.44
Minor State Highways	43.19	--	--	2.23	45.42
Principal State Highways	12.19	29.02	43.18	130.70	215.09
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>453.43</b>	<b>548.12</b>	<b>494.79</b>	<b>2,192.50</b>	<b>3,688.84</b>

Source: County Road Administration Board 2003 Annual Report

On these county roads and state highways there are several bridges that must be maintained as well. Table 6 summarizes the number of bridges by ownership. Also significant in the maintaining of the roadway system is the number of structures less than 20 feet in length. The replacement of these structures does not have a designated funding source and can expend a significant portion of county maintenance funds. Each County maintains records differently, but for a sense of the influence this has on maintenance efforts, Whitman County has nearly 100 structures less than 20 feet with approximately four being replaced annually at a cost of over \$300,000.

**Table 6: Bridges by Roadway Type and County**

<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Asotin</b>	<b>Columbia</b>	<b>Garfield</b>	<b>Whitman</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
County Roads	18	63	36	243	360
State Highways	6	17	7	92	122
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>482</b>

Source: County Road Administration Board 2003 Annual Report

Bridges 20 feet or greater in length on Federal Aid and non federal aid routes.

WSDOT Bridge and Structures Office

Roadways in the region were discussed with City, County and WSDOT representatives to define those roadways which serve regional needs. By definition state highways are considered to have regional significance. Within each county roadways were considered that fit the definition of "regional" taken from RCW 47.80.030.

- (i) Crosses member county lines;
- (ii) Is or will be used by a significant number of people who live or work outside the county in which the facility, service, or project is located;
- (iii) Significant impacts are expected to be felt in more than one county;
- (iv) Potentially adverse impacts of the facility, service, program, or project can be better avoided or mitigated through adherence to regional policies;
- (v) Transportation needs addressed by a project have been identified by the regional transportation planning process and the remedy is deemed to have regional significance; and
- (vi) Provides for system continuity;

Since many roads are used to haul grain and other produce to market outside the region this was a major factor in the discussion. Also, there are several recreational opportunities along the Snake River as well as outdoor camping and hiking destinations situated in the Umatilla National Forest in the southern portion of the region to which people within and outside the region travel. The discussion of regional roadways resulted in those facilities shown in Figure 2 and correlated with the list below that includes some city streets, primarily in the Cities of Clarkston and Pullman as well as several county roads. Other transportation systems are also discussed below that are shown in Figure 2.

Although given the agricultural nature of the region and relatively sparse population traffic volumes were not a major factor in determining which roadways serve a regional function, existing average daily traffic volumes are reported in Figure 3. These traffic volumes are derived from available information, primarily the WSDOT Annual Traffic Report and the County roadlogs. Some of the data for the county roadways is quite dated and was factored at a modest rate of 1% per year in rural areas and 2% per year in urban areas. In some rural areas this may be overstating the traffic volume because of the relatively established nature of agricultural activity. In other areas traffic volumes may be understated due to substantial increases in recreational traffic.

Figure 2. Regional Transportation Facilities - map

**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

Figure 3: Existing Average Daily Traffic Volumes - map

**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

The following is a list of designated regionally significant roadways by jurisdiction. Roadway corridors are identified in Figure 2.

ASOTIN COUNTY:

1. Snake River Road: Grande Ronde River to SR 129
2. Peola Road: Garfield County to Evans Road
3. Evans Road: 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to US 12
4. 15<sup>th</sup> Street: Fleshman Way to US 12
5. 13<sup>th</sup> Street: SR 129 to US 12
6. Elm Street: US 12 to 13<sup>th</sup> Street
7. Ben Johnson Road/Valley View Drive/Scenic Way: Evans Road to 15<sup>th</sup> Street
8. Fleshman Way: 15<sup>th</sup> St to Idaho, Southway Bridge crossing of Snake River
9. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Reservoir Road/Appleside Blvd: Evans Road to Scenic Way
10. 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Peaslee Avenue: Appleside Blvd to 13<sup>th</sup> Street
11. Critchfield Road: SR 129 to 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue
12. Mountain Road/Mill Road: Garfield County Line to SR 129
13. Grande Ronde Road: Oregon Border to SR 129
14. US 12: Garfield County to Idaho border
15. SR 129: Oregon border to US 12
16. SR 128: US 12 to SR 193, Red Wolf crossing of Snake River

COLUMBIA COUNTY:

1. North Touchet Road: Dayton to Ski Bluewood (CR #91150)
2. Mt. Eckler Road (CR #91240): North Touchet Road to Umatilla National Forest
3. Patit Creek Road/Hartsock Road: US 12 to Tucannon Road (CR # 92320, #91310)
4. Blind Grade: Tucannon Road to Garfield County (#92400)
5. Turner Road: US 12 to Tucannon Road (#91260)
6. Tucannon Road: US 12 to Camp Wooton State Park (CR # 92330)
7. Eager Road/Thorn Hollow Road/Whetstone Road/Kellogg Hollow Road: US 12 to McKay Alto Road (CR #92160, #92180, #25860, #92250)
8. McKay-Alto Road/Kellogg Hollow Road: Waitsburg area to Starbuck (CR 92090, #92250)
9. US 12: Walla Walla County to Garfield County
10. SR 261: US 12 to Franklin County

GARFIELD COUNTY

1. Lower Deadman Road/North Deadman Creek: SR 127 to Kirby-Mayview Road
2. Gould City-Mayview Road: Ben Day Gulch Road to Mayview
3. Meadow Creek Road/Ben Day Gulch Road: SR 127 to US 12
4. Bell Plain Road: US 12 to Dye Seed
5. Kirby-Mayview Road: US 12 to Lower Granite Dam
6. Tatman Mountain Road/Blind Grade: SR 12 to Columbia County
7. Peola Road/Mountain Road: US 12 to Asotin County Line
8. Sweeny Gulch Road/Ledgerwood Spur Road: Peola Road to Kirby-Mayview Road
9. Peola Road: Mountain Road to Sweeney Gulch Road to Asotin County
10. Iron Springs Road: Peola Road to Mountain Road
11. Port Way: US 12 to Port Industrial Site
12. US 12: Columbia County to Asotin County
13. SR 127: US 12 to Whitman County

## WHITMAN COUNTY

1. Endicott Road: Adams County to SR 26
2. Dry Creek Road: US 195 to SR 27
3. Belmont-Farmington Road: SR 27 to Farmington
4. Palouse Cove Road: SR 272 to Idaho border
5. Airport Road (Whitman County Memorial): SR 26 to US 195
6. Sommer Road/Wilcox Road: SR 26 to Almota Road
7. Almota Road: US 195 to SR 194
8. Upper Union Flat Road/Hamilton Hill Road: SR 194 to Almota Road
9. Bishop Boulevard: SR 27 to SR 270
10. Stadium Way: SR 27 to SR 270
11. Terre View Road: SR 27 to Airport Road
12. Airport Road (Pullman-Moscow Regional): SR 270 to SR 270
13. US 195: Idaho border to Spokane County
14. SR 23: Spokane County to US 195
15. SR 26: Adams County to US 195
16. SR 27: US 195 to Spokane County
17. SR 127: Garfield County to SR 26
18. SR 194: Almota to US 195
19. SR 270: US 195 to Idaho border
20. SR 271: SR 27 to US 195
21. SR 272: US 195 to Idaho border
22. SR 274: SR 27 to Idaho border

## **River Transportation**

The Snake River serves an important function in the Palouse region as it provides the means to transport significant amounts of grain and other commodities that are produced in the region. The construction of four major dams on the Snake River in the 1950's to 1970's, complete with lock facilities, enables ocean going vessels to travel inland as far as Lewiston, Idaho. Three of these dams serve the Palouse Region: Lower Monumental Dam, Little Goose Dam and Lower Granite Dam.

Port facilities located along the Snake River are operated by Port Districts in each county. Specific ports include the following:

- Port of Columbia
- Port of Garfield
- Port of Central Ferry
- Port of Almota
- Port of Wilma
- Port of Clarkston

Grain shipments are a major part of the ports' freight activities, accounting for 80% of the total commodities shipped from the Port of Clarkston and Wilma (Port of Whitman County) and 85% to 90% of the total shipment from the Ports of Garfield and other Port of Whitman County on-water sites (Central Ferry and Almota). The grain shipped from these sites is trucked in from Montana, Oregon, Colorado, the Dakotas, Idaho, the Great Plains states and

from the farms within the PRTPO. Lumber is also an important product shipped through the Port of Clarkston.

Increased tonnage will depend upon a number of factors including: expansion of foreign markets, federal government policies and programs, reservoir drawdowns related to endangered fish species, costs of trucking grain, availability of rail cars, waterway user fees and increased availability of space on ocean-going ships (in Portland, Oregon).

The annual tonnage of commodities shipped through the locks at the Lower Monumental Dam (just to the west of the region in Walla Walla County), Little Goose Dam and Lower Granite Dam is shown in Table 6.

In addition to grain elevators situated near the water ports, the Port Districts also operate a variety of other facilities including inland industrial and commercial sites near Pomeroy, Colfax and Pullman. The Port of Whitman also operates two airports.

**Table 7: Total Commodities Shipped Through Area Locks**

Year	Lower Monumental	Little Goose	Lower Granite	Total Tonnage	Annual Percentage Change (%)
1989	4,378,000	4,046,000	4,328,000	12,752,000	
1990	4,192,000	4,046,000	3,801,000	12,039,000	-5.6
1991	3,554,000	3,409,000	2,093,000	9,056,000	-24.8
1992	2,995,000	2,921,000	1,861,000	7,777,000	-14.1
1993	3,389,000	3,295,000	2,200,000	8,884,000	14.2
1994	3,678,000	3,776,000	2,313,000	9,767,000	9.9
1995	3,924,000	3,776,000	2,414,000	10,114,000	3.6
1996	3,099,000	2,912,000	1,771,000	7,782,000	-23.1
1997	3,675,000	3,180,000	1,952,000	8,807,000	13.2
1998	4,017,000	3,554,000	2,221,000	9,792,000	11.2
1999	3,496,000	2,967,000	1,987,000	8,450,000	-13.7
2000	4,099,000	3,072,000	2,193,000	9,364,000	10.8
2001	3,421,000	2,822,000	1,781,000	8,024,000	-14.3

<http://www.iwr.usace.army.mil/ndc/lpms/lpms.htm>

US Army Corp of Engineers -- Lock Performance Monitoring System

In addition to creating the ability to carry commodities both up and down the Snake River, the dams create large bodies of water which are an added recreational feature that continue

to grow in popularity. The Port of Clarkston operates recreational tour boats and other touring type activities occur regularly on the rivers. River recreational boating is also an important feature on those portions that are not controlled by the dams. Several parks as well as other recreational facilities are situated along or near the Snake River as shown below:

- Boyer Park
- Central Ferry Park
- Chief Timothy Park
- Granite Lake Park
- Lyons Ferry Park
- Palouse Falls State Park
- Wawawai County Park

## Railroads

Although in the past several railroads served the region, only the Blue Mountain Railroad in Columbia County, and the Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad and the Camas Prairie Railroad in Whitman County currently operate. The Washington State Department of Transportation is in the process of purchasing the Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad in order to maintain this as a viable short line in the region. Many other rail lines have been abandoned over time as shown in Figure 1.

The Blue Mountain Railroad (a short line operator) serves Dayton in Columbia County. The track is owned by Union Pacific Railroad which is leased to the Ports of Walla Walla and Columbia which, in turn, subleases it to the Blue Mountain Railroad. The maximum attainable speed on this track is 10 to 15 miles per hour which is typical of most rural railroad tracks in the region. The two major shippers are the Green Giant Company and Dayton Cut Stock.

A major positive attribute of rail in the Palouse Region has been the "Grain Train". This program started in Washington State in 1994 in Walla Walla County to help farmers get grain to market. Local Port Districts worked with the state of Washington and the federal government to purchase grain hopper cars which are now locally owned. The program has expanded to Moses Lake in 2000 and in 2003 a third train operated by the Port of Whitman was purchased making a total of 94 cars that are financially self sustaining. These Grain Trains help to prevent damage to highways by reducing the number of heavy trucks carrying grain to deep water ports for more than 2,500 cooperative members/farmers.

## Airports

Passenger air service for Asotin County is provided primarily through the Lewiston-Nez Perce County Airport. There are 2 runways with length of 6512' and 5000'. Horizon Air provides 6 daily flights arriving from and departing to Pullman/Seattle and Boise. There are approximately 100,000 annual boardings. A grant has been secured to study the possibility of attracting a second passenger air provider at the Lewiston airport, and to off-set start-up costs for such service.

Rogersburg State Airport is a relatively lightly used airstrip situated along the Snake River in the southern portion of Asotin County with a turf airstrip of 1500' in length and 50' wide.

Little Goose State Airport is the only public airport in Columbia County; it has a 3400' bituminous gravel surface. Public air service is provided through the airports in Walla Walla, Lewiston and the Tri-Cities.

Garfield County has no public airports but is served by the Lewiston Nez Perce County Airport.

Five public airports exist in Whitman County.

- Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport - this airport provides passenger air service by Horizon Air with 6 daily arrival and departures to/from Seattle and Lewiston/Boise and approximately 25,000 annual boardings. The runway is 7,730' x 100'. There are over 29,000 annual aircraft operations (take-offs/landings) including 4270 air carrier and air taxi flights.
- Whitman County Memorial Airport near Colfax has approximately 12,000 annual operations on it's 3209' x 60' asphalt runway.
- Rosalia Municipal Airport has approximately 7200 annual operations on it's 2800' x 45' asphalt runway.
- Willard Field has approximately 8300 annual operations on it's 2260' x 40' asphalt runway.
- Lower Granite State Airport has only 300 annual operations on it's 3400' x 50' gravel runway.

There are numerous smaller landing strips in the area, most of which are only capable of handling light aircraft. These smaller airports play an important role in agriculture-related operations such as crop dusting, and access to remote recreational areas. Columbia County has considered studying the feasibility of constructing a general aviation airport.

## **Non-Motorized Modes**

Separate off-road facilities for pedestrian and bicycle use are sparse throughout the region. There are sidewalks provided in many of the communities and efforts to increase the quality and quantity of sidewalks have been made in recent years, particularly with the Surface Transportation Program - Enhancement funds made available by the federal government.

The City of Pullman has a substantial amount of foot traffic and bicycle traffic due to the university population. Population densities are high within Pullman due to the associated services that accompany an urban condition. The City of Pullman has a system of sidewalks and bike paths that serves these needs. Two off-road pathways currently exist that connect cities within the region. One follows SR-270 on the south side from Pullman to the City of Moscow, Idaho which is home to the University of Idaho. A second is a pathway that connects the City of Asotin to Clarkston and a Levy Trail System that has linkages to Lewiston, Idaho.

Given the relatively light traffic volumes on many of the roadways in the region, bicycle travel is considered a relatively safe activity. The City of Palouse assists with an annual bicycle race that is carried out on some local roads, county roads as well as State Highways. The Washington State Department of Transportation also produces a State Bicycle Map that indicates the average daily traffic on all state highways and also shows which state highways have shoulders less than two feet in width. Bicyclists wishing to travel in the area are encouraged to consult this state map.

## Transit

The region is served by Wheatland Express, a private provider that runs daily from the City of Pullman to the Tri-Cities and connects with Greyhound service there. Service is also provided to the City of Moscow, Idaho.

Asotin County has public transit service that is provided by Valley Transit and operates Fixed Route service as well as Demand Response Service in the Lewiston-Clarkston metropolitan area. A single fixed route provides service in Clarkston 6 AM to 6 PM Monday through Friday with daily runs to Asotin as well.

Columbia County is served by a senior citizens bus service which operates Monday - Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 PM on a demand response basis.

Garfield County operates one deviated route between Pomeroy and the City of Lewiston, Idaho Tuesdays and Thursday 9 AM to 4 PM and dial a ride accessible services in and about Pomeroy mid-day for a few hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The City of Pullman has a transit system that owns 16 35' coaches and 4 paratransit buses. During the Washington State University school year there are 12 buses operating during peak hours, 7 during off-peak and 2 that serve during the evening until mid-night and on Saturdays. Two paratransit buses provide on-demand service for the elderly and disabled. During the summertime reduced service is provided by 2 buses on weekdays. Approximately 920,000 annual boardings on the fixed route service were provided in 2003 while 15,814 rides were provided by the paratransit service.

## Level of Service Standards

The level of service (LOS) standards establishes a gauge for evaluating the relative performance of existing systems and planning for future systems to meet current and future needs. Level of service is defined in the Highway Capacity Manual as a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within the traffic stream or on the transit system, and the perception by motorists and/or passengers. A "level of service" generally describes these conditions in terms of such factors as speed and travel times, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety.

Consistent with state level of service standards, the PRTPO establishes Level of Service "C" as the standard for all rural facilities and LOS "D" for all urban facilities included in the regional roadway network.

Most of the roadways in the region operate at acceptable levels of service. Portions of US 12 in the City of Clarkston experience peak hour congestion during short periods of time. Of particular note is the congestion that occurs at the Fleshman Way/SR 129 interchange in Asotin County. With daily traffic volumes of over 25,000 on the Southway Bridge which provides access to the City of Lewiston and the regional airport there, this area is heavily congested. Asotin County is also unique within the region in that it experiences urban congestion in developed portions of the county outside of the City of Clarkston.

In the City of Pullman congestion occurs on SR 27 and SR 270. Stadium Blvd is also burdened with congestion primarily during the evening peak hour. There is also special event related congestion associated with Washington State University athletic events. This type of congestion is most prevalent in Pullman on the State highway system and many local roadways. Congestion can also be evident on US 195 north throughout Whitman County, but especially as far as Colfax where traffic divides to head west on SR 26 as well. SR 27 also experiences congestion before and after football games as it serves as an alternate route to Spokane for US 195.

## Region's Key Issues

The region has its own unique need for the movement of freight and people for economic reasons, medical, recreational, and other social needs. The region has enjoyed a fairly balanced multimodal system which consists of rail, barge, truck, transit and paratransit. The aviation mode is available to the region through the airport facilities in Pullman, Lewiston, the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla.

There are several internal and external factors that affect the ability of the multimodal system to serve the economic and social needs of the region. The economic viability of the Snake River as a transportation system is being challenged and railroads are continuing their abandonments of rail lines. Both of these systems are critical in moving freight through the region.

The trucking industry is much more efficient now than it has been in the last three decades, but the road infrastructure is not adequate in many areas to support the increased axle weights and year-round use of the road. Also, the geometrics of some roadways do not provide the appropriate widths for trucks to safely operate.

The Washington Transportation Plan is in the process of being updated. Data on the transportation system has been collected over the last year to document existing conditions. Workshops with the Transportation Commission are being held to discuss issues with stakeholders, planners, elected officials and other interested parties. Nine Key Statewide Transportation Issues have been identified for discussion:

- **System Preservation**  
*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?
- **System Efficiencies**  
*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?
- **Safety**  
*Fundamental Issue* - How do we make transportation systems and facilities throughout the state safer for their users?
- **Transportation for Everyone**  
*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 Extensions - Bottlenecks and Chokepoints**  
*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?
- **System Extensions - Contributing to a Strong Economy and Good Jobs**  
*Fundamental Issue* - What investments in new facility and system assets can help support the state's economic vitality and strengthen the job picture?

- **System Extensions - Moving Freight**  
*Fundamental Issue* - How are the special needs of freight movement to be incorporated into the state's transportation plan?
- **System Extensions - Building Future Visions**  
*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?
- **Health and the Environment**  
*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?

Outlined below is a discussion of the key transportation issues with respect to providing a multi-modal transportation system to serve the Palouse Region. Many of these issues can be categorized into these statewide issues, but many also overlap into multiple statewide issue areas.

## Maintenance and Preservation

Over the next 20 years maintenance of existing roadways and bridges will be vital to the region. These roadways connect communities throughout the region and to the rest of the state and provide important means to carry agricultural products from fields to highways, rail service as well as inland water ports. As important as rail and barge transport modes are to the region for providing competition between freight hauling modes, without well maintained roadways, access to these other modes would not exist.

Several roadways will need reconstruction work and many bridges will need to be replaced. Replacement of bridges fill an important role in maintaining the viability of roadways that provide important connections to major highways and other routes that connect fields to freight hauling facilities. Funding for maintenance of roadways and bridges will far exceed all other expenditures for transportation facilities in the region in order to ensure that the transportation system is effective.



## Safety

Another important aspect of the transportation system is making improvements in areas where safety deficiencies exist. Because of the topography of the region, many of the roadways have frequent horizontal and vertical alignment changes as they bend around the hills and follow rivers and streams through the valleys. Initial construction of many of these roadways was achieved without many cuts and fills to straighten alignments and improve sight distances. Travel lanes are often narrow and shoulders are sometimes non-existent, very narrow or in disrepair. Several intersections in the region have poor sight distances and adverse approach angles making it difficult for trucks to turn onto main highways safely.



Some guardrails exist and fulfill an important role when steep slopes are adjacent to the roadway. Installation of guardrails can save lives as evidenced in the pictures below. Discussions with regional engineers revealed that installation of guardrails does increase maintenance budgets that are already stretched to meet existing demands.



It should be noted that as the number of recreational visitors to the region that are unfamiliar with the roadways poses an added safety concern. Travelers that are familiar with the roadways are aware of deficiencies and drive accordingly.

## Seasonal Road Closures

An existing chokepoint in the regions transportation system is the yearly closure of much of the regions County road system to loaded truck traffic. Seasonal "load limits" or "closures" are commonly applied to the system around the second or third week in January and last until the end of March or longer. The load limits effectively shut down the truck traffic to any load greater than an empty semi-truck or tractor-trailer arrangement. Without the application of load limits on the roads, they would be irreparably damaged during the first winter.

Road closures represent a major impediment to the transport of agricultural products to the river barge system or to destinations out of the area. Although much of the area has widespread "home storage" or local grain storage facilities, this represents a major negative impact on the local economy. The problem also extends beyond the agricultural market, to local industries. Supplies and shipment of finished goods is limited by the inadequate roadway system.

One of the major goals of the transportation planners and engineers in the region is to secure increased funding for reconstruction of a number of specific routes of regional significance to be "all-weather" travel by loaded trucks. If this goal can be realized, the local shipping of grains and other products would positively impact the local economy.

## Pullman Bypass

For many years the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has periodically investigated the issues and needs of the Pullman and Colfax areas in Whitman County. The most recent detailed Advanced Planning Study for Pullman and Colfax was documented in 1994. Although several by-pass alternatives for the City of Colfax were conceived and examined, after evaluating the costs, environmental documentation, forecast traffic data and public input, it was recommended to proceed with operational improvements and design modifications for SR 195 through the city. Many of these improvements have been carried out.

Four Pullman by-pass alternatives were evaluated in the 1994 Advance Planning Study as well, two north of Pullman (one of which was identified earlier in the late 1960's and early 1970's for which the right-of way was purchased) and two south of Pullman. The impetus for many of these studies has been the growth in Pullman, the important role that Pullman plays in the region and the congestion and high traffic volumes evident on SR 27, SR 270 and US 195 in and around the City.

The 1994 study indicated that signs of congestion and capacity deficiencies were occurring, but that an immediate need for construction of a by-pass was not evident. The North Alternative B as a four-lane divided highway was expressed as the preferred alignment. It was recognized that funding sources other than WSDOT would need to be secured. The City of Pullman, Port of Whitman and Washington State University had, at the time, expressed an interest in taking the lead to constructing portions that would include a two-lane facility connecting SR 27 and SR 270 on the existing state owned right-of-way. Although more detailed environmental studies were needed, it was felt that engineering work on this phased approach could be performed with plans to accommodate future expansion by WSDOT to a four-lane facility.

The Washington State Highway System Plan (2003 - 2022) identifies the Pullman By-Pass (proposed SR 276) as the investment alternative for mobility strategies to address congestion issues on the state highways in Pullman. The estimated cost as reported in the WSHSP ranges from \$79.04 million to 106.94 million.

The City of Pullman has included in its 6 Year Transportation Improvement Program \$25,000 for the study of a south by-pass for the City.

### **Fleshman Way/SR 129 Interchange**

The Fleshman Way/SR129 Interchange project has been on Asotin County's 6-year TIP for a number of years and continues to be unfunded. This regionally significant project is a key connector between states, provides freight access and also provides direct access to the Nez Perce County Regional Airport. The interchange experiences about 25,000 vehicles per day. Some of the major turning movements on the interchange are cross-turning and currently operate below LOS D, and there are a significant number of yearly accidents because of this. The project would involve complete reconfiguration of the interchange.

### **US 12 in Clarkston**

Traffic volumes in Clarkston have grown over the years. All of US 12 within the City of Clarkston carries just a single lane in each direction, except the portion east of SR 129 as it approaches the Snake River. The Washington State Highway System Plan identifies the stretch of US 12 from SR 128 (the Red Wolf Crossing of the Snake River) to Bridge Street as needing further study to recommend mobility strategies for future improvement. The cost to widen to 4 lanes with a two-way center turn lane is estimated at \$14.21 million to 19.23 million.

### **Railroads**

In the 1950s Washington had approximately 5,000 miles of railroad; today that number is down to around 3,100. Over time, the larger carriers have pared their systems of lines with low traffic densities to reduce their costs. Once spun off by the larger railroads, the lines are run by public or private entities.

More than half of the state's rail system has traffic with densities less than five million gross ton-miles per mile. These lines are known as short-line or branch railroads. Short-line railroads often find themselves in a vicious cycle as described in the [Washington State Freight Rail Plan](#), pp. 2-15. They often do not generate enough revenue for appropriate track maintenance. Accumulated deferral of these expenditures leads to a gradual deterioration of the track, ties, and base. These lead, in turn, to reduced train speeds and inefficient operations. As costs of operation escalate, service deteriorates, shippers convert to other modes, deferred maintenance costs rise to a staggering total, and the line ends up in trouble, possibly abandoned.

These lines are important because they handle local traffic that, if not moved by the railroads, would either move by truck over state and local roads, or would cease to move.

When the latter happens, it can cause businesses to close or relocate. These lines also provide a relatively inexpensive option for moving goods. In addition, when lines are lost, they often have a negative impact on an area's ability to attract new businesses and industry. (Source: WSDOT Rail website.)

There are many benefits to providing rail service to agricultural producing areas of the State of Washington, especially the Palouse. Many of these are documented in the Grain Train experience, included in Appendix B, and summarized below:

- shipping by rail is cheaper than by truck
- rail reduces the number of trucks on the roadway system which reduces congestion and fuel consumption and improves air quality
- transporting heavy products by rail reduces highway repair and maintenance costs
- short line railroads move local traffic that might cease to move or cause businesses to relocate

A detailed study of *Eastern Washington Grain-Hauling Short Line Railroads* was performed for WSDOT in 2003 to analyze the economic viability of the PCC and to value the public benefits of preserving the PCC system. The study determined that, in private ownership, the system is not self sustaining and is highly susceptible to abandonment. Among other things, the study found that preserving this rail system keeps more than 29,000 heavy truckloads per year off state and county roadways, and that over the long-term the annualized net public benefits of avoided highway truck damage are \$4.16 million. Other benefits of the rail line include \$6.4 million of wages and benefits in affected rail dependent industries that could be lost and \$11.1 million WSDOT supports the placing of this rail line in public ownership. The Executive Summary of the Study is included in Appendix C.

As part of the State of Washington's interest in maintaining and improving economic viability, the State Legislature appropriated \$7.35 million in funds for WSDOT to acquire and rehabilitate the Palouse and Coulee City Railroad (PCC). These nearly 400 miles of rail line provide most of the local rail service for rural eastern Washington. A detailed cost-benefit analysis is required before actual purchase can take place in order to determine if the railroad can sustain itself without operating subsidies.

Maintaining the viability of short-line railroads and minimizing the future abandonment of additional railroads is a very important issue to the Palouse region. Rail transport is more economical than trucking and also provides alternative shipping methods to barging which keeps the transportation system healthy by providing shippers competitive alternatives for the movement of freight. If barging on the Snake River is reduced for any reason, rail transport will become increasingly important to the region.

## **Vitality and Importance of the Snake River**

A major factor that may impact the multimodal system is the Endangered Species Act that may require the breaching of the four dams or a drawdown of river levels on the lower Snake River thereby eliminating barge service to the RTPO region. Because of said Act, the Sockeye and Chinook Salmon have been declared endangered species in the Snake/Columbia River

system. The above prospective will cause significantly more truck traffic moving on roads not adequate for such weights and volumes, and mixing with automobiles and busses to an extent that has not been experienced before. Not insignificant is the contribution that these dams make to the production of electricity for the western United States that would be impacted by the breaching of dams.

Many studies have been performed in recent years by WSDOT, the Eastern Washington Intermodal Transportation Study (EWITS) at Washington State University, the Army Corp of Engineers and others regarding a drawdown of the Snake River. Studies have included issues such as the following:

- Potential impacts to Sockeye and Chinook Salmon migrations
- Other methods to improve salmon passage at the dams
- Impacts of a river drawdown on the transportation of grains
- Impacts of a river drawdown on energy consumption and Environmental Emissions
- Impacts on roadway networks due to greater trucking needs.

Regardless of the ultimate outcome of the Endangered Species Act on the Snake River, transport on the river has been affected by silting. The flow of silt and debris down the free flowing portions of Snake and Clearwater Rivers above Lewiston, Idaho over several years has begun leave it's mark. Much of this silt has built up behind the Lower Granite Dam and has reduced the depth of the river, thus reducing the depth at which barges can travel and limiting the amount of cargo that can be taken on board. Many barges are leaving the Ports of Lewiston, Clarkston and Wilma at half capacity. It is important to the future of barge transport on the Snake River that dredging be considered in order to restore the river depth to original levels and improve the efficiency of barge transport.

Even with the importance of the grain train discussed above, the importance of the Snake River to the region and the ability to barge significant amounts of grain from the region to national and international markets is summarized in the following facts and comparisons outlined below.

- 1 barge = 37.5 hopper rail cars
- 1 barge = 150 25-ton semi-trucks
- transport by barge uses less fuel/ton-mile (514) than either rail (202) or truck (59)
- If trucks were used to ship the 156,900 tons of wheat that the first two grain trains have carried to Columbia River and Puget Sound ports, it would have added 4,482 heavy truck loads to Washington State highways.
- By comparison, if barge traffic were halted it would take an additional 120,000 rail cars, or more than 700,000 semi-trucks annually to carry the cargo now being moved by barge on the Columbia-Snake river system

Policy makers and others in the region need to continue to stress the importance of the Snake River system to the economic viability of the region and the multimodal transportation system.

## **Stormwater**

Recent regulatory changes and philosophies, including State Stormwater Management Guidance and EPA Phase II requirements have placed a much higher emphasis on how counties manage stormwater associated with transportation system elements. This increased effort has applied to both regular maintenance and construction activities. With the changes have come increased costs in implementing our maintenance and construction programs, however little or no additional transportation funding has been made available to address the situation. This in turn has resulted in further dilution of the existing funding. It is essential that additional funding be identified that is directly tied to the transportation system to provide for planning and executing stormwater management activities.

## **Other**

Certainly there are other transportation issues within the Palouse region. Many studies and other documents were consulted during the preparation of this Regional Transportation Plan. A listing of many of these documents is included in Appendix D. A summary of other issues is included below

**US-12 Route Development Plan** - A Route Development Plan for US 12 from Walla Walla to the western portion of Clarkston was completed October of 2002 by WSDOT. A thorough review of existing conditions was presented as well as an analysis of future operating conditions accounting for terrain, no-passing restrictions and other important roadway features. A listing of improvements was identified that includes where shoulders could be widened, a safety rest area, safety improvements and other economic initiatives.

### **SR 129 Route Development Plan**

A Route Development Plan for SR 129 from the Oregon State line to the southern portion of Clarkston was completed April of 2002. A thorough review of existing conditions was presented as well as an analysis of future operating conditions accounting for terrain, no-passing restrictions and other important roadway features. A listing of improvements was identified that includes safety improvements and other economic initiatives.

**Roadways Traversing Snake River Dams** - As a result of the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, the roadways traversing the Snake River Dams have been closed. Since many of the Port facilities are situated near these dams, this effects travel routes to the ports.

**Regional Airports** - As discussed earlier, there are two regional airports that serve the eastern portion of the region that are separated by less than an hours drive: Pullman - Moscow Regional Airport and the Lewiston Nez Perce County airport. There have been discussions in the past that have centered on the possibility of combining the two so as to provide better service at improved prices for travelers. Clearly many issues surround this discussion.

**Columbia County Airport** - Past discussions identified the need to study a new general aviation airport potentially located at Rock Hill.

**Wawawai Road** - The Port of Whitman has identified the need to pursue the extension of Wawawai Road to Lower Granite Dam. The roadway currently follows the Snake River heading west from the Port of Wilma for several miles and then turns inland to connect with US 195 near Pullman. A stretch of approximately 2 - 3 miles along the river between where Wawawai Road turns inland and where Granite Road extends southeastward from the Port of Almota and SR 194 is not served by a roadway. A railroad line follows the river and the slopes are steep; considerable rock work will be required to construct this roadway linkage.

If the silting problem worsens and barges transporting grain are unable to proceed to the Ports of Wilma, Clarkston and Lewiston, this roadway could serve an important linkage to the Port of Almota where barges could be loaded downstream of the Lower Granite Dam.

**Small Structures** - Within the discussion of maintenance and preservation of the transportation system is the issue of small structures, bridges and culverts less than 20 feet in length. There is currently no designated funding source for these features. For Whitman County especially, who maintains 92 of these structures, the burden significantly effects the ability to maintain a chip seal program on county roads.

## Current and Future Deficiencies

Based on the previous discussion of regional issues, discussions with elected officials, discussions with staff from the various member jurisdictions, review of past studies and analysis to meet the Level of Service Standards for roadways on regional facilities, a listing of deficiencies and future needs has been identified.

It should be noted that efforts to identify project needs within the region, at least for the cities and counties, has been focused on the 6-year program required by Washington State. County engineers recognize the need to project needs over a 20 year horizon for future planning efforts.

WSDOT has identified 20 year needs through the Washington State Highway System Plan, however funding deficiencies limits the construction program significantly and the discussion centers around 10-year needs, 6-year programs and 2-year budgets.

Included in Table 8 are the needs and deficiencies of the designated regional transportation systems and cost estimates to address these deficiencies. The source of the project for identification purposes is also shown in Table 8. Those projects shown as being included in the STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program) are projects that have already have an identified funding source, have been budgeted will be in the implementation stages of development in the next few years.

Figure 4 identifies the deficiencies on the map of regional facilities, with those projects already programmed shown separately from those that are awaiting to identify a secured funding source.

**Table 8: Current and Future Roadway and Deficiencies and Needs**  
**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**



Figure 4. Roadway Needs and Deficiencies - map

**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

## Financial Plan

### Analysis of Funding Capability

The responsibility for determining the application of funding for transportation projects (programming) in rural areas is significantly different from urban areas. In urban areas over population 50,000, a federally mandated regional Metropolitan Planning Organization performs the programming function. In rural areas there is no such federal mandate and individual state and local jurisdictions are required to program for their own specific projects.

Each jurisdiction in the region funds its projects through a variety of sources. Often the source of funding is determined by the type of the project. The various forms of funding mechanisms are described in Appendix E.

While some funding sources are directly allocated each year and thereby generally predictable, most sources, particularly those administered to WSDOT for state highways have no direct allocation and must be "earned" or justified project-by-project on a state-wide or district-wide basis. These funds are available either by direct competition or through a prioritization method established by the administering jurisdiction. Consequently, development of funding capability forecasts for regional projects will be best focused on each participating jurisdiction's six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The programming document required by WSDOT and the Federal Highway Administration shows how and where state and federal funds are to be spent.

Table 9 was prepared that shows historic revenue sources for transportation expenditure levels for various project types for both local governments as well as WSDOT. Detailed information is included in Appendix F.

With respect to State Highways, as noted above, WSDOT does not forecast funding by Region, nor by county, but funds are distributed at the state level each biennium. The data included in Table 10 shows the past 10 years of expenditures as can be best estimated by WSDOT offices, however some funding categories include expenditures for the entire WSDOT region.

The top priority of the region is to maintain existing roadways, performing routine resurfacing and patching, snow removal, etc. as necessary. A relatively small amount of funding will be spent on major capital improvements such as roadway reconstruction or additions to the roadway network through widening of existing roads or new facilities.

For future updates of this plan, once 20 year needs have been identified for county roads, a more specific analysis of potential funding sources for the various projects should be performed.

There are currently several of the projects shown that indeed are already included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and are funded and expected to be constructed in the next few years. This will help the region to implement a large portion of the long range plan in the early years. The STIP is included in Appendix G.

## **Application of Future Funding to Needs**

There are clear distinctions in both the type of project necessary and the extent of work applied to each project. Typically, the vast majority of all projects are limited to maintenance for both state and county roads. Those projects normally consist of patching, oiling or chip seal coating. Periodically for state routes, and more rarely on county roads, cold or hot mix resurfacing projects are done.

Further complicating the funding issue are the varying sets of construction standards and regulations that apply to federal, state and local projects. As an example, while federal funding may be more readily available for state and county projects, the extensive list of federal project standards and conditions tend to drive project costs significantly higher than state or locally funded work. As a result, the cost of any given project, regardless of priority, may range widely from as little as a few thousand dollars per mile to over one half million dollars per mile.

Another consideration in funding a given project is the determination of when the project is required. A project with high regional priority may not receive the same ranking from the responsible jurisdiction, therefore, a regional project with a high regional priority may not be constructed as early as a regional project with a lower regional priority. These conditions again point to the programming jurisdiction as the key factor in determining the specifics of how and when funding may be sought for from various sources for any given project. The process for obtaining state funding is highly competitive.

## **Identification of Alternative Solutions**

It is recognized that some regionally prioritized needs will be difficult to program. In these cases consideration of alternative sources of funding or another means of meeting those needs must be found. Each unfunded project, by priority, should be carefully evaluated to identify any specific features that could be funded under special grants or programs and those sources should be pursued by both the responsible jurisdiction and the RTPO to obtain such available funding. These include the Enhancement, Statewide and Safety elements of the Surface Transportation Program of the federal Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA 21).

A further alternative is to identify common project needs by type and work to promote the creation of a program element to address the specific need. An example of this alternative can be seen in the most recent development of the Rural Economic Diversification Support Program promoted by the RTPO, member counties and WSDOT to address the severe economic hardships brought on rural communities when essential freight routes are closed due to seasonal conditions.

All alternatives should be considered and the most viable should be vigorously pursued to the successful resolution of the need. Some alternatives may not appear to meet the apparent need but should be evaluated until its application is shown to be inapplicable.

**Table 9. Potential Funding by County and Source**

<b>Funding Type</b>	Asotin County	Asotin Cities	Columbia County	Columbia Cities
Property Tax	16,850,629	6,554,342	6,570,510	126,686
State Motor Fuel Tax	38,786,007	4,357,725	37,861,009	1,474,726
Federal Revenues	11,475,224		13,753,758	159,516
<b>Base Total</b>	67,111,860	10,912,067	58,185,277	1,760,928
General Fund Appropriations	1,941,028	9,264,150	3,169,542	247,406
Other Local Receipts	1,568,030	1,068,958	1,944,316	3,224,860
Other State Funds	6,328,888	1,164,624	8,576,324	1,914,514
<b>Total Estimate</b>	76,949,806	22,409,799	71,875,459	7,147,708

<b>Funding Type</b>	Garfield County	Garfield Cities	Whitman County	Whitman Cities
Property Tax	4,846,066	0	40,432,378	12,660,726
State Motor Fuel Tax	33,659,257	785,216	109,504,048	17,977,433
Federal Revenues	2,631,678	0	23,277,592	16,049,675
<b>Base Total</b>	41,137,000	785,216	173,214,018	46,687,835
General Fund Appropriations	1,629,626	2,622,360	513,948	6,179,272
Other Local Receipts	579,186	207,494	3,621,354	17,967,361
Other State Funds	8,061,812	835,374	15,496,374	16,206,457
<b>Total Estimate</b>	51,417,624	4,450,444	192,845,694	87,040,924

- Forecasts of Revenue are based on historical revenues spent on transportation expenditures during the period 1993 - 2003. Data provided by WSDOT.
- See Appendix F for more detailed information

**Table 10. WSDOT Highway Capital Program Expenditures**

**SOUTH CENTRAL REGION -- Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield Counties**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>1993-1995</i>	<i>1995-1997</i>	<i>1997-1999</i>	<i>1999-2001</i>	<i>2001-2003</i>	<i>Total</i>
A1	\$1,792,019					\$1,792,019
H1	\$712,765					\$712,765
I2		\$295,316	\$1,500,135	\$1,308,023	\$130,282	\$3,233,755
I3		\$190				\$190
P1		\$1,861,520	\$2,961,934	\$3,742,360	\$9,230,297	\$17,796,111
P2		\$151,022	\$924,812	\$1,305,093	\$2,293,594	\$4,674,522
P3		\$774,703	\$492,170	\$126,096	\$536,872	\$1,929,841
Z2		\$11,885,422	\$4,504,183	\$1,828,157	\$4,419,421	\$22,637,182
<i>Grand Total</i>	\$2,504,783	\$14,968,174	\$10,383,233	\$8,309,729	\$16,610,465	\$52,776,384

\* Please note that the above expenditures may include regionwide program costs that may not have been spent in the Palouse RTPO area. This data should only be used to develop general proportions of activity expenditures.

**EASTERN REGION -- Whitman County**

<i>Activity</i>	<i>1993-1995</i>	<i>1995-1997</i>	<i>1997-1999</i>	<i>1999-2001</i>	<i>2001-2003</i>	<i>Total</i>
A1	\$2,079,717					\$2,079,717
C1	\$4,213,376					\$4,213,376
H1	\$137,581					\$137,581
I1		\$4,307,726	\$1,868,926	\$391,174	\$700,045	\$7,267,871
I2		\$99,439	\$943,113	\$13,657		\$1,056,209
I3				\$934,190	\$377,892	\$1,312,082
P1		\$6,291,045	\$12,595,345	\$13,153,373	\$5,053,555	\$37,093,318
P2		\$916,995	\$39,376	\$834,497	\$1,062,588	\$2,853,456
P3		\$1,233,161	\$96,442	\$234,869	\$53,502	\$1,617,974
Z2	\$2,979,445	\$4,654,065	\$3,079,123	\$4,448,913	\$4,348,278	\$19,509,824
<i>Grand Total</i>	\$9,410,119	\$17,502,431	\$18,622,325	\$20,010,673	\$11,595,860	\$77,141,408

\* WSDOT does not forecast funding availability by Region, nor by County but are distributed at the state level each biennium. The above two tables show the most accurate data available with respect to historical expenditures

Old Program Activity

A1 - Roadway Preservation  
C1 - Roadway Improvement  
H1 - Bridge Program

Current Program Activity

I1 - Mobility Improvements  
I2 - Safety Improvements  
I3 - Economic Initiatives  
P1 - Roadway Preservation  
P2 - Structures Preservation  
P3 - Other Facilities  
Z2 - Local Programs Construction - Off State System

## Regional Transportation Plan Implementation

In the Palouse region each jurisdiction is responsible for identifying, planning, programming and constructing any transportation projects within the scope of their responsibility. The RTPO has no specific authority to fund or direct transportation improvements. The involvement of each jurisdiction in the RTPO (with the exception of WSDOT) is voluntary and consequently the results of the regional planning process necessarily takes the form of recommendations for consideration in each jurisdiction's overall program responsibilities.

Consequently, this plan is a tool to be used by those participating jurisdictions to assist them in programming efforts. For cities and counties these recommendations should be viewed as positive options that recognize both their own needs as well as their neighbors and the region as a whole. The same perspective is true for WSDOT with the additional consideration that state legislation requires the incorporation of these recommendations in WSDOT plans for transportation improvements on state routes within the region.

The regional plan shall only be implemented through mutual agreement among all members of the RTPO. Implementation of the Regional Plan following its adoption will consist of the following elements:

- A. Consideration of regionally significant projects in city, county and WSDOT TIPs. This action should include scheduling and programming as appropriate within each jurisdiction.
- B. Action by the RTPO, its lead agency and member jurisdictions to seek and obtain alternative funding for regionally significant projects not fundable under normal programs and not programmed in the TIPs.
- C. Review of the inventory and formula data to verify accuracy and improve forecasted needs. Verification shall be an ongoing cooperative process involving appropriate members of the RTPO to insure consistency with State and local guidelines.
- D. Continuation of a Public Involvement process that includes open opportunity for review and comment on the scope and actions of the plan and allows for timely revision of relevant aspects of the document in conformance with State guidelines and the desires of member jurisdictions.
- E. Amendments to the Regional Transportation Plan may be requested, at any time, by the public, RTPO Technical Advisory Committee or the Regional Transportation Governing/Policy Board. The RTPO will consider amendments to the plan concurrently with its biennial review of the plan for concurrency and annual review of the TIPs of the participating jurisdictions.
- F. The amendment process for the plan shall include timely (30 day) public notification to the regions newspapers in coordination with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act requirements for non-project actions.

## **Performance Monitoring**

Performance monitoring should focus on the accuracy of the regional data and priorities compared to the jurisdictional application and the ability of the participants to access alternative funding sources to complete priority projects. It is projected that those actions incorporated into the ongoing regional planning process will accurately monitor the implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan and lead to the overall meeting of the significant transportation needs of the region.

## **Potential Inclusions for Future Plan Updates**

In the course of the preparation for this Plan, several items were identified as being potential items for more detailed evaluation or reporting and are open for discussion at the time of the next update as shown below in no particular priority order.

- South Pullman by-pass
- Accident analysis
- Railroad crossing inventory
- Pavement condition
- Detailed Level of Service Analysis
- Trucking routes and tonnage
- Greater correlation between population growth and Anticipated Growth Areas
- Map of growth areas
- Map of roads that are seasonally restricted
- Detailed description of projects
- 20 years needs analysis
- Financial capabilities analysis of State funding sources



## **Appendix A - RTPO Membership Lists**

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD**

1. Don Scheibe, Asotin County Commissioner
2. Dean Burton, Garfield County Commissioner
3. Dwight Robanske, Columbia County Commissioner
4. Jerry Finch, Whitman County Commissioner
5. Larry Baumberger, City Councilman, City of Clarkston
6. Clark Posey, Representative, City of Dayton
7. Norma Becker, Mayor, City of Colfax
8. Rick Davis, Manager, Port of Clarkston
9. Gene Turner, Manager, Port of Columbia
10. Lora Brazell, Manager, Port of Garfield
11. Bob Gronholz, Commissioner, Port of Whitman
12. Don Whitehouse, South Central Region Administrator, WSDOT
13. Jerry Lenzi, Eastern Region Administrator, WSDOT

### **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

1. Joel Ristau, Asotin County Engineer
2. Grant Morgan, Garfield County Engineer
3. Scott Smith, Columbia County Engineer
4. Mark Storey, Whitman County Engineer
5. Doug Higgins, City of Clarkston Public Works Director
6. Dane Dunford, Whitman County Public Works Director
7. Mark Workman, City of Pullman Public Works Director
8. Salah Al-Tamimi, South Central Region Planning Engineer, WSDOT
9. Mark Rohwer, Eastern Region Planning Engineer, WSDOT

### **PALOUSE RTPO STAFF**

1. Ken Olson, RTPO Executive Director

## **Appendix B**

# **SUCCESSFUL GRAIN TRAIN PROGRAM ADDS A THIRD TRAIN**

**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

## **Appendix C**

# **EASTERN WASHINGTON GRAIN-HAULING SHORT-LINE RAILROADS**

SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS



# Appendix D

## DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- 1 Current Palouse RTP (reviewed/confirmed by RTPO, 2003)
- 2 Washington Bicycle Map (2001)
- 3 Garfield County and City of Pomeroy Comprehensive Plan (2003)
- 4 County Freight and Good System -- 2002 Status Report
- 5 Port of Whitman County Comprehensive Plan (2000)
- 6 Transit Development Plan - Garfield County 2001 - 2007
- 7 General Highway Map Garfield County (1982)
- 8 Asotin County Zoning Maps
- 9 Asotin County Functional Class Map
- 10 Asotin County Land Use Maps
- 11 Asotin County Truck Route Map
- 12 Asotin County Traffic Count Location Map
- 13 Asotin County STIP
- 14 Asotin County Comprehensive Plan
- 15 Asotin County Roadlog Summary (2002)
- 16 Rural Roads and Bridges in Washington State: Current Status and Recent Trends (1999)
- 17 Washington State Highway System Plan (2003 - 2022)
- 18 SR-270/Pullman to Idaho State Line -- Additional lanes summary from website
- 19 Palouse River and Coulee City Railroad Acquisition - March 2004 update on website
- 20 WSDOT Rail Plan
- 21 Rural Mobility Grants 2001 - 2003, Transit Info by WSDOT region
- 22 WA State Freight Truck Origin and Destination Study: Whitman County (EWITS, 1998)
- 23 Eastern Washington On-Farm and Commercial Grain Storage (EWITS, 1998)
- 24 Ten Year State Tax Availability and Expenditure by County
- 25 WSDOT Highway Capital Program Expenditures by past four bienniums
- 26 Sources and Uses of Funds (used in developing '03 - '05 budget)
- 27 Distribution of gas tax to the state, Cities and Counties (for Blue Ribbon)
- 28 Listing of Roadway bridges in Whitman County on and off the state system
- 29 Historical and Projected Population for growth management and other purposes
- 30 Revised April 1 population of cities, Towns and Counties
- 31 WSDOT Bridge Repair list -- Southcentral region
- 32 Impacts of Snake River Drawdown on Energy Consumption... (EWITS, 1998)
- 33 Impacts of Snake River Drawdown on Transportation of Grains... (EWITS, 1998)
- 34 Route Development Plan -- SR 129 from Oregon Border to 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue Clarkston (2002)

- 35 Route Development Plan -- US 12 from Walla Walla to Clarkston MP  
335 to MP 432.62 (2002)
- 36 Washington Transportation Plan 2005 Update:Work Plan Overview
- 37 State Highway Roadlog
- 38 Palouse RTPO STIP (2004 - 2006)
- 39 1993 - 2003 State Highway Accidents by Route by County
- 40 Scenic and Recreational Highway System Designation (RCW 47.39.020)
- 41 Annual Traffic Report (2002)
- 42 Snake River Drawdown Transportation Impact and Alternatives Analysis (1997 draft)
- 43 Estimated Gross Tonnage, Freight and Goods System (1997, Whitman County)
- 44 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2003)
- 45 Truck Traffic Percentage Point Change, Whitman County (1997)
- 46 City of Pullman Comprehensive Plan



# Appendix E

## FUNDING MECHANISMS

This is excerpted from: Your Community's Transportation System - "A Transportation Element Guidebook" by the Washington State Department of Community Development (1993).

This appendix identifies funding mechanisms and types of debt available for transportation improvements. These mechanisms include new sources provided through state legislation in conjunction with the State Growth Management Program. The State provided for the imposition of impact fees, additional real estate excise taxes, local option taxes (fuel tax, vehicle license fee, commercial parking, and street utility), and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) local option taxes.

These transportation funding mechanisms require that the city or county interested in using the mechanism comply with the transportation planning requirements on the State Growth Management Program, including the finance element.

### City/County Funds

City/county revenue resources can be categorized as unrestricted and dedicated. Unrestricted revenue is available for transportation to the extent the transportation needs can compete with the many other local government needs.

#### Unrestricted Governmental Funds:

<i>General Funds</i>	General funds include all local funds subject to appropriation by the governing body - property taxes, local option sales taxes, utility taxes, general state shared revenues, business license fees, etc. These funds may be used for transportation purposes.
<i>Special Property Taxes</i>	Additional taxes can be authorized by voters, usually for the purpose of bonds. If proposal is above the statutory limitations for taxing rate, it must be approved by 60 percent of voters with 40 percent turnout. If it is below the legal limitation, a simple majority is sufficient (usually called a "lid lift"). The tax may be temporary or permanent.

#### Dedicated Governmental Funds for Capital Purposes:

<i>Special Fuel Tax</i>	Tax on motor fuels specifically dedicated to highway purposes. Currently a total of 23 cents is collected for each gallon of fuel sold. Of that total 10.21 cents is allocated to state programs, 4.42 is allocated to counties, 2.45 cents to cities, 1.31 cents to the Transportation Improvement Board and 0.58 cents to the Rural Arterial Program.
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*Real Estate Excise* Tax on sale of real property. Two categories are available; now both can be used for all types of GMA defined capital projects, not just streets.  $\frac{1}{4}$  c is authorized by capital facilities; if used another 1.4 c may be levied. The projects must be included in the capital facilities element of the comprehensive plan.

*Sales and Use Tax for HOV* Up to 0.8 percent additional sales tax for HCT by transit agencies in Clark, Thurston, Spokane, Yakima and Snohomish Counties; requires a vote prior to implementation.

Other Dedicated Governmental Funds for Transportation Purposes:

*Transportation Benefit Districts* Special taxing district for transportation purposes created by cities and/or counties. Allows more than one jurisdiction to join together for the purposes of acquiring, constructing, improving, providing, and funding any city street, county road, or state highway improvements within the district. With voter approval, has authority to levy property tax and issue general obligation bonds. With city/county approval, has authority to impose fees on building construction or land development.

*Transit Tax* Separate taxing authority for transit authorities. Voter approval is required for the B&O, household/utility, and sales and use taxes.

**Federal Financial Assistance**

*TEA 21* A federal funding program for surface transportation called the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Federal funds are available to cities or counties as distributed by the state and Metropolitan Planning organizations. Allocation has three components: regional competition, statewide competition, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) funding. Funds can be used for highways, roads, transit, bicycle facilities and related improvements.

For regional competition, funds would be distributed to:

- Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) for areas with an urban population over 200,000.
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) for areas with an urban population over 50,000.
- Counties for areas with an urban population under 50,000.

*Public Works Trust Funds (PWTF)* Available to cities, counties, and special purpose districts from the state in the form of low interest loans for public work improvements.

*Motor Vehicle Excise (MVET) for Transit and High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes*

With voter approval, transit agencies may collect a local excise tax on vehicles registered within their taxing district imposed as an addition to the state MVET, for high capacity transit service.

*Local Development Matching Fund (LDMF)*

Available to cities to fund transportation studios related to economic development.

*Essential Rail Assistance Account Light (ERAA)*

Available to cities, county rail districts, and port districts; provided to preserve essential freight rail service on economically viable density lines. Rail lines must appear in the State Freight Rail Plan.

*Essential Rail Banking Account (ERBA)*

Available to cities, county rail districts, and port districts. Preserve Freight rail corridors. The rail lines must appear in the State Freight Rail Plan.

## **Private Sources**

### User Fees

*Transit Fees*

Established by transit operator.

*Tolls*

Paid by user; limited to repayment of bonds to finance construction.

*Ferry Fares*

Established by transit operator.

*Parking Fees*

Either for use of right-of-way (on street parking) or special facility (parking garage).

### Developer Contributions

*Development Regulations*

Various development regulations (especially subdivision ordinances) may require that certain facilities to be available, frequently requiring developers to finance them.

## **Debt Types**

Many of the various sources of revenue can be used either to fund the facility at one time or through various debt financing systems.

*Voted General Obligations*

Debt secured by "full faith and credit" of the jurisdiction; taxing power pledged to repay debt. Usually (not always) involved approval of an additional property tax levy pledged to retire the debt. Requires a vote with a 60 percent approval of those voting at an election with the participation of 40 percent of the number who voted in the last general election in the jurisdiction. Total amount of debt is limited by statute and constitution.

*Nonvoted General*

This debt is also secured by “full faith and credit” of the jurisdiction. However, no voter approval is required and debt service is paid out of current taxing authority (revenue is diverted from operations and is committed debt service.) Sometimes this type of debt may be coupled by a “Levy Lift” vote if additional taxing authority is available in the jurisdiction. Total amount of this type of debt is strictly limited by law. Also called “councilmanic” debt and/or “inside levy”.

*Revenue Bonds*

Debt is secured by identified revenue source, not the taxing power of the jurisdiction. Such revenue is usually some sort of user fees, such as fare box revenues or toll charges. Since such revenues are less secure than taxing powers, this type of debt usually has higher interest costs than GO bonds. Rarely used for street financing, but theoretically possible. Street utilities could increase the use of this type of debt. Industrial revenue bonds are technically a specialized type of revenue bond.

*Double Barreled Bonds*

Debt secured by taxing authority (under one of the two types of GO methods), but debt service is paid out of other revenues. This allows revenue bonds to enjoy lower interest benefits of GO bonds.

*Special Assessment Debt  
Utility*

Bonds financed by the formation of a special assessment district (Local Improvement District, Road Improvement District). Predominate method of debt financing of developer contributions. Must be based on benefit to the assessed properties and must meet requirements of IRS code. Can be augmented by general revenues (usually by absorbing financing costs or “buying down” interest rates).

## **Appendix F**

# **DETAILED REVENUE EXPENDITURES AND FORECASTS BY COUNTY**

**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

## **Appendix G**

# **PALOUSE REGION PORTION OF THE STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)**

**SEE LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**