

Chapter 6

Regional Transportation System

Introduction

The basis for transportation planning is the transportation system. For the Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (S-RTPO), the designation of a regional transportation system is a requirement. Within the metropolitan planning area the same system serves the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The state describes the following characteristics of a regional transportation system:

- Physically crosses member county lines;
- Is or will be used by a significant number of people who live or work outside the county in which the transportation facility, service, or project is located;
- Significant impacts are expected to be felt in more than one county;
- Potentially adverse impacts of the facility, service, or project can be better avoided through adherence to regional policies; and
- Transportation needs addressed by a project have been identified by the regional transportation planning process and the remedy is deemed to have regional significance.

This system should include:

- All state transportation facilities;
- Local freeways, expressways, and regional arterials; and
- High capacity transit systems defined as express oriented transit service operating on an exclusive right-of-way, including dedicated HOV lanes to separated fixed guideway system.

This update of the plan has added the vanpool program to the list of programs that are part of the regional transportation system. This program was previously included as part of "Other transit facilities and services". Specifying this program will give it more visibility.

Skagit Sub-Regional Transportation System

The Skagit Sub-Regional Transportation System is made up of the following components:

- Highways and Road System
 - All Federal and state routes within Skagit County;
 - The Federal Functional Classification System, including:
 - Urban – Principle Arterial, Minor Arterial, Collector

- Rural – Principle Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector;
- Bridges that exist on other components of the Skagit Sub-Regional Transportation;
- Other streets and roads specifically designated by the S-RTPO.
- Passenger, Transit, and Ridesharing System
 - Skagit Transit (SKAT) routes, services, and related facilities;
 - Air passenger facilities and services at Skagit Regional Airport, Anacortes Airport, and Concrete Municipal Airport;
 - Rail passenger facilities and services including the Mount Vernon Multimodal Station and Amtrak;
 - Water passenger routes and facilities including the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Skagit County Ferry routes and facilities;
 - Other private sector passenger facilities and services including Greyhound, Airporter Shuttle, and other regionally based transportation providers;
 - Other specialized elderly and handicapped transportation services;
 - Park and ride and park and pool lots;
 - Vanpools, and
 - Other transportation demand management (TDM) services and programs.
- Freight and Goods System
 - WSDOT's Freight and Goods Transportation System of identified trucking routes in Skagit County;
 - Air freight facilities and services at Skagit Regional Airport, Anacortes Airport, and Concrete Municipal Airport;
 - Rail freight facilities and services including Burlington Northern Sante Fe and the Mount Vernon Terminal Railway;
 - Water freight facilities, services, and navigation channels including the Port of Anacortes, oil refinery terminals, and the Guemes Channel; and
 - Other private freight facilities including the Trans Mountain and Olympic pipelines, and Inter-modal freight facilities.
- Non-Motorized System
 - Formally designated Regional bike, pedestrian, and equestrian system.
- Future planned regionally significant transportation facilities, services, routes, and programs.

The regional transportation planning process is one of identifying the impacts of change upon this transportation system and proposing additions or deletions to accommodate these changes. When the existing system cannot accommodate these changes, new facilities, services, or programs will be proposed. Once adopted into the plan, these proposed additions become part of the regional transportation system, as per the category of facility and service type.

Three processes are particularly important to the maintenance of this system. Those processes are monitoring, the transportation improvement plan, and funding and implementation. Monitoring is aimed at determining when standards are exceeded, whether planned or unplanned. The transportation improvement plan (TIP) identifies a list of projects that are eligible for funding regionally within the short term. Funding and implementation is the process of carrying out the plans. Each of these processes is discussed at greater length in the plan.

Federal Requirements

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century defines the following guidance for metropolitan transportation plans, with regards to the transportation system, “An identification of transportation facilities (including but not necessarily limited to major roadways, transit, and multi-modal and inter-modal facilities) that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions.” This definition leaves more to judgment than the definition of the regional system provided by WSDOT, but should lead to the same conclusions.

Maps

The following maps are attached in the following pages:

- Figure 2: Skagit County Sub-RTPO
- Figure 3: Skagit County Transportation System
- Figure 4: 2025 No Build Scenario
- Figure 5: 2025 Build Scenario