



The Blue Ribbon **Commission on Transportation**

Final Recommendations to the Governor and Legislature
adopted November 29, 2000

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopt transportation benchmarks as a cornerstone of government accountability at the state, city, county, and transit district levels.
2. Establish a single point of accountability at the state level, strengthening the role of the state in ensuring accountability of the statewide transportation system.
3. Direct a thorough and independent performance review of WSDOT administration practices and staffing levels.
4. Remove the barriers to achieving the transportation benchmarks for efficiency and system performance by providing funding for a strong state and strong regional transportation system.
5. Invest in maintenance, preservation, and improvement of the entire transportation system so that the transportation benchmarks can be achieved.
6. Provide regions with the ability to plan, select, fund, and implement (or contract for implementation of) projects identified to meet the region's transportation and land use goals.
7. Achieve construction and project delivery efficiencies.
8. Incorporate the design-build process and its variations into construction projects to achieve the goals of time-savings and avoidance of costly change orders.
9. Use the private sector to deliver projects and transportation services.
10. Reengineer the workplace to achieve greater efficiency, and consider the use of managed competition for operations and maintenance functions.
11. Streamline permitting for transportation projects.
12. Link transportation funding to efficiencies.
13. Link maintenance and preservation funds to best practices.

14. Simplify funding distributions for best results.
15. Adopt a regional funding equity principle.
16. Seek a 90% farebox recovery for ferry system operational costs within 20 years.
17. Adopt a package of new revenues to fund a comprehensive multi-modal set of investments, which, taken together with the recommended efficiency measures and reforms, will ensure a 20-year program of preserving, optimizing, and expanding the state's transportation system.
18. Begin action now to improve the transportation system, guided by the BRCT Early Action Plan.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS

1. Zero percent of interstate highways in poor condition.
2. Zero percent of major state routes in poor condition.
3. Zero percent of local arterials in poor condition.
4. Zero percent of bridges structurally deficient.
5. Complete seismic safety retrofits of all Level 1 and Level 2 bridges.
6. Traffic congestion on urban interstate highways will be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean.
7. Delay per driver will be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean.
8. Maintain vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita at 2000 levels.
9. Increase non-auto share of work trips in urban centers or reverse the downward trend of non-auto share of work trips in urban centers.
10. Administrative costs as a percent of transportation spending at the state, county and city levels should improve to the median in the short-term and to the most efficient quartile nationally in the longer term.
11. Washington's public transit agencies will achieve the median cost per vehicle revenue hour of peer group transit agencies.

SUMMARY OF BENCHMARKS RECOMMENDED TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE TRANSPORTATION ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

1. **Traffic Safety Benchmark:** Traffic accidents will continue to decline.
2. **Freight Mobility Benchmark:** Freight movement and growth in trade-related freight movement should be accommodated on the transportation system.
3. **Air Quality Benchmark:** Maintain air quality (carbon monoxide and ozone) at federally required levels.
4. **Project Cost Benchmark:** Improve operations, maintenance, and project delivery costs.
5. **Transportation Revenue Benchmark:** Ensure that transportation spending keeps pace with growth.
6. **Person Delay Benchmark:** Reduce overall hours of travel delay per person in congested corridors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1: Adopt transportation benchmarks as a cornerstone of government accountability at the state, city, county, and transit district levels.

These benchmarks should measure results and monitor performance of the system. Transportation funding should be tied to progress in achieving the benchmarks.

With a focus on goals and results, benchmarks accurately quantify where Washington stands in comparison to other states. By giving a 'baseline' of current status, these measures can then be assessed for future action, and used as performance goals.

(The benchmarks are listed at the end of this report.)

Recommendation #2: Establish a single point of accountability at the state level strengthening the role of the state in ensuring accountability of the state wide transportation system.

- a. The Washington Transportation Commission should negotiate a protocol with the Governor on the procedures for the appointment of the replacement for the current Secretary of the Department of Transportation.
- b. The Washington Transportation Commission should maintain its current authority until the effective date of implementing legislation. At that time, the Commission should transition into the Transportation Accountability Commission, a single, independent, statewide point of accountability for reporting and monitoring the performance of the integrated state transportation system at all levels. The TAC should:
 - i. Take responsibility for overseeing attainment of the benchmarks addressed in Recommendation 1.
 - ii. Provide a report card annually to the Governor and Legislature on:
 - Progress toward achieving reform and efficiencies
 - Progress toward accomplishment of the BRCT's and the Legislature's adopted investment strategies
 - Policy suggestions for furthering progress toward benchmarks and related transportation policies
 - iii. The TAC should also review and advise on regional and integrated statewide transportation plans and budgets and should advise the Governor in his or her exercise of plan certification responsibilities on whether plans are making adequate progress toward achieving benchmarks. Such reports should also be made to the Legislature.

- iv. The TAC should be expected and encouraged to serve as an active "bully pulpit" for continuing insistence on progress toward both adopting leading edge transportation strategies and achieving benchmarks. The TAC should report both successes and deficiencies.
- c. From the effective date of implementing legislation forward, the Secretary shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor, and subsequently, the Governor shall have appointment authority over the Secretary, with confirmation by the Senate. The authority of the Transportation Commission with respect to budget and policy will become advisory and the Governor will assume responsibility for the performance of the statewide transportation system, including proposing policies, plans and budgets to the Legislature and executing the policies, plans and budgets enacted by the Legislature.
- d. The TAC membership should transition from the current Transportation Commission membership in order to take advantage of its considerable expertise. In that transition, it should expand from seven to nine members, with no more than five out of the nine affiliated with a single political party. Three members shall be from Eastern Washington and six from Western Washington. Members should be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Terms of office should be six years, with terms staggered so three members are appointed every two years.

Recommendation #3: Direct a thorough and independent performance review of WSDOT administration practices and staffing levels.

- a. Scale and size of accounting and management information systems division staffs.
- b. Possible duplication of functions among regions
- c. Possible application of computer and Internet technology for administration purposes.
- d. Scale and size of other WSDOT support programs, including program D, S, T, and U functions.

Recommendation #4: Remove the barriers to achieving the transportation benchmarks for efficiency and system performance. Provide funding for a strong state and strong regional transportation system.

Recommendation #5: Invest in maintenance, preservation, and improvement of the entire transportation system so that the transportation benchmarks can be achieved.

- a. Preserve the transportation system.
 - i. Prioritize and fund all maintenance, preservation, and safety needs of the existing transportation infrastructure in the state, including operating and maintenance costs of rail, transit, and ferries. All agencies and jurisdictions should be required to demonstrate the use of maintenance management systems and, for roadways, pavement management systems, as a condition of receiving a baseline allocation of funding;

- ii. Use the most cost-effective pavement surfaces available based on durability;
 - iii. Phase out studded tires or establish a surcharge to recognize the cost of studded tire damage to the roadways;
 - iv. Develop a utility cut ordinance for use throughout the state, or require jurisdictions to adopt a utility accommodation ordinance that must include a section.
- b. Optimize the transportation system.
- i. Transportation system management (TSM) and intelligent transportation systems (ITS) policies should be implemented where cost-effective.
 - ii. Transportation demand management (TDM) policies should be used to reduce demand on the highway system.
 - iii. Jurisdictions should integrate transportation and land use planning.
 - iv. Congestion pricing should be made a policy option for congested urban areas.
- c. Make cost-effective system expansions in heavily traveled corridors.
- i. Look to congestion. Congestion and accidents are key indicators of transportation dysfunction.
 - ii. Look to corridors. Corridors are where congestion is likely to be, and congestion cannot be effectively treated by isolated spot improvements.
 - iii. Use benefit-cost analysis to the extent possible, to analyze and communicate the value of investment alternatives.
- d. Improve the decision-making process for transportation investments.
- i. Use cost-benefit analysis in selecting the most effective transportation investments. Multi-modal benefit-cost analysis should be used to the extent possible as it develops. There is currently no institutionalized analytical approach to cost-benefit analysis across modes and regions. The method used for transportation projects necessarily differs from that used in private industry, taking into account societal costs and benefits. The state should encourage the development of the analytic tools to measure benefits and costs for all modes with a common methodology.
 - ii. Travel demand modeling tools should be enhanced and used by the state to evaluate investments.
 - iii. Use a corridor approach in transportation planning and investing so the most heavily traveled corridors are the highest investment priorities. The most effective mix of strategies in each corridor should be the goal.
 - iv. The state and local transportation authorities should invest in the human resources necessary to supply the technical workforce capable of maintaining, preserving, and improving the transportation system.

Recommendation #6. Provide regions with the ability to plan, select, fund, and implement (or contract for implementation of) projects identified to meet the region's transportation and land use goals.

- a. The regional authority would have responsibility to program and prioritize, with selected state and federal matching funds, state and regional roadway projects and regionally significant transit projects within the region.

- i. A revenue package would be developed to implement a regional transportation plan, and the authority would have increased funding for the transportation system improvements through an improved allocation of state and new revenues, using a regional equity principal.
 - ii. The authority would be able to contract with state, regional, and local jurisdictions for construction and, where necessary, become the implementing agency. Other cost-effective and project delivery tools would be utilized, such as design/build and streamlined decision making.
- b. Merged functions of any new authority may also include air pollution control. A regional authority may be responsible for monitoring this commission's indicator on air quality (among other things) to assess progress.
- c. The governing board for the authority should include local and region-wide perspectives and may have a directly elected or a federated membership. The authority would set goals, objectives, and standards, and monitor achievement and performance as part of its planning and funding responsibilities. With the principle of "no new bureaucracy," however, our intention is to simplify and minimize structural redundancy rather than add new layers of government.
- d. The size of the project or investment to be undertaken by the regional authority should depend upon its significance to the region. Standards for regional significance should be established for facilities; existing models are available via WSDOT's defined facilities of 'statewide significance,' and those facilities defined in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Recommendation #7: Achieve construction and project delivery efficiencies.

- a. Reduce engineering/construction cost ratio. WSDOT's preliminary engineering and construction engineering costs have recently been reduced from 26% to 20% of overall ('hard') construction costs. We recommend that cost savings such as these continue at all levels of government statewide.
- b. Save money on materials and methods.
- c. Use right-of-way 'banking.'
- d. Continue to assess prevailing wage survey techniques.
- e. Make mitigation more cost-effective.
- f. Provide incentives to encourage efficiencies.
- g. Efficiencies will be realized by having predictable revenue sources to fully fund projects, thereby eliminating starts and stops in design and construction which result in delays and increased project costs.

Recommendation #8: Incorporate the design-build process and its variations into construction projects to achieve the goals of time savings and avoidance of costly change orders.

- a. Grant statutory authority to transportation agencies to use design-build techniques and their variations, including design-build-operate, design-build-operate-own, design-build-own-operate-transfer, and general contractor/construction management.
- b. Provide methods by which public employees may participate in the design-build process.
- c. Provide increased education and training in alternative project delivery (ADP) concepts.

Recommendation #9. Use the private sector to deliver projects and transportation services.

- a. Continue pilot projects allowing the private sector to provide expertise and financing in developing cost-effective transportation facilities.
- b. Examine removing barriers preventing the private sector from providing transportation services in light of some public expressed interest in alternative services, which could include ferry, bus, or monorail. A level playing field should be maintained between the public and private sectors. It is essential to take into account issues such as wages, health care and other benefits.

Recommendation #10: Reengineer the workplace to achieve greater efficiency, and consider the use of managed competition for operations and maintenance functions.

- a. Place an emphasis on excellence in the workplace, through service, customer satisfaction, and a focus on results. Incorporate elements of total quality management into business practices.
- b. Form partnerships with employer-employee organizations to develop apprenticeships and training programs to ensure the availability of a skilled workforce to deliver projects and services.
- c. Under managed competition, private sector bids are sought for operations and maintenance activities, and then compared to a bid from the public sector staff currently performing the service. Legislative authorization would be required to permit managed competition. Alternatively, because managed competition is very restricted under current state law, it may be best to introduce a pilot program, perhaps through negotiation between labor and management. A level playing field should be maintained between the public and private sectors. It is essential to take into account issues such as wages, health care and other benefits.

Recommendation #11: Streamline permitting for transportation projects.

- a. Delegate 404 wetlands permit authority to the state. Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act regulates the placement of fill in waters of the United States, including wetlands. In parts of Washington, the average time to acquire a permit from the federal government under this process is 1 to 2.2 years. Two states, Michigan (since 1984) and New Jersey (since 1994),

- have been authorized to administer the Federal Section 404 program in parts of their states.
- b. Write and apply substantive standards for transportation (road) projects to streamline permit approvals thereby reducing process review delays. Based on the results of the pilot project, work toward a goal of one-stop permitting, using a single permit application. Use existing models to create an agency with powers to consolidate permit review for major transportation capital projects.
 - i. Identify highway projects of statewide significance to be eligible for review under this option.
 - ii. Select a significant highway project as a pilot to plan and permit with an integrated steering committee that includes project proponents, elected officials, agency staff, and public representatives (like the Trans-Lake Washington Project process). The ability to complete the project within two years of commencement should be a criterion in project selection.
 - iii. Evaluate the use of planning and permitting standards that encourage lower impact alternatives, such as Smart Growth, transportation demand management (TDM), transportation system management (TSM), pricing, and transit, along with the HOV and general purpose roads proposed in the project.
 - iv. Accelerate the permit process for a project that uses low-impact development standards.

Recommendation #12: Link transportation funding to efficiencies.

- a. Require WSDOT, counties, cities, and transit to demonstrate progress toward achieving benchmark efficiencies as a condition of receiving some portion of new baseline funding.
- b. Require cities, counties and transit to demonstrate that they are not supplanting existing transportation funds as a condition of receiving new funding.

Recommendation #13: Link maintenance and preservation funds to best practices.

- a. Direct a baseline allocation of adequate funding to operations, maintenance, preservation and safety functions for state highways, county roads, city streets, transit, ferries, and alternate modes.
- b. As a condition of receiving their baseline allocation of funding, require all agencies and jurisdictions to demonstrate the use of maintenance management systems and pavement management systems.
- c. As a condition of receiving funding, require WSDOT, cities, and counties to demonstrate, after an initial period of three years, that their preservation investments are based on lowest life cycle cost principles.
- d. Require that available grant programs do not fund preservation projects that are already funded out of baseline fund allocations.

Recommendation #14: Simplify funding distributions for best results.

- a. Distribute pass-through funds according to a new formula that directs funds on a geographic basis to counties and cities within counties, and takes into account lane miles, classification and pavement type, population, and utilization (for example, VMT), and is adjusted for changes in road jurisdiction at least once every five years.
- b. Develop a new method for joint regional programming of federal funds, with the state, local jurisdictions, transit agencies and other stakeholders participating in a regional prioritization process that directs federal funds to major corridors and facility clusters.
- c. Require that federal funds be managed only by jurisdictions and agencies that are “certification accepted.”
- d. Create one-stop grant funding centers where all competitive funds, whether federal or state, are disbursed under regional priority programming agreements and administered using a single application process.

Recommendation #15: Allow regions to retain funds they raise.

- a. Adopt a regional equity principle for distribution of new funds to regions of the state, based on the following three-tiers:
 - i. allocate sufficient funds statewide to all regions for basic operations, maintenance, preservation and safety at a minimum agreed upon level;
 - ii. allocate all other new funds such that each region is guaranteed a minimum return of 85% of funds generated in that region, and allocate remaining funds to a statewide equalization fund to be distributed to negative equity regions; and
 - iii. allocate all funds regionally authorized directly to the region in which they are generated.

Recommendation #16: Seek a 90% fare box recovery for ferry system operational costs within 20 years.

- a. Adopt the Ferry Tariff Policy Committee’s recommendation on a new ferry tariff policy, including a new time-based route equity structure, premium pricing for passenger-only service, and 80% farebox recovery, phased in over the next six years. Seek to achieve a 20-year goal of 90% to 100% farebox recovery.
- b. The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation recognizes ferries are an important part of the highway system and recommends the Legislature give serious consideration to the Ferry Task Force’s findings on the needs of the ferry system.

Recommendation #17: Develop a package of new revenues to fund a comprehensive multi-modal set of investments, which, taken together with the recommended efficiency measures and reforms, will ensure a 20-year program of preserving, optimizing, and expanding the state's transportation system.

The Revenue Committee recommends a combination of the following revenue measures to comprise the elements of such a package:

- a. Efficiency measures at the state, county, city, and transit agency levels.
- b. Transfer from the state general fund transportation-related sales taxes, within the capacity determined to be available.
- c. Authorize the extension of the existing gross weight fee to all vehicles that use the roadway system, including passenger cars, sport utility vehicles and recreation vehicles.
- d. Authorize a surcharge to the existing gross weight fee for trucks, the proceeds to be dedicated to freight mobility improvements.
- e. Increase the motor fuel tax.
- f. Extend the sales tax to motor fuels. The commission adopted a sales tax on gas to be imposed on the wholesale commodity price of the fuel up to a set cap. The proceeds would be dedicated to all transportation purposes. The purpose of the price cap is to meet the commission's goal of predictability in revenues and to reduce the potential for disruptive price swings. The choice of commodity price as the revenue basis is intended to avoid imposing the new tax on top of the existing motor fuel taxes. The tax would be collected at the 'rack' and paid by the distributor, like other fuel taxes.
- g. Authorize a new surcharge on the wholesale sale of new and used vehicles, auto parts, and accessories, the proceeds to be dedicated to transportation.
- h. Adopt a new ferry tariff policy that includes premium pricing for passenger-only ferry service, regional route equity pricing; adopt a new farebox recovery policy of 80% within six years and 90% within 20 years.
- i. Authorize a local option vehicle mile traveled (VMT) charge to be used by regional entities in congested regions of the state, and to be imposed on all vehicles registered in such a region.
- j. Authorize new multi-modal transportation taxing authority for counties or regions that have not been previously granted high capacity transportation taxing authority.
- k. Expand the authority of counties to impose the local option motor vehicle license fee; repeal the referendum provision; and authorize cities to impose the fee if the county in which they are located has not imposed the fee within two years of enactment.
- l. Authorize bonding programs at the state and regional levels to achieve the funding levels determined to be needed.
- m. Authorize a local option regional sales tax dedicated to all transportation purposes.

- n. Authorize to the state and to regional entities the implementation of all forms of value pricing, including region-wide pricing and pricing on individual facilities.
- o. Examine and, if appropriate, authorize the bonding of federal funds.
- p. Examine and authorize the expansion of tax increment financing as a tool for transportation and other development projects.
- q. Examine all transportation revenue sources at least biennially and ensure that they are keeping pace with inflation and with growth according to benchmarked trends.
- r. Extend the \$30 license fee. The existing \$30 license fee is applied only to passenger vehicles. The commission adopted a recommendation to extend it to all vehicles including trailers.
- s. Authorize a flat \$20 traffic mitigation fee. (The existing \$30 license fee would be increased to \$50. It should be a non-eighteenth-amendment restricted tax to ensure that it can be used for all transportation purposes.) A \$20 charge would be imposed on all passenger vehicles and non-commercial trucks. The revenue generated could be used for any transportation purpose.

Recommendation #18: Begin action now to improve the transportation system, guided by the BRCT Early Action Plan

- a. Act on accountability, efficiency, and governance recommendations.
- b. Begin the first stage of investment in the 2001-2003 biennium by investing in actions that will help the state reach the BRCT benchmarks.
 - i. Fund system maintenance and preservation throughout the state, ensuring continuation of efficient ferry and transit services.
 - ii. Optimize the current system using technology, and the most cost-effective demand management techniques such as telecommuting and commute trip reduction tax credits.
 - iii. Fund cost-effective system expansions in all modes.
- c. Set the stage for future investments by getting systems in place that will encourage best practices, technical analysis to solve the toughest problems, and evaluation of performance by transportation agencies in delivering on the expected investments.

RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS

Benchmark 1: Zero percent of interstate highways in poor condition.

The benchmark committee found that slightly under five percent of the interstate highway was in poor condition in 1997.

Benchmark 2: Zero percent of major state routes in poor condition.

The benchmark committee found that less than one percent of major state routes were in poor condition in 1997.

Benchmark 3: Zero percent of local arterials in poor condition.

Data were unavailable for current conditions of local arterials in Washington. A pilot project under the auspices of the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) is compiling the available data.

Benchmark 4: Zero percent of bridges structurally deficient.

The benchmark committee found that slightly fewer than twenty-five percent of bridges in Washington were in deficient condition in 1997. The benchmark applies to all bridges over 20 feet in length recorded in the State of Washington Inventory of Bridges (SWIBs).

Benchmark 5: Complete seismic safety retrofits of all Level 1 and Level 2 bridges.

The benchmark committee found that the state has been pursuing a program to retrofit bridges and structures identified by risk level. Levels 1 and 2 are the two highest risk levels. Over 300 bridges have been retrofitted to date at a cost of about \$40 million. However, almost 1,000 bridges remain to be repaired in the two highest risk levels at a cost of \$560 million, \$350 million of which is contained in a single structure, the Alaskan Way viaduct in Seattle.

Benchmark 6: Traffic congestion on urban interstate highways will be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean.

The benchmark committee found that between sixty and eighty percent of urban interstate highways are congested in Washington. The national mean is about forty-five percent urban interstate miles congested.

Benchmark 7: Delay per driver will be significantly reduced and be no worse than the national mean.

This benchmark calculates delay per driver by metropolitan region. Delay per driver is a calculated average based on the number of licensed drivers in a region. It does not attempt to distinguish between individuals actually experiencing delay and those traveling on non-congested roads or not traveling at all. The benchmark committee found the national mean to be about forty hours of average delay per driver annually. Data show that the Seattle-Everett metropolitan area experienced seventy hours of average delay per driver annually; Vancouver-Portland experienced over fifty hours of average delay per driver annually; Individual regions of the state may choose to track more detailed data such as person delay on specific corridors.

Benchmark 8: Maintain vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita at 2000 levels.

The benchmark committee found that VMT in Washington were about 9,000 miles per person per year in 1998. While Washington's population has grown about forty percent over the past twenty years, VMT have grown sixty percent, or about half again as fast. VMT have been growing faster than population since the mid-1980s. However, VMT per capita have leveled off at about 1990 levels. The Transportation Accountability Commission will review this benchmark and raise the standard if necessary to reach other benchmarks.

Benchmark 9: Increase non-auto share of work trips in urban centers or reverse the downward trend of non-auto share of work trips in urban centers.

The benchmark committee found that the only reliable data for this benchmark was the U.S. Census Bureau's journey-to-work surveys, the most recent of which showed a declining share of non-auto trips in the 1980-90 timeframe. Year 2000 census data will be available early next year, 2001. The new accountability board should set a target for this benchmark when the data are available. Non-auto travel includes ferry, transit, walking and bicycling; commuter and light rail should be added when data become available.

Benchmark 10: Administrative costs as a percent of transportation spending at the state, county and city levels should improve to the median in the short-term and to the most efficient quartile nationally in the longer term.

The benchmark committee found that the state transportation agency's administrative costs fell between the third and fourth quartile nationally, (the first quartile being the lowest), or at roughly ten to twelve percent of spending. The committee added that these costs were not all due to inefficiency, but also to Washington's environmental ethic, culture of planning, neighborhood activism, and citizen involvement. The benchmark applies to all transportation agencies in the state.

Benchmark II: Washington's public transit agencies will achieve the median cost per vehicle revenue hour of peer group transit agencies, adjusting for regional cost of living

The benchmark committee found that King County Metro and Pierce Transit's cost per vehicle hour were thirteen percent and fourteen percent respectively, above their peer group transit agencies nationwide. The committee also found that transit-operating costs are highly dependent on wages of transit personnel, which in turn are related to the economy and cost of living in the region.

BENCHMARKS TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE TRANSPORTATION ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION

The following benchmarks are recommended for further development by the proposed transportation accountability commission that monitors and tracks benchmark progress. The accountability commission should develop metrics and identify targets and responsibility for these benchmarks.

Traffic Safety Benchmark: Traffic accidents will continue to decline.

The committee found that Washington has slightly less than 1.5 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles, which is less than the national average of about 1.7. All accidents, including those involving bicyclists and pedestrians, should decline.

Freight Mobility Benchmark: Freight movement and growth in trade-related freight movement should be accommodated on the transportation system.

The benchmark committee found that growth in trade-related freight movements by truck (up over seventeen percent annually in the 1991-98 timeframe) and by railcars (up about nine percent annually in the 1991-98 timeframe) exceeded other economic growth rates. The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) should be involved in developing additional benchmarks of freight movement and the supporting data to monitor progress.

Air Quality Benchmark: Maintain air quality (carbon monoxide and ozone) at federally required levels.

The benchmark committee found a declining incidence of carbon monoxide and ozone (the components of smog) in the state's urban areas since the 1970's. However, recently our air quality has come close to exceeding allowable levels on several occasions. Federal law requires that regions be sanctioned by loss of federal funds if this happens. The transportation accountability commission is asked to consider measuring greenhouse gases, particulates, and visibility when data and appropriate standards are available.

Project Cost Benchmark: Improve operations, maintenance ,and project delivery costs.

Create benchmarks for the operations and maintenance and capital project delivery functions of transportation agencies, parallel to that suggested for their administrative costs. The new accountability commission that monitors and tracks benchmark progress is directed to develop metrics to compare Washington's project development, design, permitting and construction costs with best practices nationally.

Transportation Revenue Benchmark: Ensure that transportation spending keeps pace with growth.

Washington's transportation system must not be allowed to fall behind the pace of its population and economic growth. The transportation accountability commission should develop a benchmark that monitors transportation revenues and how they track transportation needs.

Person Delay Benchmark: Reduce overall hours of travel delay per person in congested corridors.

The new transportation accountability commission should develop and track a benchmark of person delay that can be used across all modes of travel.

TOOL BOX OF ADDITIONAL EFFICIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve data collection for best decisions.

- a. All transportation agencies should improve data collection and cost allocation. Without access to comparative data, it is not possible to measure accurately the cost and quality of services.
- b. Implement the management and financial accounting system changes recommended by the Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee (JLARC).
- c. Refine budget accounting and record systems (BARS) codes at the state, city, county, and transit districts into a consistent format for cost comparison purposes.
- d. Requires data collection and reporting at the city level, consistent with data collected at state, county, and transit district level, and reported to a single repository for simpler access.
- e. Define consistent terminology for — administration, construction, maintenance, operations, and preservation —across all levels of government in order to make correct comparisons.

2. Improve management practices.

- a. Improve project management.
- b. Take measured (appropriate) risks.
- c. Use enhanced team planning/partnering.

3. Improve the permit process.

- a. Develop an environmental cost model to document and monitor the costs of environmental review, permitting, and mitigation on projects.
- b. Do environmental review early.
 - i. Require early agreements including interagency agreements early in decision-making process.
 - ii. Provide early involvement by stakeholders.
- c. Establish standards for environmental reviews that are consistent across jurisdictions.
 - i. Work with local agencies and state agencies to coordinate review efforts.
 - ii. Coordinate environmental mitigation strategies with other agencies.
 - iii. Coordinate with other federal, state and local agencies, and with non-governmental organizations to develop comprehensive strategies.
 - iv. Coordinate mitigation across jurisdictions.
- d. Use watershed based planning.
- e. Make better use of current environmental processes and available resources.
 - i. Better integrate NEPA/SEPA: to the extent possible, coordinate reviews at the federal, state and local levels.
 - ii. Fund staff in resource agencies to review permits: Staff shortages are a principal cause of delay in issuing environmental permits. Funding staff positions for specific projects or on an ad hoc basis will facilitate earlier project review.
 - iii. Set and honor timelines.
 - iv. Use project teams.