

# ***Transportation Action***

***final recommendations to the governor and legislature***  
***Executive Summary***



The Blue Ribbon **Commission on Transportation**

# THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION

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CH2M HILL  
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Transportation Choices Coalition

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Yakima County

## **Andrew K. Johnsen**

Governor's Executive Policy Office

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VICE CHAIRMAN, INVESTMENT STRATEGIES COMMITTEE

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District Council of Laborers

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Innovac

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Washington State Transportation Commission

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1000 Friends of Washington

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Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway

## **Neil Peterson**

Transportation Solutions

## **Larry A. Pursley**

Washington State Trucking Associations

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Rowley Enterprises, Inc.  
CHAIRMAN, REVENUE COMMITTEE

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Washington Good Roads & Transportation Association  
CHAIRMAN, INVESTMENT STRATEGIES COMMITTEE

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Office of Financial Management

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The Blue Ribbon **Commission on Transportation**

December 31, 2000

Dear Washington citizen:

Washington's transportation system is on a collision course with reality. Looking ahead 20 years, the Puget Sound region will experience severe congestion much of the day. The congestion contagion is already showing signs of spreading north and south along I-5. Congestion is threatening movement on I-90 over Snoqualmie Pass and in Spokane. Critical rail and freight corridors throughout the state are bogging down. Meanwhile our ability to preserve and maintain the existing system is under severe pressure.

Thirty years of population and economic growth have led Washington into a transportation crisis. We must act now to prevent the gridlock on our roads and highways from irreparably damaging the state's environmental health and economic prosperity and diminishing the personal well-being of citizens.

This report is the result of over two years of work by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation. It is a comprehensive and bold set of actions that will get us moving again. Our recommendations chart a new direction that will prevent this state from being overwhelmed by the demands of the future while making progress on the problems of today.

Business as usual is not meeting the public's transportation needs. Fundamental changes to transportation planning, financing, construction, and service must be made. We are proposing an integrated package of reforms, actions, and priorities that will meet the common needs and varying challenges of our growing state. Implementing this new transportation vision will not be simple, and it will require legislative, regulatory and operational change, which the public not only demands but also deserves.

There are areas of the transportation system that are not operating as efficiently as they should be. Therefore, the state must demonstrate fiscal responsibility and stretch limited resources by improving the system's efficiency. We recommend cutting administrative costs and eliminating legislative and regulatory barriers that keep agencies from sharing resources and employing cost-saving techniques. We also recommend streamlining the permit process so projects can be built faster while still protecting the environment.

It is paramount to invest in our statewide transportation system to keep it functioning well. Cities, counties, and the state must do the basics first: ensuring that roads and highways are well

maintained and safe; sustaining transit services, including ferries; strengthening bridges to withstand earthquakes, and making appropriate improvements to keep pace with growth.

It is time for our state to realize one size does not fit all. We recommend empowering regions to solve their own transportation problems, if they choose to do so, by granting them new authority, flexibility, and revenue options.

The cost of solving our crisis is not cheap, and efficiencies alone will not be enough to fund and fix our problems. There is \$150 billion worth of transportation needs across the state over the next 20 years. Current revenues will cover \$55 billion, leaving a shortfall of \$95 billion. We recommend raising \$9-13 billion over the next six years and an additional \$30-40 billion by 2020. To resolve the remaining \$40-50 billion of costs, we recommend implementing aggressive efficiencies, traffic demand management, telecommuting, and other emerging technologies.

Our revenue recommendations are based on two principles: those who use the transportation system should fund it, and there must be a fair balance of funding among roads, transit, and other transportation choices.

It will take time to get out of the current transportation mess, but we do not have to wait years to see progress – nor should the public be asked to wait. We have created a six-year “early action” strategy that will provide \$9-13 billion to fund key maintenance projects, fix some of the worst congestion points in the state, keep ferries and transit operating, and ensure that freight is getting to our ports quickly.

We need your help. The need is urgent. The solutions are not simple; but taken in phased steps, as part of an overall package, we can achieve measurable results. Decisive action in January 2001 will raise public confidence in the system and begin to turn the tide on gridlock.

Thank you to all of the citizens of Washington State who participated in our process and who brought so many bold and creative ideas to our attention.

Doug Beighle

Chairman

# THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION

Final Recommendations

Executive Summary

December, 2000

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# INTRODUCTION

## A COLLISION COURSE

**W**ashington's transportation system is on a "collision course with reality." We must take action now.

Looking ahead twenty years, if nothing changes, the Puget Sound region will experience severe traffic on every major roadway during most of the day. Congestion will also spread and worsen north and south along the entire length of I-5, east on I-90 from Seattle to the I-82 junction and on to Yakima. Traffic and delay will also expand along I-90 and U.S. 2 through Spokane, on U.S. 395 to Colville, on U.S. 195 to Pullman and on U.S. 12 between Walla Walla to the Tri-Cities. Critical rail and freight corridors throughout Washington will also be increasingly bogged down, delaying farm products and other goods from reaching our ports.

Perhaps the most sobering realization is that our state has no transportation plan in place today that, if implemented, would come anywhere close to meeting the challenges of the future. While Washington has an extensive and interconnected transportation network, we are not prepared for current and future growth, and our investment as well as the state's economic well being are threatened.

### Who We Are

The Governor and Legislature created the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation in 1998 to: assess the local, regional and state transportation system; ensure that current and future money is spent wisely; make the system more accountable and predictable; and prepare a 20-year plan for funding and investing in the transportation system. The commission consisted of 46 members representing business, labor, agriculture, tribes, government, ports, shipping, trucking, transit, rail, environmental interests and the general public.

As an independent, non-partisan group, the commission conducted a comprehensive review of transportation in Washington. Its members were committed to asking tough questions and

recommending ways to shift resources to meet top priorities. The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation worked diligently for over two years to recommend how to make Washington's transportation system a national model for maximizing efficiency, embracing innovation, and identifying the public's top priorities.

The commission listened to state and national experts as well as to citizens from all parts of the state to study, explore, and analyze many aspects of transportation throughout the state. This pursuit led to a set of findings on the current status of the transportation system. The commission looked at how transportation is managed and administered, at every level of government. They studied the ways that money is raised for transportation spending, and examined how that money is invested. The commission came to recognize that the state's needs and how those needs are addressed are complicated, complex, and outdated.

Following a six-month period of public comment gathered through public hearings, web-based surveys, correspondence, speaking engagements, and committee deliberations, the 46 members of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation approved a set of recommendations for the future of our transportation system.

This document presents a summary of those recommendations as well as a summary of the findings of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation.

The diversity of Washington state dictates that transportation needs will vary greatly throughout the state, from road-dependent rural areas to Puget Sound's complex multi-modal network. We must recognize these regional priorities in funding programs. Our recommendations call for a new way of doing business that will require both legislative and institutional change.

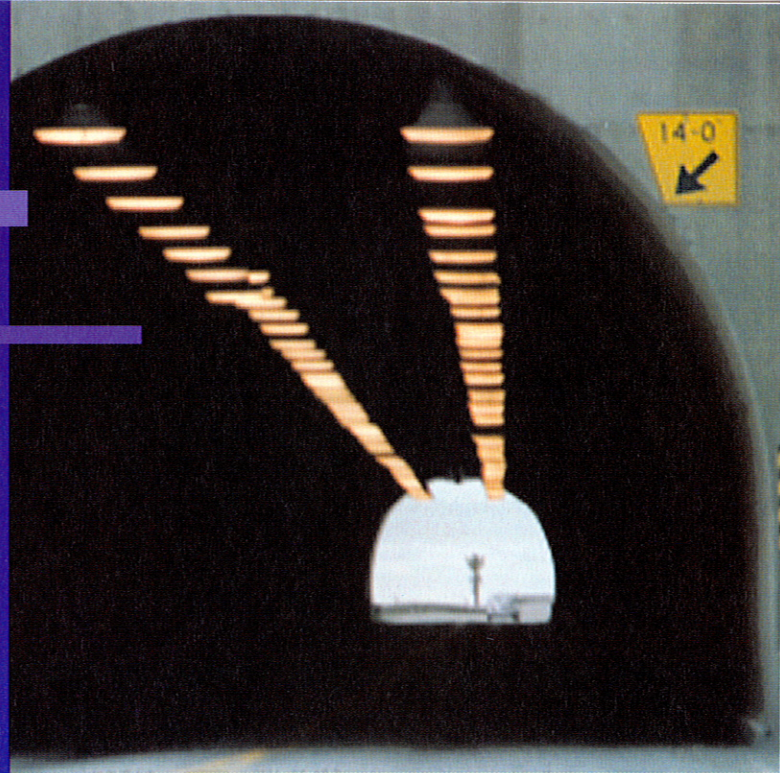
The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation's recommendations identify ways to solve critical problems in the areas of investment, revenue, and administration. The recommendations reflect the commission's twenty-year outlook, respecting the need to approach some problems immediately and others over a longer timeframe.

Recognizing the urgency of Washington's transportation dilemma, the Commission recommended an 'early action' strategy. This state cannot afford to wait until all of the commission's recommended changes and efficiencies are in place. The early action strategy will start us on the path to fix this state's transportation problems.

We understand that the problems facing us are enormous, and the issues complex. Nonetheless, these recommendations spell out in straightforward terms what we believe are positive steps toward putting the transportation system on firmer ground for the future.

In one sentence, "For the good of Washington, we must take action."

# FINDINGS



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Understanding the problems

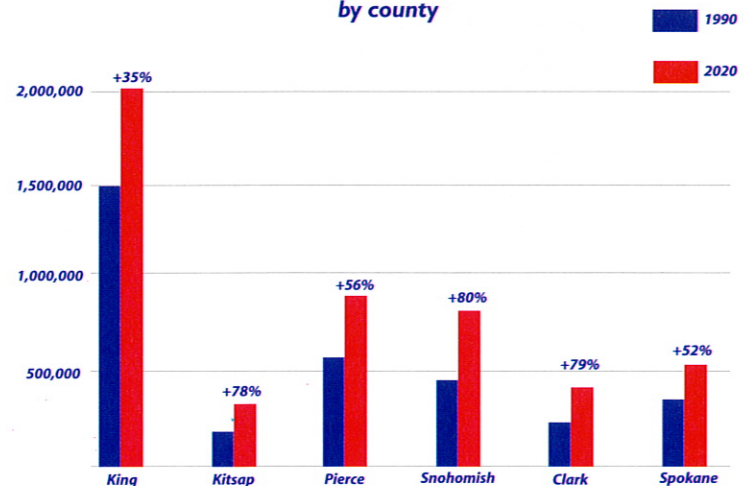
Washington's population has grown 36 percent in the last two decades and is expected to climb another 36 percent by 2020. Population growth, increased employment, more cars and more trips are impacting Washington's roadways. Finding resources to maintain roads adequately is a major problem faced by counties and cities around the state. Highly restrictive funding processes and the great number of entities responsible for planning and coordination have led to a system that doesn't always make the most cost-effective investments. In two measures of urban congestion — percent of urban lanes congested and traffic per lane — Washington ranks among the worst in the nation.

### Recognizing the consequences

Washington's transportation system influences almost every facet of life in the state, including how we spend our time, where we live and work and the profitability of our businesses. With one in four Washington jobs dependent on international trade, maintaining an effective transportation system is vital to preserving and enhancing our economic prosperity and quality of life.

### REGIONAL POPULATION FORECASTS

by county



source: Washington state OFM forecasts, 1995 (medium series)



## Responding to the public

Polling results and the passage of Initiative 695 demonstrate that many Washington residents are skeptical about the efficiency of current transportation programs and funding. However, polling also demonstrates that a majority of voters believe Washington needs to maintain and improve its transportation system by increasing investments over the next five years. No specific tax option is supported by a majority of the voters, but gas taxes are considered more acceptable than other options.

## Addressing the effects of I-695

The replacement of the state's Motor Vehicle Excise Tax with a \$30 license fee eliminated a major source of funding for transportation, including funding for public transit, ferries, rail programs, and construction projects voters approved in 1998 by adopting Referendum 49. The loss of an estimated \$750 million annually in MVET revenues has created a structural gap in the state's transportation funding system.



## Simplifying transportation governance and accountability

While drivers may not notice when they cross from one jurisdiction to another, Washington's transportation system is a patchwork created and maintained by more than 450 governmental entities through processes that have evolved slowly over the years. There isn't always adequate coordination, and processes that once served important functions have sometimes outlived their

usefulness. In some areas, the complexity of the system and the number of players suggest needs for greater simplicity and accountability.

## Fostering greater funding flexibility

Much of the state's funding is distributed through accounts restricted to specific uses, such as repairing roads or increasing safety. The commission found that agencies and jurisdictions could be granted greater flexibility in setting funding priorities.

## Maintaining the transportation system

Washington's transportation system represents public assets worth more than \$100 billion. Providing sufficient maintenance to preserve these assets is an important priority. While most state highways are currently in good condition, many bridges, urban arterials, county roads and city streets are not. Many cities and counties cannot meet their basic preservation needs. Heavy vehicles, studded tires and weather contribute significantly to deterioration of roads and bridges. Washington's public transit systems, ports, waterways, and rail systems also require adequate maintenance.

## How much congestion is acceptable?

Residents of urban areas agree there is too much congestion, but there is no consensus on what level is acceptable. Each year in Washington, congestion wastes time and resources worth more than \$2 billion. The commission found a need to balance investing in building more roads with expanding public transit and reducing the number of trips people make in vehicles.



## Identifying needs and priorities

The more than 450 jurisdictions and agencies that shape Washington's transportation system have identified needs for the next 20 years that will exceed funding available from current sources by billions of dollars. The state lacks consistent methods for measuring needs across jurisdictions, however, and not all entities use the best tools available for identifying the highest priorities and most cost-effective investments.

## Reducing maintenance costs

Transportation agencies in other states have reduced costs by establishing clear performance goals and reengineering workplace procedures to encourage frontline employees to come forward with cost-saving ideas. Another potential strategy is allowing managed competition between private companies and public-sector work teams.



## Re-evaluating the permitting process

Businesses, individuals and transportation agencies go through the complex process of obtaining permits before launching construction projects. The foundation exists for a thorough reform of permitting processes at both the state and local levels with the goal of protecting public interests while reducing the time and costs involved.

## Promoting innovation and efficiency in constructing projects

Governments around the country have saved time and money completing projects by venturing from the traditional design-bid-build process. Alternate strategies include the design-build process in which the same entity both designs and builds a project. Processes that promote innovation and create incentives increase the likelihood of finishing projects on time and on budget.

## Distributing funds effectively

The state doesn't always distribute transportation funds based on objective measures reflecting each agency or jurisdiction's actual roadway responsibilities. Allocations could be based on miles of roadway, traffic volumes, population growth and/or the local tax base.



## Facing the gas tax dilemma

State gas tax revenues — generated by collecting a flat amount for each gallon of gas purchased (regardless of the price) rather than a percentage of sales — do not keep pace with inflation.

## Making transportation a factor in land use decisions

Over the last 50 years, residential development in Washington has tended towards low-density suburbs, promoting a heavy reliance on automobiles that underlies congestion problems in

most urban areas. Now, governments are looking for ways to respond to new growth regulations and growing consumer demand for compact, mixed-use developments that help reduce congestion.

## Encouraging carpooling and transit use

Park-and-ride lots have proven to be a strong incentive for transit use and carpooling; many lots in congested corridors are now full.

For a complete description of the commission's findings, please refer to the final report, available at [www.brct.wa.gov](http://www.brct.wa.gov), or through the Legislative Transportation Committee.

## ACCORDS TO GUIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

ADOPTED MAY 18, 2000

"BUSINESS AS USUAL" NO LONGER WORKS. WE MUST RESPOND AGGRESSIVELY AND INNOVATIVELY TO GROWTH AND TRANSPORTATION DEMAND.

WASHINGTON'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SHOULD BE GUIDED BY A PLAN THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THE PUBLIC AND BASED ON GOALS THAT ARE SIMPLE, UNDERSTANDABLE, PRACTICAL, AND MEASURABLE.

THE PUBLIC DESERVES A SPECIFIC SET OF INVESTMENTS THAT WILL ACHIEVE THE GOALS FOR AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

WE MUST MAKE OUR ROADS AND HIGHWAYS SAFER, PROVIDE MORE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES, AND ADDRESS CONGESTION.

THE PUBLIC REQUIRES ACCOUNTABILITY – THEY WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEIR TRANSPORTATION DOLLARS ARE BUYING. THIS INCLUDES THE ASSURANCE THAT PROJECTS WILL BE BUILT ON TIME AND WITHIN BUDGET.

WE MUST PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN OUR DIVERSE TRANSPORTATION ASSETS AND ENSURE AN INTEGRATED AND FUNCTIONAL STATEWIDE SYSTEM. IN ADDITION, REGIONS MUST BE GIVEN THE FLEXIBILITY AND TOOLS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES MUST MAKE THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS. BUT, EFFICIENCIES ALONE WILL NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO ADDRESS FUTURE DEMANDS.

WE MUST STREAMLINE THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS WHILE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT.



PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL

# RECOMMENDATIONS



## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### **R**ecommendation 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 statewide 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.**

This review should address the following:

- 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.**

For examples, see recommendations 6 through 17.

## **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 on utility cuts.
- 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.
- c. 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.
  - d. 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% farebox 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 to all vehicles, including trailers. The existing \$30 license fee is applied only to passenger vehicles.
- s. Authorize a flat \$20 traffic mitigation fee on all passenger vehicles and non-commercial trucks. (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.)

## **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.

The early action plan is presented in the next section of this report.

## 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. Require data collection and reporting at the city level to be consistent with data collected at state, county, and transit district level, and report 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.

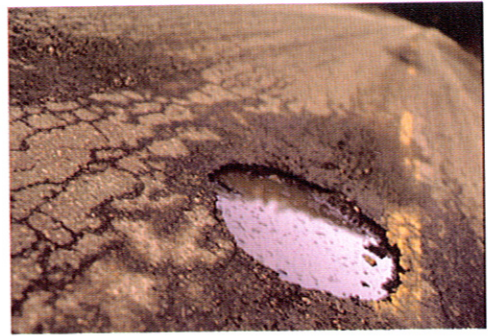
### 3. Improve the permit process.

- 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.





PIGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL



WASHINGTON STATE DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION



# EARLY ACTION



## STARTING ON TOMORROW TODAY

It has taken Washington state 30 years of population and economic growth to get to this transportation crisis. It will take time to get out of it. But we don't have to wait years to see progress. Nor should the public be asked to wait. One thing is for sure: Business as usual will not fix our transportation problems. We need efficiencies from administrative overhead to highway construction and transit investments.

The diversity of Washington state dictates that transportation needs will vary greatly throughout the state, from road-dependent rural areas to Puget Sound's complex multi-modal network. We must recognize these regional priorities in funding programs. Our recommendations call for a new way of doing business that will require both legislative and institutional change — both of which the public deserves and demands.

This state cannot afford to wait until all of the commission's recommended changes and efficiencies are in place. We must take action now.

### SUMMARY OF 20-YEAR NEEDS AND INVESTMENTS

DESCRIPTION	20-YEAR ESTIMATED NEED**	CURRENTLY FUNDED	EARLY ACTION ITEMS	AVOIDED COSTS	YEAR 2008-2020 COSTS
<b>Total statewide transportation needs</b>	<b>\$150 billion</b>	<b>\$55 billion</b>	<b>\$9-13 billion</b>	<b>\$40-50 billion</b>	<b>\$30-40 billion</b>
<b>Maintenance, preservation, safety, and retrofit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State maintenance, preservation, safety and retrofit – all modes. \$19,278 (million)</li> <li>Local and regional transit maintenance and preservation. \$20,286</li> <li>Cities and counties maintenance, preservation and safety. \$27,832</li> </ul> <b>Optimization</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State Optimization and TDM \$1,984</li> </ul> <b>Expansion and mobility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State – all modes \$54,799</li> <li>Local and regional transit expansion \$15,359</li> <li>Cities and counties mobility \$10,713</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funded portion of preservation and maintenance current system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfunded portion of maintenance preservation, and safety</li> <li>Restoration of transit and ferry service</li> <li>Optimization</li> <li>Expansion: roadway, transit, choices</li> <li>Cities and counties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>De-prioritize projects</li> <li>Permit reform</li> <li>Efficiencies</li> <li>Unused local and transit district revenue authority</li> <li>Cost-benefit analysis</li> <li>Optimization planning</li> <li>Private sector provision of services</li> <li>Technology improvement</li> <li>Reduce demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfunded portion of maintenance preservation, and safety</li> <li>Optimization</li> <li>Expansion</li> <li>Cities and counties</li> </ul>

\*\* As noted in the BRCT findings, more than 468 governmental entities have authority for transportation planning, funding, management, and construction in Washington state. Different jurisdictions and agencies do not share common definitions of needs and services objectives. The needs cited here were derived through a multi-year effort by many different data collection agencies. Dollars were converted to year 2000 dollars. The BRCT is recommending that consistent and improved data collection methods be put in place. This twenty-year need cost is therefore an estimate that should be updated and revised as improved data become available.

The detailed assumptions for this compilation of need are found in the investment strategies committee final report (Appendix B). To date, comments received from agencies are that their needs are under-reported. Given that the claimed need is subjective the BRCT has chosen to focus investments on effectiveness in meeting benchmark targets where results can be measured.

### EARLY ACTION INVESTMENT GUIDELINES, 2001-2007 (SIX-YEAR PLAN)

This list provides direction for an early action investment strategy. Detailed budgets and cash flows to implement this direction should be developed by the legislature prior to authorizing funds.

The needs listed below are for new revenues. Existing federal, state, and local funding was already factored into the total six-year needs.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	NEW STATE & REGIONAL REVENUE NEEDED (in millions)
<b>Start efficiency measures.</b>	Administration, operations, maintenance and project delivery savings. Pilot permit reforms; project delivery approaches.	<b>Efficiency savings</b>
<b>Authorize governance changes.</b>	Authorize regional transportation entities and funding tools.	<b>Authorize regional revenue</b>
<b>Start fixing the worst chokepoints and make real progress on what was started.</b>	Finish projects with complete and approved plans. Start on toughest problems.	<b>\$3,000 - 4,000</b>
<b>Construct HOV lanes.</b>	Finish projects with complete and approved plans.	<b>\$750 - 1,000</b>
<b>Start now on the toughest problems.</b>	Fund multi-modal corridor studies to make best investment choices.	<b>\$225 - 300</b>
<b>Keep the ferries afloat.</b>	Restore auto and passenger ferry service. Replace 4 auto ferries to meet Coast Guard regulations.	<b>\$375 - 500</b>
<b>Expand choices, and start projects now to avoid future investment costs.</b>	Restore and expand transit, passenger and freight rail, TDM, park & rides, smart growth, vanpools, bikes, pedestrian services and improvements, and special needs transit and rural mobility.	<b>\$3,000 - 4,000</b>
<b>Use technology to do more with what we have.</b>	Expand use of traffic service patrols. Synchronize traffic lights. Expand use of intelligent transportation systems.	<b>\$40 - 50</b>
<b>Keep freight moving.</b>	Provide partnership funding to solve freight delays on strategic corridors.	<b>\$300- 400</b>
<b>Start now to make more informed choices at the local level.</b>	Tie funding to efficiencies.	<b>\$1,875 - 2,500</b>
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENT PACKAGE</b>		<b>\$9,565 - 12,750</b>

NOTE: These investments should be subject to a proportionality principle: any reductions in the total package should be proportional by category as above, and by state/regional split.

### REVENUE RECOMMENDATIONS — SIX-YEAR SCENARIO STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL SOURCES (NUMBERS ARE ESTIMATES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

SOURCES	6-YEAR REVENUES (\$ MILLIONS)	YEAR-1 COST TO USER
<b>STATEWIDE FLEXIBLE</b>		
sales tax on commodity price of gas (up to price cap @ 6.5% on 80¢ 'rack' price)	1,100	29
surcharge on wholesale value of transportation goods @ 2%	1,266	
\$20 transportation mitigation fee on passenger vehicles and non-commercial trucks	445	20
general fund transfer of sales tax on transportation construction	510	
<b>SUBTOTAL ALL POTENTIAL STATEWIDE FLEXIBLE SOURCES</b>	<b>\$3,321</b>	<b>\$49</b>
<b>STATEWIDE RESTRICTED BY 18<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT</b>		
gas tax increase of ~6 cents	1,100	33
gross weight fee on all vehicles	1,330	40
truck surcharge (FMSIB)	150	
extend \$30 license fee to all vehicles	31	
ferry farebox recovery @ 80% in six years	95	
<b>SUBTOTAL ALL POTENTIAL STATEWIDE RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	<b>\$2,706</b>	<b>\$73</b>
statewide bond proceeds (25-year bonds, 5.6% interest rate) (less debt service)	1,800 (271)	
efficiency savings (10%)	214	
<b>STATEWIDE SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,770</b>	<b>\$122</b>
<b>REGIONAL AND LOCAL FLEXIBLE (illustration using Puget Sound as example)</b>		
regional sales tax @ 0.2%	687	
VMT charge @ 2 cents	1,340	
local option vehicle license fee @ \$50	373	
regional bond proceeds (25-year bonds, 5.7% interest rate) (less debt service)	1,500 (226)	
<b>REGIONAL AND LOCAL FLEXIBLE (outside Puget Sound)</b>		
local option vehicle license fee @ \$50	TBD	
local option high capacity transit sales tax @ 1%	TBD	
local option high capacity transit MVET @ 0.8%	TBD	
<b>REGIONAL AND LOCAL SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,674</b>	
<b>TOTAL ALL SOURCES</b>	<b>\$11,444</b>	

USE	COST (\$ MILLIONS)
Fix chokepoints, make progress on work started	\$3,000 - 4,000
Construct HOV lanes	\$750 - 1,000
Start on tough problems	\$225 - 300
Keep the ferries afloat	\$375 - 500
Expand choices, avoid future costs	\$3,000 - 4,000
Use technology	\$40 - 50
Keep freight moving	\$300- 400
Make more choices at local level	\$1,875 - 2,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,565 - 12,750</b>

## Begin with fixing the worst congestion chokepoints in the state and make real progress on what was started.

We know that each region of the state has highways and roads that we try to avoid during rush hour. Instead of hiding from the problem we recommend that we focus on it. Using work that



WSDOT has already done to study these 'congestion chokepoints,' let's fund and begin building projects that are ready to go on the most congested highways of the state. These traffic solutions have already been through the cost-benefit analysis and priority listing review. The state began work on some of these projects in 1998 – then funding was cut with Initiative 695. The 2000 legislature began to fund some of these projects and the BRCT encourages the state to complete construction of those ready-to-go projects while we plan for more complex projects.

Following are some examples of chokepoints that should be fixed. The list below is for illustrative purposes only. These are the types of projects that could be done in the next six

years. (A complete list of chokepoints in the state is included in the investment strategies committee final report, appendix A.)

Projects set for completion before end of 2007:

Examples to complete HOV lanes on congested corridors in Puget Sound

- Expand and improve HOV lanes on I-5 from Tukwila to the Pierce County line.
- Build direct HOV to HOV connections between I-90 and I-405.
- Extend HOV lanes on SR 167 to Auburn.
- Add HOV lanes to SR 99 in Shoreline.
- Reconstruct the I-5/SR 16 and I-5/38th Street interchanges in Tacoma and add HOV lanes to improve traffic flow.
- Improve SR 304 between the Bremerton Ferry Terminal and SR 3, including the addition of HOV lanes.
- Add HOV lanes on SR 16 between I-5 and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.
- Widen and add HOV lanes to SR 900 from SE 78th Street to the I-90 interchange in Issaquah.

Examples of congestion relief for all vehicles in Puget Sound

- Complete congestion relief improvements on I-5 and SR 524 near Alderwood Mall.
- Provide congestion relief and interchange improvements at the junction of US 2 and SR 9 north of Snohomish.

- Connect SR 509 to I-5 in the SeaTac area to improve access to the airport and provide alternative access to south Seattle industrial areas.
- Convert SR 522 to a four-lane freeway from Paradise Lake Road to the Snohomish River.
- Continue the widening of Bothell-Everett Highway (SR 527) north from 132nd Street SE to 112th Street SE.
- Widen SR 9 to five lanes from 228th Street SE to 212th Street SE near Clearview.
- Widen SR 161 to five lanes from Jovita Boulevard to S 360th Street in the Milton-Federal Way area.
- Widen SR 524 to five lanes from 24th Avenue SW to SR 527 in the Lynnwood area.
- Construct an interchange on SR 167 in North Sumner.
- Construct a new interchange at SR 16 and Olympic Drive in Gig Harbor.

Examples that could improve traffic flow in western Washington (outside of Puget Sound)

- Add additional lane to I-5 between Salmon Creek and I-205 north of Vancouver.
- Widen SR 539 from two lanes to five from Tenmile Road to the Canadian border between Bellingham and Lynden.
- Improve SR 542 from Orleans Road to Hannegan Road in Bellingham.
- Construct truck climbing lanes and passing lanes on US 101 near Sequim, Blyn and Gardiner.
- Build a passing lane on SR 19 near SR 104 in the Hood Canal area.
- Add a lane to I-5 between Grand Mound (exit 88) and Maytown (exit 95), between Centralia and Tumwater.



Examples that could improve traffic flow in eastern Washington

- Improve north-south flow in East Wenatchee by improving the SR 28 from the US2/97 junction to 9th Street.
- Improve capacity on US 2 from the SR 28 intersection to Rocky Reach dam, north of Wenatchee.
- Add an additional lane to I-90 through the Spokane Valley from Argonne Road to the Idaho border.
- Construct an auxiliary lane on I-90 westbound from Vantage to Ryegrass Summit.
- Improve US 395 from the Spokane River to Francis Avenue in Spokane, and to the north.
- Widen SR 17 to four lanes from Pioneer Way to Stratford Road in Moses Lake.
- Widen US 12 to four lanes in the Attalia area east of Pasco.
- Construct additional lanes on SR 240 between I-182 and Columbia Center Boulevard interchange in the Tri-Cities.

### **Start now on the toughest problems.**

Some of our most difficult problems will take more than six years time to resolve. The sooner we start, the sooner the fix. Place a spotlight on the tough decisions and complex issues to reduce traffic congestion. Provide funding for new technical tools such as multi-modal modeling to use in the analysis needed for making wise investment decisions. These tools will aid the ability of the state to have solutions ready for phase two investments beginning in the 2007-2009 biennium.

- Finish multi-modal corridor planning that has been started to make the best decisions on Trans-Lake Washington Project — SR 520 and I-405.
- Begin using most effective mix analysis and other investment strategy tools to screen all transportation investments in all modes, as soon as possible.
- Get multi-modal corridor planning started on SR 2 from Everett to Stevens Pass, SR 9 through Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom counties, SR 395 in Spokane, and SR 101 on the Olympic Peninsula, to name a few examples.



### **Keep the ferries afloat.**

Restore auto and passenger service and replace four deficient auto ferries to meet Coast Guard requirements.

### **Expand choices and assure our transportation system continues to serve those who need it.**

Offer travel options for the commuter, bus rider, and driver that can be put in place quickly:

- Build park and ride lots and get at least 15,000 new stalls in place by 2006.
- Provide transit service through state match of local sales tax for transit, to achieve a combination of restoring funds lost from Initiative 695, and expanding service to meet demand. Link matching funds to benchmarks and productivity.
- Ensure special needs and rural populations have transportation services.
- Restore the commute trip reduction (CTR) tax credit and expand the CTR program.
- Prioritize and fund vanpools.
- Provide incentive funds to encourage trip reduction.
- Encourage smart growth land use planning.
- Encourage flexible hours, telecommuting, car sharing and creative ways to reduce demand during peak hours.

- Bring rail service on line to meet commuter demand.
- Implement state rail plan recommendations to meet inter-city service goals.

### Use technology to do more with what we have.

Fixing traffic jams is more than building new facilities – it also means being smarter with what we have: making greater use of traffic service patrols to clear accidents and prevent traffic jams. We recommend immediately synchronizing traffic lights on key routes to keep traffic flowing and using intelligent information systems such as real-time video, the internet, computer updates and electronic signage to alert drivers to conditions so they can alter routes and avoid delays.

- Improve traveler information systems, including cameras and traffic sensors, on I-5 from Everett to Bellingham
- Service Patrols can be added: I-5; I-90; SR 522 and SR 405
- Improve signals:
  - Bremerton SR303
  - Central Puget Sound: SR522; SR169; SR2; SR524; SR527
  - Centralia SR507
  - Mount Vernon SR20
  - Oak Harbor SR20
  - Pierce County SR 7 and SR 161
  - Spokane SR 27, I-90 Sullivan Road, SR 2

### Keep freight moving.

Moving freight is critical to the health of the state. Building overpasses and underpasses to separate rail lines from roads could make a huge difference. These projects reduce conflicts between general traffic and trucks and trains. These projects have met the cost-benefit analysis test and have funding partners to spread the cost and many can be underway in six years. Some examples are:

- South 228th Street near Kent
- East Marginal Way ramps in Seattle
- Spokane Street Viaduct Improvements in Seattle
- SR 519 Intermodal Access – Royal Brougham/Alaskan Way near the sports stadiums in Seattle
- I-90 Cascade crossing additional lanes and snow sheds from Hyak to Easton





- Widening last section of SR 20 to I-5 near Mount Vernon
- Elimination of at-grade crossings in Yakima
- Columbia Center Boulevard in Kennewick

### **Start now to make more informed choices.**

We need to be smarter about spending money at the local level. Right now there is no common way to track or evaluate investment, problems, or progress. Funding should be used to make progress in meeting BRCT goals and benchmarks. New funding for local governments should be used for the basic transportation infrastructure and should be tied to:

- Demonstrated progress in achieving efficiencies
- Sharing of resources to reduce duplication and save money
- Improved cost reporting systems
- Best use of pavement management system
- Greater use of cost-benefit analysis by all transportation agencies.

### **Start projects now to avoid future investment costs.**

Estimates of our current transportation funding revenues show a significant shortage of funds, \$100 billion, if we want to meet our goals for 2020. The BRCT has identified some options that can help avoid future costs of up to \$50 billion but these options require further testing before they can be recommended for broad implementation. It is critical we conduct further analysis in the next biennium to help the state meet this shortfall. We recommend that the following studies start right away:

- Incentives to reduce SOV trips through smart growth in high growth corridors.
- Expansion of TDM tools for most congested corridors. Target demonstration projects for SR 520 and I-405 to help meet demand forecasts.
- Substantive permit reform.
- Pilot project for managed competition.
- Congestion pricing for new facilities and value pricing experiments.
- Look to the private sector to help meet demand for transportation services.

### **Continuously prioritize to get best results.**

This package of recommendations is the first phase of a twenty-year plan. The BRCT recommends new transportation revenues be authorized for the next six years ranging from \$9-\$13 billion. Authorization for the second phase of transportation investment should take place in conjunction with a review of the progress in achieving this first stage. To ensure this money is spent wisely, the BRCT recommends these criteria to select projects for inclusion in the early action phase.

Priority should be given to:

1. Projects that meet BRCT investment strategies and benchmarks;
2. Continued maintenance and preservation of the state-wide system;
3. Projects in the most congested corridors;
4. Projects that are in transportation plans approved by April 2001;
5. Projects showing measurable results within six years;
6. Projects with permit approvals in place;
7. Ensuring the total package achieves a most effective mix of investments.

### Expected Results

Ensure that progress is made toward reaching benchmarks and that results are evaluated for effectiveness before second phase funds are expended.

Interim results to be expected are:

- Demonstrated efficiencies in administration, operation, maintenance and project delivery.
- Meet air quality benchmark continuously.
- Prevent deterioration of existing transportation system.
- Assure continuous operation of ferry service beginning in 2001.
- Improve traffic flow on interstate system by removing accidents promptly.
- Improve traffic flow on 15 major arterials throughout the state by synchronizing traffic lights by end of year 2002.
- Double vanpool service to 3,000 vanpools by adding 1,500 vanpools in congested corridors by 2007.
- Open park and ride stalls in high-demand locations by end of year 2002.
- Construct approved HOV lanes in the most congested areas by end of 2007.
- Construct new lane miles of approved highways by end 2007.
- Construct 15 grade separations to improve freight mobility.
- Expand the CTR program coverage from 500,000 to 800,000 employees by June 30, 2003.
- Double to 37,500 the number of cars taken off the roads each weekday morning through trip reduction and smart growth programs, by 2007.
- Meet demand for transit trips in the most congested corridors by June 30, 2005.
- Increase passenger rail service between Vancouver, BC and Portland.
- Keep the public informed of delays and work schedules using all available technologies to provide real-time alerts about construction delays.

**Set target dates to take action on the BRCT recommendations.**

Act on efficiency and governance recommendations.

- Immediate Adopt benchmarks and create Accountability Board.
- Immediate Transportation Commission and Governor negotiate procedure to fill the vacancy for the Secretary of Transportation.
- Immediate Direct a thorough and independent performance review of WSDOT administrative practices and staffing levels.
- Immediate Begin substantive permit reforms for transportation projects.
- Immediate Provide incentives to achieve construction and project delivery efficiencies.
- Immediate Adopt incentives for all transportation agencies to reach benchmarks.
- Immediate Authorize regional transportation authorities, including regional revenue measures.
- 2001-2003 Provide statewide revenue to regions for multi-modal regional priority setting using a regional equity principle.
- Immediate Adopt new formula for distribution of new roadway funds.

Invest to hold steady on system condition benchmarks.

- Immediate Continue priority funding of highway maintenance, preservation, and safety.
- Immediate Restore funding for auto and passenger ferry service and transit.
- Immediate Continue current public transportation funding.
- Immediate Provide funding to cities, counties, and transit to ensure preservation and maintenance of existing system.
- Immediate Phase-out the use of studded tires or institute a surcharge to recognize cost of studded tire damage.

Invest to optimize the system.

- Immediate Make use of highway service patrols
- Immediate Synchronize & update traffic lights on key corridors.
- 2001-2003 Restore the commute trip reduction (CTR) tax credit and expand the CTR program.
- 2001-2007 Establish incentives for smart growth in key corridors.
- 2001-2007 Establish incentives for innovative trip reduction programs.
- 2001-2007 Increase use of intelligent information systems.
- 2001-2003 Provide incentives to get park and ride lots to be sited and built.
- 2001-2007 Build 15,000 new park and ride stalls in most congested areas.

Invest to make cost effective system expansions.

- Immediate Fund further planning to reduce congestion in key corridors.
- Immediate Create a multi-modal planning model for best decision-making.
- 2001-2007 Finish the HOV system.
- 2001-2007 Finish highway projects already started and approved.
- 2001-2007 Finish pedestrian & bicycle improvements started and approved.
- 2001-2007 Construct freight mobility projects and continue corridor improvement plans.
- 2001-2007 Conduct engineering for projects in congested corridors.
- 2001-2007 Bring additional cost-effective multi-modal transportation services on-line, vanpools, transit, rail, and other choices.

Adopt a revenue package.

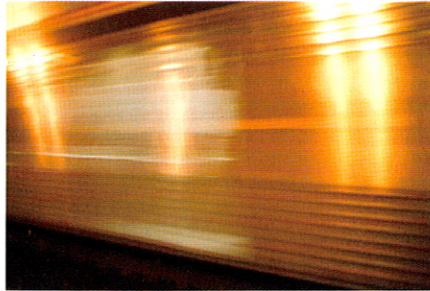
- Immediate Adopt a package of revenue measures to fund a comprehensive multi-modal set of investments, which, taken together with the recommended efficiency measures and reforms, will ensure a 20-year program of preserving, optimizing, and expanding the state's transportation system.

## TWENTY-YEAR TIMELINE

2001-2007		2007-2013		2013-2020		BENCHMARK RESULTS	
<b>EFFICIENCIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish benchmarks &amp; accountability board.</li> <li>Make governance changes: appointment of Secretary; regional authorities.</li> <li>Direct performance review of WSDOT.</li> <li>Permit reform.</li> <li>Provide incentives for construction, operations, and maintenance efficiencies.</li> <li>Allow innovative project delivery methods.</li> <li>Achieve administrative savings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor benchmarks.</li> <li>Evaluate performance of all transportation agencies in progress on benchmarks.</li> <li>Continuous efficiency improvements.</li> <li>Phase 2 permit reforms based on pilot program results.</li> <li>Phase 2 construction, operations, maintenance efficiencies based on phase 1 results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor benchmarks.</li> <li>Evaluate performance of all transportation agencies in progress on benchmarks.</li> <li>Continuous efficiency improvements.</li> <li>Phase 3 permit reforms based on pilot program results.</li> <li>Phase 3 construction, operations, maintenance efficiencies based on phase 2 results.</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Washington's public transit agencies will achieve the median cost per vehicle revenue hour of peer group transit agencies.</li> <li>Improve operations, maintenance, and project delivery costs.</li> </ul>
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore auto and passenger ferry service.</li> <li>Replace 4 auto ferries to meet Coast Guard requirements.</li> <li>Restore transit service.</li> <li>Use technology to optimize the system; traffic lights, ITS, patrols.</li> <li>Finish projects that are ready to go.</li> <li>Expand choices for TDM, transit, rail, bikes, pedestrians, smart growth, vanpools, park and ride stalls.</li> <li>Construct HOV lanes.</li> <li>Keep freight moving.</li> <li>Improve effectiveness of local government transportation investments.</li> <li>Start on toughest problems.</li> <li>Plan for phase 2 investments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 2 investments to meet benchmarks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 3 investments to meet benchmarks.</li> <li>Evaluate progress meeting benchmarks.</li> <li>Authorize next increment of phased investments.</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zero percent of interstate highways, state routes, and local arterials in poor condition.</li> <li>Zero percent of bridges structurally deficient.</li> <li>Complete seismic safety retrofits of all Level 1 and Level 2 bridges.</li> <li>Reduce traffic congestion on urban interstate highways to be no worse than the national mean.</li> <li>Reduce delay per driver to be no worse than the national mean.</li> <li>Reduce overall hours of travel delay per person in congested corridors.</li> <li>Maintain vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita at 2000 levels.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Reduce traffic accidents.</li> <li>Freight movement and growth in trade-related freight movement should be accommodated on the transportation system.</li> <li>Maintain air quality at federally required levels.</li> </ul>
<b>NEW REVENUE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link funding to efficiencies.</li> <li>Link funding to best practices.</li> <li>Simplify funding distributions.</li> <li>Seek fare box recovery target for ferries.</li> <li>Adopt regional equity principle.</li> <li>Authorize revenue package: \$9-13 billion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate progress meeting benchmarks.</li> <li>Authorize next increment of phased investments.</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that transportation spending keeps pace with growth.</li> <li>Twenty-year revenue: \$50 billion.</li> <li>Twenty-year avoided costs: \$50 billion.</li> </ul>	



WASHINGTON STATE DOT



# BENCHMARKS



## RECOMMENDED BENCHMARKS

### **B**enchmark 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.

### **B**enchmark 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.

### **B**enchmark 3: **Zero percent of local arterials in poor condition.**

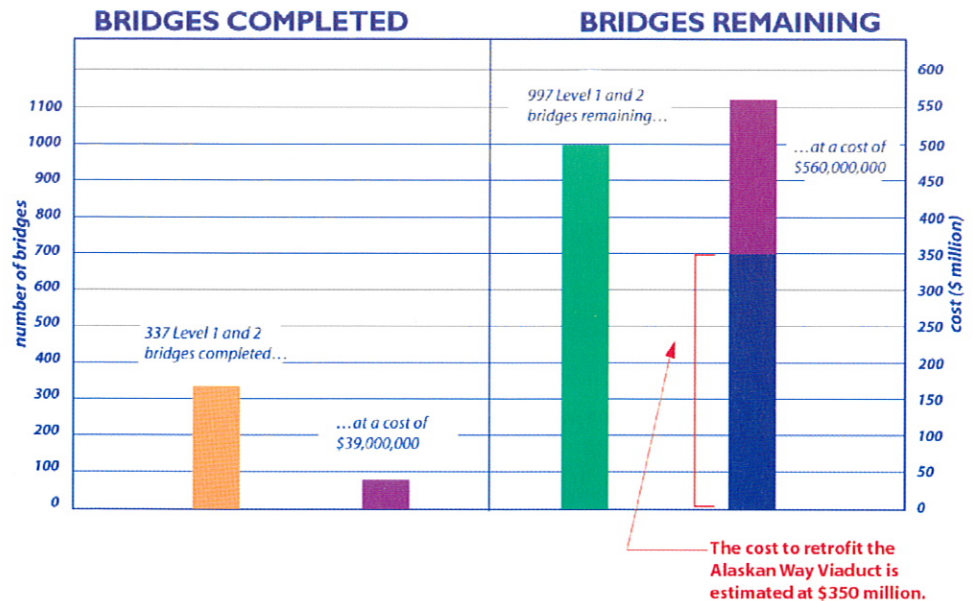
Data were unavailable for current conditions of local arterials in Washington. A pilot project under the auspices of the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program (LEAP) is compiling the available data.

### **B**enchmark 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 proposed transportation accountability commission will review this benchmark and raise the standard if necessary to reach other benchmarks.

### Benchmark 9:

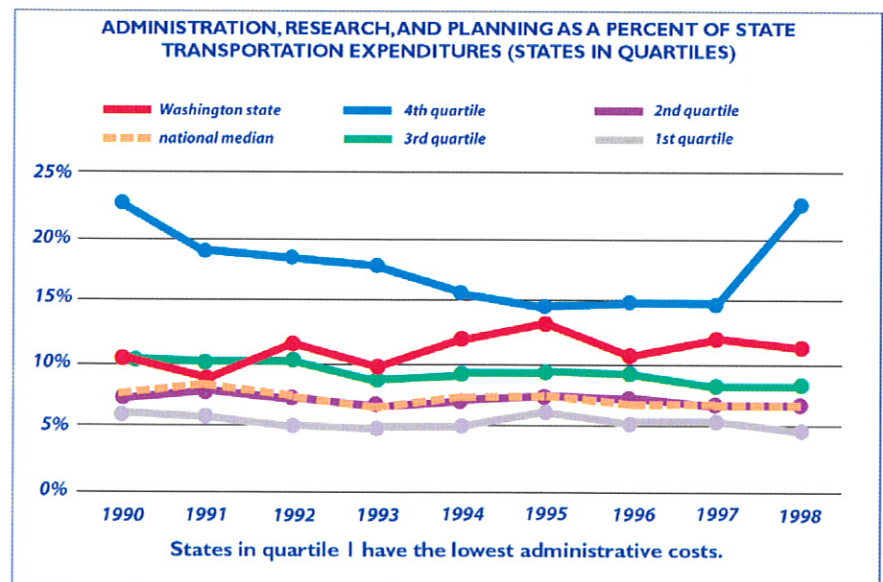
#### Increase non-auto share of work trips in urban centers or reverse the downward trend of non-auto share of work trips in urban centers.

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 proposed accountability commission 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 11:

**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.**

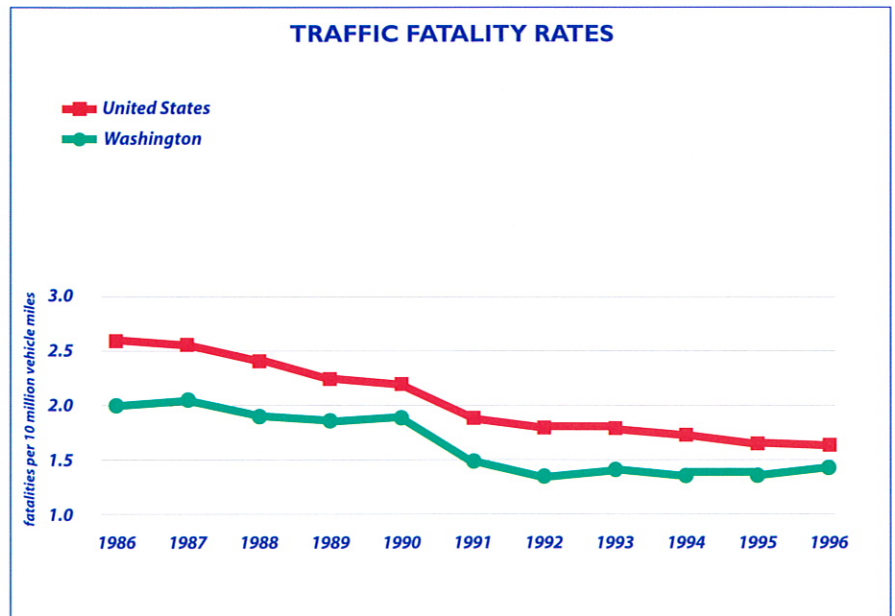
The benchmark committee found that King County Metro and Pierce Transit’s cost per vehicle hour were thirteen percent and fourteen percent respectively, above their peer group transit agencies nationwide. The committee also found that transit-operating costs are highly dependent on wages of transit personnel,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

## BENCHMARKS TO BE DEVELOPED

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.

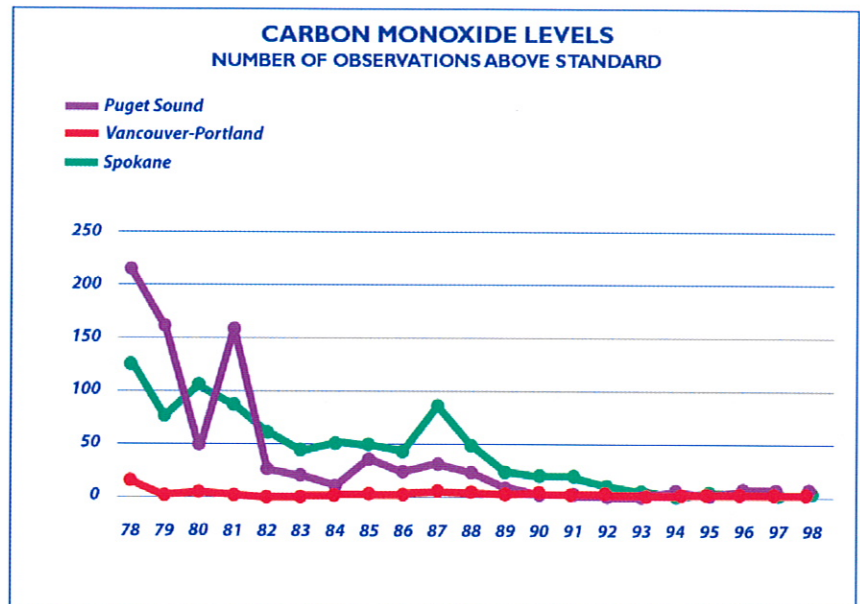
The committee found that Washington has slightly less than 1.5 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles, which is less than the national average of about 1.7. All accidents, including those involving bicyclists and pedestrians, should decline.



### 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 proposed transportation accountability commission should 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 proposed accountability commission should 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.**

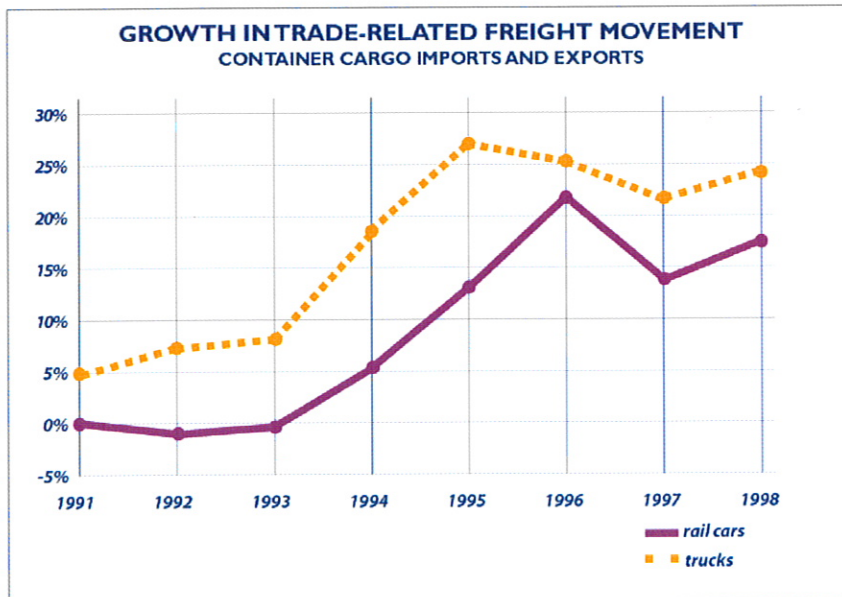
Washington's transportation system must not be allowed to fall behind the pace of its population and economic growth. The proposed transportation accountability commission should develop a benchmark that monitors transportation revenues and how they track transportation needs.

### 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.



### Person Delay Benchmark:

**Reduce overall hours of travel delay per person in congested corridors.**

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



PROJECT CONSULTANT TEAM

**Lund Consulting, Inc.**, project management

**Cocker Fennessy**, communications

**CSE Group**, meeting facilitation

**Design Analysis**, newsletters, printed reports, administration options and recommendations

**ECONorthwest**, investment strategies

**Michael Doubleday**, investment strategies

**Paladino Consulting**, administration findings and options

**Prospect Delta**, benchmarks and revenue findings, options, and recommendations



Unless otherwise noted, all photographs contributed by Dawson R. Murchison and Dennis Sellin, and taken in Washington state between March 2000 and September 2000.

## **CONTACT**

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation  
411 University Street, Suite 1200  
Seattle, Washington 98101

(206) 652-2562

(888) 414-2562 (toll-free)

(206) 442-4253 (fax)

[wsbrct@earthlink.net](mailto:wsbrct@earthlink.net)

[www.brct.wa.gov](http://www.brct.wa.gov)