

## **CHAPTER ONE - REGIONAL OVERVIEW**

### **BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) is an intergovernmental board comprised of local governmental jurisdictions and agencies within Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties. Non-voting and ex-officio members from both the public and private sectors also actively participate in activities of the agency.

The BFCG is the lead planning agency for both the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). The MPO is federally mandated and authorized to fulfill federal planning requirements for the Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, West Richland urbanized area. The RTPO is voluntary, locally developed, and fulfills state planning requirements for the three-county region. The organization is comprised of twenty-three member jurisdictions/agencies, which represent the region's population of 317,200.

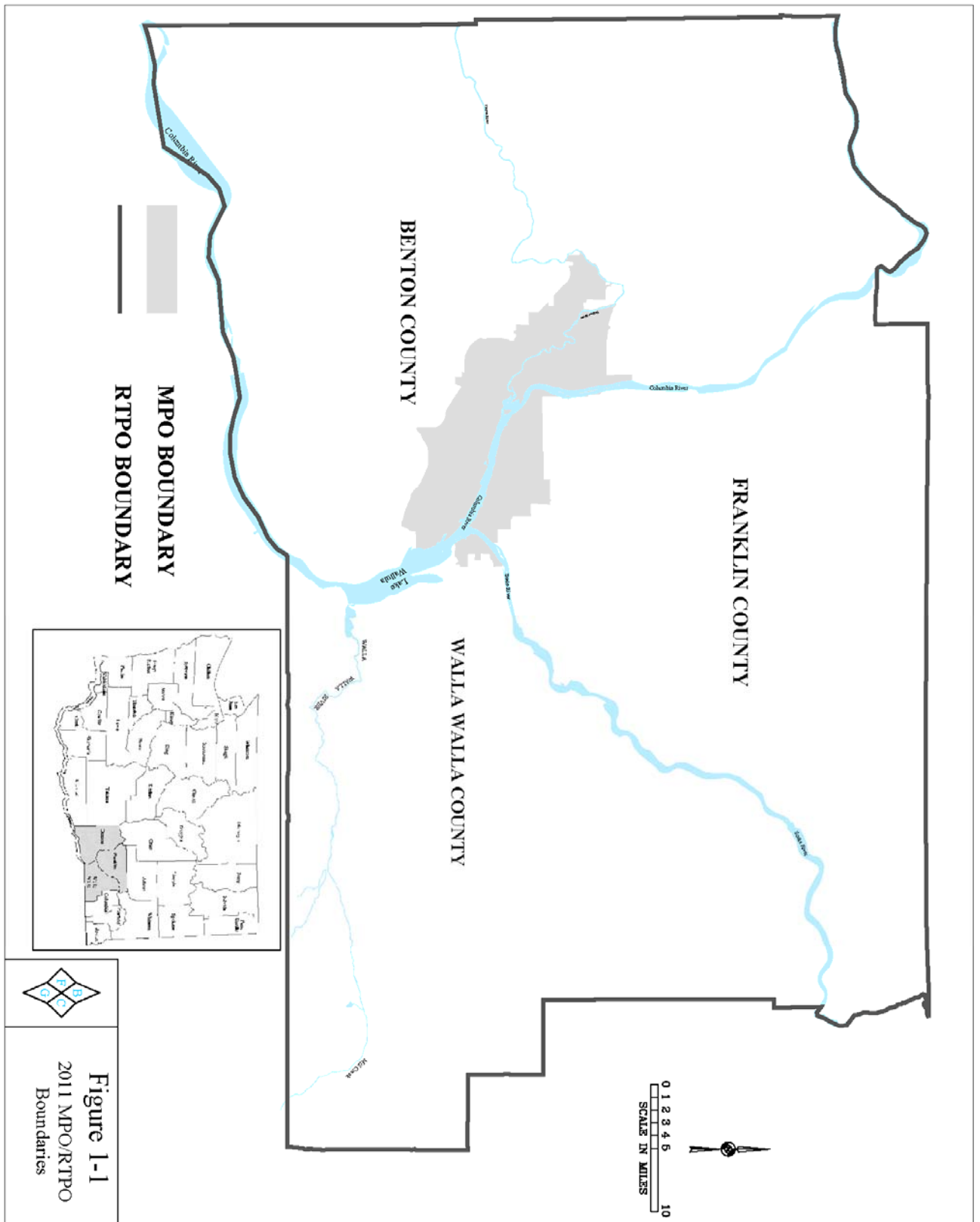
The BFCG fulfills its MPO/RTPO responsibilities through Tri-MATS (Tri-Cities Metropolitan Area Transportation Study), consisting of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), and the BFCG Board. Citizen task forces are also intermittently formulated for specific projects.

The mission is a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive planning process that results in regional multi-modal transportation plans and programs that anticipate the social, economic, and environmental needs of the metropolitan area, the region, and the state. Major products of the process are this long-range (20-year) Regional Transportation Plan, a long-range (20-year) Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the regional Transportation Improvement Program (6-year), the Unified Planning Work Program (annual), a comprehensive transit plan (annual), and special planning and research studies.

The TAC is comprised of engineers and planners representing local jurisdictions, transit, special purpose districts, and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The TAC provides staff level input to the activities being undertaken and forwards its recommendations to the PAC and the Board.

The PAC is comprised of elected officials from the same jurisdictions represented at the technical level. The PAC provides policy review and guidance to activities and projects that will require action or adoption by the BFCG Board and/or local jurisdictions. This multi-level forum provides coordination and consensus prior to adoption of work program products.

Like the PAC, the Board is comprised of elected officials. The Board is the legally recognized governing body for the MPO, and must formally adopt all federal and state requirements.



**Figure 1-1**  
2011 MPO/RTPO  
Boundaries

**BFCG BOARD MEMBERSHIP - 2011**

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Benton County	James Beaver
Franklin County	Brad Peck
City of Kennewick	Bob Olson
City of Richland	Dave Rose
City of Pasco	Al Yenney
City of Benton City	Lloyd Carnahan
City of Prosser	Randy Taylor
City of West Richland	Brent Gerry
City of Connell	Lee Barrow
City of Kahlotus	Vacant
City of Mesa	Vacant
Port of Pasco	Bill Clark
Port of Kennewick	Skip Novakovich
Port of Benton	Robert Larson
Ben Franklin Transit	Bob Koch
Benton Public Utility District	Lori Kay-Sanders

The BFCG undertakes transportation related activities that are of regional significance or are of particular importance to member jurisdictions. Each member supports the Council activities through an annual assessment, based on a per capita formula. The Council is governed by the jurisdictional representatives, who, as a group, determine the work program of the BFCG and the necessary budget to ensure the completion of that program.

**BFCG COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP - 2011**

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>PAC Representative</u>	<u>TAC Representative</u>
Benton County	Leo Bowman	Malcolm Bowie
Franklin County	Brad Peck	Tim Fife
Walla Walla County	Gregg Tompkins	Randy Glaeser
City of Kennewick	Bob Olson	Ken Nelson
City of Richland	Dave Rose	Steve Stairs
City of Pasco	Bob Hoffmann	Ahmad Qayoumi
City of Benton City	Lloyd Carnahan	Bob Spink **
City of Prosser	Randy Taylor	L.J. DaCorsi
City of West Richland	Tony Benegas	Roscoe Slade
City of Connell	Lee Barrow	Larry Turner
City of Kaholtus	Richard Halverson	Sharon McCaleb*
City of Mesa	Austin Davis	Teresa Standridge*
City of Walla Walla	Jerry Cummins	Neal Chavre
City of College Place	Rick Newby	Paul Hartwig
City of Waitsburg	Walt Gobel	Randy Hinchliffe*
Port of Pasco	Bill Clark	Randy Hayden
Port of Benton	Robert Larson	Roger Wright
Port of Kennewick	Skip Novakovich	Larry Peterson

Port of Walla Walla	Ron Dunning	Paul Gerola
Ben Franklin Transit	Bob Koch	Kathy McMullen
Valley Transit	Gregg Loney	Dick Fondahn
WSDOT	Don Whitehouse	Paul Gonseth
Mission Support Alliance	-----	Frank Powell
Fluor Daniel Hanford, Inc.	-----	-----
Battelle Northwest	-----	-----

\* City Clerk, not delegate

\*\* Engineering Consultant

### UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

To secure federal and state funding to sustain metropolitan and regional transportation planning, the BFCG annually prepares a Unified Planning Work Program in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), local governments, and Ben Franklin Transit (BFT). Emphasis areas identified by FHWA and FTA are incorporated. Any special studies anticipated to be performed by BFCG for WSDOT and the local jurisdictions are included. This may include transit planning and marketing surveys, route planning studies, the undertaking of FHWA or FTA related annual emphasis area issues, census data, a Regional Transportation Plan update, and other studies. Any anticipated corridor or subarea studies in behalf of or in cooperation with WSDOT and/or BFT will also be documented in the UPWP. Upon Tri-MATS and BFCG Board endorsement, the UPWP must be approved by WSDOT, FHWA and the FTA. The UPWP then guides BFCG transportation staff activities for the coming year.

### TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)

In accordance with state and federal rules and guidelines, the BFCG planning process includes compilation of a Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the MPO and RTPO in cooperation with WSDOT, Transit, and the member jurisdictions. Additionally, the BFCG, in cooperation with WSDOT and BFT, develops a financial plan that demonstrates resources are reasonably available to implement the TIP. The TIP must be financially constrained and prioritized by year, and must also identify all state, federal and local funding requirements. Finally, BFCG must certify that the TIP is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Each member jurisdiction, including WSDOT and transit, must annually review and update its six-year TIP in the format provided by WSDOT. Local TIPs are prioritized by year and financially constrained to approximate anticipated annual revenues. After adoption of local TIPs by their governing bodies, those TIPs are forwarded to BFCG for compilation into the regional TIP.

Upon compilation of a draft TIP and prior to Tri-MATS adoption, BFCG provides a public forum for review and comment. After resolving any comments, the final regional TIP is endorsed by the Tri-MATS committees and the Regional Board. The approved TIP is then forwarded to WSDOT for inclusion in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for approval by the Governor. BFCG and its membership assist and cooperate with WSDOT in the regional public involvement process for the TIP.

The TIP may be amended to reflect needed modifications to the transportation program. Procedures for interim amendments of the TIP must conform to state and federal requirements as well as BFCG policy. Public involvement in TIP preparation and/or amendment at the jurisdiction, agency or BFCG levels must conform with state and federal requirements and to supplemental BFCG Public Involvement Procedures.

Annual TIPs and amendments adopted by RTPPO member jurisdictions and agencies are incorporated by reference into the 2011-2032 Regional Transportation Plan.

## **METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

The 1970 US Census indicated that the cities of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, and West Richland and portions of Benton and Franklin counties reached the threshold population and density required for an urbanized area, triggering a federal requirement to designate an MPO to coordinate transportation planning and programming. In 1973, the local governments and the governor designated the BFCG as the responsible agency to carry out the required planning responsibilities of an urbanized area for highways, streets, roads, and public transportation. The 2000 US Census expanded the urbanized area into western Walla Walla County, encompassing the unincorporated communities of Burbank and Burbank Heights. The BFCG planning responsibilities are defined in the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), the MPO certification documentation, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WSDOT and Ben Franklin Transit, and the BFCG Public Involvement Procedures.

The BFCG MPO complies with federal (USDOT) regulations which require that the *“metropolitan area has a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process that results in plans and programs that consider all transportation modes and supports metropolitan community development and social goals. These plans and programs shall lead to the development and operation of an integrated, inter-modal transportation system that facilitates the efficient, economic movement of people and goods.”* (Federal Register, Volume 58, No. 207, October 28, 1993, Section 450.300).

Federal regulations for MPO planning (23 CFR 450.316) and metropolitan area transportation plan requirements (23 CFR 450.322) are included in Appendix A. The Metropolitan Planning Area boundary is shown on Figure 1-1, page 1-2. Appendix H contains a glossary of terms, acronyms, and abbreviations used throughout this document.

## **AGENCY CONSISTENCY AND COOPERATION**

The BFCG planning process must be consistent with and conform to all federal and state requirements, including Title 23, U.S.C., the Federal Transit Act, and the appropriate management systems as recommended by 23 CFR 500.

Two agreements exist that define relationships in the planning process. The first is the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Coordination Agreement establishing the working relationship between WSDOT and BFCG in fulfilling the 3 C (Cooperative, Comprehensive, and Continuous) transportation planning process for the Tri-Cities Urbanized Area.

The second is the Memorandum of Understanding with WSDOT and Ben Franklin Transit (BFT) defining each agency’s responsibilities for planning and programming, including public involvement for the regional portion of the State Transportation Improvement Program, project selections, and major metropolitan transportation investment analyses.

### TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA

The Tri-Cities Urban Area may reach the 200,000 population threshold to be reclassified as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) as an outcome of the 2010 Census. The following table outlines how TMA status would change the planning responsibilities and funding possibilities for the BFCG and the urban transportation agencies. Table 1-1 below details how certain MPO responsibilities will change.

*Table 1-1: Non-TMA MPO and TMA MPO Comparisons*

ACTIVITY	Non-TMA MPO	TMA MPO
Develop/Maintain Long-Range Plan (20-Year, Financially Constrained)	Basis for determination and selection of projects to include in 4-Year TIP.	Basis for determination and selection of projects to include the in 4-Year TIP.
Develop Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	MPO shall develop TIP, including 4-Year project priority list and financial plan.	MPO shall Develop TIP, including 4-Year project priority list and financial plan.
Congestion Management Process (CMP)	Voluntary	A Congestion Management Process (CMP) must be developed and implemented by the MPO(s) in the TMA area.  Projects to add highway capacity for SOV’s in non attainment TMA areas must first be evaluated through a CMP.
Allocation of Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) Funds.	MPOs depend on WSDOT’s Statewide Committee and the legislature for STP funds and project selection authority.	Federal law to date has guaranteed TMAs a prorated share of “attributable” STP funds.
Project Selection from the TIP.	Projects selected by the State and/or the public transportation operator(s) in cooperation with the MPO from the approved metropolitan TIP.	Projects selected by the MPO (excluding projects on the National Highway System and projects funded under the Bridge, Interstate Maintenance, and Federal Lands Highway programs) in consultation with the State and public transportation operator(s) from the approved TIP. Projects on the NHS and projects funded under the Bridge and Interstate Maintenance programs shall be selected by the State in cooperation with the MPO, from the approved TIP.
Planning Process and Federal Certification Review	Conduct process and prepare planning documents in accordance with federal transportation legislation.	Similar but more in-depth. Planning process. Planning process must be reviewed and certified every 4-years by FHWA & FTA.

Source: 23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C - Metropolitan Planning and Programming

## FEDERAL PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Federal transportation regulations require that metropolitan transportation planning be accomplished through formation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). That ongoing process creates a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions in urbanized areas of 50,000 or more population. Those investment decisions must include both highway and transit projects. Planning funds are, therefore, provided by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to carry out those MPO activities.

The 2005 federal transportation appropriations bill - the Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) builds upon urban planning requirements of the previous acts, imposing substantial additional responsibilities upon MPOs. Many of the new requirements relate to consulting or coordinating with additional agencies and parties in the planning process. A more detailed look at the last three federal transportation appropriations follows.

SAFETEA-LU consolidates all provisions for metropolitan planning under Section 5303 of Title 49. Those provisions establish a national policy to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that serve the needs of people and freight while encouraging economic growth, reducing fuel consumption and improving air quality both at the MPO and state levels.

MPOs are required to develop plans and TIPs that provide for integrated management and operation of transportation systems and facilities, including those for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Act encourages a relationship with other planning officials through consulting with officials responsible for state and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movements. The Act also emphasizes safety and security as separate and distinct planning factors.

The work of MPOs impacts all sectors of the American economy. More than 80 percent of our citizens live and work in metropolitan areas, which drive the nation's economy and compete head-to-head with regional economies in other countries. Because the pricing of our goods and services in the international marketplace largely determines our ability to compete successfully, we must be able to transport these goods and services efficiently. The quality of metropolitan transportation infrastructure - highways, bridges, airports, transit systems, rail, and ports - is a primary factor in American economic competitiveness.

### ISTEA, TEA-21 & SAFETEA-LU

The Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 brought about a new focus on a balanced, efficient transportation system. The 35-year interstate highway construction era was over. The ISTEA shifted decision-making about federal transportation funding from the state DOTs to a shared responsibility between the states and the MPOs. Major emphasis was put on local planning and programming. That emphasis expanded the duties of MPOs and RTPOs.

ISTEA set forth requirements for Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTPs), including sixteen planning factors to be incorporated into the MTPs. ISTEA's successor, the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) built on the initiatives of ISTEA. Flexibility in the use

of funds; emphasis on measures to improve the environment; focus on a strong planning process as the foundation of good transportation decisions---all ISTEA hallmarks---were continued and enhanced by TEA-21.

New initiatives addressed improving safety, protecting and enhancing communities and the natural environment, and advancing America's economic growth and competitiveness, both domestically and internationally through efficient and flexible transportation. A significant feature was a guaranteed level of federal funds for surface transportation through FY 2003. SAFETEA-LU guaranteed funding levels through FFY 2009 and has subsequently been extended since then.

One of TEA-21's changes for metropolitan planning involved restructuring ISTEA's sixteen planning factors into the following eight more generalized areas to be considered as part of the planning process.

- Economic vitality: Support the economic vitality of the United States, the states, non-metropolitan areas, and metropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.
- Safety: Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Security: Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- Accessibility and mobility: Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- Environmental protection: Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Integration: Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the state, for people and freight.
- Efficiency: Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Preservation: Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

SAFETEA-LU's key modifications to the metropolitan planning process include:

- MPOs are encouraged to consult or coordinate with planning officials responsible for other types of planning activities affected by transportation, including planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movement.
- The metropolitan planning process is to promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Safety and security of the transportation system are separate planning factors that are to be considered during the metropolitan planning process.

Key modifications for Transportation Management Areas (TMAs):

- Must be certified not less than once every 4 years.



- Must implement a Congestion Management Process to effectively manage and operate the system through the use of travel demand reduction and operations management strategies.
- The phase-in schedule for compliance with the congestion management system may not be sooner than 1 year after identification of a TMA.
- TMAs classified as non-attainment for ozone or carbon monoxide may not use federal funds to advance projects that increase single occupancy vehicles unless the project is addressed in the Congestion Management Process.
- TMAs in non-attainment must coordinate with Clean Air Act Agencies to develop transportation control measures in the State Implementation Plan.

## FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The metropolitan planning process establishes a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas. The federal metropolitan planning program oversight is a joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) responsibility. Requirements for a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) are addressed in Title 23 CFR Chapter I Section 450.322. SAFETEA-LU continues many of the planning requirements of ISTEA and TEA-21 including:

- Local officials, in cooperation with the State and transit operators, remain responsible for determining the best mix of transportation investments to meet metropolitan planning needs.
- MPOs are responsible for adopting a transportation plan which has at least a 20-year planning horizon, addresses air quality consistency with the federal Clean Air Act, demonstrates fiscal constraint, and provides for public involvement throughout the planning process.

## PUBLIC AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

23 CFR 450, the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Rule, rule revises planning regulations to reflect any changes made by SAFETEA-LU.

Section 450.316: "Interested Parties, Participation, and Consultation" outlines requirements for developing a participation plan that defines a process for providing interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

In January 2008, the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) adopted revised public and agency involvement procedures for transportation planning to address the additional requirements of SAFETEA-LU.

The BFCG process for development of plans and programs affords opportunity for participation by public officials, private citizens, public agencies, special interest groups, community groups and organizations, minority groups, low-income populations and private transportation providers.

An intended outcome of this process is informed and involved citizens with access to records and information, and the opportunity to participate in and influence the decision making

process prior to commitments to specific proposals. Another goal is community support for projects and programs through early identification and resolution of issues, including adverse effects on minority or low-income populations, and removal of potential barriers or opposition caused by a poorly informed citizenry.

The MTP/RTP is an integral part of the overall work program, which provides a continuing, comprehensive, cooperative transportation planning process. The process includes review and approval by local elected officials, agency staff members and citizens. The MTP/RTP serves as the basis for transportation planning decisions and guides the expenditure of available federal transportation funds.

The MTP/RTP must be periodically reviewed and updated or amended to maintain its currency with issues, problems, and policies affecting regional planning. Agency and citizen participation is encouraged at multiple stages during the development of the update.

The BFCG hosts a public meeting in the Tri-Cities to facilitate citizen review and comment. Pertinent comments are referred to the appropriate jurisdictions for response and resolution. The revised draft MTP is processed through the Tri-MATS committees (TAC and PAC) and the Council of Governments Board. Upon adoption the document is published in final form.

Advertisements of the public meetings to discuss the draft MTP are published in regional newspapers and the BFCG newsletter. The newspaper advertisements are made for two consecutive weeks, the second being no less than one week prior to the meetings. These advertisements indicate availability of the draft document for public review at local libraries, city/county facilities, and BFCG. Similar notices are mailed to appropriate state and regional agencies, elected officials, special interest groups, and a general list of individuals known to have interest in regional planning. Additionally, the MTP is available for review on the BFCG website.

SAFETEA-LU requires consultation, as appropriate with "State, local, Indian Tribal, and private agencies responsible for planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, freight movements, land use management, natural resources, conservation, and historic preservation".

Data and information are conveyed through a variety of visualization techniques at BFCG public meetings. Large maps are generated to present project information. PowerPoint presentations may be used to convey relevant data to meeting attendees and handouts are available based on the presentations.

Through open houses, BFCG committee meetings and the availability of draft documents in libraries and on the BFCG website, interested agencies and the public are afforded the opportunity to review and comment on TIPs, the MTP and the RTP.

During public meetings on TIPs and the MTP, public comments are responded to directly, or if necessary, referred to a specific jurisdiction. Significant written and oral comments are noted in the final version of the document, as well as a response detailing the disposition of the comment.

If the final MTP/RTP differs significantly from the version that was initially made available for public comment, additional opportunity for public comment will be provided.

## AIR QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

Air quality requirements are promoting the development of a more balanced transportation system. The Clean Air Act requires that urbanized areas meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Tri-Cities Urbanized Area is considered to be in attainment by both the Department of Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency. As such, the federal standards are not exceeded and no air quality improvement measures are required. However, air quality is considered as part of the project review process. Air quality episodes in the RTPO are generally attributed to windblown dust particulate matter (PM 10).

The sole air quality event to involve the metropolitan area occurred in the late 1980s. A portion of western Walla Walla County was designated as *The Wallula Particulate Matter (PM10) Non-attainment Area (NAA)*. The eastern portion of the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Area was included in that NAA. The non-attainment status was the result of measurements of windborne dust. In 2004, diligent effort by the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) resulted in the development of a Serious Attainment Plan for the Wallula NAA.

DOE requested the Wallula NAA be re-designated as an attainment area in April 2005. The Federal Environmental Protection Agency approved the Plan in May 2005. The approval included an exclusion from regional transportation conformity analysis. Specific transportation projects in the Wallula NAA must still meet project-level conformity requirements.

## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) affects transit systems, public terminals for buses, trains, and airports, streets, and other public facilities. The act required many design standards to be rewritten to provide access to all individuals in public facilities. Since most all transportation facilities are public facilities, the ADA is an important component in the planning process.

## 2010 COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION - HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

SAFETEA-LU requires the establishment of local coordinated plans for all human services transportation programs.

The requirement appears in the Rule on Metropolitan Planning, Section 450.306: Scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process;(g) The metropolitan transportation planning process should be consistent with the development of Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans, as required by 49 U.S.C. 5310, 5316, and 5317.

From the onset, WSDOT delegated responsibility for the development of Human Service Transportation Plans (HSTP) to RTPOs.

BFCG updated the 2006 HSTP Plan in 2010 in concert with Ben Franklin Transit, Valley Transit, the Washington State Department of Transportation and other stakeholders. The plan identifies strategies and preferred alternatives for initiating or improving coordination among,

or consolidation of, public, private, and non-profit providers that receive public funding for transportation of disadvantaged individuals-older adults, people with disabilities, human services agency clients, and others. The goal is a plan to best fulfill the federal expectations of a coordinated, cost-effective and efficient multi-provider transportation system for the transportation disadvantaged.

The 2010 Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla County, and any subsequent Human Service Transportation Plan adopted prior to the next RTP update, are incorporated by reference into the 2011-2032 Regional Transportation Plan.

## **2010 REGIONAL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

For the past 15 years, federal laws have supported the inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in transportation plans and projects and have supplied a consistent source of funding for these activities. This new policy direction was initially established through the ISTEA in 1991 and was strengthened in TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU. The federal law is currently contained primarily in 23 USC Section 217.

23 USC Section 217(g) mandates the following action for MPOs: "Bicyclists and pedestrians shall be given due consideration in the comprehensive transportation plans developed by each metropolitan planning organization..."

On the state level, the Growth Management Act requires GMA Transportation Plans/Elements to include a pedestrian and bicycle component that includes identified planned improvements for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and corridors.

The 2010 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan for Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties and the Tri-Cities Urban Area helps to fulfill those requirements. The Plan discusses implementation and safety issues; RTPO member jurisdiction bicycle and pedestrian plans and policies; and includes collision data and project lists.

The 2010 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan and any subsequent Plan adopted prior to the next RTP update, are incorporated by reference into the 2011-2032 Regional Transportation Plan.

## **TRIBAL CONSULTATION**

Under SAFETEA-LU, MPOs are required to consult with Native American tribes as part of their public involvement process in the development of all planning documents. Consultation means respectful, effective communication in a cooperative process that works toward a consensus, before a decision is made or an action is taken.

While there are no formal tribal lands in the MPO or RTPO, three tribal nations have traditional homelands in the BFCG three-county area. The Yakama Nation's reservation is in Yakima County. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Umatilla, Cayuse, Walla Walla) reservation is in Oregon, while the Nez Perce reservation is in Idaho.

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SECURITY

SAFETEA-LU calls for the security of the transportation system to be a stand-alone planning factor, signaling an increase in importance from prior legislation, in which security was coupled with safety.

According to the Washington State Department of Transportation, Transportation System Security is "The use of operating and management policies and procedures to reduce the security vulnerabilities of a transportation system to the lowest practical level." During a 2004 meeting with WSDOT, FHWA and FTA, three focus areas were specified for transportation system security: Identification of Evacuation Routes; Participation in Preparedness/Response Exercises; and Critical Facilities Assessment.

In the arena of security, the Richland/Kennewick/Pasco metropolitan area is a special case. Due to the proximity of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Hanford Site; the Columbia Generating Station (a nuclear reactor owned and operated by Energy Northwest); and the Umatilla Chemical Depot and Chemical Agent Disposal Facility near Umatilla, Oregon, many security measures are already in place and to a greater degree than would normally exist in a metropolitan area.

### Identification of Evacuation Routes

The State of Washington has formally adopted the *Incident Command System* (ICS) as a template for managing incident response. Under ICS, evacuation plans are only developed for, or from, fixed facilities, such as the Umatilla Chemical Depot. In all other incidents, regardless of magnitude, evacuation-related decisions are the responsibility of the on-scene incident commander. That being the case, evacuation routes have been identified for three fixed facilities in the Tri-City area: the Energy Northwest reactor, the Hanford Site and the Umatilla Chemical Depot.

### Preparedness/Response Exercises

Due to the long-term presence of multiple potentially hazardous sites near the Tri-Cities, emergency preparedness exercises have a detailed and lengthy history in the area.

### Radiation-Related Emergencies

Radiation-related emergencies on the Hanford site are managed through the Radiological Emergency Preparedness (REP) program. Under REP, emergency plans have been developed to assure the health and safety of the people who live near and work at the facilities on the Hanford Site.

Benton County and Franklin County Emergency Management planners for the REP program help prepare plans and procedures for emergencies on the Hanford Site. REP planners coordinate with the Department of Energy and Energy Northwest to prepare for a radiological emergency. REP has been in place since 1982 and the DOE has been running preparedness exercises since 1990. Currently, both REP and DOE sponsor at least one exercise annually.

### Chemical Weapons Emergencies

Chemical weapons emergencies related to the Umatilla Chemical Depot are managed under the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP). CSEPP is a national program responsible for administration of the emergency preparedness process for

communities located near chemical stockpiles and the Army's chemical munitions storage depots.

CSEPP began in October 1989 after passage of Public Law 99-145, which mandated the destruction of certain types of chemical warfare agents throughout the United States. Like the REP program, CSEPP holds annual preparedness exercises.

Benton County Emergency Management planners are involved in the CSEPP planning process. Additionally, they, along with Benton County first responders such as police, fire departments and emergency services are involved in CSEPP exercises.

### **Other Preparations**

In addition to the hazard-specific planning and preparedness efforts described above, there are other preparedness efforts in the Tri-Cities.

REP, DOE and CSEPP all participate in various additional drills and training sessions with local hospitals, fire districts and other first responders.

The Tri-County Mass Casualty Incident Plan (MCIP) is an effort by Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla counties to develop a coordinated program for response to hazardous materials emergencies. Like REP, DOE and CSEPP, the MCIP planners execute at least one preparedness exercise per year.

Section 38.52.030 of the Revised Code of Washington mandates Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans for each county in the state. These plans analyze natural, technological or human caused hazards that could affect the county, and include procedures to be used during emergencies for coordinating local resources.

There is also a Local Emergency Planning Committee, comprised of first responders and relevant agencies, but it also includes representatives of local industry and business communities to involve them in the preparedness dialogue and emergency planning process.

### **Critical Facilities Assessment**

The third element mentioned under the security component is assessment of critical transportation facilities. This assessment has been completed by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

WSDOT has three priorities in dealing with potential threats to the transportation system:

- ◆ Minimize the risk of injury to the public, WSDOT employees and staff.
- ◆ Protect the infrastructure and support facilities.
- ◆ In the event of an incident, restore safe customer service as soon as possible.

WSDOT has been working closely with the Washington State Patrol and other local officials to monitor the transportation system. They have increased their presence, inspections and monitoring of highways, bridges and ferries. In addition, they are training their employees to serve as the eyes and ears of the system, to look for unusual or suspicious activity.

In all three areas, it is clear that this work, while in some instances ongoing, has been completed. In many cases ongoing processes have been in place for years. Roles, responsibilities and relationships are long established. The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments believes that existing plans for these three focus areas of transportation system

security are being successfully administered and envision no current role for the MPO in their ongoing implementation.

## ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION

Section 450.322(f)(7) of the (SAFETEA-LU) Rule on Metropolitan Transportation Planning states that:

(f) "The metropolitan transportation plan shall, at a minimum, include:

(7) A discussion of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan transportation plan. The discussion shall be developed in consultation with Federal, State, and Tribal land management, wildlife, and regulatory agencies. The MPO may establish reasonable timeframes for performing this consultation."

In 1991, Washington established the Growth Management Act (GMA), which imposes certain requirements on counties and cities planning under GMA. Among those is the development and adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. Portions of the GMA mandate classification of lands in such Plans, which in turn regulate development and land uses on those designations.

Several relevant sections of the GMA include:

- Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Section 36.70A.050: Guidelines to classify agriculture, forest, and mineral lands and critical areas;
- RCW 36.70A.060: Natural resource lands and critical areas – Development regulations;
- RCW 36.70A.160: Identification of open space corridors – Purchase authorized;
- RCW 36.70A.165: Property designated as greenbelt or open space – Not subject to adverse possession;
- RCW 36.70A.170: Natural resource lands and critical areas – Designations;
- RCW 36.70A.172: Critical areas – Designation and protection – Best available science to be used;
- RCW 36.70A.175: Wetlands to be delineated in accordance with manual.

GMA mandates are relevant because they define mandated planning responsibilities of cities and counties in identifying, monitoring and maintaining resource lands within their legal purview. Existing statutes require Washington cities and counties to describe critical resource lands, wetlands, wildlife corridors and riparian areas in greater detail than envisioned in SAFETEA-LU. Consideration of those resources is mandated in all elements of planning, including transportation planning. Since enacting the GMA in 1991, these elements have become thoroughly integrated into the planning process at both the policy and implementation levels.

The Growth Management Act imposes sufficient requirements on the cities and counties in the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Area to fulfill the planning responsibilities outlined in 450.322(f)(7). The requirements of the section are met and exceeded by member jurisdictions and for the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, through the MTP, to attempt to achieve more would be duplicating that effort.

An additional part of the GMA process involves certification of member jurisdictions' GMA Comprehensive plans, and transportation elements of those plans, for conformity with the transportation requirements of the Act. The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, as the

Regional Transportation Planning Organization for Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties has this responsibility. The certification checklist used in the review process calls for specific evaluation of a plan's recognition of its effect on the environment.

### **GREENHOUSE GASES/CLIMATE CHANGE (Federal)**

In July 2008 the Federal Highway Administration issued its Final Report Integrating Climate Change into the Transportation Planning Process. To quote from that document:

“Several federal statutes and regulations govern the transportation planning process. The text of these documents provides some opportunities to link climate change considerations with the planning process. These documents set out the requirements for undertaking transportation planning, and include statements regarding the scope of planning processes, required procedures, and required content for metropolitan and statewide transportation planning under both FHWA and FTA. While there are no specific requirements to directly address climate change, recent revisions to legislation have further incorporated energy and environmental considerations. These revisions offer greater opportunities for MPOs and state DOTs to integrate climate change considerations within their planning processes.”

The issue of federal initiatives concerning greenhouse gases and climate change will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

### **LIVABILITY/SUSTAINABILITY**

Like the topics of greenhouse gases and climate change, there are no specific federal requirements to directly address livability and sustainability at the MPO level. There has, however, been some USDOT and FHWA activity in this area.

The USDOT along with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency have formed the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Through the Partnership, the three agencies are coordinating investments and aligning policies to support communities that want to give Americans more housing choices, make transportation systems more efficient and reliable, reinforce existing investments, and support vibrant and healthy neighborhoods that attract businesses.

FHWA has issued the Livability in Transportation Guidebook. The *Livability in Transportation Guidebook's* primary purpose is to illustrate how livability principles have been successfully incorporated into transportation planning, programming, and project design. It is intended to be an overview on the importance of livability in transportation, to encourage transportation practitioners to think more broadly about project goals, enlist more partners, and develop more integrated solutions that support community livability.

The issue of federal initiatives concerning livability and sustainability be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

### **OBJECTIVES-DRIVEN PERFORMANCE-BASED PLANNING**

Objectives-driven performance-based planning integrates operations planning into the planning process.



At the Federal level, Planning for Operations is a joint effort between the FHWA Office of Operations, Office of Planning and FTA's Office of Planning, and was developed to promote multimodal planning practices that support transportation system management and operations. In order to link operational services into the transportation planning and programming process, transportation planners and operators should have a common understanding of the mobility, safety, and efficiency benefits of linking planning and operations.

Planning for Operations includes three important aspects:

- Regional transportation operations collaboration and coordination activity that facilitates Regional Transportation Systems Management and Operations,
- Management and operations considerations within the context of the ongoing regional transportation planning and investment process, and
- The opportunities for linkage between regional operations collaboration and regional planning.

This topic will be more fully discussed in Chapter Two.

## **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RTPO)**

The 1990 Legislature authorized regional transportation planning as part of Washington State's Growth Management Act. The Act created a formal mechanism for local governments and the state to coordinate planning for regional transportation facilities and services. Furthermore, where an MPO exists, the RTPO is required to be the same organization. Therefore, in 1991, in response to this state law, the local governments designated the BFCG as the responsible agency to carry out the regional planning responsibilities of the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO).

The Benton - Franklin - Walla Walla RTPO is a transportation planning agency encompassing all of Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties (Figure 1-1). The RTPO was developed to comply with RCW 36.70A, the Growth Management Act (GMA), and RCW 47.80, which authorized creation of RTPOs formed through voluntary association of local governments. (See Appendix B for details.)

Per RCW 47.80.023, the duties of an RTPO are:

- Prepare and periodically update a transportation strategy for the region.
- Prepare a Regional Transportation Plan that is consistent with countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, and state transportation plans.
- Certify that the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans reflect the region's guidelines and principles for transportation planning; are consistent with the adopted Regional Transportation Plan; and conform with the requirements of the state Growth Management Act.
- Certify that countywide planning policies and the Regional Transportation Plan are consistent.

- Develop a six-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program, which proposes regionally significant transportation projects and programs and transportation demand management strategies.
- Designate a lead planning agency to coordinate preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan and carry out the other responsibilities of the organization.
- Review level of service methodologies used by cities and counties to promote a consistent regional evaluation of transportation facilities and corridors.
- Work with cities, counties, transit agencies, WSDOT, and others to develop level of service standards or alternative transportation performance measures.

As lead planning agency, the BFCG administers and supplies staff support for the RTPO. The BFCG transportation planning staff receives direction from the MPO/RTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC forwards recommendations to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), which forwards action items to the BFCG Board.

### **STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)**

State requirements for regional transportation plans are addressed in RCW 47.80. The following is a brief summary of the state's planning requirements for regional transportation plans:

Regional transportation plans should:

- Be based on a least cost planning methodology that identifies the most cost-effective facilities, services, and programs;
- Identify existing or planned transportation facilities, services, and programs that should function as an integrated regional transportation system;
- Establish level of service standards for state highways with the exception of Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS);
- Include a financial plan demonstrating how the regional transportation plan can be implemented;
- Assess regional development patterns, capital investment, and other measures necessary to ensure preservation of the regional transportation system and make the most efficient use of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize mobility of people and goods;
- Set forth a proposed regional transportation approach to guide development of the integrated, multi-modal regional system; and
- Where appropriate, set forth the relationship of high capacity transportation providers and other public transit providers with regard to responsibility for, and coordination between, services and facilities.

The RTPO shall review the regional transportation plan biennially for currency and forward the adopted plan along with documentation of the biennial review to WSDOT.

All transportation projects, programs, and transportation demand management measures within the region that have an impact upon regional facilities or services must be consistent with the RTP and with the adopted regional growth and transportation strategies.

In order to ensure statewide consistency in the regional transportation planning process, the state Department of Transportation and the RTPO shall identify and jointly plan improvements and strategies within those corridors important to moving people and goods on a regional or statewide basis.

The regional transportation plan must be consistent with countywide planning policies, with county, city, and town comprehensive plans, and state transportation plans.

## **JURISDICTION COORDINATION**

RTPO member jurisdictions conduct individual plan development based on internal schedules, however, the Growth Management Act requires that transportation elements in local comprehensive plans (1) conform to the requirements in the Growth Management Act for transportation elements and (2) are consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan. RTPOs, including the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, must certify the plans for conformity and consistency. This relationship between RTPOs and member jurisdictions creates a formal mechanism to coordinate regional transportation facilities.

## **THE WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN/REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN RELATIONSHIP**

The federal government requires a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive planning process, mandates cooperation and coordination between the state and the metropolitan planning organizations, and establishes over-arching policy goals that integrate planning. The eight federal policy goals in SAFETEA-LU are listed on page 1-8.

WTP 2030 was developed in response to state mandates, and the 2011-2032 MTP/RTP was developed to respond to both federal and state mandates. The six statewide transportation policy goals listed above and the federal goals in SAFETEA-LU, which are a basis for the development of both documents, are compatible. The WTP was developed through a collaborative process in partnership with Regional Transportation Planning Organizations and the public. The goals, policies, and action strategies presented in Chapter Three of this RTP were also developed through a collaborative, visionary, long-range transportation planning process.

The WTP and the RTP have missions of preserving, maintaining, and developing a balanced, multi-modal, inter-modal transportation system that provides access and mobility for people, goods, and services in a safe, convenient, and energy efficient manner; minimizes impacts upon the environment; is coordinated through multi-jurisdictional efforts; is compatible with adjacent land uses; facilitates planned economic growth; maintains livability and community values; and promotes health and fitness.

Washington State's Growth Management Act linked city and county comprehensive plans with regional plans. The WTP now ties regional transportation plans with statewide planning.

## **THE WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN (WTP)**

The Washington Transportation Plan 2030 (WTP 2030), adopted in December 2010, is the overarching state policy framework intended to provide policy guidance and

recommendations across all transportation modes and regions in the state. The Washington State Transportation Commission developed WTP 2030 as a comprehensive and balanced statewide transportation policy plan that reflects the multifaceted needs of the state's transportation system.

The Plan is grounded in *three foundational themes*, which serve as the base for the development of WTP 2030, and *five strategic drivers* which are the influences that reflect the political, policy, and economic environment within which the Plan was developed. These are listed below.

#### Foundational Themes

- *Washington faces a structural transportation funding problem and additional revenue is essential.* Statewide transportation system needs continue to grow while revenues are declining. As a result, the ability to effectively maintain and operate the statewide transportation system is at risk.
- *The state's transportation system needs to work as an integrated network, effectively connecting across modes and jurisdictions.* A fundamental goal of the statewide transportation system over the next 20 years must be to work towards achieving system connectivity and integration.
- *Preservation and maintenance of the existing transportation system is the most critical need.* A safe and effective transportation system is fundamental to a sustainable economy and livable communities and so must be made a top priority.

#### Strategic Drivers

- Transportation policy should support and reinforce other state policy objectives.
- The relationship between land use and transportation is key.
- There are significant differences across regions and one size does not fit all.
- It is critical to educate, inform, and reach out to the public.
- Continue the evolution to performance-based programs.

The WTP 2030 Policy Plan is organized around the six statewide transportation policy goals listed in RCW 47.04.280. Those goals are:

- **Economic Vitality:** To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.
- **Preservation:** To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.
- **Safety:** To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.
- **Mobility:** To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington State.
- **Environment:** To enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.
- **Stewardship:** To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

In the context of all of the above, WTP 2030 contains a detailed examination of transportation funding followed by a very detailed presentation of strategies and recommended actions based on the transportation policy goals.

## WASHINGTON STATE'S STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN: TARGET ZERO

The federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), 23 USC 148 requires each state have a Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Target Zero meets those federal requirements for Washington State.

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan: *Target Zero* sets forth a vision to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries to zero by the year 2030. It identifies Washington State's traffic safety needs, helping to guide investments to achieve significant reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The partners who have developed Washington State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan intend for it to coordinate their safety programs, align their goals and objectives, and leverage their collective resources.

*Target Zero* provides a comprehensive framework of specific goals, objectives, and strategies for reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries. It serves as a statewide strategic highway safety plan and will be incorporated into the plans and programs of key traffic safety agencies. The plan directs the commitment of agency resources and funding, and seeks to support agencies, groups, and individuals working together to implement Target Zero strategies.

*Target Zero* contains four levels of priorities based on the percentage of traffic fatalities associated each factor.

Priority One has the three areas - impairment, run-off-the-road collisions, and speeding - associated with the largest number of fatalities in the state. Each of these areas was a factor in 40% or more of the traffic fatalities between 2006 and 2008.

Each area of Priority Two, which includes young drivers, distracted drivers, unrestrained vehicle occupants, and intersection-related crashes, accounted for somewhere between 21% and 38% of traffic fatalities. Traffic Data Systems, while not a cause of fatalities, is considered a Level Two priority because of the potential for better data to improve our analysis of traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

Priority Three areas were each involved in somewhere between 12% and 20% of fatalities between 2006 and 2008. They include unlicensed drivers, opposite direction multivehicle collisions, motorcyclists, pedestrians, and heavy trucks. Emergency Medical Services is also a Level Three priority area.

Priority Four includes areas that each involved less than 10% of all fatalities during this time, including older drivers, drowsy drivers, bicyclists, work zones, vehicle-train collisions, and school-bus-related collisions.

Target Zero proposes strategies for further reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries in Washington. It shows how to improve roadway design to better accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists; enhance emergency medical capabilities to increase survivability; use education to decrease the likelihood of dangerous behaviors; fund enforcement patrols at locations where dangerous behaviors are likely to occur; and how to improve traffic data collection systems to enhance our ability to measure the effects of these strategies.

## GREENHOUSE GASES/CLIMATE CHANGE (State)

Governor Gregoire issued Executive Order 07-02, Washington Climate Change Challenge, in February 2007. This order declared the state's commitment to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. An outcome of the Executive Order is RCW 70.235.020, enacted in 2008, which establishes statewide GHG emissions reduction limits. Those limits are:

- Return to 1990 emissions levels by January 1, 2020;
- Reduce to 25 percent below 1990 emissions levels by January 1, 2035; and
- Reduce to 50 percent below 1990 emissions levels by January 1, 2050.

Also enacted in 2008 was RCW 47.01.440 which establishes a vehicle miles traveled reduction goal and benchmarks for Washington State. Those benchmarks are:

- Decrease the annual per capita vehicle miles traveled by eighteen percent by 2020;
- Decrease the annual per capita vehicle miles traveled by thirty percent by 2035; and
- Decrease the annual per capita vehicle miles traveled by fifty percent by 2050.

At this time, the limits, goals and benchmarks listed above are at the statewide level, and not directly applicable at the local or regional level.

In May 2009, Governor Gregoire signed Executive Order 09-05: Washington's Leadership on Climate Change.

Section 2(a) of the Executive Order directed WSDOT to:

- Estimate current and future statewide levels of VMT,
- Evaluate potential changes to the VMT benchmarks established in RCW 47.01.440 as appropriate to address low- or no-emission vehicles, and
- Develop additional strategies to reduce GHG emissions from the transportation sector.

Section 2(b) directed WSDOT to work with the state's four largest RTPOs: the Puget Sound Regional Council, Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council and Thurston Regional Planning Council to develop practical approaches for reducing GHG emissions at the regional level.

Legislative efforts at refining Washington State's methodology for addressing greenhouse gas emissions are ongoing. Potential solutions at the local and regional level include amendments to the Growth Management Act. The Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla RTPO will implement applicable measures as they emerge.