

## **CHAPTER THREE - REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION GOALS & POLICIES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The goals, policies, and strategies were developed through the transportation planning process and subsequently adopted by the BFCG Board. These goals and policies will guide and direct the regional transportation planning process for the next twenty years.

### **MISSION**

The mission of this Regional Transportation Plan is to develop and maintain a balanced regional 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 a multi-jurisdictional effort; is compatible with adjacent land uses; facilitates planned economic growth; and maintains the livability of the communities across the entire region.

### **GOALS OF THE RTP:**

- The preparation and implementation of a long range plan which identifies transportation related deficiencies and problems, provides clear direction, and seeks comprehensive least-cost solutions for maintaining the integrity of the transportation system in Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla Counties;
- A transportation system that is integrated with local land use policies;
- A transportation system that provides lower cost solutions in the form of transit, vanpool/carpool, bicycling, and walking, in lieu of expanding capacity;
- A transportation system that provides access for goods, services, and people while minimizing total system costs;
- A transportation system that provides access and mobility for all citizens regardless of age, race, or ability;
- A transportation system that gives access while minimizing energy consumption and environmental impacts;
- A transportation system that meets the needs for sustained economic growth;
- A transportation system that is consistent with local, regional, state and federal policies; and
- A transportation system that assures improvements are consistent with and supports the values of communities and neighborhood structures.

## POLICIES

### Policy 1 – Access & Access Management

It is the policy of the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments to support a regional transportation system that emphasizes access and access management and encourages the member jurisdictions to adopt policies incorporating access management into their construction projects and project prioritization processes.

#### Background

Access may be defined as a “connection” such as an approach, driveway, turnout or other means of ingress or egress. Access provides for the entrance or exit onto a public highway or street network from the adjoining parcel(s) of land.

State Statute RCW 47.50 requires incorporated cities to have in place access management policies (ordinances) for non-limited access state highways within their boundaries. Those policies shall be equal to or exceed those of WSDOT access management standards. Local agencies also have the option of adopting WSDOT’s access management rules (WAC 468-51 and 52).

The cities are responsible for issuing access permits on non-limited access highways. Counties do not issue state highway access permits, but can educate developers of adjacent lands about the permit application process with WSDOT.

Access management seeks to balance the needs and access rights of adjacent property owners with the need of the traveling public to have smooth traffic flow and to correlate those needs with other factors such as land use plans and zoning, speed limit, and the functional classification of the highway.

Access management promotes an effective transportation system and increases traffic-carrying capacity. Access management reduces the incidences of traffic collisions, personal injury, and property damage or loss; promotes economic growth and the growth management goals of the state.

#### Action Strategies

Establish a system to define acceptable levels of accessibility of all modes to various land uses for all potential users of the transportation system through minimum service standards.

Support land use strategies that reduce mobility requirements such as mixed-use development, transit oriented development, and infill development.

Encourage multi-modal accessibility to land uses including measures which provide access for the transportation disadvantaged and mobility challenged.

Encourage cities and counties to incorporate access management into their comprehensive planning and into their land use and subdivision regulations and policies.

Encourage incorporation of access management into project prioritization and selection criteria.

Encourage cities and counties to incorporate access management into their construction projects.

Encourage developers to incorporate access management into their plans.

## **Policy 2 - Efficiency**

It is the policy of the BFCG to support a regional transportation system that 1) Maintains the greatest efficiency of movement in terms of travel time and distance and 2) Requires transportation investment decisions to maximize the full net benefits of the system.

### **Background**

An efficient transportation system is fast and economical for the public, assures the public is faced with the full costs of their transportation choices, and ensures that transportation investment decisions maximize the net full benefits of the system. Full benefits and costs include social and environmental impacts, the benefits of mobility to users, and costs of construction, operations and maintenance.

### **Action Strategies**

Explore the possibility of assimilating cost effectiveness of alternative supply and demand investments, long term level of service/life-cycle cost comparisons, and other economic criteria into the planning process in order to develop cost-effective solutions and more efficient transportation facilities (i.e. least-cost planning).

Encourage coordinated planning practices and road and street standards among the counties and their cities and towns.

Discourage inefficient modes of transportation, such as single occupancy vehicles (SOVs), during peak hours.

Promote maintaining the efficiency of the existing transportation systems by supporting investments in operational strategies and technologies.

Promote Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, voluntary Commute Trip Reduction (CTR), transit, HOV, bicycling, and walking.

## **Policy 3 - Balance**

It is the policy of the BFCG to support a regional transportation system that 1) Stresses multi-modalism with minimum service standards, 2) Provides transportation options, 3) Avoids dependence on any particular mode, especially single occupancy vehicles, and 4) Optimizes the efficiency of each mode.

## Background

A transportation network contains a variety of modes that provide its users with viable choices for making a complete trip. Citizens should have a variety of transportation options for conducting daily activities whether the mode is walking, bicycling, transit, or the automobile. When a particular mode of transportation becomes too dominant, such as single occupancy vehicles, then the system as a whole becomes imbalanced and inefficient. The effects are widespread--pollution, excessive energy consumption, and traffic congestion. It is, therefore, important to strive for balanced use of all modes so everyone may benefit and be given the opportunity to choose from a variety of transportation options.

## Action Strategies

Encourage systems and facilities that accommodate multiple modes, when possible, especially along transportation corridors that provide users with cost-effective choices in their travel options.

Support demand management techniques that strengthen the efficiencies of each mode of transportation.

Support the use of the most efficient form of transportation for each area, recognizing that not all modes are appropriate for each area.

Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

## Policy 4 - Safety & Security

It is the policy of the BFCG to provide a transportation system that maintains and improves safety and security in all aspects of the transportation network, including both users and non-users of the system.

## Background

The safety and security of all individuals should be high priorities in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the transportation system. In particular, special attention should be given to automobiles. Automobiles pervade almost every part of the built environment, creating potentially dangerous safety hazards for both pedestrians and bicyclists. Safety and security at the "modal-interface" of automobiles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians is a significant aspect of the transportation system and especially important in multi-modal planning.

Safety and security must be continually reemphasized. The aphorism "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" makes good sense in transportation planning and should be applied throughout the process.

Washington State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP): Target Zero has been developed to identify traffic safety needs and guide investment decisions to achieve significant reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The data-driven emphasis areas of the SHSP are addressed on page 1-20.

## Action Strategies

Support and promote region-wide participation in the state's efforts to identify traffic safety needs and guide investment decisions to achieve significant reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads (SHSP: Target Zero).

Support and promote programs that ensure both structurally and operationally safe and secure pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, truck, rail, waterway, and air travel movement.

Encourage development of transportation safety goals (e.g. road safety targets and policies) to provide direction to the safety component of a plan.

Encourage interagency cooperation between governmental and private enterprises to increase overall safety and security awareness.

Promote high levels of safety standards for all modes of transportation so that users feel safe and secure as they travel.

Implement traffic calming measures to reduce automobile speeds in pedestrian areas, such as residential neighborhoods and school zones.

Encourage cities and counties to seek competitive funding solutions through WSDOT's Safe Routes to Schools Program.

## Policy 5 - Safety Conscious Planning (SCP)

It is the policy of the BFCG to promote integration of urban land use and transportation planning efforts through implementation of safety conscious planning.

### Background

Traditionally, safety programs have been reactive in nature, identifying and analyzing collision data and then implementing appropriate enforcement, education or engineering-oriented solutions.

While traditional safety strategies have made improvements, Safety Conscious Planning (SCP) goes beyond conventional safety practices by proactively incorporating road safety into the transportation and land use planning process with a view toward preventing "unsafe" situations from occurring in the first place.

Transportation planners and engineers will logically take the lead in implementing SCP. Implementing SCP will take time to evolve, with safety practitioners and researchers playing a significant role in advancing the knowledge of SCP, and providing the "tools" needed to effectively integrate SCP with other decision-making factors.

### Action Strategies

Monitor national efforts toward development of a user-friendly collision prediction model and the associated analytical techniques to diagnose and identify areas in which there is potential to improve the inherent safety of the transportation system.

Promote safety considerations as key criteria in evaluating projects and programming expenditures.

Ensure that the measures incorporated in a plan effectively reflect road safety issues.

Encourage plan implementation strategies that effectively implement and reflect road safety priorities and financial programming.

Stress the need for SCP in land use planning decisions and processes.

Stress that SCP is also an integral part of transportation planning for all modes of travel.

## **Policy 6 - Environmental Responsibility**

It is the policy of the BFCG to provide a regional transportation system that limits and mitigates adverse and harmful impacts on the environment.

### **Background**

Environmental awareness in transportation planning is an important responsibility. The impacts of transportation projects are far reaching and can affect air quality, water quality, wetlands, endangered/threatened wildlife, cultural/archeological sites, ambient noise-levels, and other sensitive environments. Increased awareness of the environment has led to legislation designed to protect the environment for future generations.

Transportation systems develop through planning that includes careful attention to environmental elements. Balance between planning for transportation needs and protecting the environment can be reached by expanding the decision-making process to include a greater spectrum of participants.

### **Action Strategies**

Ensure all elements of the RTP support environmental responsibility in order to meet federal and state requirements.

Promote environmentally efficient modes of transportation such as transit, HOVs, bicycling, and walking in order to minimize negative impacts on the environment.

Promote development of alternatives to actions that adversely impact the environment.

Coordinate with local agencies in identifying and mitigating the effects of the transportation system on sensitive areas.

Promote the preservation of agricultural lands and open spaces and the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat.

Promote consistency with environmental rules and regulations.

## **Policy 7 - Transportation Financing**

It is the policy of the BFCG to promote funding strategies that ensure regional financial stability for the transportation network.

### **Background**

It is clear that not all currently identified projects will be funded. Decision-makers face a challenge in meeting the transportation needs of Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla County residents and businesses. Addressing this challenge requires clear strategies for guiding transportation investments to assure that the most critical and important transportation needs are addressed. Major efforts will be required to raise adequate revenues to support extensive capital improvements and maintenance programs in the future.

### **Action Strategies**

Work with community, business and citizen interest groups to establish agreement on transportation needs and to seek support on funding measures to finance capital improvement projects, including innovative financing strategies.

Encourage the state legislature to index the state motor fuel tax to inflation to forestall ever-decreasing buying power.

Encourage the state legislature to consider funding alternatives to the gas tax as vehicles get more fuel efficient, hybridize, or use alternative fuels.

Encourage the state legislature to exempt transportation construction projects from the retail sales tax that currently shifts transportation funds back into the general fund.

## **Policy 8 - Intergovernmental Cooperation Including Regional Consistency & Certification**

It is the policy of the BFCG to provide a regional transportation planning process that 1) Coordinates federal, state, regional, and local comprehensive plans, policies and legislation and 2) Emphasizes cooperation among jurisdictions.

### **Background**

Though sometimes visualized as a tangled web, complex interagency communication is necessary in an environment with multiple levels of government and overlapping jurisdictions. Regional and metropolitan transportation planning is complex, involving a number of agencies, each with their own agendas and policies. Through continuous communication and interaction among agencies, transportation decisions and improvements crossing jurisdictional boundaries are coordinated and consistent.

During the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Tri-MATS met regularly to discuss and resolve regional issues related to the RTP including: Regional growth assumptions (population and employment) used for transportation modeling; Level of service standards;

and mode split assumptions. Additionally, the Technical Advisory Committee served as the staff forum for inter-jurisdictional and regional coordination.

To assure consistency between local and regional planning efforts, the Growth Management Act (RCW 47.80.023) requires all transportation elements of local comprehensive plans to undergo a consistency review and certification process to ensure that they conform to the requirements of GMA and are consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The GMA states that this process is to be developed and administered by Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).

The Washington Administrative Code's Procedural Criteria for Adopting Comprehensive Plans (Chapter 365-195 WAC) reiterates sections of the RCWs and recommends further steps to meet the requirements.

The GMA (RCW 36.70A.100) emphasizes coordination and consistency in planning efforts among jurisdictions and agencies.

### **Action Strategies**

Continue to encourage active participation by all members of the Tri-MATS MPO/RTPO structure at the technical, policy, and board levels, including the formation of special committees for specific projects or programs.

Promote and host meetings and workshops pertinent to regional transportation issues, policies, and planning.

Coordinate between state and member jurisdictions concerning technical methods and data to identify and analyze needs of regional significance.

Provide for coordination between the state and member jurisdictions on major transportation decisions involving all transportation modes.

Develop regional "guidelines and principles" to serve as a guide for developing, updating, and reviewing local comprehensive plan transportation elements. (See Appendix C ).

Certify that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans conform to the appropriate requirements of RCW 36.70A.070 and recommend steps to meet the RCW requirements in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 365-195-325.

Certify consistency between the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans and this Regional Transportation Plan.

Determine consistency of city comprehensive plan transportation elements with the Countywide planning policies adopted by the respective Boards of County Commissioners and the cities within those counties.

Develop a checklist for certifying conformity of transportation elements with the GMA and the Regional Transportation Plan. (See Appendix C)

Discuss and resolve any inconsistencies identified during the certification process, first with jurisdictional staff, and if necessary, at the Technical and Policy Advisory Committee levels. The BFCG Board will make the decision on any issues of inconsistency.

## **Policy 9 - Citizen Involvement and Public Education**

The BFCG in July 1994 adopted "Public Involvement Procedures for Transportation Planning" (last revised and adopted January 2008). The BFCG develops and maintains on-going programs that include citizen participation in all transportation related decisions.

### **Background**

Involving citizens is important when preparing and adopting a transportation plan, transportation plan element, facility plan or transportation improvement programs. Citizen input throughout the planning process assures the public is informed and aids in maintaining consensus for various projects. Without the assistance of the public, the process becomes dominated by professionals and special interests, who, while specially trained and qualified, may not see every aspect of a project.

Public education is particularly important when transportation related actions or initiatives require public vote.

### **Action Strategies**

Make information about transportation plans, policies, projects, and programs available to the public in an understandable form.

Develop ongoing public education programs and transportation forums about regional and statewide transportation planning to assure the public is informed on current issues, proposed improvements, new technologies, and upcoming events.

Continue to apprise the media (newspapers, radio, and television) of newsworthy transportation information for publication or general disclosure. Arrange interviews, print and distribute flyers, etc.

Continue to include up-to-date transportation information in the BFCG monthly newsletter (circulation 300).

Continue to expand and improve BFCG Public Involvement Procedures to attain the most effective citizen involvement and awareness.

Communicate with potential users of the transportation system, including the private sector, to ensure that transportation decisions that impact private facilities or public services are coordinated with the affected users or industries.

## Policy 10 - Livability, Sustainability & Land Use

It is the policy of the BFCG to encourage transportation related decisions that maintain and enhance livability and sustainability for all citizens and communities within Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties.

### Background

The objectives associated with the terms “livability” and “sustainability” are not new in transportation planning. Language used to describe these concepts includes smart growth, walkable communities, new urbanism, healthy neighborhoods, active living, transit-oriented development (TOD), complete streets, and others.

The common element shared by all of these terms is an understanding that transportation planning is no longer a stand-alone exercise. More and more transportation planning and neighborhood development projects integrate shared objectives to accomplish a wide variety of community goals.

Sustainable transportation planning considers the future and asks how the decisions made today will meet current demands without compromising the quality of life of the future generations.<sup>1</sup>

The changing attitudes toward land use and transportation planning, reflected in recent legislation, require adjustment and change of habits. A balanced multi-modal transportation system requires land uses to be efficient and compact with mixed uses. This permits a spectrum of transportation alternatives for individuals making travel decisions.

The vision is for compact cities surrounded by farms and open spaces. This concept can be applied to urban, suburban and rural communities and is one of the most important elements in preserving livable communities. The Growth Management Act (GMA) supports this concept by establishing Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) which denote where growth may take place. Cities may expand their identified UGA's if there is justification for the expansion and sufficient resources for additional services exist.

### Action Strategies

Promote transportation projects and improvements that support community goals of access to jobs, affordable housing, and good schools.

Maximize transportation choices that will improve regional, community, and neighborhood livability.

Promote transportation projects and improvements that enhance and protect a community's aesthetic values.

Work with citizens and community groups to assure transportation projects support livability within neighborhoods and communities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Livability in Transportation Guidebook*, FHWA/FTA. 2010

Promote the provision of greenbelts, parks, and paths and preservation of open space relative to transportation improvement projects and new infrastructure development.

Encourage infill development and redevelopment in areas where access to alternative transportation is provided.

Support developments that provide options for people to live, work, and shop in the same areas and accomplish day-to-day needs close to home via mobility options other than single-occupancy vehicles.

Support increased densities and in-fill development for efficient use of urban land while still maintaining open-space area and residential privacy and safety.

Strive to improve circulation and access within areas that are most likely to support mixed-use developments, in-fill development, and increased density.

Support the efforts of the Alliance for a Livable and Sustainable Community.

## **Policy 11 - Pedestrians and Bicycles**

It is the policy of the BFCG to promote pedestrian and bicycle travel as essential modes of transportation both within existing communities and new development and to provide opportunities for the safe and efficient use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as a legitimate alternative to motorized travel and for improved health.

### **Background**

Bicycling and walking are viable components in a multi-modal transportation network.

Bicycling is very efficient and capable of transporting people over distances of five miles or more while using no fossil fuels and using a minimal amount of space. There is much untapped potential for bicycling in our environment, but physical, institutional, and mental barriers keep bicycling from becoming a more common mode of transportation. Overall, the built environment has a significant impact on bicycle behavior. Many people cite existing conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists as the reason for not using these alternative modes. Existing conditions include trip barriers (distance, fear of safety, inadequate facilities, and environmental factors) and destination barriers (security, facilities, lack of employer support).

Pedestrian movement is perhaps the most important mode in the transportation network since all other modes ultimately depend on walking. If we drive we usually walk from our cars. If we take transit, we usually walk from the transit stop. Walking is inherently assumed to be the end mode in which we arrive at our destinations. However, if pedestrian movement is to evolve as a mode by itself, it will take more than just laying down sidewalks.

Pedestrians typically do not walk greater than one-half mile. This means that land uses and other transportation modes need to be coordinated if they expect to support this mode of transportation. Additionally, the pedestrian is much more exposed to the elements than the occupants of a car or bus and requires extra attention in regards to safety and comfort.

For bicycling and walking to increase as partners in the transportation network, usable facilities must be in place, along with the land use designations to support them. A bicycle and pedestrian friendly transportation network will provide increased travel options for individuals.

### **Action Strategies**

Develop, implement, and maintain, a pedestrian and bicycle plan that is consistent with federal, state, and local pedestrian goals and objectives.<sup>1</sup>

Establish Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to oversee, promote, review, and make recommendations on regional bicycle and pedestrian issues.

Assign a high priority to the provision of bicycle and pedestrian access in local comprehensive plans.

Encourage local jurisdictions to develop ordinances which require the provision of safe, adequate, and convenient access for pedestrians and bicycles in new development.

Encourage provision of sidewalks and bicycle lanes on arterials and school routes.

Encourage local jurisdictions and school districts to cooperatively seek funds through WSDOT's Safe Routes to Schools Program.

Encourage the connection of parks, open spaces, water and other recreation areas to residential areas with bicycle and pedestrian paths and when appropriate, equestrian paths.

Promote the adoption of efficient non-motorized compatible land use patterns and zoning requirements.

Encourage consideration of pedestrian/bicycle transportation needs relative to all urban transportation improvement projects and subdivision developments.

<sup>1</sup>See *2010 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan for Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties and Tri-Cities Urban Area, October 2010 BFCG*.

### **Policy 12 - Transit Element**

It is the policy of the BFCG to 1) Support Ben Franklin Transit and Valley Transit and their goals and policies; 2) Promote a transit system which offers alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle; 3) Promote a transit system that offers services to citizens with special transportation needs; 4) Promote land use patterns that support the use of transit; and 5) Support intercity bus service between Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities.

### **Background**

Transit remains a priority for the region. There are two Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBA) within the Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla RTPO: Ben Franklin Transit serving the Tri-Cities, Benton City, Prosser, and the community of Finley; and Valley Transit serving Walla

Walla and College Place. Both Ben Franklin Transit and Valley Transit prepare their own respective Transit Development Plans which the RTP supports.

A partnership between WSDOT and Greyhound provides intercity bus service called the Grape Line between Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) also provides intercity bus service from Hermiston, Oregon to Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities.

### **Action Strategies**

Support our transit agencies in their efforts to maintain effective and predictable operations of the transit systems to meet customers' expectations.

Support the Grape Line's continuation of intercity bus service between Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities.

Integrate the regional transit systems with other modes of transportation including air, rail, auto, bicycles, and pedestrians to facilitate smooth inter-modal connections.

Evaluate the possibility of providing further intercity transit service as a viable alternative to highway expansion.

Periodically reevaluate the viability of providing some form of transit service to those rural RTP communities not currently having such service.

Encourage transit friendly land use plans and development patterns.

Support services to those citizens with special transportation needs. Special transportation needs as defined by RCW 47.06B.012; "Persons with special transportation needs" means those persons, including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation.

### **Policy 13 - Transportation Demand Management/Commute Trip Reduction**

It is the policy of the BFCG to promote strategies that offer low-cost solutions to capacity challenges on our streets and highways.

#### **Background**

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) programs are designed to address transportation congestion from the demand side. TDM/CTR seek methods that reduce the amount of vehicles on roadways. As a result, those programs offer low-cost solutions for some road capacity problems.

The focus of TDM is to reduce overall congestion, while CTR programs are specific to reducing congestion during the journey-to-work commute. Strategies to reduce congestion include ridesharing, alternative work hours, use of transit/vanpools, non-motorized modes, and employee/employer incentives. Other broader more community based strategies may include land use alternatives, such as Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

## Action Strategies

Work with WSDOT, Ben Franklin Transit, urban jurisdictions, and major employers to develop and implement a voluntary Commute Trip Reduction program for the Tri-Cities to reduce single occupancy vehicle use, vehicle miles traveled, and minimize trip length during peak periods. Overall benefits will be reduced congestion and delay, cleaner air and less fuel consumption.

Continue to work with decision-makers, jurisdictions, and other agencies to encourage the Department of Energy (DOE) to implement the Federal Employees Commute Trip Subsidy Program.

Encourage employers to offer flexible work schedules (flex time); telecommuting, 4-day work week, and other incentives that reduce peak period travel and lessen the need for roadway capacity.

Encourage commercial drivers to make deliveries and the shipping of freight during off-peak hours.

Investigate ways in which parking can be managed to decrease drive alone commuters.

Explore land use strategies that can reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles.

Continue facilitation of the urban Transportation Demand Management Committee.

## Policy 14 - Streets and Highways

It is the policy of the BFCG to encourage a network of streets and highways that 1) Supports a balanced and efficient multi-modal transportation network; 2) Is accessible for a variety of users; 3) Meets the needs for safely moving people, goods, and services throughout the region; 4) Contributes to the livability of both urban and rural communities.

### Background

Understanding the various functions of streets and highways is an essential part of transportation planning. Streets and highways are vital links between neighborhoods, cities, and regions.

Providing for both access and mobility functions, street and highway networks allow for travel across the region as well as for local traffic circulation. Maintaining balance between access and mobility brings livability and safety to local communities and efficiency in moving people, goods and services.

### Action Strategies

Encourage consideration of multi-modal needs and accessibility, including pedestrians and bicycles, freight and goods movement, etc., relative to all urban transportation improvement projects and subdivision developments.

Promote transportation improvements that enhance community access and livability.

Promote transportation improvements that meet infrastructure needs of the region's major sources of economic growth and vitality, including recreation and tourism.

Maintain the arterial street system for the safe and economical movement of people, goods, and services within and through the region and to promote a diversified economy.

Encourage preservation of transportation corridors for future growth.

### **Policy 15 - Air/Waterways/Rail**

It is the policy of the BFCG to encourage air and rail passenger facilities and services and river and rail freight facilities and services that enhance regional economic competitiveness.

#### **Background**

Air, waterways, and rail continue to move a variety of goods and people throughout the region. These modes of transportation have special characteristics, requiring special consideration in regards to adjacent land uses, access, and expansion, to ensure long term continuation.

#### **Action Strategies**

Ensure that the impact of surrounding development on airport operations is minimized and adjacent land use decisions are consistent with airport operations.

Promote expansion of mainline freight railroad capacity by the railroads and the improvement of rail access to and efficient use of inter-modal terminals and ports.

Promote continuation and improvement of freight service on branch and light density rail lines and preservation of any essential lines threatened with abandonment.

Support and encourage projects to reduce or eliminate conflicts between trains and vehicles and/or pedestrians.

Continue to reject and oppose river draw-downs below current operating levels and removal or breaching of any dams on the lower Snake River or Columbia River systems. The Minimum Operating Pool (MOP) should be maintained by the Corps of Engineers to ensure the preservation of the 14 foot federal navigation channel.

Support the US Army Corps of Engineers in their ongoing efforts to dredge the Columbia River/Snake River system.

Support and encourage the Corps of Engineers to continue Snake River dredging as needed to preserve the viability of port facilities at Clarkston, Washington, and Lewiston, Idaho.

### **Policy 16 - Freight Movement**

It is the policy of the BFCG to encourage safe and efficient freight movement; support inter-modal freight facilities; and ensure that any harmful effects of freight movement are mitigated with the users of the system.

## Background

Freight movement plays an important role in the regional economy by transporting various raw materials and finished products to and from the region. The efficient movement of freight is important. Freight movement by virtue of its magnitude, places wear and stress on roadways. It is necessary to restrict major freight movement to specific roadways designed to withstand inordinate conditions. The protection of neighborhood communities, livability, and public safety should also be a major concern when planning freight movement.

Preservation of existing networks is a priority. Of particular importance are rail abandonments. The elimination of rail routes may create additional freight movement on roads, highways, and freeways and result in public money being diverted into increased maintenance costs or capital expenditures. Special efforts are necessary to keep these lines active.

Also important is preservation of the Columbia/Snake River navigation system extending 465 miles inland from Astoria, Oregon to Lewiston, Idaho. Modern ships require a 43-foot deep channel to access the lower ports of Kalama, Longview and Portland. Siltation is rapidly depreciating the viability of the uppermost ports. In the winter of 2005-2006 the Corps of Engineers completed dredging on the Snake River and lower Columbia River. The dredging work was held up for several years due to lawsuits by those opposed. Siltation is expected to necessitate dredging again in 5-7 years.

Of great importance to Washington and other northwest states is the continued viability and reliability of Snoqualmie Pass (I-90) as the primary freight route over the Cascade Mountains to the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma. Severe winter storms and avalanches have been known to close the pass for hours and even days at a time.

## Action Strategies

Gather and maintain freight information for all appropriate modes. Coordinate with local jurisdictions.

Periodically review and update the regional portion of the statewide Freight and Goods Transportation System.

Evaluate freight movement needs, restrictions, opportunities, and constraints within the region. Examine hazards created by freight movement to local communities and search for solutions to mitigate inequities or hazards.

Encourage local comprehensive plans to address the issue of freight movement within their boundaries and address the impacts associated with land use and freight movement.

Support private sector investments in advanced technologies and management systems that support regional goals and policies.

Apply the recommendations from the Eastern Washington Inter-modal Transportation Study (EWITS) and the Strategic Freight Transportation Analysis, both by Washington State University, to applicable policies and strategies.

Promote and encourage all-weather surfacing of farm-to-market roads subject to heavy truck usage and seasonal closures or weight restrictions.

Encourage freight access improvements to agricultural processing, industrial facilities, ports, rail terminals and other shipping facilities.

Encourage the location of freight facilities adjacent to appropriate existing arterials and transportation hubs and encourage the consolidation of freight facilities wherever feasible.

Support efforts by the Corps of Engineers and the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho to restore and upgrade the Columbia/Snake River navigation system to strengthen our position in the international trade market.

Continue support of the WSDOT in their efforts to find solutions to the challenges associated with I -90 over Snoqualmie Pass.

Support WSDOT in efforts to secure funding for the completion of the I-90 improvements over Snoqualmie Pass.

## **Policy 17 - Intermodalism**

It is the policy of the BFCG to encourage and maintain an accessible intermodal passenger and freight network with transportation hubs to facilitate access to urban and rural destinations while maintaining an efficient and balanced transportation system.

### **Background**

Any efficient transportation system relies on a variety of modes to move people and freight. The ability to easily transfer people, goods, and services from one mode to another without unnecessary delay or confusion is part of the concept of intermodalism. Ships, trains, planes, trucks, buses, automobiles, bicycles, pipelines, and walking all contribute to intermodalism. As any transportation system grows the need for efficient connectivity between modes becomes more important.

The regional airports facilitate inter-modal passenger and freight services. WSDOT has re-established intercity bus service with the Grape Line from Walla Walla to the Tri-Cities. The Pasco intermodal depot connects Amtrak, Greyhound Bus Lines, The Grape Line, Ben Franklin Transit and local taxi services. Transit transfer stations provide pedestrian shelters and at some locations, bike lockers. The buses have bicycle racks. The assorted port facilities along the Columbia/Snake River system provide intermodal connections between trucks, barges, and rail.

### **Action Strategies**

Identify major transportation terminals, facilities, routes, and corridors that connect passenger and freight movements with other intermodal facilities.

Develop an intermodal plan outlining the region's strategies to deal with any constraints to increasing intermodalism.

Recognize the ability of each mode to enhance the efficiency of other modes. Explore the possibility of other modes contributing to the overall efficiency of the network such as waterways and rail.

Encourage the development or expansion of efficient freight and passenger intermodal facilities that expedite transfers between modes, routes, and carriers.

Work with local jurisdictions to develop and promote regional intermodal facilities to avoid duplication of services.

## **Policy 18 - Transportation and Economics**

It is the policy of BFCG to acknowledge and promote transportation as having a fundamental role in growing and maintaining a healthy and strong regional economy.

### **Background**

In March of 2010 Governor Gregoire and the Legislature added Economic Vitality to the statewide transportation system policy goals. State Statute RCW 47.04.280 defines Economic Vitality; "To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy". Transportation systems connect people to jobs, recreation, products, and services in local communities within the region and across the entire state.

### **Action Strategies**

Support transportation projects that provide service for new, expanding or existing industry/businesses in the region.

Acknowledge the extensive diversity of commerce within the region.

Encourage and support transportation infrastructure improvements and expansion projects that eliminate congestion points and support a strong economy through promotion of economic development and increased employment opportunities.

Support improvements to freight routes in order to move products and commodities in and out of the region for economic growth as well as the employment stability created by the activity.

Support transit efforts to serve employment centers and develop park & ride lots.

Recognize how projects may impact the recreation and tourism trade.

Continue support for the development and funding of a statewide All Weather Road (AWR) system that allows for the year-round movement of agricultural products, consequently strengthening the rural economy.

## Policy 19 - Maintenance and Preservation

It is the policy of the BFCG to promote the maintenance and preservation of the existing regional multi-modal transportation system.

### Background

Preservation is established as one of the State of Washington's transportation policy goals pursuant to RCW 47.04.280. This goal is defined as; "To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services". The focus is to maximize the efficiency and quality of the existing transportation and transit systems.

As part of the January 2011 report published by the Washington State Transportation Commission titled *Regional Transportation Priority Projects*, the Commission identifies a "backlog" of preservation projects across the state. Acknowledging "there is not a consistent, agreed to definition of this term [preservation]" the Commission identified an estimated \$6.6 billion needed over the next 10 years for statewide preservation.

### Action Strategies

Recognize both a federal and state emphasis on maintaining a safe and efficient existing system rather than building additional capacity.

Encourage scheduling of maintenance and preservation that will achieve lowest life-cycle costs.

Promote detailed inventories and analysis of transportation systems; understanding this exercise can take a variety of forms that may or may not include advanced computer technologies.

Encourage discussions regarding the funding challenges for preservation of the existing multi-modal system.