

## PREFACE

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) serves as the lead agency for both the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). In accordance with state and federal transportation planning requirements, the BFCG has coordinated with area jurisdictions in the development of this combined Regional and Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The intents of this long-range transportation plan are to establish the vision for the region and provide the means to attain that vision. It identifies the issues and concerns associated with the transportation system in the region, as well as the policies and specific programs intended to address those concerns. The plan provides an inventory of the current system as well as providing metropolitan area forecasts for population, employment, and traffic to be anticipated during the life of the plan.

Development of the *2011-2032 Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan* required the efforts of local area planners and engineering staff from each of the BFCG's member agencies. In addition, elected officials from each agency aided in formulating the policies contained in the plan and the review of its' content. BFCG staff was integral in providing the layout of the plan, the coordination of interacting with the many members, as well as the collection of information and efforts described within the plan. Without the collective effort of all involved, successful formulation of the plan would not be possible.

The *2011-2032 Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) replaces the 2006-2025 RTP. This combined urban/rural document eliminates duplication; provides a comprehensive vision for the entire region; and meets both the state planning requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the federal requirements of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Over the coming years this plan will be updated to reflect policy changes, technological advances, funding options, and other "course corrections." This document is intended to be a dynamic guide to achieving the regional vision.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### THE PLAN

This Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a compilation of coordinated city, county, and state planning efforts for the Tri-Cities Urban Area (MPO) and the Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla Counties region (RTPO). The plan is in accord with state and federal guidelines and requirements.

The plan is based on least cost planning methodologies to attain the most cost-effective facilities, services, and programs that function as an integrated multi-modal regional transportation system; ensures preservation of that system; and makes efficient use of facilities to relieve congestion and maximize mobility of people and goods.

The plan presents regional level of service standards; evaluates the operational level of service of regional facilities for current conditions and for ten and twenty year horizons; assesses current and future capacity deficiencies; presents short, medium, and long-range transportation projects of each regional jurisdiction; presents a financial plan demonstrating how the transportation plan will be implemented; and includes goals, policies, and action strategies to guide the planning process for the next twenty years.

The plan establishes consistency with the jurisdictional six-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and the MPO/RTPO TIP; the transit development programs of Ben Franklin Transit and Valley Transit; the land use and transportation elements of city and county comprehensive plans; and the Washington Transportation Plan.

### BACKGROUND

The RTP was developed through a cooperative process that involved the BFCG, WSDOT, the public, and the efforts of the three counties, 13 cities, four ports, and two transit agencies that constitute the MPO/RTPO of the region.

The analysis for the Tri-Cities Urban Area and periphery utilized a computer traffic model to forecast future traffic volumes and levels of service. The Tri-Cities model area includes the Tri-Cities urbanized area and some adjacent areas in Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties, including travel to and from the Hanford Reservation. Those future travel demand estimates were direct results of forecasts of changes in the level of urban development. One of the most important aspects of the urban transportation planning process is the forecasting of future development in terms of population and employment.

Total population within the Tri-City model area during 2010 was nearly 214,000. By 2020, the area is forecast to grow by 48,565 people for a total population over 263,500. During the second decade, the addition of nearly 48,000 is forecast to bring the 2030 total population to 310,504 people within the model area. This equates to model area increase of 96,527 over the twenty-year period, or an annual increase of 2.3 percent.

Employment and forecasted employment is stated by number of employees for most land use categories. There are, however, some categories that are measure in other means - such as schools being reflected by the number of students, or hotels being measured by the number

of rooms for example. For the purposes of discussion, employment values within this section refer only to those categories measured by employee.

Within the model area in 2010, total employees were estimated at 69,271. Forecasted employment for 2020, show an increase of 6,249 employees bringing the area total to 75,520. By the year 2030, an additional 11,675 employees were forecast to be employed within the area resulting in a total of 87,195. Employment forecasts are reflective of the anticipated downturn in total employment associated with the Hanford cleanup mission. In total, employment forecasts show an increase of nearly 18,000 employees or an annual growth rate of 1.3 percent for the twenty-year period.

## MAJOR REGIONAL ISSUES

Regional transportation issues that were identified by the local transportation committees when developing the plan were:

**Preservation and Maintenance.** Smaller jurisdictions have difficulty transferring general revenues to street maintenance when those funds are severely needed. Additionally, much of the available grant funding is restricted to federally classified routes, leaving local road maintenance underfunded. Long-term maintenance deferral leads to system deterioration.

**Safety Deficiencies.** Physical deficiencies or items that do not meet current engineering standards may include horizontal and vertical alignments, intersections, stopping sight distance, inadequate or nonexistent shoulders, narrow lanes, roadside hazards, lack of protective guardrails, narrow bridges, and warning devices at railroad crossings. Obtaining funds to implement remedial measures is an on-going problem.

**Automobile Dependence.** Both the volumes of traffic on our streets and highways and the vehicle miles traveled by individual vehicles are increasing. Funding capacity improvements to keep pace with the demand is an on-going challenge.

The Hanford Site work commute changed when the Department of Energy eliminated their bus fleet and allowed private vehicles on the site. A BFCG survey performed every other year finds the daily Hanford-bound commute through Richland consisting of approximately 88 percent single-occupancy and 10 -12 percent carpool and vanpool. The nuclear waste treatment plant currently under construction is adding another 1,000-2,000 workers (numbers fluctuate) into the Hanford commute.

The morning commute to Hanford on SR 240 operates well within the capacity of this corridor due to staggered and variable work shifts. However, the afternoon return commute is more compressed, resulting in significantly more congestion and delays.

Ben Franklin Transit's vanpool program helps ease the Hanford corridor congestion.

The Tri-Cities area was again granted a two year exemption (effective June 30<sup>th</sup> 2011) from implementing a state mandated Commute Trip Reduction Program that will affect major employers, including the Department of Energy and their prime Hanford contractors.

**Inter-City Bus Service.** In 2004, Greyhound discontinued service to Connell, Prosser, Richland and Walla Walla. With WSDOT support, the “Grape Line” bus service has attempted to fill part of that void between Pasco and Walla Walla.

**Stampede Pass Rail Impacts.** Reopening the Stampede Pass rail line has resulted in traffic impacts in Pasco, Kennewick, Prosser, and other communities up the Yakima Valley. Grade separations have been constructed at the Interstate 82 Kiona Interchange (Exit 96), Ainsworth Avenue (SR 397) in Pasco and Columbia Center in Kennewick. In 2011 BNSF is scheduled to begin bridge construction for a grade separated crossing of Steptoe Street as part of a joint Kennewick/Richland project extending Steptoe Street between Clearwater Avenue and Gage Boulevard. Additional work is needed.

**Snake River Draw Down/Dam Breaching.** The impacts to road and rail transportation associated with the potential loss of barge traffic on the Snake River are extensive. There is no mechanism in place to finance the capacity improvements that would be needed to continue those freight commodity movements. The BFCG Board has gone on record (resolution) opposing any dam breaching or pool draw downs.

**Columbia and Snake River Dredging.** The Columbia River Channel Improvements Project was a collaborative effort between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and six lower Columbia River ports to improve navigation by deepening the navigation channel to accommodate the current fleet of international bulk cargo and container ships. The Corps completed the last section of the Project in November 2010, finishing an effort that took more than 20 years to complete. The project deepened the Columbia River by three feet, to 43 feet along a 103-mile stretch of river from the Pacific Ocean to Portland, Oregon. Additionally, following favorable court action, the Corps of Engineers completed the necessary dredging on the Snake River in the winter of 2005-2006. Siltation is again expected to necessitate dredging in 5-7 years.

**Seasonal Weight Restrictions.** Seasonal weight restrictions during freeze/thaw cycles of late winter and early spring affect 85 percent of the regional rural county freight and goods routes. This impacts delivery of farm commodities from scattered rural storage facilities to railheads and water ports. The process of all-weather surfacing these vital freight routes is moving slowly for lack of adequate funds.

**Preservation of Light Density Rail Lines.** Four light density, or branch lines, operate in the RTPO. Branch line operations provide competitive alternatives to shipping by barge or truck as well as reducing traffic congestion and maintenance requirements on state and local roads. Branch lines tend to operate on slim profit margins, resulting in deferred maintenance and potential abandonment. State financial support and a grain car program have helped to keep them running. Continued support will likely be needed to preserve these freight options.

**Decline of Dedicated Transportation Funds.** The 1999 repeal of the State Motor Vehicle Excise Tax was followed by two subsequent state gasoline tax increases. One of those increases marginally addressed funds for cities and counties, extending city and county transportation program needs.

The growth in the state’s population, number of licensed vehicles, and vehicle miles traveled indicate the need for appropriate increases in transportation funding for cities and counties to offset increased maintenance costs, pavement overlays and capacity improvement needs. The Washington Transportation Plan further emphasizes those needs.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

Regional transportation goals and policies were developed by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Advisory Committee, public input, and the BFCG to guide jurisdictional actions related to transportation planning. As an integral part of the adopted plan, the goals and policies should be reviewed on an ongoing basis for currency and consistency. Agencies may choose to adopt some or all of the policy statements as part of their local transportation or land use planning processes. The policies include:

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|--|---|
| 1. Access                                      | 11. Pedestrians and Bicycles                                    |
| 2. Efficiency                                  | 12. Transit Element   |
| 3. Balance                                     | 13. Transportation Demand Management/<br>Commute Trip Reduction |
| 4. Safety & Security                           | 14. Streets and Highways  |
| 5. Safety Conscious Planning                   | 15. Air/Waterways/Rail  |
| 6. Environmental Responsibility                | 16. Freight Movement  |
| 7. Transportation Financing                    | 17. Intermodalism   |
| 8. Intergovernmental Cooperation               | 18. Transportation and Economic                                 |
| 9. Citizen Involvement and Public<br>Education | 19. Maintenance and Preservation                                |
| 10. Livability, Sustainability, & Land Use     |   |

## TRI-CITIES DEFICIENCY ANALYSIS (MPO)

**City of Richland** - Current congestion exists upon George Washington Way's (GWW) southern portion, with numerous delays experienced at signalized intersections with local cross-streets. SR 240 eastbound, between Route 10 and Stevens Drive, operates under congestion during the PM commute, while the SR 240 southbound "Bypass" traffic experiences delays at the six signalized intersections within this section. SR 240 eastbound ramp to I-182 westbound (toward Queensgate Drive) experiences congestion associated with the higher volumes and required weave movements accessing the westbound ramps.

Forecasts for the year 2020 show conditions along GWW will worsen with congested segments appearing further north. The I-182/GWW interchange will become increasingly busy, with some movements likely near capacity. SR 240 eastbound between Kingsgate Way and Stevens Drive is forecast to operate as congested. The Duportail Bridge and associated Duportail Extension (to Stevens Drive) will draw significant traffic volumes and improve conditions at both Aaron Drive and Queensgate Drive. With that said, the SR 240 eastbound ramp to I-182 eastbound will remain a location of concern.

2030 forecasts show the extension of Jones Road, coupled with anticipated reduction of employment in further reaches of the Hanford Site, will reduce congestion upon SR 240 eastbound between Kingsgate Way and Stevens Drive. However, conditions along the SR 240 Bypass are expected to worsen between SR 224 (Van Giesen Street) and Duportail Street in the southbound direction. Conditions along GWW southbound are forecast to be congested entirely when south of Lee Boulevard, with increasing congestion at the I-182/SR 240 interchanges at Aaron and GWW. Queensgate Avenue is forecast to operate as congested in the vicinity of the I-182 interchange while roundabouts at Columbia Park Trail and Tapteal Drive are forecast to operate near, or above, capacity by 2030. Gage Boulevard is forecast to operate with some segments congested and others at, or near, capacity.

**City of West Richland** - Currently there are no major deficiencies apparent within the city, however forecasts for the years 2020 and 2030 indicate SR 224 westbound will approach capacity in some locations. The extension of Keene Road to Twin Bridges Road is expected to provide an attractive alternative for Hanford commuters who have traditionally used the SR 240 Bypass. Further connection to I-82 with the Red Mountain Interchange will provide much easier access into and out of the city from points west and south of the area.

**City of Kennewick** - Currently, congestion exists upon portions of Gage Boulevard, primarily in the eastbound direction. US 395 travelers experience numerous delays at the signalized intersections with local streets. Clearwater Avenue also experiences significant delay in both directions due to the numerous signalized intersections present on the corridor. The US 395 "Blue" Bridge (southbound) is near congested levels, with improvements at the US 395/SR 240 interchange appearing to handle current volumes well.

Forecasts for the year 2020 show conditions forecast to improve along Gage Boulevard, with the Steptoe Street Corridor extended to Southridge sub-area, though portions of Gage Boulevard will continue to operate at levels near congestion. Improvements adjacent US 395 in the Southridge area will draw large volumes to the newly developed area, with model forecasts showing both 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hildebrand Road as congested at points east of US 395. SR 240 eastbound between Columbia Center Boulevard and Edison Street is forecast to near congested levels. The US 395 "Blue" Bridge southbound is forecast to be at congested levels with the northbound approach also forecast as congested. SR 397, south of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue is forecast to operate at congested levels, though largely a factor of its lower classification capacity.

By the year 2030, Gage Boulevard is forecast to be congested in both directions (adjacent Steptoe). SR 240 eastbound, between Columbia Center Boulevard and Edison Street, will continue to operate near congested levels. Hildebrand Road and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue (east of US 395) are forecast to operate at congested levels. Portions of US 395 southbound are nearing congested levels with the US 395 "Blue" Bridge forecast to be above levels of congestion *in both directions* by the year 2030. Conditions along SR 397 (south of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue) are forecast with congestion with congestion reaching further southeast than seen in 2020 forecast.

**Benton County (Urban)** - Current conditions show congested levels upon SR 240 eastbound between Route 10 and Twin Bridges Road. Other areas on the urban fringe appear to operate at comfortable levels at this time, though there are some spot operational concerns at specific locations.

Forecasts for 2020 indicate the SR 240 eastbound segment identified as congested today will experience lighter volumes if Hanford employment reductions occur as anticipated. Portions of SR 397 in the Finley area are expected to approach congested levels by 2020.

The 2030 model forecasts show that the Red Mountain Interchange will be an attractive route for some north-south commutes in the area. By 2030, segments of SR 224 could approach congested levels without sufficient improvement to accompany the interchange project. Development of the Badger sub-area in Richland is forecast to lead to some congestion along Reata Road near Leslie. Forecasted congestion will spread southward along SR 397 in the Finley area, primarily in the southbound direction.

**City of Pasco** - Currently, congestion exists in the I-182/Road 100 vicinity and also the I-182/Road 68 area. Congestion is primarily upon Broadmoor Parkway, Road 68, and Burden Boulevard as travelers negotiate the signals and ramp movements in these areas. The US 395 segment between Kartchner Street and Court Street experiences some congestion as numerous ramp movements and weaves are present in this portion.

By the year 2020, forecasts indicate the I-182 ("Richland-Pasco") Bridge will near levels of congestion. Ramps to and from Road 100 are expected to be congested as is Broadmoor, north of I-182. Conditions at Road 68/Burden Boulevard are forecast to be congested in north, south, and east directions. US 395 southbound ramps from US 395 (from Spokane Street) and loop ramp to Blue Bridge are both forecast to operate at congested levels by this time.

In the 2030 forecast, volumes upon the I-182 Bridge (eastbound) are forecast to grow beyond the volumes of any other roadway in the urban area - and operate at levels of congestion. Improvements are planned for the Road 100 interchange, but those associated ramp improvements are forecast to be at congested levels by 2030. Interchange projects at Road 52 and an Underpass at Road 76 result in better conditions at Road 68/I-182. The forecasts for US 395 (southbound) continue to show levels of congestion between Kartchner and Court Streets. In the 2030 forecasts, congested levels are found on US 395 southbound ramps with mainline volumes nearing congested levels.

**Franklin County (Urban)** - The model area roadways for Franklin County operate at comfortable levels at this time with only operational concerns at spot locations. Forecasts include few Franklin County roadway improvements on the urban fringe. Of those, only the extension of Road 100 (Broadmoor) is forecast to operate near a congested level. This is most likely a factor of the lower capacity associated with rural road segments. The intersection of Columbia River Road/Taylor Flats Road/Dent Road/Clark Road will experience a significant amount of traffic by 2030 and these volumes should be kept in mind when design of the planned improvements is begun.

**Urban Area Summary** - For the most part, forecasted congestion is upon segments that area professionals would intuitively expect. Area staff seem to have a good understanding of the needs and expected areas of future growth. The project lists contained within both 2020 and 2030 "Build" scenarios do help alleviate the congested conditions forecasts for most areas. It is evident, however, that not all congestion problems can be solved through the limited resources available at the local level. The SR 240, I-182, and US 395 corridors and their interactions with the local road systems will continue to be an area of required focus as locals struggle gaining access to and across the state facilities. Additionally, and perhaps of greater concern, is the congested levels of traffic forecast for the Tri-City area's two highest capacity bridges, the I-182 "Pasco-Richland" Bridge and the US 395 "Blue Bridge".

## REGIONAL DEFICIENCY ANALYSIS (RTPO)

### Rural Benton County

In large measure, road access for rural and agricultural areas in rural Benton County is good and improving. However, the road system may be considered to provide less than convenient access to some of the outlying rural areas.

Congestion challenges are absent on county roads serving rural or agricultural areas; existing Level of Service (LOS) is B or higher. Generally, principle road concerns in rural areas are "all weather" access for agricultural product transport, and more direct farm-to-market routes for agricultural products.

### **Benton City**

All of Benton City's functionally classified streets are predicted to operate at LOS A or B in the Year 2030, with one exception. State Route (SR) 225, which is contiguous with components of the Benton City street system from the Yakima River north to SR 240, is forecast to operate at LOS D by 2020. This is a situation which Benton City and WSDOT should monitor over time.

### **Prosser**

Most segments of the Prosser street system currently operate at LOS B or better. Projected volumes based on traffic count data suggest the downtown area south of the railroad tracks is the area of town most prone to future congestion. Because increased downtown business activity would lead to increased congestion, Prosser's 2011 Comprehensive Plan reduces the downtown LOS threshold to "D" in order to accommodate the City's vision for a more robust downtown. The remainder of Prosser's street system has an LOS threshold of "C".

Higher traffic volumes are also projected north of the Yakima River on Wine Country Road. Recent improvements on Wine Country Road were designed to accommodate these higher traffic volumes. However, continued intensification of growth accessing the intersections at the I-82 interchange and Merlot Drive in the north part of the city will require a major street improvement project at some point during the planning period.

### **Rural Franklin County**

Most of Franklin County's functionally classified rural roads currently operate at LOS A or B. A few segments operate at LOS C, the regionally adopted standard. In 20 years, segments of Road 68 North and Taylor Flats Road may degrade to LOS D and merit future monitoring. These segments constitute a very small percentage of the classified rural road system. As such, traffic congestion is generally not a problem in rural Franklin County.

### **Connell**

Calculations based on traffic counts performed prior to completion of the Coyote Ridge Correctional Facility expansion show all of Connell's functionally classified streets operating at Level of Service (LOS) "A" or "B" through the Year 2030 except for portions of Columbia Avenue north of Elm Street where higher traffic volumes may occur. Traffic flow, operating speeds, and maneuverability on most of the street system is expected to be at acceptable levels through the planning period. The need to widen Columbia Avenue beyond the current three lanes would be near the end of the 20-year horizon of the Plan. The effects of Coyote Ridge expansion on population-related and employment-related trips need to be more closely examined.

### **Kahlotus**

All of Kahlotus' functionally classified streets, including State Routes 21, 260, and 263, are projected to operate at LOS A in the Year 2030. Anticipated need is likely to be in the form of street maintenance and the necessity for wider streets with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.

### **Mesa**

All of Mesa's functionally classified streets are projected to still operate at LOS A during the life of the Plan. Therefore, projects are generally triggered by pavement condition and the need for wider streets with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks.

### **Rural Walla Walla County**

Overall, traffic congestion is not a problem on Walla Walla County's rural roads. All of the County's roads currently operate at LOS A or B, and population growth in the rural County has been slow - less than one percent/year between 2000 and 2010. None of the County-controlled roadways are projected to exceed their level of service standard by the year 2030.

### **Urban Walla Walla County**

Capacity deficiencies may develop on roads currently under county jurisdiction but in the adopted Walla Walla or College Place Urban Growth Area over the twenty-year life of the Plan. Cooperation between neighboring jurisdictions is essential in addressing maintenance and capacity issues because City growth and the expansion of city limits could encompass those areas within that time frame.

### **Prescott**

All of Prescott's functionally classified streets, including SR 124, are predicted to operate at LOS A or B throughout the 20-year planning period. Therefore, projects are generally triggered by pavement condition and the need for wider streets with curbs and sidewalks. The city's ability to finance such improvements relies upon securing state and/or federal funding.

### **Waitsburg**

The City of Waitsburg is unique in that the two principal arterials in town are actually State highways: State Route 12 (Coppei Avenue) and State Route 124 (Preston Avenue), which are maintained by the State Department of Transportation. The state routes are projected to operate at LOS A or B, as are all of Waitsburg's remaining streets.

### **Walla Walla**

Streets in Walla Walla generally operate at acceptable levels of service. Several deficiencies were identified in the 2004 Traffic Circulation Study; however, changes to the regional transportation network have occurred since then, altering conditions defined in that report. Regional changes to the urban area traffic system since the Study, altering conditions defined in that report.

Changes to the City's transportation network have occurred since that time. A project to reconstruct 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Abadie Street to Cherry Street to minor arterial standard is scheduled for construction in 2012. Additionally, the Myra Road - SR 125 to Garrison Creek project, which includes a grade separated intersection, is being studied.

## College Place

Most streets in College Place currently operate at acceptable levels of service. As noted with Walla Walla, deficiencies were identified in the 2004 Walla Walla/College Place Traffic Circulation Study.

Improvements to the local transportation network are also underway. The City of College Place is also reconstructing and improving roughly a mile of Whitman Drive from Larch to Academy Drive with completion anticipated by November 2011. Additionally, the City is planning the reconstruction of Rose Avenue, a principal east-west arterial from Myra Road through College Avenue, a principal north-south arterial.

## WSDOT - RTPO

Analysis of state routes in the rural RTPO region has determined that very few potential capacity challenges over the life of the plan.

SR 125 through Walla Walla functions as a city street with numerous intersections, traffic signals and commercial activities. The inherent congestion and delay are not conducive to through travel. There have been discussions between urban area jurisdictions and WSDOT to transfer jurisdictional responsibilities for the existing SR 125 and the new Myra Road, which would become the new SR 125.

SR 225 extends from Interstate 82 through Benton City to SR 240 at Horn Rapids, serving as Benton City's main street. Hanford commuters dominate peak volumes on this two-lane roadway and the route should be monitored for capacity problems.

## FINANCIAL PLAN

The 22-year financial plan is required to be constrained to reflect what realistically may be done with available revenues during the 22-year planning horizon. This requirement means that the improvements included in the plan, and the maintenance and preservation of the existing transportation system, must be affordable within already available and projected sources of revenue.

The Tri-Cities metropolitan area transportation system is forecast to cost \$1,062 million to maintain and provide needed improvements over the next 22 years. Of this total, \$474 million (45%) will be needed to maintain and operate the system, and \$589 million (55%) will be available for improvements. At the end of the 22-year planning horizon, the MPO will have an estimated \$30 million surplus. In addition, the MPO will need to generate an additional \$110 million in revenue to fund projects identified as unmet need.

The balance of the regional transportation system outside the MPO area is estimated to cost \$1,065 million to maintain and provide needed improvements over the next 20 years. Of this total, \$476 million (45%) will be needed to maintain and operate the system, and \$589 million (55%) will be available for improvements. At the end of the 20-year planning horizon, the rural RTPO planning area will have a remaining estimate of -\$29 million. In addition to this shortfall, the rural RTPO will need to generate an additional \$68 million in revenue to fund projects identified as unmet need.

The MPO/RTPO members have indicated any funding shortfalls, excluding the planning projects, will be reduced to a manageable level and/or eliminated as project priorities and plans are defined and future transportation improvement plans are developed.

## CONCLUSIONS

Public investment in the transportation system is essential to the health, safety, and economic prosperity of the region. The RTP identifies cost-effective transit and highway improvements, using each mode of travel where it is best suited to meet the travel demand of the community.

The future regional transportation system must be consistent with the land use goals and plans of each of the jurisdictions. Ensuring orderly growth is essential to the success of the transportation system. Lack of agreement between land use and transportation planning will result in unnecessary capital investment, underused facilities, or under-designed roadways incapable of serving the demand.

The Regional Transportation Plan is a planning and programming tool to assist in solving regional transportation problems. The RTP provides a basis for assessing the impacts of years 2020 and 2030 travel demand, and requires periodic updates to remain consistent with community goals.

The RTPO shall review the RTP biennially for currency and shall update it at least every five years to incorporate changing conditions and financial reality.

The BFCG will monitor the performance of the RTP and compare with the updated local comprehensive plans; thus, continuously gathering information about programs and projects implemented from this plan. This information will tell us how well the plan is being executed and the effectiveness of proposed strategies. It will also provide feedback to policy makers and the public on whether the policies and provisions in the RTP are helping to realize the preferred future for the region.

## PLAN AND POLICY IMPLICATION

This Regional Transportation Plan was developed jointly by the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments and member jurisdictions, including the Washington State Department of Transportation. Adoption of the plan by the BFCG Board includes the following:

- Endorsement of regional transportation system components, including the street and highway system, public transit systems, regional airport system, water and land-based freight systems, and a commuter management program.
- Identification and documentation of transportation system deficiencies including: travel corridors with inadequate capacity to meet current and future travel demand; the need for transit to capture a higher percent of work trips; and the need to decrease the numbers of drive alone work trips by increasing the ridesharing and park & ride programs.
- Recognition of a state mandate to possibly have Commute Trip Reduction Plans and Ordinances in place.

- Endorsement of the level of transportation investment needed to adequately serve current and anticipated growth.
- Endorsement of the regional transportation planning framework as the process for achieving a unified direction on transportation policies and coordination with comprehensive land use planning.
- Completion of a federal requirement as a condition for receiving federal Surface Transportation Program funding, and as a basis for review of projects proposed for funding within the near-term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Implementation of the transportation plan, including transit plans, by the responsible jurisdictions.
- Establishment of consistency between this plan, the MPO/RTPO six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Washington Transportation Plan.