

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 282,700 population.

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, 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, 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.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE 2006 BFCG BOARD

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Representative</u>
Benton County	Claude Oliver
Franklin County	Frank Brock
City of Kennewick	Bob Olson
City of Richland	John Fox
City of Pasco	Tom Larsen
City of Benton City	Lloyd Carnahan
City of Prosser	Randy Taylor
City of West Richland	Julie Jones
City of Connell	Kent Mosbrucker

City of Kahlotus	Vacant
City of Mesa	Vacant
Port of Pasco	Bill Clark
Port of Benton	Robert Larson
Ben Franklin Transit	Lynn Johnson
Port of Kennewick	Gene Wagner
Benton Public Utility District	Lori Sanders

The BFCG undertakes land use and 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. They collectively determine the work program of the BFCG and the necessary budget to ensure the completion of that program.

BFCG COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP - 2006

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>PAC Representative</u>	<u>TAC Representative</u>
Benton County	Leo Bowman	Ross Dunfee
Franklin County	Frank Brock	Tim Fife
City of Kennewick	Bob Olson	Peter Beaudry
City of Richland	John Fox	Marlin Brinkley
City of Pasco	Bob Hoffmann	Bob Alberts
City of Benton City	Lloyd Carnahan	Bob Spink **
City of Prosser	Randy Taylor	L.J. DaCorsi
City of West Richland	Nancy Aldrich	Roscoe Slade
City of Connell	Gary Walton	Art Tackett
City of Kaholtus	Donna Fone	Sharon McCaleb*
City of Mesa	Patti Bailie	Teresa Standridge*
Port of Pasco	Bill Clark	Randy Hayden
Port of Benton	Robert Larson	Roger Wright
Port of Kennewick	Gene Wagner	Larry Peterson
Ben Franklin Transit	Neva Corkrum	Ed Frost
WSDOT	Don Whitehouse	Bill Preston
Fluor Daniel Hanford, Inc.	-----	Dave Penfield
Battelle Northwest	-----	Vacant
Walla Walla County	Greg Loney	Randy Glaeser
City of Walla Walla	Jerry Cummins	Wrandoll Morua
City of College Place	Tim Edwards	Paul Hartwig
City of Waitsburg	Martin Dunn	Dan Katsel
City of Prescott	Ted Cook	Val Powers
Port of Walla Walla	Fred Bennett	Paul Gerola
Valley Transit	David Carey	Dick Fondahn

* City Clerk, not delegate

** Engineering Consultant

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

The 1970 US Census indicated that the cities of Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, and West Richland and some surrounding portions of Benton and Franklin counties reached the threshold population and urban densities required for an urbanized area. In 1973, in compliance with federal laws, 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 1-8. Appendix H contains a glossary of terms, acronyms, and abbreviations used throughout this document.

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 1-2). 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.

FEDERAL & STATE TRANSPORTATION BOUNDARIES

Urban Areas: Section 101 (a) of Title 23 U.S.C. defines Urban Clusters (UCs) or small Urban Areas (UAs) of 5,000 to 49,999 population; and Urbanized Areas (UZAs) of 50,000 or more population as designated by the Bureau of the Census. All such urbanized areas must have designated urban area boundaries as cooperatively established among state and local officials and as approved by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The FHWA uses the term “Federal-Aid Urban Area” (FAUA) to distinguish the area of the adjusted urban area boundary.

Small Urban Areas: Those urban clusters having a population of at least 5,000 and less than 50,000. The Walla Walla/College Place urban area fits this category. (See Fig. 1-3) The City of Prosser has an estimated population of 5,045; but will not officially cross the 5,000 person threshold for a small urban area until the 2010 census data is released.

An Urbanized Area (UZA) is an area of one or more cities with a population of 50,000 or more and surrounding unincorporated areas that meet certain criteria for population size and density. The Tri-Cities urbanized area of 188,571 people falls in this category. The Walla Walla/College Place urban area will likely reach the 50,000 population threshold by about 2015 (currently 43,994), thus officially becoming an urbanized area after the 2020 census. There has been discussion regarding growth from Milton-Freewater Oregon north along the Highway 11/SR 125 corridor to the Walla Walla/College Place urban area. After conversations with both the Umatilla County and Milton-Freewater planning departments, it was concluded

the density necessary to be recognized as an urban area would unlikely occur before the 2010 census. This area will again be reviewed prior to the next planning horizon.

Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) are urbanized areas over 200,000 in population. There are no TMAs in this three-county region; however, the Tri-Cities will attain TMA status by about 2010.

Rural Areas comprise the areas outside the boundaries of small urban and larger urbanized areas, as defined above. Small cities and towns under 5,000 population are, therefore, considered to be parts of the rural areas.

Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) as mandated by the Growth Management Act (GMA), are those areas expected to become urban (i.e. city growth) within 20 years. Figure 1-1 shows Tri-City area UGAs. Figure 1-3 shows the UGAs for Walla Walla and College Place. The cities and counties periodically update their UGAs in accordance with the GMA.

An Urban Area Boundary (UAB) or an Urbanized Area Boundary (UZAB) are the lines demarcating urban areas or larger urbanized areas from rural or abutting urban areas. The urban/rural split of federal funding and functional classification for streets, roads and highways occurs at the UAB or UZAB. Therefore, all roadways outside of those boundaries are considered to be rural regardless of whether they fall within a Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) (defined below) or not. Figures 1-1 and 1-3 depict the urban/urbanized boundaries for both the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla/College Place.

A Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB) defines the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO, i.e. Tri-MATS). The metropolitan area boundary (i.e. MPO boundary) must encompass the existing urbanized area and the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast period (i.e. Urban Growth Areas). This is the geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process required by federal law is carried out. The Tri-Cities MPO encompasses 189 square miles and nearly 189,000 people. Figure 1-1 shows the Tri-Cities MPA and its relationship to the slightly smaller urbanized area.

The current Metropolitan Area Boundary/MPO boundary of the Tri-Cities urban area was adopted by the BFCG Board in March 2004 and approved by the Governor in May 2004.

A Non-attainment Area Boundary defines an area designated by the Environmental Protection Agency for noncompliance with ambient air quality standards for particulate matter (PM 10), carbon monoxide and/or ozone. Both the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla/College Place urban areas meet air quality standards for the specified pollutants and are, therefore, not designated as non-attainment areas.

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 registered in the late 1980s. 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. 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.

DOE requested the Wallula NAA be re-designated as an attainment area in April 2005. The re-designation request continued the exclusion from regional transportation conformity. The final approval from EPA became effective in September 2005.

Tri-Cities as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) and potentially with Air Quality Non-attainment: As previously indicated, the Tri-Cities urban Area will likely reach the 200,000 population threshold to be reclassified as a TMA by about 2010. With inherent population and traffic growth, industrialization, etc., our air quality might deteriorate until the area is not in compliance with ambient air quality standards (carbon monoxide, ozone, particulate matter).

What does that mean for the BFCG and the urban transportation agencies? Here are some comparisons, including the potential for air quality non-attainment.

ACTIVITY	MPO	TMA
Develop/Maintain Long-Range Plan (20-Year, Financially Constrained)	Strong basis for selection of projects in 4-Year TIP.	Strong basis for determination and selection of projects in 4-Year TIP.
Develop Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	MPO must develop TIP, including 4-Year project priority list and financial plan.	TMA is responsible for coordinating regional process to prioritize TIP projects. In Air Quality Non-attainment Areas this includes efforts to comply with clean air goals. Capacity improvement projects should strive to improve but not worsen air quality.
Development of Management Systems	Voluntary	TMA must develop Congestion Management System and collaborate in implementation of other statewide management systems.
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 a prorata share of STP funds.
Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) Funds & Project Selections.	MPO must cooperate with WSDOT on project selection and STP funding in conformance with local TIP. Not eligible for CMAQ funds unless have air quality problems.	WSDOT must consult with TMA. TMA has responsibility of project selection in conformance with local TIP.
Planning Process	Conduct process and prepare planning documents in accordance with federal transportation legislation.	Similar but more in-depth planning process must be certified by FHWA & FTA.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). The Regional Transportation Planning Program was authorized by the 1990 Legislature as part of the state's Growth Management Act. The program created a formal mechanism for local governments and the state to coordinate planning for regional transportation facilities and services.

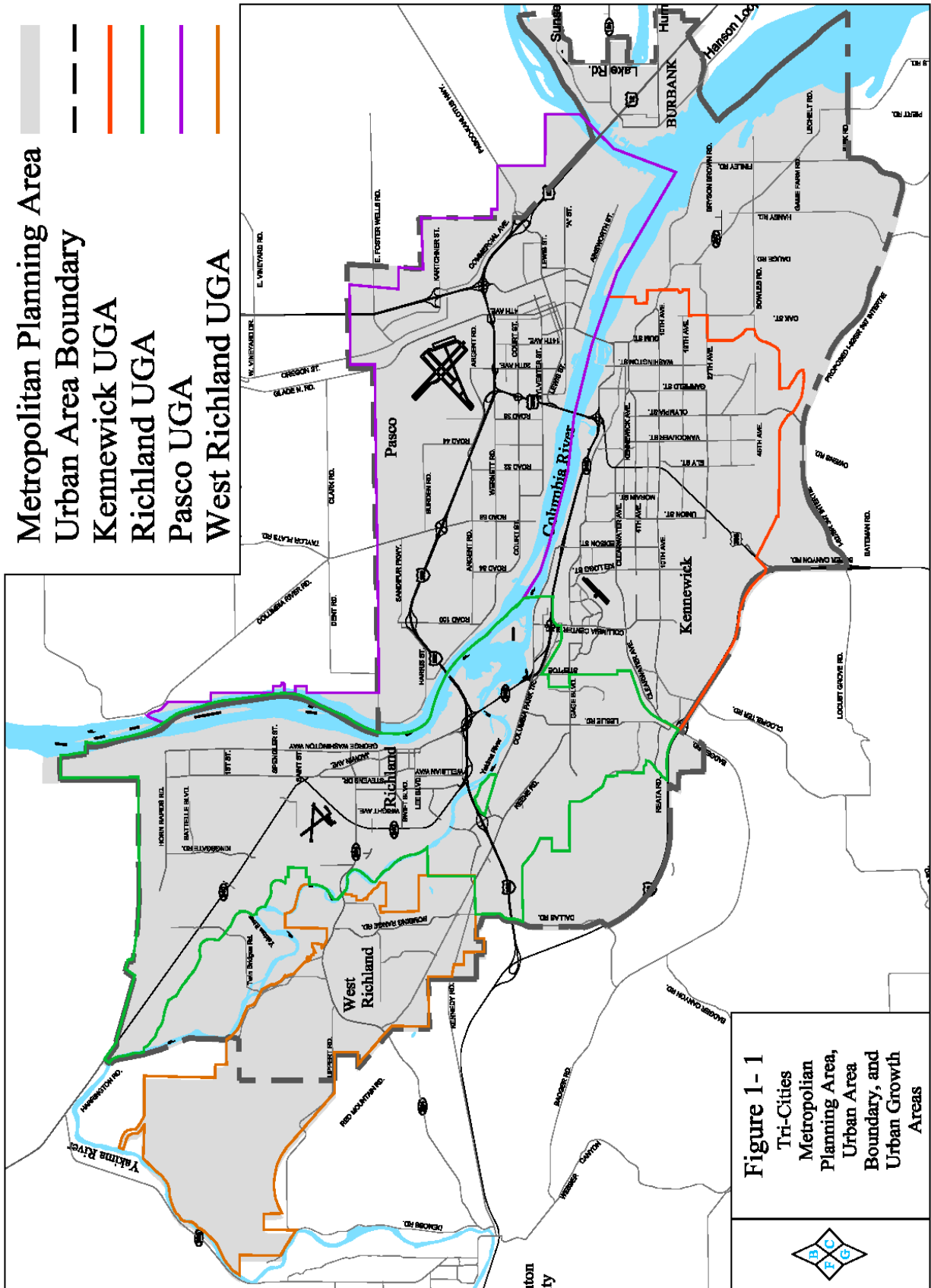
RCW 47.80.020 defines the minimum area that must be included within the planning boundary of an RTPO. This legislation states *"Each organization shall: (1) Encompass at least one complete county; (2) Have a population of at least one hundred thousand or contain a minimum of three counties; and (3) Have as members all counties within the region, and at least sixty percent of the cities and towns within the region representing a minimum of seventy-five percent of the cities' and towns' population."*

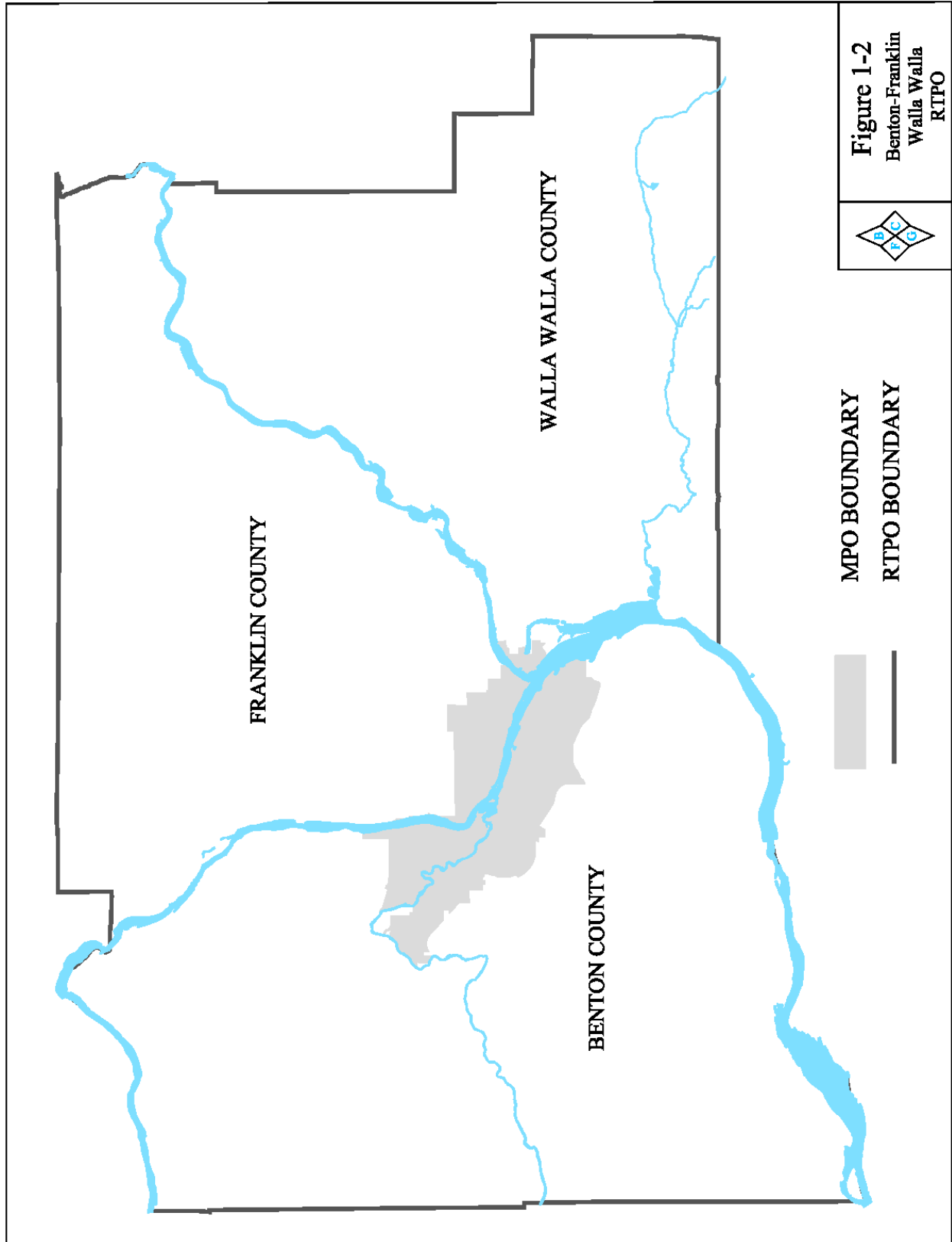
Figure 1-2 shows the Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla RTPO. The boundary is coincident with that of the three counties. All cities within the region have opted into the RTPO.

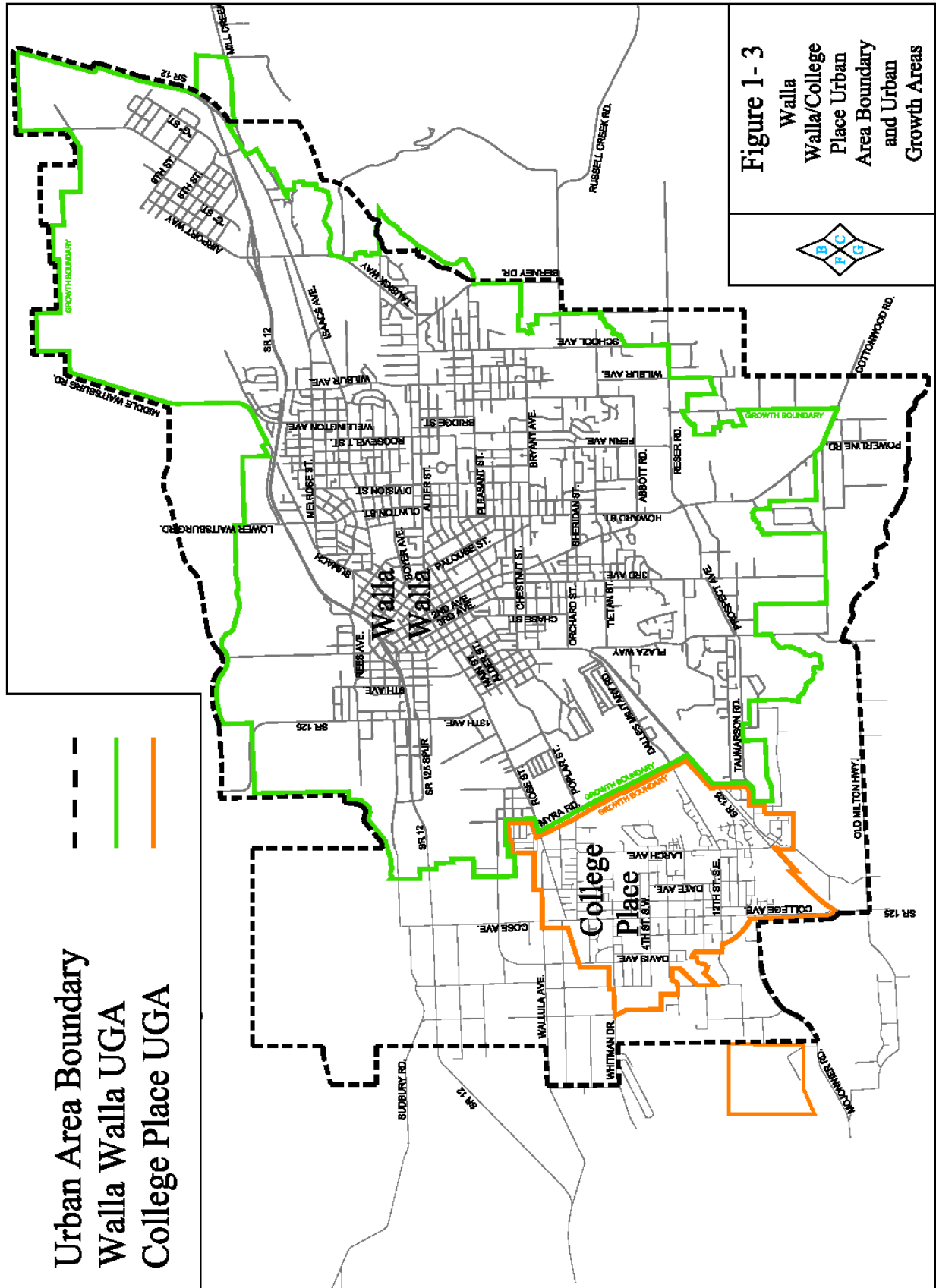
State requirements specify that RTPOs shall be the same organization as that designated for the federally mandated MPO. This assures integration of the region and metropolitan programs. Once an RTPO is formed, all cities in the region are subject to certification and consistency with the regional planning efforts. This fosters an ongoing transportation planning and decision making process that actively plans for the regional transportation system as well as coordinates among jurisdictions.

In accordance with legislative requirements, BFCG fulfills the roles of both MPO for the Tri-Cities metropolitan area and RTPO for Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla Counties.

Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA): Designates the area of operation of a public transit system and the taxing area that helps finance that operation. Figure 4-10 (Chapter Four) depicts the PTBAs of Ben Franklin Transit and Valley Transit, respectively. The BFT service area encompasses 190,038 people, the Valley Transit service area, 47,914. (2005 population per Office of Financial Management (OFM).)







UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)

In order to secure federal funding to sustain metropolitan and regional transportation planning, the BFCG annually prepares a Unified Planning Work Program in cooperation with the State, local governments, and Ben Franklin Transit (BFT). Any special studies anticipated to be performed by BFCG for WSDOT and the local jurisdictions are defined therein. This may include transit planning and marketing surveys, route planning studies, the undertaking of FTA (Federal Transit Administration) related annual emphasis area issues, census data, certification of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) plan, a Regional Transportation Plan update, and assorted other studies mutually agreed upon. 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 (4-yrs.) and RTPO (6-yrs.), in cooperation with WSDOT, Transit, and the other member jurisdictions. Furthermore, the BFCG, in cooperation with WSDOT and BFT, develops a financial plan that demonstrates resources are reasonably available to implement the TIP. To assist in the process, WSDOT provides estimates of the available federal and state funds. 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 biennially review and update its six-year TIP in the format provided by WSDOT. These local TIPs are prioritized by year and financially constrained to approximate anticipated annual revenues. Upon approval of the local TIPs by their governing bodies through a public forum process, those TIPs are forwarded to BFCG for compilation into the regional TIP. Upon compilation of a draft TIP, BFCG provides a public forum for review and comment, prior to Tri-MATS adoption. Upon resolution of pertinent 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 is annually updated (amended). Procedures for interim amendments of the TIP must conform with state and federal requirements and those herein for TIP preparation. The TIP may be amended at any time deemed appropriate to reflect needed modifications to the transportation program. Public involvement in TIP preparation and/or amendment at either the agency or BFCG levels must conform with state and federal requirements and with supplemental BFCG Public Involvement Procedures.

MAJOR METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS

Major Metropolitan Transportation Investments are high-type roadway or transit improvements of substantial cost that are anticipated to significantly affect capacity, traffic

flow, level of service, or mode share at the transportation corridor or sub-area scale. Any project meeting the federal qualifications requires refinement with a major investment analysis in consultation with FHWA and the FTA. Participants in this cooperative process include WSDOT, BFT, BFCG, local officials, and assorted other agencies and individuals per the federal criteria. To the extent appropriate to the scope of the project, major investment studies include evaluation of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of alternative investments or strategies in attaining local, state, and national goals and objectives. When required, major investment studies are accomplished in conjunction with environmental studies for a project.

FEDERAL & STATE FUNDING SOURCES

Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) & National Highway System (NHS)

Washington State receives annual allocations of federal STP funds and NHS funds. By federal mandate, ten percent of the STP funds are earmarked for the Enhancement Program, administered by WSDOT on a statewide basis. Federal mandate also guarantees funds to large urban areas of over 200,000 population and also to rural counties. (Eligible roadways for utilization of these funds are defined in Chapter Four.)

The remaining STP and NHS funds are distributed to WSDOT, urban areas throughout the state, additional funds to rural counties, and two additional statewide programs, the Rural Economic Development Program and the STP Statewide Competitive Program (SCP). The SCP is oriented toward regional projects that are multi-modal, enhance mobility and movement of freight and goods, improve safety, promote economic development, and generally have financial partnerships (public and private).

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) was originally established under ISTEA (1991) and perpetuated under TEA-21 (1998) and SAFETEA-LU (2005). The STP is the most flexible of all federal-aid programs, allowing use for the widest array of transportation projects. Examples of such projects are construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, and operational improvements for highways (including Interstate highways) and bridges (including Interstate bridges), including any project necessary to accommodate other transportation modes; mitigation of damage to wildlife, habitat and ecosystems caused by any transportation project; capital cost of transit projects eligible for assistance under the Federal Transit Act; publicly owned intracity and intercity bus terminals and facilities; highway and transit safety improvements and hazard elimination; surface transportation planning; highway and transit research and planning and technology transfer activities; capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management and control; fringe and corridor parking facilities; carpool and vanpool projects; bicycle and pedestrian facilities; transportation control measures; transportation enhancement activities; development of certain required management systems; and a variety of wetlands mitigation efforts.

Transportation Enhancement Program

The 10 percent set aside of STP funds by WSDOT for the Transportation Enhancement Program is for non-traditional transportation activities including pedestrian and bicycle facilities; acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; scenic or historic highway programs; landscaping/scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and

operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals); preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion for trails); control and removal of outdoor advertising; archaeological planning and research; and mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff.

This on-going program encourages non-motorized transportation and is in line with regional goals and policies to reduce congestion on our streets and highways through the promotion of walking, bicycling, and other alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle.

Bridge Program

This program enables states and local governments to improve their bridges through replacement, rehabilitation and maintenance. Any bridge over 20 feet long on a public road and rated as deficient, is eligible. Furthermore, states must spend at least 15 percent of bridge funds on bridges not on the federal-aid system, which often means county bridges. Spending on bridge preservation is now eligible even if the bridge is not classified as deficient.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The HSIP replaces the safety set-aside that was formerly part of the Surface Transportation Program. These funds are formula distributed to the states for use on any public road or publicly owned bicycle and pedestrian pathway or trail. HSIP funds are for a broad array of safety improvement projects, including intersection safety improvements, pavement and shoulder widening, rumble strips, signage, and guardrail.

Each state is required to develop a **Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)** that involves a comprehensive, collaborative (MPOs, representatives of major modes) and data driven approach to highway safety. The SHSP must include analysis of state, regional, and local crash data and ways to improve safety for public roads in an effort to significantly reduce fatalities.

As part of the HSIP, there is a specific set-aside for **High Risk Rural Roads**. While any of the annual HSIP funds can be spent on rural roads, about 7.5 percent is specifically targeted for safety problems on roadways classified as rural major and minor collectors and rural local roads. The funds can be used for construction and operational improvements related to safety but must be used on roads that have a crash rate for fatalities and incapacitating injuries that exceeds the statewide average for those functional classes of roads.

A second set-aside (18.33 percent) of the HSIP program is for **Railway-Highway Grade Crossings**. This program is aimed at funding projects on any public road that eliminates hazards at rail crossings, including the separation or protection, reconstruction and relocation of grade crossings.

Safe Routes to Schools

This totally new program focuses on enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bicycle to school by making those modes safer and more appealing. An average of \$122 million annually will be distributed to the states, with no state getting less than \$1 million.

Projects include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, traffic diversion near schools and public awareness campaigns.

State Infrastructure Banks

Under the SIB program, a portion of a state's highway and transit program funds can be used to help capitalize state infrastructure revolving funds. (Requires an agreement with USDOT.)

Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP)

This program provides grants to assist in planning, developing and implementing strategies to integrate transportation, community, and system preservation plans and strategies and identify private initiatives to improve such relationships. State, regional and local governments are eligible to receive these grants.

Metropolitan Planning

Federal highway and transit funds are provided to metropolitan transportation planning organizations to carry on a cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive framework for making transit and highway transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas. SAFETEA-LU brings forth a number of new requirements, many of which relate to consulting or coordinating with additional agencies and parties in the planning process. Those requirements are addressed later in this chapter, beginning on page 1-17.

Statewide processes also disburse other STP competitive funds, Rural Economic Vitality funds, assorted Federal Transit Administration funds, and Freight Rail Assistance funds.

State Funding Sources

State revenue sources include the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, Urban Corridor Program, Urban Arterial Program, Sidewalk Program (Urban & Small City), Small City Program, Small City Preservation Program, Congested Corridor Program, Public Works Trust Fund, County Arterial Preservation Program, the City Hardship Assistance Program, and distribution of state motor fuel tax revenues to cities and counties.

For further details of these federal and state funding sources and the regional and state processes for funding distribution, the reader is referred to Appendix G of this Regional Transportation Plan.

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 not to be a non-attainment area 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).

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.

FEDERAL PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Since 1993, federal transportation acts have required 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 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. Although increased federal funding is provided, the timing is such that BFCG must proceed with updating this Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the 2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to any substantive rulemaking or guidance development has been issued by the Federal Highway Administration to assist in making those documents SAFETEA-LU compliant.

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.

COUNTY COMPLIANCE

The three counties of Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla conduct their own planning under their respective state and federal authority. However, since this is an RTPO, it is essential that the three counties coordinate plans with BFCG. This coordination between RTPOs and counties is part of a mandate of the GMA, which creates a formal mechanism to coordinate regional transportation facilities.

AGENCY CONFORMITY 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 congestion management, public transportation, and inter-modal 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.

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 21st 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. The 2005 SAFETEA-LU now guarantees funding levels through FFY 2009. This guarantee facilitates planning and programming of transportation improvements with a good degree of certainty.

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

- ◆ Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
- ◆ Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- ◆ Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.
- ◆ Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life.
- ◆ Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- ◆ Promote efficient system management and operation.
- ◆ Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005 builds on the initiatives of ISTEA and TEA-21. Significant continuing provisions include:

- Local officials, in cooperation with state and transit operators, remain responsible for determining the best transportation investments to meet metropolitan transportation needs.
- MPOs are responsible for adopting the long-range transportation plan (Plan).
- The governor and MPO approve the transportation improvement program (TIP).
- The Plan and TIP remain separate documents.
- The 20-year planning perspective, air quality conformity, fiscal constraint, and public involvement established under ISTEA.
- The Plan must contain: operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities while relieving vehicular congestion and improving safety for people and freight; investment and other strategies that provide for multi-modal capacity increases based on regional priorities and needs; and proposed transportation and transit enhancement activities.
- A Congestion Management System is still required in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) (urbanized areas larger than 200,000 population).
- The planning process in TMAs requires DOT certification.

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 affecting the long-range (20-year) transportation plan (Plan) are:

- Update at least every 4 years in non-attainment and maintenance areas. Attainment areas remain on a 5-year update cycle (Tri-Cities).
- Inter-modal connectors are added as a transportation facility.
- Include a “discussion” of potential environmental mitigation activities and potentially impacted areas and the activities that can best restore and maintain those areas. The discussion is to be developed in consultation with federal, state, and tribal wildlife, land management, and regulatory agencies.
- A financial plan is required with resources identified from both private and public sources.
- The MPO, transit operators, and the state shall cooperatively develop estimates of funds to support implementation of projects.
- An illustrative list of additional projects that would be adopted if funds were available may be included.
- Operational and Management Strategies are required that improve the performance of existing facilities while relieving vehicular congestion and improving safety for people and freight.
- Capital Investment and other strategies are required for existing and projected future infrastructure. Proposed enhancements to transportation, including transit, are required.
- MPOs are required to consult with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning development of the Plan. Also, as appropriate, the comparison of the transportation plans with state conservation plans or maps (if available) or to inventories of natural or historic resources (if available) should occur.
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities, and the disabled are specifically added as parties to be provided with the opportunity to participate in the planning process.
- The MPO is to develop a participation plan in consultation with interested parties that provides reasonable opportunities for all parties to comment. Included should be citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private transportation providers, public transportation user representatives, representatives of bicycle and pedestrian facility users, representatives of the disabled and other interested parties.
- To carry out the participation plan, public meetings are to be: conducted at convenient and accessible locations and at convenient times; employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and make public information available in an electronically accessible format, such as on the Web, as appropriate and to the maximum extent practicable..
- The Plan is to be published and made available electronically, such as on the Web.

Key modifications to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):

- Will be updated every 4 years (we do a 2 year cycle with interim amendments as needed).
- Will contain a priority list of projects and strategies for 4 years (previously 3 years); a financial plan that demonstrates implementation; public and private resources to support projects; innovative financing techniques; and descriptions (type of work, termini, length, etc.) to identify projects and project phases. The financial plan may include an illustrative list of projects if funds were to become available.
- Investments in pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities are to be included in a published annual listing of projects.
- The annual list of projects, including bicycle and pedestrian projects, for which federal funds have been obligated, will be published for public review in a cooperative effort with the state and transit operators.

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. (The Tri-Cities is expected to reach the 200,000 population threshold to be reclassified as a TMA by about 2010.)
- 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.

Implementation of the modifications to statewide and metropolitan planning processes will be in accordance with the following:

- The Secretary (FHWA) will issue guidance on a schedule for implementation of the changes made to the transportation planning process.
- State and MPOs will not be required to deviate from their established plan and program update cycles to implement these changes.
- State or MPO plan or program updates shall reflect the changes beginning July 1, 2007.

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.

STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)

State requirements for regional transportation plans are addressed in RCW 47.80. The complete text is included in Appendix B. WSDOT also developed a guidebook to assist RTPOs in developing their regional transportation plans. The following is a brief summary of the state's planning requirements for regional transportation plans:

Regional transportation plans should:

1. Be based on a least cost planning methodology that identifies the most cost-effective facilities, services, and programs;
2. Identify existing or planned transportation facilities, services, and programs that should function as an integrated regional transportation system;
3. Establish level of service standards for state highways with the exception of Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS);
4. Include a financial plan demonstrating how the regional transportation plan can be implemented;
5. 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;
6. Set forth a proposed regional transportation approach to guide development of the integrated, multi-modal regional system; and
7. 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.

THE WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN (WTP)

The WTP provides a blueprint and strategies to guide decisions and investments needed to develop Washington's transportation system to serve its citizens, communities, and its future economic needs, while safeguarding its environment.

The WTP is required by law, is updated regularly, and extends at least 20 years into the future. The 2007-2026 update of the WTP provides policy and strategy guidance on how transportation systems are to be managed; gives direction for future transportation programs and investments (operational and capital); and clarifies the state's role in investing in state interest transportation facilities. State interest facilities are those parts of the transportation system that provide statewide or interregional transportation services that, although not owned by the state, are defined by and within the WTP as areas of state concern.

The WTP structure is designed to allow decision-makers and the public to relate principles, policies, and investment programs. The WTP targets strategic investment recommendations at a policy level (e.g. no list of projects) and recommends priorities among categories of investments that result in a roster of targeted investments. That priority setting is essential to maximizing investments in our state's key transportation services.

The 2007 WTP is data-driven, analytically grounded (including public input), and organized around key issues that provide decision-makers with solid bases for making choices, particularly about investments to the system. The WTP is framed around the following publicly analyzed strategic issues/emphasis areas:

Safety - "Always a Concern" Whether on a state highway, local roadway, public transit, rail, ferry, or air, safety is of paramount importance.

Preservation - "Fix it First" Most people support taking care of public facilities while it is cost-effective and recognize that preservation funding for today's new facilities will be needed later.

System Efficiency - "Getting the Most from What We Have" Efficiency measures such as incident response, signal coordination and traveler information—like providing actual travel times—are widely supported.

Bottlenecks and Choke Points - "Targeting Congestion Relief" Congestion is a common frustration—although perception of congestion varies statewide. Eliminating or reducing bottlenecks (i.e. undersized bridges, rail crossings, border crossings) and reducing congestion are high priorities.

Transportation Access - "Connecting People and Communities" Areas of concern expressed include transportation for the elderly and low-income workers, and rural loss of regional air, bus, or rail service.

Building Future Visions - "Where We are Going" Although opinions vary on what the future transportation systems should look like, defeat of Initiative 912 (to eliminate new gas taxes) might be a sign that voters are willing to step up and pay for the state's future transportation needs.

Current efforts underway include a Transportation Commission led tolling study which is evaluating value pricing for system management and their rail study is addressing a variety of freight and passenger rail issues to define the state's role in investment.

In addition, WSDOT is discussing the benefits of a long-range comprehensive Capital Investment Plan (CIP) to establish and stabilize revenue needs and supplies. The CIP is a tool to outline the long-term needs and timing of investments. It will assist in clarifying system investment needs and provide decision makers in the governor's office, the state legislature and at local levels, increasing ability to make strategic investments that will serve the long-term needs of the transportation system users and ensure that the correct projects are funded in a logical order.

Freight Movement - "Moving the Goods" The ability to move freight—particularly to access ports and cross Snoqualmie Pass—is a high priority. Rural agricultural areas expressed concerns about short line rail abandonment and the need to complete their all-weather road system.

Strong Economy and Good Jobs - "Growing Opportunity" Several regions would like to understand more about the state's commitment to rail and feel that policy development and cost/benefit analysis is needed to compare rail and water transport investments to roadway investments.

Health and the Environment - "Sustaining Quality of Life" People want transit-oriented development and strong bike/pedestrian networks. The state has a strong environmental commitment.

Additional information on the WTP is available online at www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/wtp.

THE WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN/REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN RELATIONSHIP

The nine strategic issues/emphasis areas of the WTP were 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. Congestion relief, elimination of chokepoints, managing transportation demand, and commute trip reduction are important elements of both plans. Likewise, both plans address costs, funding availability, innovative financing, and prioritization of needs to attain the most value from limited funds.

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.

LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES

The importance of integration and consistency of land use planning with transportation planning cannot be overstated. Land use is now recognized as the basis for making significant public investment decisions, including those associated with transportation. Transportation is a public service with its demand determined by the physical separation of activities (e.g. the arrangement of land uses). Therefore, land use policies and transportation policies need to be consistent with one another as they work in a single, unified direction. To accomplish this, the community and its decision-makers need to have a greater understanding of the procedures and purposes underlying transportation and land use planning.

Development in the last half-century typically consisted of isolated shopping centers, employment centers, and residential areas oriented toward use of automobiles. Alternative modes such as walking, bicycling, and transit were generally afterthoughts and not very viable as options. Each peripheral subdivision or commercial development, therefore, added to the need for more transportation infrastructure.

If growth is concentrated within urban areas, the need for additional infrastructure is greatly lessened. Transit, bicycling, and walking are viable options. These types of transportation investments are much less expensive to provide than arterials to the suburban fringe. Moreover, these are the types of investments that provide positive returns to residents in the form of pedestrian oriented, livable communities.

If we let development patterns continue as they have been, we are condemning ourselves to land uses that are not conducive to a variety of transportation choices. We must then continue to accept all of the social, economic, and environmental consequences associated with automobile dependency.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) supports the concept of compact urban development. The sprawling of urbanized areas is a heavy burden on infrastructure. GMA rethinks traditional transportation planning by first establishing a vision for the community followed by a plan to fulfill the community's vision. Transportation infrastructure will now be built to meet the vision of regions rather than simply as a reaction to a problem such as traffic congestion. Additionally, the concurrency requirement of GMA stipulates that infrastructure must be backed by sound financial plans.

The 2005 SAFETEA-LU now stipulates that MPOs are encouraged to consult or coordinate with planning officials responsible for other types of planning activities affected by transportation, including planned growth and economic development. Furthermore, the metropolitan planning process is to promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns. MPOs are also required to consult with state and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning development of the long-range transportation plan.

Safety Conscious Planning (SCP)

Safety in transportation planning has for many years been an ongoing process of updating road, street and highway design standards in response to increased speeds and traffic

congestion, and also to make our streets and highways safer. Much of that effort has been directed toward periodic improvements to routes and systems that have been in existence for decades. Modern improvements typically upgrade horizontal and vertical alignments, expand roadway and shoulder widths, and flatten roadside slopes and protect and/or eliminate roadside hazards (e.g. traversable slopes and adequate obstruction-free recovery areas or clear zones). Where hazards cannot be eliminated, guardrails, concrete re-directional barriers, and crash cushions are installed to lessen the damage to property and the vehicular occupants. Tracking accident frequencies also alerts transportation planners and engineers to hot spots in need of safety improvements, such as signalization and other improvements at an intersection.

All of this sounds simple enough—design for safety and react to developing problems. But how can we proactively incorporate road safety into the transportation planning process with a view toward preventing “unsafe” situations from occurring in the first place? The Transportation Research Board and the Institute of Transportation Engineers call it “Safety Conscious Planning.” Safety planning initiatives they cite range from programming safety improvements to address hotspots (collision-prone locations); introducing multi-disciplinary programs (i.e., integrating engineering, enforcement and education activities); reflecting road safety considerations as a key decision-making parameter in evaluating projects and programming expenditures; and establishing inherently safe transportation networks (i.e., Safety Conscious Planning).

Hotspot programs are directed towards significantly improving safety at localized collision-prone locations (i.e., reactive, high localized impact, short-term implementation). Safety conscious planning achieves road safety improvements through smaller quantum changes, but targeted at the whole network (i.e., proactive, network-wide, low localized impact, medium to longer term implementation). To have significant influence on changing the overall safety of the transportation system, SCP needs to ensure that: 1) Safety is considered an explicit priority in all land use and multi-modal transportation planning initiatives; and 2) Planning decisions are informed about road safety impacts.

While current strategies spearheaded at speeding, impaired driving, and hotspot improvements still have significant crash reduction potential, they will reach a level of saturation over time. New safety strategies and programs will be needed to achieve ongoing collision reductions. Proactive planning can ensure that the next strategy can kick in before the current strategies reach saturation levels. It will also be necessary to change the focus from driver behavior initiatives to ones that will make it more difficult for the driver to have a crash.

The improved inherent safety of the transportation system that can be achieved through initiatives such as safety conscious planning, indicate such planning should be one of the next generation of road safety strategies.

The linkage of land use and transportation planning results in informed decisions at regional or citywide levels (major land use patterns and primary street networks) and also at lower levels involving rezones, subdivision plans or site plans (influencing physical layout of an area, a neighborhood or a particular site).

Computer traffic models such as used in the Tri-Cities, are calibrated to simulate current population and employment (based on a breakout of “analysis zones”) and also traffic

volumes on the primary grid system of arterial and collector streets. Ten and twenty-year population and employment projections and anticipated financially feasible capacity improvements to those primary streets are then fed to the model to predict how those streets will operate (i.e. congestion level) under those future scenarios. (Chapters 6 and 7 of this Regional Transportation Plan address those modeling efforts.)

Our urban jurisdictions will also individually utilize the traffic model to evaluate transportation impacts associated with their anticipated urban growth developments. Developers could then be assessed for an appropriate share of street improvement costs. The basis for such assessments is usually based on volume/capacity ratings with and without the proposed development to determine if there is adequate capacity to accommodate the anticipated traffic growth. Safety conscious planning would take this process one step further, utilizing crash prediction models to assess street access alternatives for the development to further improve safety and prevent or minimize the anticipated frequency of accidents. As demonstrated here, planning decisions can have a significant impact on road safety. Similar efforts are needed for both land use and transportation planners to better understand these potential impacts and to ensure that safety becomes an explicit planning consideration in developmental decisions.

Transportation planners and engineers influence the majority of decisions that affect land use and transportation plans. It is, therefore, logical that they should take the lead in implementing safety conscious planning in concert with their road designers and safety practitioners and those responsible for land use planning.

Implementing safety conscious planning (i.e. safer transportation network planning) 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.

FATAL ACCIDENT STATISTICS

The numbers of licensed drivers and vehicles in Washington State are increasing at a fast pace. Likewise, the total vehicle miles driven on our streets and highways is showing a dramatic increase. Yet, traffic fatalities are on the decrease. The statewide traffic fatality trend is downward from 675 in 1993 to 615 in 2005. The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled also shows a downward trend from 1.43 in 1993 to 1.07 in 2004.

The opposite is true of the statewide motorcyclist fatality trend, which has risen from 35 in 1994 to 64 in 2005. Statistics for 1993-2003 indicate 472 motorcyclist fatalities. Regionally, there were nine in Benton County, three in Franklin County, and two in Walla Walla County. The eleven-year statewide statistics indicate 180 (38%) motorcyclist fatalities on state routes, including the interstates; 176 (37.3%) on county roads; 105 (22%) on city streets; and 11 (2%) described as “other.”

Seatbelt use is up from 73 percent in 1993 to 95.2 percent in 2005. Even seatbelt use by vehicle occupants who die in fatal crashes rose from 35 percent in 1993 to 58 percent in 2003. Seatbelt use by uninjured occupants in fatal crashes rose from 77 percent in 1993 to nearly 94 percent in 2003.

Observed child safety seat use was 54.4 percent in 1994 and 70.9 percent by 2004. Observed booster seat use was about 47 percent in 2004.

The pedestrian fatalities trend from 1993 through 2004 has decreased from 83 to 63. Pedestrian fatalities generally have a high frequency among those not old enough to drive and those old enough, but, do not have cars. However, the eleven-year statistics show the highest number of pedestrian fatalities in the 41-45 age group, with 59 percent of them having ingested alcohol.

The bicyclist fatality trend also declined from 13 in 1993 to 9 in 2003. Statewide there were 126 bicyclist fatalities in that eleven-year period, with 45 in the 0-14 age group and 19 in the 15-20 age group. One hundred twelve of the fatalities were males. City streets accounted for 53 of the fatalities, county roads 47, state highways 25, and one on an Interstate route.

Drinking drivers involved (DDIs) in fatal crashes also trend downward from 317 in 1993 to 232 in 2003. DDI fatalities from 1993 - 2004 were 87.7 percent vehicle occupants, 7.4 percent motorcyclists, 3.8 percent pedestrians, 0.6 percent bicyclists, and 0.4 percent other/unknown. The majority (61.2%) of those fatalities occurred in rural areas, with 38.8 percent in urban areas. The DDIs were predominantly males (over 76 percent). The state highway system, including the interstates, experienced 43.4 percent of those DDI accidents, county roads 39.8 percent, city streets 14.5 percent and other roads 2.3 percent. As shown in the following Table 1-1, the DDI fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled is highest on county roads (1.18), followed by the state system (0.81) and city streets (0.35).

Statewide fatal crash involvement rates (1993-2003) by driver age group have been defined per 10,000 licensed drivers in each age group. That fatal crash rate is highest (4.47) for the 16-20 age group, drops dramatically to 2.25 for the 26-30 age group, declines gradually to 1.29 for the 66-70 age group, then makes a major upswing to 3.85 for the 91+ age group. Drinking-driver crash rates show 1.22 for the 16-20 age group, 1.40 for the 21-25 age group, a steep decline to 0.88 for the 26-30 age group, a gradual decline to 0.20 for the 60 year olds, then, generally flat to age 80, followed by a decline to zero by age 91.

Common driver errors in the eleven-year statewide fatal crashes were lane problems (46.1%), impairment (34.5%), speeding (24.7%), inattention (16.6%), failure to yield (7.6%), failure to obey (4.9%), overcorrecting (4.2%), drowsiness (3.7%), swerving/sliding (3.7%), improper passing (1.9%), recklessness (1.4%) and no errors (18.1%).

In comparing Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla County rural statistics against statewide data, the reviewer needs to keep in mind that many west-side counties are more urban in nature.

WASHINGTON STATE'S STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN: TARGET ZERO

The Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) was developed to identify Washington State's traffic safety needs and to guide investment decisions to achieve significant reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The state seeks to build traffic safety partnerships throughout the state in order to align and leverage resources to address traffic safety challenges.

Table 1-1, Fatal Collision Statistics 1993 - 2003				
Fatality	Benton Co.	Franklin Co.	Walla Walla Co.	State
Vehicle Occupant	143	101	106	5,725
Motorcyclist	9	3	2	472
Pedestrian	10	7	8	832
Bicyclist	1	0	0	126
Other/Unknown	0	1	0	22
Totals	163	112	116	7,177
Rural	109	77	92	4,389
Urban	54	35	24	2,788
Interstate	39	11	0	825
State Route	57	48	72	2,723
County Road	42	43	31	2,254
City Street	25	10	13	1,259
Other	0	0	0	116
Male	107	82	881	4,855
Female	56	30	35	2,320
Drinking Driver - Rural	44	40	50	1,956
Drinking Driver - Urban	26	12	7	1,086
Fatalities/100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled				
	1.18	1.83	2.50	1.27
Interstate				0.53
State Highway				1.65
County Road				2.28
City Street				0.90
Drinking Driver Involved				
Interstate	16	6	0	296
State Highway	29	18	34	1,024
County Road	17	25	18	1,210
City Street	8	3	5	441
Other Road	0	0	0	71
Male	57	45	45	2,330
Female	13	7	12	712
Drinking Driver Involved Fatality/100 Million Vehicle Miles Traveled				
Interstate				0.19
State Highway				0.62
County Road				1.18
City Street				0.35

Source: Washington State Traffic Commission: Fatal Traffic Crashes in Washington State, 1993-2003

The SHSP is a new federal requirement in SAFETEA-LU, 23 USC 148. It closely follows the successful model adopted in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Strategic Highway Safety Plan and is strongly data driven.

Washington State is a leader in traffic safety. Our roadway fatalities have been dropping: from 7112 in 1996 to 563 in 2004. All traffic crashes cannot be prevented, but many deaths and disabling injuries are preventable.

We can impact those behaviors that lead to traffic deaths and disabling injuries by eliminating impaired driving, slowing down speeders, increasing seatbelt use, curbing aggressive driving, supporting intermediate driver licensing, keeping drivers alert, focusing on special populations with high death rates, and ensuring all drivers are fully licensed and medically competent.

We can improve accommodations, interactions, designs, facilities, and awareness of and for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and commercial motor vehicles.

We can improve roadways to keep vehicles from leaving the road and minimize the consequences of striking objects or overturning when a vehicle does leave the roadway. We can improve the design and operation of intersections and reduce the possibility of head-on and across-the-median crashes. We can design safer work zones and school zones.

We can enhance emergency medical capabilities to increase survivability when a collision does occur. We can improve our traffic data collection systems to improve our ability to measure the effects of these strategies and keep us on course to our target of zero deaths and disabling injuries. The state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan shows us how.

At the core of Washington's SHSP are traffic safety emphasis areas and proven strategies/countermeasures that target problems on roadways. These emphasis areas and proven strategies are organized under the following five basic categories:

1. Driver Behaviors:

- Impaired Drivers: Reducing collisions involving drunk or drugged drivers
- Speeding Drivers: Reducing collisions involving speeders
- Unrestrained Drivers or passengers: Increasing correct seatbelt and child restraint use
- Aggressive Drivers: Reducing collisions
- Distracted and Drowsy Drivers: Reducing collisions
- Young Drivers: Reducing collisions involving drivers who are not properly licensed

2. Other Users:

- Pedestrian Safety: Making walking and crossing the street safer, especially in school zones
- Motorcycle Safety: Reducing collisions
- Commercial Vehicle Safety: Reducing collisions involving heavy trucks

3. Roadway Improvements:

- Reducing severe and fatal injuries associated with run-off-the-road crashes

- Reducing intersection crashes
 - Reducing head-on and across-the-median crashes
 - Reducing congestion-related crashes
4. Emergency Medical Service and Trauma Care Systems:
 - Enhancing emergency medical capabilities to increase survivability
 5. Management:
 - Improve traffic data collection systems

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SECURITY

The 2005 federal transportation act, 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 in the same planning factor. This new requirement must be in place prior to MPO and state adoption/approval of transportation plans addressing SAFETEA-LU provisions.

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.

Interviews with relevant agencies show that all three security emphasis areas are more than adequately addressed. The task here is to document existing work so as to not duplicate it, and to determine if the MPO has a role in work to be done.

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 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.

The Hanford Site contains Energy Northwest's Columbia Generating Station, the DOE's Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF), the 200 Area nuclear fuel storage facility, and other nuclear waste treatment and storage facilities.

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 is funded by the U.S. Army and overseen by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

CSEPP enhances emergency preparedness in communities surrounding chemical warfare agent storage sites through emergency planning efforts, a community alert and warning system, and hazard mitigation strategies.

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. Concurrently, Congress saw that emergency preparedness in cities and counties surrounding chemical stockpile sites needed upgrading in order to deal with an unlikely emergency resulting from storage and subsequent destruction. 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. For security reasons, they won't list identified facilities, but want the public to know they have stepped up efforts to protect Washington's transportation infrastructure, and are paying attention in order to maintain safety.

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.

Conclusion

Transportation system security is multi-faceted, encompassing a broad range of topics. Three focus areas were suggested during development of the BFCG Unified Planning Work Program:

Identification of Evacuation Routes, Participation in Emergency Preparedness/Response Exercises and Assessment of Critical Facilities.

After interviewing appropriate parties with responsibilities 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) proposed 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 discuss guidelines for classification of lands in such Plans, which in turn regulate development and land uses on those designations. Several relevant sections of the GMA are cited below.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Section 36.70A.050: Guidelines to classify agriculture, forest, and mineral lands and critical areas.

(1) Subject to the definitions provided in RCW 36.70A.030, the department shall adopt guidelines, under chapter 34.05 RCW, no later than September 1, 1990, to guide the classification of: (a) Agricultural lands; (b) forest lands; (c) mineral resource lands; and (d) critical areas. The department shall consult with the department of agriculture regarding guidelines for agricultural lands, the department of natural resources regarding forest lands and mineral resource lands, and the department of ecology regarding critical areas.

(2) In carrying out its duties under this section, the department shall consult with interested parties, including but not limited to: (a) Representatives of cities; (b) representatives of counties; (c) representatives of developers; (d) representatives of builders; (e) representatives of owners of agricultural lands, forest lands, and mining lands; (f) representatives of local economic development officials; (g) representatives of environmental organizations; (h) representatives of special districts; (i) representatives of the governor's office and federal and state agencies; and (j) representatives of Indian tribes. In addition to the consultation required under this subsection, the department shall conduct public hearings

in the various regions of the state. The department shall consider the public input obtained at such public hearings when adopting the guidelines.

(3) The guidelines under subsection (1) of this section shall be minimum guidelines that apply to all jurisdictions, but also shall allow for regional differences that exist in Washington state. The intent of these guidelines is to assist counties and cities in designating the classification of agricultural lands, forest lands, mineral resource lands, and critical areas under RCW 36.70A.170.

(4) The guidelines established by the department under this section regarding classification of forest lands shall not be inconsistent with guidelines adopted by the department of natural resources.

RCW 36.70A.060

Natural resource lands and critical areas – Development regulations.

(1)(a) Except as provided in RCW 36.70A.1701, each county that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040, and each city within such county, shall adopt development regulations on or before September 1, 1991, to assure the conservation of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands designated under RCW 36.70A.170. Regulations adopted under this subsection may not prohibit uses legally existing on any parcel prior to their adoption and shall remain in effect until the county or city adopts development regulations pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040. Such regulations shall assure that the use of lands adjacent to agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands shall not interfere with the continued use, in the accustomed manner and in accordance with best management practices, of these designated lands for the production of food, agricultural products, or timber, or for the extraction of minerals.

(b) Counties and cities shall require that all plats, short plats, development permits, and building permits issued for development activities on, or within five hundred feet of, lands designated as agricultural lands, forest lands, or mineral resource lands, contain a notice that the subject property is within or near designated agricultural lands, forest lands, or mineral resource lands on which a variety of commercial activities may occur that are not compatible with residential development for certain periods of limited duration. The notice for mineral resource lands shall also inform that an application might be made for mining-related activities, including mining, extraction, washing, crushing, stockpiling, blasting, transporting, and recycling of minerals.

(2) Each county and city shall adopt development regulations that protect critical areas that are required to be designated under RCW 36.70A.170. For counties and cities that are required or choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040, such development regulations shall be adopted on or before September 1, 1991. For the remainder of the counties and cities, such development regulations shall be adopted on or before March 1, 1992.

(3) Such counties and cities shall review these designations and development regulations when adopting their comprehensive plans under RCW 36.70A.040 and implementing development regulations under RCW 36.70A.120 and may alter such designations and development regulations to insure consistency.

(4) Forest land and agricultural land located within urban growth areas shall not be designated by a county or city as forest land or agricultural land of long-term commercial significance under RCW 36.70A.170 unless the city or county has enacted a program authorizing transfer or purchase of development rights.

RCW 36.70A.160

Identification of open space corridors – Purchase authorized.

Each county and city that is required or chooses to prepare a comprehensive land use plan under RCW 36.70A.040 shall identify open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. They shall include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas as defined in RCW 36.70A.030. Identification of a corridor under this section by a county or city shall not restrict the use or management of lands within the corridor for agricultural or forest purposes. Restrictions on the use or management of such lands for agricultural or forest purposes imposed after identification solely to maintain or enhance the value of such lands as a corridor may occur only if the county or city acquires sufficient interest to prevent development of the lands or to control the resource development of the lands. The requirement for acquisition of sufficient interest does not include those corridors regulated by the interstate commerce commission, under provisions of 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1247(d), 16 U.S.C. Sec. 1248, or 43 U.S.C. Sec. 912. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to alter the authority of the state, or a county or city, to regulate land use activities.

The city or county may acquire by donation or purchase the fee simple or lesser interests in these open space corridors using funds authorized by RCW 84.34.230 or other sources.

RCW 36.70A.165

Property designated as greenbelt or open space – Not subject to adverse possession.

The legislature recognizes that the preservation of urban greenbelts is an integral part of comprehensive growth management in Washington. The legislature further recognizes that certain greenbelts are subject to adverse possession action which, if carried out, threaten the comprehensive nature of this chapter. Therefore, a party shall not acquire by adverse possession property that is designated as a plat greenbelt or open space area or that is dedicated as open space to a public agency or to a bona fide homeowner's association.

RCW 36.70A.170

Natural resource lands and critical areas – Designations.

(1) On or before September 1, 1991, each county, and each city, shall designate where appropriate:

- (a) Agricultural lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products;
- (b) Forest lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the commercial production of timber;
- (c) Mineral resource lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the extraction of minerals; and
- (d) Critical areas.

(2) In making the designations required by this section, counties and cities shall consider the guidelines established pursuant to RCW 36.70A.050.

RCW 36.70A.172**Critical areas – Designation and protection – Best available science to be used.**

(1) In designating and protecting critical areas under this chapter, counties and cities shall include the best available science in developing policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas. In addition, counties and cities shall give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

(2) If it determines that advice from scientific or other experts is necessary or will be of substantial assistance in reaching its decision, a growth management hearings board may retain scientific or other expert advice to assist in reviewing a petition under RCW 36.70A.290 that involves critical areas.

RCW 36.70A.175**Wetlands to be delineated in accordance with manual.**

Wetlands regulated under development regulations adopted pursuant to this chapter shall be delineated in accordance with the manual adopted by the department pursuant to RCW 90.58.380.

The above sections of the Revised Code of Washington are relevant because the statutes proscribe mandated planning responsibilities of cities and counties in identifying and outlining critical resource lands within their legal purview. The above are existing statutes that require Washington cities and counties to describe critical resource lands, wetlands, wildlife corridors and riparian areas in greater detail than envisioned in SAFETEA-LU. As well, 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.

We believe that the above listed sections of the Growth Management Act impose 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 implementing the Growth Management Act, 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.

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 proposed Rule on Metropolitan Planning in: 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.

The Washington State Department of Transportation decided to use an existing infrastructure - Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) - to implement the SAFETEA-LU requirement at the regional level. RTPOs were established in 1991 under the state Growth Management Act to help implement the transportation planning provisions of the Act. RTPOs were given funding and the responsibility to determine how to best develop the required plan.

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) is the lead planning agency for the RTPO for Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties. The RTPO selected BFCG as the lead agency to develop a Coordinated Public Transportation - Human Services Transportation Plan for Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties.

In concert with Ben Franklin Transit, Valley Transit, the Washington State Department of Transportation and other stakeholders, BFCG is currently developing the Plan. The plan will identify 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 plan is currently under development and adoption is expected by November 2006. The Plan will be consistent with, and is incorporated by reference into, this document.

THE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION MODEL

Current land use and transportation data provide a foundation for the base year transportation model, which replicates existing travel patterns. With additional information, the model evaluates future urban development to ensure preservation and efficient operation of the transportation system.

Changes in population and land use compel adaptations in a road network to accommodate subsequent changes in travel demand. Predicted growth in employment and population are the basis for future year models. The model accommodates projected modifications to the existing road and street network; has the capability to forecast future travel demand; and can help identify future regional transportation system deficiencies.

This modeling capability gives transportation planners and engineers the ability to determine the impacts of different growth scenarios, be it roadway and/or land use, on the traffic network, and to test alternative forecast conditions. It also allows the user to evaluate economic decisions on potential capital improvements and then make appropriate plans. Current and future land use forecasts and transportation models were developed for years 2005, 2015 and 2025.

The development of the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Area transportation model was closely coordinated with member jurisdictions to include common regional population and land use visioning assumptions to ensure consistency. Technical details of the modeling process are included in Chapter Six.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES

In compliance with 23 CFR Section 450.316(b), the BFCG in July 1994 adopted “Public Involvement Procedures for Transportation Planning” (last updated in 2003). The proactive process for development of plans and programs affords opportunity for participation by public agencies and officials, private citizens, special interest groups, community groups and organizations, minority groups, and private transportation providers. Major activities including public involvement are Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and TIP amendments, Regional Transportation Plans, prioritization and selection of Transportation Enhancement projects, and regionally significant transportation planning studies. An intended outcome of this process is informed and involved citizens, who have 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 and removal of potential barriers or opposition caused by a poorly informed citizenry.

Public involvement for some activities consists of advertising the availability of information for public perusal and comment. At the other end of the spectrum, public meetings or informal hearings are necessary. Methods used to present information to the public and encourage participation include public meetings, scoping sessions, meetings with community and special interest groups, meetings with public officials, news releases, news letters, public opinion surveys, open houses and information centers, and formation of citizen advisory committees.

BFCG holds informal open houses to facilitate public comments on the MPO/RTPO TIPs. Public meetings are held and project specific newsletters are disseminated at key stages of major transportation studies. Updating of the Regional Transportation Plan includes key public meetings. Important transportation workshops and meetings are advertised to encourage public participation.

Public notification is tuned to specific plans or programs. Direct mailings, newspaper items, legal advertisements, and radio and TV announcements are made when appropriate. The monthly BFCG Newsletter is mailed to all radio and TV stations, newspapers, and a diversity of agencies, jurisdictions, groups, organizations, and individuals. The public is invited to all Tri-MATS meetings and are such notified. The monthly BFCG Board Meeting has two agenda slots that encourage public comment.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE RTP

The draft RTP was circulated to all jurisdictions and responsible agencies for thorough review and comment. BFCG also hosted public meetings in both Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities to

facilitate citizen review and comment. The public open houses included a display of maps and a 30-minute Power Point presentation with handouts for in all who attended. The revised draft RTP was then processed through the Tri-MATS committees (TAC and PAC) and the BFCG Board. Upon adoption the document was published in final form.

Advertisements of the public meetings to discuss the draft RTP were published in regional newspapers and the BFCG Newsletter. The newspaper advertisements were made for two consecutive weeks, the second being no less than one week prior to the meetings. Such advertisements also indicated availability of the draft document for public perusal at local libraries, city/county facilities, the BFCG, and the BFCG website. Similar notices were 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. Public involvement activities are further addressed in Chapter 11.

LEVELS OF SERVICE (LOS) STANDARDS

Levels of service standards represent the minimum performance level desired for transportation facilities and services within the region. They are used as a gauge for evaluating the quality of service on the transportation system and can be described by travel times, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience, and safety. The Washington State Growth Management Act states that these standards should be regionally coordinated. The standards are used to identify deficient facilities and services in the transportation plan, and are also to be used by local governments to judge whether transportation funding is adequate to support proposed land use developments. Level of service standards were established throughout the RTPO for this plan.

A uniform Level of Service (LOS) of “D” is the acceptable urban area LOS for the purposes of preparing the Transportation Elements of city and county Comprehensive Plans under GMA and this RTP. LOSs have been determined for all arterials and collectors on the “Functional Classification” system. At the discretion of each jurisdiction, a higher or lower LOS may be used on selected portions of the urban transportation network. Level of Service “C” shall apply to all rural areas.

The Transportation Research Board’s Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) contains a method for estimating the LOS for two-lane facilities where time delay data is not available. In addition, the HCM defines LOS ratings “A” through “F” for highway segments, intersections, and arterial street segments, based on the volume of traffic and the available capacity of the facility. These “A” through “F” descriptors are further defined in the following tables.

TABLE 1-2 - LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS FOR UNSIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS

LOS	GENERAL DESCRIPTION
A	Nearly all drivers find freedom of operation. Very seldom is there more than one vehicle in the queue (waiting line).
B	Some drivers begin to consider the delay an inconvenience. Occasionally there is more than one vehicle in the queue.
C	Most drivers feel restricted, but not objectionably so. Many times there is more than one vehicle in the queue.
D	Drivers feel quite restricted. Often there is more than one vehicle in the queue
E	Represents a condition in which the demand is near or equal to the probable maximum number of vehicle that can be accommodated by the movement. Drivers find the delay approaching intolerable levels. There is almost always more than one vehicle in the queue.
F	Forced flow. Represents an intersection failure condition that is caused by geometric and/or operational constraints external to the intersection.

TABLE 1-3 - LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS: ROADS/STREETS

LEVEL OF SERVICE CATEGORY	DEFINITION
Level of Service A	Describes a condition of free flow with low volumes and high speeds. Freedom to select desired speeds and to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely high. Stopped delay at intersections is minimal.
Level of Service B	Represents reasonably unimpeded traffic flow operations at average travel speeds. The ability to maneuver within the traffic stream is only slightly restricted and stopped delays are not bothersome. Drivers are not generally subjected to appreciable tensions.
Level of Service C	In the range of stable flow, but speeds and maneuverability are more closely controlled by the higher volumes. The selection of speed is now significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream, and maneuvering within the traffic stream requires substantial vigilance on the part of the user. The general level of comfort and convenience declines noticeably at this level.
Level of Service D	Represents high-density, but stable flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and the driver or pedestrian experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience. Small increases in traffic flow will generally cause operational problems at this level.

LEVEL OF SERVICE CATEGORY	DEFINITION
Level of Service E	Represents operating conditions at or near the maximum capacity level. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult, and it is generally accomplished by forcing a vehicle or pedestrian to “give way” to accommodate such maneuvers. Comfort and convenience levels are extremely poor, and driver or pedestrian frustration is generally high. Operations at this level are usually unstable, because small increases in flow or minor disturbances within the traffic stream will cause breakdowns.
Level of Service F	Describes forced or breakdown flow at very low speeds and long delays. Volumes exceed theoretical capacity. Vehicles may progress at reasonable speeds for several hundred feet or more, then be required to stop in a cyclic fashion. Operations within the queue are characterized by stop-and-go waves which are extremely unstable.

CHAPTER ONE

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS	1-1
MEMBERSHIP OF THE 2006 BFCG BOARD.....	1-1
BFCG COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP - 2006.....	1-2
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)	1-3
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (RTPO).....	1-3
FEDERAL & STATE TRANSPORTATION BOUNDARIES.....	1-4
UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)	1-10
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP).....	1-11
MAJOR METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS	1-11
FEDERAL & STATE FUNDING SOURCES	1-12
Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) & National Highway System (NHS).....	1-12
Transportation Enhancement Program.....	1-12
Bridge Program.....	1-13
Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)	1-13
Safe Routes to Schools.....	1-13
State Infrastructure Banks	1-14
Transportation and Community and System Preservation Program (TCSP).....	1-14
Metropolitan Planning	1-14
State Funding Sources	1-14
AIR QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS.....	1-14
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT	1-15
FEDERAL PLANNING REQUIREMENTS	1-15
COUNTY COMPLIANCE	1-16
AGENCY CONFORMITY AND COOPERATION.....	1-16
ISTEA, TEA-21 & SAFETEA-LU	1-16
FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN	1-19
STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP)	1-20
THE WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN (WTP)	1-21
THE WASHINGTON TRANSPORTATION PLAN/REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN RELAT.....	1-22
LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES.....	1-23
Safety Conscious Planning (SCP)	1-23
FATAL ACCIDENT STATISTICS.....	1-25
WASHINGTON STATE'S STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN: TARGET ZERO	1-26
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SECURITY	1-29
Identification of Evacuation Routes	1-29
Preparedness/Response Exercises	1-30
Chemical Weapons Emergencies	1-30
Other Preparations	1-31
Critical Facilities Assessment.....	1-31
Conclusion	1-31
THE METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION MODEL.....	1-36
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES.....	1-37
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE RTP	1-37
LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) STANDARDS	1-38