

PREFACE

The Benton-Franklin Council of Governments (BFCG) is the lead agency for both the Tri-Cities Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Benton-Franklin-Walla Walla Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). As lead planning agency for the region, the BFCG has coordinated and developed this Regional Transportation Plan in accordance with state and federal transportation planning requirements.

The intents of this long-range transportation plan are to establish the vision for the region and provide the means to attain that vision. However, this plan may only partially meet those objectives. The plan sets a clear course of action; however, the means of achieving it are currently uncertain.

In 2000 the Washington State Legislature repealed a significant source of funding for transit agencies and for state and local transportation improvements --- the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET). The legislature apportioned general funds to meet some of the most immediate needs. However, a stable, long-term transportation funding mechanism was required to meet the balance of current and future needs.

In 2003 the legislature implemented a five-cent gas tax increase, an increase in the large truck gross weight fee, and a 0.3 percent vehicle sales tax. Generated revenues were directed to state highway improvement needs.

In 2005 the legislature implemented a 9 ½-cent gas tax increase to be phased in over four years. The package also included other transportation related fees and charges. Beginning in the third year, ½-cent of that tax increase will go to cities and counties (estimated at \$7.5 million per year, each). While those earmarked funds for cities and counties will help alleviate shortfalls, the transportation infrastructure needs (maintenance, resurfacing, capacity and safety improvements) of our regional jurisdictions will still far exceed available revenues.

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) replaces the 2001 RTP. This combined urban/ rural document eliminates duplication; provides a comprehensive vision of the entire region; and meets both the state planning requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the federal requirements of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

This RTP represents the efforts of government agencies serving the region to coordinate planning of diverse transportation systems to support the region's anticipated growth and meet its economic vitality and environmental goals. The plan describes regional strategies to maintain and preserve existing transportation systems; add new capacity to more efficiently move growing volumes of traffic; and recommends implementation and funding strategies, including investing in other ways to address traffic congestion. Its policies are intended to provide access to more transportation options and support more affordable and efficient movement of goods and people. It describes ways the region can sustain a high quality of life and a growing economy. It encourages and supports development of safe and strong neighborhoods; city centers; and the preservation of open spaces, farmland, and recreational opportunities.

Through the 20-year planning horizon it is assumed population and employment will increase at slightly more than one percent per year. The primary form of transportation will still be the automobile. Gasoline prices are assumed to only slightly restrict individual travel habits. Transportation project listings of the individual jurisdictions are financially constrained to reflect realistically anticipated funds. Unconstrained planning projects are listed separately and will likely require statewide competitive funding or innovative local funding sources to finance their implementation. The basis of this plan is each jurisdiction's 20-year GMA Comprehensive Plan.

This update is based on regional growth management, economic, and transportation strategies, which provide a regional framework for achieving local, regional, and state planning efforts. Over the coming years this plan will be updated to reflect policy changes, technological advances, funding options, and other "course corrections." This document is intended to be a dynamic guide to achieving the regional vision.

This plan addresses motorized transportation for the three-county region. Non-motorized transportation is addressed in separate documents: The 2005 Walla Walla Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the 2005 BFCG Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan for Benton, Franklin and Walla Walla Counties and Tri-Cities Urban Area.

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The daily movement of people, goods, and services on the region's transportation system is unmindful of city and county boundaries. The state highway system affects all of our jurisdictions. Our regional arterial and collector routes likewise cross boundaries.

Demand for new or expanded facilities and services is strongly influenced by the extent to which alternative modes of travel are available, including transit, vanpool/carpool programs, and non-motorized.

Land use and transportation planning decisions made by one jurisdiction invariably affect other jurisdictions. If local comprehensive plans of individual jurisdictions permit isolated, low-density development surrounded by abundant free parking, the use of transit becomes infeasible. The roadway system gets more congested because individuals have few travel options.

Infrastructure financing is also complex. Since implementation of ISTEA in 1993, the state has opted to directly allocate federal surface transportation funds to urban areas and rural counties. Those allocations have resulted in cooperative processes to disburse funds to priority projects. Multiple-agency funding of high priority projects for mutual benefits is a direct benefit of regional planning.

Regional transportation planning provides a unified blueprint to ensure that the efforts of all affected jurisdictions are coordinated and that the individual parts of the overall transportation system function properly as a whole. This Regional Transportation Plan will help to guide multi-modal transportation planning and programming decisions for the future of the region. It serves as a regional framework for coordination of transportation and land use elements of local comprehensive plans; establishes policies and strategies for achieving the regional visions; addresses regional transportation issues and problems; provides a long-range program of fundable transportation improvement needs; and provides consistency

between the RTP and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Furthermore, it allows for periodic review of the transportation system to evaluate progress, adjust for new policies, and accommodate new technologies that can improve the overall transportation system.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN ADOPTION

This Regional Transportation Plan for the MPO/RTPO was developed jointly by the Benton-Franklin Council of Governments and its member jurisdictions. Adoption of the Plan by the BFCG Board includes the following:

- ◆ Endorsement of regional transportation system components, including the street and highway system, public transit system, regional airport system, commuter management program, and the water and land-based freight systems.
- ◆ Identification and documentation of regional transportation system deficiencies including: Travel corridors with inadequate capacity to meet current and future travel demand; the need for transit to capture a higher percent of work trips; and the need to decrease the numbers of drive-alone work trips by increasing the ridesharing/park & ride lot programs.
- ◆ Recognition of a state mandate to have local and regional Commute Trip Reduction Plans and Ordinances in place in 2009.
- ◆ Endorsement of the level of transportation investment needed to adequately serve current and anticipated growth.
- ◆ Endorsement of the regional transportation planning framework as the process for achieving a unified direction on transportation policies and coordination with comprehensive land use planning.
- ◆ Completion of a federal requirement as a condition for receiving federal Surface Transportation Program funding, and as a basis for review of projects proposed for funding within the near-term Transportation Improvement Program.
- ◆ Implementation of the transportation plan, including transit plans, by the responsible jurisdictions.
- ◆ Establishment of consistency between this plan, the MPO/RTPO six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). And the Washington Transportation Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PLAN

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

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

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

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

BACKGROUND

The Tri-Cities model area includes the Tri-Cities urbanized area and some peripheral areas in Benton, Franklin, and Walla Walla counties, including travel to and from the Hanford Reservation. The RTP was developed through a cooperative process that involved the BFCG, WSDOT, the public, and the efforts of the three counties, 13 cities, four ports, and two transit agencies that constitute the MPO/RTPO of the region.

The plan is based on traffic forecasts for the ten and twenty-year planning horizons. For the overall region those projections are based on existing traffic counts and an annual regional traffic growth rate of 3 percent. The resultant traffic volumes were then converted to Level of Service (LOS) values using the FHWA Highway Capacity Manual. Those LOS values indicate the extent of congestion for any given roadway segment. From there, needed capacity improvements, if any, have been determined.

The analysis for the Tri-Cities urban area and periphery utilized a computer traffic model to forecast future traffic volumes and levels of service. Those future travel demand estimates were directly resulting from forecasts of changes in the level of urban development. Thus, one of the most important aspects of the urban transportation planning process was the forecasting of future development in terms of population and employment, which were the that drove the model.

The total population of the Tri-Cities model area in the base year was 192,382. By 2015, the population is forecasted to increase by 42,713. The forecasted population by 2025 increased by 41,212 to 276,307 people. This brings the total increase in population to 83,925 and an annual increase of 1.8 percent over the twenty-year period. The number of employees in the base year was 63,547. This number grew by 8,723 employees by the year 2015 to 72,270. By the year 2025, an additional 10,347 employees were forecasted, reaching a total of 82,617. This equates to an increase of nearly 19,070 employees at an annual growth rate of 1.4 percent over the twenty-year period.

Similar traffic modeling of the Walla Walla/College Place urban area and periphery was done in 2003. Projections for that model area show a population increase from 44,081 in 2003 to 51,163 by the year 2013. That population is projected to reach 58,352 by the year 2023, for a total increase of 14,271 and an annual growth rate of about 1.4 percent over the twenty-year period. The projections also reflect an increase of 4,872 single-family homes and 617 multi-family dwellings. The 13,927 employees in 2003 would expand to 17,539 in 2013 and 20,109 in 2023, thus an annual growth rate of 1.9 percent over the twenty-year period.

MAJOR REGIONAL ISSUES

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

Preservation and Maintenance. Smaller jurisdictions have difficulty transferring general revenues to street maintenance when those funds are severely needed elsewhere. Long-term maintenance deferral leads to system deterioration.

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

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

The Hanford Site work commute changed when the Department of Energy eliminated their bus fleet and allowed private vehicles on the site. A survey performed in 2005 found the daily Hanford-bound commute through Richland consisted of 88 percent single-occupancy and 12 percent carpool and vanpool. A proposed nuclear waste treatment plant currently under construction is injecting another 1,000-2,000 workers (numbers fluctuate) into the Hanford commute. Related truck traffic occurs throughout the day.

WSDOT expanded the SR 240 Richland “Bypass” to six lanes. They are currently constructing six to eight lanes on the SR 240 “Causeway” over the Yakima River and six lanes from the Richland “Wye” to Columbia Center Blvd. The City of Richland similarly expanded Stevens Drive from SR 240 northerly to the Hanford boundary. The morning commute to Hanford operates well within the capacity of this corridor due to staggered and variable work shifts. However, the afternoon return commute is more compressed, resulting in more congestion and delays.

Ben Franklin Transit's vanpool and carpool matching programs help ease the Hanford corridor congestion.

An October 2000 Presidential mandate to DOE for their employees to receive \$60-100 per month for bus riding, vanpooling, or parking was not implemented here.

The Tri-Cities area is two years away from implementing a state mandated Commute Trip Reduction Program that will affect major employers, including the Department of Energy and their prime Hanford contractors.

Inter-City Bus Service. In 2004, Greyhound discontinued service to Connell, Prosser, Richland and Walla Walla. In September 2005, Genie Tours implemented bus service between Walla Walla and Pasco. That service was terminated in July 2006. WSDOT is seeking another server (state grant funds).

Stampede Pass Rail Impacts. Reopening the Stampede Pass rail line has resulted in traffic impacts in Pasco, Kennewick, Prosser, and other communities up the Yakima Valley. Grade separations have been constructed at Ainsworth (SR 397) in Pasco and Columbia Center Boulevard in Kennewick. Others are needed.

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

Columbia and Snake River Dredging. The shipping channel on the lower Columbia from Portland/Vancouver to the mouth at Astoria, Oregon, has a minimum depth of 40 feet. Modern ships require a 43-foot channel. Two major shipping companies have thus withdrawn. The Corps of Engineers attempts to complete the dredging have been hampered by court suits. The uppermost ports on the Snake at Lewiston, Idaho, and Clarkston, Washington, are losing viability due to siltation. C. of E. dredging is here again blocked by a law suit.

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

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

Decline of Dedicated Transportation Funds. The 1999 repeal of the State Motor Vehicle Excise Tax, coupled with two subsequent state gasoline tax increases, with only one of those

increases marginally addressing funds for cities and counties, have exacerbated city and county efforts to adequately fund their transportation programs.

The growth in the state's population, number of licensed vehicles, and vehicle miles traveled indicate the need for appropriate increases in transportation funding for cities and counties to offset increased maintenance costs, pavement overlays and capacity improvement needs. The Washington Transportation Plan further emphasizes those needs. Yet, many of our state legislators thought otherwise. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed and federal Surface Transportation Program funds sub-allocated to rural counties and Metropolitan Planning Organizations on an annual basis since 1993 will continue to flow, at least for now. The legislature has emphatically stipulated that there will be no formulaic allocations (i.e. everyone getting a piece of the action). Future projects must be selected based on a set of criteria demonstrating need and with a full and transparent accounting to the legislature. To date there has been no guidance from the state as to when these mandates will be effective.

GOALS AND POLICIES

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

1. Access
2. Access Management
3. Efficiency
4. Balance
5. Safety & Security
6. Safety Conscious Planning
7. Environmental Responsibility
8. Transportation Financing
9. Intergovernmental Cooperation
10. Citizen Involvement and Public Education
11. Livability
12. Aesthetics
13. Pedestrians and Bicycles
14. Transit Element
15. Transportation Demand Management/ Commute Trip Reduction
16. Streets and Highways
17. Land Use & Urban Design Strategies
18. Air/Waterways/Rail
19. Freight Movement
20. Intermodalism
21. Regional Consistency and Certification

TRI-CITIES DEFICIENCY ANALYSIS (MPO)

Richland - Current major deficiencies are on George Washington Way (Comstock to I-182); the Queensgate Interchange in the vicinity of the eastbound I-182 ramps; and the eastbound SR 240 Causeway, including ramps from EB I-182 and ramps to Columbia Park Trail.

By 2015 some WSDOT projects and the city's financially constrained capacity improvement projects (i.e. within anticipated revenues) would have eliminated many of the above deficiencies. However, the model indicates deficiencies on pieces of the SR 240 "Bypass" (southbound); George Washington Way southbound from Lee Blvd. to I-182; and I-182 westbound ramp to Queensgate northbound.

By 2025 more city and state projects would have been implemented. Yet, the model shows deficiencies on George Washington Way southbound from Williams to SR 240; the I-182 interchanges with Thayer/SR 240 and Queensgate; northern portions of the SR 240 bypass; SR 224 from SR 240 westward to West Richland; and SR 240 west of Columbia Center Boulevard.

West Richland - Currently there are no major level of service deficiencies. Furthermore, the 2015 “build” scenario did not indicate major deficiencies. However, the 2025 “build” scenario indicates deficiencies through town on SR 224.

Kennewick - Current deficiencies have been identified for the US 395 Blue Bridge southbound fly-over of SR 240 and the Leslie Road approach to Clearwater Avenue. WSDOT has a project funded to address the fly-over. Richland, Kennewick and Benton County are in the project development phase of a project addressing Leslie Road.

Under the 2015 “Build” scenario deficiencies are still shown for SR 240 southbound across the Blue Bridge. With the 2025 “Build” scenario there are continued problems on the Blue Bridge; deficiencies in the SR 395/SR 240 interchange; and on US 395 from that SR 240 interchange to Yelm Street.

Benton County (Urban) - Current deficiencies are indicated on SR 397 (south of 10th Avenue to Finley Road vicinity). The 2025 “build” scenario indicates deficiencies on SR 224 north of the planned Red Mountain Interchange.

Pasco - No deficiencies.

New deficiencies occur with the 2015 “Build” scenario at the Road 100/Broadmoor overcrossing of I-182 and US 395 southbound at the Blue Bridge. The 2025 “Build” scenario shows further congestion on US 395 between the Blue Bridge and the junction with SR 397 and at the I-182 interchanges with Road 100/Broadmoor and Road 68.

Franklin County (Urban) - No deficiencies were shown.

Urban Area Summary - With the network deficiencies identified throughout the 20-year planning period, capacity improvements must be implemented to maintain an acceptable level of service. Solutions to many of those deficiencies are included in the jurisdictional six-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). Others are addressed in the state and cities 20-year financially constrained and unfunded planning projects lists. Some deficiencies are not addressed in either the TIPs or project lists, indicating the need for future planning to include them.

Since the traffic model only addressed p.m. peaks, it stands to reason that there are also a.m. peak hour capacity deficiencies. Furthermore, there may be more areas of p.m. peak hour capacity deficiencies that the model did not capture.

REGIONAL DEFICIENCY ANALYSIS (RTPO)

Benton County (Rural) - Benton County’s functionally classified rural roads currently operate at Level of Service A or B with one exception. A segment of Gap Road north of County Route 12 operates at LOS C, the regionally adopted standard. In ten years that Gap Road segment is predicted to operate at LOS D and in twenty years at LOS E, indicating the future need to

plan for added capacity. The twenty-year analysis found no other roadways that would operate at less than LOS C.

Traffic congestion is generally not a problem in rural Benton County. The need for road improvements is primarily based on pavement condition; substandard widths; the need for all-weather surfacing on roadways subject to seasonal closures or weight restrictions; the need for hard surfacing of gravel roads; and safety. The county's 20-year financially constrained projects total \$50.56 million. There is also another \$21 million of planning projects with no identified funding source.

City of Prosser - Prosser has some serious congestion problems developing. Wine Country Road crossing the Yakima River into the downtown area was recently expanded to four through lanes and currently operates at LOS A to LOS C. The segment from Nunn Road to 6th Street is projected to reach LOS E by 2025. The 6th Street extension from Wine Country to the downtown area has LOS D to LOS F. The parallel segment of 7th Street will degrade to LOS D by 2015 and LOS F by 2025. Bennett Avenue and Meade Avenue west of 6th Street currently operate at LOS D and C, respectively, with both projected to LOS F in ten years.

The recent multi-million dollar expansion of Wine County Road from the West Prosser interchange to the East Prosser interchange relieved congestion on that loop route. Other capacity improvements will relieve congestion on other streets.

The city has \$8.6 million of financially constrained projects in the ten-year horizon and \$5.8 million of constrained projects in the second ten years.

City of Benton City - All of Benton City's functionally classified streets are predicted to operate at LOS A or B in the Year 2025, with one exception. SR 225 through town and across the Yakima River to its junction with SR 224 near I-82 will operate at LOS E. That issue will be addressed later in this chapter under the WSDOT heading.

The city's 20-year projects total \$2.1 million, all financially constrained.

Ben Franklin Transit - 15-passenger vans serve Hanford commuters from Prosser and Benton City. Van replacements every six to seven years are included in BFT's urban project list in Chapter 7.

City of West Richland - For the most part, West Richland is in the Tri-Cities urban area. However, the city has annexed a vast area outside the urban boundary that is currently rural in character, minimally populated, and generally under farm cultivation or covered with native steppe vegetation. The city's comprehensive plan indicates considerable future growth in that area (industrial, commercial, residential). The road network will develop as those land use changes occur. Level of service is not currently an issue.

Franklin County (Rural) - Most of Franklin County's functionally classified rural roads currently operate at LOS A or B. A few segments operate at LOS C, the regionally adopted standard. In ten years, segments of R-170, Road 68 North, and Taylor Flats Road will degrade to LOS D. Using the regional 3 percent traffic growth trend for the Year 2025 determined the following segments will operate in the upper range of LOS D, indicating the need for future planning to add capacity:

R-170: MP 6.67 to MP 7.45 - 7,253 ADT, Rolling Terrain, LOS D
Road 68: UAB to Taylor Flats Road - 11,072 ADT, Level Terrain, LOS D
Taylor Flats Road: MP 0.43 to Birch Road - 7,076 ADT, Rolling Terrain, LOS D
Taylor Flats Road: Birch Road to Eltopia West - 7,542 ADT, Rolling Terrain, LOS D

Traffic congestion is generally not a problem in rural Franklin County. The need for road improvements is primarily based on pavement condition; substandard widths; the need for all-weather surfacing on roadways subject to seasonal closures or weight restrictions; the need for hard surfacing of gravel roads; replacement of obsolete bridges; and safety.

Franklin County's constrained 20-year project list totals nearly \$38.9 million, including widening the above section of Road 68 to four lanes and also bridge widening and a truck climbing lane on Taylor Flats Road.

City of Mesa - Capacity analysis determined no deficiencies. Therefore, projects are generally triggered by pavement condition and the need for wider streets with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. The city's \$497,000 constrained project list contains an assortment of improvements ranging from simple seal coats to widening, adding sidewalks, curbs and drains.

City of Connell - The need for increased capacity on Columbia Avenue north of Elm Street is predicted near the end of the 20-year planning period. All other street segments will operate at LOS A or B. The city proposes \$1.3 million of constrained projects and \$15.4 million of planning projects without an identified funding source.

City of Kahlotus - Capacity analysis determined no deficiencies. Financially constrained 20-year projects total \$500,000. \$395,000 is shown for projects without a funding source being identified.

Walla Walla County (Rural) - All of the county's rural roads are predicted to operate at LOS C or better in the 20-year planning period. Assorted 20-year financially constrained projects total \$39 million. Projects without a funding source identified total \$16 million.

City of Prescott - Capacity analysis determined no deficiencies. Twenty-year financially constrained improvements total at \$155,000. Another \$370,000 is shown for planning projects without funding sources.

City of Waitsburg - All of Waitsburg's streets are predicted to operate at LOS A through the Year 2025. SR 124 in town will be at LOS C in 20 years. SR 12 south of SR 124 is at LOS B and will be reduced to LOS E by 2025. East of SR 124, SR 12 currently operates at LOS C, but will degenerate to LOS E by 2025. This predicted LOS indicates the need to plan for the SR 12 bypass of Waitsburg by about 2020. Rights of way for that bypass were acquired many years ago.

The 20-year financially constrained projects total slightly over \$1.3 million. Other projects without identified funding sources total \$6.2 million.

City of Walla Walla - Most streets in Walla Walla currently operate at acceptable levels of service. The primary exceptions are either on the SR 125 corridor (9th Avenue, Pine Street) or major streets (Dalles Military Road, Plaza Way) that connect to that corridor.

The extension of Myra Road from Rose Street to SR 12 will open up an alternate route that will attract traffic away from the SR 125/9th Avenue/Pine Street corridor. However, due to the pervasiveness of commercial activities there, congestion is likely to continue at levels E and F. At present, antiquated signals preclude efficient coordination to better move traffic.

The Pine Street/13th Avenue intersection has an offset tee, complicating traffic movement. Intersection reconfiguration and signalization will provide some relief; however, capacity deficiencies will emerge soon after.

The 9th Avenue intersection with Dalles Military Road and Plaza Way has the most severe capacity deficiency (F) in spite of major improvements in recent years. Further improvements are planned; however, high traffic volumes and some congestion problems will prevail.

Roosevelt Street at Alder (north approach) is indicated to operate at LOS E at present and throughout the 20 year period.

Other LOS E deficiencies are predicted by 2015 and some LOS E to F deficiencies by 2025 at other major intersections in Walla Walla, including the Myra Road/SR 125 intersection. Some of these deficiencies will be alleviated by the proposed, financially constrained projects. Other deficiencies will be in mind for ongoing long range planning.

The city's financially constrained 20-year project list exceeds \$30.4 million. Their unfounded planning projects exceed \$20 million.

City of College Place - Most federally classified streets in College Place currently operate at acceptable levels of service.

The Wallula Avenue stop controlled approach to Rose Street currently operates at deficiency level E. However, the Myra Road extension to SR 12 will attract traffic away from Wallula Avenue, thus reducing its congestion level to D.

The College Avenue approach to SR 125 is currently at LOS D, but, will develop LOS E deficiencies by 2015 and LOS F deficiencies by 2025, indicating the need to plan for improvements. College Avenue between 2nd Avenue and 4th Avenue is predicted to have LOS E by 2025 under the no-build scenario; however, the build scenario only predicts LOS D. Similar 20-year LOS E deficiencies alleviated under the build scenario are shown for the Taumarson approach to SR 125 and for 4th Street between Birch and College Avenue.

The full build out of Myra Road to SR 12 to the north and to Taumarson Road south of SR 125 will include new signalized street intersections at Whitman Drive and Garrison. The inherent disruption of through traffic on Myra Road to facilitate cross movements at intersections will result in some future LOS E and F capacity deficiencies. The C Street approach to Myra Road will operate at LOS E by 2015 and LOS F by 2025. The Meadowbrook approach to SR 125 is predicted to operate at LOS E by 2025 under both the build and no-build scenarios.

The city's 20-year constrained project list (\$2.52 million) includes improvements that will alleviate those future problems.

Valley Transit - The twenty-year plan indicates expenditure of over \$11.5 million for rolling stock replacements and other amenities.

WSDOT - LOS analysis has validated existing deficiencies (LOS D and E) on SR 12: Attalia vicinity to Jct. SR 730; SR 24: Jct. SR 240 vicinity (LOS E); SR 124: Jct. SR 12 to Sunset Drive; SR 125: Chestnut Street to Poplar Street (LOS E) and SR 240: RM 15.20 to RM 21.43 (incl. Jct. SR 225/Hanford Route 10) (LOS D-E).

By the Year 2010, additional deficiencies (LOS D) are forecasted for SR 12: East of Jct. SR 124 to Attalia; SR 12: Bottom of Nine Mile Hill to Touchet North Road; SR 17: Poe Road to Merion Road; and SR 24; Priest Rapids Dam Road to Grant County Line. Of the base year deficiencies listed above, SR 124: Jct. SR 12 to Sunset Drive would deteriorate to LOS E; SR 125: Chestnut Street to Poplar Street would downgrade to LOS F; and SR 240: RM 15.20 to RM 21.43 would deteriorate to LOS E throughout.

By the Year 2020, additional deficiencies (LOS D) are predicted for SR 12: East side Nine Mile Hill; SR 12: Lowden to Wallula Road; SR 12: Cornwell Road to Climbing Lane East of Dixie; SR 14: Plymouth Road to I-82; SR 17: Jct. SR 395 to Poe Road; SR 17: Marion Road to Adams County Line; SR 22: Yakima County Line to I-82; SR 24: Jct. SR 240 to Priest Rapids Dam Road; SR 224: I-82 to Sandstone Road; and SR 225: Jct. SR 224 to River Road (N. of Benton City). Of the base year and Year 2010 deficiencies previously noted, SR 12: Attalia to Jct. SR 730 would deteriorate to LOS E; SR 24: Jct. SR 240 vicinity would be reduced to LOS F; and SR 240: RM 21.02 to RM 21.43 (E. of Jct. SR 225) would deteriorate to LOS F.

WSDOT has financially constrained projects to complete the widening of SR 12 to four lanes from Jct. SR 124 to Jct. SR 730, including the SR 12/SR 124 interchange. Another constrained project will build the SR 12 four lanes from McDonald Road to Walla Walla. The balance of SR 12 from Jct. SR 730 easterly to McDonald Road is currently involved in an alternative alignment study. Unfunded planning projects will then widen that segment to four lanes. Further planning projects will construct interchanges throughout SR 12 from east of Jct. SR 124 to Walla Walla. Other financially constrained and unfounded planning projects will alleviate deficiencies on the balance of the state highway system in the three-county RTPO.

FINANCIAL PLAN

The 20-year financial plan is required to be constrained to reflect what realistically may be done with available revenues during the 20-year planning horizon. This requirement means that the improvements included in the plan, and the maintenance and preservation of the existing transportation system, must be affordable within already available and projected sources of revenue.

The Tri-Cities metropolitan area transportation system will cost \$1.04 billion to maintain and provide needed improvements over the next 20 years. Of this total, \$344 million (33%) will be needed to maintain and operate the system, and \$697 million (67%) will be available for improvements. At the end of the 20-year planning horizon, the MPO will have an ending balance of -\$6 million. In addition, the MPO will need to generate an additional \$121 million in revenue to fund proposed planning projects.

The balance of the regional transportation system outside the MPO area will cost \$1.05 billion to maintain and provide needed improvements over the next 20 years. Of this total, \$502

million (48%) will be needed to maintain and operate the system, and \$546 million (52%) will be available for improvements. At the end of the 20-year planning horizon, the rural RTPO planning area will have an ending balance of -\$7 million. In addition to this shortfall, the rural RTPO will need to generate an additional \$350 million in revenue to fund proposed planning projects.

When combining the analyses for the entire RTPO planning area, the regional transportation system will cost \$2.09 billion to maintain and provide needed improvements over the next 20 years. Of this total, \$846 million (41%) will be needed to maintain and operate the system, and \$1.24 billion (59%) will be available for improvements. At the end of the 20-year planning horizon, the RTPO will have an ending balance of -\$13 million. In addition to this shortfall, the RTPO will need to generate an additional \$471 million in revenue to fund proposed planning projects.

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

CONCLUSIONS

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

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

The Regional Transportation Plan is a planning and programming tool to assist in solving regional transportation problems. The RTP provides a basis for assessing the impacts of years 2015 and 2025 travel demand, and requires periodic updates to remain consistent with community goals.

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

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

PLAN AND POLICY IMPLICATION

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

- Endorsement of regional transportation system components, including the street and highway system, public transit systems, regional airport system, water and land-based freight systems, and a commuter management program.
- Identification and documentation of transportation system deficiencies including: travel corridors with inadequate capacity to meet current and future travel demand; the need for transit to capture a higher percent of work trips; and the need to decrease the numbers of drive alone work trips by increasing the ridesharing and park & ride programs.
- Recognition of a state mandate to have local and regional Commute Trip Reduction Plans and Ordinances in place in 2009.
- Endorsement of the level of transportation investment needed to adequately serve current and anticipated growth.
- Endorsement of the regional transportation planning framework as the process for achieving a unified direction on transportation policies and coordination with comprehensive land use planning.
- Completion of a federal requirement as a condition for receiving federal Surface Transportation Program funding, and as a basis for review of projects proposed for funding within the near-term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Implementation of the transportation plan, including transit plans, by the responsible jurisdictions.
- Establishment of consistency between this plan, the MPO/RTPO six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Washington Transportation Plan.