

## **SECTION 1**

# **Regional Transportation Goals and Policies**



## **Regional Transportation Goals and Policies**

Spokane Regional Transportation Council, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Spokane County, has adopted several goals and policies for guiding and directing development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The goals and policies contained in this Plan are the culmination of various modal plans developed in previous years and integrated into the Countywide Planning Policies. These goals and policies are used to direct not only development of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, but also each jurisdiction's compliance of their local comprehensive land use plans to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

### **Comprehensive Goals For Spokane's Regional Transportation System**

The Board of Directors adopted a mission statement for the Spokane Regional Transportation Council in 1997, setting the direction for the development of this plan. The mission statement is used to evaluate the recommendations of the SRTC to ensure the regional transportation planning process being conducted for the area is in a manner established by the community.

*"The mission of the Spokane Regional Transportation Council is to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods into, within, and through the Spokane Region with an integration of balanced multi-modal transportation choices."*

Generalized goals have also been established that are similar to the SRTC mission statement. They are as follows:

*Spokane's regional transportation system shall provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the Spokane region, while seeking to enhance the area's quality of life, efficiently using limited resources, and ensuring that transportation solutions are compatible with the rights of citizens to the peaceful and healthy enjoyment of life, home and property.*

*Develop a balanced, integrated, multi-modal transportation system, which serves the existing and future needs of the area and provides a convenient choice among modes for trips into and out of Spokane's metropolitan area, for work, school, shopping, personal business, and recreational purposes.*

### **General Land Use Policies Related to Transportation**

#### ***Statement***

It is recognized that land use and transportation planning, as well as the ensuing implementation, must be aligned for orderly development in the Spokane Metropolitan Area. Often land use and transportation decisions have been made independently of one another, without the benefit of understanding the

consequences of individual decisions. The Spokane region continues to face serious transportation challenges. One challenge is to accommodate growth in a manner that will continue to be affordable, while at the same time enhance, or at least maintain, the quality of life that makes this area so attractive. In order to meet these challenges, the Spokane Metropolitan Area must make well-informed decisions about its land use design and corresponding transportation investments. These policies are provided to guide and direct the land use and transportation decisions in this plan:

1. Preservation and maintenance of community investment in existing residential neighborhoods should be enhanced through regularly scheduled transportation infrastructure maintenance and rehabilitation.
2. Future growth and development should be directed toward identified transportation and transit corridors, as well as activity centers to ensure that efficient services can be provided.
3. Include in land use plans design standards for pedestrian friendly environments, including streetscapes, to encourage walking and non-motorized transportation.
4. Promote and encourage mixed land use activity centers along corridors that can be efficiently served by public transportation
5. Institute a land use planning process to support all modes of transportation in advance of the transportation system design and implementation.
6. Provide appropriate densities of land use for the mode of public transportation and community integration being desired.
7. Comprehensive land use plans must be coordinated through the SRTC to ensure they can be accommodated by the regional transportation system.
8. Enhance major established commercial activity centers that are currently served by transit, and represent potential high-capacity transportation (HCT) corridors, by adding residential, retail, office, government, service, and labor-intensive activities that are compatible and support surrounding land uses.
9. Encourage retention of existing medium and higher density multi-family zoning and, where it is adjacent to activity centers, promote new residential development in these areas. Increase residential and commercial densities in HCT activity centers in order to support HCT and conventional transit uses.
10. Balance the interest of regional and local jurisdictions' growth and development requirements through a neighborhood preservation and maintenance program. Implement a code enforcement program to identify general neighborhood improvements, as well as housing and infrastructure deficiencies in advance of serious problems.
11. Require developers, through the established land use permitting process, to include public transportation compatible designs in the projects. Transit compatible designs include such things as access from transit facilities to buildings and locating transit facilities within or adjacent to buildings.
12. Adopt and integrate design standards into community development standards, including public transportation access, pedestrian/bicycle access, and high occupant vehicle facilities.

13. Encourage mixed-use residential developments along established transit routes, especially where vacant land affords an opportunity to infill development. Ensure policies are coordinated with neighborhood representatives and an established neighborhood preservation and maintenance program.
14. In areas with higher levels of transit service, permit higher residential densities that are compatible with surrounding development. Medium density residential zoning should allow 12-24 units per acre, and higher density residential zoning should allow densities greater than 24 units per acre, using new development and urban design standards. Establish design goals that illustrate what the community wants and how good design can provide for improved community acceptance of new development.
15. Encourage retail use of ground-level space, including shops and restaurants on the first floors of buildings, bring building setback requirements forward to sidewalks, encourage window display interaction, awnings, public plazas, street amenities, and other transit activity centers. Do not permit "blank wall" at pedestrian ground level.
16. Mixed-use commercial centers with adequate transit service should have a minimum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0 in business districts and 0.5 in other transit activity centers. Densities should be sufficient to support decked parking.
17. Future land uses requiring heavy freight movement should be encouraged to locate in close proximity to transportation corridors already capable of supporting and accommodating similar transportation needs.

## **General Non-motorized Transportation Policies**

### ***Statement***

Every trip, whether by transit or automobile, begins and ends with a pedestrian movement. Additionally, many trips within the urban area can be solely accomplished by walking or bicycling within the community. SRTC policy is to accommodate pedestrian and non-motorized transportation movements in a safe and pleasant manner, as they are an important factor in providing transportation services for a true multi-modal transportation system. The following are stated goals to accomplish this.

1. Establish a bicycle and pedestrian program that will increase the mode-share of people walking and bicycling as a means of transportation in the Spokane Metropolitan Area over the next 20 years.
2. Eliminate barriers that discourage or prohibit pedestrian or bicycle access and movement for other than safety reasons.
3. Provide jurisdictions and agencies with guidance on how to select the appropriate type of pedestrian projects and how to establish priorities for funding.
4. Through the zoning codes, require connections between residential areas and adjacent land uses by eliminating barriers that restrict bus, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation.

5. Identify the needs and gaps in the regional bicycle and pedestrian system.
6. Enhance awareness and cooperation between all roadway users.

## **High Capacity Transportation Policies**

### ***Statement***

The region's transportation network is a major factor in the way land uses are organized in the community. The development and implementation of high capacity transportation facilities provides an opportunity to affect positive change in the future development patterns of Spokane, while helping to manage urban growth. Alternate transportation choices to that of the single occupant vehicle, when appropriately planned and implemented, can improve accessibility and mobility in the Metropolitan Area. The following HCT policies provide the general planning framework, as well as specific objectives for accommodating high capacity transportation modes:

1. Potential HCT corridors, including the full range of transportation alternatives, should be adopted as part of each jurisdiction's Comprehensive Plan. Major investment analyses should be conducted to advance implementation of the accepted strategy.
2. Local jurisdictions and WSDOT, as appropriate, should adopt an HCT right-of-way corridor preservation agreement in order to identify and preserve their existence.
3. Short and long term access needs to HCT corridors, transit centers, and activity centers, should be included in local Comprehensive Plans and Transportation Improvement Programs for timely development.
4. Encourage the development of improvements to provide for increased person carrying capacity of roadways, reducing the number of single occupant vehicles (SOVs), and facilitate local transit access to current and future multi-modal activity centers.
5. As part of the regional transportation system, facilities including park and ride lots, bus turning lanes, and traffic signal priority systems should be incorporated into regional and local transportation plans and programs for implementation.

## **Freight and Goods Transportation Policies**

### ***Statement***

Economic vitality of the Inland Northwest relies on the safe and efficient movement of freight and goods into and through the Spokane Metropolitan Area. Whether moving farm commodities to market or shipping manufactured goods in or out of the community, both goals require a seamless transportation system that is safe, reliable, and accessible. Spokane enjoys a diversified economy. That diversity however, necessitates a transportation system that can respond to a wide variety of needs. Some industries need rail service to bring in large quantities of bulk materials to their sites. Ensuring rail access to the mainline railroads is an essential part of maintaining that part of Spokane's economy.

Other industries and businesses have moved to Just In Time (JIT) truck delivery systems to reduce the amount of space needed for storage of materials as well as inventory. Our regional transportation system's performance can significantly impact a business's ability to maintain delivery schedules and cost controls, thereby affecting their profitability. Reducing the congestion conflicts between road-based freight and goods movement and rail based freight and goods movement will become even more critical in the future as mainline railroads continue to experience significant levels of additional shipping. Policies directed at addressing freight and goods movement are as follows:

1. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan and local comprehensive plans of each jurisdiction shall include roads, air, and rail service elements that accommodate the need for freight and goods movement, to the extent applicable for each geographic area.
2. Plans should identify routes that are, or could be with available funding, designed and constructed to regional standards for supporting heavy truck traffic to serve the movement of freight and goods from industrial corridors and rural areas to market centers.
3. Acknowledge the need to operate and maintain existing rail lines for shipments of commodities, which will reduce the impacts of shipping by road. Local jurisdictions should protect rail facilities to the extent possible.
4. Reduce the number of at-grade rail crossings at principal arterials to improve safety, reduce lengthy vehicle delays, and reduce the need for whistle blowing in the Metropolitan Area.

## **Parking Policies**

### ***Statement***

The amount of parking required by a land use plan or zoning code can have a dramatic, cumulative impact on the regional transportation system. Parking availability and the availability of alternate modes of transportation must be carefully inter-linked to ensure that adequate mobility and accessibility exists. Too much parking negates the attractiveness of alternate means of transportation. In contrast, too little parking without reasonable alternatives restricts mobility and access, thereby causing adverse economic consequences and parking in undesirable areas, such as neighborhoods. Any policies affecting parking must take into account the relationship between the land use activity and the availability of alternate modes of transportation. The following policies guide the Metropolitan Transportation Plan on parking:

1. Reduce the parking requirements for new development and encourage reduced parking for existing developments as increased levels of transit and pedestrian access are provided.
2. Through zoning ordinances, limit the amount of parking and establish HCT compatible siting requirements in HCT corridors and activity centers.
3. Institute a cap on the total number of parking spaces in the Central Business District, and provide increased transit service from outlying park and ride lots.

4. Commercial parking standards should apply within ¼ mile radius of HCT activity centers and transit centers. In suburban locations, 3.5 spaces per 1,000 gross floor area (GFA) of retail space, and 3.0 spaces per 1,000 GFA for office space should apply. In urban locations, standards of 2.5 spaces per 1,000 GFA for retail and 2.0 spaces per 1,000 per GFA for office space should apply.
5. Residential parking standards should apply within ¼ mile radius of HCT activity centers and transit centers. In suburban areas, 2.5 spaces per three bedroom unit; 1.5 spaces per two bedroom unit; and 1 space per one bedroom unit. In urban locations, 2.0 spaces per three-bedroom unit; 1 space per two-bedroom unit; and .5 spaces per one bedroom unit. Additional spaces must be provided for guest/visitor parking at a rate of one space for each five units in suburban areas, and one space for each ten units in urban locations.
6. Require that parking be located at the sides or the rear of the building, leaving the “front door” access to the building for pedestrians and public transit patrons.
7. Parking lots should establish parking pricing strategies that provide incentives to high occupancy vehicles. Single occupant vehicle parking spaces should be priced higher than ride-share parking.
8. Parking lots should have bicycle parking spaces available equivalent to 10 percent of the automobile spaces provided.

## **Congestion Management Policies**

### ***Statement***

Virtually everyone who has traveled area roadways has had the experience of sitting in traffic due to congestion. Congestion is the level at which transportation system performance is no longer acceptable due to traffic interference. SRTC is in the process of creating a Congestion Management Process (CMP) to address and manage congestion within the Spokane area in order to facilitate the movement of people and goods. The following policies provide direction for congestion management in developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan:

1. SRTC will support growth in economic activity and maintain the quality of life in the Spokane area by limiting the amount of ‘excess’ delay encountered in the movement of people, goods, and services.
2. SRTC will make contributions to the avoidance and mitigation of congestion on all modes by implementing demand management programs first, before performing capacity expansions.
3. All elements of the CMP will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect changes to the region’s transportation goals and objectives and transportation systems.
4. CMP assessments will be conducted as part of development of all capacity projects to be included in long range transportation plans.
5. Commute Trip Reduction alternatives will be promoted as part of CMP implementation, as they help to reduce congestion in the region.

6. Use of alternative modes and supporting infrastructure will be seriously considered as part of CMP implementation.

## **Environmental Policies**

### ***Statement***

Citizens in the Spokane area have been consistently improving the environment in which they live, through implementation of a wide variety of programs. Air and water quality have seen the highest levels of improvement during the past twenty years. The transportation system plays an important role in the ability to improve both air and water quality. Transportation improvements on the regional transportation system are now required to demonstrate they will not adversely impact Spokane's ability to achieve the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). This means a transportation project's air quality impact must be quantified and compared to the NAAQS prior to receiving funding for construction. It is also the responsibility of the SRTC to ensure that transportation plans and programs conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for achieving the NAAQS prior to their adoption or approval.

Another important facet of the environment is the social environment. Separate and apart from the traditional relocation assistance programs are impacts caused by disrupting or compromising neighborhood and commercial centers. Just as important is the need to ensure that transportation disadvantaged individuals are afforded an opportunity through major transportation investments to increase their accessibility and mobility throughout the metropolitan area. As part of the regional transportation-planning program, SRTC must ensure that all impacts are equitably treated.

The following policies provide direction for the environmental considerations in developing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the overall transportation-planning program:

1. SRTC will not include within the Metropolitan Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), projects that are found to collectively cause or contribute to environmental exceedances of national standards.
2. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan and subsequent TIP must stay within the mobile source emissions budget established within an approved State Implementation Plan (SIP)
3. Plans, programs, and projects affecting the regional transportation system must be found to conform to the SIP, pursuant to Federal and State regulations.
4. Projects identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan will be of sufficient scope and design to calculate the estimated environmental impacts of their implementation. This includes social and economic impacts and the impacts to transportation-disadvantaged individuals.

5. Evaluation of plans, programs and projects will be based on documented assumptions, generally accepted travel demand modeling procedures, and only EPA approved models for conducting air quality analysis.
6. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan will include plans, programs and projects that reduce reliance on the single occupant vehicle, and demonstrate a concerted effort to reduce mobile source emissions in the most cost-effective manner possible.
7. SRTC will comply with Federal and State laws and regulations governing the social, economic, and environmental (SEE) considerations that must be a part of future analysis.
8. Major Investment Analyses will be used to conduct early assessment of issues related to Environmental Justice and the transportation disadvantaged.

## **Financial Policies**

### ***Statement***

A successful Metropolitan Transportation Plan ultimately rests on the ability to financially support what the community has decided to put into the Plan. Federal and State laws require that transportation plans and programs demonstrate that there is a reasonable chance funds will be available to implement all the projects contained within the horizon of the plan. This means assumptions must be made for project costs and revenue projection during the twenty-year horizon. The following policies provide the guidance used in establishing the financial feasibility of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and subsequent regional Transportation Improvement Programs.

1. Financial projections will take into consideration historical revenues and the rate those revenues have increased over time.
2. Financial resources available to the Spokane Metropolitan Area, but not yet utilized or enacted will be based on the legal amount available by statute. Local options, which have been defeated more than three times, will not be considered as being reasonably available during the initial ten-year period, but considered available during the remaining life of the twenty-year plan.
3. Major investments will require significant funding from Federal and State competitive grant programs or direct allocations. The ability to successfully compete for funds will be critical to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan's financial feasibility. For the purpose of the Plan, major investments will have multiple funding sources approximating 33% Federal, 33% State, and 33% local contributions, except for those projects on the National and State Highway system, which will be Federal and State sources only.
4. Funds available to local jurisdictions and agencies for local match, maintenance, and preservation activities will be based on historical revenues.
5. Least cost planning will be considered through the use of value engineering studies and major investment analyses to ensure the most useful and cost effective approach towards transportation investment decisions are conducted.

6. Cost estimates will be based on year of expenditure at five percent inflation for expenditures.

## **Public Involvement Policies**

### ***Statement***

For the public, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan provides the direction Spokane is heading to address its existing and future transportation challenges. The plan provides a blueprint for what projects are expected to be implemented, what the anticipated costs of the projects will be, and the financing that is expected to be available to fund the necessary improvements. Most importantly, the plan provides an opportunity to participate directly in shaping Spokane's overall transportation system and investments. The public's acceptance and willingness to participate in the planning process creates the catalyst for making the plan a reality.

Since the plan must be updated every three years, the opportunity for it to be out of step with the community is less likely. The Plan's dynamic nature allows it to respond to changes brought about by a wide variety of factors such as growth management, community opinion, and new technology such as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). The Plan is only as good as the community's willingness to implement it. The following policies have been established to guide and direct the public involvement process for the SRTC activities.

1. Involving the public effectively means:
  - Listening to ideas, comments, and concerns provided by the public
  - Addressing the comments that have been provided by the public
  - Informing the community what problems have been identified
  - Providing the community options of what could be done to address problems and the possible ramifications of those actions
  - Hearing from the community what alternatives they would like to have considered
  - Recognize public input as valued and appreciated by incorporating good ideas, comments and suggestions into the transportation planning process and Plan
2. Periodically review the Official Public Involvement Policy for the SRTC.
3. Dissemination of information will be thorough in order to ensure education of the public and to reach a consensus on the needs of the region, as a means of strengthening regional policy making.
4. SRTC's constituency will be broadened by increasing public and private sector communications and by reaching out to the traditionally under-represented communities and neighborhoods.
5. The interested public will be ensured of ample opportunity to participate in the policy making process for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, programs, and projects.

6. The SRTC will use a wide variety of techniques to engage the public and determine community viewpoints and attitudes on the wide range of transportation issues being addressed in the transportation planning process.