

the transportation vision project

EVERYONE MOVES. EVERYTHING'S CONNECTED.

existing conditions and trends analysis



in association with

Fehr and Peers
Parsons Binkerhoff
Leland Consulting
Desautel Hege

FINAL REPORT September 2010

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Interstate 90 and the City of Spokane.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2010, the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC), in collaboration with local jurisdictions and community partners, initiated a process to develop a vision and implementation strategy for the regional transportation system. While the broader region must be considered, the study area for this effort is Spokane County. This process will provide strategic direction for a multimodal transportation system over the next 30 to 50 years.

Over the past decade, several transportation plans have been developed to address the unique needs of a variety of individual modes. However, the region lacks a clear

overarching vision to identify how these modes of transportation fit together, or the order and priority in which these projects should be developed. The Transportation Vision Project will identify what the community views as critical transportation goals and the prioritization of transportation investments. Ultimately, the vision will serve to drive sustainable economic growth and improve mobility in a manner that protects and enhances the region's livability, environment and competitiveness in a global economy.

Project Overview

The planning process for the Transportation Vision Project consists of three phases (Figure 1). To guide the development of this project, the SRTC and its community partners have established a Visioning Process Team (VPT) to meet throughout each of the planning phases.

Figure 1: Planning Process



- Phase I: Project Goals, Visioning Process Refinement and Plan Inventory.** The first phase of the project begins with goal setting and process refinement to help define measures of success and allow for the development of outreach and analysis tools. Additionally, the Existing

Conditions Summary and Trends Analysis Report is included in this phase. This report includes an inventory of existing planning efforts in order to identify gaps and inconsistencies in existing plans, as well as to ensure that ongoing planning efforts are reflected. It also analyzes and identifies key trends and issues with regard to transportation in the Spokane region.

- *Phase II: Visioning Process Unified Transportation Vision and Implementation Strategy.* Phase II focuses on a comprehensive outreach and engagement effort centered on a series of community roundtables, workshops and intercept events. Supplementing this effort will be a coordinated media campaign and online presence that will leverage social media to help drive turnout and participation. One of the primary outreach tools beginning in this phase is the project website (www.spokanetransportationvision.com) that will also allow the public to review and comment on the process and project documents. These efforts will include use of a range of mapping and visualization tools to help the public and key partners better understand the issues, opportunities and choices facing the region. During this phase, the planning team will refine and synthesize community and stakeholder input into an overall vision with strategic directions for implementation. The planning team will then test this vision with community members and key partners to ensure that the vision and strategic directions meet the needs of the region.
- *Phase III: Draft and Final Unified Vision and Implementation Strategy Reports.* Based upon feedback received regarding the draft plan, the planning team will create a revised public draft of the Unified Vision and Implementation Strategy Report with integrated maps and graphics for review by the broader community. The final phase of the planning process will include an integration of final revisions, and will shepherd the plan through the adoption process.

Purpose and Organization of this Report

The Existing Conditions Summary and Trends Analysis Report is an important initial step. It establishes a solid foundation for future phases of the planning process by providing a common baseline of information for all participants. The report identifies existing conditions and relevant trends that impact the regional transportation system. Information provided in this document will serve to develop informed decisions and begin to establish the visioning process.

This report is organized into three sections and three appendices.

- *Visioning Context* provides an overview of characteristics of the Spokane region.
- *Existing Transportation System* identifies existing and planned elements of the system with a focus on major gaps.
- *Key Findings* presents results of the document review, stakeholder interviews and GIS and mapping analysis.
- *Appendices* include a list of stakeholders, document review summary and project maps.



SE Blvd. near South Hill Park & Ride.

II. VISIONING CONTEXT

The Spokane region is dependent on an efficient and reliable transportation system to move people and goods both within the region and to non-local destinations. To effectively plan for the future transportation system of the region, the visioning context summarizes regional characteristics with important implications for the planning process, as well as the transportation system. This section provides a review of:

- Demographics;
- Employment and Economy;
- Land Use; and
- Transportation Policy.

Demographics

Regional growth and demographic information helps describe the existing and future characteristics of the Spokane region and its residents.

Growth

Population growth in the County and the region is one of the major forces impacting the regional transportation system. Table 1 shows that population forecasts predict an increase of 29% of an additional 127,400 residents in Spokane County between 2005 and 2030. By 2030, the County estimates an increase of 53,000 households, reaching a total of 240,600. The 1.3% annual growth rate in the number of households in Spokane County from 2000 to 2009 is above the national rate of 1.1%, but less than the Washington State rate of 1.4% for the same period.

The impact of growth will not be equal in all parts of the County. The majority of cities in the County are smaller, with populations under 10,000. While the region's

smaller cities will receive 19% to 90% more residents over 2005 numbers, the total population of each city will remain small by 2030 (under 10,000). Growth in the County's largest cities (Spokane and Spokane Valley) will add 25% to the 2005 population base.

Unincorporated growth in Spokane County will require consideration for new and expanded services outside of city limits. Unincorporated areas are forecast to add approximately 30% or 37,000 residents by 2030. In 2005, 72% of the population lived in cities and towns while 28% lived in unincorporated areas of the County. This ratio is forecast to remain the same in the future. Both Cheney and Deer Park were projected to grow only 29% in 25 years but are both on major highways, much like Liberty Lake, Spangle and Airway Heights. According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), Deer Park exceeded 12.2% growth and Cheney 6% growth since 2005. In the last 10 years Deer Park has grown by over 15% and Cheney over 21 percent.

Table 1: Population Growth in Spokane County (2005-2030)

Jurisdiction	Population		
	2005	2030	% Change (2005-2030)
Unincorporated Spokane County	121,848	159,000	30%
City of Spokane	198,700	255,000	28%
City of Spokane Valley	85,010	106,000	25%
City of Airway Heights	4,640	7,000	51%
City of Cheney	10,070	13,000	29%
Deer Park	3,100	4,000	29%
City of Liberty Lake	5,255	10,000	90%
City of Medical Lake	4,350	6,000	38%
City of Millwood	1,645	2,000	22%
Fairfield	589	700	19%
Latah	212	300	42%
Rockford	484	600	24%
Spangle	269	500	86%
Waverly	128	200	56%
Total	436,300	563,700*	29%

Source: Intermountain Demographics SRTC 2030 Population Forecasts by TAZ.

* Intermountain Demographics total.

The City of Spokane is the second largest city in the State of Washington. Yet the city is physically isolated from other cities with a similar population. Similarly, Spokane County has a larger population than its neighboring counties. Spokane County

shares its border with four other Washington counties and two counties in Idaho. Table 2 shows that growth among Spokane's neighboring counties has varied since 2000. Among neighboring Washington counties, only Pend Oreille County to the north has experienced significant growth. Lincoln County to the west has received the least amount of growth, while Stevens and Whitman Counties have each experienced a moderate growth rate.

Spokane County's largest neighbor, Kootenai County, Idaho has grown at a rate nearly twice that of Spokane County. Since 2000, Kootenai County has grown by about 28 percent or 30,000 residents. A majority of the growth has occurred in the City of Coeur d'Alene, roughly 30 miles from the City of Spokane.

Table 2: Regional Population Growth (2000-2009)

State and County	Population		
	2000	2009	% Change (2000-2009)
Washington			
Spokane	417,939	468,684	12%
Pend Oreille	11,732	12,946	10%
Stevens	40,066	42,334	6%
Lincoln	10,184	10,248	1%
Whitman	40,740	42,689	5%
Idaho			
Kootenai	108,685	139,390	28%
Benewah	9,171	9,258	1%

Source: US Census 2009 Population Estimates

Income and Education

The 2009 median household income in Spokane County was \$48,628--below that of both the State of Washington and the United States. However, the region boasts an educated workforce, with the many local universities and colleges providing the personnel training needed by local employers. There are approximately 65,000 college/university students within 75 miles of Spokane, attending schools in Washington and Idaho.¹ In Spokane County, 42% of the population has an educational attainment beyond high school, well above the national average of 35.5% and on par with the State of Washington.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics, Fall 2008 enrollment.

Table 3: Spokane Demographic Data Comparison, 2009

Data Category	Washington	Spokane County	United States
Per Capita Income	\$29,418	\$23,818	\$27,277
Median Household Income	\$60,852	\$48,628	\$54,719
Percent of Population with Educational Attainment Beyond High School	42.2%	42.0%	35.5%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Employment and Economy

Between 2005 and 2030, employment in the region is projected to increase by 90,000 jobs, reaching a total of 339,000 employees by 2030.² Employment growth is projected to be geographically focused in the areas of Airway Heights/West Plains, the northern portion of the North Spokane Corridor, and the area north of Liberty Lake. Employment at Fairchild Air Force Base is forecast to increase by 2,000 employees during the same period. [According to Greater Spokane Inc. (GSI), the 2007 average annual wage for the region was \$43,000.]

Regional services historically driving Spokane's economy include:

Spokane County "is considered the regional, economic and cultural hub of a four-state region with over 1.7 million people... [with an] historic role as a regional center of services for the surrounding rural population."

(GSI 2008 CEDS)

- Government;
- Higher education;
- Medical services;
- Transportation and warehousing;
- Finance; and
- Durable goods sales like cars, furniture and clothing.

² SRTC Transportation Analysis Zone 2030 Forecasts

Although Spokane has not been immune to the effects of the global recession that began in 2008, the area has historically experienced shorter recessions after WWII than the US average (Table 4). Based on this historic trend, the area could expect to recover quicker from the current recession.

Table 4: Post World War II Recessions

Recession start-end	Duration/ months (US)	Employ. decrease/ months (Spokane)
Nov. 1948 – Oct. 1949	11	-
July 1953 – May 1954	10	-
Aug. 1957 – April 1958	8	-
April 1960 – Feb. 1961	10	7
Dec. 1969 – Nov. 1970	11	5
Nov. 1973 – March 1975	16	9
Jan. 1980 – July 1980	6	4
July 1981 – Nov. 1982	16	8
July 1990 – March 1991	8	5
March 2001- Nov. 2001	8	4
Dec. 2007 – June 2009 ³	18	?

Source: Spokane's Labor Market, WA State LMEA May 14, 2010 and National Bureau of Economic Research.

According to Washington state labor economist, Doug Tweedy, a number of key industries in Spokane will benefit from pent-up demand due to the recession, starting in the later part of 2010.⁴ These include:

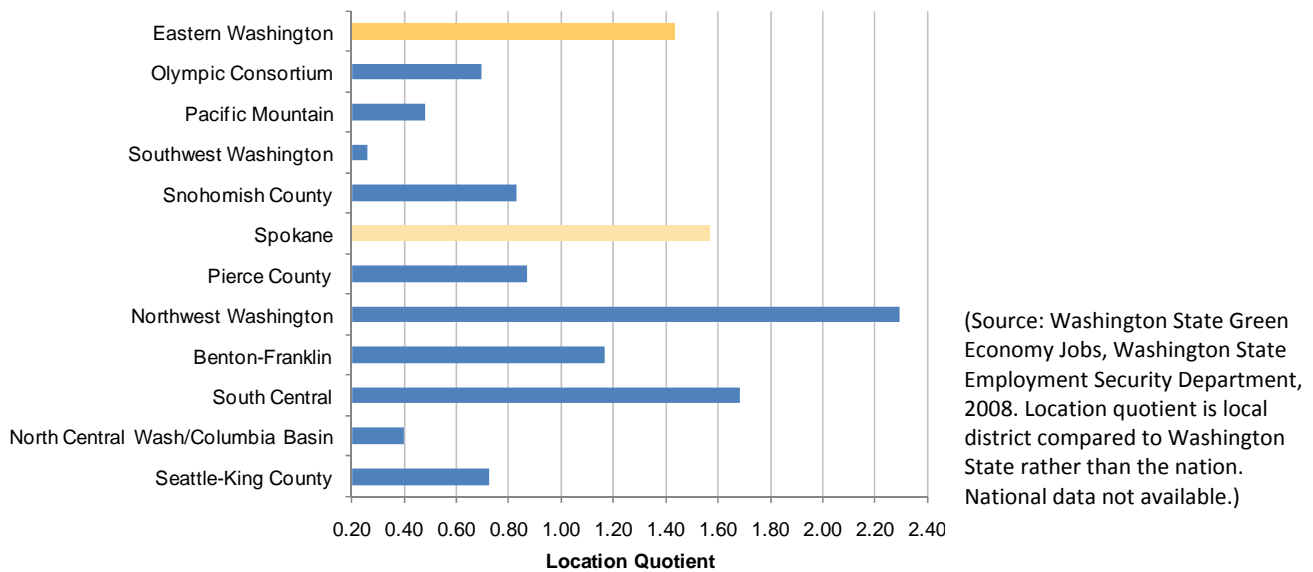
- Professional and technical services (especially in research, design and consulting);
- Waste management;
- Remediation;
- Transportation (aviation);
- Advanced manufacturing;
- Health care;
- Military; and
- Agriculture.

³ National Bureau of Economic Research

⁴ Spokane MSA (Spokane County), Labor Area Summary, Doug Tweedy, March, 2010, Volume 2010, Number 3

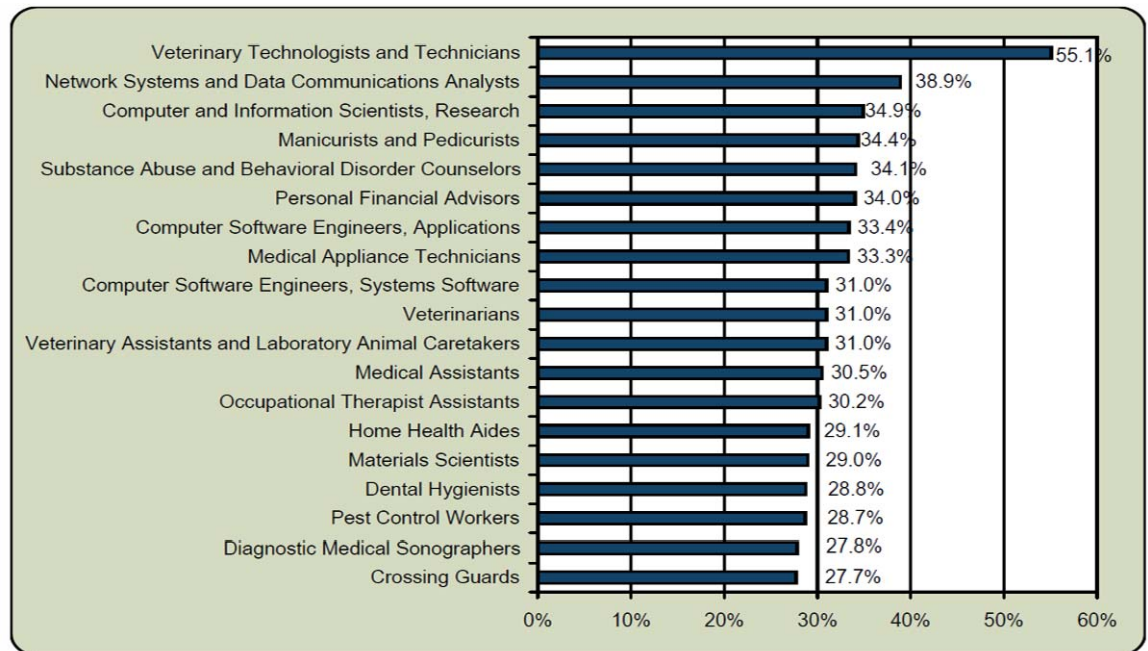
The prediction also assumes that energy will become a well-defined industry cluster, affecting almost every sector of the economy. Renewable energy is another sector for which Spokane is well positioned to receive future employment expansion (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Concentration of Renewable Energy Jobs in Washington by Area



Health care is a key industry, not only in Spokane, but also in the State of Washington (Figure 3). Health care, along with education, is one of the only sectors to have grown during the recession. It is also one of the highest-paying sectors overall. Spokane is poised to reap many benefits since it is a healthcare hub for a bi-state region. Registered nurses are expected to have the largest projected increase in employment through 2017 in the State of Washington, and will earn a mean annual wage of \$72,334. However, competition for regional health care services is also increasing with the expansion of services in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

Figure 3: Fastest Growing Occupations, Washington State, 2007-2017



(Source: LMEA/Employment Security Department)

Inland multimodal transportation hubs will grow as fuel prices increase. Recent industrial market research suggests that regional transportation hubs, especially those at border crossings, will become increasingly important in the future as the price of crude oil shifts transportation logistical efficiencies away from a system with few mega distribution centers--typically located at sea ports--to many smaller regional facilities, many located inland, with transloading capabilities.

Renewable energy resources are another important industry with potential in the region. These resources include bio-refineries, and solar and wind technologies. The natural resources of the area were an important driver of the economy in the past, and could again provide jobs in rural areas as the nation seeks to increase capacity for alternative energy sources and to become less oil dependent. High tech manufacturing and data companies seek areas with dependable, cost-effective energy sources.

Transportation Policy

The Spokane region is composed of several stakeholders that create a complex policy environment. The State's Growth Management Act (GMA) and State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) are the bodies of legislation that drive much of the transportation and land use related policy in Spokane County. Along with statewide legislation, the policy realm in Spokane County is multi-layered, with regional (SRTC) and local (cities) entities responsible for setting policies that impact

the future of the regional transportation system. Transportation policy set at the local level must comply with regional and state-wide goals, while also setting-forth policy that reflects the envisioned future of area cities. A summary of local transportation policy can be found in the document review (Appendix B).

As the federally mandated Metropolitan Transportation Organization for Spokane County, SRTC is responsible for coordinating transportation policy among planning and transportation departments with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Spokane County, and cities and towns in the County. SRTC ensures that Federal, State and regional policies are carried out at the local level. Thus, local transportation and land use plans must be reviewed for consistency with SRTC policies prior to local adoption.

A summary of existing transportation policy is based on a review of existing plans and regional policies listed in Appendix B. The primary policies affecting the regional transportation system include:

- The State's Climate Comprehensive Plan;
- The Regional Commute Trip Reductions Plan;
- Countywide Planning Policies;
- The Metropolitan Transportation Plan;
- The County Comprehensive Plan; and
- Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation.

Climate Comprehensive Plan

One of the most significant drivers of regional transportation policy is the State of Washington's efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions. In 2009, the state adopted a new law establishing statewide benchmarks for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Local jurisdictions are required to adhere to the statewide goals, implemented through a variety of policies and programs. According to the *Comprehensive Plan to Address the Challenges and Opportunities of Climate Change*, the State goals call for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. By 2035, the plan calls for a reduction in emissions by 25 percent below 1990 levels, and 50 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

One of the primary policies contained in the plan is to reduce transportation emissions by increasing public transit and rideshare options and promoting compact development that minimizes VMT. The plan also calls for a cap-and-trade program to allow industry a degree of flexibility to determine how to best reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Other programs identified in the plan include:

- *Developing and enhancing a Washington State Transportation Access Network* - A strategy to ensure that public transportation provides vital connections to enable travel throughout Washington and to provide affordable alternatives to a car-dependent lifestyle;
- *Enhancing urban commute trip reduction and rideshare programs* - Expanding the number of urban commute trips made by car and van-pooling, telecommuting and compressed work week schedules;
- *Creating a statewide residential trip reduction program* - To encourage travelers as well as commuters to use other modes versus driving alone;
- *Promoting compact and transit-oriented development* - Provides the density, infrastructure and amenities to encourage the use of forms of transportation besides single occupancy vehicles. Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) already enables, but does not require, local government planning to promote urban centers;
- *Develop funding criteria, pricing strategies and adequate funding resources* - Including aligning state, regional and local transportation investments and operation with the statutory reductions for VMT and greenhouse gas emissions; and
- *Increasing the use of rail for the movement of both passengers and freight.*

Regional Commute Trip Reduction Plan

The Regional Commute Trip Reduction Plan establishes a regional goal of reducing drive alone trips by 10 percent and reducing VMT by 13 percent from present levels within a six-year period. To achieve these targets, the plan calls for several regional transportation goals:

- Raising the public's awareness of regional transportation issues, laws and regulations;
- Ensuring alternatives to single occupant vehicles;
- Developing strategies to remove barriers which prevent access to transportation alternatives; and
- Providing efficient connections between routes and modes.

The plan requires local governments in counties experiencing the greatest automobile-related air pollution and traffic congestion to develop and implement plans to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips. Currently, the cities of Cheney and Medical Lake have adopted Commute Trip Reduction Plans that require intergovernmental agreements with Spokane County.

Countywide Planning Policies

The Countywide Planning Policies provide a unified framework from which County and city comprehensive plans are developed and adopted. While all policies have some affect on the regional transportation system, *Policy Topic 1: Urban Growth Areas* and *Policy Topic 5: Transportation* provide the context for land use coordination and transportation planning.

Policy Topic 1 addresses Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) within the County. Because of the close relationship between growth and land use, Policy Topic 1 requires that each city coordinate with the County for urban growth planning and population forecasts. The County periodically reviews each city's UGA to ensure accommodation of each city's future growth projections. The process involves a review by the Steering Committee of Elected Officials, followed by their recommendation and review by the Board of County Commissioners.

Policy Topic 5 stipulates that transportation planning in Spokane County be carried out by the Spokane Regional Transportation Council. Consequently, the policies require each jurisdiction's land use plan to be consistent with the regional transportation system. The policy requires local jurisdictions to develop and adopt land use plans that have been coordinated through SRTC to ensure that they preserve and enhance the regional transportation system. Policy Topic 5 also requires that new development pay for transportation improvements at the time of construction or identify other transportation strategies to offset the impacts.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

In 2003, SRTC adopted the Spokane Metropolitan Area, Metropolitan Transportation Plan to guide transportation decisions at the regional level. Since this time, the plan has implemented transportation improvements to fill gaps in the existing system and prepare the region for future growth. The plan contains several goals aimed at developing a transportation system that is financially affordable, environmentally friendly and that promotes quality of life.

The plan's policies are largely based on requirements from the 1998 Federal transportation legislation, TEA-21. In 2005, a new policy act (SAFETEA-LU) replaced TEA-21 and brought new regulations, programs and funding mechanisms. Set to expire in 2009, this most recent act has been extended into 2010. Thus, the federal policy context of the plan is outdated, in addition to reliance on scenarios and forecasts based on 1990 trends.

While the document provides a detailed assessment of 2003 conditions and identifies deficiencies in the system, there is limited discussion of the necessary steps to achieve the document's many goals. There is also limited discussion of how different transportation modes are integrated. The plan focuses on different transportation modes yet lacks substantial discussion of multimodal issues and conflicts.

Spokane County Comprehensive Plan

The Spokane County Comprehensive Plan presents a set of goals, policies and implementation strategies that states how the County should grow physically, socially and economically. As established by the GMA, local governments within Spokane County must develop comprehensive plans and adopt regulations that are consistent with the County plan. Similarly, cities within Spokane County must adopt comprehensive plans that adhere to the regional policies established by SRTC. Through this concurrency, each jurisdiction is responsible for accommodating its proportional share of future population growth and subsequent land use and transportation planning.

The Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan outlines policies to allow regional transportation choices, and encourage multi-modal and pedestrian friendly facilities. The transportation policies emphasize the movement of people and goods effectively and safely while maintaining or improving air quality and mitigating impacts to the natural and built environment. There are multiple transportation policy categories, each with several specific goals and policies. These include:

- *Intergovernmental Coordination*; requiring that comprehensive plans, especially transportation plans, be coordinated between neighboring governmental jurisdictions;
- *Consistency and Concurrency*; transportation facilities must be in place and in use within six years of the impact of development;
- *Alternative Modes of Travel*; include alternative modes of transportation to the automobile including public transportation, pedestrian facilities, bikeways, air and rail facilities;
- *Design of Urban Roads*; accommodate pedestrians, bicycles and transit, as well as the automobile. The public has also identified a need to improve the appearance of transportation facilities by landscaping and controls on signs and other means; and
- *Design of Rural Roads*; provide rural roads to serve rural environments and connect with urban areas.

Other categories provide goals and policies for safety, mobility, level of service, public participation, transportation finance, demand management strategies and environment.

Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation

The Spokane Transit Authority adopted the Comprehensive Plan for Public Transportation in July 2010. This plan includes the goals and policies for transit throughout the region. It contains a map of the high performance transit network, which identifies corridors for future transit enhancement and further study as money becomes available.

Land Use

Land use and development patterns have a significant effect on the regional transportation system. Land use is directly linked with transportation, as a growing population will require housing, jobs, services and infrastructure. In Washington, the State's Growth Management Act (GMA) requires counties of a certain size and growth rate, and the cities within them, to adopt comprehensive plans and development regulations which are guided by statewide goals. Through this framework, population forecasts and land use planning are closely coordinated among the State, County and local jurisdiction levels.

In compliance with the GMA, Spokane County has adopted a Comprehensive Plan, as well as County Wide Planning Policies that serve as a framework for the Comprehensive Plan's development. Among the required elements specified by the State, the policies must address countywide transportation facilities and strategies, as well as joint County and City planning within urban growth areas.

Population Forecasts

The growth of the region and the resulting needs of the future population are the primary reasons for planning and coordination between SRTC and local jurisdictions. The State's Office of Financial Management (OFM) establishes the official population estimates and 20-year growth forecasts for local governments. County officials are responsible for selecting a 20-year GMA planning target from the forecasts prepared by OFM. Within each county, population planning targets for cities, towns and unincorporated areas are worked out among the affected local jurisdictions as part of City and County planning processes.⁵

Urban Growth Area

The State's Growth Management Act requires the majority of new growth to be directed within urbanized areas. However, based on building permit data, development in the Spokane Metropolitan Area has mostly occurred outside of the City of Spokane or along the City's perimeter.⁶ Retail uses are mostly located along

⁵ State of Washington Office of Financial Management

⁶ Spokane Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2007

major transportation networks including Highways 395 and 291 in north Spokane, I-90 and East Sprague Avenue in Spokane Valley and Highway 2 through Airway Heights. According to the County's Comprehensive Plan, commercial uses will be focused along these same routes in the future, with nearby higher density residential uses.

As required by the State, each County and its cities must coordinate review of Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) every ten years. Since adoption of the current UGA in 2001, the County has added a total of 1,188 acres to the metro area. In the fall of 2009, Spokane County and the Cities of Spokane, Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, Airway Heights, and Millwood initiated an evaluation of the metro UGA to determine its ability to accommodate the projected population. According to the County, the existing UGA land area has capacity to accommodate an additional 113,797 residents which will easily accommodate the projected population growth through 2030.

To oversee the coordination of planning within urban growth areas, the Countywide Planning Policies set forth a steering committee of elected officials to define standards for urban growth area delineation, as well as minimum levels of service, distribution of future growth, and to negotiate designations for urban growth areas. As the UGA update process moves forward, it will be critical for the SRTC to coordinate future phases of the vision process with this effort in Spokane County.

Zoning

Land use zoning establishes a framework to implement the desired uses and densities as identified in the County's Comprehensive Plan. While cities must coordinate planning with Spokane County, land use within incorporated communities is subject to city zoning. There are eight zoning categories that apply to unincorporated areas within the County.

- *Urban Residential Zones* - Allow a range of residential-based uses and range from low to high density residential. These include: Low Density Residential for a density between one to six units per acre; Low Density Residential Plus for one unit per acre for specific areas; Medium Density Residential for six to 15 units per acre; and High Density Residential for 15 units or greater per acre.
- *Mixed-Use Zones* - Encourage development that fosters pedestrian activity, supports transit and provides for a mix of diverse land uses. The zoning district supports uses that can support higher intensity development.
- *Commercial Zones* - Include four types of zones: Neighborhood Commercial for small-scale neighborhood-serving retail and office uses; Community Commercial for retail, service and office establishments to serve several neighborhoods; Regional Commercial for intensive

commercial uses to draw customers from the County at large and from other outlying areas; and Limited Development Area Commercial for rural commercial areas of more intense development.

- *Industrial Zones* - Light Industrial for industrial businesses that have a limited impact on surrounding uses; and Heavy Industrial for intense industrial activities.
- *Resource Lands* - Intended to protect and preserve the County's valuable agriculture and forest resources. Uses other than agriculture or forestry are discouraged in these zones.
- *Rural Zones* - Provide for a traditional rural landscape including residential, and agriculture and open space uses.
- *Mineral Lands* - Allow for quarrying, blasting, reduction, processing and mining of minerals in urban, industrial, rural and resource areas.
- *Overlay Zones* - The Airport Overlay Zone to reduce the potential for airport hazards; Planned Unit Development to foster creative, efficient and comprehensive design of site development; and Aesthetic Corridor Overlay to provide pleasing and clutter free appearance along major transportation routes entering and exiting urban areas.

Transportation Funding

Funding for Spokane's regional transportation system consists of a relatively complicated patchwork of funding from a range of sources. Some funding sources are specific to certain modes of transportation (including road, transit and freight rail), some to particular geographic areas and others are linked to related goals, like job creation or maintaining environmental quality. In the Spokane region, transportation funding comes from federal, state, regional and local sources.

Federal

The federal agencies that have historically distributed the greatest amount of funds in Washington State are the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Rail Administration (FRA) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Most FHWA funds are first channeled through the state, or to the municipal planning organization (MPO) via formula; MPOs and local jurisdictions typically do not seek direct competitive grants from the FHWA. FTA formula funds flow directly to the region's "designated recipient" for those funds: Spokane Transit Authority.

State

The State of Washington manages a wide variety of transportation funding programs, including those managed by WSDOT, Department of Community, Trade

and Economic Development, Transportation Improvement Board, County Road Administration Board, and other agencies. Some state funding sources are grants (outright cash awards that often require a local match), while others can be loans (often at low interest rates, but requiring repayment). In addition, some state funds are formula funds (determined through a formula that includes population or other variables) which make securing larger allocations difficult. Direct legislative appropriations (earmarks) are another source of state and federal funding.

Regional

Spokane Transit is the only transportation agency within the region that levies a regional tax that directly funds transportation.

Local

At the local level, there are many funding sources. These include city and county funds generated from property, sales and other local taxes, fees and revenue sources. Local districts, such as transportation benefits districts or local improvement districts, are also viable funding sources. An advantage to local funding is that local jurisdictions have the greatest amount of control. A disadvantage is that there are almost always more needs than resources (including non-transportation needs) competing for these funds. In addition, many require a public vote.

Most local funding sources often involve higher rates or new taxes or fees, and should always be carefully evaluated and tailored to meet the needs and expectations of the community. Local funding sources can include:

- *Transportation Benefits Districts (TBD)*. TBDs are a relatively new and flexible funding option for Washington's cities and counties. Geographically, a TBD can encompass almost any area. They generally must be approved through a vote, and are able to raise revenue through a variety of sources, including vehicle registration fees, transportation impact fees, a sales tax surcharge, as well as tolls and other secondary fees;
- *Property Tax*. Many communities have the ability to increase their property tax receipts through a levy lid lift or special levy. Both options require a vote, and the specific uses of the funds must be specified on the ballot;
- *Local Option Gas Tax*. This tax has considerable potential to generate revenue, but has never been implemented by any of Washington's counties because of political pressures and the concern that consumers would simply cross the county or state border for cheaper gas; and
- *Sales Tax*. Several types of sales taxes are available to local jurisdictions including the basic rate (cities and counties often do not levy the full basic rate), and an optional rate.

III. EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

As the transportation hub of Eastern Washington, the Spokane Region has a multimodal transportation system, which includes both an international airport and a variety of surface transportation facilities that accommodate autos, commercial vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

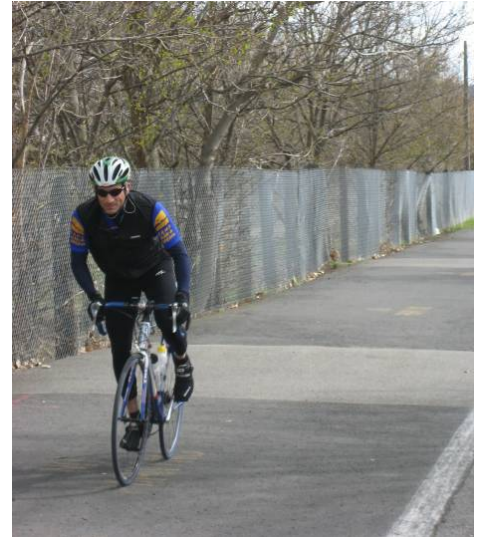
Like most communities, commuters in the Spokane region primarily rely on motor vehicle travel. Yet, the county's share of commuters using alternative transportation modes is increasing. In 2008, the share of non-automobile commuters in Spokane County was 12.4%, up from 11.6% in 2000. While this number has increased, Spokane's share is 3.4% lower than the state average. Since 2000, the portion of commuters using public transit increased 13.6%, while the share of commuters walking or using other means increased 80%. These numbers increased more than the state average.⁷

This section provides a review of the region's transportation system through a review of the following:

- Roadways;
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities;
- Transit;
- Other Modes and Emerging Technology;
- Freight;
- Aviation; and
- Future Transportation Network Improvements.

Roadways

The region's roadway network serves as the heart of its transportation system. On average, approximately nine out of ten commute trips in the region are made by motor vehicles. Single occupant vehicle travel is the predominant mode of transportation in the region. Yet roadway congestion is generally stable. Overall, Spokane has experienced less congestion than other medium-sized metropolitan areas.⁸ Increases to roadway capacity have kept pace with the growth in vehicle travel, expressed in terms of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) between 1997 and 2007. During this period, VMT increased 25 percent. At the same time, the region's arterial and freeway capacity increased 27 percent from 1,175 lane miles to 1,495 lane miles with projects like the I-90 widening (completed in 2005) and the region's



Cyclist on dedicated multi-use pathway.

⁷ Community Indicators Initiative of Spokane.

⁸ 2009 Urban Mobility Report (Texas Transportation Institute, 2009).

ongoing roadway paving efforts.⁹ In 2010, the share of single occupant vehicle travel is 85 percent.

The roadway system in Spokane is classified by a functional hierarchy of local roads, collectors and arterial highways. However, roadway classifications do not always accurately reflect the existing characteristics of the transportation network. Several arterials, such as SR 27 and SR 278, receive lower traffic volumes than other highways with the same classification. Similarly, some roadways classified as collector streets can receive higher amounts of traffic than similarly classified roadways.

Arterials

The primary arterials in the Spokane region include local roads and state and federal highways. The highway system forms the spine of Spokane's regional transportation system. Local arterials are also major elements of the street network and in many cases carry more vehicles than area highways. The key highway facilities described here include Interstate 90 (I-90), US 2, US 195, US 395, State Route (SR) 290, and SR 291. Other significant arterials in the region include Sprague Avenue, Argonne Road and Market Street.

- I-90 serves as the region's primary east-west route, which originates in Seattle and terminates in Boston, Massachusetts. I-90 is a grade-separated freeway facility and provides a high-speed, high capacity connection for both regional and interregional travel.
- Similar to I-90, US 2 is a cross-country route that can provide a direct connection between interregional destinations. However, US 2 is constructed as a standard two-to-four lane highway that meanders through urban and rural areas. US 2 is largely at-grade and serves as the main street for towns like Airway Heights. Given the presence of traffic signals and direct access from properties adjacent to US 2, it serves as a lower speed connection providing local service in the Spokane Region.
- US 395 is a major federal north-south route which connects Southern California with the Canadian Border. US 395 largely parallels I-90 in the western part of the Spokane region, then turns north and parallels US 2 (along the Division Street corridor), before breaking off into a more standard two-lane highway serving residential areas to the north.
- US 195 is a north-south route, which starts in Lewiston, Idaho, serves the southern part of the region terminating at I-90. While US 195 is a fairly high speed, four lane highway, it does have some at-grade intersections providing local access.

⁹ Ibid.

- SR 290 (Trent Avenue) is an east-west arterial roadway providing access between Downtown Spokane, Spokane Valley and points east. It provides an alternative route to I-90 (which is lower speed) and provides more local access.
- SR 291 (Francis Avenue) is an east-west arterial roadway in the north part of Spokane. It is largely flanked by residential and commercial uses and is not a high speed roadway.

Collectors and Local Roads

While individual arterial roads within Spokane County accommodate a higher amount of VMT, there are fewer arterial roadway miles within the region. Conversely, individual collector and local roadways accommodate a lower number of VMT, yet account for far more miles of the entire network. As a result, local roads in rural and urban settings create the majority of roadway miles in the network and carry approximately two-thirds of the region's vehicle travel.

While the State is responsible for maintaining the arterial network, the collector and local network is the responsibility of local jurisdictions. Spokane County and its cities maintain over 1,000 miles of collector and local roadways throughout the region. Most of these facilities are two-lane local roads, which provide direct access to residences, businesses, schools and services.

The amount of locally maintained roadway miles and extent of the collector and local roadway system exemplifies the importance of the local transportation system on the region. In some cases, the difference between functional roadway classification and existing roadway conditions can result in conflicts between busy roads and non-motorized and/or public transportation systems. The extent and maintenance needs of the local roadway system also indicate the importance of improving coordination with and accessibility to public transportation and non-motorized facilities.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Non-motorized travel is a small, but important component of the region's transportation system. Bicycle and pedestrian travel modes account for about ten percent of travel modes in the region, with the majority occurring in Downtown Spokane and the University District. SRTC has recently published both a Regional Bicycle Plan (2008) and Regional Pedestrian Plan (2009). These plans list a number of high priority projects to facilitate non-motorized modes and include policies for the design of regional transportation facilities to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. Current facilities include shared-use trails and paths, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and roadways designated for shared-use between bicyclists and pedestrians.

In the past, transportation planners have been challenged to clearly identify socio-economic and land use factors that influence levels of bicycling and walking. However, as the field continues to evolve, it is easier to quantify the effects of these factors on a latent demand for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These planning tools, many of which are GIS-based, can clearly identify the locations where jurisdictions should invest capital funds for non-motorized improvements to ensure that they are well used and help build towards an agency's goals for mode split. This level of analysis is missing from many of the planning documents and while including provisions for bicyclists and pedestrians in major road projects is critical, it does not necessarily lead to true transportation choices or shifts in mode split.

Transit

Spokane Transit Authority (STA) provides fixed-route bus service throughout the region. This service includes 40 routes that connect Downtown Spokane with various destinations, including the Spokane Airport, Airway Heights, Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, Medical Lake, Fairchild Air Force Base and Cheney, and the number of universities and medical centers in the region. Bus service provides convenient public transportation every 15 minutes within many neighborhoods. The agency also provides paratransit and vanpool services, which serve older adults and disabled populations and commuters, respectively.

Each year, STA completes an assessment of route service in an effort to ensure that public transit is meeting the needs of the public. The review measures several elements of the transit system including ridership, cost efficiency (cost per revenue hour) and service effectiveness (passengers per revenue hour). Based on the most recent report, STA has been performing well over the past four years when compared to other urban public transportation systems in the state (Table 5). Since 2005, ridership has increased 45% with gains in each service type. In 2009, the overall cost per revenue hour was lower than the state average, while serving a higher number of passengers.

Table 5: Spokane Transit Performance

Service	Ridership			Cost/Hour		Passengers/Hour	
	2007	2009	% Change 2007-2009	STA	State Average*	STA	State Average*
Fixed Route	9,436,662	11,152,408	15%	\$104.4	\$123.0	27.4	26.8
Paratransit	506,710	521,578	3%	\$67.4	\$83.5	2.9	2.4
Rideshare	186,654	209,787	11%	---	---	---	---
Total	10,130,026	11,883,773	15%	\$171.8	\$206.5	30.3	29.2

* Average of Washington's urban transportation systems.

Source: STA Performance Measures First Quarter 2010.

Spokane Transit has historically expanded slowly, funded on a cash basis. Spokane's transit system is funded by a special taxing district similar to a fire or school district. Known as the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA), the taxing district was established by Spokane County and its cities in the urban area in 1980 for the purpose of providing public transportation for the Spokane region. In 2006, STA redrew the PTBA boundary to more closely reflect the urban nature of public transportation. The revised 248 square mile area closely conforms to the Spokane County Urban Growth Area (UGA), urban growth reserve boundaries, and on current precinct and school district boundaries.

The local sales tax levied in the PTBA provides the majority of STA funding, along with federal funding and customer fares. While the State of Washington requires transit agencies to rely on local sales and use tax, transit agencies are limited to allocating no more than 0.9% of the tax to fund public transit. Currently, STA levies 0.6% and any increase would require a vote of the public.

Other Modes and Emerging Technology

There are other transportation modes used in the Spokane region that are difficult to define by a common transportation category. These mode types include increasingly popular types of transportation such as longboard type skateboards as well as common mobility devices like wheelchairs. Some modes that are typically oriented for recreational use, such as rollerblades or scooters, usually share the same surfaces used by pedestrians, bicyclists and even motor vehicles.

When accounting for other transportation modes, it is equally important to consider emerging technology that may have an impact on the future system. In Spokane, smaller Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) are becoming more common as an alternative to their larger, petroleum based counterparts. Similar to golf carts, NEVs typically travel at slower speeds and are more commonly used on the local street

network. While the use of these mode types may only account for a fraction of the total existing transportation system, they still must interact with the larger transportation network, playing a small but legitimate role in regional mobility.

Freight

SRTC has worked very closely with WSDOT's Freight Systems Division and other major Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in Idaho, Oregon and Puget Sound to develop a series of freight initiatives that provide a Pacific Northwest regional approach to the movement of freight. SRTC and WSDOT have adopted the State's Freight and Goods Transportation System which classifies roadways based on tons of product moved annually. These facilities are mostly principle and minor arterials in the urban areas and major collectors in the rural areas.

Spokane County, local jurisdictions and SRTC are planning for incorporating land uses into the transportation planning framework to create connectivity to higher order systems. This includes access to airports, rail yards, industrial centers and major manufacturers and distributors from the road network and all other modal connections (hubs). The planning and coordination effort between State and local freight industry can be evidenced through the current Inland Pacific Hub Transportation Study (IPH). Although still in progress, the Visioning Team reviewed and discussed the findings and current conclusions with the IPH Team and the SRTC Program managers. The current conclusions from the IPH showed that the top five outbound freight commodities of 2007 are:

- Lumber or woods products (10.9 million tons);
- Retail and consumer goods (7.7 million tons);
- Farm products (5.9 million tons);
- Nonmetallic minerals (2.9 million tons); and
- Food and kindred products (2.1 million tons).

To better understand the freight context of the region, there are several related terms that require definition.

- *Inbound Freight* (or "into" the region) - Freight that has its origin outside of the region and a destination within the region. The destination can be the final delivery point, a distribution hub or a value added enterprise.
- *Outbound Freight* (or "out of" the region) - Freight that has an origin within the Spokane area and leaves the area.
- *Within* - Freight that has both the origin and the destination points within the general Spokane region, which would include for the purposes of this study, the 19 counties studied as part of the IPH effort.

- *Through* - Freight that doesn't stop anywhere within the region. This would typically be rail and motor freight that is transiting from Western Washington to other parts of the US and Canada.

Forecasts through 2027 show a net inbound change of 8.3 million tons (22% increase) and a net outbound change of 4.8 million tons (9.5% increase).

Truck/Motor Freight

In the area of truck/motor freight, the total transportation of goods into, out of, within and through the region totaled 83 million tons. Truck was the most popular mode, at 54%, followed by rail at 43%, water at 3% (IPH study area), and air at less than 1 percent. The directional flow for motor freight, (measured in tons) was 23% within the local area (IPH study area) counties. The western movement of goods was 43% of traffic; southern direction was 20%, eastern 12%, and northern 2%. 52% of all truck moves are one-way to or from outside of the region, with 33% through the region, and the remaining 15% are within the region.

The majority of freight moving into, out of and within the Spokane Region is moved by truck and motor carriers.

Rail

Rail moving inbound carried 8% of the total freight traffic (5.5 million tons), outbound rail carried 11.6% (7.9 million tons), and local less than 1% (98,000 tons). However, 80.4% of the freight moving through the region is on the rails (54.7 million tons). Of this traffic, 85% is east-west movements and 14% are north-south movements. This reflects the strong port related container movements from Asia to the U.S. and Canada.

The IPH forecast for 2027, not taking into account through traffic, shows an inbound increase of 900,000 tons (18.8%), an outbound decrease of 940,000 tons (-11.8%), and a local decrease of 49,666 tons (-49%) in rail movements.

Water

The Spokane area does not use waterborne freight and thus all data points referenced in this study reflect information from the IPH that included the ports on the Columbia/Snake River system.

Air Cargo and Parcel

As a point of clarification for this study, the term air cargo is used to represent cargo and freight moved via aircraft specifically designed for cargo, exclusive of UPS, DHL and FedEx aircraft that handles parcel freight as their primary cargo. The basic reason is that most goods movement and freight studies handle parcel freight as a truck or motor carrier move, with the origin or destination of cargo being the airport and the counter point of distribution being within the local region. Air cargo is also typically not handled on passenger aircraft as “belly cargo”, whereas parcel freight, which includes mail, is handled in this manner.

Unfortunately, the IPH did not separate the two types of cargo. Based on the project team estimates (based on discussions with the Spokane International Airport) the vast majority of aviation related cargo should be considered as parcel freight and the transportation of parcel freight is accounted for in truck or motor carrier.

Thus for this report, for inbound traffic the top four commodities (by tonnage) are: mail or contract traffic (29%), consumer goods (23%), miscellaneous shipments (18%), machinery (14%). Outbound traffic’s top commodities are mail or contract traffic (41%); pulp, paper or allied products (22%); other – consumer goods, etc. (21%); and machinery (7%). The 2027 forecast shows inbound growth of 21% and outbound growth of 19 percent. Again, the above data is in tons and while mail and contract traffic are represented by tonnage (41% of outbound cargo) the volume is significantly greater and results in more truck traffic on the highways than machinery for example. The total freight flow (in millions of tons) by mode and direction in the IPH study area is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Existing Freight Flows by Mode

Freight Flow	Truck	Rail	Water	Air	Total	Direction
Internal	13.8	.01	n/a	n/a	13.8	8.5%
Inbound	18.7	5.4	n/a	.02	24.1	14.8%
Outbound	29.0	7.8	n/a	.04	36.8	22.6%
Through	29.7	58.3	n/a	n/a	88.0	54.1%
Totals	91.1	71.6	n/a	.06	162.8	100%
Mode %	56.0%	44.0%	n/a	.04%	100%	---

Through this project, SRTC is in the process of developing a visioning process that includes freight movements and the economic benefits of freight to the Spokane region. Due to the logistics required for moving freight on County roads and rails, SRTC should continue to address the following issues that are part of the continuing Growth Management Act process as defined by the State of Washington.

- Economics of freight and the benefits (jobs) to the local region;
- Land Use considerations and impacts: proximity to freight modes, truck corridors, industrial and warehousing developments, permitting and zoning regulations are all part of this analysis;
- Environmental issues such as air quality, congestion management, noise and light pollution, stormwater runoff, and wildlife crossing protection;
- Safety and security are emerging as critical issues from both a local and national perspective;
- Operations and maintenance, especially during the winter storm season, and the preservation of infrastructure with preventive maintenance; and
- Funding and legislative support that is sustainable based upon a sustainable plan.

Washington MPOs currently do not have land use or zoning authority, including environmental controls. The key to providing the framework for freight transportation is for a more involved discussion with all stakeholders (and documentation of the discussions) on key aspects of transportation corridors and land use investment as part of an overall vision.

Future Transportation Network Improvements

Based on a review of the existing plans (Appendix B), there are a number of major transportation related improvements planned for the Spokane region. A major theme of these documents was that planned improvements include a diverse range of modes and location. A summary of capital projects and future improvement priorities include:

Capital Projects

- *Future Roadway Corridors* – North Spokane Corridor;
- *Transit* – The Spokane Transit high performance transit (HPT) network;
- *Multimodal Streets Enhancements* – US 2 Revitalization, Division Street, Sprague Avenue, Bigelow/Gulch Road;
- *Bicycle Improvements* – Spokane River crossings, improvements on Hatch Road, Northwest Boulevard, the Maple/Ash corridor, Five-Mile Prairie, Post Street, Wall Street, Assembly Street and connections to the Farwell/Hastings park rides;
- *Pedestrian Improvements* - University District Pedestrian Bridge; sidewalk infill programs for Spokane, Spokane Valley, and Airway

Heights; conversion of the Post Street Bridge; connections to Farwell/Hastings park & rides; and improved pedestrian crossings along US 2;

- *Trail Improvements* – The Regional Pedestrian Plan includes a project list mainly focused on trails, including improvements to the Fish Lake Trail gap closure,¹⁰ Centennial Trail gap and safety projects, Ben Burr Trail, Little Spokane River Trail, Gleneden Trail, Liberty Lake trails, North Green acres Trail, Children of the Sun Trail, along with several new trail connections including a recommended trail system in Airway Heights;
- *Bridges* – Reconstruction imminent for many of the region’s bridges which are reaching the end of their design life; and
- *Bridging the Valley* – A collection of projects that will separate vehicle traffic from train traffic in the 42 mile rail corridor between Spokane, Washington and Athol, Idaho.

Other Priorities

- *Local roads rehabilitation* – This is an on-going effort, but is viewed as an important major investment;
- *Transit* – Maintaining on-going transit operations, providing demand-responsive services to serve people whose disabilities prevent them from using regular bus service, implement the high performance transit network;
- *Non-motorized facilities* – Fulfilling goals of the City of Spokane’s recently adopted Complete Streets resolution and realizing additional funding for active transportation projects via SRTC’s SmartRoutes 2010 initiative. Also includes development of a North/South bicycle route; improved connections to South Hill, Browne’s Addition and the Downriver area; and
- *Congestion relief for I-90* - A project yet to be identified.

¹⁰ The Fish Lake Trail project and Five-Mile Prairie projects are the only ones noted as a high priority in both the Regional Bicycle Master Plan and the Regional Pedestrian Plan. Otherwise, the plans do not represent a shared set of high priority projects.

IV. KEY FINDINGS

The review of existing conditions in the Spokane Region generated several key findings that relate to the regional transportation system. Information gathered from a review of regulatory documents and planning efforts, interviews with stakeholders and analysis of regional maps pointed to common themes that influence the development of the regional vision.

There are nine key findings summarized in this section. These include:

1. The Spokane region is well positioned for future economic growth;
2. Imbalances exist within the existing freight system related to limitations in both policy and infrastructure;
3. Targeted freight infrastructure projects will generate additional economic opportunity;
4. Multiple demands and plans exist for individual roadways and alignments;
5. Transportation funding allocations are not always aligned with stated policy;
6. Differences exist between urban and rural transportation priorities;
7. Cities and the County sometimes compete for high tax generating uses;
8. Local funding capacity limits the region's competitiveness for state and federal funding; and
9. Stakeholders believe that stronger regional leadership is needed to forge agreement for implementing the unified transportation vision.



Downtown Spokane intersection.

1. The Spokane region is well positioned for future economic growth.

The Spokane region is well positioned for future economic growth due to its relative affordability, high quality and educated work force, quality of life, ease of movement, access to the outdoors, and robust regional center city. More than one out of ten people were employed in education, which has been recognized as a growing industry even during the recession. The area serves as a regional healthcare hub, also a growth industry. The University District and Sirti (formerly known as the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute) located near downtown Spokane, draw federal investments and provide many research and technology jobs, partnering with bio-medical companies and creating synergy with the health care industry. Sirti is an especially important resource for the region, focusing on

accelerating the development and growth of innovative technology-based companies in the Inland Northwest. The agency fosters an environment where entrepreneurs and small start-up companies can flourish and high-growth companies can focus on their efficient growth. Spokane County has strong community support for education, passing most operational tax levies and capital improvement bond issues for schools.

- *Relative Affordability* - Compared to the rest of the country, Spokane's cost of living is 8.90% lower than the U.S. average. The median home cost in Spokane is \$144,400. Stakeholders and Visioning Process Team members frequently cite the low cost of living in Spokane County as a major attractor for residents and employees.
- *High Quality and Educated Work Force* - The biomedical/health industry is a driver that many stakeholders mentioned. The area's universities were also identified as a major driver for growth, with many citing expansion opportunities and job creation as offshoots of Spokane's higher education. Spokane has made investments in infrastructure, such as optical fiber networks, that make it attractive to high tech companies. Spokane's proximity to Seattle, and training programs at local universities, provide a labor pool that is also attractive to high tech firms.
- *Quality of Life* - While quality of life can be characterized in many different ways, standard indicators of quality of life include not only wealth and employment, but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging.
- *Ease of Movement* - The diversity of living space, i.e.: urban versus rural, and the ease of transportation (the ability to get just about anywhere in the city in 20 minutes) were mentioned by several stakeholders.
- *Access to the Outdoors* - Recreational opportunities attract tourists. In 2005, visitors spent \$52.7 million, generating substantial non-resident tax revenues for the County.
- *Robust Regional Center City* - Spokane has vibrant urban amenities. Downtown Spokane has seen significant new investment in housing, retail and entertainment projects, keeping it active and interesting. Particularly for the service, technology and medical industries that will comprise the bulk of Spokane's employment growth in the future, a high quality of life is a critical factor to attracting and retaining both business and skilled workers. Therefore, as with recreational amenities, a strong

and vibrant downtown is a significant component of the region's economic development strategy.

2. Imbalances exist within the existing freight system related to restrictions in both policy and infrastructure.

The imbalance of cargo flows is the bane of the motor freight industry since paying for the operation and maintenance of driving many miles without any revenue freight has forced many low end motor carriers out of business. According to the Washington State Trucking Association, about 80% of the trucking capacity in the Spokane area (exclusive of parcel freight carriers such as UPS, FedEx and DHL) are company-owned or controlled fleet operations (having more than 10 trucks) and have a dispatch operation. Typically a dispatch function results in about a 20% empty back haul whereas an owner-operator or non-dispatch trucker has about an 80% or greater dead haul. This means that approximately 30% to 40% of the trucks operating in the region are hauling nothing but air. This has a significant impact on safety, the economy, maintenance of the infrastructure from use, congestion and environmental impacts.

Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) discrepancies between states/provinces has become a large issue in several areas of the country that are tied to interstate commerce as trucks moving freight across state and international boundaries have to deal with differing regulations regarding weights and cargo loads such as hazmat. Currently there isn't a uniform basis to move freight- Washington State has a GVW (no permit required) of 105,500 lbs assuming the national bridge formula is complied with; Idaho allows a GVW of 105,000 lbs but only on National Network (NN) designated highway. If not on a NN highway, the limit is 80,000 in Idaho, Oregon and Montana. Alberta and British Columbia are limited at 87,080 lbs for a 5 axle unit.

While only 14% of the current (2007 data) traffic is tied to the Canadian border crossing from the Spokane region, the lack of a north-south corridor from Canada to points south is a major obstacle. The western plains of Canada (Alberta, Saskatchewan and east) are not served by a rail connection with Oregon, Western Washington and California markets that can handle a significant capacity of movements. The corridors mostly used are truck routes that are either I-5 through Portland or US 97 through Bend, and I-395 and I-84 in the Tri-Cities and continuing through Spokane. The IPH study identified that during interviews with carriers and shippers, the lack of a high-level north-south corridor was one of the most repeated weaknesses in the region's infrastructure.

The study area for the current project also lacks an intermodal container market (double stack service or dedicated intermodal yard). Spokane is not tied to a major port that specializes in container movements. This means that international cargo coming into or out of the region will arrive via containers but virtually all domestic

and Canadian cargoes will arrive via truck. Both UP and BNSF have indicated that on their transcontinental intermodal routes, they will stop to pick up a string of cars. They prefer full unit trains and on a consistent basis. The Port of Quincy's (WA) intermodal yard is a good example of this restriction as it currently stands empty with no traffic.

There is a regional and national need for a coordinated freight strategy, which requires coordination of federal-state and local corridors for freight and application of cost-benefit criteria for projects and infrastructure system improvements. In addition, there is an obvious trend in the greening of the supply chain, through such legislative agendas as Cap & Trade and California's AB 32. Both of these policies target the quantification of the carbon footprint of the supply chain and the modes of transportation within the supply chain.

3. Targeted freight infrastructure projects will generate additional economic opportunity.

The Spokane Region will experience moderate growth in inbound and outbound cargoes for truck and motor freight. With the growth expected in the state, the US west coast ports and the Spokane Region, capacity will become a much larger issue as it affects all of the aforementioned issues for quality of life and economic benefits.

However, capacities for both road and rail are constrained at the present time, even with the downturn in the economy. "Through" traffic for both rail and motor freight will grow faster and greater without local impetus as there is not a viable alternative route. This means that any project for infrastructure improvement is not going to be related to system performance but for regional quality of life issues such as safety, congestion, environmental and security.

As trucks must share the road with passenger and public transit vehicles, the freight industry is often viewed negatively as the impacts from congestion, safety and environmental issues take on a very visible role in the public's view. Thus one of the key capacity projects that is being developed is the North Spokane Corridor and the ability to extend it beyond the current 10.5 miles. This will create economic opportunity for industrial and distribution development in the region.

The key to positioning the region will be to keep cargo moving on all modes, by using freight corridors, grade separations, and environmental controls. Additionally, environmental concerns such as Cap & Trade, GHG emissions and air quality restrictions in California will have a casual effect on supply chains and the routing criteria used by shippers and carriers. These concerns primarily affect the international containerized cargo which directly relates to the number of trains transiting the Spokane area.

4. Multiple demands and plans exist for individual roadways and alignments.

One of the common themes resulting from the stakeholder interviews and within the document review was the need to create a unifying vision and strategic direction for the various planning efforts in the region. Thus far, transportation planning in the region primarily consists of individual mode plans (eg. *Spokane Regional Bike Plan*), or planning efforts that are limited by jurisdiction boundaries (eg. *City of Spokane Neighborhood Planning Assessment*). This has led to conflicting route designations for individual roadways and alignments in the region resulting in potential conflict between modes, such as dangerous intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists, and heavy truck traffic on local streets.

Table 7 shows where potential conflicts may occur based on regional route designations. Using data from existing and planned transportation routes, there is potential for several conflicts. Looking at the table, the extent of potential conflicts varies. There is potential for many minor conflicts, where the extent of conflict is less. The table also shows several major conflicts where the potential conflict between route designations is greater.

Table 7: Potential Conflicts in Route Designations

	Railway Crossing*	Major Ped. Crossing (Class I)*	Class II Bike Route	Class III Bike Route	Transit Route	Freight Route	Local/ N.hood Street	Arterial/ Highway
Railway Crossing*		○				○	○	○
Major Ped. Crossing (Class I)*	○					○		●
Class II Bike Route					○	○		
Class III Bike Route					●	●		●
Transit Route			○	●			○	
Freight Route	○	○	○	●			●	
Local/ N.hood Street	○				○	●		●
Arterial/ Highway	○	●		●				

Key: ○ = Minor Conflict, ● = Major Conflict, * = Intersection

System wide, the number of potential conflicts illustrates the need for improved coordination. The Potential Conflicts Maps (see appendices) show the impacts of divergent route planning throughout the region. Both the existing network and planned improvements have the potential for conflict within urban areas as well as more isolated locations throughout the region. The majority of potential conflicts exists between shared bike routes (Class III) and busy streets, as well as between freight routes and arterial/highways and local streets. There are also extensive potential conflict intersections along SR-290 in the cities of Spokane, Millwood and Liberty Lake.

5. Transportation funding allocations are not always aligned with stated policy.

Thus far, the Spokane region has done a good job of building its roadway system commensurate with increased demands. This success is documented in the Texas Transportation Institute's *2009 Urban Mobility Report*, which shows that overall roadway congestion and delay experienced per driver is lower than other similarly sized cities. Meanwhile, transit and non-motorized modes have been a relatively minor component of the Spokane Region's overall transportation network, although they figure prominently in every transportation policy document.

While the modal plans have project lists, they do not include clear cost estimates or funding sources. Additionally, the City of Spokane's recently passed Complete Streets resolution; plans for a High performance transit corridor in the downtown area; visions for major new corridors (North Spokane); and reconstruction of many of the region's bridges will bring the region's transportation system a new depth but will also require substantial funding. The City of Spokane's 10-Year Street Bond Program has funded some non-motorized infrastructure enhancement as part of broader roadway improvement projects, however there is no stand-alone funding for bicycle, pedestrian or transit projects.

In evaluating the planned expenditures within the 2008 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the balance of expenditures is heavily slanted towards roadway projects. Of the approximately \$7 billion that will be expended on transportation projects between now and 2030, roughly \$5.6 billion is earmarked for the North Spokane Corridor. Of the remaining \$1.4 billion:

- About 69% (\$966 million) of those funds are for roadway projects, including roadway extensions and widening, ITS and signal upgrades, and auto bridges;
- Thirty-two percent (\$445 million) is for transit. Most of these funds (\$320 million) are devoted to the South Valley Corridor light rail project, which is now being considered only as a piece of the High Performance Transit network; and
- About two% (\$21 million) is for exclusive non-motorized improvements, including pedestrian bridges, trails and sidewalk infill.

In addition to plans for a bike path for the North Spokane Corridor, there are other examples of recent multimodal roadway projects in Spokane Valley, South Hill and North Spokane. Yet the current allocation of revenues does not seem to align with the stated policy goal of shifting 15% of travel to non-auto modes. The region does not currently have an adopted policy that roadway improvements should incorporate multimodal elements. This is a policy approach that the region could consider in order to ensure that its roadway investments accommodate travel by all modes.

6. Differences exist between urban and rural transportation priorities.

A review of local plans indicates that smaller community priorities generally contrast with the needs of the region and more urban areas. While regional projects that aim to increase capacity on larger roadways, neighborhoods and smaller communities express a need to slow traffic and control the type of development that occurs along higher traffic routes. While concepts like complete streets and multimodal accommodation are discussed more in the documents focusing on the region’s urban areas, smaller communities like Airway Heights are making substantial investments into revitalizing the US 2 corridor to provide facilities for all modes.

Moreover, while increased highway capacity and new roadway corridors might be more of a priority for suburban residents who have to commute into Downtown, the *University District/Downtown Spokane Transportation Improvement Study* relies on the completion of the North Spokane Corridor to relieve congestion on Downtown streets so that potential road diets and increased mixed use development projects are feasible.

Table 8 summarizes the differences between urban and rural priorities; however, as discussed above, these priorities are highly interrelated.

Table 8: Urban Versus Rural Priorities

Urban	Rural
Complete streets/SmartRoutes	Improved east/west connectivity
Multimodal accommodation	Highway capacity
High performance transit corridor	Highway revitalization

7. Cities and the County sometimes compete for high tax generating uses.

Higher income households have tended to locate in the unincorporated County causing revenue disparities between the cities and the County, which also compete for high-tech employment centers. The lack of a unified regional vision or strategy linking transportation, land use and economic development has tended to facilitate an environment of competition rather than one based upon cooperation. Generally speaking, land is cheaper in the unincorporated areas of the County than in the

cities of Spokane County. Cheaper land tends to attract both home builders and employers, but there are many other factors that are considered when making a decision about location. Developers, families and employers all balance the desire for inexpensive land, reasonable taxes, services and amenities, access to attractive destinations, and the presence or absence of a particular number or type of neighbors.

The cities of Spokane County and the County itself are facing increasing demands for better services while feeling significant fiscal constraints related to a slowing of growth and the economy. A unified effort to attract young talent, families, businesses and visitors should help demonstrate that the region is well-coordinated and proactive. Potential investors are willing to deal with many policies and restrictions, but frequently walk away from uncertainty in the marketplace. The current visioning project must be coordinated with current economic development and growth management efforts to ensure that the cities and County are well coordinated and speaking with a single voice.

8. Local funding capacity limits the region's competitiveness for state and federal funding.

Almost all planning efforts have pointed to a concern over available funding resources. Most federal grants require a local funding match in order to receive grants. If local funding cannot be approved then federal funding will be lost. Proposed changes for national funding of infrastructure projects lead to uncertainty about the application process and could mean new or different requirements.

Key challenges to transportation funding in the Spokane region include:

- Changes federal policy that creates uncertainty about federal transportation funding;
- Increasing the role of local match funding, which means that without raising local revenue the region will have difficulty receiving federal funds;
- Competition from jurisdictions in other regions that make it more difficult to receive transportation funds; and
- A shortfall in budgets for local governments due to decreased sales tax revenues caused by the recession.

9. Stakeholders believe that stronger regional leadership is needed to forge agreement for implementing the unified transportation vision.

The lack of cooperation and communication between jurisdictions is a major concern of area residents, and is a common theme found through the document review and stakeholder interviews. The need for clear communication, inclusive

planning and coordination is the key to addressing these challenges. Overall, interview participants communicated the desire to create a unified voice as a result of the visioning process.

Results from the interviews and document review indicate a need for a unifying vision to bring the community together and provide a forum that will encourage open, honest dialogue of what the community wants and how that should be achieved. The term “education” was also addressed by stakeholders, with the belief expressed that the visioning process will raise awareness and knowledge, both of which allow for the creation of a solid plan. Additionally, several participants believe that a vision will help identify gaps in jurisdictional cooperation. The vision will encourage leadership, and will provide an opportunity for leaders to think regionally and across borders.

V. NEXT STEPS

The next step in the process will focus on implementing the visioning process with staff, officials, key stakeholders and the general public. This phase includes a comprehensive outreach and engagement effort centered on a series of community roundtables, workshops and intercept events. Supplementing this effort will be a coordinated media campaign and online presence that will leverage social media to help drive turnout and participation.

The outcome of these efforts will ultimately establish core values and vision elements, as well as explore potential futures and trade-offs associated with various transportation infrastructure and programs, economic strategies, growth patterns, and the environment.