

Transportation Commission

The Transportation Commission provides policies to shape and direct decisions about the future of Washington's transportation systems. The state transportation policy summary can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/commission/ReportsPlans/StateTranspPolicy.htm>

The policy addresses several issue areas, one of which is environmental protection and energy conservation. The environmental section of the policy states the following three principles:

- Minimize, and avoid when practical, air, water, and noise pollution; energy usage; use of hazardous materials; flood impacts; and impacts on wetlands and heritage resources from transportation activities.
- When practical, and consistent with other priorities, protect, restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitats and wetlands impacted by transportation facilities.
- Coordinate and take the lead in partnering with other agencies in environmental issues affecting transportation to reduce costs and increase effectiveness.

Executive Order Number E 1018.00

In this order, dated September 26, 2001, the Secretary of Transportation committed the department:

- To implement and maintain an environmental management system that embraces all the department's program functions.
- To establish, maintain and make available to the public appropriate performance indicators of the department's exercise of its environmental stewardship, and to consistently review these indicators as a basis to improve the department's performance.
- To comply with all environmental laws and regulations applicable to our business and activities.
- To assure that employees of the department receive training appropriate to their functions concerning the department's environmental responsibilities.

- To communicate to contractors, designers, consultants, and other participants in the department's work the management practices and compliance requirements established to further the aims of this Policy Statement [[Executive Order # E1018.00](#)].
- To encourage employees and all other citizens to communicate with the department about ways to increase the effectiveness of departmental practices supporting its mission of environmental stewardship.
- To make every reasonable effort to also protect the cultural and historic resources of the state.

Planning

State Highway System Plan

The State Highway System Plan is the state highway portion of the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP). The WTP was developed, and is updated, by the Washington State Transportation Commission in response to [RCW 47.06](#), as well as to state law and federal laws, such as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21), and the Clean Air Act.

The WTP specifically defines service objectives and proposes strategies for maintaining, preserving, and improving state highways. This plan forms the basis for development of future state transportation programs, projects, and budgets.

Statewide Roadside Plans

Roadside Classification Plan M-25-31, (1996)

Provides a statewide roadside classification process and guides roadside treatment for the management of safe, environmentally beneficial, and sustainable roadsides. The text of the [Roadside Classification Plan](#) can be found at the following website:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/cae/design/roadside/rcp.htm>

Vegetation Management, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), 1993

Produced in response to proposed anti-pesticide legislation, this document incited a large response from the public with regard to the use of chemical herbicides. As a result, the Department has shifted its roadside management emphasis toward locally based, long-term planning Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM). In addition, the EIS recommended development and use of Roadside Management Plans for each of the area maintenance offices. The plans provide the

means for documenting site-specific long term goals and determining the planning and evaluation necessary to achieve those goals.

Region and Route-Specific Roadside Plans

The following planning tools are available in some, but not all, areas.

Corridor Management Plans

WSDOT defines transportation corridors as “accessible, passable routes between points encompassing a traveler’s perspective and experience of the available resources while using a transportation mode (roadway/railway, trail/path, or water route).

A *corridor management plan* is a document composed of maps and written material stating a community’s vision and goals for a scenic byway corridor. This document inventories and assesses the resources of the corridor, and outlines specific strategies and actions to preserve and enhance them.

Roadside Master Plans

Guides roadside related, long-term design and management activities on Washington State highway roadsides. Based on the [Roadside Classification Plan](#), Roadside Master Plans are route-specific conceptual plans prepared for a route, or portion of a route, where conditions require coordination beyond that provided under the [Roadside Classification Plan](#).

Route Development Plans (RDP)

A long-range plan for a specific highway corridor that describes existing highway conditions and local land use plans. Recommends improvements and goals for future improvements and transportation services. The plan is developed through cooperative efforts with affected city, county and regional agencies.

Route Development Plans are route-specific and may include a Roadside Master Plan where roadside planning concerns are identified.

Policies

Environmental

Water Quality Policy

Minimize and control levels of harmful pollutants generated by transportation activities. Mandates preventing them from entering surface and groundwater resources.

Fish and Wildlife Habitat Protection Policy

Protect, restore, and enhance, where feasible, fish and wildlife habitat and populations within transportation corridors.

Noise Abatement Policy

Minimize noise impacts from transportation systems and facilities.

Wetlands Conservation Policy

Support federal and state “no net loss” policies by protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural wetlands adversely impacted by transportation related construction, maintenance, and operations activities. (Department Directive 31-12)

Use of Hazardous Substances Policy

- Reduce and eliminate, where practical, the reliance of the state’s transportation system on environmentally hazardous substance utilized in the construction and maintenance of transportation facilities.
- Ensure the adoption of best management practices in handling hazardous substances for transportation purposes.

Visual Quality

Visual Quality Policy

Protect and enhance the visual quality of Washington State’s transportation corridors and facilities.

For more information on visual impact assessment on Interstate highways see this website:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/EESC/design/Roadside/#Viu>

Utilities Accommodation Policy

The objective of this policy is to prescribe the means by which utility installations, when located in a manner not interfering with the free and safe flow of traffic or otherwise impairing the highway of its visual quality, may be accommodated within state highway rights of way.

Heritage Resources

State Transportation Policy on Heritage Resources

WSDOT has an interest in preserving, enhancing, and interpreting heritage resources to:

- Provide appropriate access to those resources that have been identified by national, tribal, state, and local resource management entities.

- Provide directional and interpretive signing along the transportation system. Consider directional signing on the transportation system to access cultural, natural, and historical resources only when resources are identified as significant in regional transportation plans or where there are clear economic benefits.
- Assist, where appropriate, with preserving and enhancing heritage resources that are within transportation corridors or are an integral part of the traveling experience along a corridor. Identify significant proposed transportation projects relating to the preservation, enhancement, or interpretation of resources on the transportation system in regional transportation plans.
- Avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts of transportation projects on heritage resources.
- Cooperate in promoting heritage resources to aid tourism and achieve economic benefits.
- Commit state funding to leverage funding opportunities from other sources for transportation projects that preserve, enhance, and interpret heritage resources within transportation corridors.

Directives

- Adopt a Highway Litter Control Program (D 51-50)
- Safety Rest Areas and Roadside Parks (D 55-96)
- Protection of Wetlands (D 31-12)

References

- *Construction Manual* (M 41-01)
- *Design Manual* (M 22-01)
- *Environmental Manual* (M 31-11)
- *Highway Runoff Manual* (M 31-16)
- *Hydraulics Manual* (M 23-03)
- *Maintenance Manual* (M 51-01)
- *Plans Preparation Manual* (M 22-31)
- *Roadside Classification Plan* (M 25-31)
- *Safety Manual* (M 75-01)
- *Scenic Byway Logo Signing Guidelines* (M 3003.00)
- *Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge and Municipal Work* (M 41-10)

- *Transportation Commission Policy Catalog* found on the web at:
<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/commission/ReportsPlans/Catalog.pdf>
- *Utilities Manual* (M 22-87)
- *Water Quality Manual* (M 22-15)
- *Defining Washington's Heritage Corridors Program*, WSDOT, 1995