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- Puget Sound Regional Council
- The Evergreen State College
- Thurston Economic Development Council
- Timberland Regional Library

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Policy Board

FROM: Katrina Van Every, Senior Planner

DATE: February 5, 2020

SUBJECT: Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – WSDOT Facilities Chapter

PURPOSE

To brief the TPB on the addition of a new chapter to the RTP concerning WSDOT transportation facilities in Thurston County.

Summary:

- The RTP is due to be updated in July 2020.
- A new addition to the Plan will be a chapter discussing Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) facilities such as I-5, US 12, SR 507, etc.
- State facilities are a key component to the region’s transportation system and including this chapter in the RTP can help to better align regional and state transportation solutions.

REQUESTED ACTION

This is for discussion; staff seeks any questions and feedback you might have on the state facilities chapter.

87:bm



Marc Daily
Executive Director

2424 Heritage Court SW
 Suite A
 Olympia, WA 98502-6031
 360-956-7575
 360-956-7815 Fax
 www.trpc.org

BACKGROUND

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is required to be updated every four years; the last update (not including amendments) occurred in 2016. Included in this update is a new chapter discussing state facilities in Thurston County. The chapter is intended to better align regional and state transportation solutions as well as balance our communities' transportation, land use, and economic needs. It is being drafted by Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff in partnership with TRPC staff.

ISSUES

The new chapter discusses Practical Solutions, WSDOT facilities in Thurston County; maintaining a state of good repair, and work on Interstate 5 (I-5).

Practical Solutions. WSDOT uses Practical Solutions to plan, design, build, operate, and maintain state transportation facilities. The purpose of utilizing practical solutions is to enable flexible, sustainable, and cost-efficient transportation investment decisions with a focus on transportation system performance.

State Facilities. Thurston County has seven state facilities: I-5, US 101, US 12, SR 8, SR 121, SR 507, and SR 510. Like our local roads, state facilities are impacted by increased user demand and system capacity challenges. Factors increasing demand on state facilities include population growth, a sparse arterial network, concurrency exemptions, capacity limitations, local access on highways (ex: US 12 in Rochester) and signal timing issues, and pass-through traffic.

Maintaining a State of Good Repair. WSDOT has a core responsibility to preserve the structural integrity of the state highway system, despite funding shortfalls – \$13.2 million in 2018 alone.

Interstate 5 (I-5). I-5 carries more than 10 million tons of freight each year. Maintaining and preserving this vital route is critical to both the State's and the Thurston Region's economic well-being. Traffic along the I-5 corridor is rapidly increasing, creating delays and impacting the route's reliability – especially at the state Capitol exits, the Martin Way exit, and the Nisqually River.

Recent I-5 planning efforts include a near-term study (complete) and the Mid- and Long-Range Strategies (nearly complete). The next step in the I-5 planning process is a Planning and Environmental Linkages Report for the recommended strategies coming out of the mid- and long-range strategies study.

CONCLUSION

Please contact Katrina Van Every via email at vaneveryk@trpc.org or by phone at 360.741.2514 with comments, questions, or other feedback.