

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

SELECTED KEY MESSAGES

1. **Protect the Core Functions.** Assuming a *stable* revenue and cost scenario, the financial analysis indicates that there are likely enough resources to cover the *core functions* of maintaining and operating the County transportation system. Given this, the County will need to be selective in the number and magnitude of projects that focus on improving the infrastructure.
2. **Consider Ultimate Capacity.** In the past twenty years this County has been able to build a number of projects that significantly increased the capacity of certain roadways. In the future, there is a need to review, assess, and potentially act on the concept of limiting the expansion of capacity of certain roadways due to cost, impacts on the built and natural environment, and the need to align with state policy.
3. **Transportation Demand Management.** Single occupant vehicle travel is the most common travel mode. The key challenge will be to develop meaningful ways to change how we shop, do errands, and go to work. This Element proposes to focus on specific areas of need (continue the JBLM focused TDM effort) and work with other jurisdictions and agencies to form more carpooling, vanpooling, and accessing transit stations. It is noted in this Element that TDM may have a very functional role should Ultimate Capacity be implemented in this County.
4. **Nonmotorized: A More Determined Program.** Most people agree that nonmotorized facilities are important to have in their community. There are many nominated projects but the costs are high and the prospects for funding are less than stellar. It is suggested that a *programmatic* approach be tested that would identify partners and use seed money to *draw down* more grant dollars. These efforts could focus on schools and activity centers that have a *critical mass* of usage and interaction with communities.

STEPS TO CONSIDER

1. **Understand Technology and Leverage it.** The County uses Global Positioning technologies, software, and communication to conduct standard field operations and uses *asset management* to optimize county resources and save money. There is a need to stay cognizant of technologies that may make carpooling, vanpooling, or fixed route transit more practical.
2. **Continue working on all levels with other jurisdictions and agencies.** Pierce County works with many jurisdictions and agencies on transportation issues at both the policy and technical level. While much of this interaction may be agency to agency, Pierce County is active at the PSRC policy boards and their technical committees. This interaction has been of benefit both regionally and locally as there is the opportunity to align planning and program objectives. These conversations will become important as

PSRC begins to prepare for the next update of Vision. Also, the County needs to work with the local and regional transit agencies to develop successful Transportation Demand Management Programs. While there are some residents who now fall outside of the Pierce Transit Benefit Area, many are still served by that agency. Pierce County should be active in the monitoring and development of services associated with Sound Transit. ST provides significant *long haul* service to residents on a countywide basis.

METRICS

It is suggested that the County periodically review a number of indicators that relate to key policy, planning, and program objectives. These may be aggregated into a report.

The following is a selected list of measurable *products and services* and behaviors that may be considered. It should be noted that some of measures or data are already being collected and monitored by various agencies while some information may only be periodically available.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- a. Transit Ridership- Detailed by line
- b. Transit Route Miles, Service Miles
- c. Mode Share
- d. Formation of carpools/vanpools

ROADWAYS

- a. Roadway Congestion- Reported now by County and WSDOT
- b. Accidents
- c. Condition of roadways
- d. Safety projects initiated/completed
- e. Projects completed that provide interconnectivity

FINANCE

- a. Transit fares
- b. Parking fees in key locations
- c. Costs and Revenue trends for transportation – example : What are trends for roadway and sidewalk construction relative to factors such as inflation

NONMOTORIZED

- a. Nonmotorized projects as part of roadway projects
- b. Nonmotorized projects that are independent of roadway projects i.e., new corridors, reconstruction of existing roads

- a. Trends in residential development and employment construction. In order to develop the most efficient services, it is helpful to have a critical mass of demand, or higher density. It may be useful to monitor the short and long term densities as they relate to TDM and nonmotorized Transportation. It is fairly certain that until the residential densities increase in the County that fixed route transit serving neighborhoods will not be significantly more viable.

The above metrics are suggested as a starting point for conversation about transportation planning in the County. There are many more candidate measures or metrics that may be considered. The discussion of metrics is an appropriate ending point for this planning element. It is important to periodically look in the past to determine how to move forward.

MEETING VEHICLE MILES TRAVELLED (VMT) POLICY

Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) is a key transportation planning metric. VMT is one indicator of the magnitude or extent that a population uses the transportation system. It is acknowledged that the proposed Transportation Element does not reduce the per capita Vehicle Miles Travelled on the Pierce County roads between 2010 and 2030. This increase in VMT may not be consistent with current regional and state policy that call for overall reductions in VMT per capita.

While VMT is an important indicator of the use of the transportation system, it should not be the only one in which Pierce County should use as a baseline for assessing the transportation system nor for determining future policy and programs. There are a number of difficulties in using VMT in the Pierce County transportation planning setting as a metric for the effectiveness of County planning actions. It is suggested that the following factors make VMT a less than ideal measure for measuring the level of effort and effectiveness of Pierce County's efforts to reduce future VMT:

1. The Roadway Network Is Not Entirely Our Own

This County's analysis of current and future roadway conditions clearly indicates that most of the state arterials and freeways are now congested. These levels of congestion increase in 2030 and will spill over onto the local (County) roadway network. While we will continue to work with the state on our respective planning efforts, we do not have programming and operational authority on these facilities.

2. The Roadway Demand is Not Entirely Our Own

Pierce County users are the primary users of our local roadway network. However, the VMT for specific roadway facilities is affected also by residents in other jurisdictions who may find the "path of least resistance" to their destination through County roads.

3. The Supply of Transit Services Is Not Our Own

One important tool in reducing VMT is through encouraging and developing alternative modes of transportation for residents. Transit can play an important role in reducing the VMT on the roadway network with adequate coverage and frequencies. However, Pierce Transit and Sound Transit own the primary transit systems in this area. Pierce County will continue to look for opportunities to coordinate usage of their services by County residents but does not make operational decisions for the systems.

MEETING THE INTENT OF REDUCING VMT

While this current Transportation Element does not reduce VMT in 2030, Pierce County proposes the following strategies that would work toward reducing VMT:

1. Creating Additional Employment Opportunities within the County

The Census data from past years indicate that there is a trend for Pierce County residents to live further from their workplace. The increased distance between home and employment contributes would likely contribute to increased aggregate VMT. The land use/economic development component of this Comprehensive Plan calls for the continued realization of the Frederickson Manufacturing/ Industrial Center. Bringing employment closer to Pierce County residents will decrease the latter's VMT.

2. Both the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Nonmotorized Strategies Reduce VMT

Pierce County has actively worked to develop its Commute Trip Reduction in compliance with state law and regional policy. Pierce County will explore additional opportunities to reduce VMT through increased usage of transit and rideshare. Complimenting these efforts will be a greater emphasis on delivering standalone nonmotorized improvements. It is notable that the Finance Plan calls for \$20 million to be targeted toward standalone pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

3. Ultimate Capacity

The proposed designation of Ultimate Capacity roadways supports the examination and possible implementation of additional TDM and nonmotorized improvements. As

discussed earlier, the County will investigate and apply where appropriate, the use of TDM and the development of nonmotorized facilities in corridors designated as Ultimate Capacity roadways.

DEVELOPING MULTIMODAL LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

It is noted that regional policy calls for level of service standards to be focused on movement of people and goods rather than just that of vehicles. There is also a call for concurrency programs to address multimodal transportation options in each jurisdiction's programs. This element does not yet offer such a multimodal level of service standard. The development of such a standard will be considered in the course of implementing Ultimate Capacity and also in revising the Traffic Impact Fee Program. Such a standard would be useful in understanding the effectiveness of implementing certain nonmotorized and TDM strategies that would respond to the address the roadway congestion of certain facilities.