

APPENDIX 6

guidance for plan amendment

and capacity investment decisions

Plan Amendment Process

Destination 2030 is a long-range, 30-year planning document. It is prepared in a dynamic environment involving continuing change in regional population, housing, employment, land-use, and technology. Change in any environment is inevitable. Revenue sources may become available or may be discontinued. Cost assumptions may need to be adjusted. Therefore, periodic amendments to *Destination 2030* will be necessary.

Destination 2030 is prepared in accordance with state and federal requirements. Federal statutes require that the plan be reviewed every three years for effectiveness and viability, and that a new plan be prepared or the existing plan be updated.

The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require that regional transportation plans be prepared in conformity with the State Implementation Plan for air quality planning and monitoring purposes. A new conformity statement must be prepared whenever *Destination 2030* (the region's metropolitan transportation plan) or the short-range Transportation Improvement Program is amended. If amendments to the Plan or Program do not affect air quality, a new conformity statement may not be required. However, this is not clearly stated in federal statutes, and it may be necessary to prepare a conformity statement no matter how minor the amendment to the Plan or Program may be.

Recognizing the need for amendments, the Regional Council is committing to a major amendment of *Destination 2030* every three years to coincide with federal requirements, including preparation of a conformity statement. In addition, depending on the scope and magnitude of the major amendment, the Regional Council may conduct environmental review as required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), in the form of a new Environmental Impact Statement, an Amendment or Addendum to the original Environmental Impact Statement, or a Declaration of Non Significance (DNS).

Minor amendments that clearly have no impact on regional air quality will be processed on an as-needed basis if Executive Board review of the proposed amendment results in a Declaration of Non Significance under SEPA.

Washington State legislation for regional transportation planning organizations requires that RTPOs review their regional transportation plans every two years, and forward the adopted plan, along with documentation of the biennial review, to the Washington State Department of Transportation (Chapter 47.80, Revised Code of Washington). To address both federal and state requirements for reviewing and updating the region's metropolitan transportation plan, the Puget Sound Regional Council will report to WSDOT on *Destination 2030* every two years. This reporting will then provide the basis for identifying issues to be addressed in the three-year update of *Destination 2030* required by federal law.

Guidance for Major Capacity Investments

Major capacity investments are needed on a number of regional facilities. Reaching agreement upon the type, design, and implementation of significant capacity investments is a challenging and important process. Where regional capacity needs have been identified, but where specific project or program details are not yet determined, the following framework establishes guidance for final investment decisions.

A CORRIDOR APPROACH

Transportation facilities do not exist in isolation, but are part of larger regional and state systems. Just as these corridors do not sit in geographic isolation, they also constitute elements of many different regional transportation modal systems. Multimodal analysis of corridor level investments is an essential part of making sure the regional system needs are fully identified. The long-term performance of these facilities is also heavily dependant upon surrounding land uses. As a result, evaluating transportation investments within the context of an entire transportation corridor may lead to a more comprehensive approach to problem solving. The objective of corridor-based analysis is to identify an effective mix of strategies, selected from a full range of capacity and system management approaches, that can demonstrate measurable results and that are consistent with the objectives of local and regional growth plans.

IDENTIFYING, MINIMIZING, AND MITIGATING IMPACTS

Destination 2030 incorporates previous Regional Council policy commitment to pursue and help achieve reasonable mitigation of impacts on communities resulting from major transportation facility and service investments/improvements that are either regionally significant or of statewide significance. Such projects should seek reasonable mitigation for impacts upon local communities that may result from project development. Implementation strategies to achieve this objective may include, but may not be limited to, priority programming of transportation investments that could help mitigate such community impacts, and pursuing state or federal legislative support for funding to help mitigate such community impacts.

MAJOR PROJECT RECORDS OF AGREEMENTS

Corridor level records of agreement should be encouraged, where appropriate, for large major corridor projects, whether they be freeway, transit or ferry. Records of agreement would document actions that will help successfully implement the preferred alternative that resulted from the environmental and public review process. Such agreements should be prepared by project sponsor leads at the conclusion of environmental decisions on selected major corridor projects, and should be regionally coordinated to help assure effective follow-up in regional performance monitoring of plan implementation activity.

EVALUATING BENEFITS AND COSTS

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations are required (RCW 47.80.030) to apply least-cost planning analysis to alternative transportation investment strategies. Within the Washington Administrative Code (WAC 468-86-030 and WAC 468-86-080) least-cost planning is defined as "a process of comparing direct and indirect costs of demand and supply options to meet transportation goals and/or policies where the intent of the process is to identify the most cost-effective mix of options." Least-cost planning attempts to consider all of the reasonably identifiable resource costs associated with alternative investments, and to provide relevant information as input to regional transportation plan investment selection and prioritization.

Destination 2030 utilized least-cost planning analysis as input to regional decision processes. In addition, all major "Candidate" projects (defined further below) must conduct and document an enhanced benefit-cost analysis (appropriate to the scale and complexity of the study) that considers reasonable full public and private costs of transportation in its environmental analysis leading to a decision on a preferred alternative or option. In combination, regional least-cost analysis at the programmatic level, and project or corridor level benefit-cost analysis constitute a least cost planning methodology for regional plan refinement and development.

FINANCING PLAN

Major transportation projects need to demonstrate that they can be reasonably funded. Large projects often require funding that spans many years and multiple funding sources. A project level financing plan describes the manner by which the entire project may be completed, ensuring that initial funding will eventually result in a fully implemented project. Consistent with the recommendations from the Transportation Pricing Task Force major investments in new capacity should evaluate a self-financing approach. Understanding the viability of self-financing through user fees is a reasonable test of whether benefits from investments are on the same scale as costs, even if self-financing is not pursued for other policy reasons.

CANDIDATE/APPROVED PROJECT STATUS

Destination 2030 includes a process to classify regional projects and programs as either "Candidate" or "Approved." Candidate major investments are projects or program components occurring on regionally significance facilities (on the Metropolitan Transportation System), but which have one or more planning requirements that must be satisfactorily addressed before they are eligible to be formally approved in the region's metropolitan transportation plan for implementation. All of the projects contained in Appendix 9 (Projects on MTS Facilities) have satisfied the Candidate Project Criteria (see below). A Candidate project must satisfactorily address Approved Project Criteria before it can be redesignated as Approved in *Destination 2030*, which then enables a project to be eligible for implementation. Projects designated in *Destination 2030* as Approved are then eligible to be included in the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for full project action/implementation phases such as final design, right-of-way acquisition and construction. Reclassifying a Candidate project as Approved occurs as a result of a majority vote of the Regional Council's Executive Board.

The Regional Council will respect the many complex requirements and due public processes that local, regional and state agencies must go through to enable their project to achieve Approved project status in the adopted regional transportation plan. Therefore, the Regional Council will only revisit or reconsider Approved status if a major project sponsor finds that significant conditions have conclusively changed, and which cause the project sponsor to be incapable of continuing implementation in the general manner by which it was originally approved.

Candidate Projects: This category of projects/programs identifies those transportation investments being proposed to respond to some identified transportation problem or deficiency where the specific design character or nature of the project or program solution is yet to be resolved. The development of a final resolution of how a project or program will be developed is achieved through formal state or federal planning and environmental review processes. Projects included in *Destination 2030* Appendix 9, unless they are designated as Approved, are only eligible for TIP funding to conduct planning, environmental or preliminary engineering phases which lead towards resolution of how it will be proposed to be developed in a final public decision process.

Candidate Project Criteria

The following three criteria have been met by all projects or programs included in *Destination 2030* Appendix 9. Any new project proposals must satisfy these Candidate Project Criteria in order to be included in future amendments to *Destination 2030*, and included in Appendix 9:

1. The proposed project/program is part of the Metropolitan Transportation System and falls under the definition of a regionally significant project/program as noted in state law under RCW 47.80.030.
2. The proposed project/program has been endorsed by its sponsor and forwarded to the Regional Council for inclusion in the *Destination 2030*.
3. The proposed project/program has been derived from one of the following types of comprehensive planning processes:
 - An approved local comprehensive plan developed under the state Growth Management Act (where a city or county is the project/program sponsor).
 - An approved public transit short- or long-range plan (where a transit agency/operator is the project/program sponsor).
 - WSDOT's approved State Transportation System Plan (where the state is the project/program sponsor).
 - An approved capital improvement plan or program of another agency not noted above (e.g., where a port or special purpose transportation agency is the project/program sponsor).
 - A regional planning process conducted as part of the region's unified planning work program that supports implementation of the region's policies for transportation, development and/or economic strategies (where the Regional Council is the sponsor).

Approved Projects: This category of projects/programs identifies regionally significant transportation investment proposals that have met all of the above-noted criteria, have completed their formal planning, environmental review and decision process, and have been found consistent with *Destination 2030* and/or its policies.

Approved Project Criteria

For projects to be designated as Approved, all of the following applicable criteria must all be met:

- The sponsoring agency has documented completion of appropriate public and environmental review processes and has made a decision on the final nature, character, components or design of the given project or program.
- Any other additionally required planning process requirements or conditions have been completed by the sponsor to conclude its candidate status.
- The proposed project/program, if involving measurable air quality impacts, has been successfully tested in the region's transportation and air quality models for systemwide mobility and found to comply with state and federal air quality conformity requirements.

- The proposed project/program has been found to be consistent with the policies of VISION 2020 and *Destination 2030*.
- The project or program has conducted and documented an enhanced benefit-cost analysis (appropriate to the scale and complexity of the study) that considers reasonable full public and private costs.
- A specific funding source has been identified and proposed for the project or program (naming at least the specific type of revenue source(s) and whether such revenues are projected to be coming from local, regional, state, federal, or private sources).

The Regional Council will develop administrative procedures to evaluate the manner in which projects satisfy the above criteria.