



Southwest Washington  
Regional Transportation Council  
January 2024



# SKAMANIA COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN



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### Member Jurisdictions

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City of Stevenson  
City of North Bonneville  
Port of Skamania  
WSDOT SW Region

### Non-Voting Participants

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District  
Port of Cascade Locks  
Regional Transportation Council



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Introduction .....	10
Chapter 2. Regional Transportation Planning Context.....	14
Chapter 3. Regional Profile and Trends .....	20
Chapter 4. The Regional Roadway System.....	26
Chapter 5. System Challenges and Needs .....	29
Chapter 6. Regional Transportation Strategies and Improvements .....	36
Chapter 7. Financial Outlook Revenues .....	40
Chapter 8. Implementation and Performance Monitoring.....	43
Appendix A – Level of Service Descriptions.....	48
Appendix B – Funding Sources Overview .....	49
Appendix C – Revised Code of Washington Title 47 Compliance “Checklist” .....	52

# ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

<b>B/C</b>	Benefit to Cost	<b>PHFS</b>	Primary Highway Freight System
<b>BEA</b>	U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis	<b>PTBA</b>	Public Transportation Benefit Area
<b>BIL</b>	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law	<b>RAP</b>	Rural Arterial Program (CRAB Funding Program)
<b>BNSF</b>	Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway	<b>RWC</b>	Revised Code of Washington
<b>BMS</b>	Bridge Management System	<b>RID</b>	Road Improvement District
<b>CAPP</b>	County Arterial Preservation Program (CRAB Grant Program)	<b>RTC</b>	Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council
<b>CCA</b>	Climate Commitment Act	<b>RTP</b>	Regional Transportation Plan
<b>CDBG</b>	Community Development Block Grant (HUD Grant Program)	<b>RCO</b>	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
<b>CERB</b>	Community Economic Revitalization Board	<b>RTPO</b>	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
<b>CRAB</b>	County Road Administration Board	<b>SCAP</b>	Small City Arterial Program (TIB Grant Program)
<b>DEM</b>	Department of Emergency Management	<b>SCPPP</b>	Small City Pavement Preservation Program (TIB Grant Program)
<b>EV</b>	Electric Vehicle	<b>SHB</b>	Senate House Bill
<b>FAST</b>	2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act	<b>SR</b>	State Route
<b>FFC</b>	Federal Functional Classification	<b>STBG</b>	Surface Transportation Block Grant (Federal Funding Program)
<b>FHWA</b>	Federal Highway Administration	<b>STP</b>	Surface Transportation Program
<b>FMSIB</b>	Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board	<b>TA</b>	Transportation Alternatives Program
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas	<b>TDM</b>	Transportation Demand Management
<b>GMA</b>	Growth Management Act	<b>TIB</b>	Transportation Improvement Board
<b>HSP</b>	State Highway System Plan	<b>TIP</b>	Transportation Improvement Program
<b>HSIP</b>	Highway Safety Improvement Program (Federal Funding Program)	<b>TPC</b>	Transportation Policy Committee
<b>HSS</b>	Highways of Statewide Significance	<b>TSM</b>	Transportation System Management
<b>HUD</b>	Department of Housing and Urban Development	<b>WSDOT</b>	Washington State Department of Transportation
<b>INFRA</b>	Infrastructure for Rebuilding America	<b>WSTC</b>	Washington State Transportation Commission
<b>LOS</b>	Level of Service	<b>WTP</b>	Washington Transportation Plan
<b>MCEDD</b>	Mid-Columbia Economic Development District		
<b>MPO</b>	Metropolitan Planning Organization		
<b>NHS</b>	National Highway System (Federal Funding Program)		
<b>NHPP</b>	National Highway Performance Program (Federal Funding Program)		
<b>OFM</b>	Washington State's Office of Financial Management		
<b>NHPP</b>	National Highway Performance Program (Federal Funding Program)		
<b>NHS</b>	National Highway System		
<b>PDX</b>	Portland International Airport		





# SKAMANIA COUNTY RTP2024 SUMMARY

## Skamania County

Situated along the Columbia River in south central Washington, Skamania County is home to 12,170 residents spread over 1,683 square miles. Stevenson, the county seat, lies approximately 45 miles east of Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington (Figure 1-1).



Figure 0-1. Skamania County

## The Regional Transportation System Today

The regional transportation system includes roadways, ranging from state routes to forest service roads, train tracks, shipping lanes and public transportation.

Skamania County residents and visitors depend on an efficient, safe transportation system for access to opportunities like work and school, their daily needs, and recreation. While a successful transportation system contributes to quality of life and drives economic development, aging and inefficient transportation facilities can inhibit the safe movement of people and goods and diminish the region's prosperity.

## Looking Ahead to 2045

Over the past decade the county's population has grown substantially faster than both the Washington and U.S. averages<sup>1</sup> for rural communities, and it's projected to continue to grow.

This growth isn't without challenges. The future population is expected to skew older and include more people living with disabilities. Future demand and travel trends are expected to diversify, with higher demand for transit and multimodal options.

Aging infrastructure, lack of existing multimodal options, transportation cost burdens, and funding continue to be concerns for businesses and residents alike. To ensure a robust, flexible transportation system in years to come, it is important to maintain the facilities the county has while enhancing the multimodal transportation network of transit, walking, and bicycling more viable options.

## A Regional Transportation Plan: The Road to 2045

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is Skamania County's long-range transportation planning document. It assesses the transportation system today, expresses the community's vision and goals, and lays out how these goals will be achieved over the next 20 years.

The focus of this plan is to promote a transportation network that supports future economic growth, improves access to services and employment, and enhances quality of life for residents and visitors.

Chapters 1 through 5 of the RTP provide a wealth of information about Skamania County and its transportation system. They describe the people, communities, and industries the transportation system supports; the key transportation facilities and services that make up the system today; and gaps in the system, both today and projected as the region's population and economy grow.

In its last few chapters, the RTP shifts from the what to the how. Chapters 6 through 8 describe the financial resources available to the County to support the transportation system; strategies and solutions to meet the projected needs; and how projects will be implemented and monitored to ensure they are performing as required. A constrained project list raises the most pressing needs to top priority for available funds.



# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

*This chapter defines what a regional transportation plan is and introduces the vision, purpose, and goals of the plan. A summary of how the update was completed is outlined in the chapter, as well.*

## The Regional Transportation Plan

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is Skamania County’s long-range transportation planning document. The RTP assesses the transportation system today, establishes the community’s long-term vision and goals, and lays out how they will be achieved.

This update includes the latest available data, plans, and policies to guide in its development. Using 2045 as the horizon year, the RTP aims to meet the region’s transportation needs over the next 20 years by outlining future transportation system needs and implementing a transportation planning process that meets them. Importantly, the RTP identifies transportation projects and improvements necessary to maintain mobility and safety throughout the region.

Since the Skamania County RTP was first adopted in 1995, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Commission’s (RTC) Skamania County Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) has led the update of this document nine times. Each update is a coordinated effort between local jurisdictions and member agencies to enhance transportation access, coordinate transportation resources, and promote key transportation projects. The update process is guided by Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 47, Chapter 47.80.

Consistent with the State’s Regional Transportation Planning Program Planning Standards, the RTP regional transportation system has been designated to include:

1. All state transportation facilities and services (including state highways).
2. All local principal arterials (the definition of rural principal arterials may be the same as used for federal classification or be regionally determined).
3. All other transportation facilities and services—including airports, transit services, and facilities; roadways; rail facilities; marine transportation facilities, etc.—that the RTPO considers necessary to complete the regional plan.
4. Any transportation facility or service that is regionally needed or impacts places in the plan, as determined by the RTPO.



## Vision, Purpose, and Goals

The Skamania County RTP is guided by the vision, purpose, and goals listed below:

### Vision





The RTP is a collective effort to address the development of a safe regional transportation system that will support planned economic growth and maintain the region’s rural quality of life.

### Purpose

The RTP identifies future regional transportation system needs and outlines transportation plans and improvements necessary to maintain adequate mobility and safety within and throughout the Skamania County region. The region must plan for a future regional transportation system that adequately serves the population, employment, and visitor growth projected for Skamania County. The RTP’s goals, objectives, and policies will guide the various jurisdictions and agencies involved in the planning and programming of transportation projects throughout Skamania County.

### Goals

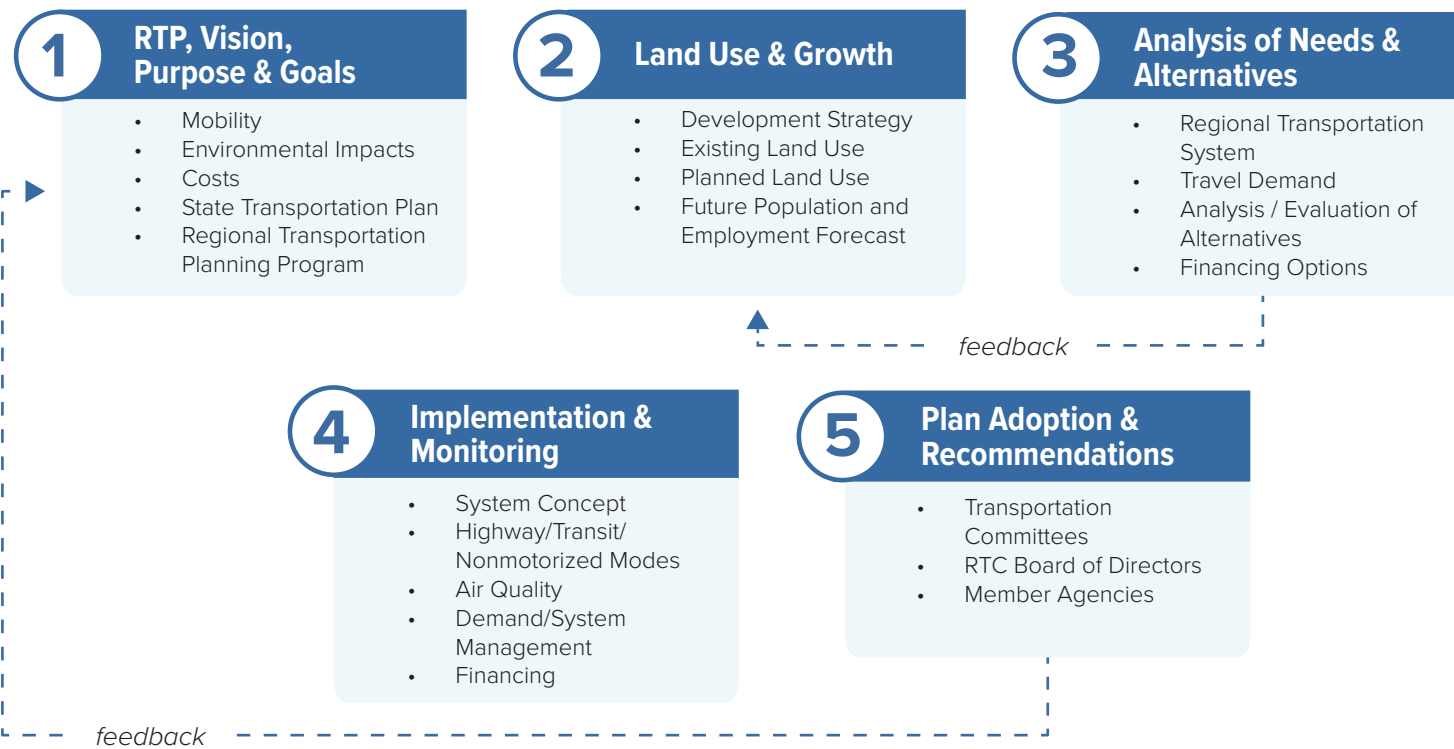
The following goals were used to guide the development of the Skamania County RTP:

 <p><b>Economic Vitality:</b> Promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.</p>	 <p><b>Environment:</b> Enhance Washington’s quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.</p>
 <p><b>Preservation:</b> Maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.</p>	 <p><b>Stewardship:</b> Continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.</p>
 <p><b>Safety:</b> Provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.</p>	 <p><b>Vision and Values:</b> Provide for viable and livable local communities.</p>
 <p><b>Mobility:</b> Improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington State.</p>	 <p><b>Management and Operations:</b> Maximize efficient management and operation of the transportation system.</p>

## The Update Process

This section outlines the responsibilities and the requirements guiding the development of an RTP work plan that all jurisdictions within the county can implement. Figure 1-1 illustrates this cross-jurisdictional, five-step work plan. Step one entails understanding what an RTP is and defining the vision, purpose, and goals that guide the creation of the work plan. Steps two and three help to better evaluate existing conditions and forecast for the future. This feeds into the recommendations and adoption of the plan in the fourth step, all of which is also influenced by community engagement to gather feedback. Step five implements the project and program recommendations, while also defining performance measures to ensure that the RTP is meeting the vision, purpose, and goals it is intended to meet.

Figure 1-1. RTP Work Plan



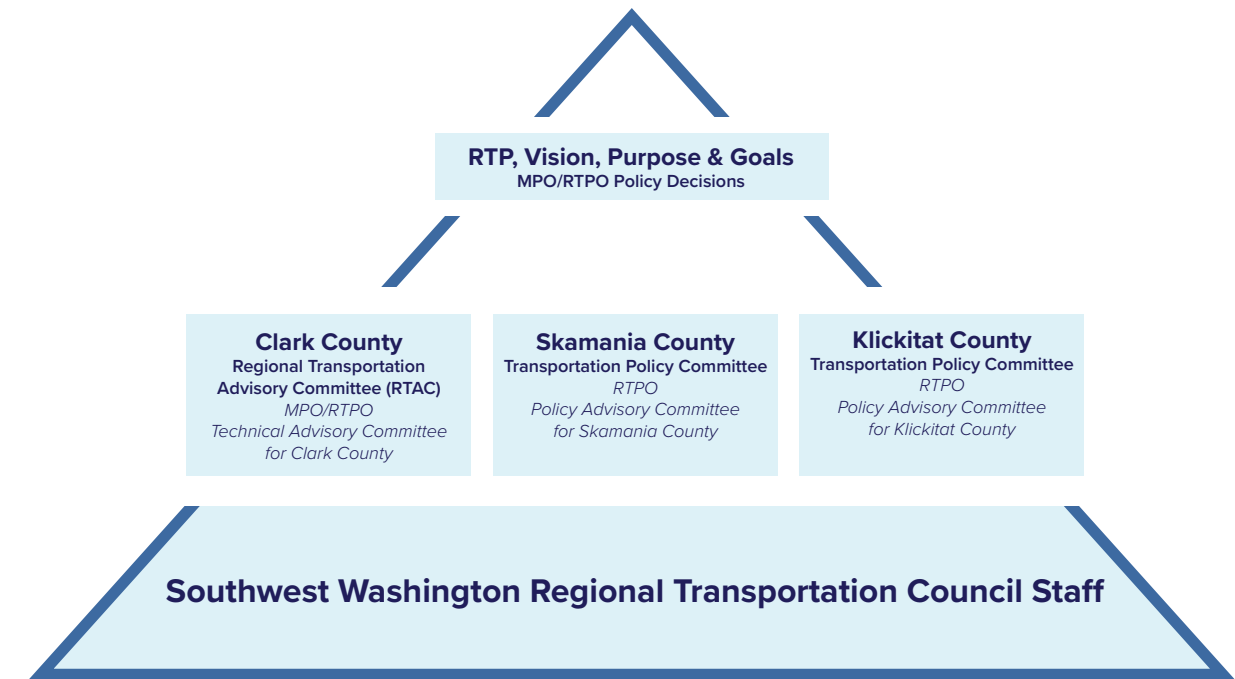
## Who Is Involved

The RTP Update development is supported by the RTC, which serves as the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Skamania County. RTC assumed responsibility for the RTPO region—consisting of Clark County, Skamania County, and Klickitat County—on July 1, 1992.

Consistent with the 1990 GMA legislation, a three-county RTC Board of Directors was established to serve the RTPO region. Individual county committees and boards also play a part in the regional transportation decision-making. The Skamania County TPC continues to guide the county’s regional transportation policy. The role of and representation on the RTC Board of Directors and individual county policy committees is described in the Bylaws of Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (last amended December 2017) and Interlocal Agreement for Establishment of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council. This regional transportation committee structure is outlined in Figure 1-2. The Skamania County TPC was set up to provide a nexus for Skamania County regional transportation issues and policies to inform the RTOP’s policy decisions for the region. It is composed of representatives of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Skamania County, City Stevenson, City of North Bonneville, and the Port of Skamania.

The Skamania County TPC carries out the regional transportation planning activities within Skamania County. Other agency organizations—including the Columbia River Gorge Commission, U.S.D.A Forest Service, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, and the Port of Cascade Locks—are welcome to participate as nonvoting members of the committee.

Figure 1-2. Agency Structure



## Public Involvement in Regional Transportation Planning Process

RTC has an adopted public participation plan outlining the public involvement efforts in the development of regional transportation plans and programs. All RTC Board meetings and the Skamania County TPC meetings are open to the public. Public involvement efforts build on those carried out at the local level in development of local plans and programming of transportation projects.

Amendments to the RTP are presented to both the Skamania County TPC and the RTC Board of Directors for their consideration and adoption. Transportation issues, studies, plans, and programs are outlined and reported on RTC’s web site at <http://www.rtc.wa.gov>.

## Bistate Coordination

Skamania County’s proximity and ease of access to northern Oregon has resulted in frequent bistate travel and an intertwined economy. Within the region there are two bridges that span the Columbia River into Oregon: The Bridge of the Gods and the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge. Each are important to the movement of people and goods within the region and, as discussed later in this Plan, each need replacement or repair.

Oregon and Washington jurisdictions in the region have a history of coordinating their transportation and land-use plans. These planning efforts ensure that regionally significant aspects of the transportation system are considered within a bistate context. The travel patterns of Skamania residents will be discussed further in Chapter 2.



RTC representatives participate in bistate studies and transportation opportunities with Oregon, such as the Gorge TransLink group, which was established to develop a seamless transit network within the Mid-Columbia River Gorge area with links to Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington. RTC welcomes participation from Oregon public agency representatives in the Skamania County regional transportation planning process.

# CHAPTER 2. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING CONTEXT

*This chapter outlines statewide, regional, and local transportation planning documents applicable to Skamania County's regional planning context.*

## Legislative Context

The Regional Transportation Planning Program was created in 1990 through Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA). The program established a formal mechanism for local governments and the state of Washington to coordinate transportation planning for regional transportation facilities. The GMA also authorized the creation of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) by units of local government. As previously noted, RTC is the designated RTPO for the three-county area of Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties.

In 1994, additional state legislation clarified the duties of the RTPO outlined in the GMA and further defined RTPO planning standards. The duties of the RTPO, as outlined in the GMA and SHB 1928, include the development of an RTP to include a regional transportation strategy, identification of existing and planned facilities and programs, level of service standards, a financial plan, assessment of regional development patterns, and capital investment using a regional transportation approach. The RTP must be reviewed at least every two years to ensure it is consistent with applicable plans and policies.

With the oversight of the Washington State Legislature, the regional transportation planning process should:

- Guide the improvement of the regional transportation system
- Use regionally consistent technical methods and data
- Consider environmental impacts
- Ensure early and continuous public involvement
- Be consistent with the local comprehensive planning process
- Be an ongoing process
- Incorporate multimodal planning activities
- Address major capacity expansion and operational improvements to the regional transportation system
- Be a partnership—including federal, state, and local governments; special districts; private sector; the general public; and others—during conception, technical analysis, policy development, and decision-making

This RTP achieves all applicable elements of the Title 47 RCW requirements. These requirements are highlighted in the body of the document and are outlined in Appendix C.

## Washington Transportation Plan: 2040 and Beyond

The Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) is the statewide long-range transportation planning document. The WTP is updated every four years to ensure that the policy framework is relevant and maintains consistency between local and regional levels of government. The WTP provides the tools for Washington residents and businesses to incorporate statewide policy and support their own mobility needs. The current WTP, *2040 and Beyond*, was completed by the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) in 2018.

2040 and Beyond is based on recommendations from the legislature and six statewide goals: economic vitality, preservation, safety, mobility, environment, and stewardship. To maintain consistency with the WTP, the six statewide goals have been incorporated as core goals for the Skamania County RTP. The Skamania County TPC developed two additional goals: vision and values and management and operations. The RTP goals are listed in full in the previous chapter.

### Statewide Plans

WSDOT has completed a variety of statewide plans, including plans for aviation, bicyclists and pedestrians, ferries, freight, rail, public transportation, and ultra-high-speed ground transportation. These statewide plans aim to guide decision-making and investment in Washington. While some plans focus on one mode of transportation, others are multimodal, reflecting the many ways people travel. Current statewide plans are documented [online](#).

### Move Ahead Washington

In 2022 Governor Jay Inslee signed into law *Move Ahead Washington*, a 16-year spending package aimed at adding support to existing programs and leading in the development of new ones. The spending package highlighted the following priorities:

- Preserving public infrastructure (roads, bridges, ferries, and sidewalks)
- Reducing carbon emissions
- Expanding safe, accessible, affordable options to get around
- Addressing the harm caused by past transportation policies

Each of these policies reflect and reaffirm the goals of *2040 and Beyond*.

### Climate Commitment Act

In 2021 the Washington Legislature passed the Climate Commitment Act (CCA). This sweeping bill updated the State's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction limits set in 2008 to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. CCA works alongside complementary climate policies to help Washington achieve its commitment to reduce GHG emissions by 45 percent, 70 percent, and 95 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, 2040, and 2050, respectively.

Enshrined in law through Senate Bill 5126 (2021), the CCA caps and reduces GHG emissions from Washington's largest emitting sources and industries, allowing businesses to find the most effective path to lower carbon emission. Vehicles, which are the largest contributor to GHG emissions in Washington, will play a large role in meeting these emission goals.

### Target Zero

Improving safety for all modes of transportation is critical to improving quality of life and improving access for all citizens of the region. Washington State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Target Zero, establishes a statewide policy of zero fatalities and zero disabling injury collisions by 2030. Target Zero helps assess safety needs statewide, encouraging and promoting good safety practices in the design and operation of the transportation system, as well as promoting safety by system users. Target Zero sets statewide priorities, provides a resource for potential strategies, and monitors outcomes at a statewide level





## Complete Streets

“Complete streets” describes an approach to transportation planning, design, and construction that considers the needs of all potential users. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Section 11206, defines Complete Streets standards or policies as those which “ensure the safe and adequate accommodation of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation users, children, older individuals, individuals with disabilities, motorists, and freight vehicles.”

A complete street is safe and feels safe for everyone using it. In practice, it is not always possible to accommodate all modes on a single street due to right-of-way constraints; so a practical approach to Complete Streets also focuses broadly on building Complete Networks to provide connectivity for different modes of travel. To reduce reliance on automobiles, Skamania County needs to develop adequate sidewalks and bikeways to access activity centers and allow people to safely and easily get to their destinations. Developing Complete Streets and active transportation infrastructure is a strategy that can maximize the existing transportation system’s capacity. Local jurisdictions within Skamania County are focusing on nonmotorized projects to provide a balanced transportation system that safely accommodates all users

In 2022, the Washington State Legislature passed the Move Ahead Washington package (Senate Bill 5974) that added the Complete Streets requirement to state law (RCW 47.04.035). Complete Streets is a comprehensive approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining safe streets for all users. All state transportation projects that began the design phase on or after July 1, 2022 and that are \$500,000 or more are screened to determine if Complete Streets applies. Screening criteria includes projects within incorporated cities, population centers, and tribal lands with active transportation gaps that have been identified in a WSDOT or local plan.

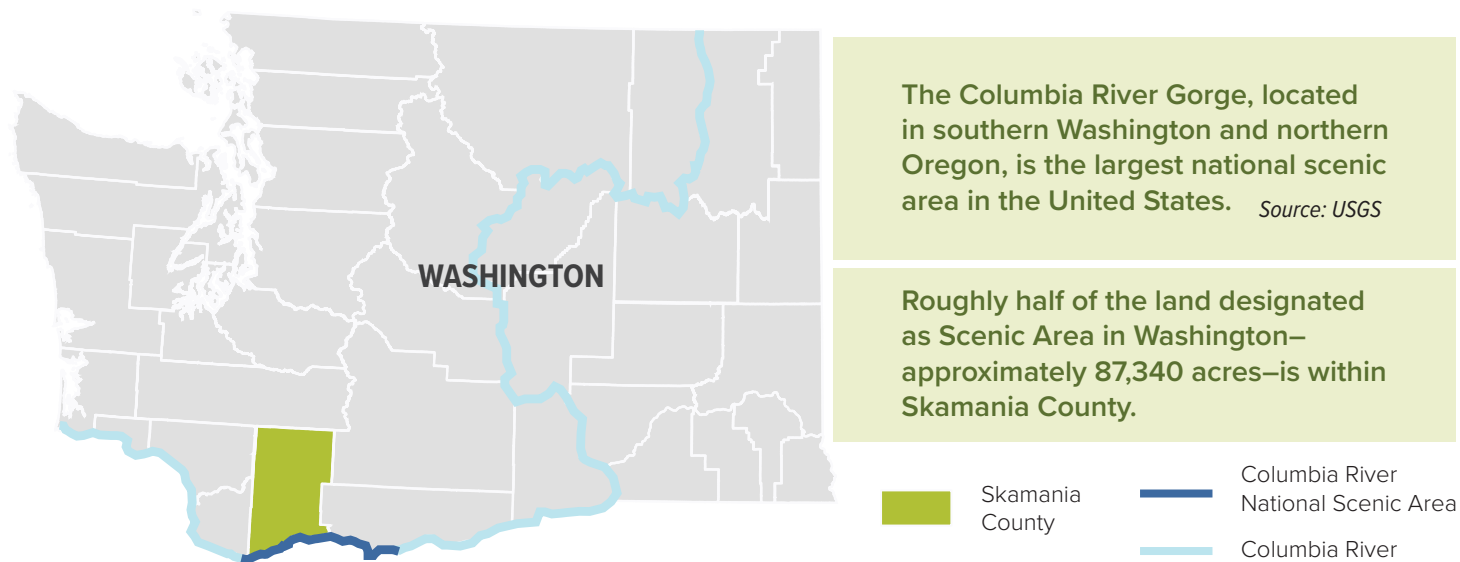
## HEAL Act

The Healthy Environment for All Act (HEAL Act) was passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2021 and will apply to all WSDOT transportation projects and other significant agency actions greater than \$15 million that initiated efforts after July 1, 2023 (Senate Bill 5489). Environmental justice in Washington State, as provided in the HEAL Act addresses disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm (RCW 70A.02.010).

## Gorge Region Guiding Documents

### Columbia River National Scenic Area Act

The Columbia River Gorge was declared a National Scenic Area in 1986 through an effort to protect and enhance resources important to the region. The Scenic Area stretches 85 miles from west to east along the Columbia River and is between 1 and 4 miles wide, spanning the ridge lines in Washington and Oregon. Roughly half of the land designated as Scenic Area in Washington—approximately 87,340 acres—is within Skamania County.

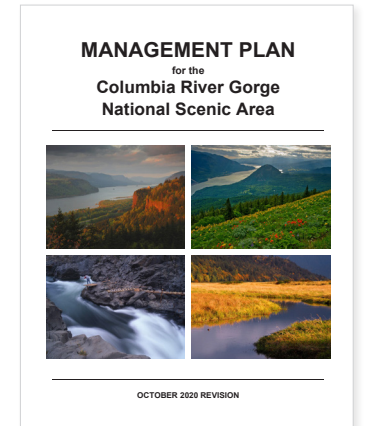


The Columbia River National Scenic Area encompasses many of the region’s premier outdoor recreation sites. As the popularity of these destinations grows, new transportation facilities and programs have been made available to meet the needs of the traveling public. These initiatives support the RTP’s recreation goals and objectives while protecting scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The region has embraced alternative transportation modes that improve the traveling public’s safety and enjoyment. These modes will also help alleviate future demand for motor vehicle capacity on the county’s roadways.

## Gorge Management Plan

The Scenic Area Act authorized Oregon and Washington to enter into a bistate agreement that created the Columbia River Gorge Commission. The Scenic Area Act delegates authority to the Gorge Commission and the US Forest Service to adopt and implement a Gorge Management Plan that regulates land use in the National Scenic Area (excluding urban areas).

The Gorge Commission writes the rules for the General Management Areas and oversees land use and development on private and state lands, while the Forest Service writes the rules for the Special Management Areas and oversees all federal activities. Subject to oversight by the Gorge Commission and the Forest Service, Gorge counties, like Skamania County, are authorized to adopt and enforce land-use ordinances that implement the Gorge Management Plan.



The Gorge Management Plan includes direction for future land use in the Scenic Area. This land-use direction influences the regional transportation system and travel patterns. While there are provisions for some new commercial and rural residential development in existing rural communities in Skamania County, new industrial development in the Scenic Area can only be located in the urban areas.

## Local Planning Efforts

### Comprehensive Plans

Comprehensive plans are used by local jurisdictions to plan for their future growth and development. These plans provide a process for anticipating and coordinating land development to achieve orderly outcomes. In Washington the state delegates planning authority to local governments, as laid out in RCW 36.70A, 35.63, and 35A.63. Comprehensive plans are required to include a land-use element showing the general distribution and location of land for various uses, as well as a circulation element showing the street system and transportation routes. Skamania County, the City of Stevenson, and the City of North Bonneville have each adopted comprehensive plans. The transportation goals of each city’s comprehensive plan are provided below.

### Skamania County Comprehensive Plan

The County’s Comprehensive Plan was adopted in July 2007 as the official public document guiding policy decisions related to the physical, social and economic growth of the county. It provides a framework for the future growth, development, and public decision-making over the a 20-year period. The overall vision statement of Skamania County is: Skamania County is strongly committed to protecting our rural character and natural resource-based industries while allowing for planned future development that is balanced with the protection of critical resources and ecologically sensitive areas, while preserving the community’s high quality of life.

Transportation element goals and policies captured in the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Goal T.1: Encourage an efficient multi-modal transportation network that is based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
- Goal T.2: Continue the priority of increasingly safety of the Skamania County rural 2-lane road system. The majority of the Public Works Department’s future efforts will be to reduce the accident rate of Skamania County.
- 

Subarea Plans for Carson, Swift, and West End each provide additional goals and policies, including transportation, for that area.

## City of Stevenson Comprehensive Plan

In 2022 the City of Stevenson completed its comprehensive plan update. Among the goals identified by the City, the following are aimed at meeting future demands on the transportation system:

- Goal 7.1: Develop a long-range transportation plan and incorporate its projects into the Capital Facilities Plan.
- Goal 7.2: Establish and manage the transportation system in a manner which contributes to community appearance and livability, recognizes and respects the characteristics of natural features, and minimizes the effects on abutting land uses.
- Goal 7.3: Develop a transportation system that provides all citizens with transportation choices and alternatives.
- Goal 7.4: Develop a plan for safe and convenient alternate forms of transportation, such as bikeways, walkways, and pathways and incorporate its projects into the Capital Facilities Plan
- Goal 7.5: Periodically review and revise standards for public and private roads.
- Goal 7.6: Reduce the effects of through traffic in the downtown commercial area while minimizing any negative impacts on local businesses.
- Goal 7.7: Establish a tree conservation and management program for City rights-of-way. This program should provide for replacement, planting, preservation and maintenance of trees.
- Goal 7.8: Expand the railroad quiet zone to include the crossings at the Stevenson Cemetery and the Co-Ply mill site.
- Goal 7.9: Facilitate and support rail service for future transportation and commerce needs.
- Goal 7.10: Manage on-street parking to permit the safe and efficient operation of the transportation system.
- Goal 7.11: Review and revise parking policies to facilitate efficient short-term parking and minimize off-street parking requirements.
- Goal 7.12: Provide wayfinding signage to aid traveler navigation and guide visitors to Stevenson attractions and amenities, especially east- and west-bound travelers on I-84.

## City of North Bonneville Comprehensive Plan

In 2018 the City of North Bonneville completed its urban area comprehensive land use plan update. As an express goal of the plan all land use development will consider and provide for the safe and orderly flow of pedestrian, bicyclist and motorist traffic. The city also incorporates an adopted Transportation Plan and Complete Streets Policy to further this goal. A range of transportation modes of travel are emphasized in the policies contained within the plan, which are divided among roadways, residential streets, pathways, and parking.

## SR 14 Corridor Management Plan

State Route 14 (SR 14) is a two-lane rural highway that functions as the primary access route to communities in Washington State along the Columbia River. WSDOT developed the SR 14 Corridor Management Plan in 1997 to guide highway improvement projects through the Gorge.

## SR 14 and Dog Mountain Congestion and Safety Study

This more recent study of SR 14, published in 2022, examines a 80-mile stretch of the highway and popular Dog Mountain Trailhead. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) partnered with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) on this study.





# CHAPTER 3. REGIONAL PROFILE & TRENDS

This chapter identifies key demographics and trends important to transportation planning in Skamania County.

## Regional Snapshot

Skamania County is dominated by timberland, 90 percent of which is within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Much of the non-timber land is concentrated in the southern strip along the Columbia River, and falls under the protection of the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area. As a result of these factors, the county has a small population, job base and number of housing units. Even still, population, housing, and employment in Skamania County have all grown modestly over the past three decades. Figure 3-1 illustrates population, housing unit, and employment growth since 1990.

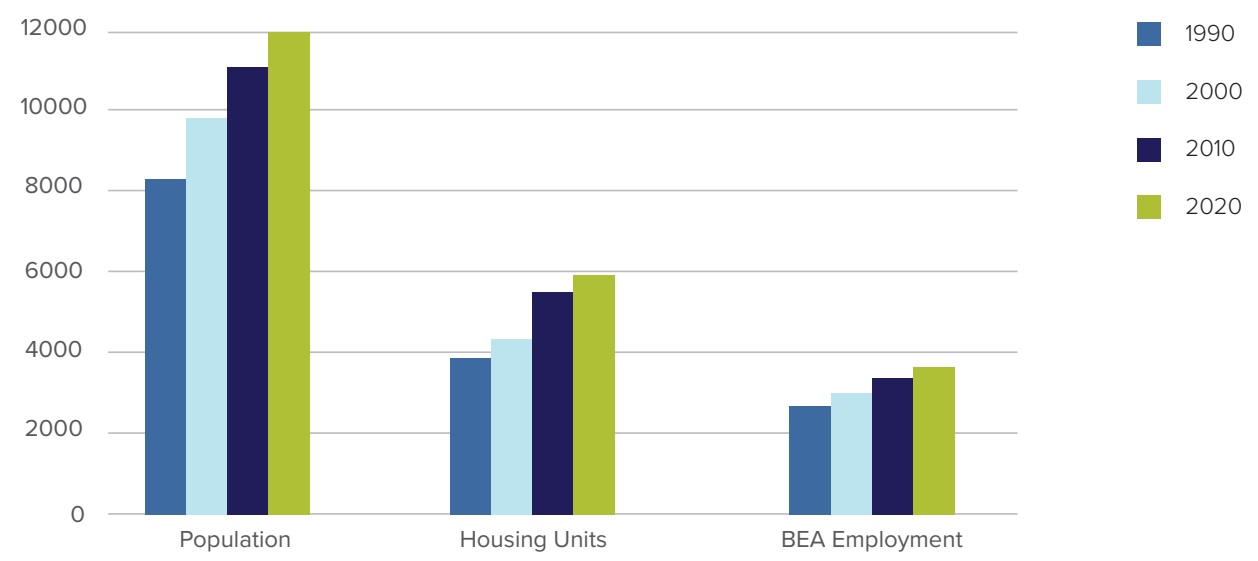


Figure 3-1. Population, Housing Unit, and Employment Growth in Skamania County

<sup>22</sup>This document uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau; and the State of Washington's Office of Financial Management (OFM) and Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). BEA employment includes all wage and salaried jobs, as well as proprietors' jobs, including sole proprietor, self-employed, and farm employment.

## Population

Between 1990 and 2020, the County's population increased by 45 percent, from 8,289 to 12,036 residents. Over the past decade the county has grown 0.8 percent on average per year, which is faster than the average for rural counties in the state (0.7 percent) and for the nation (0.6 percent) but slower than the state overall (1.4 percent).

## Employment

Skamania County's economy was dramatically changed thirty years ago when logging was curtailed on National Forest lands. Stevenson Co-Ply, the county's largest employer, was shuttered and 10 percent of the county's job base disappeared overnight. Just a year after the closure, in 1992, the Skamania Lodge was opened and ushered in a new era of employment centered around tourism and recreation.



## Housing and Population Density

Reflecting the rural nature of the region, housing in Skamania County is predominantly suburban and single-family. Between 1990 and 2020, the number of housing units grew by 2,174, or roughly 72 new units each year.

Typical of a rural area, Skamania County's population density is 7 people per square mile. The highest population densities are in Stevenson and North Bonneville.

And while employment and population are concentrated in the City of North Bonneville and Stevenson, people primarily live in unincorporated Skamania County. Table 3-1, below, illustrates the population density for the incorporated cities and county, generally.

Household size is one of the most significant demographic factors that influences land use and demand for transportation services. Between 1970 and 2010, there was a trend toward smaller household size in Skamania County due to more single-person households and smaller family size. The average number of persons per housing unit is now 2.52, slightly below the state-wide average.

Location	2021 Population	Population per Square Mile
Skamania County	11,690	7
North Bonneville	970	384
Stevenson	1,525	792

Table 3-1. Skamania County Population Density

## Elderly Population

Approximately 20.6 percent of Skamania County population are aged 65 and over. This compares to 16.0 percent of the U.S. population and 15.4 percent of the Washington State population that are aged 65 and over. While the elderly population is distributed across the county, the highest concentrations are in North Bonneville and Stevenson. Figure 3-2 demonstrate the 2016-2020 Census for counties or American Community Survey demographic data for cities of populations aged 65 and over.

## Population Living Below Poverty Line

10.8 percent of Skamania County residents live below the poverty line, which is less than the national (12.8 percent) and greater than the Washington state (10.2) average. Recent Census Bureau data reveal that median household income in Skamania County has increased considerably. The median for the five years spanning 2015 to 2019 was \$65,181, a significant increase over the 2010 to 2014 average of \$54,467. Both the median household income and median family income (\$82,682) were above the national average. Table 3-2 demonstrates how the population living below the poverty level has changed over the last 20 years.

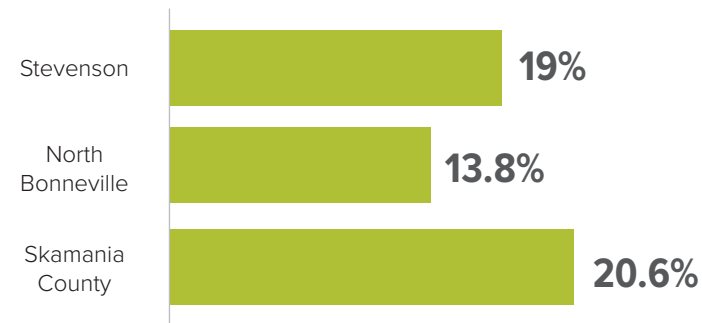


Figure 3-2. Skamania County Population Aged 65 and Over

### Households Without A Vehicle

Approximately 3.7 percent of Skamania County households do not have a vehicle. This is lower than the U.S. average of 8.5 percent and the Washington State average of 6.9 percent. Given that most residents live in unincorporated areas, while service services are concentrated in cities, Skamania County is highly car-oriented. This is reflected in the fact that very few households have no vehicle. According to the 2020 Census, the highest concentration of households without a vehicle are located in Stevenson.

### Employment Travel Trends

The transition from timber to tourism over the past three decades was accompanied by a shift in commuting trends more broadly. While the number of employed residents grew by about 15 percent during the 1990s, the number of those commuting to jobs outside the county grew by almost 50 percent. In 2020, 74 percent of the county's earned income came from jobs outside of the county, which is the highest in the state. This is reflected in the county workflow, Table 3-3, which shows the majority of Skamania County residents that work outside of county limits. Still, Skamania County residents fill the majority of jobs in the county, as shown in Table 3-3. Technology that supports remote work has become cheaper and more readily available. Skamania County residents that work out of the county may commute there by bus, car, or simply connect remotely.

Location	1999	2007-2011	2012-2016	2016-2020
U.S	9.2%	14.3%	15.1%	12.8%
Washington	10.6%	12.5%	12.7%	10.2%
Skamania County	13.1%	11.1%	14.3%	10.8%

Table 3-2. Population Below Poverty Line



County	Count	Percentage
Skamania County	2,455	47%
Clark County, WA	1,037	20%
Multnomah Co., OR	533	10%
Hood River Co., OR	481	9%
Klickitat Co., WA	421	8%
Other Oregon	199	4%
Other Washington	34	0.7%

County	Count	Percentage
Skamania County	2,455	85%
Clark County, WA	263	9%
Klickitat County, WA	56	2%
Hood River Co., OR	39	1.3%
Other Washington	62	2%

Table 3-3. Skamania Workflow by County

### Change in Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes along SR 14 in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area vary by season, with summer traffic volumes significantly higher than winter traffic volumes. WSDOT compiles traffic count data along state routes. Change in traffic volumes at selected locations along SR 14 are listed in Figure 3-3. Skamania County saw an overall decrease in traffic volume between 2019 and 2022. Although they have not rebounded after the COVID-19 pandemic, they have not exceeded pre-pandemic levels.

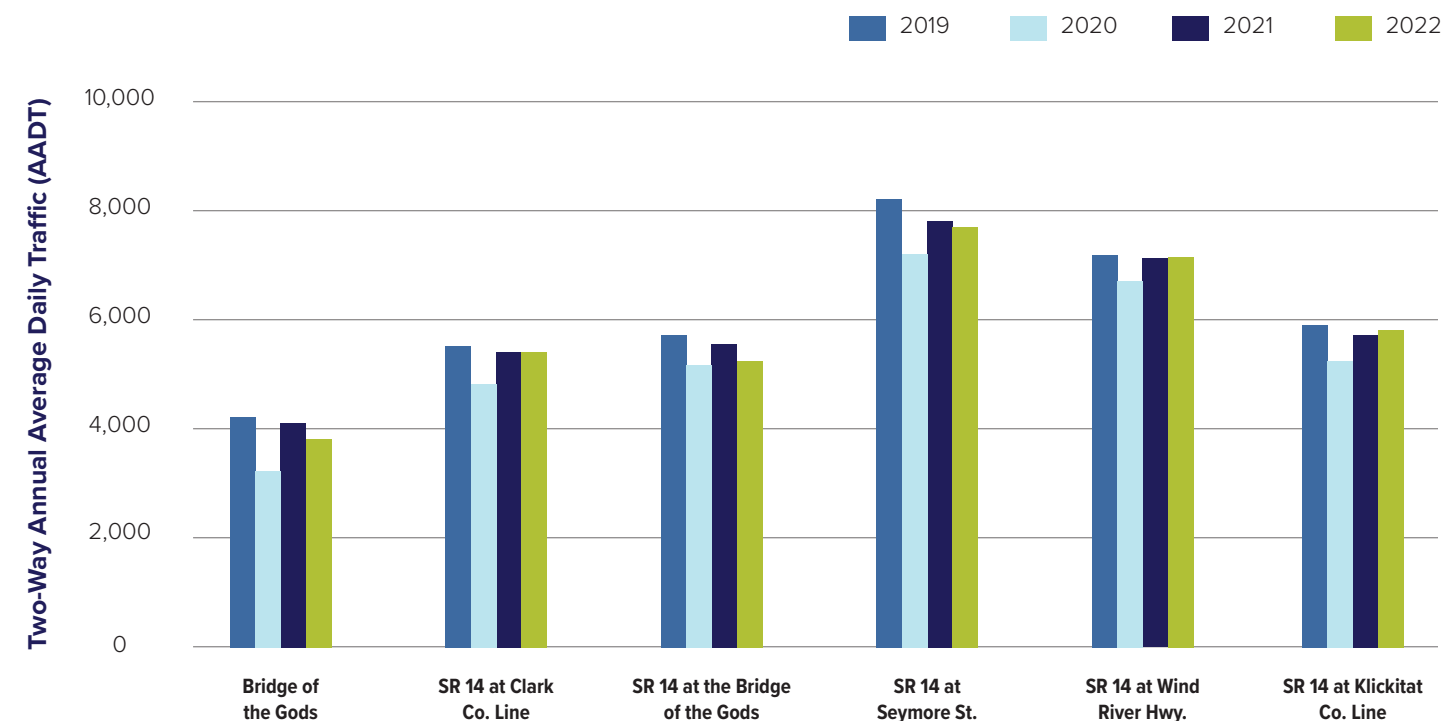
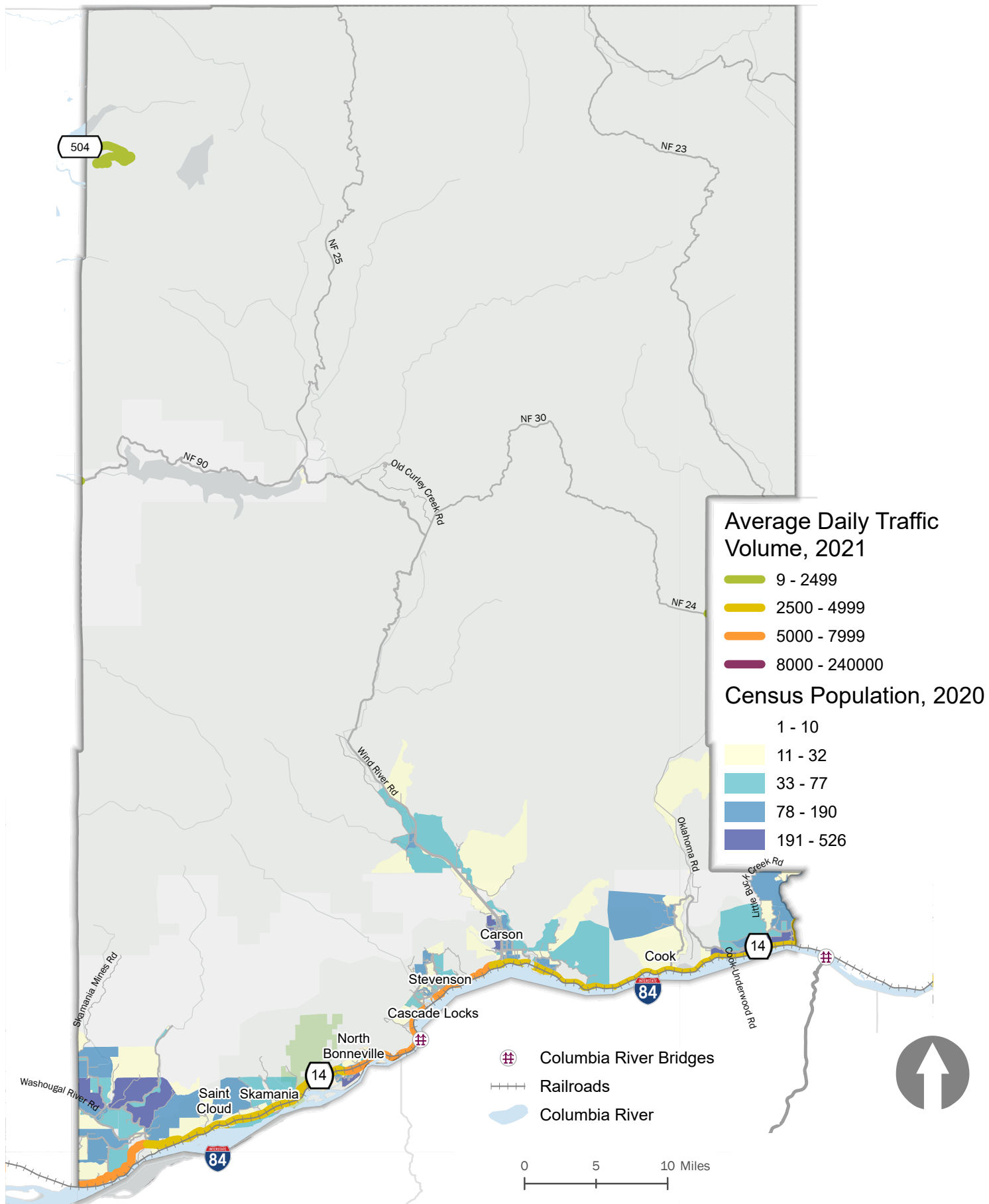


Figure 3-3. Traffic Volumes by Location



Figure 3-4. AADT

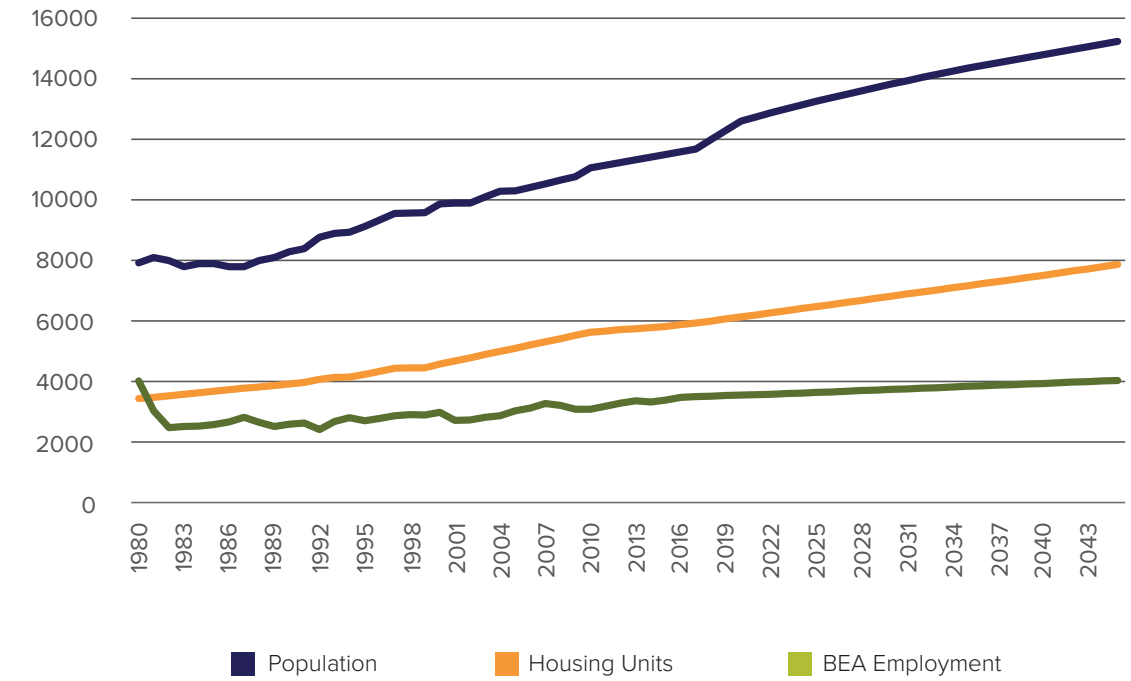


## Population and Employment Forecast

By 2045 Skamania County is projected to have a population of 15,235 residents and 7,869 housing units. This means that 1,732 new housing units will be added between 2020 and 2045. The county is projected to have 4,040 jobs, 480 more than today (see Figure 3-5).

The county population is projected to grow at a modest pace. Important challenges for the future include securing funding for modernizing the interstate bridge across the Columbia River and expanding broadband access. In a post-COVID future Skamania County will likely see slow but steady employment growth as tourism fully recovers. As population has increased, historically, there has been an increase in the number of vehicles registered in Skamania County. This trend is likely to continue into the future, adding to the demands put on the transportation system.

Figure 3-5. Population, Housing & Employment - Forecast



<sup>22</sup>These numbers were provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), which develops population forecasts for all counties in the state. For the purpose of the 2023 RTP update, the 2017 medium-high forecast has been used. Housing and employment forecasts for Skamania County were developed by RTC based on OFM population forecasts and historic trends.



# CHAPTER 4. THE REGIONAL ROADWAY SYSTEM

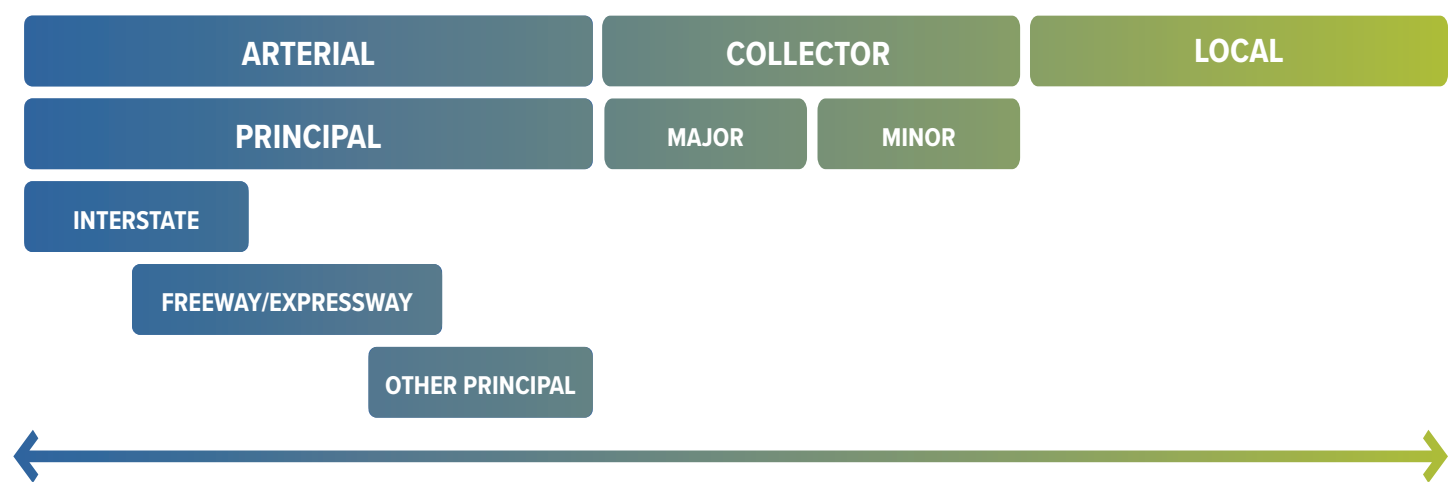
This chapter identifies key demographics and trends important to transportation planning in Skamania County.

Roadways across Skamania County support a wide range of services essential to the operation and enjoyment of the region. Buses, personal vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists all navigate it. Freight and commercial vehicles also depend on the regional roadway network to import and export goods from the county. This chapter provides an overview of roadway functional classification and designation.

## Regional Roadway Functional Classification

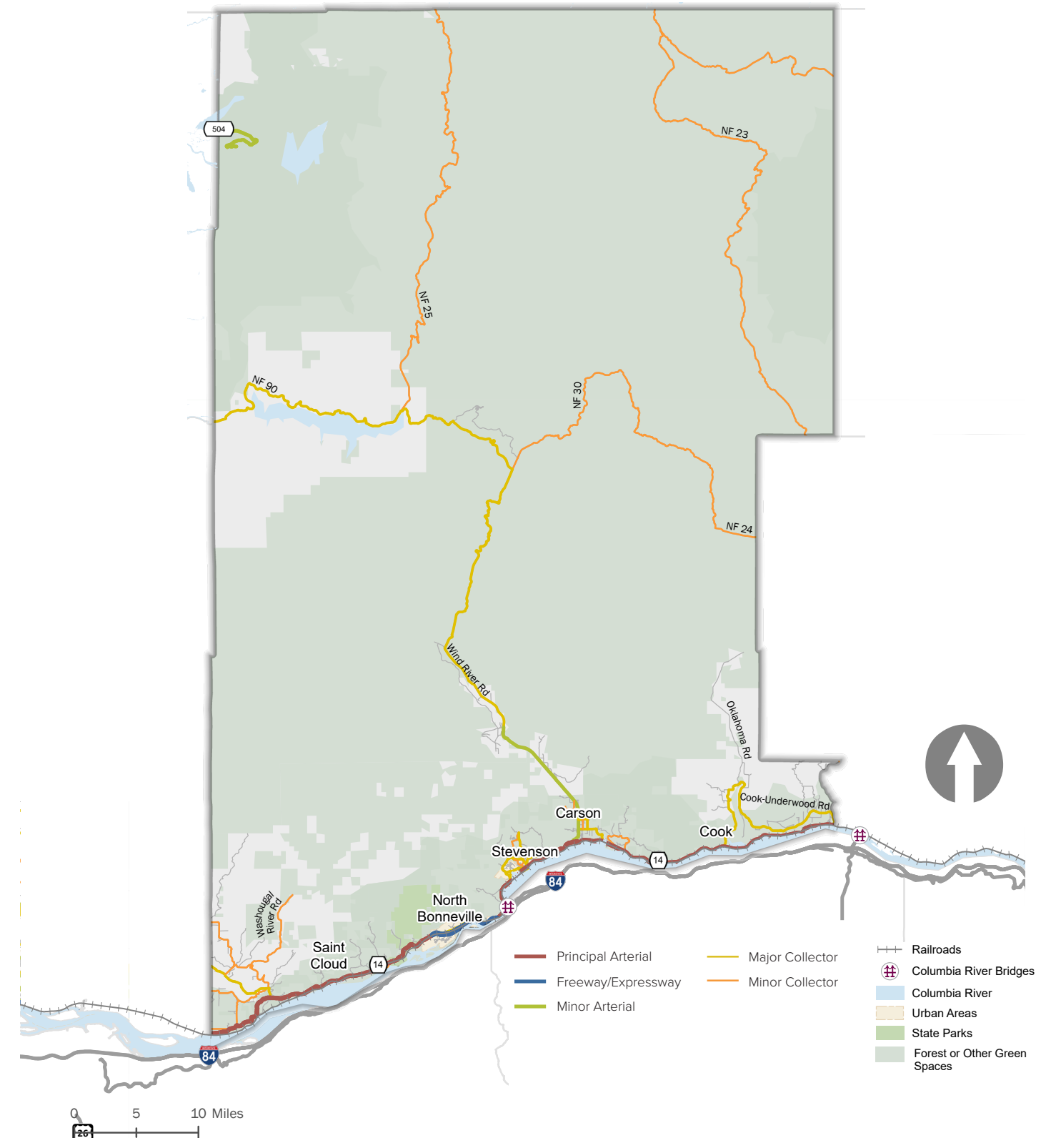
WSDOT is tasked with developing and regularly updating the federal functional classification (FFC) for roadways in rural and urban areas across Washington. WSDOT develops the FFC in cooperation with local and regional agencies to determine functional usage of the existing roads and streets. Highways, roads, and streets are grouped and classified into categories based on the character of service they provide. This RTP, along with other comprehensive transportation plans, uses functional classification to determine how the existing and future roadway network can facilitate a logical and efficient transportation system.

Figure 4-1. Roadway Functional Classification System



As shown in Figure 4.1, arterials, such as the state highway system, provide the highest degree of mobility and most limited access to local property. Collectors generally provide a more balanced approach to mobility and land access. Figure 4-2 provides a map outlining the regional roadway system functional classifications. A description of the rural functional classification categories and how they relate to Skamania County are outlined below.

Figure 4-2. Regional Roadway System Functional Classifications



Principal arterials serve corridor movements with trip length and travel density characteristics of statewide or interstate travel. They consist of a connected rural network of continuous routes. All rural principal arterials are designated as National Highway System (NHS) facilities. Congress approved the NHS with passage of the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 (NHS Act). In Skamania County, SR 14 has been designated as NHS facilities. These routes are also classified as freight economic corridors and proposed United States Bicycle Routes. SR 14 is an important highway that has east-west orientation, connecting all three counties in Southwest Washington that comprise of the RTP

### Minor Arterials

Minor arterials support principal arterials and offer greater access to communities and adjacent land uses. They form a roadway network linking cities and larger towns with other major traffic generators. The principal arterials and rural minor arterials are spaced at such intervals that all developed areas of the state are within a reasonable distance of an arterial highway. Minor arterials should be expected to handle relatively high overall travel speeds with minimum interference to through movement.

### Major Collector Roads

Major collectors provide access to larger towns not directly served by the higher systems and to other traffic generators of equivalent importance. In Skamania County, major collectors serve as important travel corridors. All major collectors are designated as part of the regional transportation system.

### Minor Collector Roads

Minor collectors are designated to collect traffic from local roads and provide developed areas with reasonable distance to a collector road. They serve smaller communities and link locally important traffic generators with surrounding rural areas.

### Local Roads

Local roads provide direct access to abutting land and access to the higher classification facilities. Rural local roads offer the lowest level of mobility; and although they are not intended to carry through traffic, the roads make up a high percentage of the total street mileage in Skamania County.

## Designation of the RTP Regional Transportation System

Consistent with the State’s Regional Transportation Planning Program Planning Standards, the RTP regional transportation system has been designated to include:

1. All state transportation facilities and services (including state highways).
2. All local principal arterials (the definition of rural principal arterials may be the same as used for federal classification or be regionally determined).
3. All other transportation facilities and services—including airports, transit services, and facilities; roadways; rail facilities; marine transportation facilities, etc.—that the RTP considers necessary to complete the regional plan.
4. Any transportation facility or service that is regionally needed or impacts places in the plan, as determined by the RTP.

A detailed description of the designated RTP Regional Transportation System is included in the following sections.

### All State Transportation Facilities and Services

In Skamania County this category includes the following State Routes: SR 14 and SR 504.

- SR 14 provides the main east-west access from south-west Clark/Skamania County line to south-east Klickitat/Skamania County line along the north bank of the Columbia River. The facility has two lanes in each direction and extends 41.71 miles through Skamania County between Clark County and Klickitat County lines.
- SR 504 provides the main access from I-5 (Cowlitz County) east to the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Skamania County has identified the need to connect SR 504 east to the U.S. Forest Service highway system.

### All Local Principal Arterials

Other than state routes the only other rural principal arterial in Skamania County is the Bridge of the Gods.

Additional transportation facilities and services considered necessary, which include transit services and facilities, roadways, rail facilities, airports, and marine transportation facilities, are detailed in the following chapter.



## Public Transit Services

Transit is important in meeting the mobility needs of the transit dependent: those unable to drive automobiles because of age, infirmity, disability, or income. Transit can also meet the mobility needs for commute trips to and from employment centers.



### Fixed Route

Fixed route transportation systems use buses, vans, and other vehicles to operate a predetermined route according to a set schedule. These systems have posted timetables and designated stops where riders are picked up and dropped off. In rural areas, fixed route services may not always meet the needs of residents, particularly in communities where people do not live along main roads and where bus stops are difficult to access.



### Dial-a-Ride

Dial-a-ride, also called demand-response transit, involves small or medium vehicles operating on flexible routes with flexible schedules that depend on passenger request. Passengers may use a subscription service, make advanced reservations, or use real-time scheduling. Demand-response vehicles may be dispatched to pick up multiple passengers at several different locations before taking them to their destination.



### Deviated Route

A deviated route is a flexible public transit service which allows for more adaptable and customizable services. It involves vehicles that can deviate from a fixed route to pick up and drop off passengers at different locations within a defined service area. This type of service may require passengers to request a ride in advance or hail a vehicle at a specific point. Flexible route public transit is often employed in areas with lower demand or in rural communities where fixed routes may not be feasible.

Since 2021 the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) led the development of a Gorge Regional Transit Strategy. MCEDD and all of the participating transit providers and counties adopted the Strategy in 2023. Divided into two phases, the first phase sought to establish a foundation for a cohesive regional strategy and vision for public transportation. The second phase developed the strategy which includes several key coordination and service enhancements to better connect cities in Skamania County to each other, across the Gorge region, and to the Portland-Vancouver metro area. Figures 5-1 and 5-2 depict the existing regional and preferred regional fixed route transit network developed in the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy.

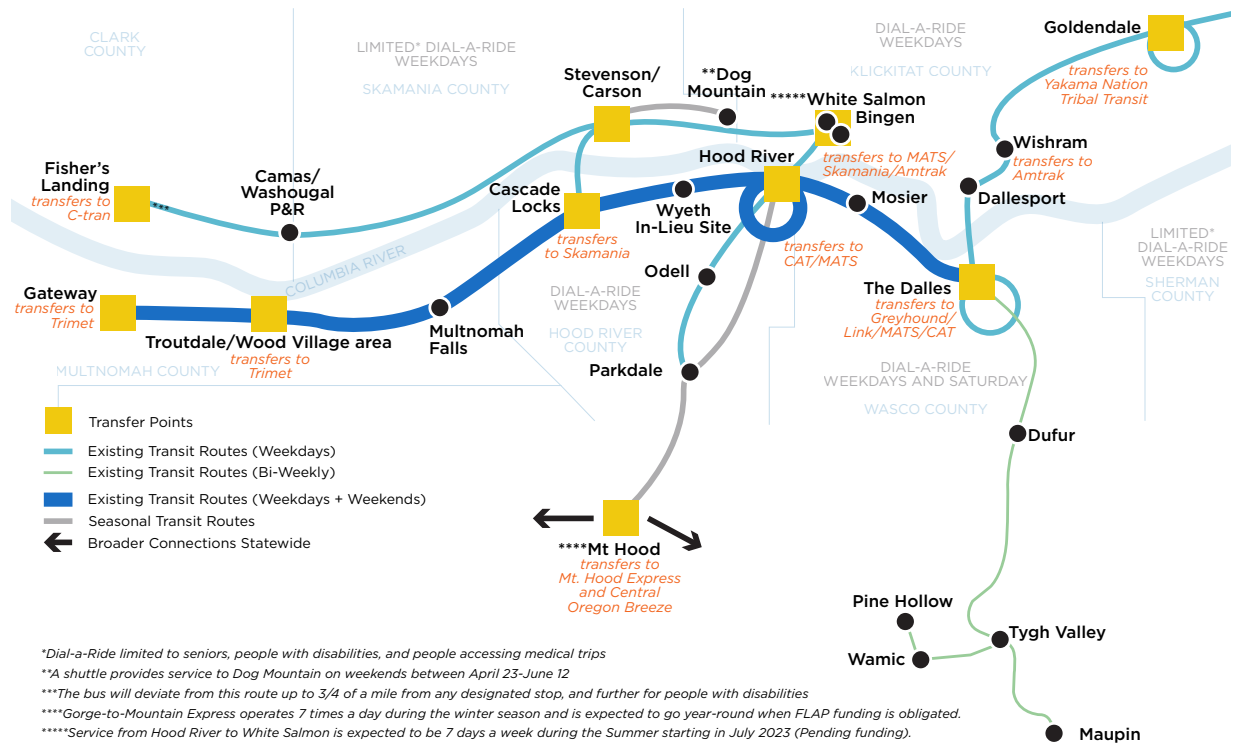


Figure 5-1. Existing Regional Transit Network

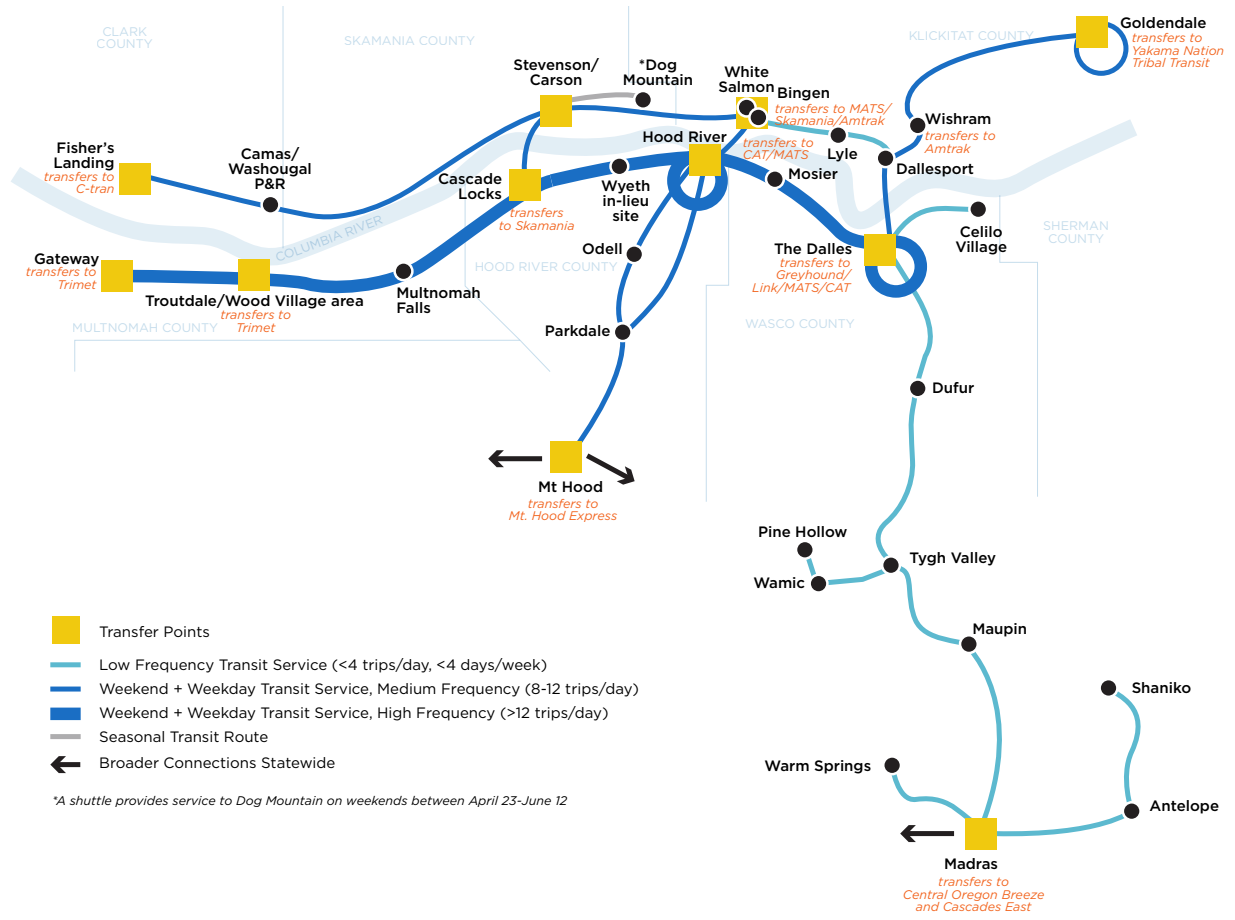


Figure 5-2. Preferred Regional Transit Strategy Map

**Skamania County Transit**

Skamania County Senior Services Department operates Skamania County Transit and a Dial-A-Ride service for Skamania County. Skamania County Transit is a route deviated service connecting Skamania County to Klickitat County to the east and Clark County to the west along the SR 14 corridor. The route deviated service also crosses the Bridge of the Gods into Cascade Locks, Oregon. This service connects Skamania communities to C-TRAN's Fisher Landing Transit Center in Vancouver, making five round trips per day (morning, midday, evening). The service began in January 2004 and expanded in November 2022 to include connections to Klickitat County and Cascade Locks, Oregon allowing for transfers to Mt Adams Transportation (MAT) and CAT (Hood River Transit). This service provides access to jobs, schools, and other trip purposes within the Greater Portland/Vancouver region. The Dial-A-Ride is a demand response service for transportation to medical and social service appointments, financial and essential shopping and to the senior congregate meal program. This program is available to seniors, the general public as well as Veterans.

Dial-a-Ride service provides preference to seniors and persons with disabilities; however, all county residents are eligible. Most system trips are for medical, social service, and shopping purposes. This service does provide transportation service as far west as Vancouver/Portland and east to The Dalles. Out-of-county medical trips are given priority over shopping or personal trips, although trip purposes are grouped when possible.

Skamania County Transit is a member of Gorge Pass, a low-cost annual pass that provides passholders with unlimited rides on it's fixed route service. Other members of the Gorge Pass include Mount Adams Transit, in Washington, as well as The Link and CAT (Hood River Transit) in Oregon. The service map at the time of publishing is shown in Figure 5-1. The Gorge Pass provides streamlined connections between these member transit providers and avoids having to pay multiple fares.

**Columbia Area Transit**

Columbia Area Transit (CAT) is a Hood River County, Oregon based public transportation provider. CAT is a transportation district organized under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 267. A major source of funding for the provider comes from Federal Transit Administration grants, several different sources from the State of Oregon, local property tax, and user fees. The District was formed by a vote of Hood River County residents in 1992 and took effect July 1, 1993. Like Skamania Transit, CAT is a member of the GORge Pass.

In Skamania, CAT provides a free, seasonal transit service that links hikers of the Dog Mountain trail to Stevenson. Connections to the Columbia Gorge Express can be made by transferring to the Cascade Locks bus stop. This service operates every 30 minutes on weekends during peak wildflower season. The shuttle service reduces the number of cars parked at the trailhead which regularly reaches capacity.







### Public Transportation Needs

The major needs to continue supporting public transportation in the Skamania County and the Gorge are listed below

- Shuttle service to additional trails
- Community awareness
- Expanded service
- After-hours and weekend hospital discharge options
- Bus shelters

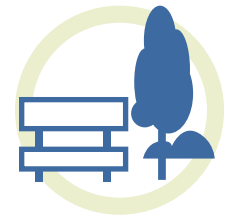
### Gorge TransLink Alliance Mobility Management

Gorge TransLink is an alliance of transportation providers offering public transportation services throughout the Mid-Columbia River Gorge area, as well as to destinations such as Portland and Vancouver. The goal of this coordination effort is to improve interconnectivity between the various transit providers in the Mid-Columbia River Region in both Oregon and Washington. The Mobility Management project provides facilitation, collaboration/coordination, planning, public outreach, and technical assistance for rural transportation providers in the Gorge region. The goal of the program is to enhance transportation opportunities for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and other special needs populations. State funding assistance sustains the Gorge TransLink Mobility Management project in Washington counties of Skamania and Klickitat, and Oregon counties of Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman.

### Port Facilities

The Port of Skamania County was incorporated in 1964 to promote community development that enhances the livability of the area. Today the Port maintains an asset base of commercial, industrial, and recreational lands, buildings, and other facilities. As Skamania's only port it encompasses a large portion of county waterfront along the Columbia River, including 162 acres in Stevenson, Carson, and North Bonneville.

The Port's mission is to identify, develop, and promote economic resources that foster diversity, prosperity, and quality of life for all citizens of Skamania County. The Port's primary goal is to encourage economic development and job creation. The Stevenson Landing dock, parks, beaches, and boat launch ramp facilities draw a variety of water sport enthusiasts and tourists helping to invigorate the local economy.



### Port Needs

The major needs to continue to support the Port are listed below:

- Build out Cascades Business Park and attract new business
- Construct new public facilities

### Columbia River

The Columbia River has been an important transportation corridor for the region since time immemorial. Native Americans originally traveled the river in dugout canoes between villages and to fish migrating salmon. By the 1850s, steamboats ferried passengers and cargo between Euro-American settlements along the Columbia River. Advances in technology continued to drive movement and settlement in the Gorge.

To date, the Columbia River is used as a transportation corridor to move goods and people. Tour boats dock in Stevenson. Fish harvesting continues to be a cultural touchstone for Native American tribes along the river. Favorable wind conditions in the Gorge have also attracted windsurfers and spawned a new recreation industry. Depending on wind and swell conditions, regional launches in Stevenson's Marina, Bingen Marina, Doug's Beach, Avery Boat Launch, Maryhill State Park, and Roosevelt Park each offer windsurfing options for enthusiasts at all skill levels.



### Columbia River Needs

The major needs to continue to support the Columbia River are listed below:

- Maintain unimpeded passage under low-lying bridges
- Improve fish passage and fishing activities
- Support for recreation and economic activity

### Forest Service Road System

With much of Skamania County located within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, the Forest Highway System plays an important role in the economy of Skamania County. Forest highways part of the regional transportation system include Forest Roads 23, 25, 30, 88, and 90. Due to inclement weather conditions in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest many of its roadways, identified on Figure 4-2, have seasonal designation and are restricted during winter months.

### Rail Facilities

BNSF Railway Company operates a Class I railroad within Skamania County. The railway links several of the lumber, natural resources, food, and agriculture industries to local, national, and international markets. These industries rely on the railroad to provide this service. Amtrak passenger rail also operates along these tracks, with neighboring Klickitat County stations in Bingen and Wishram. Seven days a week, the Amtrak Empire Builder travels through Skamania County between Portland, Oregon, and Chicago, Illinois. Although there are no Amtrak stations in Skamania County, most Skamania County residents are within an hour's drive of stations in Bingen or Vancouver. There are seven public and many private at-grade railroad crossings along the main rail line in Skamania County. The public at-grade railroad crossings are listed in Table 5-1. There are also many grade-separated crossings where the tracks cross SR 14 either by bridge or tunnel.

Map ID	Road	Warning System
1	Cape Horn Road	Stop Signs
2	SR 14 (St. Cloud)	Warning Lights
3	SR 14 (Skamania Landing)	Warning Lights
4	SR 14 (Skamania Landing)	Warning Lights
5	Russell/SR 14 (Stevenson)	Warning Lights and Drawbars
6	SR 14 (Cemetery)	Stop Sign, Tracks Warning
7	SR 14 (Home Valley Park)	Overhead/Side Lights, Drawbars

Table 5-1. At-Grade Skamania County Public Railroad Crossings



### Railway Needs

- Explore local Amtrak passenger train tourism opportunities
- Expand train horn quiet zone in Stevenson
- Improve active protection for at-grade public railroad crossings

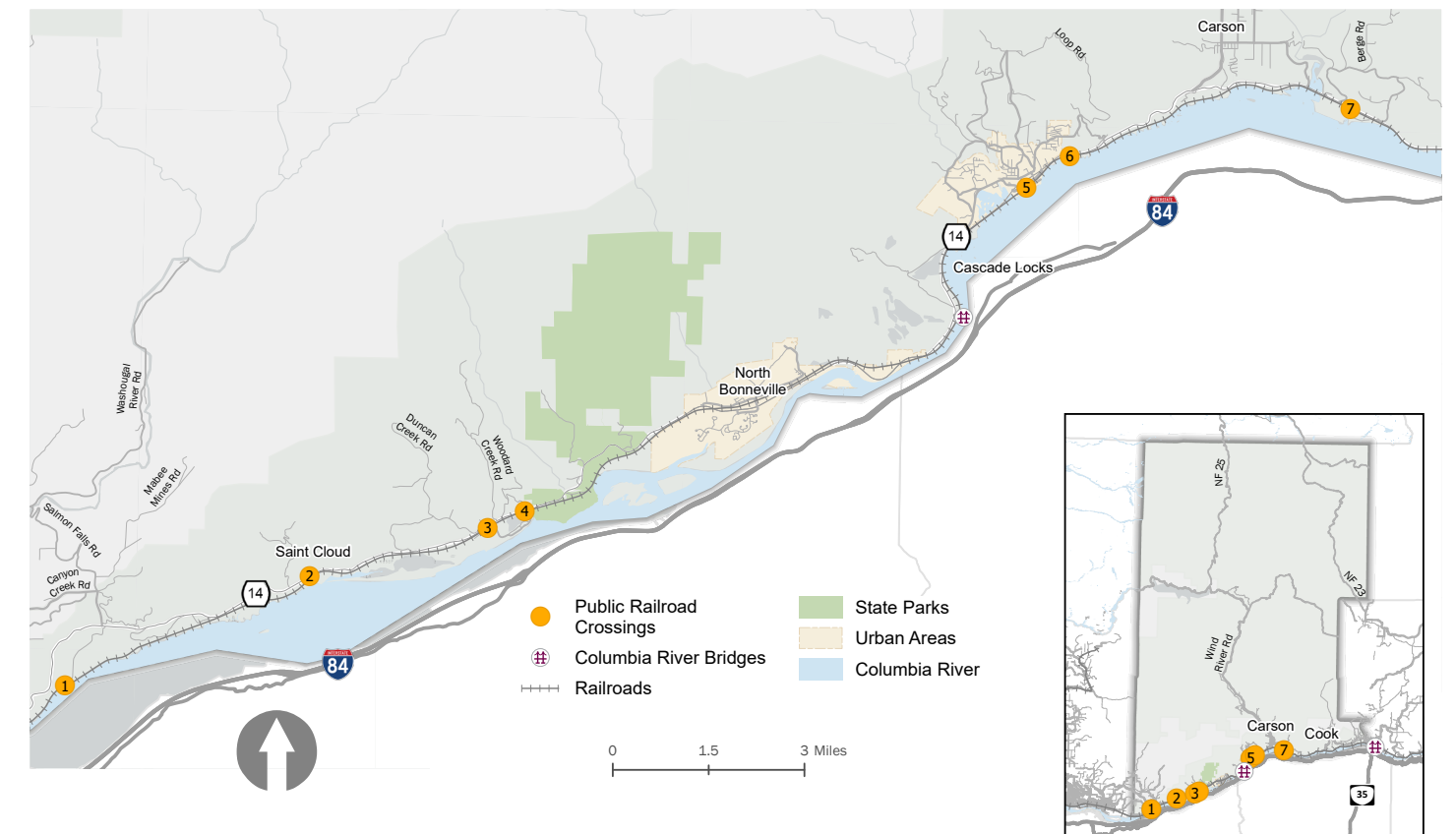
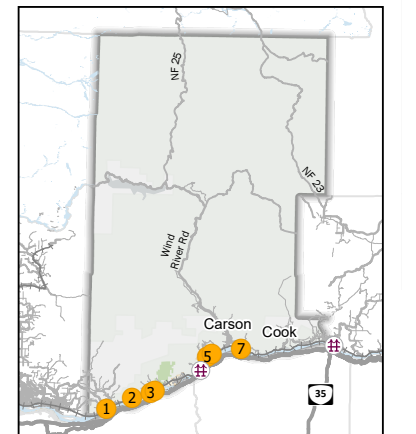


Figure 5-3. At-Grade Public Railroad



Skamania County Overview

## Commercial Vehicle

Reflective of statewide travel trends commercial vehicles account for the largest share of freight travel in Skamania County. Across the county these vehicles share the the same roads as residents. Trucks that travel both much faster and much slower than normal flow of traffic cause frustration and may increase hazards for drivers. While vehicle traffic along SR 14 has steadily increased year-over-year, trucks have maintained a sizeable share of vehicles on the road. There is a perception that through-truck traffic, where vehicles pass through Skamania County to avoid Oregon's weight mile tax, in the SR 14 corridor is increasing. Further analysis is needed to confirm this, but as long as Washington and Oregon states have different truck taxation methods, some truckers will choose to use SR 14 to lower their overall costs. This situation becomes especially pronounced during winter months when Oregon's I 84 roadway, which runs parallel to SR 14, is impacted by snowfall. In instances where the I 84 is closed completely truck traffic is diverted across a Columbia River crossing and into Washington. Due to the weight restriction of the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge, in Klickitat County, the Bridge of the Gods is the only crossing along an 80 mile segment of the Columbia River that frieght can travel.



### Commercial Vehicle Needs

The major needs to continue to support freight trucks are listed below:

- More opportunities to pass slow vehicles along truck routes
- Parking and rest facilities

## Roadways of Statewide Significance

In 1998 the Washington State Legislature passed the Level of Service (LOS) Bill to put in place new requirements relating to transportation and growth management planning. The bill was drafted to enhance the coordination of planning efforts and plan consistency at the local, regional, and state levels. Key applicable elements to the Skamania County regional transportation system include the following:

- Highways of Statewide Significance: The State must give higher priority to correcting identified deficiencies on transportation facilities of statewide significance. Designation of Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) was completed in 1999. In Skamania County the HSS system includes just SR 14.
- Non-Highways of Statewide Significance: Non-HSS state highways, otherwise known as Highways of Regional Significance, in Skamania County include SR 504.
- Roadway Needs
- Rockfall danger from adjacent cliffsides
- Limited number of passing-lanes along SR-14 for slow moving traffic
- Unsafe speeding in urban areas and near trail head and boat launches that have increased pedestrian activity
- Intersection of SR-14 and Bridge of the Gods is unsignalized

## Active Transportation

Transportation enhancements are designated as part of the regional transportation system. Enhancements include facilities for bicycles and pedestrians, scenic vistas, thematic signage, rest stops, and roadside beautification along the regional road network. As a continuous east-west corridor, SR-14 is the most well-traveled. While SR-14 is not a designated US Bike Route in the state of Washington it has been identified by state DOT as a future proposed route.



### Active Transportation Needs

The major needs to continue to support active transportation in Skamania County are listed below:

- Grade separated sidewalks
- Separated bike lanes

## Bridges

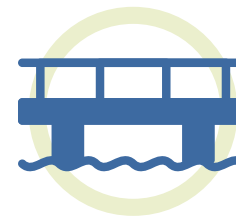
Bridges within the regional roadway system are essential to the movement of people and goods within the region. All public bridges, including Columbia River bridges, are a designated part of the regional transportation system.

### Bridge of the Gods

The Bridge of the Gods is a 1,858-foot-long and 35-foot-wide steel truss cantilever toll bridge spanning the Columbia River near Cascade Locks. The bridge connects SR 14 in Washington to I-84 in Oregon. The bridge is owned and operated by the Port of Cascade Locks. The bridge was originally completed in 1926 but was elevated to its current location in 1940.

## County Bridges

There are many rivers and creeks throughout Skamania County. The county road network is connected through a series of 61 large bridges and several small bridges and large culverts. The road department is responsible for inspecting each large bridge at least once every two years. This schedule is determined by bridge specifications and type of structure. Small bridges and large culverts are inspected routinely for deficiencies. When a bridge is ready for replacement, the funding is appropriated and the bridge is added to the Six-Year Road Program.



### Bridge Needs

The major needs to continue to support the bridges in Skamania County are listed below:

- Meet current bridge safety and functionality standards
- Accommodate all legal loads and avoid weight restrictions
- Provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle access
- Complete seismic upgrades across system

## Additional Considerations

### Recreation

The diversity of terrain within Skamania County makes it a great place for on- and off-road biking, hiking, and running. The growth in recreation in the Gorge has created a parking capacity issue at popular recreational sites, which often leads to illegal parking and safety issues on the transportation system. The SR 14 & Dog Mountain Congestion and Safety Plan was developed between 2020 and 2021 to address concerns along SR 14 and at the Dog Mountain trailhead in Skamania County. The study of existing conditions revealed that Dog Mountain is one of seven locations along the Washington side of the Gorge that have consistent and recurring congestion and safety concerns.

Sites shown within Skamania County include the Cape Horn Trailhead, Beacon Rock Trailhead, Dog Mountain Trailhead, and Drano Lake Boat Ramp. Concerns at these locations include parking lot overflow; congestion spreading into weekend "shoulders" (Friday and Monday); vehicles parking illegally on adjacent roads; pedestrians crossing SR 14 and walking in roadways; and personal vehicles, shuttles, and pedestrians circling parking lots. Each of these conditions, coupled with conditions along SR 14, can lead to serious injury and fatality. Public transit programs, such as the Columbia Gorge Express, have proven to be a successful strategy in reducing parking congestion at popular recreation sites.



### Recreation Needs

- Expand public transit service to popular recreation sites
- Advance SR 14 parking study goals

### Electric Vehicles

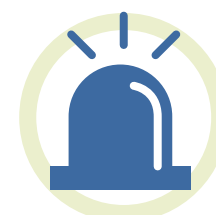
In the region and across the nation there is rapid growth in the number of electric vehicles (EVs) on roadways. EVs are recognized as having lower operating costs, reduced maintenance needs, and improved performance over conventional vehicles. In rural parts of the country, EVs can be an especially attractive option, given that rural residents drive more than their urban counterparts, spend more on vehicle fuel and maintenance, and often have fewer alternatives to driving to meet their transportation needs.

### Alternative Fuel Needs

- Identify opportunities for additional refueling/charging infrastructure

### Emergency Response

With such a large land-base of timberland Skamania County is especially susceptible to wildfire. Many of the road signs are made of wood and are susceptible to fire. During emergency situations the transportation system will be essential to Skamania County's response. The Department of Emergency management (DEM) prepares for, coordinates response, logistical support, mitigation and recovery for all natural and man-made emergencies and disasters.



### Emergency Response Needs

- Alternative emergency evacuation routes
- Transportation infrastructure resilient to seismic events and wildfires



# CHAPTER 6. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES AND IMPROVEMENTS

*This chapter summarizes a selection of strategies to support a well-maintained, structurally sound, and safe regional transportation system over the next 20 years. The objective of this chapter is to provide a planning-level assessment of necessary transportation system improvements*

## Maintenance and Preservation

Identified as an express goal of the RTP, preservation and maintenance of the existing transportation system is a priority in Skamania County. Maintenance addresses the day-to-day activities needed to keep the transportation system in good working order and keep the system safe, clean, reliable, and efficient. Such activities include but are not limited to filling potholes, repairing bridges, repairing drainage ditches, repairing guardrails, replacing damaged signs, plowing snow, removing rocks, and efficiently operating traffic signals. Preservation can prolong the life of the existing transportation system through such projects as repaving roads, rehabilitating bridges, and rockfall protection.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and local jurisdictions monitor the condition and operation of the existing system and program projects to maintain and preserve the system. The RTP supports the routine, regularly-scheduled, and necessary maintenance and preservation work identified by local and state agencies.

There is a significant need for the preservation and maintenance of Skamania County’s regional transportation system. Protecting the heavy investments already made in the system is a top priority and identified as a goal of this RTP. As the transportation system ages and funding declines, the cost of preserving and maintaining the existing transportation system has increased. There is a need to have a public discussion on how maintenance and preservation will be paid for in the future.

## Improvements and Enhancements

The RTP recommends transportation improvements needed to provide an adequate level of safety and service. Each improvement relates to an identified deficiency noted in the previous chapter. As it relates to roadways, improvements can include adding sidewalks, removing dangerous curves, intersection improvements, grade separation, adding transportation enhancements, improving sight distance, adding a climbing lane, realigning a roadway, or adding alternative modes of transportation.

Transportation enhancements are designated as part of the regional transportation system. Enhancements include facilities

for bicycles and pedestrians, scenic vistas, thematic signage, rest stops, and roadside beautification along the regional road network. There is a significant need to develop and improve these facilities. Beyond preservation and maintenance, enhancements are needed to meet the heightened activity in a region expected to increase in population by 2045. Any growth in traffic volume—either pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, freight, or transit—increases the potential for conflicts. The RTP supports cost-effective enhancements to the transportation system that anticipate and alleviate this strain.

## RTP 2045 Strategies and Solutions

The RTP supports strategies for active transportation, public transportation, rail, and road, as well as roads and highways to support the mobility of people and goods within Skamania County. These strategies aim to address the needs identified in the previous chapter and their associated deficiencies. New to this RTP update is an emphasis on developing nonmotorized transportation modes that will maximize the capacity of the existing transportation system in urban areas.

Drawing from the deficiencies identified earlier in the RTP, Table 6-1 through 6-4 list the identified improvements to the regional transportation system. This table includes a list of projects for which a regional need has been identified and for which there is strong regional commitment. The list focuses on safety improvements, as these are the projects that are most urgently needed. The list also identifies a wide range of transportation system improvements that will contribute to the development of a balanced regional transportation system.

Developing and adopting the RTP is only the first step in achieving the goals enshrined in this document. Putting this plan into action comes through funding and in developing the identified projects and promoting policy adoption by partner agencies. The RTP will be implemented through the collective work of RTC, Skamania County, cities, Skamania Transit, WSDOT and other agency partners to develop these projects and policies.

Active Transportation			
Project/Program Title	Facility	Project Partner	Cost
Enhance Bike access across Columbia River	Bridge of the Gods	Cascade Locks, ODOT, WSDOT	\$\$\$
Develop Multimodal Access Plan and identify regional connectivity opportunities	Countywide	County, WSDOT, RTC	\$
Improve roadway conditions of state route to improve safety for all system users	Countywide	RTC, County	\$\$
Promote safety for active transportation among all system users	Countywide	RTC, County	\$
Develop downtown boulevard plans	Incorporated and unincorporated areas	Stevenson, North Bonneville	\$
Enhance safety in urban areas through the addition of sidewalks, crossing infrastructure, and traffic calming measures	Incorporated and unincorporated areas	Stevenson, County, WSDOT	\$\$
Identify regional multimodal connectivity opportunities	Gorge Region	WSDOT, MCEDD, ODOT, RTC	\$
Implement Complete Streets mandate through construction of active transportation facilities.	Countywide	North Bonneville, Stevenson, Skamania County, WSDOT, RTC	\$\$

Table 6-1. RTP 2045 Active Transportation Improvements

Public Transportation			
Project/Program Title	Facility	Project Partner	Cost
Expand shuttle service to popular trailhead and boat launch locations	SR-14	CAT, SCT, WSDOT, RTC, Gorge Translink	\$
Add weekend service and expand weekday service on select routes	Countywide	SCT, Gorge Translink, WSDOT	\$\$
Establish shelters on fixed-route bus stops	Countywide	SCT, WSDOT	\$
Explore additional regional stop locations and additional routes	Countywide	SCT, Gorge Translink	\$
Coordinate schedules among Gorge Transit partners and medical providers	Countywide	SCT, CAT, MATS, Gorge Translink MCEDD	\$
Increase awareness of public transit and how to use it	Countywide	MATS, Gorge Translink, CAT, RTC	\$

Table 6-2. RTP 2045 Public Transportation Improvements

Rail			
Project/Program Title	Facility	Project Partner	Cost
Improve train safety and end freight horn in urban areas	Stevenson, BNSF	Stevenson, BNSF, RTC	\$\$

Table 6-3. RTP 2045 Rail Improvements

Road & Highways			
Project/Program Title	Facility	Project Partner	Cost
Develop regional freight and commodities study	Countywide	RTC, County	\$
Study operational needs for SR 14	SR-14, county roadways	WSDOT, County, RTC	\$\$
Support and enhance water recreation safety	Columbia River	County, Stevenson, WSDOT, SCT, RTC	\$\$
Identify locations for electric charging stations in urban and rural areas.	Countywide	Stevenson, County, WSDOT, RTC	\$
Develop regional parking management strategy for commercial and general-purpose vehicles	Countywide	County, Port of Skamania, Stevenson, RTC	\$
Improve striping and install radar speed signs	Countywide	WSDOT	\$
Dog Mountain Trailhead Improvement	Dog Mountain Trailhead	WSDOT, US Forest Service, Skamania County, Columbia River Gorge Commission	\$\$

Table 6-4. RTP 2045 Road & Highway Improvements

## Priority Projects

### Beacon Rock State Park Road Improvement

Beacon Rock State Park is located on SR 14 approximately 2.5 miles west of North Bonneville. Similar to other recreational sites in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Beacon Rock State Park is experiencing increased visitation. Safety conflicts are occurring due to increased visitation, substandard design, and high-speed volumes on SR 14 in the vicinity of Beacon Rock.

Washington State Parks, supported by the Washington State Department of Transportation, is proposing to improve safety and access to the park while maintaining efficient movement of through traffic on SR 14. The project concept adds a roundabout at Kueffler Road, separates and improves access to parking from SR 14, adds pedestrian enhancements, including a tunnel under SR 14, adds traffic-calming and gateway features, and other nontraffic enhancements to the park.

### Transportation Alternative Projects

Identifying where and how urban roadways can best support the residents, businesses, and visitors it serves is a priority of this plan. For all RTC grants, including the biennial Transportation Alternatives Grant, the funded project must be listed in the RTP. This policy is new to this RTC update and represents a greater desire to see projects enshrined in this planning document. In an effort to capture these projects the following list aims to expand upon the active transportation projects identified in Table 6-1.

- Complete sidewalk network and improve existing sidewalks to appropriate width, landscaping and street furniture
- Install pavement bulb-outs at intersections to improve safety and visibility of active transportation users
- Establish alternative routes for freight outside of the downtown center
- Install roundabouts along main street highways with marked crosswalks and pedestrian islands
- Install bicycle infrastructure, like storage racks, in convenient and publicly accessible areas

Grassroots route planning and coordination are key to identifying safe and connected bike and pedestrian routes. It all starts with bringing together local stakeholders which may include bike groups, local agencies, economic development representatives and interested citizens, among others.

### Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

This RTP supports the identification and expansion of electric vehicle infrastructure, including structures, machinery, and equipment necessary and integral to support an electric vehicle. This may include battery charging stations, rapid charging stations, and battery exchange solutions. And while Skamania County has the benefits of proximity to a more robust charging network in the Portland metro region, the region as a whole is currently underserved. In order to better achieve its potential locally, communities across Skamania County should identify electrical vehicle charging station needs and opportunities to increase public EV charging infrastructure.

### Public Transportation

The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy provides a regional vision and strategy for public transportation in the Gorge. The Strategy identifies several key coordination and service enhancements to better connect cities in Skamania County to each other, Vancouver, and Oregon. This RTP supports the service vision shown in Figure 5-2 and recommends adopting the policies outlined in the strategy to better advance public transportation in the region.

### Bridge of the Gods

The bridge is located 37 miles east of the I-205 Glenn Jackson Bridge and 22 miles west of the Hood River Bridge. The Bridge of the Gods also serves as part of the Pacific Crest Trail connecting Oregon and Washington but does not include a dedicated pedestrian path. The Port is currently seeking grant funding to study and design a multimodal path that could be added to the current bridge structure. The RTP supports enhancements to the Bridge of the Gods.





# CHAPTER 7. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

*This chapter reviews revenue sources, grant opportunities, and cost estimates for transportation projects, system maintenance, and operations.*

Skamania County faces considerable challenges to funding the transportation system into the future. Over the last decade fewer dollars have been spent on the transportation system as transportation revenues have declined. As the system ages, the cost of preserving and supporting the system increases. There is a need to have public dialogue on how improvements, maintenance, and operations will be paid for in the future.

The transportation investments found in this plan are intended to meet RTP goals, which include making the most efficient use of existing transportation systems. The changes to revenue sources due to federal and state legislation are identified and the ability of projected funding to meet RTP costs are noted.

## Revenues

Available revenues, or the money generated for transportation system development, come from federal, state, local, and private sources. At the local level, Skamania County generates revenue through property taxes, local receipts, state fuel tax distributions, federal revenues, and other state funds. Figure 6-1 displays the amount of average yearly and 22-year revenue Skamania County has received from these sources.

Over the past decade Skamania County collected roughly \$5 million from federal, state, and local sources annually. Property tax revenue, which has been growing year over year since data have been collected, amounts to roughly half of all revenues. In 2020, the County collected roughly \$2 million in property tax revenue alone. Unlike other counties across Washington, Skamania County does not receive ferry toll revenues.

Future revenue streams for the region are anticipated to remain the same, with the exception of the Bridge of the Gods improvements, which will require significant financial support from state and federal sources.

## Funding Sources

As previously noted, transportation has traditionally been funded by user fees, which are taxes collected on a pay-as-you-go basis for services or facilities, such as gasoline or property tax. Today the major tax sources to fund transportation are the gas tax, vehicle licenses, permits, and fees. A gas tax is imposed at the federal level (\$0.184 per gallon) and at the state level (\$0.494 per gallon) and is reserved for roadway purposes.

The combination of federal, state, and local highway user taxes and fees has not kept pace with the growth in the costs of transportation programs. The availability of federal, state, and local funding has a significant impact on the ability to plan for and develop projects at a regional scale. An overview of existing and potential funding sources at the federal, state, and local levels is included in Appendix B.

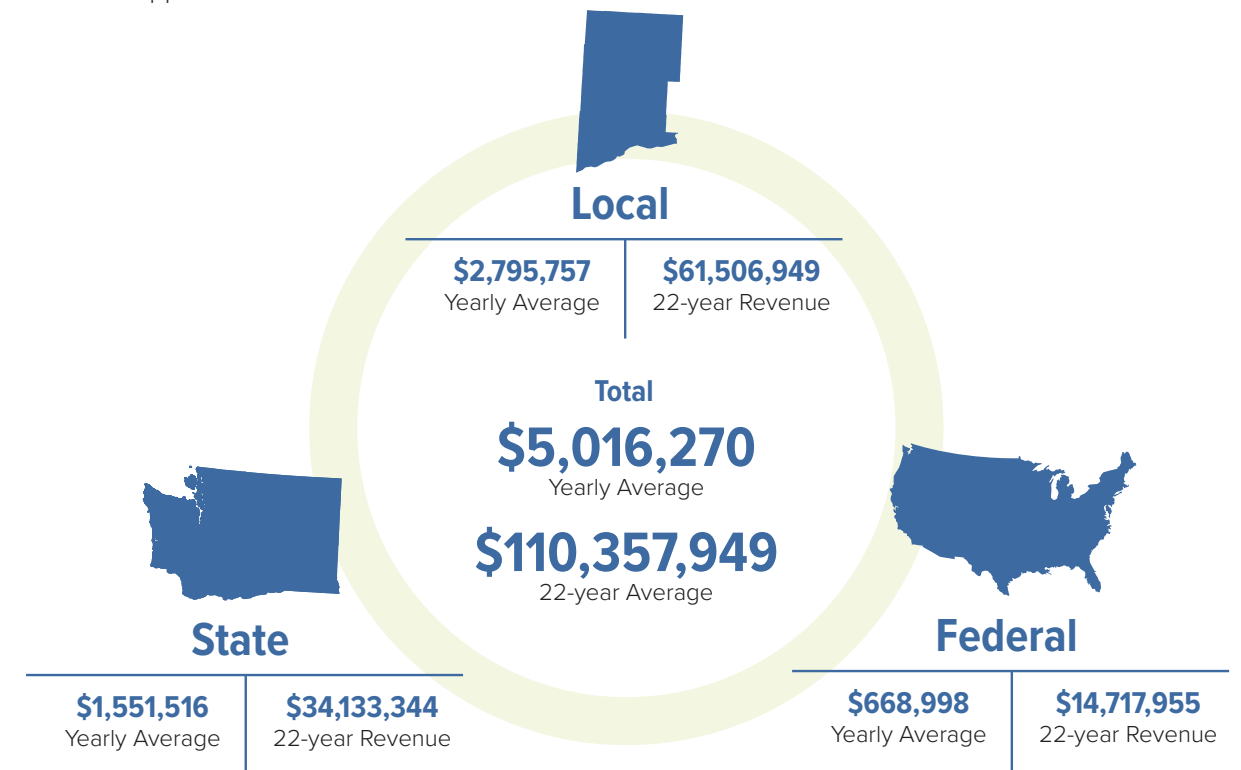


Figure 7-1. Skamania County Revenue Sources

## Expenditures

Expenditures are the funds used in the county to provide provisions of basic social services and pay wages to its employees. Money spent in Skamania County is primarily divided among construction, maintenance, administration, and operations, as shown in Figure 7-2. Over the past ten years, Skamania County and the cities in the region have spent roughly 80 percent of their available transportation revenue on preservation and maintenance. Much of the region's infrastructure was built decades ago and will require significant effort to preserve. If those investments are not made, the infrastructure will need to be replaced at a much larger expense.

Skamania County faces considerable challenges to funding the transportation system into the future. As the system ages, the cost of preserving and supporting the system increases. There is a need to have public dialogue on how improvements, maintenance, and operations will be paid for in the future.

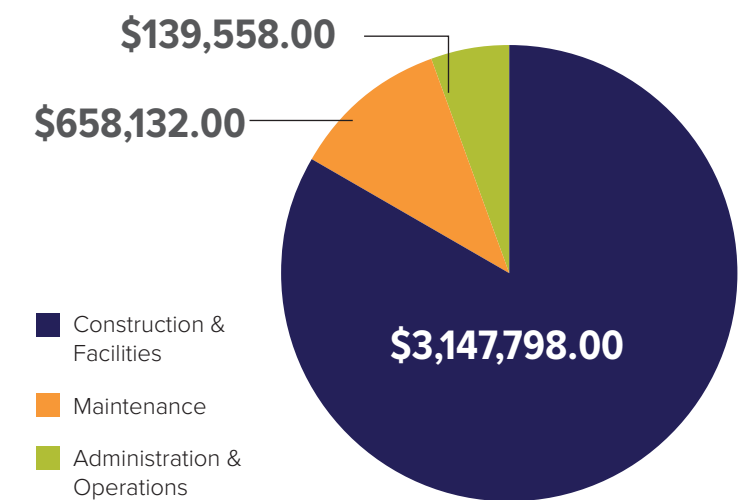


Figure 7-2. Skamania County Expenditures

## Least-Cost Planning Principle

'Least-Cost Planning' is a process of comparing the direct and indirect costs of transportation demands and supplying options to meet transportation goals and policies. The intent of the process is to identify the most cost-effective mix of options.

Potential transportation improvement projects proposed in this plan are intended to meet RTP goals and policy objectives. These goals and policies include making the most efficient use of existing transportation systems and enhancing wherever possible.

The Washington State Growth Management Act requires each RTPO to develop a regional transportation plan based on the least-cost planning methodology that identifies the most cost-effective transportation facilities, services, and programs for its region. This has been a requirement for RTPs updated and adopted since July 1, 2008.

## Looking Ahead

Skamania County faces funding challenges into the future. Although the economy has recovered significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic the funding shortfall for transportation improvements and programs lingers. Transportation expenditures anticipated in Skamania County and across the region are contingent on available revenue, which is influenced by the factors identified below.

The primary revenue source for transportation is the motor vehicle fuel tax, which is subject to several factors limiting its long-term viability, including:

- Increasing preservation and maintenance costs
- Increasing fuel efficiency
- The emergence of hybrid and electric vehicles
- Dwindling purchasing power of the gas tax as a source of transportation revenue

The future of the fuel tax as the primary road finance strategy is limited. Continual advances in vehicle technology and constant erosion of purchasing power from inflation may increase the need to find more innovative ways to pay for transportation investments.

Under the current transportation funding model, electric, hybrid, and more fuel-efficient vehicles generate a smaller share of transportation revenue compared to the miles they drive on the roadway. This makes it even more important that transportation planners and policymakers discuss transportation financing strategies and the benefits of changing how transportation is paid for.

Identified in Chapter 4, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) operates essential infrastructure in Skamania County. These facilities, including SR 14, are essential to the free movement of people and goods within Skamania County. These roadways are susceptible to damage from traffic traveling along them, as well as rockfall, snow and water damage. In order to keep roadways like SR 14 operational they must be regularly maintained. Statewide, in 2023, WSDOT's operating budget for preservation is funded at just 40% of what is needed to keep the state highway system open and functional.

WSDOT has identified a greater need to fund the preservation program in their 2024 Highway System Plan. Although increased preservation funding would lower the funding available for other policy goal areas, falling behind on preservation leads to larger replacement costs in the future. During community engagement the public overwhelmingly rejected the idea of closing or placing new limits on some bridges and highways in order to spend money on other highway programs.

Adequately funding preservation and maintenance activities aligns with the Washington State Legislature's prioritization of the preservation policy goal, WSDOT's strategic plan, the Washington Transportation Plan, and transportation industry best practices. It also makes sense from a taxpayer perspective: underfunding preservation and maintenance ends up costing five times more to restore highways to acceptable condition in the future. Ultimately Legislature determines transportation project and program funding priorities. Multiple obligations, including mandates and prior legislative packages also impact WSDOT's available resources for funding projects and programs.



# CHAPTER 8. IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

*Two required components of the RTP process are the Plan's implementation and performance evaluation. Each of these processes occurs over the course of this long-range planning effort and ensure its success.*

## Implementation and Update

Implementation of regional transportation goals, policies, and actions established by the RTP are carried forward through a local and regional decision-making process. Through the local development of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), transportation needs identified in the RTP are programmed for receipt of funds. Following implementation in 2024, the next update is scheduled for 2026.

Skamania County's RTP has been updated nine times since it was first produced in 1992 to reflect changing policies, financial conditions, and growth patterns. Results and recommendations from transportation studies and improvements will be incorporated into future RTP updates. The next update of the RTP is anticipated in 2025. In addition to the biannual review of the RTP, various methods of system monitoring and activities are described below. This RTP sets the performance measures that will be used in the next RTP update to monitor changes in the transportation network through the identified project list and make adjustments to programs and strategies as needed to ensure that the RTP is meeting its vision and goals.

## Performance Monitoring

Performance monitoring is integral in determining the success of plan implementation and the measured effect of desired improvements on the performance of the regional transportation system. As required by Revised Code of Washington (RCW), each RTPO must include its performance monitoring system in the RTP.

The transportation planning process requires that monitoring of system performance takes place after implementation. Monitoring the regional transportation system's performance is an ongoing activity, which, at a minimum, will occur as part of the review of the RTP. The RTP must be reviewed at least every two years, which allows for evaluation and improvement where necessary. Elements of system monitoring activities are described below. In each subsequent update of this plan, these types of thresholds will be considered.

This section uses the RTP goals identified earlier to structure performance monitoring metrics to ensure that they are achieved. While not all of the goals hold equal importance for transportation providers across the region, this document provides a means by which those goals can be measured. Regional stakeholders can use these thresholds to help evaluate the types of projects needed to improve the performance of the regional transportation system.



## Economic Vitality

Promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.

Economic development emerged as a prime evaluation criterion for prioritizing projects in the RTP. WSDOT has adopted a Statewide Freight and Goods Transportation System, which categorizes highways and local roads according to the tonnage of freight they carry. The State also created the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) with a mission to create a comprehensive and coordinated state program to facilitate freight movement between and among local, national, and international markets, enhancing trade opportunities. Data coming from these sources can be an important measure to the economic vitality of the region.

### Performance Measures



Change in rail freight tonnage transportation



GDP growth



Change in truck freight tonnage transportation



Employment number and median income



## Preservation

Maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.

As noted throughout the RTP, maintenance and preservation are primary concerns within Skamania County. Several tools exist to help monitor the condition of transportation infrastructure. One example of this is the Unstable Slope Management System that WSDOT began using in 1993. This management system incorporated a numerical slope hazard rating system to identify areas in need of repair.

### Performance Measures



Pavement condition



Bridge condition



Rail condition



Unstable slopes



## Safety

Provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.

Improving safety for all modes of transportation is critical to improving quality of life and improving access for all citizens of the region. Washington State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan, Target Zero, establishes a statewide policy of zero fatalities and zero disabling injury collisions by 2030. Target Zero helps assess safety needs statewide, encouraging and promoting good safety practices in the design and operation of the transportation system, as well as promoting safety by system users. Target Zero sets statewide priorities, provides a resource for potential strategies, and monitors outcome at a statewide level.

### Performance Measures



Traffic fatalities and serious injury rates for cars, bikes, and pedestrians



Collision rates for cars, bikes, and pedestrians



## Mobility

Improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington State.

Transportation demand management strategies to reduce vehicle trips on the regional transportation system can include use of transit, carpooling, vanpooling, working of flex-hours and/or compressed work week, and working from home with use of communications technology.

Transportation system management (TSM) is also a strategy to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system. TSM measures include a wide range of strategies, most of which are related to the use of intelligent transportation systems. These include incident response programs, programs to monitor travel conditions (weather/congestion), variable message signage to alert motorist of travel conditions, and Intelligent Vehicle/Highway Systems. Other TSM elements include minor capital upgrades such as channelization at intersections.

In addition to these strategies, transit is important in meeting the mobility needs of the transit dependent; those unable to drive automobiles because of age, infirmity, disability, or low income. Transit can also meet the mobility needs for commute trips to and from employment centers.

### Performance Measures



Traffic volumes to determine level of service



Number of miles of new bike or pedestrian facilities constructed



Change in bus public transportation use



Change in park and ride lot utilization



Change in recreation destination parking lot utilization



## Environment

Enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment. Weather-related events, such as wildfires, extreme heat, and floods have become more prominent in recent years and have significantly impacted the maintenance and expansion of the transportation network.

Greenhouse gases also play a role in maintaining a healthy air quality and contributes to warmer conditions. It will be pertinent that this RTP monitors the impacts to the environment surrounding the transportation network as much as it is important to monitor the performance of the network.

### Performance Measures



Change in greenhouse gas levels



Flood risk



Extreme heat



Fire risk



## Vision & Values

Provide for viable and livable local communities.

The RTP is developed with the foundation of defining vision and goals to ensure the RTP support the improvement and expansion of the transportation network. The RTP also aims to ensure the transportation system develops in synchronicity of forecasted population growth.

### Performance Measures



Population growth



Completed RTP projects



Funded RTP projects



## Stewardship

Continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

One of the most effective ways to monitor the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation network is soliciting feedback from those who use the system every day. Public feedback grounds the truths found in data and allows for finetuning of projects and programs to better support the efficacy of the transportation network.

### Performance Measures



Number of views on a transportation project or program website



Number of comments collected from the public



## Management & Operations

Maximize efficient management and operation of the transportation system.

Level of service standards represent the minimum performance level desired for transportation facilities and services within the region. They are used to evaluate the quality of service on the transportation system and can be described by travel times, travel speed, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience, and safety. Levels of service are designated A through F, from free flow to a breakdown of operations.

WSDOT has established an LOS 'C' for rural HSS facilities like SR 14. The RTPO has established an LOS 'C' for rural non-HSS. This is due to the increase in traffic volume resulting from population growth and recreation tourism. Deficient segments associated with capacity are included. In addition, there are several locations with capacity deficiencies associated with substandard curves and steep grades that create a particular problem on some facilities due to the mix of trucks, recreational vehicles, and automobiles.

### Performance Measures



Number of deficient capacity roadway segments



Average roadway speed



Hours of congestion

Road	Mile Post	Deficient Capacity Segment	LOS
SR 14	21.77 - 24.92	Clark Co. line to Half Bridge	C
SR 14	24.92 - 27.87	Half Bridge to Prindle Rd. vicinity	C
SR 14	27.87 - 37.04	Prindle Rd. to North Bonneville	C
SR 14	43.90 - 47.44	Rock Creek Br. to Wind River Rd.	C

Table 8-1 Deficient Capacity Segments





# APPENDIX A. LEVEL OF SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS

Level of service E describes conditions approaching and at capacity. For uninterrupted flow conditions, the following definitions apply:

- Level of Service A describes free flow conditions, with low volumes and high speeds. The general level of comfort and convenience provided to the motorist, passenger, or pedestrian is excellent.
- Level of Service B is in the range of stable flow but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver with the traffic stream from Level of Service A.
- Level of Service C is still in the range of stable flow but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream. The general level of comfort and convenience declines noticeably at this level.
- Level of Service D represents high-density, but stable flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and the driver or pedestrian experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience.
- Level of Service E represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform value. Comfort and convenience levels are extremely poor and driver or pedestrian frustration is generally high.
- Level of Service F describes forced or breakdown flow. These conditions usually result from queues of vehicles backing up from a restriction downstream. Operations within the queue are characterized by stop-and-go waves, and they are extremely unstable.

# APPENDIX B. FUNDING SOURCES OVERVIEW

## Federal Funding

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, includes significant funding for transportation infrastructure. The bill was signed into law on November 15, 2021 and is aimed at improving the nation's roads, bridges, transit systems, and ports.

The transportation funding available through the bill is divided into several categories, including highways, transit, rail, and airports. The funding is expected to create jobs and boost economic growth while also addressing important environmental and equity issues.

Mega-projects in Skamania County, including the upgrade of the Hood River-White Salmon Bridge, cost far more than the region can support locally. Federal funding, currently missing, is essential to funding these projects. Infrastructure for Rebuilding America

The BIL continued the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program to provide competitive grants to nationally and regionally significant freight and highway projects. The Act requires that a minimum of 25 percent of the INFRA grants go to projects in rural areas. The Act also states that projects in a national scenic area are eligible for an INFRA grant. The US Department of Transportation (USDOT) selects projects for funding.

## National Highway Performance Program

The National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) provides support to ensure that investments of federal-aid funds in highway construction are directed to support progress toward the achievement of performance targets established within a state's asset management plans. WSDOT selects projects for funding.

## Highway Safety Improvement Program

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act continues the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including non-State-owned public roads and roads on Tribal lands. The HSIP requires a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads that focuses on performances. WSDOT selects projects for funding.

## Surface Transportation Block Grant

The Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program has the most flexible eligibilities among all the Federal-aid Highway programs. This reimbursement grant program promotes flexibility in state and local transportation decisions and provides flexible funding to best address state and local transportation needs.

- STBG-Rural (STP-Rural): Formula allocation for projects outside the urban area boundary. The County selects projects.
- STBG-State (STP-State): Formula allocation to WSDOT, for use on state highway projects. The State selects projects.
- Transportation Alternatives (TA): Provides funding for transportation alternative projects. These set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under TAP. RTC selects projects for the RTPPO region.

## Community Development Block Grant

Funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) are administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Funds can be used for public facilities, economic development, housing, and comprehensive projects that benefit low- and moderate-income households. Projects are selected by the County.

### **Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant**

The BIL established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program, with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over five years. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The SS4A program supports USDOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy and their goal of zero roadway deaths. The USDOT selects projects for funding.

## **State Funding**

The State's gas tax is the primary state source of highway maintenance and arterial construction funds. WSDOT administers many transportation-related grants that are available to local agencies. However, most of these programs are dependent on the legislature's allocating funding, and funding amounts can vary from year to year.

### **Washington State Department of Transportation**

The WSDOT administers state and federal funded state highway projects. State transportation revenues are divided into separate programs. The budget for these programs is determined by the state legislature. WSDOT then prioritizes projects and determines which projects can be constructed within the budget of each program.

### **Transportation Improvement Board Programs**

The Washington State Legislature created the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) to foster state investment in quality local transportation projects. TIB grant funds come from the revenue generated by 3 cents of the statewide gas tax and are distributed to cities and counties to fund transportation projects. The TIB identifies and funds the highest-ranking transportation projects based on criteria established by the Board for each program.

- Small City Arterial Program (SCAP): Funding provided to preserve and improve the arterial roadway system for cities under 5,000 population. A local match of 5 percent or greater is required. A jurisdiction with a population under 500 needs 0 percent local match.
- Small City Pavement Preservation Program (SCPPP): Provides funding for rehabilitation and maintenance of the small city roadway system.
- Relight Washington: Provides funding for cities converting to more energy-efficient LED streetlights.
- Complete Streets: Provides funding for local government arterial retrofits to improve safe access for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, public transportation users, and truck drivers.
- Federal Match: Funding provided to meet the local match of some federally funded projects in small cities (population under 5,000). TIB funds are made available following approval of federal funds.

### **County Road Administration Board**

The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) was created by the legislature in 1965 to provide statutory oversight of Washington's 39 county road departments. CRAB manages two grant programs to assist counties in meeting their transportation needs.

- Rural Arterial Program (RAP): Funding is provided for arterial road improvements in rural areas. RAP funds cannot be used for right-of-way. Projects are rated by five criteria and selected by the CRAB.
- County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP): Funding is provided for the preservation of existing paved county arterials. Funding is provided to counties as direct allocation based on paved arterial lane miles by the CRAB.

### **Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office**

The state of Washington's Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) manages nine grant programs, including the largest park grant program in Washington State. RCO creates and maintains opportunities for recreation, protects the best of the state's wild lands, and contributes to the state's effort to recover salmon from the brink of extinction.

### **Community Economic Revitalization Board:**

The Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) was established by the legislature to make loans and/or grants for public facilities, including roads, which will stimulate investment and job opportunities, reduce unemployment, and foster economic development. The CERB selects the projects it funds.

### **Consolidated State and Federal Grants**

WSDOT is responsible for distributing a variety of state and federal grants for public transportation programs. WSDOT created a consolidated application process that is used for both state and federal public transportation grants. Applicants only need to submit their proposals for transit funding every two years.

## **Local Funding**

Local revenue comes from a variety of sources such as gas tax, property tax, sales tax, permits, fees, and private development.

### **Local Gas Tax Revenue**

This is the distribution of the state gasoline tax to the cities and counties based on each jurisdiction's population. At the February 15, 2023 city council meeting, the City of White Salmon approved both a vehicle licensing fee of \$15 and a sales tax of 0.1 percent to fund future transportation projects, including road reconstruction and smaller chip seal projects. The revenue collected from the funding mechanisms will be added to a new Street Construction Fund. The annual \$15 licensing fee for drivers registered in the city is estimated to collect approximately \$48,360 per year, based on 3,224 currently licensed vehicles. The sales tax is estimated to collect approximately \$73,000 annually.

### **Road Improvement District (RID)**

A Road Improvement District (RID) can be formed and funded by properties benefiting from an improvement. They are usually formed at the request of property owners. Local government will build the project using revenue bonds from the RID.

### **Frontage Improvement Agreements**

Developments are often required to construct frontage improvements as a condition of their development. In cases where the development abuts a proposed road improvement project, it may be beneficial for the developer to pay the local government for their share of the frontage improvement and for local government to construct the improvement as part of the overall capital project.

### **Transportation Benefit District**

RCW 36.73.020 allows city or county governments to create transportation benefit districts and impose an additional vehicle registration fee to fund local transportation projects.

### **Transit Revenues**

Revenue sources that have been described previously are generally intended for roadway improvements. The transit system is generally funded by fare box proceeds, federal and state grants, and other local funds.

### **Fare Box**

Patrons of the Mount Adams Transportation Service pay a fare to use the service. The fare revenues pay for a portion of the operating cost.

### **Consolidated State and Federal Grants**

WSDOT is responsible for distributing a variety of state and federal grants for public transportation programs. WSDOT created a consolidated application process that is used for both state and federal public transportation grants. Applicants only need to submit their proposals for transit funding every two years.

### **Local Funds**

Senior Transportation is funded in part by the Southwest Agency on Aging and Skamania County. In addition, United Way provides additional public transit funding.

# APPENDIX C.

# REVISED CODE OF WASHINGTON

# TITLE 47 COMPLIANCE

# “CHECKLIST”

RTP Requirement from Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Chapter 47.80	Corresponding Chapter
Description of the designated regional transportation system.	Regional Roadways
Regional transportation goals, policies, and strategy.	Introduction
Regional land-use strategy. Existing and proposed land uses defined on local and regional comprehensive land-use plans determine the regional development strategy.	Regional Transportation Planning Context
Identification of regional transportation needs. An inventory of existing regional transportation facilities and services, an identification of current deficiencies, and a forecast of future travel demand will be carried out.	Transportation System Challenges and Needs
Development of LOS standards consistent with the Level of Service Bill.	Regional Roadways
Development of financial plan for necessary transportation system improvements.	Financial Outlook
Regional transportation system improvement and strategy plan. Specific facility or service improvements will be identified and priorities determined.	Regional Transportation Improvements
Establishment of a performance monitoring program. The performance of the transportation system will be monitored over time. The monitoring methodology, data collection, and analysis techniques to be used will be outlined.	Implementation and Performance Monitoring
Plans for implementation of the RTP	Introduction