

**State Fiscal Year 2011 Unified Planning Work Program  
July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011**

**Transportation Planning Guidance for  
Metropolitan Planning Organizations and  
Regional Transportation Planning Organizations**

February 17, 2010

Prepared by the WSDOT Transportation Planning Office with assistance from the Public Transportation Division, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration. Preliminary reviews and input provided by the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, the Northeast Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, the Thurston Regional Planning Council, the Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council, the Whatcom Council of Governments, and the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments

## Table of Contents

PURPOSE OF GUIDANCE .....	3
TIMEFRAMES AND FUNDING .....	3
FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS AND EMPHASIS AREAS .....	3
A. Federal Funding and Requirements: .....	3
A-1. Required Elements of the UPWP .....	3
A-2. Federal Emphasis Areas. ....	4
A-3. New Federal Climate Change and Livability Resources .....	4
B. State Funding and Requirements: .....	5
B-1. General .....	5
B-2. RTPO Duties .....	5
B-3. RTPO Duties and Local Comprehensive Plans .....	6
B-4. RTPO Opportunities that WSDOT Feels are Important .....	6
B-5. Incorporation of the Five State Transportation Policy Goals .....	6
B-6. Top Statewide Themes.....	7
C. Unfunded Tasks.....	8
D. Administrative Issues .....	8
Figure D-1    Suggested Template.....	8
Figure D-2    SFY 2011 UPWP Development Schedule.....	9

## **PURPOSE OF GUIDANCE**

The purpose of this Guidance document is to provide annual guidance for MPOs to meet unified work program requirements in 23 CFR 450.308 [revised as of February 14, 2007] and for RTPOs to meet work program requirements in agreements to meet the intent of RCW 47.80.010 through 47.80.050. Our objective in presenting the top state themes (Section B-6) in this guidance document is to ensure “no surprises” regarding state-level activities and issues with which MPOs and RTPOs may need to become involved.

## **TIMEFRAMES AND FUNDING**

The focus of the MPO/RTPO SFY 2010 UPWP continues to be on achievable outcomes during the second half of the 2009-2011 biennium (July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011). Several organizations are operating on two-year UPWPs that run through the whole biennium, providing easy transition to complete projects begun in SFY 2010.

Organizations with two-year UPWPs in place:

- Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
- Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- QuadCo Regional Transportation Planning Organization
- Skagit Metropolitan Planning Organization

Recognizing this, we have minimized changes in this Guidance document that might affect existing transportation planning efforts.

State funds not spent by June 30, 2011 will remain in the Motor Vehicle Fund. Therefore, RTPO UPWP tasks must be completed by June 30, 2011 and seek reimbursement from WSDOT shortly thereafter.

We also recognize you face flat or decreasing funding levels and federal funding uncertainty after February 28, 2010 when the current SAFETEA-LU extension expires. The funding situation is causing financial challenges at all levels.

## **FEDERAL AND STATE REQUIREMENTS AND EMPHASIS AREAS**

**A. Federal Funding and Requirements.** SAFETEA-LU expired September 30, 2009, and has been extended for a short period. New federal funding maybe subject to continuing resolutions, rescissions, and a new transportation act. We do not expect a new six-year bill or new federal transportation planning regulations as you prepare your 2011 UPWP, If major program or funding changes occur during 2010-11, UPWP amendments could become necessary.

**A-1. Required Elements of the UPWP.** 23 CFR 450.308 (c) [Revised as of February 14, 2007] requires MPOs to format their UPWP in sufficient detail to indicate:

## STATE FISCAL YEAR 2011 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM GUIDANCE

- Who (the MPO, state, public transportation operator, local government or consultant) will perform the work;
- The schedule for completing the work;
- The resulting products;
- The proposed funding by activity/task; and
- A summary of the total amounts and sources of federal and matching funds.

MPOs (and in Washington State, RTPOs) are the recognized “go-to agencies” for transportation planning in the region. To help the UPWP review team<sup>1</sup> grasp the nature of transportation planning in the region, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) reiterate their request that the MPO UPWP identify all major transportation planning activities in the region.

### **A-2. Federal Emphasis Areas.**

The FHWA and the FTA do not plan to issue any new formal guidance for planning emphasis areas. They suggest continuing focus on compliance with SAFETEA-LU. As you are all aware, MPOs are required to tie their work programs to the federal planning factors in CFR 450.306 found at: <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi>. These are:

- Support economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation; and
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

### **A-3. New Federal Climate Change and Livability Resources.**

There is some federal guidance on greenhouse gas calculations in the FHWA memorandum of November 17, 2008. The entire memorandum is at the following link: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/plnInduse.htm> (January 8, 2009 memorandum).

We have extracted one paragraph from the memorandum that relates to use of transportation planning funds for climate change issues:

“When agencies request transportation planning funds for activities related to climate change, primarily to reduce VMT and GHG emissions in an effort to meet state,

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<sup>1</sup> The UPWP Review Team is composed of representatives from FHWA, FTA, WSDOT HQ Regional Coordination Branch and Policy Development Branch, the Public Transportation Division, and the pertinent WSDOT Region Planning Manager’s office.

regional, local, or future federal reduction targets, they must employ generally-agreed to and reasonable assumptions, as well as state of the practice methodologies for the calculation of those VMT and GHG emissions reductions.”

The Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) has been hosting a series of forums to engage transportation and environmental professionals in a dialogue about emerging issues in policies, research applications, and best practices. In early 2009 the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency announced an unprecedented agreement to help U.S. families gain better access to affordable housing, more transportation options and lower transportation costs. The first forum was on November 9, 2009. Access to video, audio, and written formats and dates of future forums are at the CTE website at <http://cte.ncsu.edu/CTE/TechTransfer/Teleconferences/archive.asp>

## **B. State Funding and Requirements.**

### **B-1. General.**

No significant changes to state law or rule regarding RTPO duties have been introduced since the mid-1990s. The 2010 Legislative Session began January 11, 2010 and ends in 60 days. We will keep you informed of any pertinent changes. The overall RTPO state funding level remains unchanged from the last two biennia. However, RTPO allocations are subject to slight reallocation based on slight population changes since last year. If funding and/or legislative changes should be substantial for your organization, again, we will likely request appropriate UPWP amendments. We do not anticipate substantial change.

State requirements and requests are divided below into three items: general duties, the state’s five transportation policy goals, and top statewide themes we want to ensure are on your radar because of policy developments at the state level.

### **B-2. RTPO Duties.**

This section recaps the ongoing activities with which you are familiar. RTPO duties are defined in state law RCW 47.80.023. This law provides the basis for the RTPO UPWP. In addition, each RTPO has a Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Planning Organization Agreement with WSDOT that further details mutual expectations. The significant RTPO duties are paraphrased below for your convenience:

- Prepare and periodically update a transportation strategy for the region;
- Prepare a regional transportation plan;
- Where appropriate, certify that county-wide planning policies and the regional transportation plan are consistent;
- Develop a six-year regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in cooperation with WSDOT, public transportation providers, and local governments in the region;
- Designate a lead planning agency to coordinate preparation of the regional transportation plan and to carry out the other duties of the RTPO;
- Review level of service methodologies used by cities and counties to promote consistent regional evaluation of transportation facilities and corridors;

- Work with cities, counties, transit agencies, WSDOT, and others to develop level of service standards or alternative transportation performance measures;
- Every four years update the Human Service Transportation Plan, and every two years, submit a prioritized regional human service and transportation list to the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT);
- Prepare an annual Unified Planning Work Program;
- Prepare an annual Report of Progress, including a summary of work during the course of the fiscal year, costs incurred in accordance with the approved UPWP and budget, and problems or delays; and
- As a good business practice, RTPOs should continue to coordinate with the tribal agencies in their area. Tribal coordination should include as a minimum: invitation to RTPO meetings, encouragement to include tribal transportation projects in the RTPO TIP, and discussion on areas of mutual interest.

### **B-3. RTPO Duties and Local Comprehensive Plans.**

RTPO duties in RCW 47.080.023(3) required RTPOs to certify by December 31, 1996 the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties, cities, and towns within the region reflected the guidelines and principles developed by the RTPO and were consistent with the adopted regional transportation plan. Although the initial certification was in 1996, WSDOT still desires consistency be maintained between comprehensive plans and the regional transportation plan. This will likely require a greater time commitment for RTPOs, which have counties and cities undergoing comprehensive plan updates by December 2011. The counties and cities within the counties due for updates include:

- Clallam County and three cities;
- Clark County and eight cities;
- Jefferson County and one city;
- King County and 38 cities;
- Kitsap County and four cities;
- Pierce County and 19 cities;
- Snohomish County and 19 cities;
- Thurston County and seven cities; and
- Whatcom County and seven cities.

### **B-4. RTPO Opportunities that WSDOT Feels are Important.**

RTPOs are to work closely with local agencies to achieve consistency in their planning process. To accomplish this, RTPOs are encouraged to be involved in local transportation ordinance development and legislative activities about transportation, including such activities as:

- Monitoring, commenting, or testifying on new transportation-related ordinances local agencies may create; and
- Implementing or testifying on proposed rule changes to implement GMA.

### **B-5. Incorporation of the Five State Transportation Policy Goals.**

WSDOT requests that each UPWP describe the work programmed to support and address the five legislative transportation system policy goals of RCW 47.04.280 located at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=47.04.280>. These goals are:

- Preservation: To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services;
- Safety: To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system;
- Mobility: To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state;
- Environment: To enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment; and
- Stewardship: To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

We realize that addressing these five areas has for many years been an integral part of regional transportation planning programs. Documenting the specific efforts to support the direction set by the legislature is a valuable aspect of your written planning products.

#### **B-6. Top Statewide Themes.**

WSDOT and our federal partners recognize tight budgets make it challenging to address the mandatory work elements described in items B1-B5 above. However, WSDOT will continue to be engaging in several additional themes that MPOs and RTPOs are likely to want to stay informed about and/or be active partners in shaping. Thus, we encourage that you allocate a portion of your budget to working with us on some or all of these themes. Many of you are already involved and working with us in these areas.

WSDOT themes for SFY 2011 UPWPs include:

- Involvement in Statewide Planning activities
  - Washington State Transportation Commission: respond to requests for involvement from the Transportation Commission in development of their Washington Transportation Plan 2011-2030 Policy Plan update. This plan is due December 2010
  - Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan: publication will follow federal reauthorization
  - Modal and freight plans
  - Incorporation of pertinent aspects of statewide transportation plans into your RTP/MTP if being updated in this timeframe.
- Involvement in WSDOT Region planning activities
  - Respond to requests for involvement from WSDOT Regions in Planning Studies.
- Involvement in State and National legislative activity
  - Comments on State legislative actions
  - Federal transportation, livability, climate change and performance measures legislation and planning regulations, and any interim funding situations; commenting and reporting back on actions of national interest groups.

WSDOT is monitoring this very closely and several of you are doing likewise through your involvement in national organizations and on the Governor's working group. Your organization's tasks or level of involvement may vary and it is difficult to predict what issues may require your attention, only that there will likely be some. Your ability to respond very rapidly from time to time could be important including, but not limited to, analyzing and commenting on proposed federal surface transportation act bill elements, attending meetings, participating in conference calls, or reviewing comments to proposed legislation and perhaps testifying on proposed legislation. A deliverable could be a collaborative, combined Washington State response to prospective legislation.

- Involvement in Climate Change
  - The four affected RTPOs should collaborate with WSDOT to implement Sections 2a and 2b of the Governor's Executive Order 09-05 – Washington's Leadership on Climate Change<sup>2</sup>. During the next biennium, WSDOT encourages a collaborative effort to address the Executive Order and the requirements in RCW 47.01.440 related to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) benchmarks and RCW 70.235.020 related to greenhouse gas emission reductions limits for Washington State.

### **C. Unfunded Tasks.**

We recommend that MPOs and RTPOs continue, as in previous years, to include a list of priority unfunded transportation planning tasks and projects in the UPWP.

### **D. Administrative Issues.**

We are providing updates on several administrative issues for your use.

- Requirements for reimbursement
  - WSDOT tracks the expenses of all state transportation planning funds to show the products and results. We need clear descriptions of the expenses. Please identify UPWP work elements and activities on your invoice voucher, an attached document, or discuss the activities performed with the Headquarters Transportation Planning Office staff. This additional effort provides us with an indication of progress toward outcomes vs. progress in expenditures. This also strengthens the transparency and accountability of the program. We are always looking for ways to streamline this process and ask for your input.
- Contracting
  - RTPOs may contract for services to implement tasks identified in the UPWP. To complete all tasks, the MPOs and RTPOs may desire outside assistance. Before pursuing consulting help, consider discussing your needs with your WSDOT Region Planning Manager, as WSDOT may be able to provide the resources you need. If there is agreement that you should contract with a consultant please refer to the sections in the Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Planning Organization agreement related to subcontracting

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<sup>2</sup> This primarily affects the four largest RTPOs (Puget Sound Regional Council, Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, and Thurston Regional Planning Council).

## STATE FISCAL YEAR 2011 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM GUIDANCE

and purchases. The WSDOT Transportation Planning Office (TPO) must approve the UPWP expenditure of Metropolitan Planning (PL) funds, Federal Transit Administration section 5303 funds, and state RTPO funds before any consultant selection process begins.

- Amendments
  - UPWP amendments are encouraged where needed to reprioritize work, address changes in funding, and to address new issues. As you know, your RTPO board and the WSDOT Policy Development and Regional Coordination Branch must approve all amendments before submission to WSDOT. TPO approves amendments for the non-TMAs and FHWA/FTA approve amendments for the TMAs.
- On-site review
  - A suggested template for the spring 2010 MPO/ RTPO on-site UPWP review meeting is below. We would like to encourage that the meeting follow this format, as it is the one event each year where WSDOT HQ, Region, FTA and FHWA staff make a point of in-person visits with you. RTPOs can expect a similar agenda without attendance by federal representatives.

### **Figure D-1 Suggested Template MPO/RTPO FY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program On-Site Review Meeting**

Introductions and meeting objectives	WSDOT Headquarters Staff
MPO/RTPO Presentation	MPO/RTPO Staff
Special successes during State Fiscal Year 2010	
Major work in progress	
Issues facing the MPO/RTPO	
Overview of the MPO/RTPO Work Plan	
MPO/RTPO Expectations from the 2010 Census, if any	
Federal Agency Feedback	Ned Conroy & Sid Stecker
Identify highpoints, if any	
Identify any that will be included in written feedback	
WSDOT Feedback	WSDOT Headquarter Staff
Identify highpoints, if any	
Identify any that will be included in written feedback	
How can the federal-state team assist more?	WSDOT Headquarter Staff
Next Steps	WSDOT Headquarter Staff
Submission of written comments to MPO/RTPO	

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2011 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Review dates of UPWP approval process  
 Confirm timetable for completion

Closing Comments

MPO/RTPO Staff

Adjourn

Suggested meeting attendees (if available) include the MPO/RTPO Transportation Manager, Executive Director, TAC Chair, Policy Board Chair, WSDOT Region Planning Manager, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, WSDOT Headquarters Transportation Planning Office Staff, and Public Transportation Division Staff.

Since they are RTPOs only, the meeting at the Northeast Washington RTPO, the Palouse RTPO, the Peninsula RTPO, and the QuadCo RTPO will not include representatives from FHWA or FTA. Federal Agency Feedback and federal team assistance will not be discussed as these RTPOs receive only State of Washington transportation planning funds.

- Schedule  
 The SFY 2011 UPWP Development Schedule is below:

**Figure D-2**  
**SFY 2011 UPWP Development Schedule**

<u>KEY DATE</u>	<u>KEY ACTION DUE</u>
March 8, 2010	MPOs send draft UPWPs electronically to the WSDOT Regional Coordination Branch, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration. RTPOs send draft UPWPs electronically to only the WSDOT Regional Coordination Branch.
March 22 - April 23, 2010	The Regional Coordination Branch, Public Transportation Division, FHWA, and FTA representatives meet with MPOs to review draft UPWPs. Because many school spring vacations occur during the period March 29 – April 9, 2010, on-site visits will not be scheduled during this two-week period. Note: WSDOT will meet separately with RTPOs not affiliated with MPOs.
April 30, 2010	The WSDOT Regional Coordination Branch submits formal UPWP review comments electronically to the MPOs and RTPOs.
June 1, 2010	MPOs and RTPOs submit the adopted UPWP electronically to the WSDOT Regional Coordination Branch.
June 7, 2010	The Regional Coordination Branch submits MPO adopted UPWPs electronically to FHWA/FTA for federal approval.
June 30, 2010	FHWA/FTA UPWP approval is due to WSDOT Regional Coordination Branch.
July 1, 2010	Approved SFY 2011 UPWPs Take Effect