

Chapter 455 Land Use and Transportation

455.01	Introduction
455.02	Applicable statutes, regulations, executive orders, and MOUs
455.03	Land Use and Transportation considerations during project development
455.04	Analysis and documentation requirements
455.05	External engagement
455.06	Internal roles and responsibilities
455.07	Applicable permits and approvals
455.08	Mitigation
455.09	Abbreviations and acronyms
455.10	Glossary

455.01 Introduction

Land use is a term that describes the modification and management of the natural environment for human purposes. Land use and transportation are closely related. Transportation decisions affect land use by modifying accessibility to an area. Land use decisions affect transportation by changing traffic patterns around that area.

This chapter includes policies relating to the integration of land use and transportation, including bicycling and pedestrian facilities, transit, farmland, resource conservation areas, recreational lands, and wild and scenic rivers.

455.02 Applicable statutes, regulations, executive orders, and MOUs

455.02(1) Land Use

Federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, and MOUs that specifically regulate land use include:

- **Rivers and Harbors Act** – Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act ([33 USC 410](#) et seq.) is administered by the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).
- **Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) of 1981** – [7 USC 73 § 4201-4209](#). Implementing regulations are in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) - [7 CFR 658](#) and are administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- **Section 6(f)** – Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act codified at [54 USC 2003 § 200301-200310](#). In Washington State, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) administers funding in accordance with [RCW 79A.25](#).
- **National Trails System Act** – [16 USC 1241-1251](#).
- **Wilderness Act** – [16 USC 1131-1136](#).
- **Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA)** – PL 90-542, [16 USC Chapter 28](#).
- **Environmental consequences** – [40 CFR 1502.16\(a\)\(5\)](#) – requires that Environmental Assessments (EAs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) include a discussion of possible conflicts between the proposed action and the federal, tribal, regional, state, and local land use plans objectives, policies, controls, and regulations.

State statutes, regulations, executive orders, and MOUs that specifically regulate land use include:

- **Scenic River System Act** – [RCW 79A.55](#).
- **Aquatic Lands Act** – [RCW 79.105](#). In Washington State, the Department of Natural Resources’s (DNR) implementing regulations are in [WAC 332-30](#).
- **Farmland Preservation** – [Executive Order 80-01](#).
- **Farmland and Forest Preservation MOU between Washington State Conservation Commission and WSDOT (1982)** – requires coordination between WSDOT and appropriate Washington State Conservation Commission and Conservation District to assure that roadway projects minimize agricultural land conversions. A copy of the MOU is available in [Appendix B](#).
- **Forest Practices** – [RCW 76.09](#)
- **Growth Management Act (GMA)** – [RCW 36.70A](#) (including local Critical Areas Ordinances).
- **Environmental Mitigation in Highway Construction Projects** – [RCW 47.01.305](#)
- **Shoreline Management Act (SMA)** – [RCW 90.58](#)

455.02(2) *Transportation*

Federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, and MOUs that specifically regulate transportation include:

- **USDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy Statement** – [CFR Title 23](#) Highways, [Title 42](#) The Public Health and Welfare, and [Title 49](#) Transportation.
- **Section 10 of the River and Harbors Act (1899)** – [33 USC 403](#).
- **General Bridge Act** – [33 USC Section 525](#) (formerly Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbors Act) and implementing regulations [33 CFR Parts 114-115](#).
- **National Trails System Act** – [16 USC 1241-1251](#).
- **FAA Regulations (1975)** – [14 CFR Part 77](#), [23 USC 318](#), [23 CFR 620 Subpart A](#).
- **FRA Regulations (1999)** – [64 Fed. Reg. 28545](#).
- **FHWA and FTA Regulations** – [23 CFR 771](#).

State statutes, regulations, executive orders, and MOUs that specifically regulate transportation include:

- **Aviation** – [RCW 14.12](#), [RCW 36.70A.510](#), and [RCW 36.70.547](#).
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian Traffic** – [RCW 47.30.020](#) and [RCW 47.30.030](#).
- **City Streets as Part of State Highways** – [RCW 47.24](#).
- **Design Standards** – [WAC 468-18-040](#).
- **State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)** – [WAC 197-11](#) and [WAC 468-12](#).
- **Transportation Facilities and Services of Statewide Significance** – [RCW 47.06.140](#).
- **Vehicular Traffic – Essential Public Facilities** – Growth Management Act (GMA) [RCW 36.70A](#).
- **DNR Easements** – [RCW 47.12](#) grants WSDOT authority to obtain an easement from DNR highway, ferry, rail and other state transportation projects.
- **Secretary’s Executive Order E 1113** – Sustainability

455.03 Land Use and Transportation considerations during project development

455.03(1) Planning

See [Chapter 200](#), it explains WSDOT's transportation planning and environmental linkage efforts. Determine if a WSDOT transportation plan has been done for your project area.

Determine the existing and planned land uses that are adjacent to, and served by, the study area. Land use is controlled by city and county governments through the comprehensive planning process under the Growth Management Act (GMA). WSDOT plans must be consistent with adopted comprehensive plans developed under GMA. In addition, determine if there are federal land management plans, metropolitan and regional multimodal plans, areas habitat plans, or tribal land use plans that are relevant to your project area.

Consider planned development, population growth, changes in land use, effects on communities and the environment, future demand on the system, applicable or likely zoning changes, travel trends, and other relevant issues for your planning product's conclusions and recommendations.

Review WSDOT's modal and system plans on the [Statewide Plans webpage](#) to ensure your project's land use considerations are consistent with applicable approved statewide plans.

Under [23 USC 168\(d\)](#), the Federal lead agency may adopt and use planning products in the environmental review process of a project.

455.03(2) Scoping

See [Chapter 300](#) for more information on Scoping.

Review any relevant planning products.

The following are documented in the Environmental Review Summary (ERS) Land Use tab to help determine the level of analysis needed for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). These assessments are usually conducted as a desktop exercise and do not require field verification.

- Determine if there are any properties within the project limits that used funds from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act (1965) or any other RCO grant funds. If yes, refer to the [Section 455.04\(2\)](#) and [Section 6\(f\)](#) guidance.
- Determine if there is a Wild and Scenic River (state or federally designated, 'study river', or on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory (NRI) in or near the project area. If yes, refer to the [Wild and Scenic Rivers guidance](#).
- Determine if the project is located on a state or national scenic byway. If yes, the project may need a visual assessment. Refer to [Chapter 459](#) and [WSDOT's visual resources webpage](#).
- Determine if your project area includes designated farmland. If yes, refer to WSDOT's [Farmland guidance](#).

455.03(3) Design

The design of state transportation improvement projects should support approved land use and transportation plans.

Follow the Design Standards in [WAC 468-18-040](#).

Refer to *Design Manual* [Section 1102.02](#) for Land Use context.

Refer to *Design Manual* [Section 1102.03](#) for Transportation context.

Early consultation is required with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and appropriate state and local agricultural agencies where farmlands are directly or indirectly impacted by any alternative (see [WSDOT's Farmland guidance](#)).

Consultation with the National Park Service (NPS) is required for projects that may affect rivers in the NRI that are suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

If NEPA is complete, then there may still be design needs for permitting. For example, wetland mitigation site design can impact farmlands.

455.03(4) Construction

Take measures to reduce impacts to all modes of transportation and surrounding land uses during construction. Implement agreed-upon mitigation actions during construction to offset construction impacts. For more information on incorporating environmental commitments into contracts, see [Section 590](#). For information on commitments during construction, see [Section 600.03](#).

If construction has significant impacts to traffic, as defined in [Design Manual Chapter 1010](#), follow the approved Transportation Management Plan.

455.03(5) Maintenance and Operations

WSDOT owns and manages approximately 100,000 acres of unpaved land adjacent to the highway system. Performance criteria for maintaining these areas is outlined in region maintenance area [Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Plans](#).

455.04 Analysis and documentation requirements

The land use and transportation analyses are core elements, providing the basis for modal choice, alternative development, and selection of design elements. The project's study or identified influence area should be large enough to encompass a greater area than just the highway corridor and should allow for adequate evaluation of the relationship between land use and transportation in the project vicinity. The potential effects of projects on transit, pedestrians, bicycles, rail crossings, ferry operations, airport safety zones, parking, local development patterns, and vehicle traffic on adjacent and connecting roadways need to be evaluated and discussed in the environmental document. The effects can be positive or negative, temporary, or long-term. Mitigation for unavoidable impacts should also be discussed. Consult with local, regional, and tribal entities to ensure consistency with land use plans.

The goal of the analysis is to help decision makers understand the effect the transportation project has on land use and development patterns. The analysis must:

- Describe any direct project impacts resulting from the conversion of land to transportation uses. The analysis should include a discussion of the temporary (construction) impacts and long term (operational) impacts. It is best to include a map showing the existing and proposed right of way lines, existing land use (as described in the adopted comprehensive plan) and acreage to be converted to transportation uses in support of the analysis.
- Determine if the project is consistent with the existing adopted comprehensive plans and development policies. In Washington State, land use is controlled by city and county governments through the comprehensive planning process required by the GMA. The state Local Project Review Act of 2001 precludes WSDOT from revisiting land use decisions included in the adopted comprehensive plan during project review. To receive Federal funding, a transportation project must be consistent with local planning (i.e., the goals and objectives of the project should match the goals and objectives stated in the comprehensive plan).
- Describe development trends in the study area and any reasonably foreseeable impacts caused by development that may occur in response to the project. This includes potential development or redevelopment of buildable lands within the influence area of the transportation project. These changes are driven and constrained by social and economic factors beyond WSDOT or the local public agency's control. Such effects are difficult to predict and often controversial. Projects that do not increase vehicle capacity, change the Level of Service (LOS), or significantly reduce travel time are unlikely to change land use. However, projects that add transit or active transportation capacity can have positive impacts on land use and economic development. Project teams should also review the potential impacts of planned local development or redevelopment on the project. See [Chapter 412](#) for more information on indirect and cumulative effects.
- Discuss actions that were taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate direct land use impacts. Potential or recommended mitigation measures for indirect impacts should also be described. The discussion should include the party responsible for such mitigation and the likelihood of implementation of such measures. See more in [Section 455.08](#) Mitigation.
- Evaluate and compare the potential impact for all alternatives, including the No-Build alternative (see [Section 400.07](#)). The results of this analysis should inform the indirect effects analysis conducted for other disciplines and support the cumulative effects analysis.

455.04(1) Right size to classification (CE, EA, EIS) or level of significance to land use and transportation

Determine the level of detail that is needed based on complexity/size of project and severity of impacts.

Projects classified as Categorical Exclusions / Categorical Exemptions (CE – see [Chapter 300](#)) typically do not require analysis for potential land use impacts under [23 CFR 771.117\(a\)](#) because, by definition, these projects:

- Do not induce significant impacts to planned growth or land use.
- Do not require relocation of significant numbers of people.
- Do not have significant impacts on travel patterns.
- Do not have significant environmental impacts.

For CEs, document:

- The potential direct project impacts to resource lands (critical areas, shorelines, forest/timber lands, mineral resource lands, farmland, scenic highways and byways, and parks and recreation lands) by completing the appropriate section of the ERS/ECS form and/or a SEPA Checklist (see [Chapter 400](#)).
- The temporary construction impacts to traffic and ways to minimize those impacts in the ERS/ECS form (see [Design Manual Chapter 1010](#)) or by completing a SEPA checklist. If the project has significant construction impacts to traffic, as defined in [Design Manual Chapter 1010](#), attach a copy of the Transportation Management Plan to the ECS form.

More detailed analysis may be needed for complex projects that do not qualify as a CE. This may include projects:

- With substantial direct land use effects (positive or negative) despite proposed mitigation (e.g., a project with a large number of right of way acquisitions or displacements).
- With substantial indirect effects (positive or negative) on land use despite proposed mitigation (e.g., a project that would cause sizable changes in planned development within the study area, or a project found to be inconsistent with planned growth).
- In fast growing areas with significant amounts of undeveloped land, where additional analysis is needed to determine probable effects (e.g., construction of a new interchange in a rural area).

455.04(2) Analysis and documentation for NEPA

This section describes the analysis requirements and what to consider when evaluating the significance of potential impacts for actions that are subject to NEPA.

Land Use

Large, complex, or environmentally controversial projects will need more detailed documentation of the land use analysis. Because the land use analysis influences many other disciplines (transportation, noise, air quality, visual, and social) it is important to thoroughly document the participants, assumptions, methodologies, results, and uncertainties to provide transparency and legal sufficiency. This may be done in a technical appendix to the environmental document.

Four key areas should be documented:

1. Identify and explain key underlying assumptions (such as growth rates) and explain how those assumptions were made.
2. Describe the methods used to develop land use forecasting results. Explaining the inherent advantages and limitations in the analysis process and data sources can be especially useful in establishing a “reasoned basis” for the methodology.
3. Summarize and explain the land use analysis results including an explanation of patterns in the data, causal relationships, and anomalous or unexpected results.
4. Systematically review assumptions, data, and results to ensure internal consistency across related disciplines (noise, air quality, visual quality, and social) to make sure they do not contradict the land use analysis results.

Growth Management Act (GMA)

[RCW 36.70A.070](#) requires that cities and counties that are subject to the GMA include a land use element in their comprehensive plan. Determine existing and planned land uses in cities and counties and how the project may affect local land use decisions.

Transportation

The transportation analysis supports the Purpose and Need by providing quantitative measures that demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed project. It may also provide a method of comparing the relative merits of the alternatives.

The transportation analysis should consider the significance of estimated induced demand. Induced demand is the volume of traffic that is drawn to a new or expanded road by providing additional capacity. The induced demand comes from numerous sources, including trips diverted from other routes, discretionary trips that may not have been made without the service improvement, and improved access to employment and other activity locations.

Induced demand may be estimated using models, such as travel or trip generation models. Although models may be used to approximate results, all models rely on assumptions and are inherently limited. Therefore, known assumptions and limitations should be documented with any modeling results.

Section 24 of FHWA's [Technical Advisory TA 6640.8A](#) states that the analysis should include:

- A review of the local comprehensive transportation and land use plans (see [Design Manual Chapter 1102](#)).
- An evaluation of the proposed project's consistency with traffic requirements generated by planned land use. The discussion should include effects (both positive and negative) on safety, vehicles, transit, freight, bicycles, pedestrians, and parking.
- A discussion of how the project's short-term impacts (both positive and negative) and use of resources contribute to the enhancement of the area's long-term productivity.

Compliance with [FHWA's Interim Guidance on the Application of Travel and Land Use Forecasting in NEPA](#) is recommended, but not required for projects that use a travel demand model.

Farmland

The [Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act \(FPPA\)](#) is intended to minimize the extent to which federal activities contribute to the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural uses. The FPPA requires agencies to examine the impact of their programs and projects before they approve any activity that would convert farmland to other uses. WSDOT complies with this requirement by completing the appropriate form in coordination with the NRCS.

The NRCS recognizes three categories of farmland (see [Section 455.10](#) Glossary for definitions) based on their soil types:

- Prime Farmland.
- Unique Farmland.
- Farmland of statewide or local importance.

The following are exempt from farmland analysis:

- Lands with soil types not suitable for crops (for example, sand dunes).
- Farmlands that have already been converted to industrial, commercial, residential, or recreational use.
- Farmlands already committed to urban development (for example, land within the adopted Urban Growth Area (UGA) and other urbanized areas).

The definition in 7 CFR 658.2(a) includes specific information to better understand how urban development lands are determined that will help project teams decide whether a project is exempt from analysis.

Because the rating is based on soil type, soils such as timber land, vacant land, and open space that has never been farmed may be designated as prime farmland. Therefore, for all non-exempt projects, the WSDOT project office should refer to the [Land Use](#) webpage for the documentation process and the [NRCS farmlands](#) webpage for FPPA procedural requirements.

State law [RCW 47.01.305](#) also directs WSDOT to use public lands for wetland mitigation sites before using land designated as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance (as defined in [RCW 36.70A](#)) for highway projects. If public lands are unavailable, WSDOT is directed to make every effort to avoid any net loss of agricultural lands.

Notify the NEPA Specialist immediately if eminent domain is being considered. See more in [Section 455.08](#) Mitigation.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) designates certain rivers (or river segments) for special protection to preserve them in a free-flowing condition for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The act also identifies various “study rivers” for possible inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Currently, all of the designated Wild and Scenic Rivers in Washington State are administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS) in accordance with [36 CFR 297](#). See [Chapter 457](#) for guidance on how the WSRA applies to Section 4(f) (of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966) resources.

Closely examine the management plan and coordinate with the appropriate USFS office early in the environmental review and design process. Projects in a designated or study wild and scenic river that require a Section 404 permit from the Corps also require completion of a written Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 determination by the USFS. Find more guidance on how to comply with the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and NRI on our [Land Use](#) webpage.

Federally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers within Washington include:

- Skagit River from the pipeline crossing at Sedro-Wooley upstream to and including the mouth of Bacon Creek and tributaries as listed below:
 - The Cascade River from its mouth to the junction of its North and South Forks.
 - The South Fork to the boundary of the Glacier Peak wilderness Area.
 - The Suiattle River from its mouth to the boundary of the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area at Milk Creek.

- The Sauk River from its mouth to its junction with Elliot Creek.
- The North Fork of the Sauk River from its junction with the South Fork of the Saul to the boundary of the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area.
- Klickitat River from Wheeler Creek to the confluence with the Columbia River, classified as a recreational river.
- White Salmon River from the confluence of Gilmer Creek (near the town of BZ Corner) to the confluence with Buck Creek; classified as a part wild and part scenic river.

Federally designated Study Rivers within Washington State include:

- Skagit River from Mount Vernon to and including the mouth of Bacon Creek, plus additional segments of the Sauk, Suiattle, and Cascade tributaries.
- Klickitat River upstream of the confluence of the Little Klickitat River to the Yakama Indian Reservation boundary.
- Snake River from the town of Asotin to the Oregon state line.
- White Salmon River upstream of the confluence with Gilmer Creek.

The President's 1979 Environmental Message Directive on Wild and Scenic Rivers requires federal agencies to protect and manage rivers in the NRI that are suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System as part of their normal planning and environmental review process. The directive, a listing of NRI rivers in Washington State, and the procedure for consulting on projects that may affect these rivers is available on the [NPS's NRI website](#).

Section 6(f) of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF)

Projects that impact recreational lands require special consideration. [Chapter 457](#) describes United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) specific requirements for considering impacts to recreation and resource lands (i.e., Section 4(f) properties). However, there are a number of federal and state grants given to recreation managers that require some type of compensation when lands are converted and can no longer be used for recreational purposes.

The LWCF is a federal grant program which helps pay for the acquisition of outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Grants are awarded to cities, counties, Native American Tribes, state agencies, and park and school districts. In Washington State the [Recreation and Conservation Office \(RCO\)](#) oversees many grant programs including the LWCF and represents the interests of the NPS to ensure compliance with federal requirements.

Section 6(f) of the LWCF prohibits the conversion of property acquired or developed with these grants to a non-recreational purpose without the approval of the NPS or their state designee. Therefore, a Section 6(f) analysis is also required if the project must use land purchased or improved using LWCF funding.

If property purchased or improved through LWCF is impacted by a project, the property owner (grant sponsor) is responsible for compliance with all 6(f) requirements even if the impact is caused by another party, such as WSDOT. Therefore, conversion of a Section 6(f) property to transportation uses requires early coordination with RCO and the property owner (grant sponsor) to ensure:

- All practical alternatives to property conversion have been evaluated and no reasonable alternative exists to the conversion that would meet the project's purpose and need.

- A mutually acceptable replacement property is found. The replacement property is reasonably equivalent in usefulness and location and fulfills the same recreational functions as the original property.
- The replacement property has an equal or greater fair market value than the original property.
- The public has been informed of the proposed conversion, been given a minimum of 30 days to comment on the change and their comments have been considered and adequately addressed by RCO/NPS.
- The replacement property is not designated recreation land owned by another public agency (i.e., you cannot replace a park with an existing park and thereby reduce the total amount of recreation land available to the community).
- A partial conversion will not adversely affect the recreational function of the remainder. If the remainder is not viable, the whole parcel must be replaced.
- NEPA, ESA, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and all other Federal approval requirements have been satisfactorily completed for the project as well as the conversion. Remember: the environmental approvals must include review of the portion of the recreation land to be converted and the proposed replacement site ([LWCF State Assistance Program Manual](#) Chapter 8 (E)(3)(g)).

The Federal regulations stipulate that the environmental review be conducted in a neutral and factual manner and should not include statements that promote or justify the action precipitating the conversion.

WSDOT project teams should coordinate with RCO as soon as the possibility of conversion is discovered to minimize project delay by ensuring:

- Agreement on the extent of impact caused by the project.
- The replacement property (if proposed) is determined acceptable by RCO prior to expenditure on appraisals or environmental review.

If RCO discovers an unauthorized conversion, RCO must notify WSDOT of the violation. RCO's notice will require that the project cease immediately until WSDOT satisfactorily completes the conversion process. WSDOT will also need to provide additional documentation to RCO. This documentation could include discussion of alternatives considered and a description of the work that required the use of a Section 6(f) property without prior notification and coordination with RCO. Standard procedures for working with RCO are described in their manual (RCO [Manual 7](#) Section 3(6)).

The [Recreation and Conservation Funding Board \(RCFB\)](#) must approve conversions of Section 6(f) properties. The conversion approval process can be very lengthy, so plan for this in the overall project schedule. RCO advises that any request for a conversion approval be pursued as soon as a potential conversion is identified. The complicated conversion process includes several administrative tasks before a proposal will be reviewed by the RCFB. Furthermore, the RCFB meets on a quarterly schedule, and the proposal must be received at least six weeks in advance of a decision by the RCFB. Further details regarding the approval process and document requirements should be sought from an [RCO Grant Manager](#).

Small conversions of less than 5 acres or 10 percent of the Section 6(f) property (whichever is smaller) may be accomplished under a less complex process. To qualify, the conversion must meet specific minimum size and cost requirements. WSDOT project teams must coordinate with RCO for small conversions. Size and cost requirement and the review process are described on RCO’s website in [Manual 7](#) Section 3).

Because properties purchased with LWCF are to be used for recreation, LWCF properties (Section 6(f) properties) qualify as Section 4(f) properties (see [Chapter 457](#)). Although all Section 6(f) properties are Section 4(f) properties, two different processes are needed to assess a project’s impacts to satisfy federal requirements. While Section 6(f) and Section 4(f) often apply to the same resources they are parts of different laws and there are some key differences:

- Section 6(f) applies only to properties acquired or improved with LWCF.
- Section 4(f) applies to all publicly owned parks, recreation areas and wildlife and waterfowl refuges regardless of the funding source.
- Section 6(f) applies to all programs and policies for all federal agencies. Section 4(f) only applies to USDOT programs and policies.
- Mitigation for impacts to Section 6(f) requires replacement with land of equal value, location, usefulness, and function as the impaired property. Mitigation for Section 4(f) impacts is much more flexible and may not require replacement.

Comparison of Section 6(f) and Section 4(f) below summarizes the differences between Section 6(f) and Section 4(f).

Exhibit 455-1 Comparison of Section 6(f) and Section 4(f)		
Law	Section 6(f)	Section 4(f)
Legislative Reference	Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Section 6(f).	Section 4(f) of DOT Act
Purpose	Preserve, develop, and assure the quality and quantity of outdoor parks and recreation areas and refuges for present and future generations.	Avoid use of public parks, waterfowl and wildlife refuges, and significant historic sites.
Application	Applies to programs and policies of any federal agency and can apply to fully state funded projects where no federal nexus exists. When projects impact recreational lands purchased or improved with Land and Water Conservation Funds.	Applies only to programs and policies undertaken by USDOT agencies. When projects impact significant public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and significant historic sites are “used” for a highway project regardless of funding source.
Mitigation	Requires that impacted resourced be replaced with lands of equal value, location, and usefulness.	Allows flexible mitigation opportunities.
Final Approval	NPS through RCO.	USDOT Agency lead.
Relationship to Each Other	Section 4(f) is not an integral part of the Section 6(f) process.	Section 6(f) may influence the decision making during the consideration of minimization of harm during the Section 4(f) evaluation process, but they are independent processes.

For more information about Section 4(f) evaluations see [Chapter 457](#).

Documentation and procedural requirements for complying with NEPA differ between federal lead agencies. Conversion of a 6(f) property cannot be accomplished until we have satisfied all the NEPA, ESA, and Section 106 requirements for both the property proposed to be converted and the proposed replacement property. The exact requirements will vary depending on individual circumstances and the other federal agencies involved. Early coordination with RCO, NPS, and any land-owning agencies involved is recommended to ensure that our process meets their requirements and eliminate rework.

The RCO also manages many other state and federal grant programs, aside from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program. These grants fund public recreation sites and facilities (such as parks, trails, trailheads, boat launches, habitat areas and gun ranges), and habitat improvements. RCO awards grants to counties, cities, nonprofit organizations, lead entities, state and federal agencies and Native American tribes. Decisions on granting and conversion of lands that have received grants occur through one of two funding boards: the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. It is important to research potentially impacted trails, parks, habitat areas, etc. to determine if RCO grant funds have been used to purchase and/or support the site. Impacts to these funded sites are handled in a similar manner to what is described in the section above concerning 6(f). Early coordination with RCO and the land owner (grant sponsor) is important to ensure all compliance and conversion policies are followed as outlined in the signed project agreement form, as found in RCO [Manual 7](#) Section 3.

Resource Conservation Areas

Resource Conservation Areas have previously been called Beautification Areas, Landscape Areas, Landscape or Conservation Easements, or Environmental Commitment Areas on Right of Way Plans and Real Estate Services Maps. They are natural areas, outside of limited access areas, that were purchased or set aside to provide a natural, vegetated buffer between the highway and adjacent land uses.

It is FHWA and WSDOT policy that impacts these areas must be avoided - see [2016 FHWA letter](#) regarding impacts to Resource Conservation Areas. However, due to the constrained, linear character of highway facilities, project impacts may be unavoidable. If impacts are unavoidable, they must be minimized and mitigated. See the [Roadside Policy Manual](#) M 3110 for more information.

Transit

The state's multimodal system supports local and regional transit operators. Buses and vanpools use state highways, park and rides, and other WSDOT managed assets. WSDOT projects have the potential to benefit and impact transit operations by changing traffic flow and travel patterns. Highway, ferry, and rail construction projects may affect travel time, relocate or remove transit stops, or change pedestrian access to transit stops by adding median barriers or relocating cross walks. Consult with the WSDOT Regional Transit Coordination Division in the Central Puget Sound area and with the WSDOT Public Transportation Division elsewhere in the state to locate the transit agencies most likely to be affected by your proposed project. Early and continuous coordination with local and transit agencies should be undertaken to maximize the potential benefits to transit operations of the proposed project and mitigate any negative construction or operational impacts.

The environmental review should include potential impacts to the transit system. Areas of concern include the effect on existing transit operations (area and frequency of service, travel time, and patronage), access to transit by people walking and bicycling, changes in traffic distribution, local circulation patterns, and parking. Impacts include temporary (detours, temporary route closures, etc.) and long-term.

For more information on assessing environmental impacts related to transit, refer to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) [Transportation Impacts](#) webpage.

Waterborne Navigation and Ferry Facilities

Ferry Terminals are typically located in navigable waters within the corporate limits of cities where harbor lines have been established by the state Harbor Lines Commission. According to the [State Constitution](#) (Article XV Harbors and Tide Waters), harbor areas are “forever reserved for landings, wharves, streets, and other conveniences of navigation and commerce.”

The DNR manages the use of harbor areas in accordance with the Aquatic Lands Act ([RCW 79.105](#)). These areas are also subject to local land use regulations, including shoreline, critical area, and zoning regulations.

U.S. Homeland Security regulations ([33 CFR 165](#)) impose security zones at ferry terminals and around vessels. A 25-yard separation zone is required when vessels are at the dock, and a 100-yard separation zone is required when the vessel is in route. Potential impacts to these security zones should be addressed in the land use analysis.

Ferry Terminal projects often receive FTA funds, and/or the facilities may have received FTA funding. Washington State Ferries (WSF) projects may also be subject to FTA requirements. FTA procedures are described on their [website](#). The process for complying with the NEPA and federal surface transportation statutes is defined in the joint [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)/Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)/FTA Environmental Impact and Related Procedures](#) (23 CFR 771).

Road projects typically have little impact on waterborne navigation. However, river crossings may affect shipping routes or access to port facilities. Section (V)(G)(11) of FHWA [Technical Advisory TA 6640.8A](#) requires an analysis of potential impacts to waterborne navigation and a discussion of mitigation for adverse impacts. Any project that requires a Section 9 (of the Rivers and Harbors Act) permit must also show evidence of coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) in accordance with the FHWA/USCG Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Early coordination is required during the project planning phase, prior to formal project initiation (see the table in Section V for specific requirements). Where the preferred alternative requires a Section 9 permit, the NEPA documentation should include an exhibit showing the horizontal and vertical navigational clearances for each permit activity.

Highway projects adjacent to ferry terminals may affect ferry loading and unloading procedures, transit access, or parking. Coordination with WSF terminal operations staff and a discussion of the affects (both beneficial and adverse) to ferry operations should be included in the environmental document. Signal timing, turning movements, access to parking, transit stops, pedestrian flow and bicycle connections may be important factors.

The environmental document must evaluate the effect of proposed ferry operations on the adjacent street system for vehicular traffic, transit access, pedestrian flow, and bicycle access.

Rail Facilities

There are over 3,000 miles of railroad lines in Washington, providing mobility for freight and passengers moving into, out of, within, and through the state. Two Class I railroads, the BNSF Railway and the Union Pacific Railroad, as well as 23 short-line railroads, operate through communities in Washington.

The Palouse River and Coulee City (PCC) rail system, owned and operated by WSDOT, is the longest short-line freight rail system in Washington. WSDOT contracts with private railroads to operate each of the branches.

In addition, Sound Transit owns and operates some rail lines, such as the Point Defiance Bypass route in Tacoma, and commuter light rail.

WSDOT works with a diverse group of federal agencies depending on who owns or regulates the rail line, including the FHWA, FRA, FTA, and Surface Transportation Board (STB). FHWA is typically the lead when a multimodal transportation project includes work on, over, or adjacent to rail facilities. Types of projects include grade crossing improvements, nearby roadway intersection improvements, and infrastructure improvements to support passenger rail service. When FHWA is the sole lead federal agency, apply the [Design Manual Chapter 1350](#) policies and procedures for coordinating highway and rail projects. It also includes requirements for conducting a safety analysis for at-grade crossings and signalized intersections in the vicinity of rail crossings.

If FRA is the federal lead, the EA/EIS must assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on both passenger and freight transportation, by all modes, including bicycles and pedestrians. The analysis should address local, regional, national, and international perspectives and include a discussion of construction and long-term impacts on vehicular traffic congestion. When FRA is the federal lead, refer to their agency-specific information on assessing environmental impacts on the [FRA & NEPA website](#). As of November 28, 2018, FRA conducts environmental reviews according to its revised NEPA legislation and regulations contained in [23 CFR Part 771](#), Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, and [23 CFR Part 774](#), Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges, and Historic Sites (Section 4(f)) for transportation projects.

The STB is an economic-regulatory agency and has jurisdiction over rail related proposals that include construction of new rail lines and connecting track, rail line abandonments, as well as discontinuing rail service. These types of projects are generally proposed by freight railroads and do not typically involve WSDOT. STB's environmental rules can be found at [49 CFR 1105](#). The environmental rules implement various environmental statutes that include NEPA, the NHPA, ESA, and the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Aviation Facilities

WSDOT manages and operates 16 airports. These serve the general public and play key roles in emergency response, search and rescue, and fire suppression. Capital projects to improve these airports may be subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) rules as well as SEPA. FAA retains jurisdiction, but [WSDOT Aviation](#) is required by law to review all development permits and ordinances and then comment on whether there are potential impacts to the airspace based on the submitted information.

Any proposed highway construction or alteration in the vicinity of a public or military airport will require early coordination with WSDOT's [Aviation Division](#). WSDOT Aviation is required to review projects within the areas of these projects and then make a determination of their potential impacts to the airport. Projects located within 3.8 miles of an airport may require an [obstruction evaluation](#) and must comply with FAA regulations to ensure that airway highway clearances are adequate for the safe movement of air and highway traffic ([23 USC 318](#) and [23 CFR 620](#) Subpart A, Highway Improvements in the Vicinity of Airports).

The guidance addresses:

- The effect of airports on adjacent land use and appropriate environmental documentation of proposed airport actions.
- The kinds of information on existing and planned land use that should be provided in an environmental document for highway projects within 3.8 miles of an airport, including "significance thresholds" for various land use related topics.

Aviation also has an [Airport Mapping Application](#) that can help determine if the project could potentially impact the airspace. A WSDOT Airports and Compatible Land Use Guidebook is also available by contacting a [WSDOT Aviation Planner](#).

Review of the [Airport Stormwater Design Manual](#) M 3041 is recommended to evaluate potential impacts from the construction and operation of stormwater detention facilities in close proximity to airports.

If the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the lead federal agency, the environmental document must evaluate the effect of airport expansion or rehabilitation projects on the local transportation network, including effect on parking, transit, vehicle congestion, travel time, and traffic patterns. FAA guidance on how land use compatibility should be addressed in airport planning and NEPA documents is found in FAA Orders [1050.1E](#) and [5050.4B](#). Contact the [WSDOT Aviation Division](#) for assistance.

Bicycling and Pedestrian Facilities

The state's 2022 [Move Ahead Washington](#) transportation package contains significant investments in transit and active transportation – including projects to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. WSDOT projects often include these elements. The [Active Transportation Plan 2020 and Beyond \(PDF 19.1MB\)](#), is a compass for creating the future of walking, biking and rolling on or across state highways in Washington. It is used in decisions to help connect people to where they want to go, whether they use active transportation for the whole trip or just a part of it, such as the walk to a bus stop, the bike ride to work or rolling home from a ferry terminal.

The [FHWA Bicycle and Pedestrian Policy](#) is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects and to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes. Bicycle and pedestrian facility projects should be defined as standalone projects and not be inappropriately segmented from larger highway projects in order to simplify their environmental review.

Projects must consider impacts of construction of pedestrian access routes and bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities in order to verify the appropriate use of the FHWA CE ([23 CFR 771.117\(c\)\(3\)](#)). This CE applies regardless of needing right of way or total project cost.

Section 7 of [FHWA's Technical Advisory T 6640.8A](#) states that the environmental document should discuss current and anticipated use of the bicycle and pedestrian facility, potential impacts, and measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts. This applies to formal trails and informal pathways with identified use by bicyclists and pedestrians. If the preferred alternative would sever an existing major route for non-motorized transportation traffic, the proposed project needs to provide a reasonable alternative route or demonstrate that such a route exists ([23 USC 109\(m\)](#)).

When new bicycle and pedestrian facilities are proposed as part of a highway project, the environmental document should:

- Include sufficient information to explain the basis for providing the facilities (e.g., proposed bicycle facility is a link in the local plan, or sidewalks will reduce project access impact to the community).
- Identify the facilities to be included in the preferred alternative.

455.04(3) Analysis and documentation for SEPA only (no federal nexus)

For projects with no federal nexus, WSDOT project teams should still follow the analysis and documentation requirements in [Section 455.04\(2\)](#). Exceptions include the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the FPPA, which only apply to federal activities.

455.04(4) Other Considerations

This section describes other considerations that should be included during environmental review.

Scenic River System Act

[RCW 79A.55](#) established a scenic river system in Washington State. The system is managed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission to “protect and preserve the natural character of rivers with outstanding natural, scenic, historic, ecological, and recreational values”. The protected lands include river and publicly owned or leased lands up to one quarter mile on each side of the river. The State Parks Commission has developed and adopted management policies for the public lands along designated rivers. [RCW 79A.55.040](#) requires that the management policies be integrated into local Shoreline Management Master Plans.

State designated Scenic Rivers include:

1. The Skykomish River from the junction of the north and south forks of the Skykomish (within the jurisdiction of Snohomish County):
 - a. Downstream approximately fourteen miles to the junction of the Sultan River.
 - b. Upstream approximately twenty miles on the south fork to the junction of the Tye and Foss rivers (within the jurisdiction of King County).
 - c. Upstream approximately eleven miles on the north fork to its junction with Bear Creek (within the jurisdiction of Snohomish County).

2. The Beckler River from its junction with the south fork of the Skykomish River upstream approximately eight miles to its junction with Rapid River (within the jurisdiction of King County).
3. The Tye River from its junction with the south fork of the Skykomish River approximately fourteen miles to Tye Lake (within the jurisdiction of King County).
4. The Little Spokane River from the upstream boundary of the state park boat put in site near Rutter Parkway and downstream to its confluence with the Spokane River (within the jurisdiction of Spokane County).

Shoreline Management Act

The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) aims to “prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state’s shorelines” ([RCW 90.58](#)). SMA also recognizes that “shorelines are among the most valuable and fragile” of the state’s resources.

The SMA provides for the management and protection of the state’s shoreline resources by requiring planning for their reasonable and appropriate use. The area regulated under the Act includes lands within two hundred (200) feet of designated shorelines as well as certain wetlands, river deltas, floodways and floodplains associated with such shorelines.

The SMA establishes a balance of authority between local and state governments. Cities and counties have the primary review responsibility for development along their shorelines, and the state (through the Washington State Department of Ecology) has authority to review local master programs and local shoreline development permit decisions.

Shorelines of the state include:

- All marine waters;
- Streams with greater than twenty cubic feet per second (20 cfs) mean annual flow;
- Lakes twenty (20) acres or larger; Upland areas called shorelands that extend two hundred (200) feet landward, in all directions on a horizontal plane, from the edge of the ordinary high watermark (OHWM) of these waters; and
- The following areas when they are associated with one of the above:
 - Wetlands and river deltas; and
 - Floodways and contiguous floodplain areas landward two hundred (200) feet from such floodways.

National Trails System Act

The National Trails System Act 1968 ([16 USC 1241-1251](#)) requires federal agencies that abandon roadways, utility right of way, or other properties suitable for improving or expanding the national trails system to consider the possibility of using the abandoned right of way to extend the national trail system.

Safe Routes to Schools

WSDOT oversees the Safe Routes to Schools grant program. This provides funds for pedestrian and bicyclist safety infrastructure improvements within two miles of a school (typically, also includes preliminary engineering, and right of way). Local agencies, Tribes and schools identify biking and walking routes. Areas that include state routes have typically undergone some evaluation by the WSDOT region as well.

WSDOT's Active Transportation Division can provide project teams with information on how to coordinate proposed projects near schools. Efforts to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts and coordinate with school officials should be discussed in the environmental document.

Parking

If a project provides, removes, or relocates parking, the local jurisdiction's zoning, road standards, and off-street parking regulations may apply. Links to appropriate city and county regulations can be found by searching the Municipal Research and Services Center ([MRSC](#)) website.

455.05 External engagement

The conversion of a 6(f) property to transportation uses requires that the public has been informed of the proposed conversion, been given a minimum of 30 days to comment on the change, and their comments have been considered and adequately addressed by the RCO and NPS.

455.06 Internal roles and responsibilities

The following represent typical roles and responsibilities for key offices. Actual roles and responsibilities may vary within the regions and modes.

455.06(1) *Planner*

Conduct environmental screening for potential land use impacts. Notifies the NEPA Specialist and region environmental if land use impacts are anticipated. Review GMA comprehensive plans and other local, regional, state, and tribal land use plans for consistency with the plan's recommendations. Coordinate the annual process to review and approve the conformity determination in Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Improvement plans (TIP), See [Chapter 425](#).

455.06(2) *Project engineer*

Oversee all engineering studies and technical reports are prepared as needed and provide appropriate levels of analysis to support the environmental review process and permitting activities to the environmental staff. Coordinate with Region Environmental to discuss potential environmental impacts of the project. Ensure that the Practical Design process is documented in the project in sufficient detail to support the administrative record and environmental documentation. The [Design Manual Chapter 1100](#) describes Practical Design.

455.06(3) Region environmental

Oversee the development of environmental review documents. Research and provide information describing the environmental context for the project commensurate with the level of design detail provided and the potential environmental impacts of the project. Right-size the research and analysis using GIS data, windshield surveys, coordination with subject matter experts, or site-specific analysis as appropriate. Communicate environmental information to the environmental and engineering teams so that potential budget, schedule, and permitting issues are clearly understood, taken into consideration throughout the process, and incorporated as needed for permits and other agency approvals.

455.06(4) Environmental services office

The primary role of the Environmental Services Office (ESO) is to keep the guidance current with evolving and changing rules and regulations. ESO staff also provide expert assistance for developing scopes of work for consultants and internal WSDOT staff as well as reviewing environmental documents. The ESO [NEPA Specialist](#) is available to consult on projects requiring Land Use and Transportation analyses. For EAs and EISs, the NEPA Specialist also reviews Land Use and Transportation analyses for procedural accuracy, substantive adequacy, and legal sufficiency.

455.07 Applicable permits and approvals**Clean Water Act**

Projects in a “designated” or “study” wild and scenic river area may require a Section 404 permit from the Corps for compliance with the Clean Water Act, and an ESA Section 7 determination by the USFS.

Navigable waters

Projects that impact waterborne navigation require a Section 9 Bridge Permit from the USCG. Any project that requires a Section 9 Bridge Permit must also show evidence of coordination with the USCG in accordance with the FHWA/USCG MOA.

Projects that include plans for a bridge or structure over or involving waters of the US where the navigable portions of rivers or other waterways involved in the project are not within a single state may require a Section 9 (of the Rivers and Harbors Act) permit.

Section 6(f) of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF)

The conversion of a Section 6(f) property to a transportation use also requires approval by the [RCFB](#).

Forest Practices

The DNR requires a forest practices permit for certain work on private or state forest lands ([RCW 76.09](#); [WAC 222](#)). Project activities that trigger permits include: converting timberland to other uses, harvesting timber, and installing/replacing water crossings on forest roads.

Aquatic Use Authorization

The DNR requires an Aquatic Use Authorization permit if work is performed on state-owned aquatic lands. Coordinate with your WSDOT Real Estate Services office to work with DNR to determine if your project is on state-owned aquatic lands ([RCW 79.105](#); [WAC 332.30](#)). If an Aquatic Use Authorization is needed, WSDOT Real Estate Services typically submits the permit to DNR.

Critical Areas Permits

The GMA directs local agencies to develop comprehensive plans and ordinances that protect locally delineated wetlands, wellhead protection areas, frequently flooded areas, geographically hazardous areas, fish and wildlife habitat, and other conservation areas ([RCW 36.70A](#); [RCW 36.70B](#); [WAC 365-190](#); [WAC 365-195](#); [WAC 365-196](#)). Local governments typically require a Critical Areas permit if work is performed within areas designated by their critical areas ordinance.

Property acquisition

Local permits and approvals, for example building and demolition permits, may apply.

For more information on the permitting process, see [Chapter 500](#).

455.08 Mitigation

The environmental documentation should describe any recommended mitigation measures and commitments to stakeholders for the design, construction, and post-construction phases. The documentation should also describe whether additional mitigation measures were considered and why these were not included.

[RCW 47.01.305](#) requires that WSDOT considers agricultural lands of long-term commercial significance, as defined in [RCW 34.70A.030](#), when reviewing and selecting sites to meet environmental mitigation requirements under NEPA. It also requires WSDOT to consider using public lands first before using land defined as agricultural land of long-term commercial significance, as defined in [RCW 36.70A](#). If public lands are not available that meet the required environmental mitigation needs, then WSDOT may use other sites while making every effort to avoid any net loss of agricultural lands that have a designation of long-term commercial significance.

Mitigation for impacts to Section 6(f) properties requires replacement with land of equal value, location, usefulness, and function as the impaired property. See [Section 455.04\(2\)](#).

Refer to Section 2.2(7) of the [Roadside Policy Manual](#) for mitigation of unavoidable impacts to Resource Conservation Areas.

The NPS [NRI](#) website provides guidance on how to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse effects on NRI rivers.

[Chapter 490](#) provides guidance on how to incorporate environmental commitments into project contracts. This is important for NEPA/SEPA commitments as well as regulatory permit commitments.

455.09 Abbreviations and acronyms

4(f)	Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966
6(f)	Section 6(f) of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF)
CE	Categorical Exclusion (NEPA); Categorical Exemption (SEPA)
CEQ	Council for Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
Corps	United States Army Corps of Engineers
EA	Environmental Assessment (NEPA/SEPA)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement (NEPA/SEPA)
ERS/ECS	Environmental Review Summary / Environmental Classification Summary
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESO	Environmental Services Office
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FCIR	Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GMA	Growth Management Act
LOS	Level of Service
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund Act
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MRSC	Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRI	Nationwide Rivers Inventory
NPS	National Park Service
RCO	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
RCFB	Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
STB	Surface Transportation Board
USC	United States Code
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
USFS	United States Forest Service
WAC	Washington Administrative Code
WSF	Washington State Ferries

455.10 Glossary

These definitions provide context for the Land Use analysis. Some terms may have other meanings in a different context.

Essential Public Facilities – As defined under GMA, essential public facilities that are typically difficult to site, including airports, state or regional transportation facilities, and services of statewide significance as defined in [RCW 47.06.140](#) (including improvements to such facilities and services identified in the statewide multimodal plan) and other public facilities that are typically difficult to site.

Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance – FPPA defines farmland of statewide or local importance as land used for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, or oilseed crops, as determined by the state or local government agency or agencies, using U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines.

Federal Nexus – A determination that at least one federal agency is involved as a proponent of a specified proposal and/or as an agency that needs to act on a federal permit, license, or other entitlement (such as a request to use federal funds or federal land) needed to implement the proposal. A federal nexus (even on an otherwise non-federal proposal) typically triggers the need for the federal agency or agencies to comply with various federal statutes include, but not limited to, NEPA, Section 106, Section 4(f), Section 6(f), and ESA Section 7.

Indirect Effects – The indirect land use effects involve potential development, or redevelopment of buildable lands within the influence of the transportation project. These changes are driven and constrained by social and economic factors beyond WSDOT or the local public agency's control. Such effects are difficult to predict and often controversial. Projects that do not increase capacity, change the level of service (LOS), or significantly reduce travel time are unlikely to change land use.

Level of Service (LOS) – LOS describes the minimum amount of a public facility which must be provided to meet the community's basic needs and expectations. Please consult with Multimodal Planning and Data Division and Traffic Operations for current best practices.

Prime Farmland – As defined in the FPPA, Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion. Prime farmland includes land that possesses the above characteristics and may include land currently used as cropland, pastureland, rangeland, or forestland. It does not include land already in or committed to urban development or water storage.

Resource Conservation Areas – Previously called Beautification Areas, Landscape Areas, Landscape or Conservation Easements, or Environmental Commitment Areas on Right of Way Plans and Real Estate Services Maps, these are natural areas outside of the limited access hachures that were purchased or set aside to provide a natural, vegetated buffer between the highway and adjacent land uses.

Section 6(f) Property – Any property acquired or developed with financial assistance under Section 6(f) of the federal LWCF Act. See [Section 455.04\(2\)](#).

Transportation Facilities and Services of Statewide Significance – Defined in [RCW 47.06.140](#) to include the interstate highway system, interregional state principal arterials including ferry connections that serve statewide travel, intercity passenger rail services, intercity high-speed ground transportation, major passenger intermodal terminals excluding all airport facilities and services, the freight railroad system, the Columbia/Snake navigable river system, marine port facilities, and services that are related solely to marine activities affecting international and interstate trade, and high capacity transportation systems serving regions as defined in [RCW 81.104.015](#).

Unique Farmland – As defined in the FPPA, Unique Farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality or high yields of specific crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops include lentils, nuts, annually cropped white wheat, cranberries, fruits, and vegetables.

Urban Growth Area (UGA) – UGAs are those areas designated by a county pursuant to the GMA, which are planned to support urban development and densities within the next 20 years. Growth within UGAs is intended to be urban, and growth outside of UGAs can only occur if it is not urban in nature. These rules are to concentrate growth and reduce urban sprawl into natural areas and landscapes.

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