WSDOT Economic Vitality Policy Workshops

Record of Proceedings and Analysis Methodology

Introduction

In collaboration with Smart Growth America (SGA), WSDOT's Performance Framework Team led Economic Vitality Policy Workshops in November 2017. In order to create an Economic Vitality Framework that represents various perspectives across the state, we sought to engage our partners to find out how they felt economic performance should be assessed on the state transportation network. WSDOT held workshops at five locations around Washington State including: Seattle, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Spokane, and Olympia. Participants included MPO/RTPOs, Council of Governments, professional organizations in the transportation industry, Tribes, Transit agencies, elected officials, and more.

The workshops were interactive in nature to ensure that all of the participants had an opportunity to share their ideas equally. Facilitators led participants through a series of four activities. The objectives of the activities were to,

- Identify important economic outcomes,
- Identify transportation strategies that would support those economic outcomes,
- Provide clarity on what the state's role is in those transportation strategies, and
- Recommend guiding principles to help decision makers weigh tradeoff questions in assessing economic performance.

This Summary Report explains how WSDOT conducted the workshop activities, shares the feedback WSDOT received across the state, and demonstrates how the Team analyzed this feedback. This report additionally clarifies how WSDOT will translate the feedback received into sub-policies, measures, and metrics for the Economic Vitality Performance Framework.

Defining Economic Outcomes

In order to understand how to measure economic performance, the Team first needed to understand what economic vitality means in Washington. Under RCW 47.04.280, Legislature has tasked WSDOT with supporting economic vitality by "promot[ing] and develop[ing] transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy." The statute broadly defines this policy goal. While it tasks WSDOT with supporting transportation strategies that promote that state's economic vitality, it provides little guidance on what economic performance the state is interested in achieving.

The first workshop activity sought to uncover what economic outcomes and objectives the state should be working toward achieving. This information helps answer the questions - *What does economic vitality mean? What economic outcomes are important to our partners?*

The Team asked participants to identify the economic outcomes that are important for their communities, regions, and state. Participants captured their ideas on sticky notes. Each sticky note held one concept. For example, concepts heard across workshops included affordable housing, accessible employment opportunities, and diversity. Participants then worked in groups to group these concepts together in a manner that intuitively made sense to them. The resulting concepts and groupings define what economic vitality means to our stakeholders. Common concept groupings heard include job creation, business diversity, freight mobility, and quality of life.

Table 1 | Common themes heard by workshop location

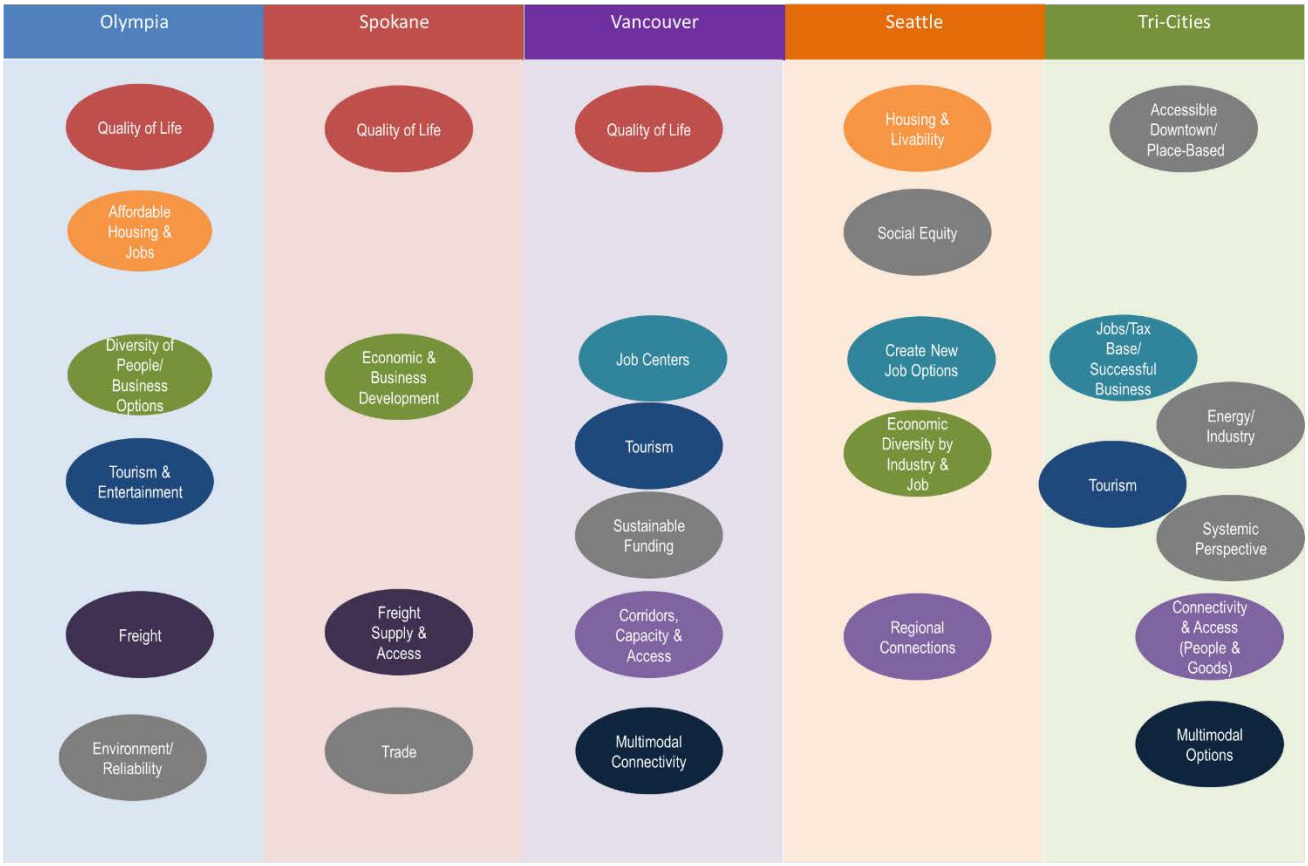
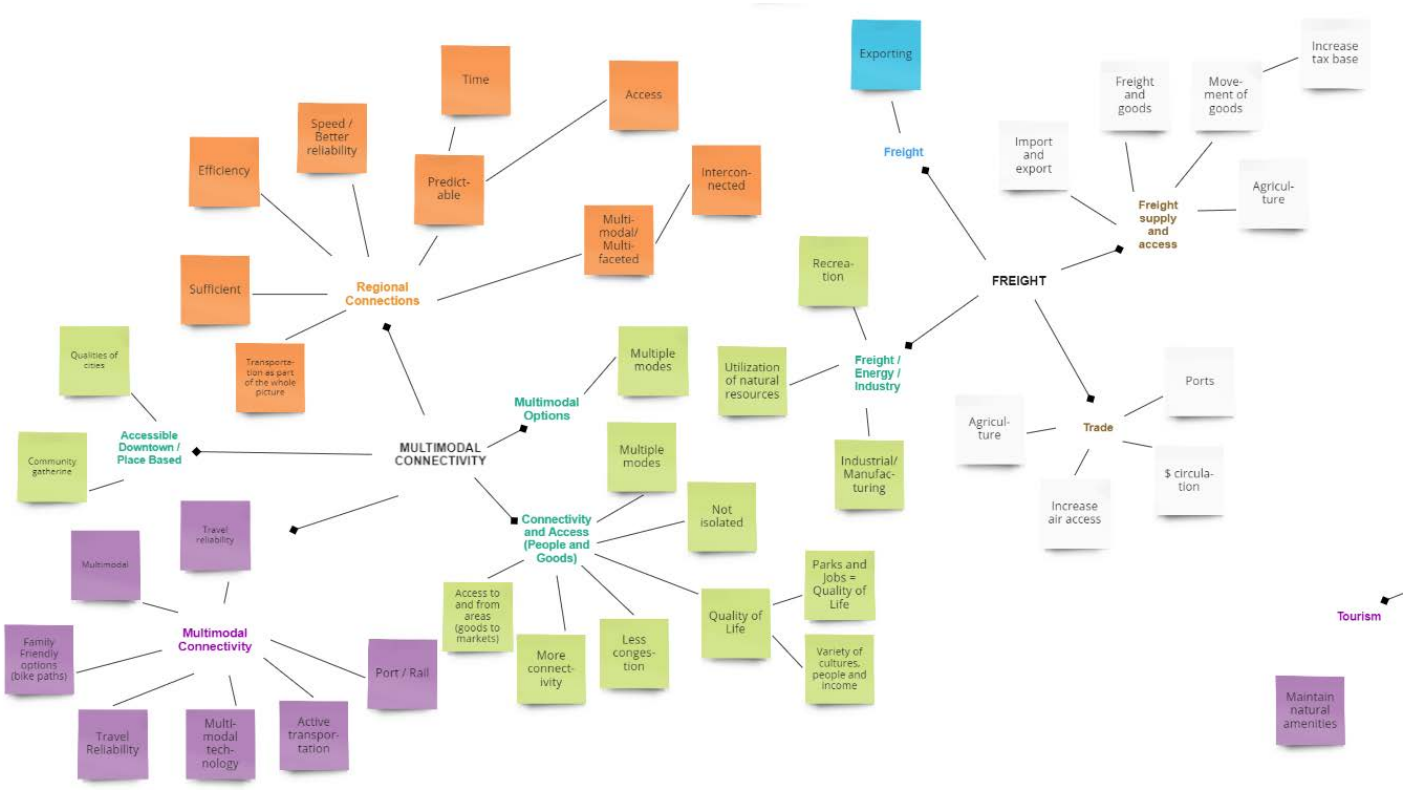


Table 1 provides an overview of the common concept themes heard at each workshop location. The table identifies similar concepts by color. Gray ovals identify concepts unique to one workshop location. Despite regional differences, themes such as quality of life, affordable housing, diversity, business development, job options/creation, connectivity, multimodal concepts, and trade are important statewide.

In addition to looking at the economic outcomes identified by each workshop, the Performance Framework Team also examined how workshop participants grouped individual economic outcome concepts. It was important to our team to retain the context of each grouping. For example, the concept of diversity was included in groups relating to both job creation and multimodal transportation options. This contextual distinction is important in understanding the conversations participants were having around these topics.

The Cluster Map provides an example of how the theme of Multimodal Connectivity was organized. The colors represent the workshop location. The connections provide context for the ideas. (See Appendix, pp. 12 – 17)

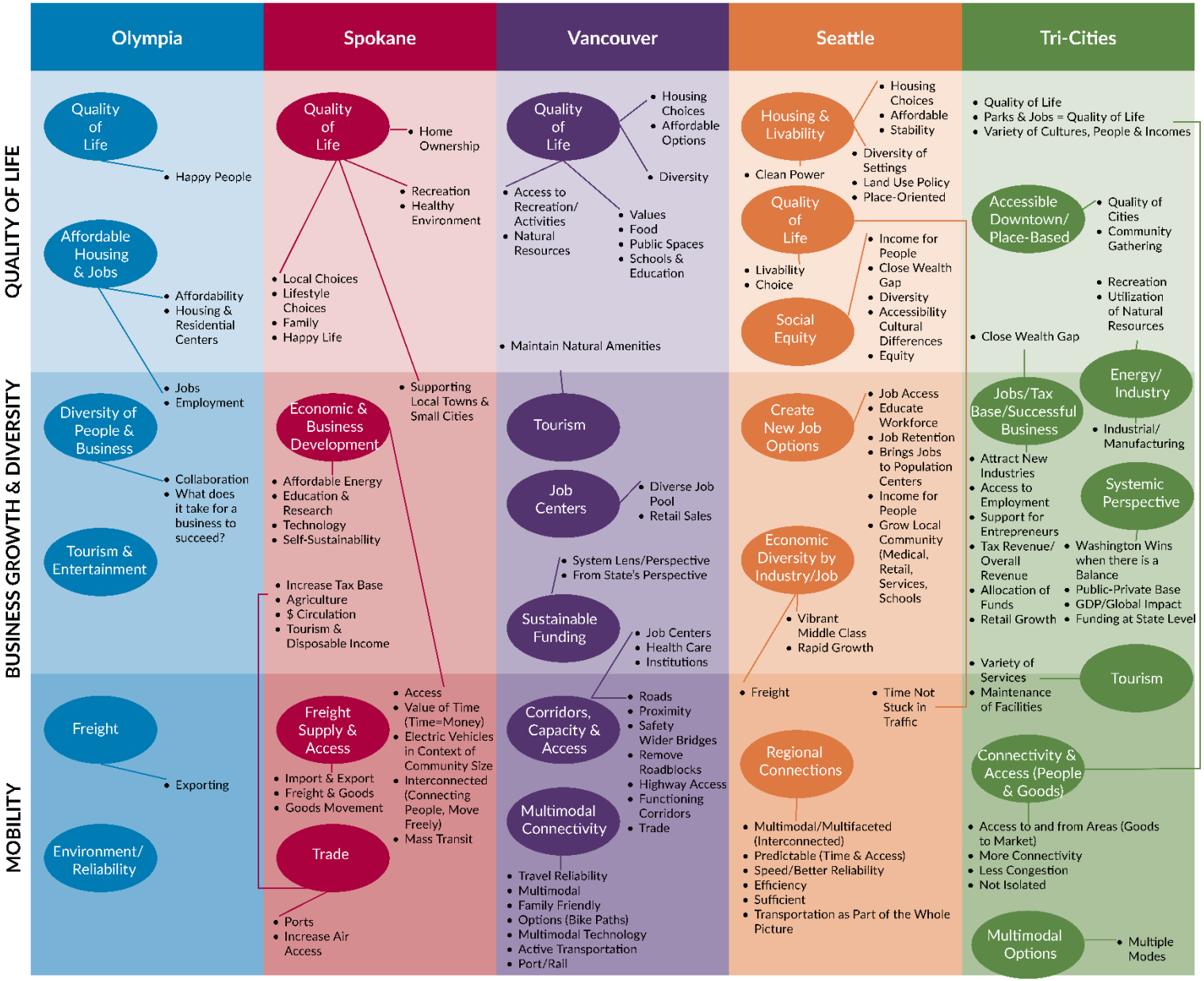
Cluster Map | Multimodal Connectivity



Based on the cluster maps, the Team sorted the economic outcomes into the three overarching themes of Quality of Life, Business Growth and Diversity, and Mobility.

Table 2 illustrates how economic outcomes heard at each location were organized under the overarching themes. This table lists the economic outcomes by location and shows how concepts were organized, preserving the context of each grouping. In the Economic Vitality Performance Framework, the overarching themes will translate into sub-policies, and the more detailed concepts will inform the selection of measures.

Table 2 | Economic outcomes organized under three overarching themes of Quality of Life, Business Growth and Diversity and Mobility



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Tree Maps | Quality of Life, Business Growth and Diversity, and Mobility

QUALITY OF LIFE

Business Growth and Diversity

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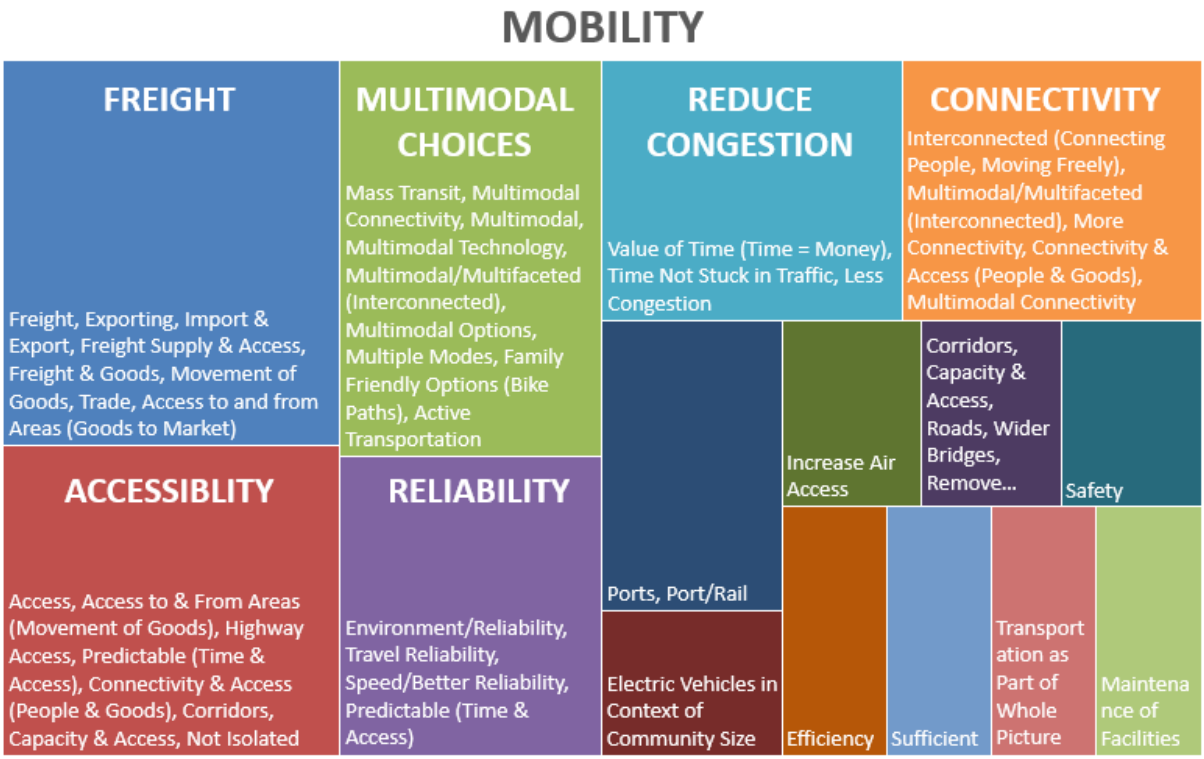


The Tree Maps depicted above illustrate how the economic outcome concepts were organized into groups. Each map represents a theme, or sub-policy of Economic Vitality. The capitalized text represents the grouping name. The smaller text in each box are concepts are direct feedback from the workshops. The sizes of each box correspond with the frequency that these concepts were heard.

For example, under the theme of Mobility, the economic outcome concepts of "freight," "exporting," "import & export," and "freight supply and access" were grouped together under "Freight." The box for Freight is larger than the box for "Reduce Congestion." This is because concepts relating to freight were heard more frequently than concepts relating to congestion reduction. Moreover, some concepts were only heard once between all five locations. This can be seen on the Mobility map in the smaller boxes reading "increase air access," and "efficiency."

Identifying Transportation Strategies

In the second activity, workshop participants were asked to identify transportation strategies necessary to support the economic outcomes identified in the first activity. For instance, one group collected the following economic outcomes into one group: "transit oriented development," "bike paths," "choices," and "public demand." The transportation strategy they selected to support these outcomes was to make more "transportation choices" available.

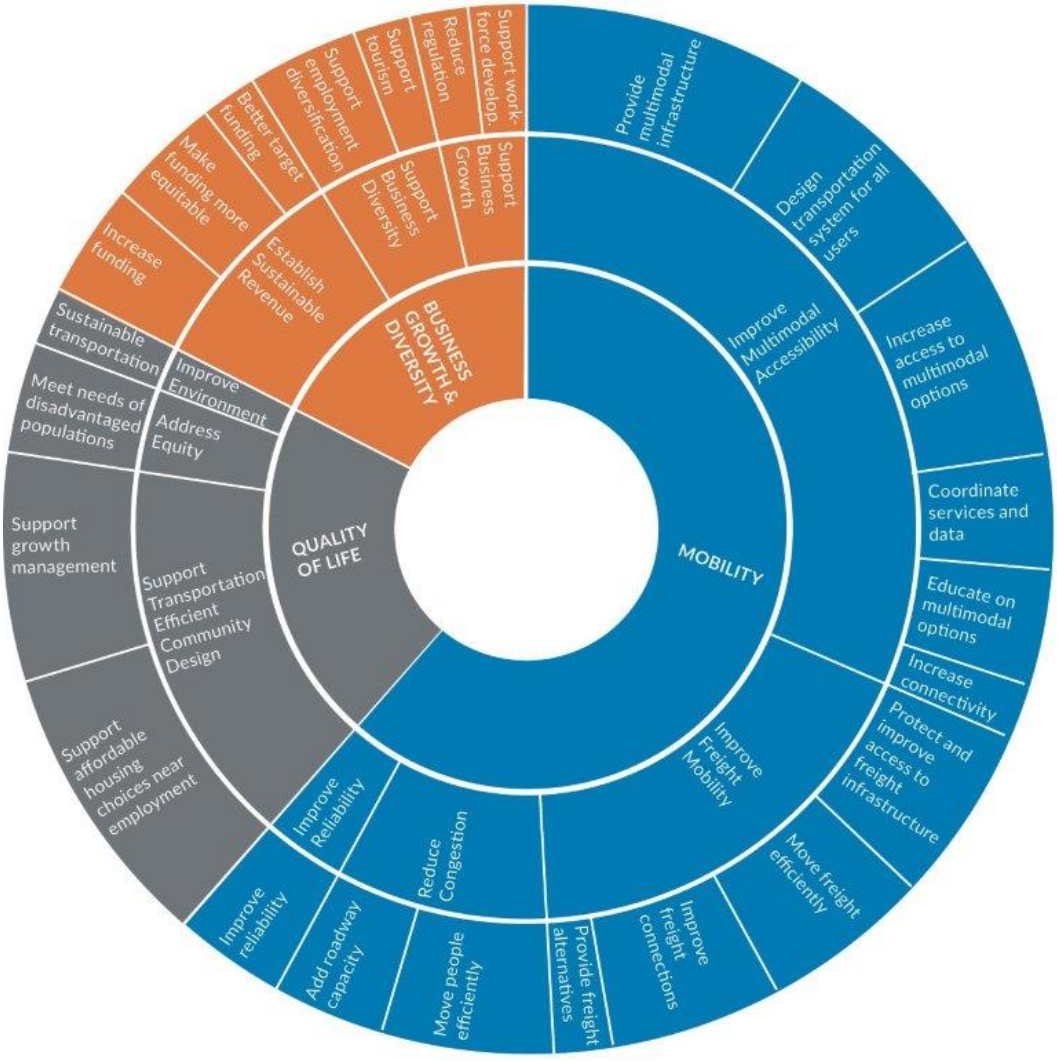
Table 3 | Transportation Strategy Themes

Seattle	Tri-Cities	Vancouver	Spokane	Olympia
Land use and transportation integration	Land use and Smart Growth	Tying transportation and land use	Transit oriented development	Land use planning
Multimodal transportation options	Improve reliability	Complete streets	Transportation choices	Multimodal connectivity
Integrated planning among agencies	Reduced or flexible regulations	Local input and control	Maintaining sustaining the system	State and local coordination / Partnerships
Funding and pricing that match outcomes	Options for moving goods	Intermodal connectivity	Access for freight mobility	Freight mobility
Integrated scheduling / High speed transportation	Targeted improvements	Higher transportation capacity	Increased capacity	Demand management
Support diversity of jobs in diverse areas	Resilient transportation system	Access	Quality of Life	Transportation resilience
				Alternative or clean fuels

Table 3 lists common transportation strategies heard at each workshop location. Strategies surrounding land use were common to all workshop locations as seen in the first row. The second row focuses on the theme of multimodal transportation options, except at the Tri-Cities location. The theme in the third row surrounds governance. The fourth row depicts that each workshop location also expressed strategies relating to freight mobility and access. There was a variation in themes in the fifth row. Most of the workshop locations touched upon strategies to support increased capacity, with the exceptions of Seattle and Olympia. Lastly, transportation resilience was a topic of interest in two locations as indicated in the sixth row.

The feedback was analyzed in a manner similar to the analysis for the first activity. The Team gathered all the transportation strategies across workshops and grouped like strategies. The workshop locations were preserved through color-coding. The transportation groupings fell into one of five themes: Multimodal and Connectivity, Land Use and Transportation, Freight Mobility, Capacity and Demand Management, and Business Growth and Diversity. (See Appendix, pp. 18 – 24)

Sunburst Chart | Transportation Strategy Themes



This Sunburst Chart above depicts how the transportation strategies heard at the workshop fit under the three major themes. The size of the boxes coincide with the frequency that a particular strategy was heard throughout all five workshops. For example, under Quality of Life "support growth management" was heard at four locations, where as "sustainable transportation" was mentioned at one location.

These transportation strategies will be incorporated into the Economic Vitality Performance Framework as measures or metrics.

Identifying roles and responsibilities

Understanding and identifying measures and metrics that WSDOT has influence over can lead to the economic outcomes our partners think are important. The third activity intended to help our Team understand what measures and metrics that WSDOT can affect. Participants were asked to identify the roles and responsibilities of each partner in achieving a particular transportation strategy.

Participants selected a transportation strategy they were interested in discussing further. Each group then worked together to identify what the private sector, local agencies, regional organizations, WSDOT, the State Legislature, and the Federal government could do to support the strategy.

The successful implementation of any transportation strategy involves the support, coordination and participation of the private sector, local agencies, WSDOT, other state agencies, the State Legislature, federal agencies and the US Congress.

The groups then filled out a handout, which asked:

- Are there opportunities for partnerships? If so, where?
- Is there a duplication of efforts?
- Is there a responsibility being performed on one level that could more efficiently be performed on another level?
- Is there a lack of alignment? If so, where?

The purpose of this activity was to identify what our partners feel the state role is in implementing transportation strategies, and identifying potential areas for partnership. We took a deep look at the state's role in implementing, leading and supporting strategies. Based on the workshop input, our partners want WSDOT to:

- Collaborate with partners on
  - Planning
  - Land use integration
  - Maintenance
- Help align federal ,state, region, and local:
  - Vision and goals
  - Identification of system needs
  - Prioritization
  - Funding
- Manage state assets
- Coordinate and share data

For a complete list of the feedback, please see Appendix, pp. 25 - 26.

Guiding Principles for Assessing Economic Vitality Performance

In assessing economic vitality performance, there are important and challenging issues that require decision makers to make tradeoffs between competing objectives. If decision makers use a set of guiding principles to reach decisions, the decision making process would be more transparent and perhaps, more predictable.

In regard to economic vitality, tradeoff questions include,

- How might we balance the distribution of economic benefits geographically when thinking about economic performance?
- How might we balance equity with effectiveness (meeting the greatest need versus providing the greatest impact)?
- How might we balance addressing current economic needs versus planning for future economic needs?

Workshop participants discussed these questions in small groups. They were asked to share their perspectives on what guiding principles decision makers should use when assessing economic vitality performance. A summary of feedback is provided below. For a complete set of responses, please see Appendix, pp. 27 – 34.

How might we balance the distribution of economic benefits geographically when thinking about economic performance?

- Allow regional and local flexibility to set performance measures and goals for their needs
- Develop different sets of state goals and objectives for the local, regional and state levels.
- Provide funding to areas with the greatest need
- Better regional partnering to develop other areas of the state
- Use cost effectiveness criteria
- Incentivize programs that optimize regional assets
- Look at tax collection versus tax distribution
- Prioritize funds with projected population growth
- Develop a statewide prioritization matrix to help score prospective improvements

How could we balance equity with effectiveness? (meeting the greatest need with providing the greatest impact)

- Develop a rubric
- Let data drive decisions
- Get a consensus on measures being applied
- Involve Commerce in this process
- Incentivize progress
- Areas with the most need get the most resources and assistance
- Place-based assessment
- Provide funding that supports job growth in regional job centers (SW Washington and SE Washington)
- Prioritize economic impact
- Cost benefit
- Equity

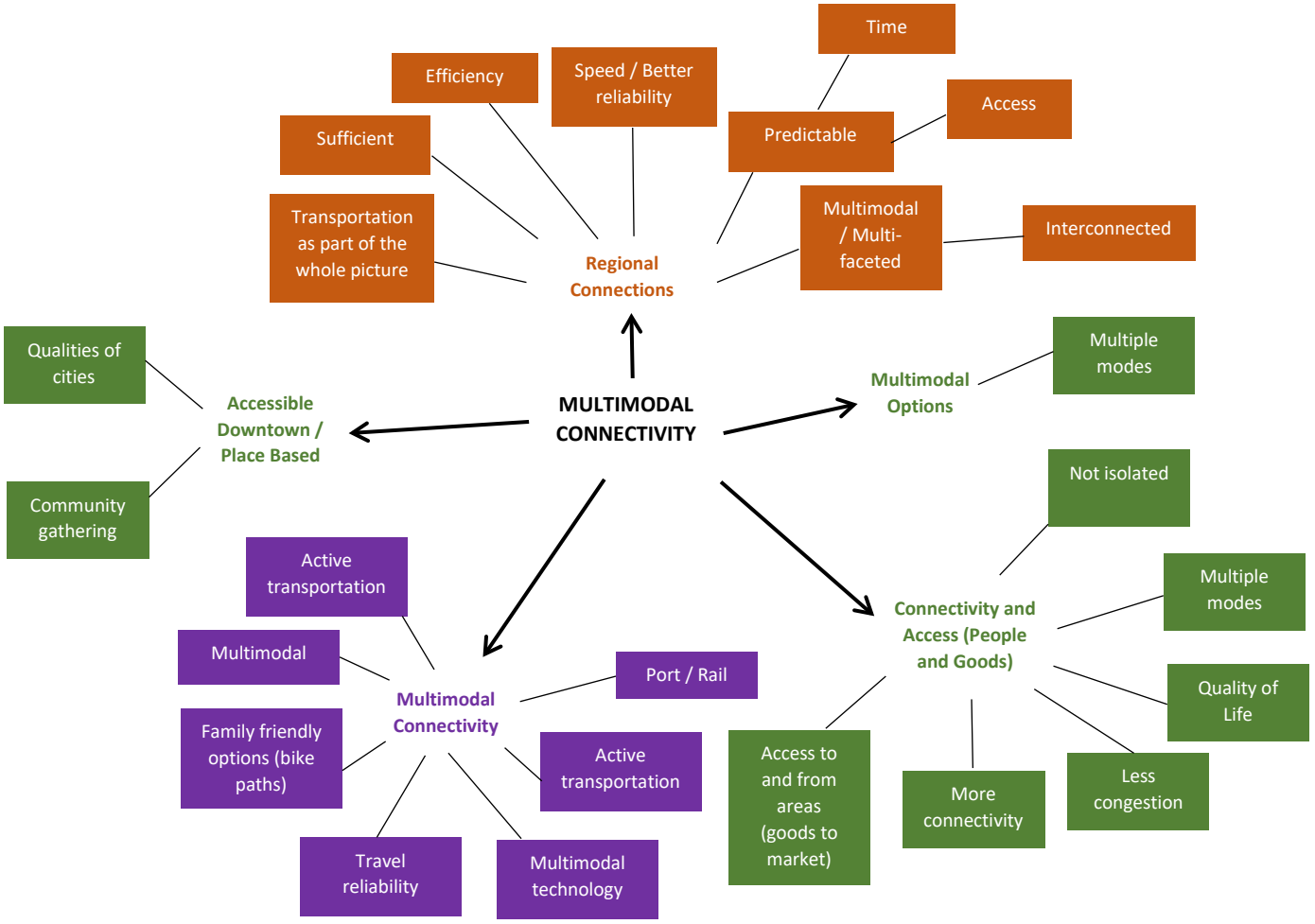
How might we balance current economic needs versus planning for future economic needs?

- Place based considerations
- Life Cycle Cost factors should be taken into account
- Methodology / Process
- Use long-range plans to guide decisions
- Alignment with Current and Future Needs
- Decisions should be data driven
- Focus on current needs

Appendix

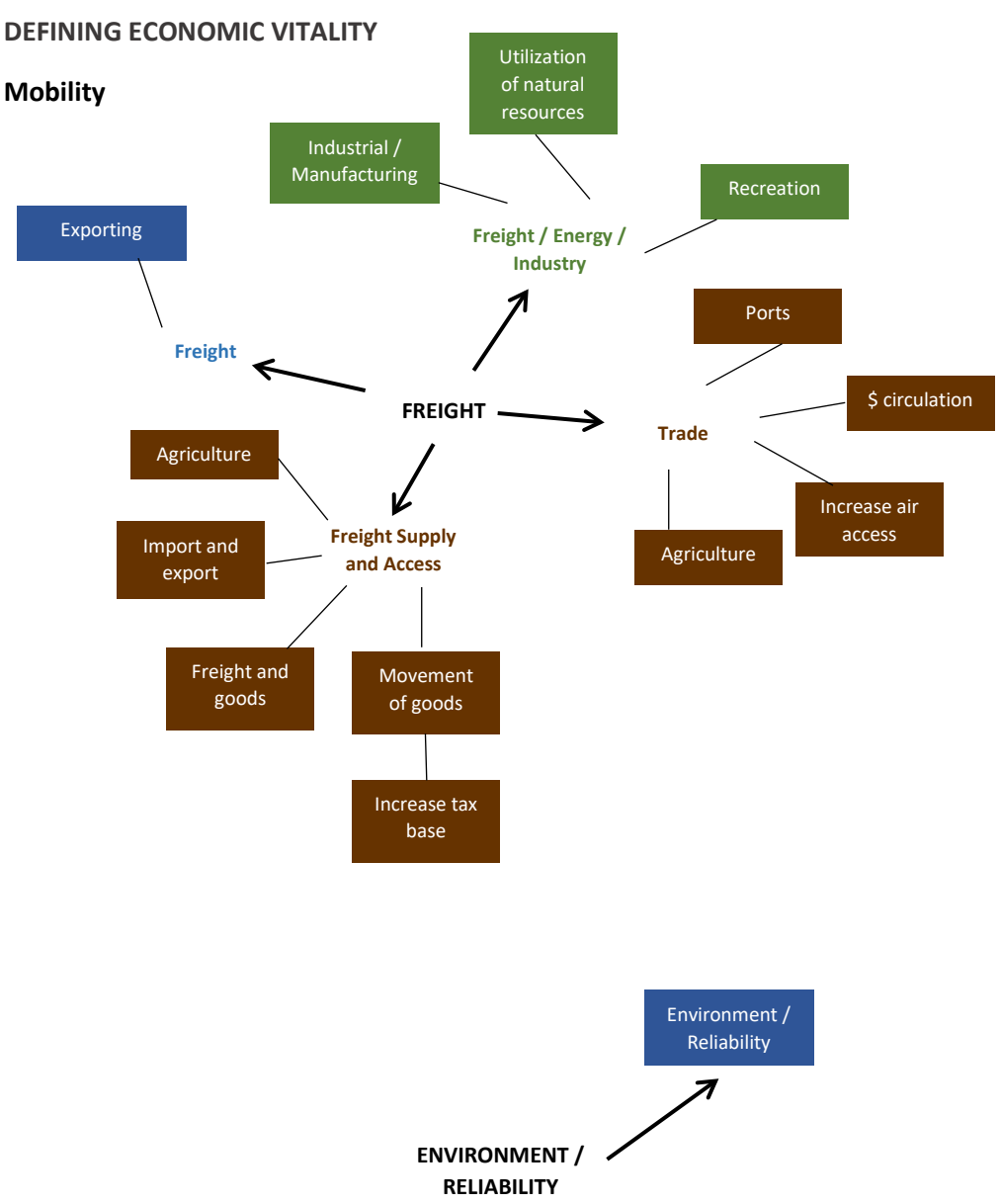
DEFINING ECONOMIC VITALITY

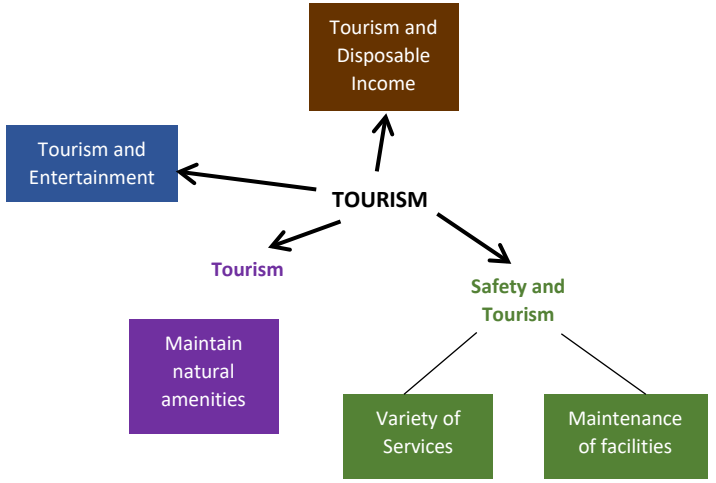
Mobility

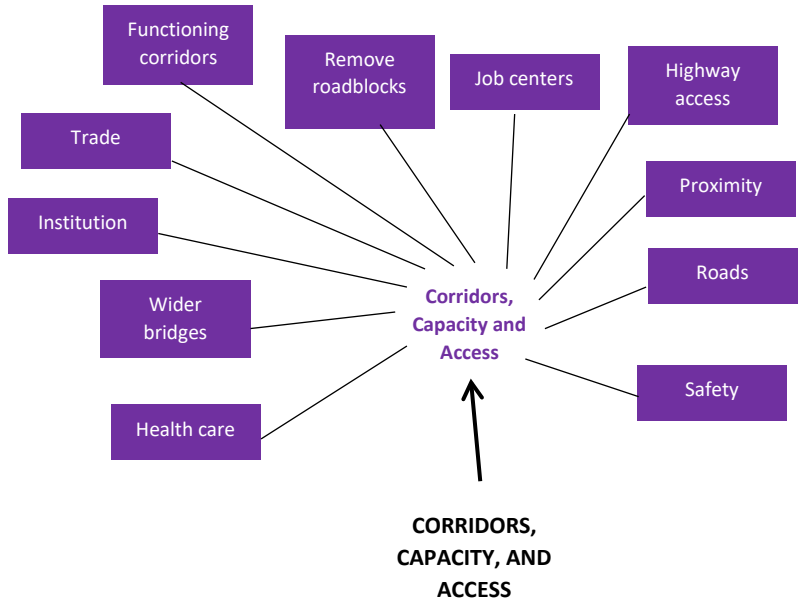


DEFINING ECONOMIC VITALITY

Mobility







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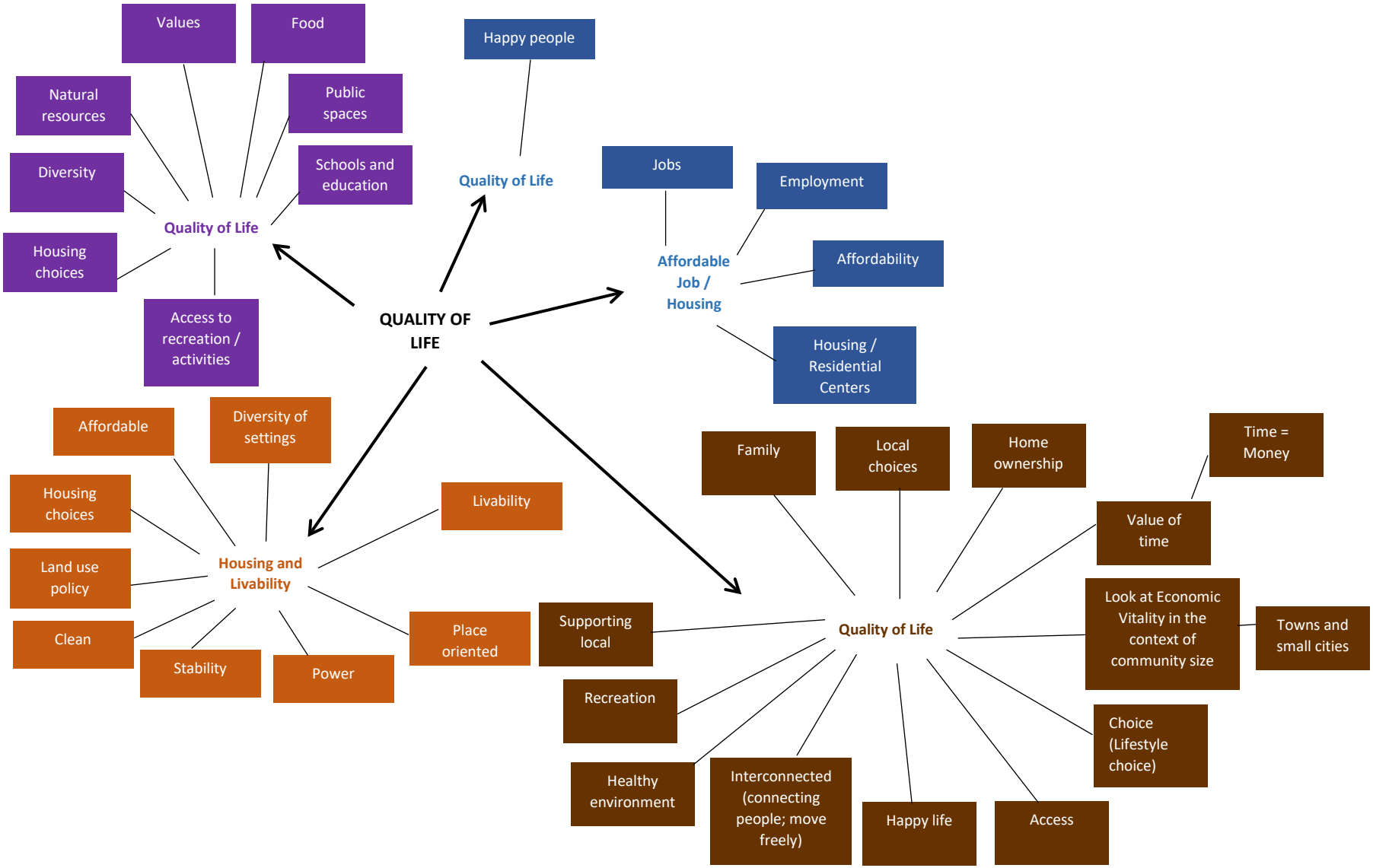
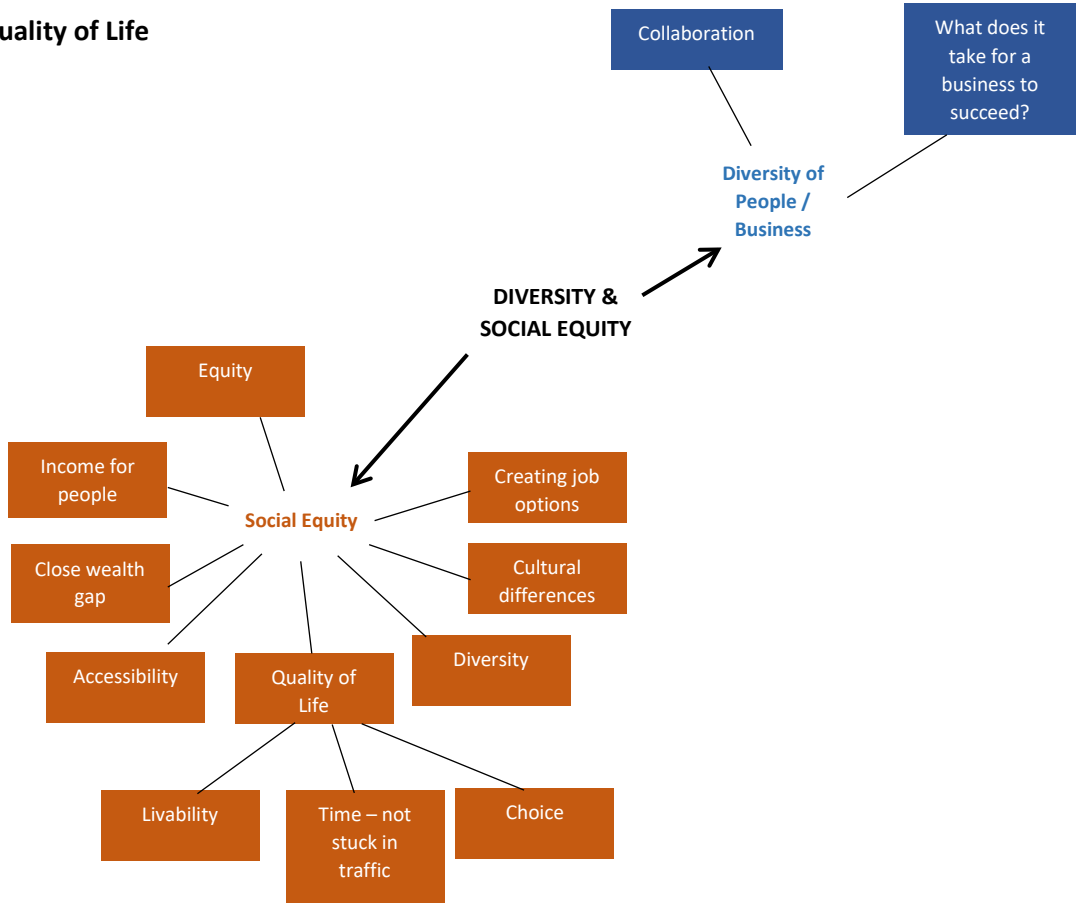
Quality of Life



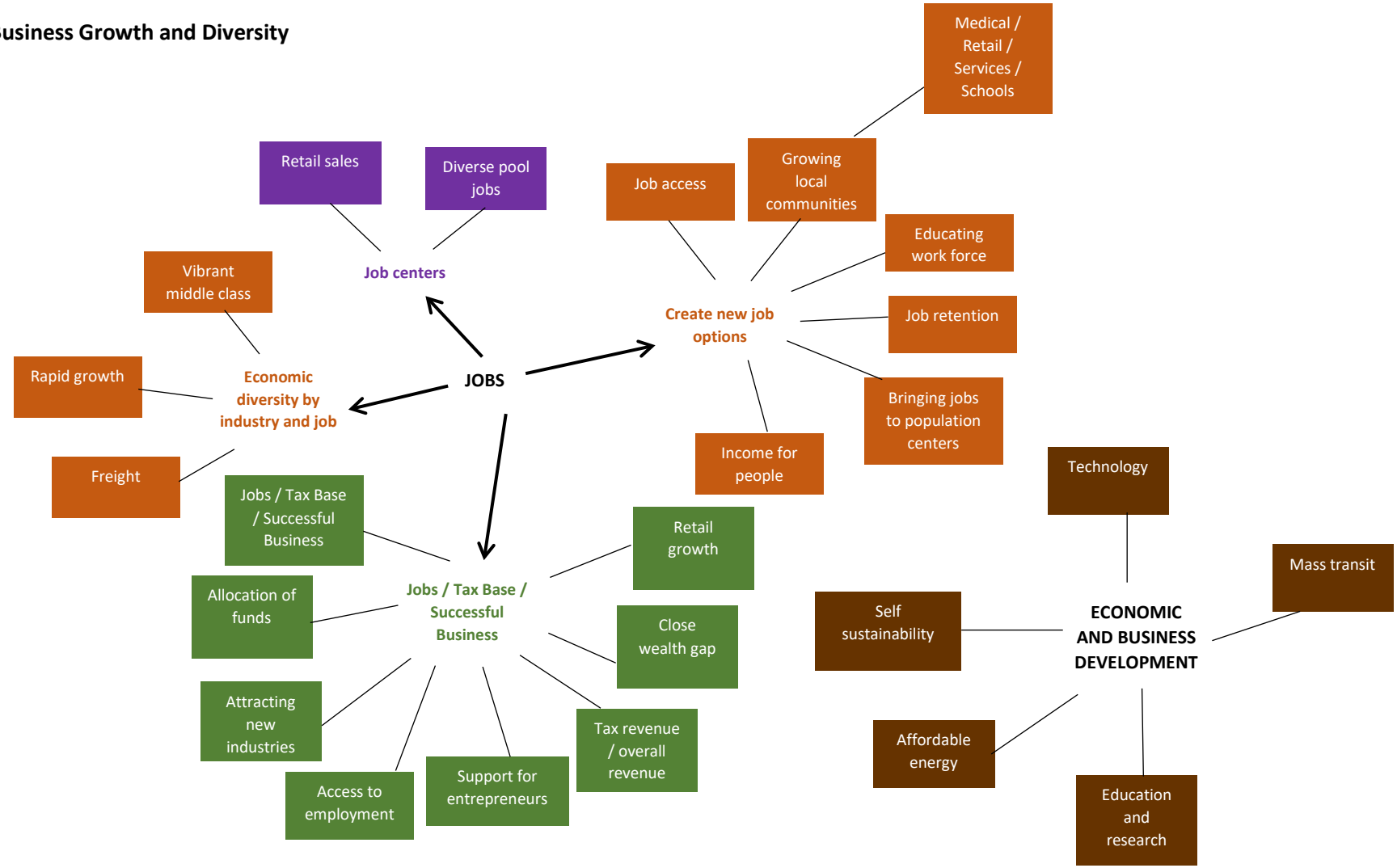
DEFINING ECONOMIC VITALITY

Quality of Life



DEFINING ECONOMIC VITALITY

Business Growth and Diversity



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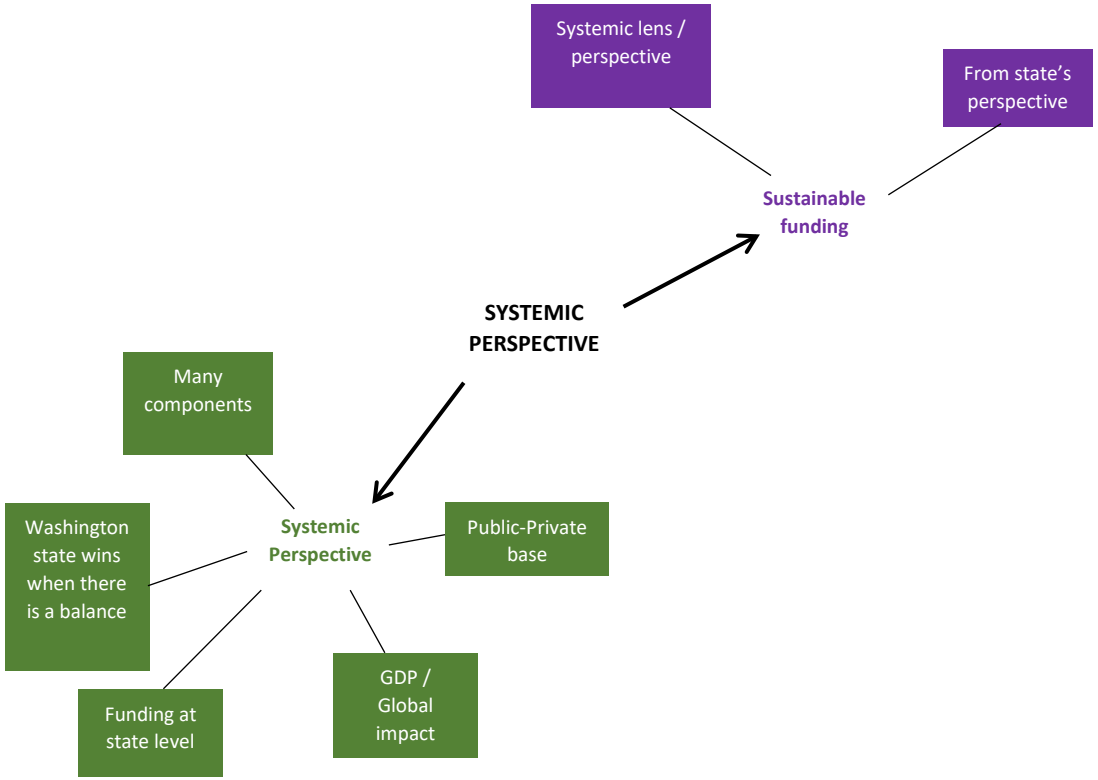
DEFINING ECONOMIC VITALITY

Business Growth and Diversity



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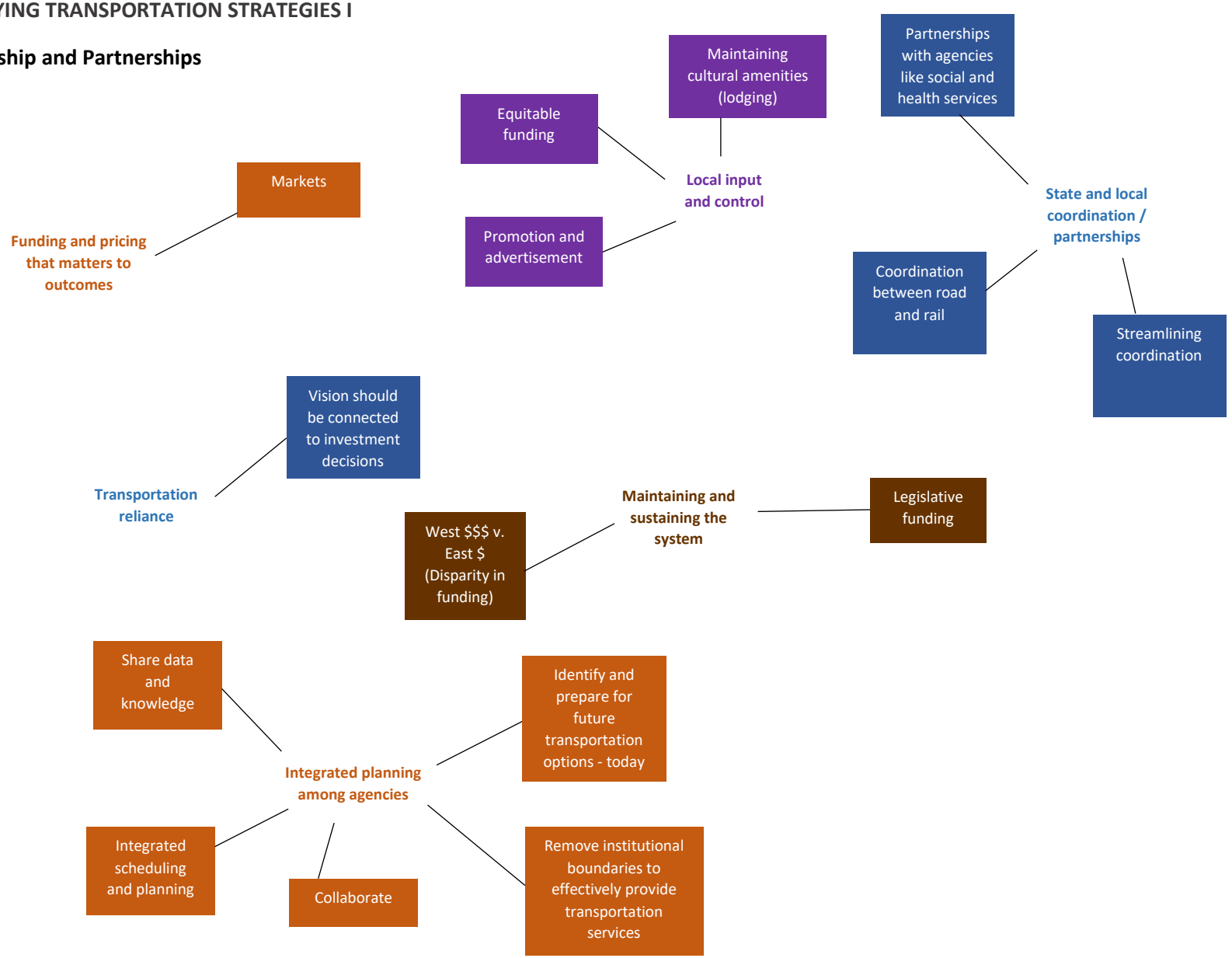
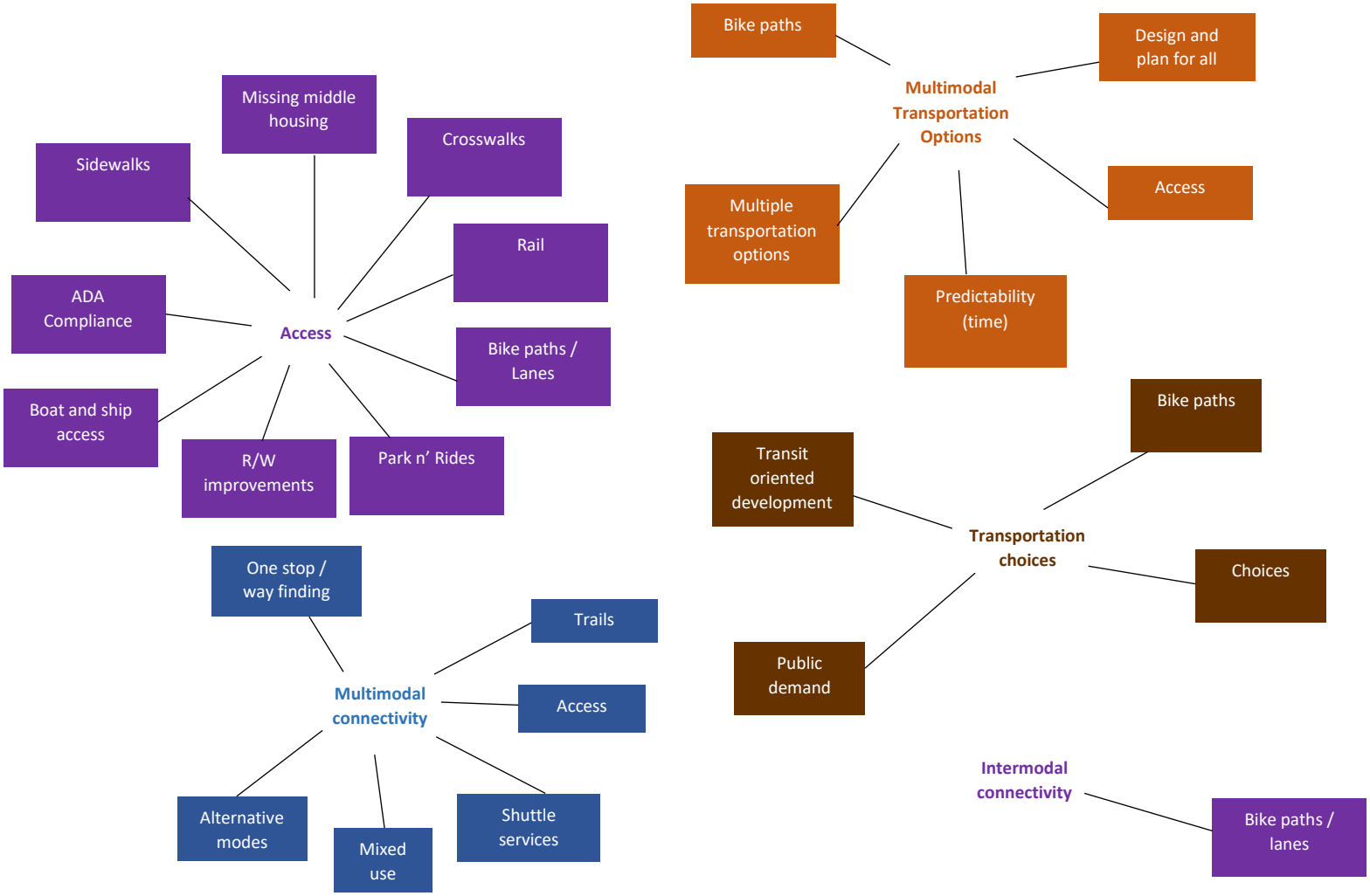
IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES I

Stewardship and Partnerships



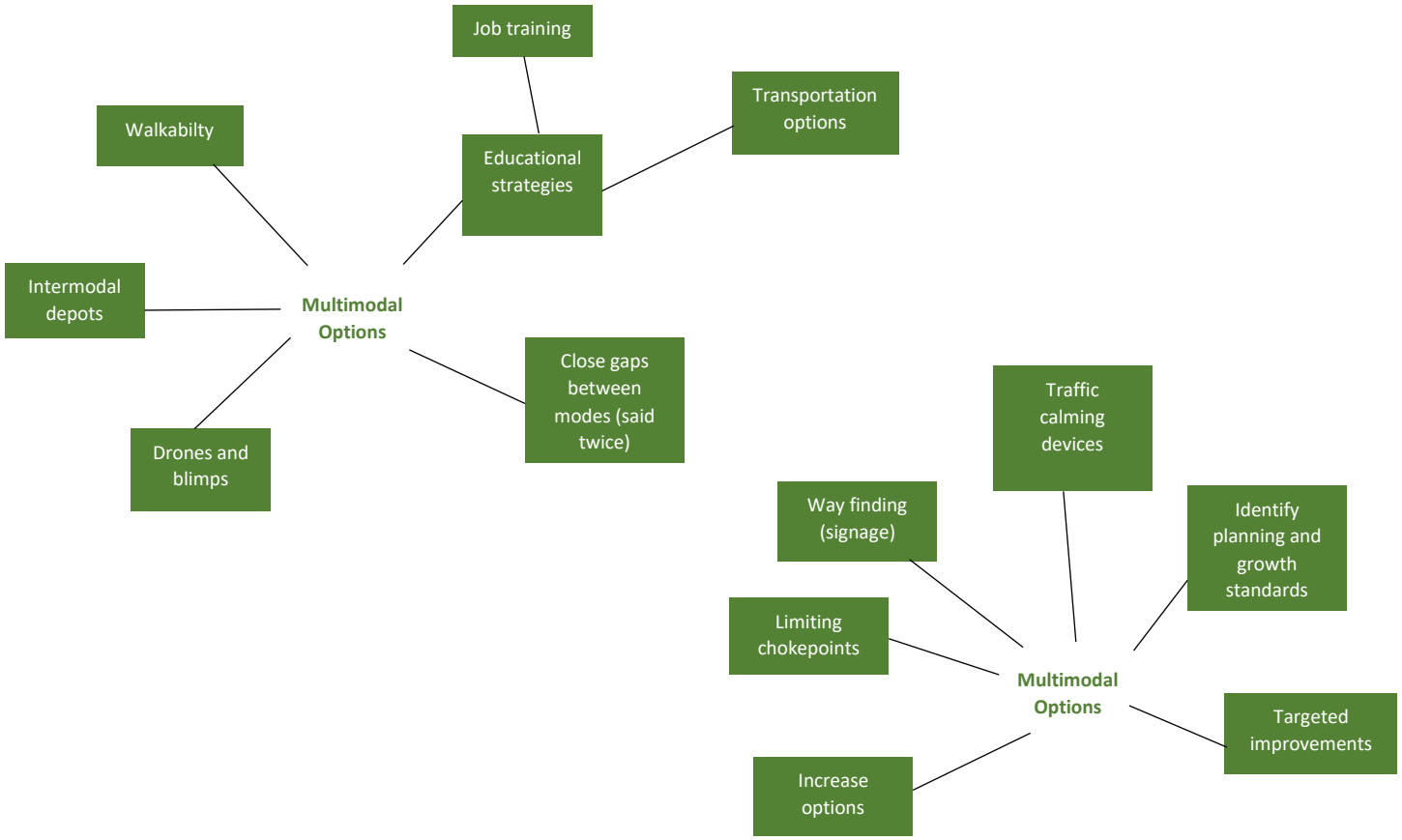
IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES I

Multimodal and Connectivity



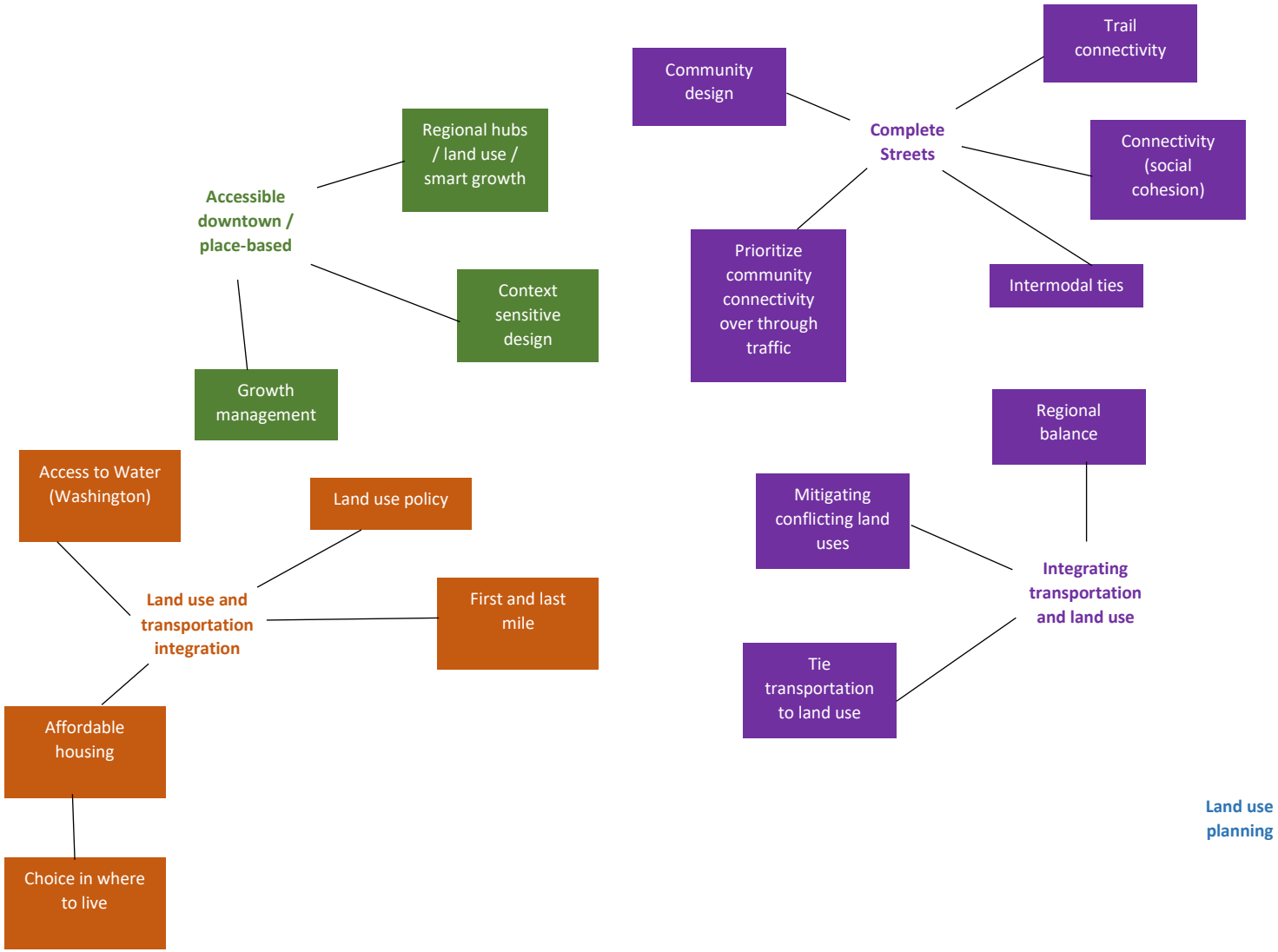
IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES I

Multimodal and Connectivity



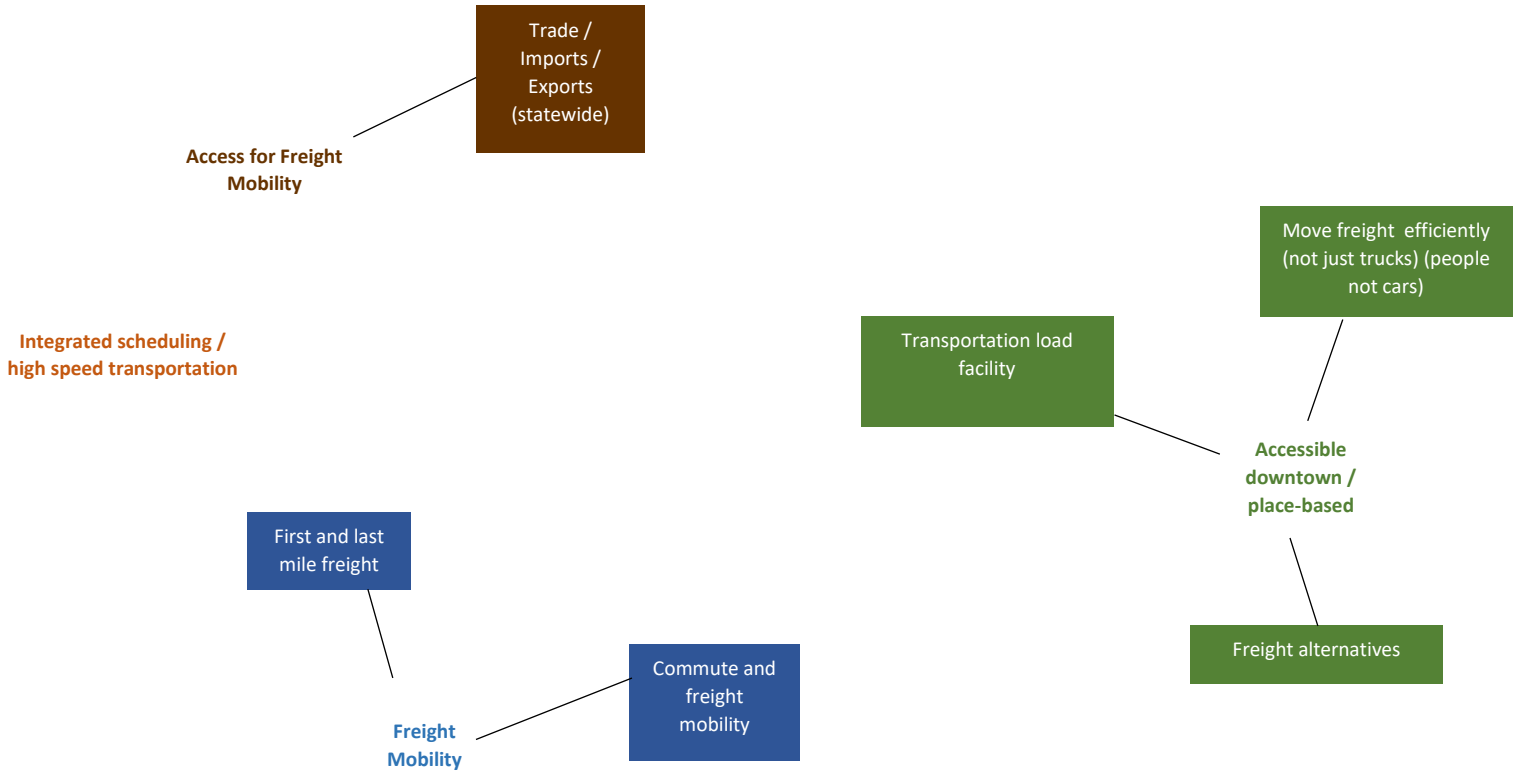
IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES I

Transportation and Land Use

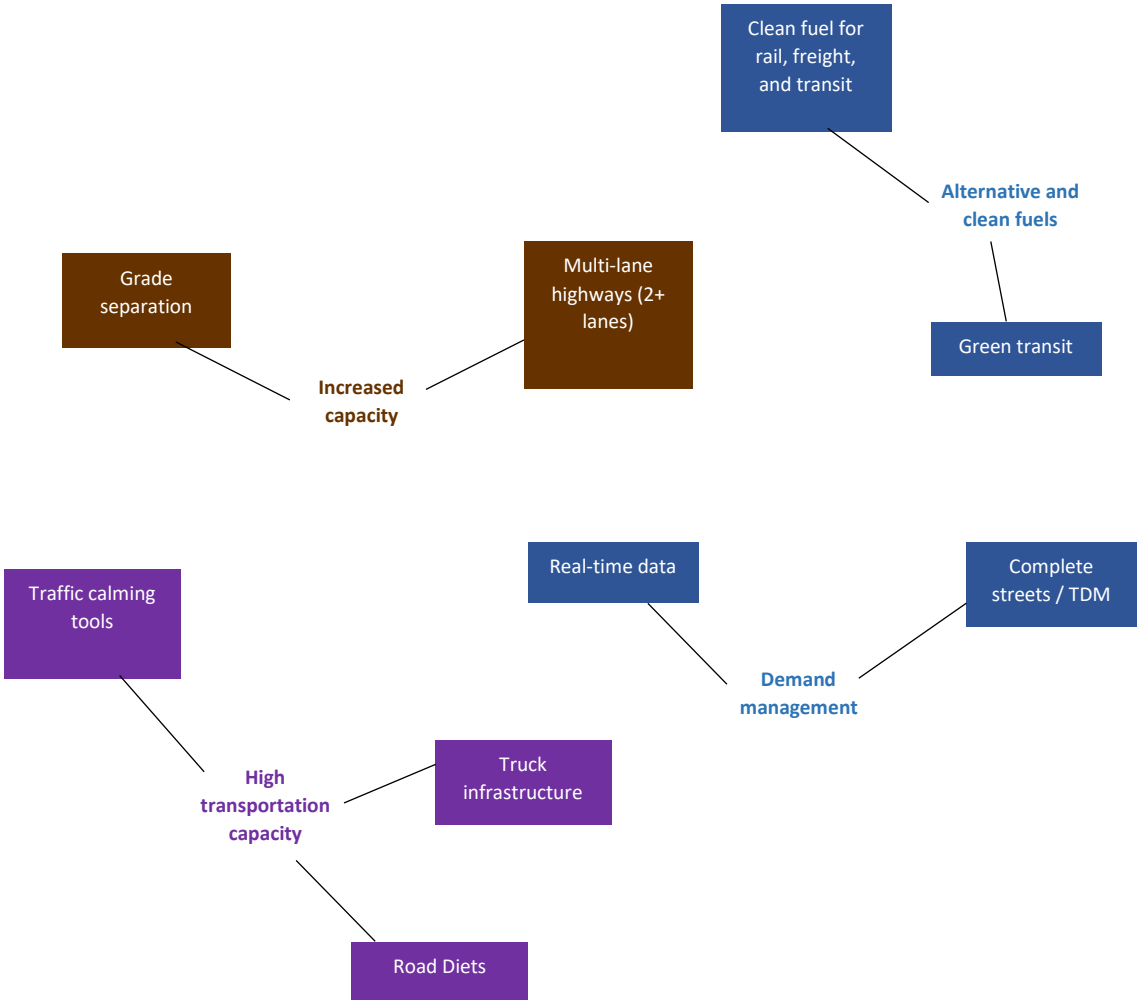


IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES I

Freight Mobility

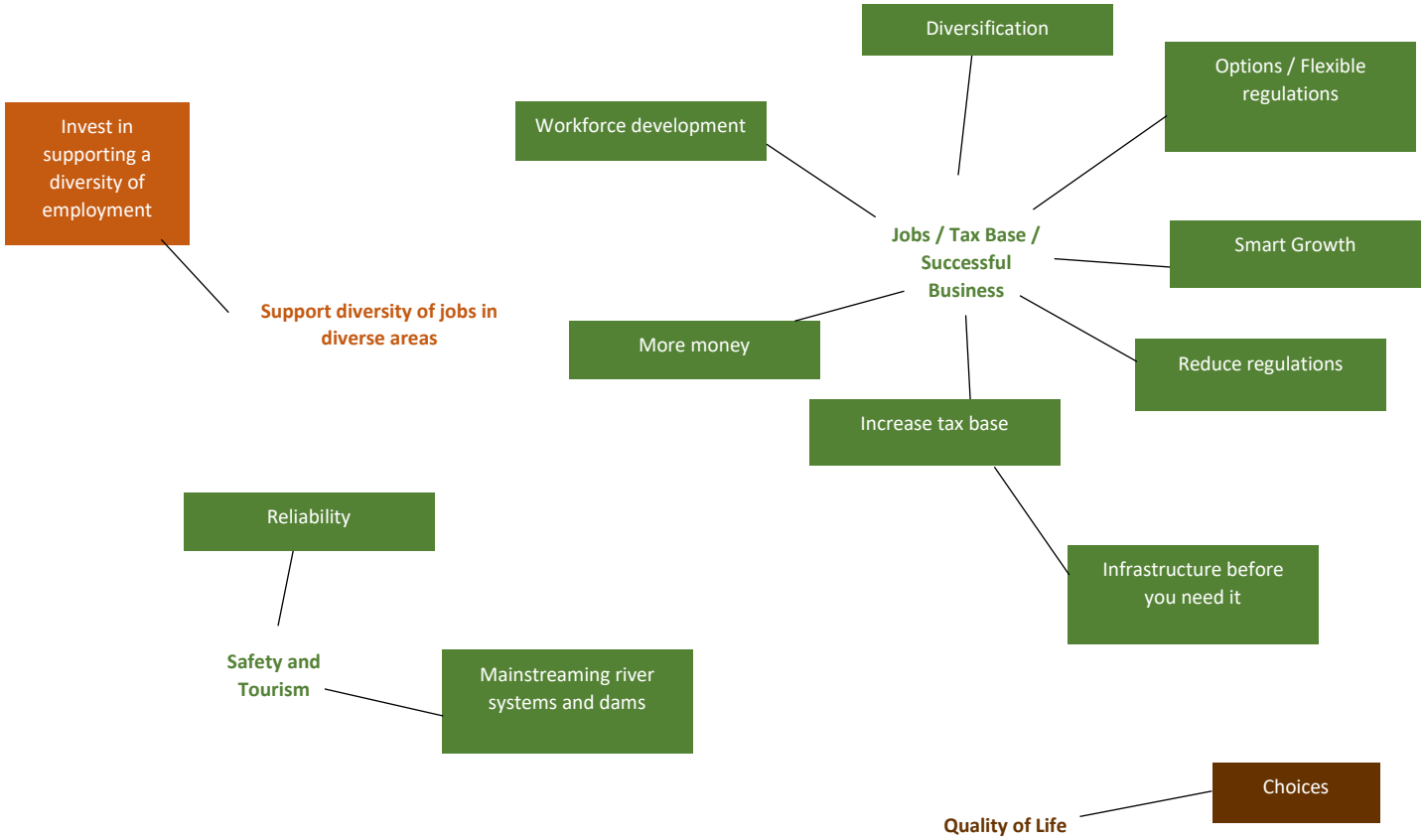


Capacity and Demand Management



IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES I

Business Growth and Diversity



IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES II

Business Growth and Diversity

- **Business Diversity**
  - Diversification
  - Invest in supporting a diversity of employment
  - Trade / Imports / Exports (statewide)
  - Promotion and Advertisement
- **Business Growth**
  - Workforce development
  - Job training
  - Reduce Regulations
  - Options / Flexible regulations
- **Sustainable Revenue**
  - Equitable funding
  - Legislative funding
  - More money
  - Funding and pricing that matters to outcomes
  - West $$$ v. East $ (disparity in funding)
  - Transportation resilience – vision should connect to investment decision
  - Increase tax base
  - Infrastructure before you need it

Quality of Life

- **Equity**
  - Partnerships with agencies like social and health services
  - Connectivity (social cohesion)
  - Collaborate
  - ADA Compliance
- **Access to Recreation**
  - One-stop / Way-finding
  - Bike paths
  - Way finding (signage)
  - Access to water (Washington)
  - Trails
- **Housing**
  - Choice in where to live
  - Missing middle housing
  - Mixed use
  - Affordable housing
  - Maintaining cultural amenities (lodging)
- **Community Design**
  - Identify planning and growth standards
  - Land use policy
  - Regional hubs / Land use / Smart Growth
  - Mitigating conflicting land use
  - Community Design
  - Tie transportation to land use
  - Context sensitive design
  -
  - Prioritize community connectivity over traffic
  - Regional balance
  - Walkability
  - First and last mile
  - Growth management
  - Smart Growth
- **Healthy Environment**
  - Green transit
  - Clean fuel for rail, freight, and transit
  - Maintaining river systems and dams

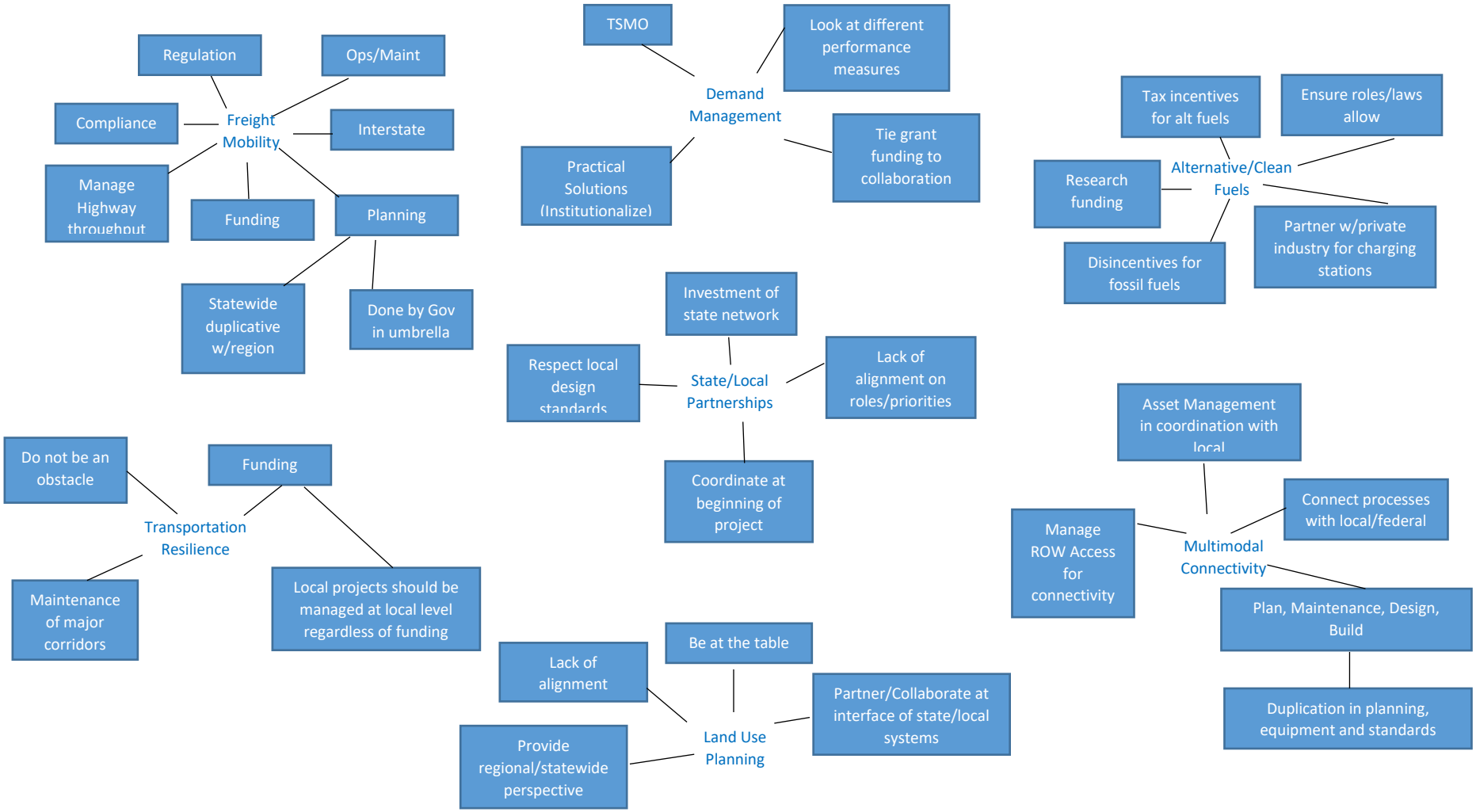
IDENTIFYING TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES II

Mobility

- **Multimodal**
  - Educational strategies
  - Alternative modes
  - Increase options
  - Multiple transportation options
  - Identify and prepare for future transportation options – today
  - Transportation options
  - Choices
  - Design and plan for all modes
  - Public demand
  - Remove institutional boundaries to effectively provide transportation services
  - Share data and knowledge
- **Access**
- **Capacity / Reduce Congestion**
  - Commute
  - Targeted improvements
  - Grade separation
  - Multilane highways
  - Limiting chokepoints
  - R/W Improvements
  - Traffic calming tools
- **Rail / Freight**
  - Rail
  - Drones / Blimps
  - Intermodal depots
  - Freight mobility
  - Boat and ship access
  - Truck infrastructure
  - Freight alternatives
  - Transportation load facility
  - First and last mile freight
  - Move freight efficiently (not just trucks) (people, not just cars)
  - Coordination between road and rail
- **Connectivity**
  - Sidewalks
  - Crosswalks
  - Bike paths/lanes
  - Trail connectivity
  - Shuttle services
  - Park n' rides
  - Intermodal ties
  - Complete streets / TDM
  - Integrated scheduling and planning
  - Close gaps between modes
- **Reliability**
  - Predictability (time)
  - Reliability
  - Real time data

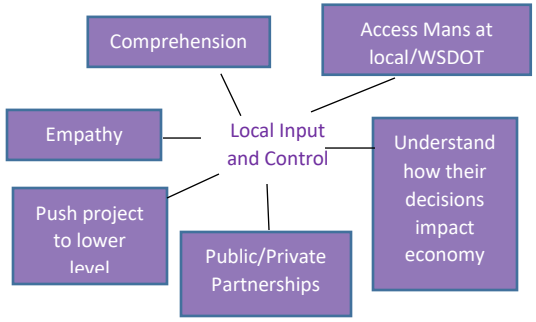
DEFINING THE STATE'S ROLE

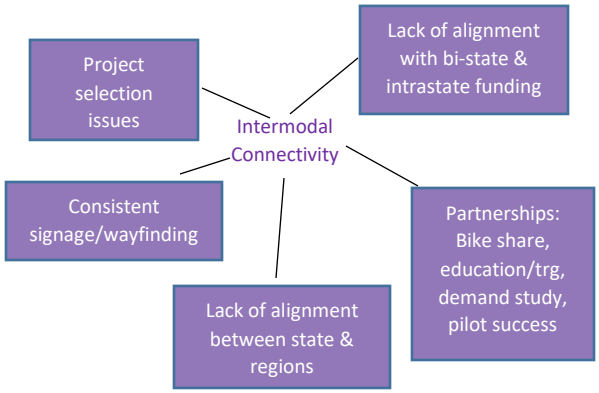
Olympia Workshop

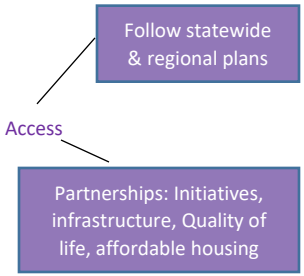


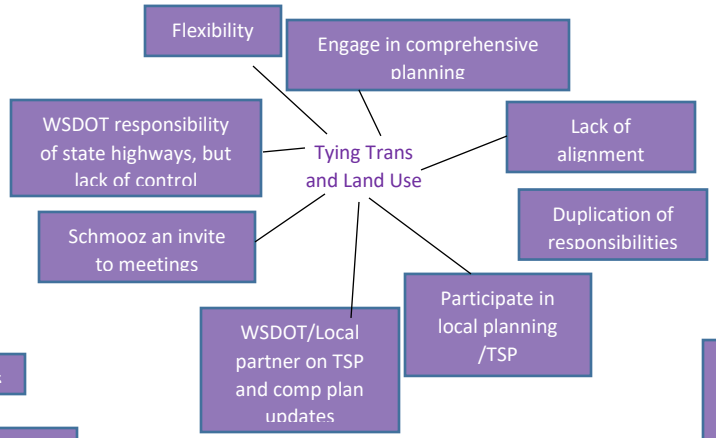
DEFINING THE STATE'S ROLE

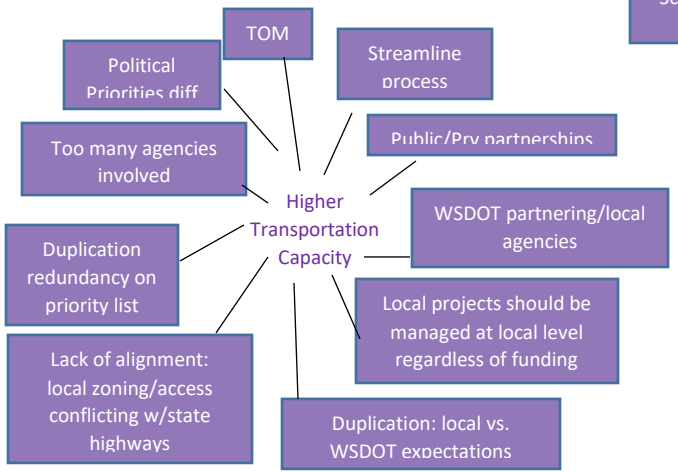
Vancouver Workshop

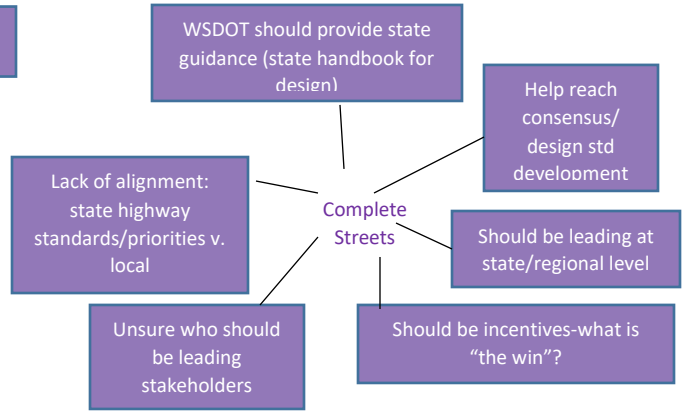












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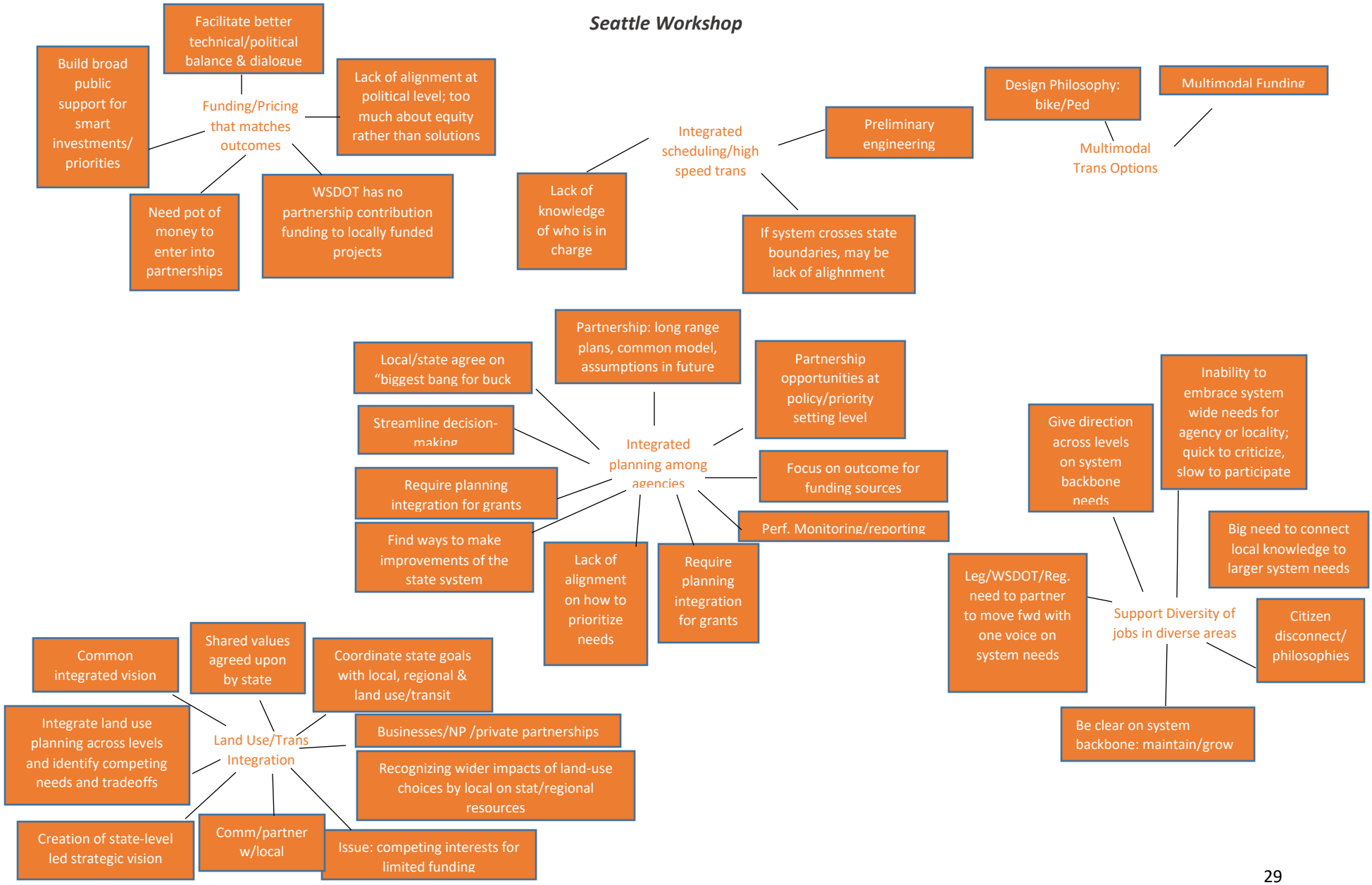
DEFINING THE STATE'S ROLE

Seattle Workshop



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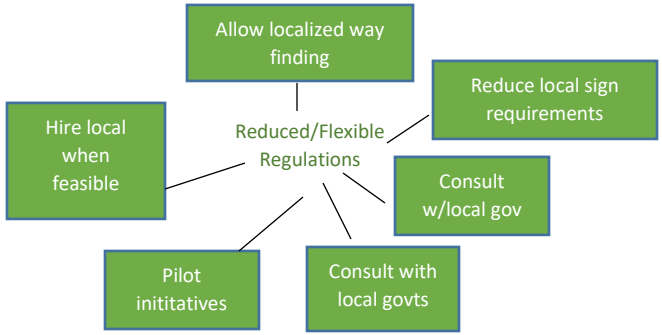
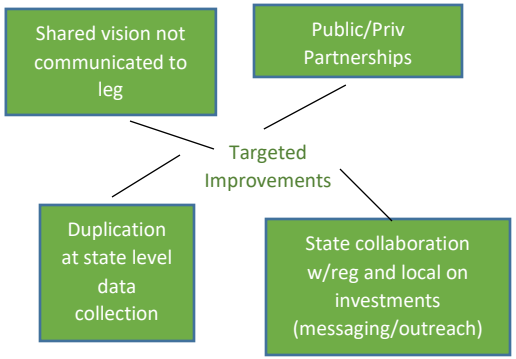
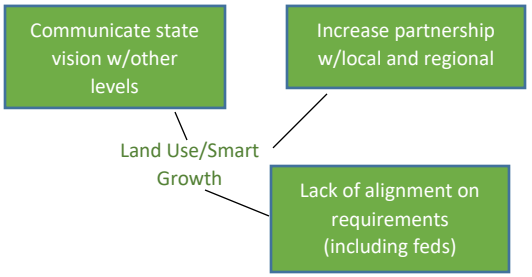
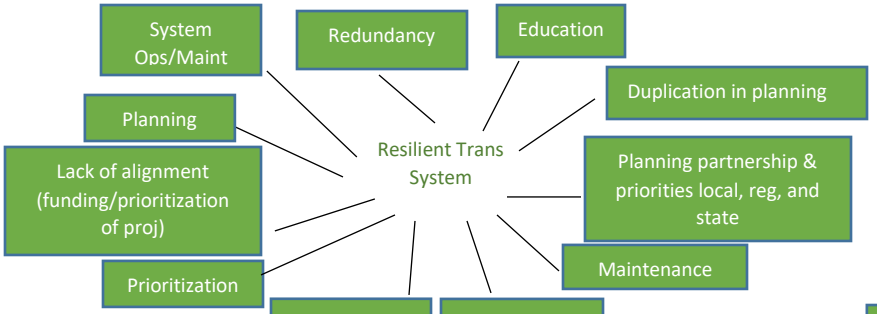
DEFINING THE STATE'S ROLE

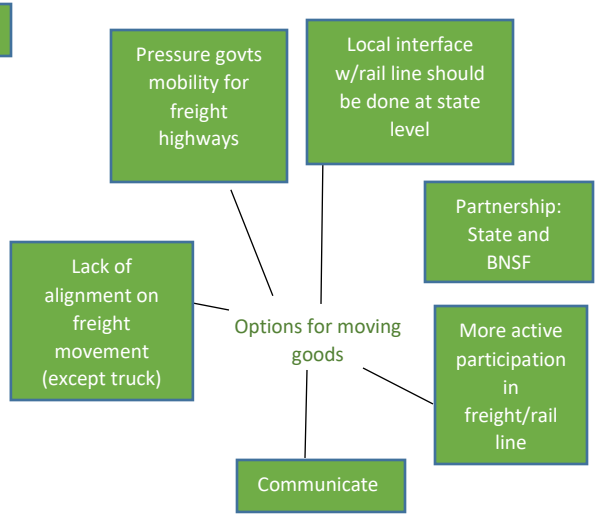
Tri-Cities Workshop

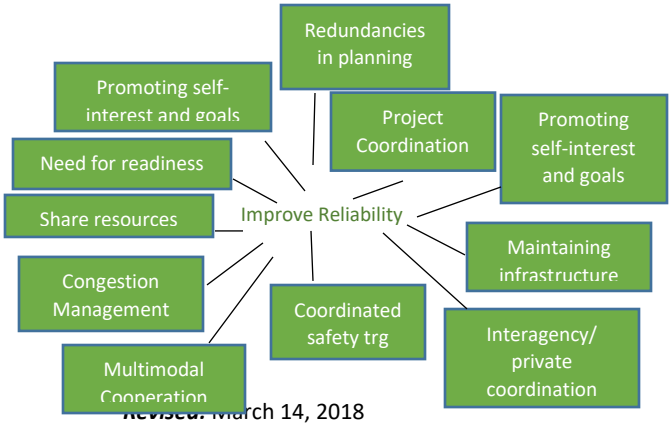






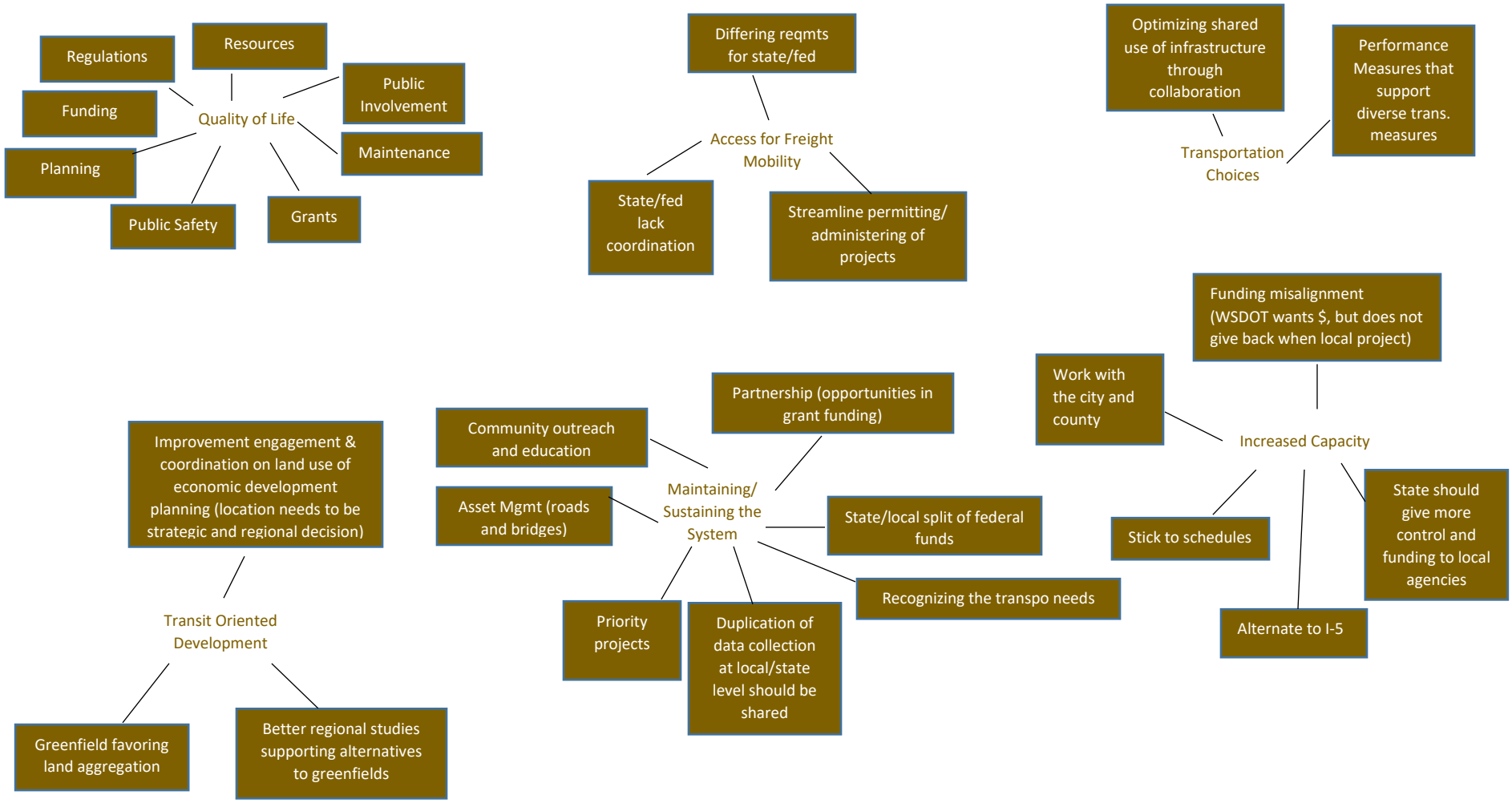






DEFINING THE STATE'S ROLE

Spokane Workshop



DEFINING THE STATE'S ROLE

Guiding Principles for Decision Makers

How might we balance the distribution of economic benefits geographically when thinking about economic performance?

- **Allow regional and local flexibility to set performance measures and goals for their needs**
    - Different performance metrics for Spokane than Vancouver
    - Let local government play a bigger role
    - Understand how funding is allocated at the local and regional levels
    - Use flexible methods for defining performance
        - Balance not by geography, but by economic activity/output by using flexible methods of defining performance
        - Measure impacts at a local level rather than state level (100 new jobs makes a bigger impact on a small town than a larger one)
    - Region based

- **Develop different a set of state goals and objectives for the local, regional and state levels.**
- **Provide funding to areas to areas with the greatest need (e.g. highest unemployment)**
- **Better regional partnering to develop other areas of the state**

- **Use cost effectiveness criterion**
    - Greatest return and potential
    - Weight factors than can bring the greatest increase in economic impact per capita
    - Greatest benefit to cost

- **Incentivize programs that optimize regional assets**
- **Look at tax collection versus tax distribution**
- **Prioritize funds with projected population growth**

- **Develop a statewide prioritization matrix to help score prospective improvements**
    - By population, regionally significant, importance to community, overall cost, geographic distribution (fairness)

How could we balance equity with effectiveness? (meeting the greatest need with providing the greatest impact)

- **Develop a rubric**
    - Transportation and housing index

- **Let data drive decisions**
- **Get a consensus on measures being applied**
- **Involve Commerce in this process**

- **Incentivize progress**
    - Determine historical growth and then reward improvements
    - Benefit those generating the most revenue (may support policies initiated by the business community)
- **Areas with the most need get the most resources and assistance**

- **Place-based assessment**
    - Base projects on sub-region basis (eastern v. western and urban v. suburban v. rural)
    - Let the Regions decide
    - Empower locals to identify needs
    - Recognize that a diversity of state/region/communities require a diversity of strategies
    - Identify sectors and set targets for each
        - Identify strategies for targets and funding
        - Funding should be based on what it takes to achieve targets – not distribution
        - Need and effectiveness should be weighed in context of community's starting point and viewed as percentages of the population or tax base, not flat numbers

- **Provide funding that supports job growth in regional job centers (SW Washington and SE Washington)**

- **Prioritize economic impact**
    - Promote projects with the greatest economic impact in relation to total investment (what effect would decreasing delay have here versus there?)
    - Benefits the greatest number of people (supports urban and infrastructure projects in dense areas
    - High impact projects in areas with less need get less funding – but more private partnerships
    - Consider the number of people impacted or benefited

- **Cost Benefit**

- **Equity**
    - Framework should account for both equity and performance
    - Poverty, low income and household income areas need help
    - Environmental justice weight to reflect historic disparities and addressing them
    - Priority given to low socio-economic impact (may support rural communities)
    - Need to move beyond supporting rural areas as a tourism resource. People living in rural areas need additional opportunities
    - Measures should not be limited to jobs
    - Focus on economic justice

How might we balance current economic needs versus planning for future economic needs?

- **Place based considerations**
    - Grow economy by regions
    - Understanding the needs of the community vision for future expansion
    - "Your turn" – each region gets a year guarantee
    - Consider the priorities of the locals and regions
    - Regional networking – making sure that all sectors are represented in decision-making

- **Life Cycle Cost factors should be taken into account**
    - Ensure lifetime of infrastructure projects is included in cost-benefit analysis
    - Seek sustainable funding solutions
    - Fully fund state of good repair, no matter what

- **Methodology / Process**
    - Matrix to prioritize highest current and future economic needs
    - Program and fund major investments counter cyclically to spend more during bad economic times

- Use of a panel of experts that are removed from political influences to help postulate the balancing point. This is how the Transportation Commission used to operate
- Identify maximum resources for effectiveness a measure so that funding is available for need
- Create performance measure that measure different, competing objectives (e.g. % of people with access, effectiveness = cost per user, mile, etc.)
- Common vision – vision the future and supplement it now

- **Use long range plans to guide decisions**
  - Everything that we do needs to fit into a long range plan. Done correctly, current economic needs already show up as part of the overall plan
  - Limit future planning time horizon we plan for – reduce from 50 years to 25 years
  - Heavily emphasize long-horizon planning for economic vitality
  - Plan for long term sustainability (reduce resource use)
  - Consider how current needs fit with long range plan for the area – if the current needs don't align, then the action being considered may be incorrect
  - Align transportation investments to city and regional long range plan. Front load and accelerate investments to meet current needs. Simplify projects at all levels to deliver projects faster and more affordably

- **Alignment with Current and Future Needs**
  - Make sure that current needs are informed by future needs
  - Focus on efforts that don't compromise current ones
  - Develop a methodology for certainty of future needs
  - Develop planning methodologies that provide us with more certainty of future needs (i.e. better use of expanding data sources to model future conditions – health, land use, income, demographics, etc. – to inform decisions and selection of projects)
  - Take future land use changes into account
  - Use a portion of funds to address worst-first easy actions, with remainder focused on future
  - Lead time on large investments is so long that future needs must be the priority

- **Decisions should be data driven**
  - Look for trends
  - Look at commuting patterns
  - Look at growth rates
  - Data and resource driven
  - Data collection and sharing – look at existing data and for trends
  - (Better) use of expanding data sources to model future conditions (income, land use, demographics, health, etc.) to inform decisions/selection of projects
  - Use long-term forecasting and traffic analysis and correct traffic conditions to identify easy, quick solutions and long-term solutions

- **Focus on current needs**
  - Spend most of your time achieving current needs so that they can inform future needs
  - Balance current economic needs by adjusting funding being lost by advances in technology which will also lead to addressing economic needs
  - CSI – future planning – current investments modification to match needs through CSI
  - Put current needs, particularly local in the context of regional and state economic needs. Longer-term to better align and leverage transportation investments.