

TRANSPORTATION

TECHNICAL SECTIONS

The following sections are technical information to supplement the policies and background in the previous section.

PREFACE

This Pierce County Transportation Element represents the first major revision in the County's transportation plan since [June 1992](#). The Transportation Element has been kept current through the twenty three years since the adoption of that plan through a series of amendments. Some of the amendments were technical in nature, many substantive. This Transportation Element is notable in that it is offered within the context of a larger Comprehensive Plan Update.

SO WHAT HAS CHANGED AND WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Much has changed since 1992. The planning landscape has changed in terms of the people, political geography, regulatory environment, technologies, economy, finance, and environment. Let us review some of the key developments since 1992 that affect how we look at transportation planning in Pierce County today.

THE POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

The boundaries and land area of unincorporated Pierce County have changed in the past twenty three years. State legislation has set the table for the emergence of new cities and the continued expansion of older ones through annexation of unincorporated lands. Since the first Transportation Plan came three new cities, Lakewood, University Place, and Edgewood. It is notable that this update of the County Comprehensive Plan offers policies that reinforce and encourage the continued process of annexation and incorporations.

PEOPLE

The concept of political geography as described above is important in transportation planning as the boundaries and coverage of this county directly relates to the population and facilities that the County serves. As the unincorporated land areas of this county decrease, so does the population within those areas. This Transportation Element will discuss the changing demography and trends of the County that will influence the demand for transportation and how it will be served.

THE PLANNING SETTING

The transportation planning policies and practices of all levels of agencies and governments have changed enormously. New terms such as *Sustainability*, *Smart Growth*, *Concurrency*, *Project Prioritization*, [MAP 21](#), [Intelligent Transportation Systems](#), and *Climate Change* have been added to the lexicon of the transportation planning profession. These are only few of the new terms.

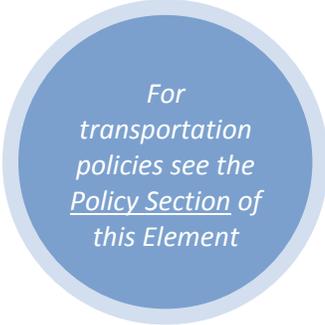
THE REALITY

The on the ground reality for transportation planning is somewhat of a *mix* of possibilities. There are enormous opportunities in such things as new high speed transit in nearby cities and a more extensive network of regional bus services developed since 1992. But there is also the almost doubling of traffic and resultant congestion on our state freeway system. There are also the budgetary realities at all levels of government and transportation agencies that have affected both the revenue and expenditure sides.

THE ASPIRATION

This Transportation Element considers the current planning setting and projects to the future. It does this through a largely *data driven* process of assessing travel needs, demographics, understanding its financial resources, and proposing approaches to addressing these needs.

It aspires to deliver a transportation future for Pierce County that is safe, sustainable, financially balanced and viable. The strategies presented in this Element are consistent with state law, and regional and countywide policies. It is in this context and more, that we offer the Transportation Element.



*For
transportation
policies see the
Policy Section of
this Element*