



City of Walla Walla
Six Year Comprehensive Transportation Program (CTP)
2024-2029



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PREFACE

Section 35.77.010 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) provides that each city shall annually update its Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and file a copy of the adopted Program with the Secretary of the Washington State Department of Transportation for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). **Adoption of the Plan is necessary for cities and counties to maintain eligibility for state and federal transportation funding.** For a project to obtain funding from the state, it must appear in the agency's current CTP. For certain types of federal funding, a project also has to be included in the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (WVVMPO) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan is divided into two parts:

- Current Six-Year Cycle
- Long Range Program

Several important points must be considered during the review of the proposed Plan. By FHWA/WSDOT guidance, the first four years of the Plan are intended to be

definitive, specific, and include those projects that have secured funding or can reasonably expect to have secured funding. The last two years should include projects that have a high probability of receiving funding. The goal is that the projects listed will be constructed as scheduled in the program, though the scheduling may change as circumstances dictate.

Projects beyond the first six years are listed in the Long Range Program as "Planned." These listings are intended to be more flexible and may be accelerated, delayed or canceled as funding opportunities or circumstances change. Projects in the Long Range Program may also be advanced to a higher level of priority should conditions and circumstances necessitate.

An advantage of the two-tier Current Six-Year Cycle vs. Long Range Program is that the public hearing process requirement has been fulfilled in the event a project in the Long Range Plan is elevated to the Current Six-Year Cycle. **The CTP may be amended at any time to include revised or new projects by a majority vote of the City Council, but only after a public hearing. Should that occur, City Council can amend the Six-Year CTP by resolution to revise a listed project or to add a new project.**

It is also important to note that the adoption of the CTP does not irreversibly commit the City of Walla Walla to construct the listed projects. A project may be canceled at any time during the course of study or design. Some typical reasons for cancelling a project could be: the project may have unacceptable environmental impacts; funding limitations could restrict the completion of the project as originally intended; or the need for the project is supplanted by other events.

CTP GOALS

The City of Walla Walla strives to create a transportation system that achieves the following goals:

- Promote pedestrian, non-motorized, and vehicular safety;
- Promote complete streets – enabling safe and convenient access and travel for all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all ages and abilities, as well as freight and motor vehicle drivers) and to foster a sense of place in the public realm;
- Support economic development; and
- Be representative of all neighborhoods.

STRATEGY

To achieve the goals and outcomes of the plan, and to meet the Goals as defined by the City Comprehensive Plan, the City applies the following strategies:

- Maximize available funding through grant requests and coordination with other agencies;
- Coordinate available funding sources such as the Transportation Benefit District (TBD), the Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Program (IRRP), and local utility funds to not only maximize available funding, but also minimize future road impacts by completing all necessary work under a single project whenever possible;
- Promote projects that have a positive impact on economic development;
- Encourage partnerships, both public and private;
- Use the most cost-effective methodology for preventative maintenance of infrastructure;
- Address parity throughout the City;
- Apply project management principles so that the project development process is well-defined and progress is adequately tracked;

- Collaborate with regional partner agencies within the WWVMPO to align regional priorities with funding opportunities;
- Provide City support to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee;
- Provide City support for mapping of bicycling and walking routes; and
- Provide opportunities for meaningful public input and participation.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

Priority is generally assigned to projects based on the following selection criteria:

- Consider high collision (and high risk) locations – for motorist, bicyclists, and pedestrians;
- Consider projects that complete a transportation corridor (serving all modes of transportation);
- Priority should be given to the higher classification facilities that serve the majority of the population;
- Consider projects that are competitive for outside grant funding opportunities;
- It is far less expensive to maintain roads in good condition than it is to rebuild them after they have failed. Therefore, priority should be given to

projects that maintain and preserve the condition of existing roadways;

- Consider projects which, if not funded, would result in a lost opportunity or partnership, costly future construction, or costly repair; and
- Allocate resources to achieve parity of infrastructure among neighborhoods over time.

COMPLETE STREETS

The City adopted a Complete Streets ordinance (Ord. 2016-48) in 2016, providing staff with consistent policy direction to consider the needs of all users when developing transportation projects.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The CTP goals and strategies are consistent with the direction given by the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The State’s Growth Management Act (GMA) required local governments to develop and adopt Comprehensive Plans covering land use, housing, capital-facilities, utilities, and transportation by July 1, 1993. The City of Walla Walla adopted its first Comprehensive Plan in 1999 and completed updates in 2008 and 2018.

Specific requirements in the GMA regarding the transportation element include: making land-use assumptions, establishing level-of-service standards, inventorying existing facilities and services, identifying current and future deficiencies, analyzing financial capability, developing an action strategy for implementation of the transportation element, ensuring intergovernmental coordination, and implementing demand management strategies.

The Comprehensive Plan is the official statement adopted by the City Council setting forth goals and policies to protect health, welfare, safety, and quality of life for Walla Walla's residents. The Comprehensive Plan anticipates change for the coming 20 years and establishes direction for the future physical growth, development, and improvement of the city. The plan also fulfills the City's responsibilities to manage growth as mandated by State law.

The requirements of the GMA imply that the projects in the Six-Year CTP be consistent with and implement the goals, policies, and plan recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Specifically, the Transportation Policies in the current Comprehensive Plan that apply to the CTP are:

Transportation Goal 1: Promote and develop transportation systems that support and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.

Transportation Goal 2: Provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation users and the transportation system.

Transportation Goal 3: Provide all users with complete streets that connect the City of Walla Walla's neighborhoods, parks, schools, employment centers, and retail areas.

Transportation Goal 4: Maintain, preserve, and extend the life of the City's transportation infrastructure.

Transportation Goal 5: Create a well-connected network of streets, paths, and transit service to provide active transportation options.

Transportation Goal 6: Maintain the predictable movement of goods and people throughout the City of Walla Walla to relieve traffic congestion and improve reliability for freight.

PROGRAMS

The CTP is divided into five programs: Arterial Street, Signal, Bicycle and Pedestrian, Bridge, and Transportation Benefit District.

Arterial Street

For capital street improvement projects that reconstruct, rehabilitate, widen, provide geometric improvements, and extend the arterial street system. These improvements may be combined with utility and other improvement projects for efficiency.

Signal

For intersection signalization, signal improvements, and channelization projects.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

For improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities such as bike trails, bike lanes, audible accessible signal improvements, and sidewalk construction. The

City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) provides significant input and prioritization of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program.

BPAC's role is to advise the City Council on bike and pedestrian matters. The BPAC also works with staff to develop goals for achieving a complete walkable, ADA accessible, and bicycle-friendly community. Consideration is given to connections with the downtown area, parks, medical facilities, the Mill Creek path, transit stops, schools, and park and ride lots, as well as with neighboring communities.

Bridge

For the replacement and rehabilitation of existing bridge structures.

Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

For rehabilitation, reconstruction, and maintenance of the transportation related infrastructure of streets included on the TBD prioritized list. The TBD list of 25 streets was formed utilizing a statistically valid citizen survey. City staff added roadway classification and traffic volumes as additional prioritization factors. The final weighting of these factors and prioritization

was collaboratively established by the TBD Citizen Advisory Board and City staff.

The Advisory Board and Staff agree that the list is a guideline, subject to change based on many factors, most significantly, the ability to combine TBD funds with other funding sources.

LEVERAGING GRANTS WITH LOCAL DOLLARS

The need to extend available local dollars by leveraging outside grants is important to all street-related programs and is consistent with the Strategic Plan. The aggressive pursuit of grants has served the City of Walla Walla well in the past for the improvement of arterials such as Myra Road, 13th Avenue, Rose Street, Wilbur Avenue, Isaacs Avenue, Park Street, and most recently Poplar Street and Alder Street in the downtown area. The availability of sufficient local funding to match grant opportunities has been an important factor in many successful applications. The organization of this CTP allows program managers to aggressively pursue grant opportunities, thereby maximizing Walla Walla's local dollars.

REVENUE SOURCES

Gas Tax

State and federal transportation funding is based primarily on motor vehicle fuel tax (gas tax). The City of Walla Walla receives a proportionate share of the State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (Gas Tax, MVFT), based on population. The amount varies depending on the amount of fuel consumed statewide.

Gas tax revenue is not an indexed tax. As fuel costs increase, the public's response has been to reduce travel and/or choose more efficient vehicles - both of which result in a reduction of the tax collected. The five-year history of gas tax revenues indicates a steady decline in the funds received. At the same time, costs for materials and construction continue to rise with inflation, significantly impacting the City's ability to fund improvements.

FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAMS

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was signed into law in November 2021 and authorizes spending for roads, bridges, mass transit, water infrastructure, resilience, and broadband. This is the largest long-term investment in

infrastructure and economy passed by Congress available over fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

It is important to remember that the vast majority of federal and state transportation funding sources are limited to application on classified roadways only (principal and minor arterials, and collector streets). Local streets are not eligible for outside grant funding, with the exception of certain bridge, pedestrian, or bicycle improvements.

Federal funds (STBG and TA) are regionally allocated through the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (WWVMPO) on a competitive basis.

Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)

The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) funds planning, design, construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation of federally classified roadways. The Local Bridge Program receives set-aside funds from the STBG program.

Transportation Alternatives (TA)

The Transportation Alternatives (TA) program generally funds bicycle and pedestrian improvements such as paths

and sidewalks, including Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects, and bike lanes.

Highway Safety Program

The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is for projects with documented safety issues, such as a high frequency of crashes, exposed bridge abutments, and other hazards to the traveling public. These funds are typically distributed on a state-wide, competitive basis.

STATE FUNDING

The Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) is a state agency directed by a 21-member board. The primary purpose of the TIB is to administer state funding for local government transportation projects. TIB's revenue comes from allocated portions of the motor vehicle fuel tax (MVFT). Projects are funded by utilizing TIB funds in combination with local matching funds, and private sector contributions.

The TIB currently administers the following grant programs that the City qualifies for:

Urban Arterial Program (UAP)

The UAP program was established to reduce congestion and improve safety, geometrics, and structural concerns.

Applications are due in August and projects are selected in November, based on a competitive scoring system.

Urban Sidewalk Program (SP)

The TIB Urban Sidewalk Program was established to provide funding for pedestrian projects. Projects should improve safety, provide access, and address system continuity and connectivity. The SP is on an annual funding cycle. Applications are due in August and selected by the Board in November.

Arterial Preservation Program (APP)

The APP program's purpose is to provide smaller local agencies with assistance to preserve their roadways, rather than allowing them to degrade to the point of requiring more costly replacement. The APP is on an annual funding cycle. Applications are due in August and projects are selected by the Board in November.

OTHER POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Local Option Fuel Tax

RCW 82.80.010 provides that any county can levy a local option fuel tax up to 10% of the state motor vehicle fuel tax, currently at \$0.494 per gallon. To exercise this option, the County Commissioners must approve the

measure, and have it approved by a majority of the voters. This only applies to each gallon of gasoline sold inside each jurisdiction's borders. The stipulations for use are the same as the MVFT. This tax may not be levied if a Transportation Benefit District has been established.

Transportation Benefit District

In February of 2012, the citizens of the City of Walla Walla approved a 0.2% sales tax increase to fund a Transportation Benefit District (TBD). The tax was initially implemented in July of 2012 and provided approximately \$1 Million per year in revenue for a 10-year term. In November, 2021, city voters renewed the TBD for a second 10-year term that will expire at the end of June, 2032.

TBD Projects are prioritized based on the results of a citizen survey, TBD Advisory Committee, staff input, and criteria such as average daily traffic volumes (ADT) and roadway classification. Higher volume arterials including Rose Street, Alder Street, Second Avenue, Poplar Street, Howard Street, Plaza Way, and Pine Street are on the priority list.

Local Improvement Districts (LID)

LIDs are an effective method to fund both transportation and utility projects and can be formed by Council to pay for specific elements of street improvements. While LIDs have not often been used for arterial improvements, they are suitable to fund improvements for local access roadways that are not eligible for Federal or State Transportation funding programs. The most recent LID considered by City Council was the Abadie Street LID, formed on April 22, 2009.

Utility Excise Fee

The City receives an ad valorem tax on private utility rates. The City collects the Utility Excise Fee from the city-owned utilities. Additional fees are anticipated as a result of the rate increases for the Infrastructure Repair and Replacement Program. Those additional fees are dedicated to the Street fund to cover street costs for general street maintenance.

OTHER LOCAL FUNDING OPTIONS

Additional funding sources available to the City are:

- Property Tax increase (Levy Lid Lift)
- Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)
- Sales Tax increase

- Councilmanic Bonds
- Vehicle License Tab fees
- General Obligation (GO) Bonds

Council has limited authority to apply these options. Council may authorize the use of the City's banked authority and issue Council Bonds upon a majority vote of the Council. Sales Tax increases and GO Bonds must be approved by a vote of the people. Councilmanic and GO Bonds revenues are issued for a specific project or task. Funds garnered through Sales Tax increase or Property Tax increase banking options are received into the General Fund and therefore cannot be legislatively dedicated for use specifically for street improvement except through the Biennial budget process.

PROJECT LIST

The City's Plan is divided into two main programs:

1. The Current Six-Year Cycle Program lists projects that are locally funded, have been allocated grant funding for design and/or construction (funding secured), and projects that have a high probability of receiving funding (funding planned).

2. The Long Range Program lists remaining projects that are needed, but do not yet have any sources of funding identified.

As projects are completed, or authorized for construction by the funding agency, they are removed from the CTP.

It should be noted that reported costs are very high-level planning estimates that are subject to significant changes as projects proceed through the development process.

DESIGN STANDARDS

The City will consult with the most up-to-date versions of the following documents during the design process:

- City of Walla Walla Municipal Code.
- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.
- AASHTO Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities.
- AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets.
- National Association of City Transportation Officials – Urban Street Design Guide

- National Association of City Transportation Officials – Urban Bikeway Design Guide
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
- Downtown Master Plan.
- City of Walla Walla Comprehensive Plan.
- WWVMPO Regional Transportation Plan.
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Design Manual.
- Department of Justice PROWAG.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Plan is a planning and reporting tool that provides local agencies the opportunity to consider future transportation needs and the funding levels that are necessary and/or available to address those needs.

Communities across the state and the nation are facing the dilemma of failing infrastructure, compounded by high inflation and dwindling federal, state and local revenues to fix them. The City of Walla Walla's overall roadway network has a substandard average condition rating, while its classified roadways (principal and minor arterials and collectors) have a slightly higher average score due principally to the past availability of federal and state fuel tax money.

Local agencies cannot rely on outside funding sources to fix the roads. Innovative local solutions must be found to address the problems.