

Issue/Solution Paper Adequacy of Transportation Concurrency

As part of Growth Management, State law requires transportation concurrency, to insure Level of Service (LOS) commitments are met within a reasonable time (6 years) to respond to transportation service impacts from development. There are concerns this amount of time is too long to have improvements in place to meet needs. Further, all too often, “financial commitments” are based on not-as-yet-secured Grant monies. Also, possibly most importantly, there appears to be no Concurrency enforcement mechanism.

There are several specific issues with applying Concurrency and setting LOS standards:

- (1) Holistic concepts like Travel Sheds (by which King County recognizes the *interconnected* nature of transportation in a way analogous to watersheds) have limitation in that they stop at jurisdictional boundaries (probably not the “natural” Travel Shed boundary).
- (2) Difficulty to respond to requirement for meaningful coordination with neighboring jurisdictions.
- (3) Integrated regional transportation concurrency is extremely difficult.
- (4) Some jurisdictions define LOS based on an “average” degree of travel comfort, e.g., intersection delay, road speed, capacity, “screenline,” distance traveled, which easily disconnects from user experience, possibly allowing development with little infrastructure investment.
- (5) Jurisdictions *greatly* exceed growth targets and appear to have no obligation to create internal job opportunities equivalent to the population growth permitted within their jurisdiction.
- (6) The Public is usually not engaged when jurisdictions adopt LOS standards and, thus, unique subarea desires are not clearly identified, if at all.

It is desired Concurrency be managed holistically without jurisdictional “seams”. Measurement must recognize “natural” interconnected travel patterns and be used consistently by all jurisdictions. Infrastructure needs should be timely met embracing best-available growth/employment forecasts. Measurement must align to the travel experience (moving people and freight).

Jurisdictional development should not *greatly* exceed growth targets. The highest priority of a jurisdiction should be to *minimize* impacts to other jurisdictions’ infrastructure by creating internal job opportunities at least equal to the growth being permitted. Funding for infrastructure improvements must be highly prioritized in jurisdictional 6-yr Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) with *guaranteed* revenue sources clearly identified. A regional perspective must be ensured whereby intercity needs and uses are addressed and accommodated by accurately describing impacts to all elements of the transportation network regardless of jurisdiction.

Infrastructure needs should be identified as early and accurately as possible, with implementation of identified improvements truly concurrent, otherwise the development approval must be delayed or denied. Concurrency must be linked to a public dialog. Concurrency must have an enforcement mechanism.

Potential solution paths for discussion: Policies that require population, growth, and revenue databases could be continuously updated and used to conduct periodic traffic modeling and impact analyses. Legislation could be enacted that strengthens requirements for a demonstrated LOS link to public dialog. Mechanisms could be established so the Growth Management Planning Council and Puget Sound Regional Council can:

- (1) Enforce the requirement that jurisdictions create job opportunities at least equal to the population growth they permit within their jurisdictions.
- (2) Ensure consistent methods for analyzing regional impacts of development across all jurisdictions.
- (3) Implement policies that ensure jurisdictional seams are addressed or removed from Concurrency.
- (4) Scrutinize “financial commitments” to ensure they are real and attainable sources of funds.
- (5) Enforce the requirements of Concurrency are met as intended.

We have identified the following RCWs and WACs that could provide such opportunities:

RCW 36.70A--GROWTH MANAGEMENT--PLANNING BY SELECTED COUNTIES & CITIES.

36.70A.020--Planning Goals [see 12. Public facilities and services].

36.70A.070--Comprehensive Plans--Mandatory Elements [see (6) transportation element].

WAC 365-196-840--CONCURRENCY. (4) Measurement Methodologies

References:

King County Proposed 2013 Transportation Concurrency Update, October 2013. [Travel Sheds (zones)
Seattle Comp. Plan. [“Screenline” -- close proximity parallel routes considered single unit]
Renton Comp. Plan, Sect. XI. [Index of Measured Travel Rates (dist. traveled over fixed period of time)]
Maple Valley Comp. Plan, Oct. 2011 Update, pp. T-35-38. [Avg. of delays across multiple intersections]
Your Community’s Transportation System -- A Guide to Reviewing, Updating and Implementing Your Transportation Element; WA State Dept. of Commerce; Sept. 2012 <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/GMS-Transportation-2012.pdf>]; Table 4E2, pp. 145-150.