

Chapter 4 - TRANSPORTATION GOALS, PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

Local transportation planning policies and guidelines are partially based on land use assumptions and their respective travel behavior and magnitude. These assumptions can include the following elements:

- Estimated traffic impacts to state-owned transportation facilities resulting from land use assumptions.
- Identification of facilities and service needs.
- Discussion of financing for transportation facilities and services.
- Intergovernmental coordination efforts.
- Transportation demand management strategies.
- Pedestrian and bicycle component.

Transportation Goals and Policies developed by the City guide the assessments of existing and future conditions, and the development of the Recommended Transportation Plan. Goals and policies are defined under the following categories:

GOAL TR-1. PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Policy TR-1.1** – Provide for safe transportation facilities that integrate the needs of transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, commuters, and motorists and take into account large vehicle movements (e.g., turning for buses and trucks).
- **Policy TR-1.2** – Make pedestrian and transit facilities safe and accessible for people with temporary or permanent mobility impairments or disabilities.
- **Policy TR-1.3** – Provide adequate illumination at night for public streets and public sidewalks.
- **Policy TR-1.4** – Promote student safety by installing signs and pavement markings to implement the school designated walk route plans.
- **Policy TR-1.5** – Promote direct access routes for emergency vehicles.

[Discussion: Sno-Com provides coordinated dispatch to public safety teams. The City also has an emergency operations plan, coordinated with the Emergency Services Coordinating Agency for this region.]

GOAL TR-2. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- **Policy TR-2.1** – Work with state, regional, and local agencies to meet or do better than meet air and water quality standards.
- **Policy TR-2.2** – Use low impact development and storm water management techniques, as appropriate, for roadway, sidewalk and trail design.
- **Policy TR-2.3** – Provide street improvements consistent with environmental regulations and best construction practices.

[Discussion: The Environmental Element of the Comprehensive Plan also contains information and guidance on environmental protection. With various wild salmon and

- trout species listed as endangered, the need for protecting the region’s water resources has become especially evident.]
- **Policy TR-2.4** – Through the environmental review process, mitigate transportation projects to minimize pollution, noise, glare, and other adverse impacts.
 - **Policy TR-2.5** – Use recycled or other environmentally-friendly products, when feasible, for street maintenance and improvement projects.
 - **Policy TR-2.6** – Encourage the provision of landscaping adjacent to transportation facilities for the purposes of storm water management, noise reduction, air quality improvement, visual appearance, and pedestrian safety.
 - **Policy TR-2.7** – Encourage the use of electric vehicles and the provision of electric vehicle infrastructure as one way of reducing greenhouse gases and improving air and water quality.
 - **Policy TR-2.8** – Support mode shifts from single occupancy vehicles to alternative modes such as walking, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling, and transit to reduce negative impacts to the environment caused by fossil-fueled transportation.

GOAL TR-3. EFFICIENCY AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS

- **Policy TR-3.1** – Provide an efficient system for multiple modes of transportation.
 [Discussion: “Modes” of transportation include walking, bicycles, cars, trucks, buses, rail, and aircraft. The City is not the primary provider of some transportation services, especially bus, rail, and air service, but can work cooperatively with agencies that provide such services.]
- **Policy TR-3.2** – Provide for a street network, based upon a classification system that meets local needs and state and federal requirements.
- **Policy TR-3.3** – Coordinate with other jurisdictions to identify and moderate the transportation impacts of development.
 [Discussion: Transportation issues do not stop at city boundaries. Population growth and business development in neighboring cities and unincorporated areas can increase traffic in Mountlake Terrace. To help identify such impacts and moderate their effect, the City will need to work with nearby cities, counties, and transportation agencies.]
- **Policy TR-3.4** – Ensure street improvements are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, adopted regulations, and, as appropriate, the City’s engineering standards.
- **Policy TR-3.5** – Implement street standards that discourage high travel speeds, minimize environmental impacts, provide for emergency service vehicles, and are sensitive to the neighborhood’s character. The adopted Transportation Master Plan includes street standards for most street improvement projects.
- **Policy TR-3.6** – Provide for a street network with circulation patterns that encourage community connections and safe access, while protecting residential neighborhoods from excessive traffic and noise.
 [Discussion: Traffic circulation has many aspects to consider. For example, developers and neighborhood residents sometimes prefer dead-end streets for residences. However, dead-end streets can prevent assurance of the most efficient emergency routes and complicate pedestrian access between neighborhoods. The City also

recognizes that existing development conditions and geographic constraints can make street connections impractical. The City strives to provide a balanced approach to circulation for motorized and non-motorized transportation.]

- **Policy TR-3.7** – Encourage traffic circulation and access to be coordinated among neighboring parcels in commercial, industrial, and multifamily areas.

[Discussion: Coordinated circulation and shared access between neighboring parcels can reduce vehicle trips on public streets and, at the same time, increase convenience for users. Coordinated circulation refers to making sure that the transportation system is laid out in a way that integrates the needs of different users and allows traffic to move smoothly. “Shared access” includes shared driveways and connections between sites. Typically, property easements will be needed to ensure the objectives for shared access and shared facilities will be met.]

- **Policy TR-3.8** – Acquire rights-of-way where most needed for streets to meet the City’s standards and circulation needs.
- **Policy TR-3.9** – Ensure adequate maintenance, preservation and renewal of existing streets, sidewalks, and traffic control systems.

[Discussion: A major part of the City’s transportation service is simply the maintenance and preservation of existing streets, including sidewalks, and traffic control systems including signs, signal, and pavement markings. Adequate maintenance is dependent on adequate funding, along with strategic decisions for an array of projects impacting street maintenance. A pavement management program, such as the one currently used by the City, guides the planning and scheduling of maintenance and preservation projects.]

- **Policy TR-3.10** – Establish a traffic volume count program to monitor development and concurrency standards and optimize signal timing at intersections.
- **Policy TR-3.11** – Implement Transportation System Management strategies such as signal synchronization to ensure the most efficient operation of the existing transportation network.

GOAL TR-4. MOBILITY

- **Policy TR-4.1** – Ensure that signalized intersections within the City meet at least a minimum Level of Service D, except for the following: a. Signalized intersections within the 212th Street SW corridor, which shall meet at least a minimum Level of Service E; b. Signalized intersections within the 244th Street SW corridor, which shall meet at least a minimum Level of Service E; c. Signalized intersections within the 220th Street SW corridor from SR 99 to I5, which shall meet at least a minimum Level of Service E.

Discussion: More information supporting these standards is contained in the section “Roadway Inventory and Traffic Volumes” of the Transportation Element.

- **Policy TR-4.2** – Ensure that non-signalized intersections within the City meet at least a Level of Service E. Discussion: More information supporting this standard is contained in the section “Roadway Inventory and Traffic Volumes” of the Transportation Element.
- **Policy TR-4.3** – Adopt Washington State Highway Department Level of Service D for

state transportation facilities within the City of Mountlake Terrace.

Discussion: Local governments are required to adopt Level of Service standards in consultation with the regional transportation organization, for state routes and, in consultation with the State Department of Transportation for designated Highways of Statewide Significance. This is intended to assist in monitoring system, performance, evaluating improvement strategies, and coordinating between local and state transportation agencies. The City of Mountlake Terrace is not responsible for making improvements or requiring concurrency to achieve the standards on state facilities. Standards contained in Policy 4.3 are consistent with the determination of the state Department of Transportation.

- **Policy TR-4.4** – Ensure that new development does not cause the street level of service to fall below the City’s minimum standard as identified in transportation level of service Policies TR-4.1, TR-4.2 and TR-4.11, except as otherwise provided by city ordinance and state law.

Discussion: Fuller explanations of “level of service” standards and concurrency are contained in other sections of this element.

- **Policy TR-4.5** – Shorten trip lengths and reduce congestion by continuing to develop non-motorized alternatives and encouraging transit, car pools, and other measures that reduce traffic congestion and pollution from automobiles and trucks.
- **Policy TR-4.6** – Review the City’s Commute Trip Reduction Plan at least every five years for effectiveness and possible modification needs, while maintaining consistency with state law, including the Commute Trip Reduction Act of 2006.
- **Policy TR-4.7** – Encourage compact development and mixed uses that reduce the need for additional vehicle trips.
- **Policy TR-4.8** – Provide mobility for people driving, walking, bicycling, and using transit.
- **Policy TR-4.9** – Support the “Complete Streets” concept of enabling use of all modes of transportation in the City, including walking, bicycling, transit, and taking into account vulnerable users, as street projects occur and where feasible.
- **Policy TR-4.10** – Adopt Level of Service “E/mitigated” for the SR 104 Highway of Regional Significance.

Discussion: Local governments are required to adopt Level of Service (LOS) standards for Highways of Regional Significance. “E/mitigated” is the Puget Sound Regional Council LOS standard that the City is required to adopt. “E/mitigated” means that if the LOS falls beneath LOS E, mitigation, such as additional transit service, is required. Policy TR-4.11 Ensure that multimodal concurrency standards are met by implementing critical pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements.

GOAL TR-5. CONSISTENCY WITH COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL NEEDS

- **Policy TR-5.1** – Make transportation decisions consistent with provisions in the Land Use Element and other elements.
- **Policy TR-5.2** – Support economic development in designated locations, especially the

Mountlake Terrace Sub regional Growth Center and the North Melody Hill Activity Hub through appropriate street improvements.

- **Policy TR-5.3** – Recognize 56th Avenue as it passes through the Town Center area as a designated pedestrian-oriented corridor.
- **Policy TR 5.4** – Encourage parking facilities, including park-and-ride facilities, to provide for mixed uses and multiple purposes and ensure that park-and-ride facilities are within a five- to ten-minute walk from the transit station they serve.

Discussion: Parking facilities, whether public or private, use land most efficiently in urbanized areas when located in conjunction with other structures and uses. This includes the location of park-and-ride facilities within, above, under, or near other structures.

- **Policy TR-5.5** – Encourage appropriate linkages between city arterials and state or regional transportation facilities to improve traffic flow.

Discussion: Coordination with other local governments and with state and regional transportation agencies will continue to be needed.

- **Policy TR-5.6** – Provide for transportation projects needed to accommodate the City’s share of future growth.

GOAL TR-6. EFFECTIVE PUBLIC TRANSIT

- **Policy TR-6.1** – Encourage public transportation to be extended throughout the City at a level of service appropriate to the type of development in each area.
- **Policy TR-6.2** – Encourage transit agencies to improve bus connections, as well as to study commute and shopping needs and routes for our City.
- **Policy TR-6.3** – Encourage improved transit service to other local and regional jurisdictions and to employment, shopping, and educational centers, including those in King County.
- **Policy TR-6.4** – Incorporate transit agency participation into the development review process, where applicable, to ensure site plans for new projects are compatible with and provide infrastructure necessary to support public transportation.
- **Policy TR-6.5** – Continue to work with Sound Transit for the expansion of Link Light Rail from Seattle to Mountlake Terrace, primarily within the eastern portion of the I-5 freeway right-of-way, and to include a light rail station in Mountlake Terrace at approximately I-5 and 236th, which shall be built in a manner that allows access from the recently-built Transit Center. Encourage and facilitate a future light rail station near I-5 and 220th.
- **Policy TR-6.6** – Provide infrastructure that supports speed and reliability for buses.
- **Policy TR-6.7** – Support transit service that provides a direct connection between the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center, the Town Center and the Melody Hill center.
- **Policy TR-6.8** – Support transit ridership by providing strong pedestrian linkages to the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center and future light rail station.
- **Policy TR-6.9** – Preserve right-of-way and private land necessary for the construction of light rail.
- **Policy TR-6.10** – Encourage development of high-capacity transit (especially light rail) on I-5 and express buses on I-5 and SR 99 to serve Mountlake Terrace.

- **Policy TR-6.11** – Support innovative programs and encourage transit-oriented development to attract transit riders and make ridership convenient, fast, and comfortable.

GOAL TR-7. WALKABILITY

- **Policy TR-7.1** – Provide for a pedestrian system that:
 - 4] Connects residences, businesses, schools, parks, transit facilities, and civic buildings;
 - 5] Uses crosswalks, bulb outs, traffic control devices, and other “walker friendly” features in appropriate locations, especially in the centers and near schools;
 - 6] Is not compromised by obstacles that unnecessarily block pedestrian access or impair mobility; and,
 - 7] Creates a high quality experience in the Town Center that includes street trees, wider sidewalks, and activity on the sidewalk such as sidewalk cafes.

Discussion: More information about creating a pedestrian-friendly environment is contained in other sections of the Transportation element, especially the Non-Motorized Transportation section.
- **Policy TR-7.2** – Maintain and enhance the pedestrian system by:
 - 8] Providing sidewalks through the City on both sides of public streets to the extent feasible; Requiring developers to complete or improve, as necessary, the sidewalk system adjacent to the property being developed;
 - 9] Funding high-priority improvements;
 - 10] Using portions of the right-of-way, where feasible, to provide planting strips consistent with city standards;
 - 11] Providing for internal pedestrian circulation systems within and between existing, new or redeveloping commercial, multi-family or single-family development; and
 - 12] Providing for convenient connections to frontage pedestrian systems and transit facilities.
- **Policy TR-7.3** – Prioritize improvements for sidewalks and pedestrian paths using the following criteria:
 - 13] How safe is the route for pedestrians? Does this improvement:
 - Separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic, especially in high traffic areas?
 - Improve width of walkway and surface conditions?
 - Address potential conflicts at road crossings?
 - 14] Is this route within a mile of a public school? Does this improvement:
 - Provide access to a public school?
 - Provide a safe route for schoolchildren to and from school?
 - Serve elementary schools?
 - 15] Does this route connect to community facilities or commercial centers? Does this improvement:

- Provide direct access to facilities or services?
 - Ensure that the route links to a safe direct access to facilities or services?
- 16] Is this route along an arterial or collector roadway? Does this improvement:
- Provide sidewalks along an arterial or collector roadway?
 - Improve inadequate pedestrian facilities along an arterial route?
 - Ultimately develop a web of walkways?
- 17] Is this route also a route for transit or provide access to transit?
- 18] Is there existing infrastructure along this route that will significantly reduce project costs?
- Does this route complete gaps in the City’s walkway system? Does this improvement:
 - Complete important pedestrian routes?
 - Make important destinations more accessible to users?
 - Ultimately develop a web of walkways?
- 19] Does the public support the development of this route?
- **Policy TR-7.4** – Prioritize projects for recreational and optional-use trails using the following criteria:
- 20] Connect with a regional trail network;
- 21] Improve access to publicly-owned open space and parks; and,
- 22] Increase mobility where terrain limits vehicular access.
- **Policy TR-7.5** – Design sidewalks in ways that provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicle traffic and that minimize the crossing distance at intersections.
 Discussion: Pedestrians are more likely to use sidewalks and will feel safer, especially along busy streets, when they are buffered from traffic. This can be accomplished by providing space between the walkway and the driving lane. Pedestrian buffer space may take the form of extra-wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes, vehicle parking space, and planting strips. Research also shows that, when crossing streets, pedestrians are safer and more comfortable if the crossing distance is short. Narrow streets are the easiest and most obvious way to ensure short crossing distances. Where streets are wide, walking distances across intersections can be minimized in various ways, for example: curb bulb-outs, medians, and “pedestrian islands.”
 - **Policy TR-7.6** – Encourage landscaping, benches, lighting, and other amenities along key pedestrian corridors.
 Discussion: People like to walk when the experience is pleasant and interesting. Landscaping, especially trees and other plantings, can be a big boost. After dark, people need lights to shine the way; if the lighting equipment is attractive, it will add interest, day or night. Benches are helpful, in strategic locations, for people who need to rest along the way or wait to meet someone, and allow people to congregate.
 - **Policy TR-7.7** – Incorporate pedestrian-oriented design into street improvements, street standards, and development projects.

Discussion: Pedestrian-oriented design means design that makes walking safer, convenient, and pleasant. It also takes into account the needs of people with disabilities. For example, a smooth sidewalk surface is safer and more convenient than a sidewalk disrupted by obstacles, poor pavement condition, or driveway cuts that abruptly change the grade for pedestrians. While improvements to the City’s walkability can occur anytime, they will be done most efficiently when planned in advance and coordinated with other projects.

- **Policy TR-7.8** – Support walking as a form of active transportation – enhancing health and providing for transportation needs at the same time.

GOAL TR-8. CONVENIENT BICYCLING

- **Policy TR-8.1** – Encourage the provision of bicycle racks in convenient locations.
- **Policy TR-8.2** – Promote safe bicycling opportunities as part of a comprehensive strategy.

Discussion: Both the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Planning Commission should be involved in the development of a master plan.

- **Policy TR-8.3** – Seek partnerships to develop or maintain bicycle routes.

Discussion: Join with the City of Shoreline in a bicycle study of SR 104 in the vicinity of I-5. Coordinate with the City of Brier regarding bike facilities on 214th near the city boundaries.

- **Policy TR-8.4** – Implement bicycle facility improvements to create a complete transportation network for bicyclists.

Discussion: There are a number of bicycle needs including installation of special traffic signal detection systems, bicycle safe inlet grates, shoulder improvements, signing, and pavement lane stripping or bicycle symbols. An annual program would ensure funds are available to address these issues.

GOAL TR-9. WELL MANAGED PARKING

- **Policy TR-9.1** – Require development projects to provide adequately for both on-site and on-street vehicle parking, consistent with the type of development and any special circumstances.

Discussion: Basic levels of on-site parking should be required for new development, recognizing that different types of development will need different amounts of parking. Such on-site parking requirements are established in the zoning code. In addition, on-street parking should supplement the required basic level of on-site parking, except where traffic conditions or other special circumstances make the provision of on-street parking either not feasible or unnecessary.

- **Policy TR-9.2** – Encourage parking management systems that will provide effective ways of meeting parking needs.

Discussion: Parking management systems may include techniques such as the sharing

- of parking facilities by adjacent developments.
- **Policy TR-9.3** – Encourage businesses in the Town Center and other key areas to work together to develop parking solutions.
- **Policy TR-9.4** – Require on-site parking facilities to provide illumination for safety needs, while minimizing unnecessary glare.
- **Policy TR-9.5** – Require on-site parking facilities to provide landscaping that mitigates environmental impacts, improves the visual appearance of the facilities, and buffers neighboring land uses.
- **Policy TR-9.6** – Reduce the need for parking facilities by increasing mode split for walking, bicycling, and transit.

GOAL TR-10. SUFFICIENT FUNDING

- **Policy TR-10.1** – Prioritize projects for funding in the following order:
 - 23] Safety and preservation.
 - 24] Concurrency to meet adopted levels of service.
 - 25] Transportation infrastructure in the Mountlake Terrace Town Center Sub-regional Growth Center and the North Melody Hill activity node.
 - 26] Other community needs and benefits.
 - **Policy TR-10.2** – Fund transportation improvements to maintain streets at the adopted level of service standards, pursuant to transportation policies 4.1 and 4.2.
 - **Policy TR-10.3** – Follow the policies in the City’s adopted Six-Year Financial Forecast to provide revenue sources for transportation improvements and maintenance.
 - **Policy TR-10.4** – Fairly assess the impacts of development, redevelopment, and other projects on transportation services and the environment.
 - **Policy TR-10.5** – Seek funding for priority projects through all available resources.
 - Discussion: Such tools may include: state grants and loans, tax increment financing, transportation benefit districts, local improvement districts, parking improvement districts, real estate excise taxes, and federal grants and earmarks.
 - **Policy TR-10.6** – Use resources efficiently by:
 - 27] Combining transportation projects and utility projects whenever feasible, and
 - 28] Improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities in conjunction with other street improvements that are being made.
 - **Policy TR-10.7** – Use impact fees to fund concurrency projects in a manner that encourages economic development and community stability.
 - **Policy TR-10.8** – Consider total life cycle costs when selecting and designing projects.

GOAL TR-11. TRAFFIC CALMING

- **Policy TR-11.1** – Utilize the City’s Traffic Calming Program to respond to traffic concerns by residents regarding speeding, safety, and other concerns on residential streets while being consistent with citywide transportation management strategies.

Discussion: The Program includes the following:

- A formal written procedure for responding to traffic calming requests.
- A phased approach to responding to traffic calming needs that first includes education and enforcement and a second phase that includes physical devices if warranted.
- Approved traffic calming devices that could be employed.