

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose of the Transportation Element**

The Transportation Element is part of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is to guide the development of the City's transportation system in a manner consistent with the City's adopted goals and policies.

Under the Growth Management Act, the City of Mountlake Terrace is required to develop a comprehensive transportation plan that addresses the City's long-term growth, including its effects on the transportation system, and a program of improvements for various modes of transportation.

The City of Mountlake Terrace last updated its Comprehensive Plan in 1996. The Transportation Element at that time was based on an earlier plan, using a 1993 traffic model with projections to the year 2010. For the nine years following 1993, no other city-wide traffic models were done. In 2002, the City reviewed the current traffic conditions and found that some areas of the city already exceeded the previous traffic growth projections for the year 2010. A new traffic engineering analysis was completed, with forecasts to the years 2012 and 2022. The Transportation Element is hereby updated to include the new traffic growth projections, regional linkages, planned transportation improvements, recommended action steps, and policies.

### **Regulatory Framework**

An array of state and federal requirements apply to transportation planning. In Washington State, the Growth Management Act (GMA) has a key role. The GMA has fourteen goals, including one specifically for transportation, as follows:

“Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with (other) county and city comprehensive plans.”

In addition, Snohomish County County-wide Planning Policies provide direction on county-wide transportation issues. For example, agreements and procedures are encouraged for jurisdictions to jointly mitigate traffic impacts that cross local boundaries.

The City of Mountlake Terrace is required to develop a comprehensive transportation plan that addresses the City's long-term growth, including its effects on the transportation system, and a program of improvements for various modes of transportation. This must be part of the Comprehensive Plan, consistent with the Land Use Element and other aspects of the Plan, and consistent with the county-wide planning policies. Other requirements of the GMA, such as coordinating with other agencies, developing “level of service” standards, and analyzing transportation funding and concurrency issues, are also addressed here.

The transportation concurrency requirement of the GMA mandates that development cannot be permitted unless adequate transportation infrastructure already exists or will be developed concurrent with the development. It allows a maximum six-year window between a development application and completion of any needed transportation infrastructure or strategies. Needed strategies, in addition to capital facilities, may include transit service, transportation demand management, or transportation system management. The appropriate infrastructure or approved strategies must be in place at the time the development is ready for occupancy, or within a limited timeframe after occupancy.

To be eligible for most funding programs, the City's transportation plan must be consistent with both regional and state transportation plans and must comply with the GMA. The most recent regional transportation plan, *Destination 2030*, was developed by this area's designated metropolitan and regional planning organization, the Puget Sound Regional Council. *Destination 2030* emphasizes the need for regional coordination and calls for investments in the existing transportation infrastructure as a high priority. It encourages compact development of urban centers and transit station areas.