

Safety

Safety is a major concern for public agencies. City-wide efforts to provide safe transportation occur at various levels. These include enforcement of traffic regulations, provision of cross-walks and sidewalks for pedestrians, and provision of well-designed streets for safe driving. Another example is ongoing coordination among public safety teams to ensure fast access for emergency equipment.

High-accident intersections are a safety focus too. Typically, the City considers high-accident intersections to be those with at least five accidents per year. Where high accident intersections are identified, the City examines and prioritizes ways to increase safety levels. (See the “Accident Information” subsection for more discussion.)

Environmental Quality

If not sensitively designed, transportation facilities can harm the environmental quality of adjacent areas. Surface runoff from parking areas and roadways can degrade both fresh water and marine water. Vehicle exhaust degrades air quality, especially as congestion increases. Noise levels can impact residential neighborhoods. Since environmental effects do not follow jurisdictional boundaries, transportation in nearby areas also can impact Mountlake Terrace. To mitigate impacts, the City tries to ensure that transportation facilities are designed and constructed to minimize environmental damage, for example, by using the least amount of paving necessary, encouraging transit and car-pooling, requiring adequate storm controls, and providing for low-impact options like walking and bicycling.

Economic Vitality

A poor transportation system increases costs of business, thus deterring economic activity. A good transportation system improves local and regional mobility, provides alternative transportation choices, minimizes congestion and accidents, and allows efficient movement of goods and freight. The provision of a good transportation system with adequate infrastructure for motorized and non-motorized modes, as well as public transportation, is critical to economic vitality of an area.

Financing of Projects

Improvements to the transportation system are dependent on available resources. Typically, financing has come from a combination of federal and state grants and loans, city revenues, and fees. In recent years, the passage of various state tax initiatives has reduced funding for state and local transportation. At the federal level, budget cuts have reduced transportation funds too. (See the “Funding Capacity Analysis” subsection for a more detailed discussion.)