

City of Chelan

Sustainability Steering Committee

“Transportation” briefing paper

April 28th, 2010

Addressing transportation sustainability

Unlike some other facets of sustainability, transportation is one that all communities must address. Transportation is one of the elements that local jurisdictions (cities and counties) are required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) to address in their comprehensive plans. Transportation is specifically addressed in Goal 3 of the GMA: “Encourage efficient multi-modal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.” Coordination between the City and Chelan County is addressed in the County-wide planning policies for transportation facilities and strategies (p. 138-140 of the Comprehensive Plan). The City is also a member of the North Central Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO).

The City’s Comprehensive Plan includes a transportation element, and also includes planning documents that have been adopted by reference, including the Lakeside Trail Study, the Traffic Circulation Enhancement Study, and a Non-Motorized Transportation Route map. In 2009 the City drafted a Non-Motorized Transportation Implementation Plan, which addresses bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The plan is still in draft form; it has not yet been adopted. Transportation-related excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan are included in this briefing paper.

The City also has adopted street standards that guide development of new streets and improvement of existing streets. The street standards were updated last year and now call for sidewalks and planter strips on all streets and bike lanes on major collectors and principal arterials.

Potential benefits of sustainable transportation

- Economic benefits (for example, increased market for agricultural products used to make fuels; reduced fuel and infrastructure costs; savings in household transportation costs)
- Less land devoted to roads and parking facilities
- Human-friendly urban design
- Improvements in air quality
- Improved community resilience
- Public health

Approaches/steps to addressing transportation sustainability

At the local level, transportation sustainability is generally addressed by:

- Reducing the impact of cars on the community—approaches include urban planning, street design, neighborhood traffic safety retrofits, and accessibility improvements
- Reducing fuel and energy use and pollution. Hybrid and electric vehicles, alternative fuels, and commute trip reduction are some approaches
- Providing, promoting, and encouraging options transportation options—for example, by providing multi-modal facilities (e.g., bike lanes, sidewalks, transit stops), working to establish public transportation links with other communities and rural areas, community car share programs, and encouraging use of public transportation in the community as an alternative to dependence on individual vehicles

- Improving resiliency
- Reducing congestion

Factors to consider

- Non-motorized transportation
- Public transportation
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Fuel efficiency, including the efficiency of the City's fleet and the possibility of electric-car fueling stations
- Land use and economic impacts of changes in the transportation system
- Mobility needs of all people, including elders, children, and people with disabilities

Resources

- Sustainable transport in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_transport
- Transportation Element of the City of Chelan's Comprehensive Plan: <http://cityofchelan.us/planbuild/planning.aspx>; under "Planning Topics", to the right, select "Long Range Planning", then select "2009 Comprehensive Plan." The Transportation Element begins on p. 105. The Non-Motorized Transportation Route map is on p. 117. The County-wide planning policies for transportation facilities and strategies are on p. 138-140.
- Smart Communities Network, Sustainable Transportation site: <http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/transprt/trintro.shtml>
- City of Chelan DRAFT Non-Motorized Transportation Implementation Plan: <http://cityofchelan.us/planbuild/planning.aspx>; under "Planning Topics", to the right, select "Long Range Planning", then select "2009 Comprehensive Plan."
- Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington
 - Transportation Efficient Land Use: Planning and Land Use Strategies that Reduce the Need to Drive: <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Transpo/efficientlanduse.aspx>
 - Designing Transportation Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles: <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Planning/PlanPedBike.aspx>
 - Car sharing: <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Transpo/traffic/CarSharing.aspx>
 - Streetscaping: <http://www.mrsc.org/Subjects/Transpo/streetscape.aspx>
- Washington State Department of Transportation, Community Planning and Development site: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/localprograms/planning>. Addresses livable communities and planning for sustainable transportation
- Walkability and bikeability
 - Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walkability>
 - Walkability checklist: <http://www.walkinginfo.org/library/details.cfm?id=12>
 - Bikeability checklist: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/bikeability/>
- *Redefining Prosperity: Energy Descent and Community Resilience Report of the Bloomington Peak Oil Task Force*: <http://bloomington.in.gov/media/media/application/pdf/6239.pdf>. The section on transportation begins on page 112; transportation also features prominently in the land use recommendations, particularly on p. 109-111
- City of Edmonds Community Sustainability Element: http://www.ci.edmonds.wa.us/CityDepartments/Climate_Prot/Sustainability%20Element%20draft8_2009-10-01_clean.pdf. Sustainable transportation options are addressed throughout.
- Safe routes to school

- Federal Highway Administration Safe Routes site:
<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>
- National Center for Safe Routes to School: <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>
- Washington State Department of Transportation Safe Routes site:
<http://wsdot.wa.gov/LocalPrograms/SafeRoutes/>
- Living streets: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Living_street

Transportation-related excerpts from the City's comprehensive plan

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Natural Systems/Critical Areas sub-element of the Land Use Element

Goal 5 ("Protect and maintain air quality"), Policy 2: Recognize the potential benefits of public water, rail, electric, alternative fuels, non-motorized and air transportation in helping maintain local air quality.

Rationale: Moving people and goods by alternative means or in a more efficient manner should reduce emissions and therefore help maintain acceptable air quality. While it is obvious that the passenger car will not be replaced, the availability of other transportation options may reduce their use.

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Open Space and Recreation sub-element of the Land Use Element

GOAL 4: PROVIDE SAFE, CONVENIENT, PLEASANT NON-MOTORIZED ROUTES CONNECTING THE CITY'S PRINCIPAL ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS.

Goal Rationale: Sidewalks and bikeways that are safe, pleasant, and easy to use will reduce reliance on the automobile, reduce pressure on parking facilities and the motorized transportation network, promote health, strengthen neighborhoods, improve access to recreation facilities (especially trails), and create a network of open space that enhances the quality of life in the city.

Policies

Policy 1: Sidewalks and bikeways should connect Chelan's neighborhoods with the Lakeside Trail and other public recreation facilities. *Rationale:* Sidewalks and bikeways will make it easier for residents and visitors to reach trails and parks, and will reduce the need for parking in parks and at trailheads.

Policy 2: Neighborhood planning should include discussion of non-motorized transportation facilities. *Rationale:* Neighborhood residents are the experts on their neighborhoods. Facilities designed to meet the needs of specific neighborhoods are mostly likely to be used and to support the life of the neighborhood. Retrofitting existing neighborhoods with sidewalks and bikeways is likely to enhance neighborhood character and property values, and encourage investments in infill and other housing that promotes urban densities.

Policy 3: The City's *Non-motorized Transportation Implementation Plan* should guide development of non-motorized routes (including bikeways of all classes) throughout the City and its UGA. *Rationale:* The *Non-motorized Transportation Implementation Plan* was developed specifically to provide links among the city's principal origins and destinations, including the Lakeside Trail, and to provide for the needs of through cyclists.

Policy 4: Sidewalks and bikeways within rights of way should conform to the City's Street Standards (section 5 of the City's Development Standards) or to the City's *Non-motorized Transportation Implementation Plan* or other approved non-motorized facilities plan. Trails, pathways, and bikeways outside rights of way should conform to the Design Standards of the City's Parks and Recreation Department. In the case of those recreation facilities classified as Open Space Areas, development and management strategies for those areas within rights of way should be arranged collaboratively by the departments of Parks and Recreation and Public Works. *Rationale:* The City's Street Standards have been developed and adopted to guide development within rights of way throughout the city. The standards provide for exceptions as needed to facilitate implementation of the *Non-motorized Transportation Implementation Plan* and any other approved non-motorized facilities plans. The Design Standards of the City's Park and Recreation Department have been development and adopted to guide the development of recreation facilities throughout the city. A number of the City's Open Space Areas include improvements within rights of way; collaborative management is a means to promote a network of safe, usable open space and to further goals that transcend a single plan element.

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Capital Facilities Element

Goal 1 (“Continue to provide and maintain adequate public facilities and services”), Policy 14: Public facilities should be located and built so that they are accessible to all segments of the population.

Rationale: Public facility planning must consider convenient transportation and pedestrian access together with access for the handicapped.

Goal 3 (“Ensure that public facilities are adequate to serve the planned land use patterns in the city and its UGA”), Policy 1: Development should carry a proportionate share of the cost for extending and increasing the capacity of needed capital facilities, including parks and recreation and transportation facilities. *Rationale:* Where new development requires improvements to capital facilities and services, the developer should be responsible for the cost. However, if the installed infrastructure is an upgrade and/or neighboring property benefits from the improvements, the developer should be responsible only for the improvements that are reasonably related to the new development.

Also see the Transportation Element