



Walla Walla Valley
Metropolitan Planning Organization/
Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization

DATE: February 3, 2021
TO: File
FROM: Andrea Weckmueller-Behringer, Executive Director
SUBJECT: 2045 Plan Regionally Significant High-Priority Projects

INFORMATION:

The Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization/Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (WWVMPO/SRTPO) provides a platform for the collective visioning and the cooperative decision-making that guides regional transportation investments. The regional vision, goals, and values, as well as the results of need and resource assessments, are documented in the recently completed 2045 Plan. This plan guides strategic investments into multi-modal transportation to address mobility concerns, support continued growth, and work to achieve community goals.

The 2045 Plan estimates availability of \$501.2 million for infrastructure investments over the next 25 years. The anticipated funding is scarcely enough for basic maintenance and preservation of existing infrastructure and will only allow the implementation of 106 pedestrian, bicycle, and roadway projects, which are primarily focused on reconstruction and safety improvements. Also forecasted are \$218.5 million for public transit operations and vehicle replacements, which are required in their entirety to operate the current system and will not allow for any significant public transit expansion.

Several high-priority regional projects had to be pushed to outlying years, commensurate with the projected availability of funding. Additional high-priority projects have also been categorized as high-value; however, funding for them has yet to be identified.

Creating a shortlist of important transportation priorities for the Walla Walla Valley may serve as a tool for decision-makers to pursue advocacy efforts for projects with regional significance. The attached list has been vetted through the 2045 Plan development process and was approved by the WWVMPO/SRTPO Policy Board during the February 3, 2021 meeting.

MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION NEEDS

According to WSDOT's 2021-2023 Capital Improvement and Preservation Program, the current preservation backlog is approximately \$690 million per year - statewide. This backlog affects every mode of transportation and, unaddressed, will result in deferred repairs that will incur much more

expensive rehabilitation and reconstruction costs in the future. Without additional state preservation funding, the following state assets in the Walla Walla Valley region will be impacted:

- ◆ Majority of state-owned freight routes
- ◆ Highways with speeds below 45 MPH
- ◆ Highway ramps
- ◆ Shoulder preservation projects, except for safety reasons

According to the latest funding data, the WSDOT facilities in the WWVMPO/SRTPO area need an annual investment of \$9.7 million. However, for the most recent 10-year period, approximately \$6 million have been programmed each year.

We are faced with a maintenance and preservation crisis. Out of the 106 projects that made it onto the fiscally constrained list in the 2045 Plan, the vast majority are tied to rehabilitation and reconstruction of existing roadways. Unless we find a fiscally sustainable way to fund the deferred and much past-due maintenance and preservation efforts, the regional system will continue to see its roadway quality and overall condition decline to a point of pavement failure.

For Walla Walla Valley regionally significant roadways, a 60% increase in preservation funding is needed to implement even a 50-year pavement resurfacing cycle, whereas a 200% increase over current levels would be required for reconstruction of all regionally significant roadways – at least once every 50 years.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY NEEDS

Much needed **improvements in traffic safety** may require engineering approaches as well as public education:

- ◆ **Distracted** driving results in more fatalities (46%) than any other risk factor.
- ◆ 60% of pedestrian- and 59% of bicycle-involved crashes occur at **intersections**.
- ◆ 58% of both **lane departure and run-off-the-road** crashes are accompanied by distracted driving and/or speeding and result in 42% of all fatalities.

SPECIFIC PROJECT NEEDS

The WWVMPO/SRTPO and its members collaborated closely on the development of goals and objectives that are tied to federal planning factors as well as the region’s specific transportation vision. The qualitative assessment is tied to **relevance** (high/medium/low) and **impact** (significant/moderate/neutral/negative); project prioritization is accomplished through assignment of numerical values to both factors. Using the resulting project ranking, the following table lists those projects that were identified as high-priority for the respective jurisdiction/project sponsor.

<i>Project</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Cost (in \$000)</i>	<i>2045 Plan Phase</i>
US 12/Phase 8 Construction	Build new highway (CN) from Wallula to Nine Mile Hill	(Walla Walla County, Port of Walla Walla, WSDOT)	\$195,000	Illustrative

<i>Project</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Cost (in \$000)</i>	<i>2045 Plan Phase</i>
<i>US 12/Clinton St</i>	Intersection Improvement (Overpass or Roundabout)	(County, Port, Walla Walla, WSDOT)	\$35,000 or \$11,000	Illustrative
<i>US 12/Wilbur Ave</i>	Intersection Improvement (Roundabout)	(County, Port, Walla Walla, WSDOT)	\$11,000	Illustrative
<i>SR 125 State Line to Walla Walla</i>	Intersection Improvements (Roundabouts, focused on Myra, Meadowbrook, Old Milton Highway, as well as College Ave. and State Line*)	(County, Walla Walla, WSDOT, and *ODOT ¹)	\$22,000	Illustrative
<i>Mojonnier Road Reconstruction</i>	Reconstruction of Mojonnier Rd to urban standards to include multiuse path, three traffic lanes, curb and gutter, and urban utilities. (Construction Phase)	College Place	\$4,270	Short-term (TIP Funded: PE and ROW Phases)
<i>12th Street Reconstruction</i>	Reconstruction of 12th Street from College to Larch Avenue and to Myra Rd, including utility reconstruction, pedestrian lighting, ADA ramps, and multiuse path.	College Place	\$6,904	Multi-phase: Short-term
<i>A Street Reconstruction</i>	Reconstruct to fix grade, add curbs and drainage, and provide ADA-compliant access to school	Prescott	\$450	Medium-term
<i>Poplar Street</i>	Reconstruction and rechannelization	Walla Walla	\$10,370	Multi-phase: Short-term (Meriam to Colville and 5 th to 14 th); Medium-term (14 th to Myra) (TIP Funded: Colville to 5 th)
<i>Myra Rd - SR 125 to Taumarson</i>	Myra Road South Extension – New Construction	Walla Walla	\$9,000	Medium-term
<i>US 12/Preston Ave Bridge Replacement</i>	Replacement of Preston Ave Bridge	WSDOT/ Waitsburg	\$3,500	Illustrative

¹ Marked project may reduce vehicle-carrying capacity and will require further evaluation per ORS 366.215