The City of Bellingham has developed a systematic approach to multi-modal transportation planning that integrates land use and transportation goals – and makes sure that options are available to pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and vehicle users.

The Transportation Element of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan contains multi-modal transportation goals and policies and a list of about 150 multi-modal transportation projects, most of which are bicycle and pedestrian projects recommended by the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). In addition, city transportation planners work hand-in-hand with the regional transit agency, Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) to incorporate transit infrastructure and service investments into the transportation network. City and WTA transportation planners have also developed long-term “Mode Shift Goals” and continuously work together to reduce the overall percentage of trips made by single occupant vehicles while increasing the percentage of trips made by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

The City of Bellingham has made significant financial investments to build the multi-modal transportation network identified in the Transportation Element in the past decade. In recent years, about half of the transportation projects on Bellingham’s annual Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are specific bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
Multi-Modal Transportation Planning: One of Our State’s Infrastructure Planning Challenges
By Leonard Bauer, AICP
CTED Managing Director, Growth Management Services

One of the most talked-about topics in the past two years for state and local governments has been infrastructure funding. Two recently-released state studies focus on how state government provides funding opportunities for local government infrastructure projects. The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) released its report, Restructuring State Public Infrastructure Programs, in December 2008. It examines the current state infrastructure funding programs and opportunities to improve that system. The OFM report is available at www.ofm.wa.gov/study/01_Report.pdf

The second study, Meeting The Growth Management Challenge in Growing Communities: The Growth Management Act Effectiveness Report, is from CTED and is available on the “What’s New” page of our web site at www.cted.wa.gov/growth. This study was directed by the 2007 Washington State Legislature to look at:

- How best to meet and finance infrastructure and service needs of growing communities;
- How to provide incentives to accommodate projected growth and protect resource lands and critical areas; and
- How local governments are prepared to address land use changes associated with climate change.

The CTED study includes surveyed local governments for their readiness to address climate change, as well as reviewing current efforts to address issues surrounding protection of critical areas while conserving resource lands. It also includes a literature search of previous studies of the GMA and its effectiveness.

But the primary focus of the CTED study is local planning for infrastructure needs in growing communities, and the use of financing tools currently available through federal, state and local sources. One of the study’s many findings is that, while there has been a substantial improvement in local governments’ capital facility planning in the past eight years, those plans identify substantial capacity issues, particularly in the area of transportation facilities.

This is probably not a surprising finding for the readers of this newsletter, most of whom wrestle with planning and providing adequate transportation facilities on a daily basis. However, the report also identified that there is much room for improvement statewide in focusing regionally on capacity issues and the use of more aggressive multi-modal and demand management strategies. Figuring out how to best integrate...
Bellingham’s Integrated Transportation Network Takes Shape

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projects and all new or reconstructed arterial streets are required to have bicycle and pedestrian facilities included. Each year, transportation planners solicit priority project requests, as listed in the Transportation Element, from both BPAC and the city’s 24 official Neighborhoods.

New multi-modal transportation facilities are also provided by through private investment. Transportation Element goals and policies, development regulations, and arterial street standards require new development to fund and construct street frontage improvements that include bicycle lanes and sidewalks. New development also pays a proportional Share Transportation Impact Fee.

All new development in Bellingham is also subject to Multi-modal Transportation Concurrency regulations that include measurements for pedestrian, bicycle, transit and automobile facilities. Each year, Bellingham transportation planners measure traffic volumes, transit ridership, and completeness of bicycle and pedestrian networks to establish the number of “person trips available” in each of 15 Concurrency Service Areas (CSA) throughout the City.

Any new development that requires more person trips than are available in a particular CSA must fund or construct an appropriate amount of additional transportation infrastructure, or institute measurable transportation demand management strategies, to ensure that there are enough person trips available on the multi-modal transportation network to serve the new development. Consistent with state law for concurrency, if the developer cannot ensure that enough person trips will be available, then the City cannot accept the application for the proposed development.

Like many communities, Bellingham has faced challenges in its efforts to comply with the Growth Management Act (GMA) and the concurrency requirement to adopt, monitor, and maintain level of service (LOS) standards for transportation infrastructure. Bellingham transportation planners recognized that it is not possible to both promote significant infill development and maintain traditional auto-centric volume-to-capacity LOS standards that do not allow significant traffic congestion beyond a theoretical threshold.

In fact, denying infill development due to increased rush hour traffic congestion, would effectively push development to the edges of the City and would lead to even worse traffic congestion. Despite the unpopularity of the message, Bellingham transportation planners chose to openly communicate that rush hour traffic congestion is a normal condition in urban environments and that while infill will create additional traffic congestion, it will also provide more opportunities for people to live closer to where they work, shop, and entertain themselves, which has the potential to reduce the overall number of trips made by automobile over time. Bellingham transportation planners worked with Kirkland-based consultants Transpo Group for over a year and held several public hearings, sometimes amid controversy. The new Multi-modal Transportation Concurrency requirements were approved at the end of 2008 and became effective on January 1, 2009.

For additional information regarding multi-modal transportation planning efforts in Bellingham, please contact Chris Comeau, AICP, Transportation Planner ccomeau@cob.org (360) 778-7900 in the Bellingham Public Works Department.
Newcastle’s Multi-Modal Planning Efforts Creating Convenient, Safe City Connections

By Doug Alder
Communications Manager
City of Newcastle

During the recent storms of December and January, something interesting happened in downtown Newcastle. While the city’s Public Works crew worked around the clock to get the roads clear, residents showed up on foot en masse. They walked from their homes to grab a cup of coffee, pick up some groceries and share snow stories with neighbors. Newcastle hopes to make these kinds of walkable opportunities a year-round sight as we work on several new projects with multi-modal transportation ideas that will provide convenient and safe connections throughout our city.

Two important elements in our plan include new zoning codes and the city’s Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMP). In 2007, Newcastle chose to go outside the typical suburban model by changing the zoning codes in the downtown area. Instead of single story buildings with parking all around them, the City Council took the step of creating a zoning plan that encourages a walkable urban village. The goal is to provide a higher density, more pedestrian-friendly downtown while encouraging mixed-use, multi-story retail, office, and residential buildings.

The city’s Comprehensive Plan calls for a town center that is the heart of the community, reachable not only by car, but also foot, bicycle, wheelchair or bus.

The city’s grant. It outlines the areas in Newcastle that are “missing segments” including sidewalks, trails, and bike facilities that provide a continuous link between key destinations. The vision of the NMP is to ensure that people of all ages and physical abilities can travel safely between neighborhoods, parks, schools and public areas without the use of an automobile. Its purpose is to provide a framework for prioritizing capital improvement projects and their cost for the City Council to consider each budget season.

Here’s a look at how the city is closing in on two primary goals of the NMP:
• Create a non-motorized system that enables pedestrians and bicyclists to move comfortably and safely between places and destinations while providing a continuous network of sidewalks, bicycle lanes and trails throughout the City of Newcastle.

Specific non-motorized facility recommendations identified in the city’s Community Business Center Master Plan include the development of an integrated network of non-motorized pathways with connections to downtown and existing trails in the Coal Creek sector. One
Regional Trails Plan Adds Another Gem To Leavenworth Charms

By Connie Krueger, AICP
Community Development Director
City of Leavenworth

Leavenworth is known around the world for its Bavarian theme. What is not so widely known is that Leavenworth is located in a small valley recreational paradise, perched on a bluff overlooking the upper reaches of the Wenatchee River and cradled by the towering peaks of the beautiful Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

Residents and visitors enjoy mountain biking, a variety of winter sports, summer water sports, climbing, camping and equestrian activities. Several years ago, staff at the City of Leavenworth noticed many trail planning and development processes becoming reality in the Upper Valley area. Some of the efforts included:

- Developing a waterfront trail by a local environmental group to connect its property to adjacent City-owned waterfront trails
- Identifying and improving safe routes to school within the city and Urban Growth Area through a partnership with Charlotte Claybrooke from Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT).
- Connecting the city with a mountain biking group and the Forest Service to link existing biking and cross-country ski trails on state land to a less developed, more remote canyon system while enhancing roads connecting the downtown to the existing system.

At the same time, a regional land trust received a grant to begin the planning process to connect the Wenatchee trail system --22 miles away through the Wenatchee River Valley to Leavenworth and all the small townsites in between.

Chelan County and Forest Service, supported by nine partner agencies, applied for a Regional Planning Grant from the state Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) after seeing an opportunity which shouldn’t be lost.

After receiving the grant, the Steering Committee (comprised of the partner agencies) selected Berger Abam to create the plan. The firm was chosen because of its enthusiasm for the project as well as its prodigious technical/graphic skills and strong public outreach plan.

The mission of the Steering Committee was to target a variety of users (pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and cross-country skiers) in an attempt to create “a community where people travel from corner to corner by own force”.

To begin the process, Berger Abam conducted several days of individual stakeholder interviews and the City held a public open house to kick-off the plan. At the second public open house, members of the public viewed three alternate plans to select the best options from each.

The Steering Committee is now working through feasibility to

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Newcastle’s Multi-Modal Planning Efforts Creating Convenient, Safe City Connections

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of the highest profile projects that will help us accomplish these goals is the expansion of Coal Creek Parkway. The hard surface improvements to the roadway will link to soft surface paths including bike lanes and walking trails adjacent to the Parkway. Upon its completion in July of this year, residents will be able to safely bike or walk from the Renton city limits all the way to downtown Newcastle.

• Encourage transit use by improving pedestrian and bicycle amenities at and linkages to existing future transit stops.

After reaching downtown, public transportation will be much more high profile thanks to our new Transit Center set to break ground later this year. Built in partnership with Sound Transit and Metro, it will include major improvements to Newcastle’s main intersection of Coal Creek Parkway and Newcastle Way. In addition to new bike lanes, improved access for the disabled, and pedestrian safety improvements, the Transit Center will reroute bus service to help bring more of the resident on the east side of town into the downtown core.

A real estate development company also recently approached the city about partnering in a new mixed-use project that could include a new city hall and structured parking adjacent to the new Transit Center. With this structured parking, commuters could drive their cars downtown and catch the bus at the Transit Center. On their way home, they could walk around the downtown area to shop and eat.

The city’s comprehensive plan calls for a town center that is the heart of the community, reachable not only by car, but also foot, bicycle, wheelchair or bus. By using the NMP in conjunction with zoning and economic development strategies, Newcastle believes this vision is becoming reality and might serve as a model for other suburban communities.

You can view further information on the plan online at www.cityofleavenworth.com.

Regional Trails Plan Adds Another Gem To Leavenworth Charms

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develop the final preferred plan. This has been an exciting planning process with a great deal of public interest. We are so appreciative of CTED’s support of the project. Without it, and with so many competing priorities for budget, an amazing opportunity to link the various users of this tourist and recreational paradise would be lost.

I look at the faces around the committee table -- from so many backgrounds and interests, yet all sharing the passion for this project – and I see this as community development at its finest.

Waterfront trails are just part of the package being promoted by both Chelan County and the City of Leavenworth.
Kirkland’s Vision Is A Continued Commitment To Transportation Alternatives

By Paul Stewart
Deputy Director, Planning Department
City of Kirkland

and David Godfrey, P.E.
Transportation Engineering Manager
Public Works Department,
City of Kirkland

Multi-modal Transportation

An important part of Kirkland’s character is its safety and accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and alternative modes of transportation. This is a cornerstone of the city’s vision, policy statements and actions beginning with a complete revision of the Comprehensive Plan in 1995 as a result of the Growth Management Act.

We recognize that we cannot build our way out of congestion. We also accept that many of our intersections will operate at a very low level of service (LOS) with increased traffic congestion. Our long term goal is to achieve a mode split of 65 percent drive alone and 35 percent transit and other modes of travel.

However, putting these ideas into practice is complicated and challenging. The city has completed several actions and strategies to address this. Our land use concept calls for new growth and higher density to be targeted to mixed use urban “villages” allowing residents to walk or bicycle to neighborhood commercial and employment centers.

Kirkland’s success in promoting walking results from a unique combination of factors. Being located on the shore of Lake Washington gives naturally attractive places to walk. The downtown street grid was developed before WWII and is therefore relatively conducive to walking. Perhaps the most important factor is long term support for walking by elected officials.

Over 30 years ago, Kirkland’s City Council foresaw the value of preserving public access to the shoreline along Lake Washington. Almost 15 years ago, different councils heartily supported development of in-pavement light and pedestrian flag programs. The current council is about to approve an Active Transportation Plan that calls for pursuit of even more programs and facilities for pedestrians. The handing of this support of pedestrians from council to council is unspoken but clearly evident; it has become part of the culture of Kirkland.

Because Kirkland is a relatively developed community, widening streets for the sole purpose of adding bicycle lanes is rare. It is more common to add bicycle lanes by restriping the existing pavement, usually narrowing or eliminating car lanes.

The smaller the required width for car lanes, the easier it is to fit in bicycle lanes. It has been traditionally thought that 12-foot wide lanes were necessary. Recent research from the Transportation Research Board shows that car lanes 10 feet wide do not have negative safety impacts as compared to wider lanes. In Kirkland, several streets were recently restriped from two lanes with parking to two lanes with parking and bicycle lanes. These streets were 44 feet in width; restriped to two 10-foot car lanes, two five-foot bicycle lanes and seven feet on each side for parking.

So far response has been positive and there are plans to restripe other segments with 10 foot car lanes in order to allow provision of five-foot wide bicycle lanes.
Kirkland recently developed a four factor method for prioritizing construction of sidewalk projects. Using Geographical Information Services (GIS), the proximity to parks, schools, commercial areas and bus routes was mapped and each segment in the city road network was scored based upon its distance to these facilities.

The community wants to see new sidewalks constructed to fill in gaps and extend the existing sidewalk network. They said that construction of new sidewalks should first take place on busy streets, places where walkways are not concrete and on routes where children walk to school.

A sidewalk inventory allowed an evaluation of where gaps in the sidewalk system existed. It also allowed the street’s functional classification and presence of school walk routes to be considered. Combining all these factors resulted in a single map that clearly shows the relative priority for constructing sidewalks on any street in the city. A fiscal component is computed on a project by project basis and scores the relative cost of the project to other similar projects.

Other approaches the city is pursuing include aggressive transportation demand management strategies, requiring transportation management plans for new development and the construction of transit enhancements through Sound Transit and King County Metro (new transit hubs in the downtown and our designated Urban Center at Totem Lake). The city is also exploring new concepts in establishing a multi-modal concurrency system.

These are not without its challenges. Accepting additional density in our urban villages traditionally raises community concerns. Transit service is provided by other agencies. Traffic congestion will get worse and funding for improvements is declining.

However, over the past 15 years Kirkland has made a concerted effort to expand its multi-modal opportunities.
Spokane GTEC Looks To Long-term Solutions For Commuters

By Margie Hall
Planner
City of Spokane

The City of Spokane and several partners kicked off a newly created Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTEC) program in August of 2008.

A media release introduced our new transportation program to the public and all three local stations and the newspaper covered the story. Since then we have been busy promoting the program and its incentives. We’ve gone door to door; participated in events, fairs and workshops; produced a city cable TV program; performed a walk audit; collaborated on land use planning with institutions and business groups and more.

We immediately began promoting the Transport Demand Management (TDM) element of the program to employers, including an opportunity for their employees to earn incentives. The conditions of the GTEC program also allow us to market TDM to downtown’s growing residential population.

Students commuting to the dual-university Riverpoint Campus in the GTEC are also being targeted. A separate incentive-based promotion was put in place for the students and is being promoted through posters, a students-only web page and an Alternative Transportation Guide being distributed on campus. The student program has received strong support from university administration as it directly supports their long term land use goals.

It is fortunate that the GTEC has coincided with the updating of the Riverpoint Campus Master Plan as well as the Downtown Spokane Partnership’s Downtown Plan, the rewriting of the city’s Downtown Design Guidelines, and the updating of the Municipal Code for CBD (Central Business District) zones. The timing has enabled parties to work together, collaborating on projects and plans. We all share a desire to promote urban density and provide excellent pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure.

The program has not been without its challenges. For example, it is difficult to persuade many employers to support Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) at their worksite because of their perception of the time and cost it would involve.

We hope to overcome that hurdle when we host a Commute Solutions Open House event in early February. Over a two-hour period in a central location, an employer’s representative can stop by to pick up a Commute Solutions Tool Kit, a list of the services we can provide, and some pizza. If they can’t send someone we will deliver to them. It is just one more attempt to market the GTEC program to a very diverse pool of employers and commuters.

Marketing, educating, collaborating, planning – all are important to the success of this program and we are seeing success. With each effort we are making progress toward the goals of our GTEC Plan.

GTEC BACKGROUND

The Washington State Legislature created the Growth and Transportation Efficiency Centers (GTEC) program in 2006 as part of the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Efficiency Act. The goal of the GTEC program is to provide greater access to a city’s densest employment and residential centers while decreasing the proportion of commuters driving alone during peak periods on the state highway system. The program requires the municipality to look at long term solutions that combine land use planning with transportation planning while simultaneously implementing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that reduce single-occupant vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled. Studies show that most successful TDM programs for commuters have two things in common. They have strong employer support and they incorporate incentives.
Rapid Transit A Long-range Plan For Wenatchee

By Nicolas Manzaro
Senior Transportation Planner
Wenatchee Valley Transportation Council

The implementation of BRT in Wenatchee Valley would ease the pressure on many of our major roads which are nearing capacity.

Wenatchee Valley is home to a variety of multi-modal efforts aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging area residents to drive less.

One focus for long-range transit service is making rapid transit in Douglas and Chelan counties a reality. The density of the Wenatchee Valley is nearing 4,000 people per square mile -- with a significant amount of regional travel occurring on LINK Transit routes.

There are also only two opportunities to enter the City of Wenatchee -- via the Sellar Bridge or the Wenatchee River Bridge -- so these are the limiting factors in our transportation system. Because of these factors there is a great opportunity to move people more efficiently to and from downtown Wenatchee, a regional hub of employment via bus rapid transit.

The City of Wenatchee’s constrained geography limits opportunities to build ourselves out of congestion, so by utilizing cross-river alignments for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) an expedited transit trip would bypass the significant congestion on these important bridges in and out of the City.

East Wenatchee is considered a bedroom community for Wenatchee. A rapid transit trip across the Columbia and Wenatchee rivers would reduce bridge congestion caused by home-to-work and work-to-home travel behavior.

The BRT would help us move exponentially more people and fewer autos, so the benefit is two-fold -- and would fit well with our legislated Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reduction and greenhouse gas targets.

This project is in its infancy, but all of the factors that would make for a successful project are emerging. The population density is here, including future planning of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas and regional travel behaviors are consistent with those that would benefit from being served by bus rapid transit.

The City of Wenatchee has also just completed an arena project which will host sporting and national level entertainment events. Wenatchee is also the regional hub in north central Washington so the valley is pulling from a much wider geographic area into the City core.

The implementation of BRT in Wenatchee Valley would ease the pressure on many of our major roads which are nearing capacity. Because of the unique conditions in Wenatchee there is strong potential for BRT to have a significant impact on automobile travel and reduction of VMT.

The primary challenges are finding funding for an

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There are only two ways into the City of Wenatchee—via Sellar Bridge or Wenatchee River Bridge—these are limiting factors in the transportation system.
Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Forges Network Of Trails To Create Healthier Lifestyles

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take time, but the commitment from both the county and the City of Castle Rock is in place to complete the trail.

The City of Longview is taking the lead to continue the trail south from Lexington into the urban area and has also received a Technical Assistance Grant from the National Park Service to complete the overall planning for the urban area trail segment. The urban area trail will continue the trail along the Cowlitz River Corridor, ultimately connecting to the Coweeman Dike Trail and the Cowlitz River Dike Trail in Kelso.

The Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments worked closely with Cowlitz on the Move to develop the maps, assist with the open houses, workshops, and other activities in the development of the North County Loop Trail. The relationship will continue with Longview as the Parks and Recreation Department takes over the lead role in development of the southern terminus of the trail, ultimately creating a new trail across the Cowlitz River and connecting it to the Coweeman River Dike Trail, which already exists in Kelso.

Cowlitz on the Move is currently using an Americorps Volunteer to map existing and proposed trails throughout the county.

Additional outreach for other areas in the county will be conducted during this spring and summer. The ultimate goal for the county’s trail system is to create a network of trails that link the communities throughout the county. Ultimately, the trail system will also connect to trail activities in the neighboring counties. The common thread will give more opportunities for residents of Cowlitz County to develop a healthy lifestyle.

For additional information on the Cowlitz County Trails planning, please contact Amy Asher at the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments aasher@cwcog.org or call 360.577.3041.

Multi-Modal Transportation Planning: One of Our State’s Infrastructure Planning Challenges

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planning for multiple modes of transportation into an overall regional plan is one of the biggest challenges faced by planners today. The importance of this task is heightened by the need to address new issues related to potential impacts of our transportation system on global climate change. It’s a complicated task, requiring a holistic look at how we provide for the transportation needs of our citizens within a limited fiscal environment.

This issue of About Growth shares stories from jurisdictions that have achieved some success with innovative ways of planning for local transportation needs. It also shares more information about CTED’s Capital Facilities Planning Template, a useful tool to streamline your capital facilities planning process that’s now available to be downloaded free from our website at www.cted.wa.gov/cfp.

Rapid Transit A Long-range Plan For Wenatchee

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infrastructure intensive project like BRT and demonstrating the public benefit adequately. We are optimistic because we believe that we are in a new era of public transit funding availability and public awareness of green issues in general are at an all time high. Finalizing a preferred alternative will be the next step in the future of BRT in Wenatchee Valley.

The density of the Wenatchee Valley is nearing 4,000 people per square mile.

Photo courtesy of City of Wenatchee
The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires communities planning under the GMA, to develop capital facility plans (CFPs) that show how their land use plans will be implemented.

For example, if a community is planning on expanding their urban growth boundary for residential, commercial or industrial purposes, they must describe how that new area will be served by sewer, water, roads, stormwater, police, fire protection and so on. Also, how those services will be paid for and the timeline involved.

Well thought out CFPs are invaluable in helping city and county staff develop operating budgets and provide direction to staff on which projects to target in which year.

To assist local jurisdictions in developing their CFPs, CTED purchased the rights to a Capital Facility Planning Template Tool, developed for the City of Olympia, which can help a jurisdiction inventory capital assets, determine their condition and capacity, link capital facility needs with comprehensive plan policies and prioritize projects as well as determine project costs and identify revenues.

This tool is available on-line, it is free and user-friendly and includes a series of Microsoft Word and Excel spreadsheets with instructions and examples.

For more information and to download the tool, go to www.cted.wa.gov/cfp.

Why Do a Capital Facilities Plan?
Capital facility plans can help your jurisdiction use its limited funding wisely and most efficiently – and maximize your funding opportunities.

The Capital Facility Planning Tool is a set of Word and Excel templates that can be used to:

- Help inventory your capital assets,
- Determine their condition and capacity,
- Link capital facility needs with your comprehensive plan policies,
- Prioritize projects,
- Determine project costs, and
- Identify revenues.