

**Chapter 47.05 RCW**  
**PRIORITY PROGRAMMING FOR HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT**

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**RCW 47.05.010 Declaration of purpose.** The legislature finds that solutions to state highway deficiencies have become increasingly complex and diverse and that anticipated transportation revenues will fall substantially short of the amount required to satisfy all transportation needs. Difficult investment trade-offs will be required.

It is the intent of the legislature that investment of state transportation funds to address deficiencies on the state highway system be based on a policy of priority programming having as its basis the rational selection of projects and services according to factual need and an evaluation of life-cycle costs and benefits that are systematically scheduled to carry out defined objectives within available revenue. The state must develop analytic tools to use a common methodology to measure benefits and costs for all modes.

The priority programming system must ensure preservation of the existing state highway system, relieve congestion, provide mobility for people and goods, support the state's economy, and promote environmental protection and energy conservation.

The priority programming system must implement the state-owned highway component of the statewide transportation plan, consistent with local and regional transportation plans, by targeting state transportation investment to appropriate multimodal solutions that address identified state highway system deficiencies.

The priority programming system for improvements must incorporate a broad range of solutions that are identified in the statewide transportation plan as appropriate to address state highway system deficiencies, including but not limited to highway expansion, efficiency improvements, nonmotorized transportation facilities, high occupancy vehicle facilities, transit facilities and services, rail facilities and services, and transportation demand management programs. [2002 c 5 § 401; 1993 c 490 § 1; 1969 ex.s. c 39 § 1; 1963 c 173 § 1.]

**Effective date—2002 c 5 §§ 401-404:** "Sections 401 through 404 of this act take effect July 1, 2002." [2002 c 5 § 417.]

**Captions not law—Severability—2002 c 5:** See notes following RCW 47.04.280.

**RCW 47.05.021 Functional classification of highways.** (1) The department shall conduct periodic analyses of the entire state highway system and report to the office of financial management and the chairs of the transportation committees of the senate and house of representatives, any subsequent recommendations to subdivide, classify, and subclassify all designated state highways into the following three functional classes:

(a) The "principal arterial system" shall consist of a connected network of rural arterial routes with appropriate extensions into and through urban areas, including all routes designated as part of the interstate system, which serve corridor movements having travel characteristics indicative of substantial statewide and interstate travel;

(b) The "minor arterial system" shall, in conjunction with the principal arterial system, form a rural network of arterial routes linking cities and other activity centers which generate long distance travel, and, with appropriate extensions into and through urban areas, form an integrated network providing interstate and interregional service; and

(c) The "collector system" shall consist of routes which primarily serve the more important intercounty, intracounty, and intraurban travel corridors, collect traffic from the system of local access roads and convey it to the arterial system, and on which, regardless of traffic volume, the predominant travel distances are shorter than on arterial routes.

(2) The department shall adopt a functional classification of highways. The department shall consider comments from the public and local municipalities. The department shall give consideration to criteria consistent with this section and federal regulations relating to the functional classification of highways, including but not limited to the following:

(a) Urban population centers within and without the state stratified and ranked according to size;

(b) Important traffic generating economic activities, including but not limited to recreation, agriculture, government, business, and industry;

(c) Feasibility of the route, including availability of alternate routes within and without the state;

(d) Directness of travel and distance between points of economic importance;

(e) Length of trips;

(f) Character and volume of traffic;

(g) Preferential consideration for multiple service which shall include public transportation;

(h) Reasonable spacing depending upon population density; and

(i) System continuity.

(3) The department or the legislature shall designate state highways of statewide significance under RCW 47.06.140. If the department designates a state highway of statewide significance, it shall submit a list of such facilities for adoption by the legislature. This statewide system shall include at a minimum interstate highways and other statewide principal arterials that are

needed to connect major communities across the state and support the state's economy.

(4) The department shall designate a freight and goods transportation system. This statewide system shall include state highways, county roads, and city streets. The department, in cooperation with cities and counties, shall review and make recommendations to the legislature regarding policies governing weight restrictions and road closures which affect the transportation of freight and goods. [2006 c 334 § 8; 2005 c 319 § 8; 2002 c 56 § 301. Prior: 1998 c 245 § 95; 1998 c 171 § 5; 1993 c 490 § 2; 1987 c 505 § 50; 1979 ex.s. c 122 § 1; 1977 ex.s. c 130 § 1.]

**Effective date—2006 c 334:** See note following RCW 47.01.051.

**Findings—Intent—Part headings—Effective dates—2005 c 319:** See notes following RCW 43.17.020.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 122:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1979 ex.s. c 122 § 10.]

**Effective dates—1977 ex.s. c 130:** "Section 1 of this 1977 act modifying the functional classification of state highways shall apply to the long range plan for highway improvements and to the six year program for highway construction commencing July 1, 1979 and to the preparation thereof and shall take effect July 1, 1977. Section 2 of this 1977 act shall take effect July 1, 1979." [1977 ex.s. c 130 § 3.]

**RCW 47.05.022 Highways of statewide significance.** The legislature designates as highways of statewide significance those highways so designated by transportation commission resolution number 660 as adopted on January 21, 2004. [2004 c 232 § 1; 2002 c 56 § 302.]

**RCW 47.05.025 Highways of regional significance.** Highways of regional significance may receive funding under the conditions of RCW 36.120.020(8)(c). The following highways are of regional significance:

- (1) That portion of state route number 9 that runs from state route number 522 in the south to state route number 531 in the north;
- (2) That portion of state route number 524 that runs from state route number 5 easterly to state route number 522;
- (3) That portion of state route number 704 from state route number 5 to state route number 7. [2002 c 56 § 303.]

**RCW 47.05.030 Ten-year programs—Investments, improvements, preservation.** (1) The office of financial management shall propose a comprehensive ten-year investment program for the preservation and improvement programs defined in this section, consistent with the policy goals described under RCW 47.04.280. The proposed ten-year investment program must be forwarded as a recommendation by the office of financial management to the legislature, and must be based upon the

needs identified in the statewide transportation plan established under RCW 47.01.071(4).

(2) The preservation program consists of those investments necessary to preserve the existing state highway system and to restore existing safety features, giving consideration to lowest life-cycle costing.

(3) The improvement program consists of investments needed to address identified deficiencies on the state highway system to meet the goals established in RCW 47.04.280. [2007 c 516 § 7; 2006 c 334 § 45; 2005 c 319 § 9; 2002 c 5 § 402; 1998 c 171 § 6; 1993 c 490 § 3; 1987 c 179 § 2; 1979 ex.s. c 122 § 2; 1977 ex.s. c 151 § 44; 1975 1st ex.s. c 143 § 1; 1973 2nd ex.s. c 12 § 4; 1969 ex.s. c 39 § 3; 1965 ex.s. c 170 § 33; 1963 c 173 § 3.]

**Findings—Intent—2007 c 516:** See note following RCW 47.01.011.

**Effective date—2006 c 334:** See note following RCW 47.01.051.

**Findings—Intent—Part headings—Effective dates—2005 c 319:** See notes following RCW 43.17.020.

**Effective date—2002 c 5 §§ 401-404:** See note following RCW 47.05.010.

**Captions not law—Severability—2002 c 5:** See notes following RCW 47.04.280.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 122:** See note following RCW 47.05.021.

**RCW 47.05.035 Demand modeling tools.** (1) The department shall use the transportation demand modeling tools developed under subsection (2) of this section to evaluate investments based on the best mode or improvement, or mix of modes and improvements, to meet current and future long-term demand within a corridor or system for the lowest cost. The end result of these demand modeling tools is to provide a cost-benefit analysis by which the department can determine the relative mobility improvement and congestion relief each mode or improvement under consideration will provide and the relative investment each mode or improvement under consideration will need to achieve that relief.

(2) The department will participate in the refinement, enhancement, and application of existing transportation demand modeling tools to be used to evaluate investments. This participation and use of transportation demand modeling tools will be phased in. [2007 c 516 § 8; 2006 c 334 § 46; 2005 c 319 § 10; 2002 c 5 § 403; 1993 c 490 § 4; 1987 c 179 § 3; 1979 ex.s. c 122 § 3; 1975 1st ex.s. c 143 § 2.]

**Findings—Intent—2007 c 516:** See note following RCW 47.01.011.

**Effective date—2006 c 334:** See note following RCW 47.01.051.

**Findings—Intent—Part headings—Effective dates—2005 c 319:** See notes following RCW 43.17.020.

**Effective date—2002 c 5 §§ 401-404:** See note following RCW 47.05.010.

**Captions not law—Severability—2002 c 5:** See notes following RCW 47.04.280.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 122:** See note following RCW 47.05.021.

**RCW 47.05.195 Highways of statewide significance—State route No. 164.** The legislature designates state route number 164, as defined in RCW 47.17.320, as a highway of statewide significance. [2009 c 262 § 1.]

**RCW 47.05.200 Highways of statewide significance—State route No. 169.** The legislature designates state route number 169, as defined in RCW 47.17.340, as a highway of statewide significance. [2006 c 83 § 1.]

*See also: RCW 47.05.022.*

**RCW 47.05.205 Transportation project of statewide significance—Qualifying factors.** (1) A transportation project of statewide significance means a project that will:

- (a) Improve accessibility for a significant number of Washington residents;
- (b) Alleviate congestion and improve the reliability of travel times for Washington residents and other users of the transportation system;
- (c) Improve the movement of freight through the corridor;
- (d) Provide safety improvements and contribute to a reduction in injuries and fatalities;
- (e) Maximize opportunities for economic development in the region and the state;
- (f) Make improvement to transit, pedestrian, and bike access; and
- (g) Serve as a critical route for both national and state defense.

(2) (a) In order to qualify as a transportation project of statewide significance, the reasonable cost estimate to construct the project must be at least one billion dollars. Similarly, if a project is to be constructed in phases, in order to qualify as a transportation project of statewide significance, the total reasonable cost estimate to construct all the phases must be at least one billion dollars. For purposes of this subsection, "cost estimate to construct" includes costs associated with design, preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and construction.

(b) In order to qualify as a transportation project of statewide significance, the project must also contain a bridge that connects two states that has a reasonable cost estimate to construct of at least five hundred million dollars and would benefit from an expedited permitting process due to preexisting permits. [2019 c 137 § 2.]

**Finding—Intent—2019 c 137:** "The legislature finds that Washington's transportation needs are increasing as both a surge in

trade and population create demand on the system. Large transportation projects that provide improvements in accessibility, freight mobility, and safety, as well as maximize economic development, are critical to Washington's future. It is the intent of the legislature to recognize transportation projects of statewide significance, and to expedite their completion through the establishment of a formal process of coordination." [2019 c 137 § 1.]

**RCW 47.05.210 Transportation project of statewide significance—Duties of the department.** (1) The department shall:

(a) Develop an application for designation of transportation projects as transportation projects of statewide significance. The application must be accompanied by a letter of approval from the legislative authority of at least one jurisdiction that will have the proposed transportation project of statewide significance within its boundaries. No designation of a project as a transportation project of statewide significance shall be made without the letter of approval, except as provided in subsection (2) of this section. The letter of approval must state that the jurisdiction joins in the request for the designation of the transportation project as one of statewide significance and has or will hire the professional staff that will be required to expedite the processes necessary to the completion of a transportation project of statewide significance. The transportation project proponents may provide the funding necessary for the jurisdiction to hire the professional staff that will be required to so expedite. The application must contain information regarding the location of the project, how the project meets the criteria specified in RCW 47.05.205, and other information required by the department; and

(b) Designate a transportation project as a transportation project of statewide significance if the department determines, after review of the application under criteria adopted by rule, the transportation project will meet the criteria listed in RCW 47.05.205 (1) and (2).

(2) Any project designated by the legislature and codified in this chapter is not subject to the application requirements set out in subsection (1) of this section. However, the project is subject to the coordination process in subsection (3) of this section.

(3) The department shall assign a project facilitator or coordinator to each transportation project of statewide significance to:

(a) Assemble a team of state and local government and private officials to help meet the planning, permitting, and development needs of each project. The team must include those responsible for planning, permitting, and licensing, infrastructure development, workforce development services, transportation services, and the provision of utilities; and

(b) Work with each team member to expedite their actions in furtherance of the project and coordinate any cross-border communications, if applicable. [2019 c 137 § 3.]

**Finding—Intent—2019 c 137:** See note following RCW 47.05.205.