



IMPLEMENTATION- READY PLANS TO FUND SAFER STREETS

Creating Financially Feasible Plans
to Maximize Success

transpogroup 
WHAT TRANSPORTATION CAN BE.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- **Introduction**
 - Chris Comeau, APA Allied Professions, APA TPD
- **Implementation & Best Practices**
 - Striving for the ideal
- **Challenges**
 - Facing Realities, Looking at Options
- **Opportunities**
 - Funding Available
- **Considerations**
 - Lessons Learned

INTRODUCTION

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- ▶ APA WA Allied Professions Liaison
- ▶ APA Transportation Planning Division, WA Representative

INTRODUCTION



American Planning Association
Washington Chapter

Get involved with APA WA

- ▶ Collaborating on common interests with professionals from various inter-related disciplines →
- ▶ **2025 Annual Conference at Hotel Murano**
Tacoma, WA, October 8-10
More information at [2025 Annual Conference](#)

NOTE: This session may qualify for AICP certification maintenance (CM) **self-reported credits** for sustainability

Allied Professions

If you're interested in...

Land use	Community Engagement
Transportation	Economic Development
Engineering	Parks & Recreation
Architecture	Natural Environment
Public Health	Housing Affordability
Demography	<i>And more!</i>
Education	

INTRODUCTION



American Planning Association
Transportation Planning Division

Creating Great Communities for All

Get involved with APA TPD (National)

State of Washington Transportation Planning Webinar Series

Now through Jan. 2026

- ▶ **Transportation Safety** (08/01)
- ▶ Collaborative Stakeholder and Community Engagement (09/22)
- ▶ Transit and Active Transportation (11/20)
- ▶ Community and Economic Opportunity (01/29)

Register for these AICP CM sessions at:
[APA Transportation Planning Division](#)

IMPLEMENTATION & BEST PRACTICES

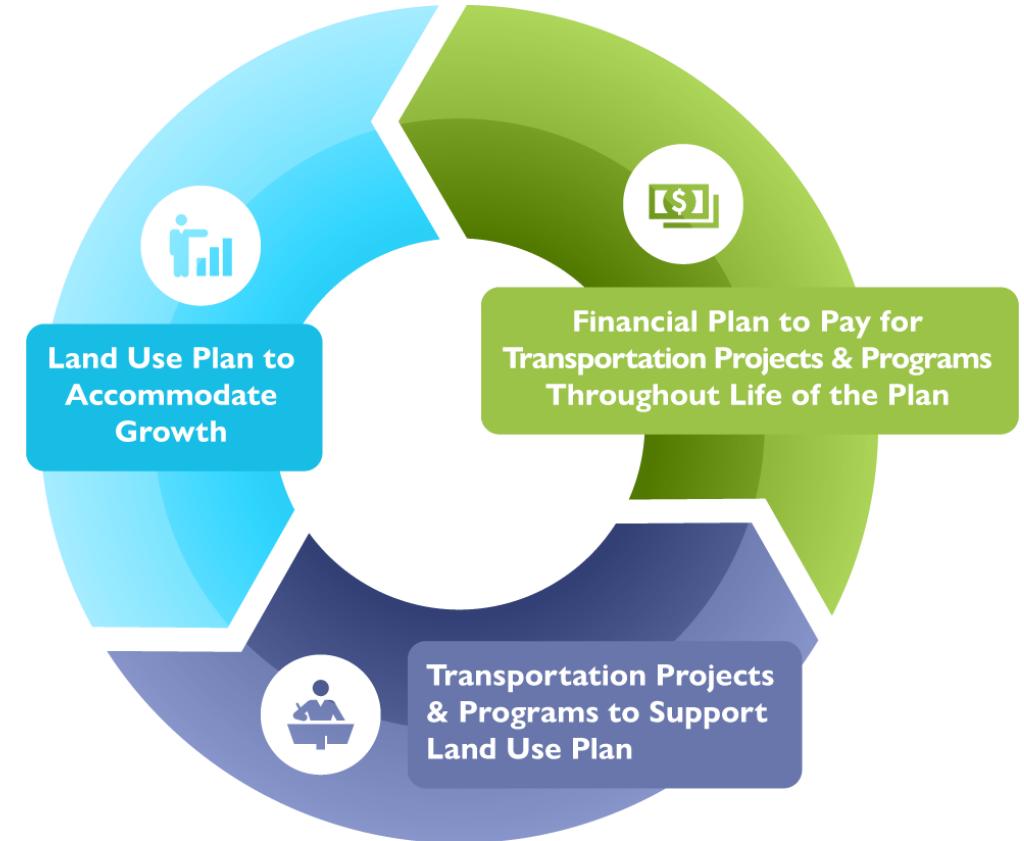
What does Implementation-Ready Really Mean?

- ▶ Intent to Realization
From goals and policies to project construction and completion
- ▶ Action Oriented
Short-term, Mid-term, Long-term, and Feasibility Studies
- ▶ Funding Focused
State and federal sources of funding and/or partnerships
- ▶ Strategically Timed
Timed for when funding is available and competitive best fit
- ▶ Opportunistic
Nimble, flexible, adaptable, scalable project scope



Per GMA, a Transportation Element must:

- ▶ **Implement** land use element
- ▶ Provide **adequate** multimodal system *and*
- ▶ Be financially **feasible** for local agency



GMA Transportation and Climate Elements

GMA & RCW legislative amendments for local Comprehensive Plans and transportation planning best practices intend to:

- ▶ **Reduce** fatal and injury crashes (*Vision Zero/Target Zero*)
- ▶ **Protect** vulnerable road users (*Target Zero/Safe Systems Approach*)
- ▶ **Invest** in ADA and under-served areas (*Safe Systems Approach/All grant agencies*)
- ▶ **Promote** Active Transportation (*WSDOT ATP/Complete Streets*)
- ▶ **Establish** Multimodal Level of Service Standards (*WSDOT ATP*)
- ▶ **Reduce** Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) (*Safe System Approach/WSDOT*)
- ▶ **Reduce** Vehicle Miles Traveled (*Transportation-Climate Elements*)
- ▶ **Reduce** Greenhouse Gas Emissions (*Climate Element*)

IMPLEMENTATION & BEST PRACTICES

Safety Plans can provide multi-year implementation lists



Fund SAFETY improvements

to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes, as well as travel risks, for vulnerable road users



Increase social and demographic EQUITY

by prioritizing ADA-compliant transportation investments in low-income and historically under-served neighborhoods



Increase SUSTAINABILITY

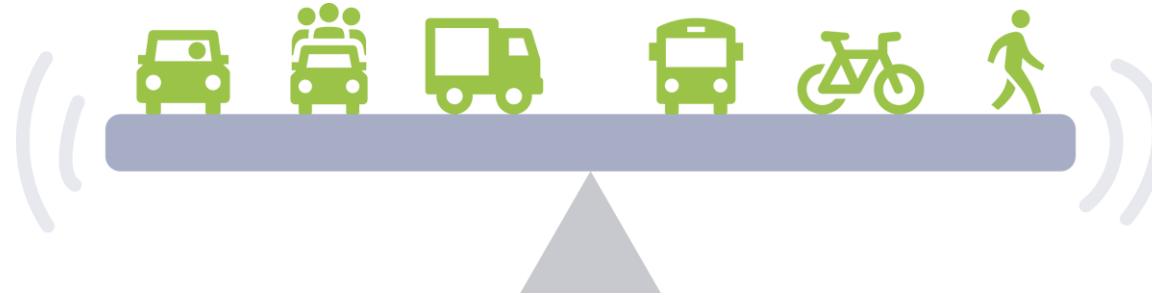
by completing streets and investing in active transportation improvements to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.

Complete Streets: Who are we Planning For?



- ▶ Complete Streets means different things in different geographic contexts (Urban/Rural/Etc.).
- ▶ It rarely means facilities for every user group on every street, even in urban areas.

Complete Streets: Who are we Planning For?



BALANCE

*ALL mobility needs, modes, land use contexts, and funding capacities must be carefully considered, balanced, and implemented for the multimodal transportation system to provide space and safety for everyone, **where feasible**.*

WSDOT State Highway Plans & RCW Amendments

- ▶ RCW 47.04.035 Complete Streets
 - ▶ All WSDOT state highway projects costing \$500,000* near population centers must include facilities for users of all ages and abilities per Complete Street principals
 - ▶ *Now > \$1,000,000 as of August 1, 2025 per ESSB 5801
- ▶ WSDOT Active Transportation Plan 2020 & Beyond
 - ▶ LTS 1 or 2 facilities on State highways
 - ▶ Both required for “*Population Centers*” on [WSDOT map](#)



Auto-Oriented Planning



Multimodal Planning

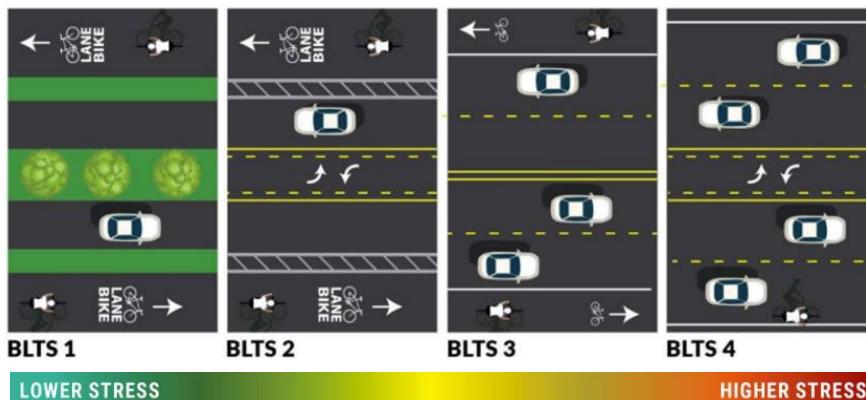
IMPLEMENTATION & BEST PRACTICES

What is Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS)?



Bicycle LTS = Measure of User Comfort

- ▶ Based on age, physical health, and confidence
- ▶ Subjective to individual user experience
- ▶ Wide spectrum of user skill levels



Bicycle LTS = Measure of Facility Comfort

- ▶ Based on facility and user proximity to moving traffic, speed, volume, land use context
- ▶ Subject to physical space (ROW) available and agency financial constraints

Safe System Approach

- ▶ Commitment to Vision Zero
- ▶ Community involvement
- ▶ Historic crash data analysis
- ▶ Emphasis on vulnerable road users
- ▶ Proactive risk assessment
- ▶ Countermeasure identification
- ▶ Systemic improvement identification
- ▶ Prioritization of improvements
- ▶ Used in CSAPs and LRSPs



Washington State Safe System Approach
(Source: [Washington's 2024 Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#))

CHALLENGES

CHALLENGES

Potential Challenges: Gaps Between Theory, Intent, and Reality

- ▶ **Ideal world** = Everything for everyone always
- ▶ **Real world** = Messy, complicated, trade-offs
- ▶ **Policy intent** cannot always be implemented
- ▶ **Cost/Funding** = Dictates scope of projects
- ▶ **Incremental progress** takes time (years)

“Don’t let your dreams be constrained by the bounds of reality.”

- Quote from an anonymous Planning professor



National Association of City Transportation Officials, December 2017



CHALLENGES

Good Intentions, but Not Feasible

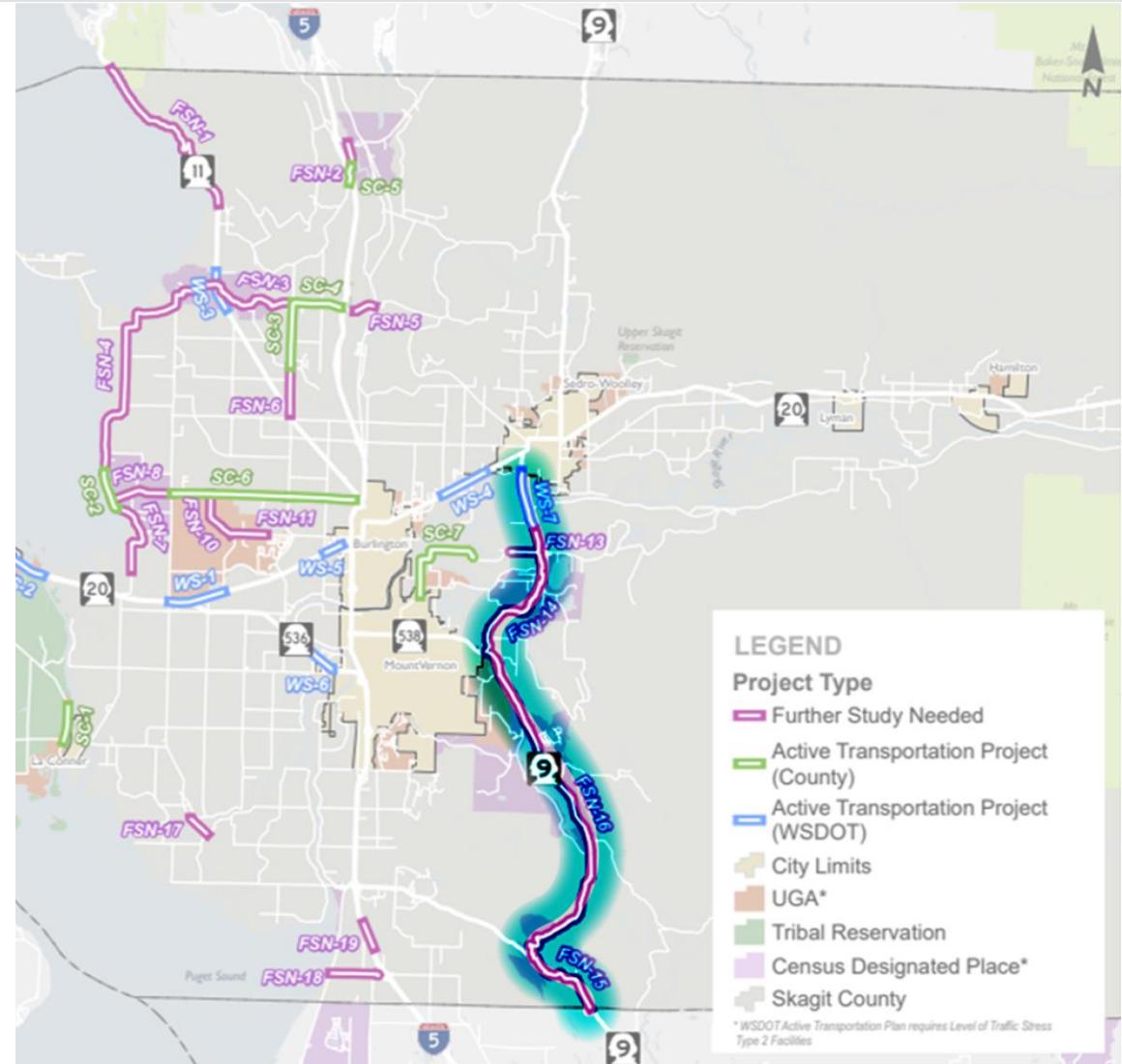
Example: Feasibility of LTS 1 or 2 Facilities on SR 9 in Skagit County?

Despite best intentions:

- ▶ RCW 47.04.035 Complete Streets
- ▶ WSDOT 2020 Active Transportation Plan
- ▶ Multiple “Population Centers” along SR 9

LTS 1 or 2 facilities are extremely unlikely due to:

- ▶ No physical space
- ▶ Narrow road
- ▶ Winding road curves
- ▶ Cliffside bedrock
- ▶ Steep slopes with guardrails
- ▶ Utility pole relocation
- ▶ All of above = Extreme cost



Plans ≠ Projects



Plans

Goals, policies, intent, priorities, etc.



Critical Factors

For project scope and implementation (land use, financial, context, timing, etc.)



Projects

Funding secured, construction programmed

CHALLENGES

Option: Develop a Menu of Facility Types and Costs




ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK FACILITY OPTIONS AND PLAN-LEVEL COST ESTIMATES											
Level of Traffic Stress		LTS 4 to 3	LTS 4 to 3	LTS 3	LTS 3	LTS 2	LTS 1	FSN	LTS 4 to 3	LTS 3 to 2	LTS 1
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Types		Install Designated Bike Route Signs & markings ⁴	Install Chip Seal Paved Shoulders ⁵	Convert Gravel Shoulder to Paved with Bike Route Signs, Markings ⁶	Widen Road to Construct 5-Foot Paved Shoulder (ROW, mitigation, & federal costs not included) ⁶	Convert Paved Shoulder to Buffer Separated Bike Lanes with Reflective Posts ⁵	Off-Street Separated Multiuse Path (ROW, mitigation, & federal costs not included) ⁵	Further Study Needed ¹	Shoulder Shared with Bikeway	Alternate ADA Walkway ⁴	ADA Concrete Sidewalk ⁴
Network Link	Linear Feet (LF)	\$2/LF	\$35/LF	\$50/LF	\$362/LF	\$263/LF	\$411/LF	\$50,000 to \$100,000	\$0/LF	\$280/LF	\$665/LF
AT-07	3,034	\$6,067	\$106,177	\$151,681	\$1,098,172	\$797,844	\$1,246,820			\$849,415	\$2,017,361
AT-08	16,250	\$14,731	\$257,788	\$368,269	\$2,666,270	\$1,937,096	\$3,027,173			\$2,062,308	\$4,897,981
1) "Further Study Needed" = Study required to determine ped-bike construction feasibility, facility type, and cost. 2) Census Designated Places defined and mapped by WSDOT 3) Priority level: Short-term = 1-5 years; Medium-term = 5-10 years; Long-term = > 10 years 4) Cost estimates based on 2024 Bellingham Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans 5) WSDOT Mt. Baker Region multiuse path project costs along State Highways. 6) Whatcom County engineering cost estimate.											

Option: Low-Cost, High-Impact

- ▶ Can't fund LTS 1 or 2, but can fund LTS 3 and several **low-cost, high-impact complimentary safety features**, such as:
 - ▶ Speed feedback signs,
 - ▶ Lower speed limits
 - ▶ Automated safety enforcement cameras
 - ▶ RRFB flashing crosswalks
 - ▶ LED flashing safety advisory signs
 - ▶ New and wider edge lines
 - ▶ Public education campaigns

OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ What grants are available?
- ▶ What are criteria or requirements?
- ▶ How much local match is required?
- ▶ Typical project funding level?
- ▶ When are applications due?
- ▶ Which grant(s) are **best fit** for your project(s)?

USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)



U.S. Department of Transportation

Comprehensive Safety Action Plans (Must Include):

- ▶ Analysis of recent crash types, locations, risk, and **systemic safety improvements**
- ▶ Projects, funding, timelines, **prioritization**
- ▶ Must have current plan, recent adoption
- ▶ **and** 4 of the following 6 elements (or all):
 - ▶ Vision Zero
 - ▶ Task Force
 - ▶ Community Outreach
 - ▶ Equity/Under-served populations
 - ▶ Policy Audit
 - ▶ Monitor Progress

- ▶ NOFO=March-April
- ▶ Online Application Due=June
- ▶ **Minimum Federal Funding Request=\$2.5 million**
- ▶ **20% (\$500,000) local match**
(Challenge for small or rural agency)
- ▶ \$3 million minimum project

Other Federal Grants



U.S. Department of Transportation

Future of federal grants is uncertain:

- ▶ RAISE reverted back to previous name of BUILD
- ▶ Reconnecting Communities
- ▶ Surface Transportation Block Grant
- ▶ Transportation Alternatives

OPPORTUNITIES

WSDOT City and County Safety Programs: HSIP Grants



Local Road Safety Plans (LRSP):

- ▶ Analysis of existing conditions, crash types, locations, risk, and **systemic safety improvements**
- ▶ Project list, funding strategies, timelines, **prioritization**
- ▶ Must have current plan with recent data

- ▶ Call for projects: October
- ▶ Applications due: Feb/March
- ▶ **No minimum grant request**
- ▶ **No local match requirement** (if grant is obligated per schedule)



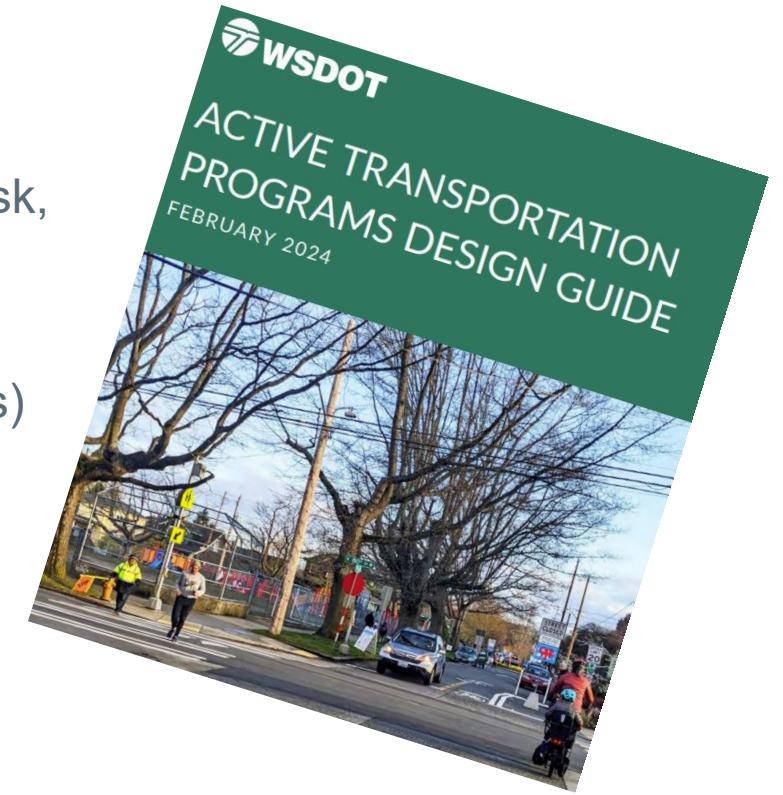
OPPORTUNITIES

WSDOT Safe Routes to School & Pedestrian Bicycle Program

For implementation grant eligibility, SRTS and PBP grants must include:

- ▶ Safety Analysis: Existing conditions, recent crash types, locations, risk, and **systemic safety improvements**
- ▶ Equity Analysis: Sandy Williams Equity Viewer
- ▶ Level of Traffic Stress Type 1 or 2 (Physical separation from vehicles)

- ▶ Call for projects: February, every even year
- ▶ Applications due: May-June, every even year
- ▶ Funds awarded: May-June, every odd year
- ▶ **No local match funds required**
- ▶ **No minimum grant request**



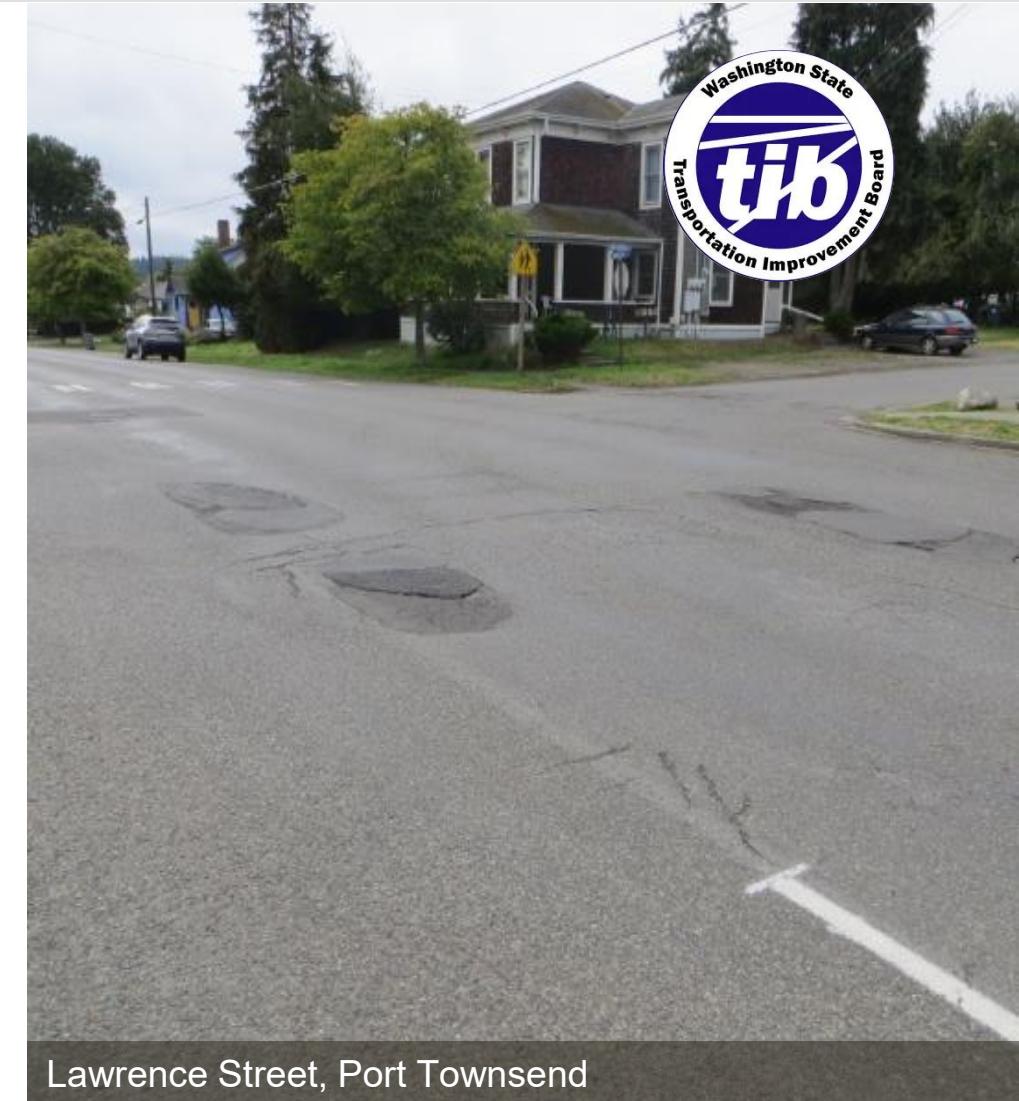
OPPORTUNITIES

TIB Urban Arterial Program

TIB UAP Grant must include:

- ▶ Transportation Impact Analysis for intersection improvements
- ▶ Safety Analysis: Existing conditions, recent crash types, locations, risk, and **systemic safety improvements**
- ▶ Safety scoring criteria
- ▶ Corridors & Intersections on federally classified arterial routes

- ▶ Call for projects: June, every year
- ▶ Applications due: August, every year
- ▶ Funds awarded: November, every year
- ▶ **No minimum grant request**
- ▶ **Up to 20% local match required**



OPPORTUNITIES

TIB Active Transportation Program

TIB ATP Grant must include:

- ▶ Preferred Active Transportation Plan
- ▶ Safety Analysis: Existing conditions, recent crash types, locations, risk, and **systemic safety improvements** on classified routes
- ▶ Level of Traffic Stress Type 1 or 2 (Physical separation from vehicles)

- ▶ Call for projects: June, every year
- ▶ Applications due: August, every year
- ▶ Funds awarded: November, every year
- ▶ **No minimum grant request**
- ▶ **Up to 20% local match required**



OPPORTUNITIES

TIB Complete Streets Program

TIB CSP Grant must include:

- ▶ TIB-approved Complete Streets ordinance
- ▶ Safety Analysis: Existing conditions, recent crash types, locations, risk, and **systemic safety improvements**
- ▶ Federal classification not required

- ▶ Call for projects: June, every year
- ▶ Applications due: August, every year
- ▶ Funds awarded: November, every year
- ▶ **No minimum grant request**
- ▶ **Up to 20% local match required**



CONSIDERATIONS

Lessons Learned (over years of practice)

Caution: Potentially controversial comments ahead!





The Goal is to Ask:

- ▶ How can we, as transportation professionals, discuss best practices?
and
- ▶ How can we better explain implementation constraints and contextual realities?

CONSIDERATIONS

There is no universal or one right way to implement safety

- ▶ “Best Practices” are ideal and aspirational recommendations
- ▶ Different geography; Different needs
- ▶ Density begets amenity
- ▶ Metrics must be tailored to context





You can't build what you can't fund

- ▶ Do not create public expectations that cannot be met by funding reality
- ▶ Yes, we should always advocate for safety and best practices

and

- ▶ We should always consider practical realities
- ▶ Do not let perfect be the enemy of good



**What
I want**

**What I
can afford**



Plans that cannot be implemented do not serve anyone's interests

(but do lead people to believe that government is not doing its job)

- ▶ Aspirational lines on a map / impractical plans are not likely to succeed
- ▶ Active transportation networks must evolve over long periods of time
- ▶ Rapid implementation: Small/lower cost improvements can build support

Q & A

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