

APPENDIX C
OTHER TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

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Issues Identified for Future Studies

Improve access to the United States Forest Service lands

Several existing roadways will need attention to provide needed improvements to foster recreation and logging activities and contribute to the economic vitality of the region. Detailed analysis should be undertaken that considers alignment issues, shoulders, guardrails and other appropriate measures. At a minimum the study should include the following roadways:

- SR 129 - coordinate with WSDOT Route Development Plan
- West Mountain Road
- Asotin Creek Road

Improve access to adjacent states and counties

A number of roadways that provide connections to Whitman and Garfield counties as well as the states of Idaho and Oregon should be considered for improvements. Detailed analysis should be performed that addresses alignment issues, shoulders, guardrails and other appropriate measures. The study should include the following roadways:

- SR 129 - coordinate with WSDOT Route Development Plan
- Troy Road/Grande Rhonde Road
- Peola Road
- Red Wolf Bridge (SR 128) - improve turning radius for trucks on north side

Snake River Crossings

Future study efforts should determine long-range traffic volume demand to cross the Snake River between Asotin and Nez Perce Counties and determine appropriate methods to address future need. This should be coordinated with the Lewis Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (LCVMPO) and regional demographic forecasts and should consider structural integrity of the existing bridges. Potential solutions may include: replace/widen the US 12 bridge, replace/widen the Southway Bridge, or provide a third river crossing south of the Southway Bridge. The product of this effort should address both short and long-range improvements and develop more detailed cost estimates that could be included in future Transportation Improvement Programs.

Downtown Dayton

Trucks need to be better accommodated in Dayton. A by-pass of downtown Dayton is not desired, however the feasibility of providing a collector roadway parallel to US 12 should be considered and evaluated, possibly Commercial Street. This concept could help to minimize the impacts of trucks on the community while easing the trip for the traveler as well. Another consideration for downtown Dayton is the possibility of adding traffic signals at strategic intersections in order to improve cross-town connectivity. As traffic volumes on US 12 continue to rise it will become more difficult for local trips to safely cross the arterial.

Freight Routes and Modes to the Snake River

The impact of heavier trucks on county roadways should be studied. A tremendous amount of grain is hauled on county roads north of US 12 in Garfield County to the Snake River (95% of all grain is hauled to the Snake River). The long term maintenance costs for these several roadways are expected to increase dramatically over time, resulting in an overall system failure. The impacts of these long term costs as well as the feasibility for alternative freight systems need to be studied in depth. Such a study might also investigate the possibility of new rail lines on abandoned rail corridors that would be self-contained to take product to the ports.

In Whitman County the need to increase options for hauling freight could be studied. So much of the product in Whitman County is destined for the Port of Almota and must traverse a significant distance on just a few roadways where there is a significant grade change down to the Port. A study examining other means of transporting the product down to the Port might identify other means to transport the products that could be implemented with less funds than would be required to reconstruct and maintain SR 194 at least from the junction with Almota Road south to the Port of Almota.

Pomeroy

Within the town of Pomeroy there are heavy impacts from US 12 through traffic on local travel patterns. A traffic study needs to be completed that would evaluate the possibility of alternative traffic designs which would consider mobility, safety, local circulation and pedestrian travel.

US-12 Route Development Plan

A Route Development Plan for US 12 from Walla Walla to the western portion of Clarkston was completed October of 2002 by WSDOT. A thorough review of existing conditions was presented as well as an analysis of future operating conditions accounting for terrain, no-passing restrictions and other important roadway features. A listing of improvements was identified that includes where shoulders could be widened, a safety rest area, safety improvements and other economic initiatives.

SR 129 Route Development Plan

A Route Development Plan for SR 129 from the Oregon State line to the southern portion of Clarkston was completed April of 2002. A thorough review of existing conditions was presented as well as an analysis of future operating conditions accounting for terrain, no-passing restrictions and other important roadway features. A listing of improvements was identified that includes safety improvements and other economic initiatives.

Wawawai Road Extention

The Port of Whitman has identified the need to pursue the extension of Wawawai Road to Lower Granite Dam. The roadway currently follows the Snake River heading west from the Port of Wilma for several miles and then turns inland to connect with US 195 near Pullman. A stretch of approximately 2 - 3 miles along the river between where Wawawai Road turns inland and where Granite Road extends southeastward from the Port of Almota and SR 194 is not served by a roadway. A railroad line follows the river and the slopes are steep; considerable rock work will be required to construct this roadway linkage.

If the silting problem worsens or dredging is discontinued and barges transporting grain are unable to proceed to the Ports of Wilma, Clarkston and Lewiston, this roadway could serve an important linkage to the Port of Almota where barges could be loaded downstream of the Lower Granite Dam.

SR 230 Connecting Lamont to I-90

During the course of the preparation of the 2004 regional transportation plan WSDOT mapping files were obtained that identified a potential alignment for a new state highway that would connect Whitman County to I-90 to the west. Apparently discussions in the past had identified a need, which was independently confirmed through the course of this study. Although no funding is envisioned for such a roadway, and no right-of-way has been purchased, the alignment generally departed SR 230 in a westerly direction southeast of Lamont and connecting to I-90 near Ritzville. During public meetings it was noted that many travelers from the region heading to Seattle use SR 23 to I-90 as opposed to SR 26 for safety reasons. This potential new state highway would reduce the distance by perhaps 20 miles.

Roadways Traversing Snake River Dams

As a result of the terrorist events of September, 11, 2001, the roadways traversing the Snake River Dams have been closed. Since many of the Port facilities are situated near these dams, this effects travel routes to the ports, causing out-of-direction travel and increased wear on county roadways. Reopening of the Lower Granite Dam river crossing would provide a much more direct route to Pullman from Pomeroy and better distribute truck loads rather than focus so many trips to the Port of Central Ferry.

Mobility Improvements

Growth in population, employment and the movement of goods will impact many roads in Asotin County. It is anticipated that a network of local roadways will serve growth in. Some new collector and arterial roadways will also be built to meet future demand. Some existing locally owned roadways as well as state owned collector and arterial facilities will need attention to accommodate future traffic volumes. Specific improvements will need to be identified as growth occurs, likely improvements to the following roadways were discussed at the Asotin County meeting:

- US 12 - within Clarkston
- US 12 - widen west to I-182
- US 195 - widen north to Spokane, provide grade separation at Wawawai Road
- Evans Road
- Dustin Loop Road
- Ben Johnson Road to Appleside
- Snake River Road

It should be mentioned that there are north-south routes in Idaho that provide significant benefits and experience similar challenges as routes in Washington. Improvements for some routes must consider the influence that routes in both states have on each other.

US 12 is the major arterial corridor throughout Columbia county. The widening to four lanes from the Tri-Cities to Walla Walla should eventually be extended to Dayton. In the interim, left and right turn lanes and passing lanes should be strategically placed to improve traffic flow and safety, especially where there is poor sight distance such as Longs elevator and Lewis Clark State Park.

US 195 is the major north-south arterial through Whitman County. It is often burdened with traffic back-ups due to slow moving vehicles or event traffic to/from Pullman. Congestion in Pullman also hampers the ability of through traffic primarily for east-west movements; a discussion of a Pullman bypass was included in the 1994 RTP. A preferred northern bypass alignment has been identified with significant right-of way secured, however there is no identified funding source. The City of Pullman is currently studying the possibility of a south by-pass. The Moscow Ring Road will also pass through part of Whitman County. Other roadways were also mentioned for mobility improvements at the visioning meeting as well. Suggestions included:

- Widen US 195 from Lewiston to Spokane.
- Provide additional hill climbing/passing lanes from Lewiston to Spokane
- North Pullman Bypass
- South Pullman Bypass
- SH-26 improvements
- Airport Road
- Preserve future functionality of rural corridors now through right-of-way and access management and frontage roads where appropriate