

STATE GUIDE PLAN OVERVIEW

ELEMENT 611: TRANSPORTATION 2030

Long Range Transportation Plan: 2008 Update

VISION STATEMENT

Our common vision recognizes transportation as a core function that threads through other elements of society. Transportation connects the state with the global and regional economies, the home with the workplace, the individual with the community, and all of us with one another. It must equitably benefit all communities, and must be reconciled with quality of life issues as vital as the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the preservation of our natural and historic heritage and beauty of the natural and built environments. It cannot exist independently of these concerns.

PURPOSES OF THE PLAN

- It fulfills federal requirements for statewide and metropolitan planning under SAFETEA-LU.
- It provides a long-range framework for coordination among various modes and advancing projects in the Transportation Improvement Program.
- It sets state policy, to guide public and private decisions involving transportation toward the end of improving the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the state.
- As a State Guide Plan element, it is a basis for determining consistency of local comprehensive plans and other plans, programs, and projects with state policies.

SCOPE OF THE PLAN

This Plan considers surface transportation systems for both people and freight, and connections to air and water travel. It encompasses all modes of surface transportation: highway, bus, rail, paratransit, bicycle, pedestrian, and intermodal facilities. It also covers passenger ferry service receiving federal funding.



The following State Guide Plan elements also address transportation topics:

- Element 155: Greenspace and Greenways
- Element 640: State Airport System Plan
- Element 651: Waterborne Passenger Transportation Plan
- Element 661: Freight Rail Plan
- Element 121: Land Use 2025

BACKGROUND FOR PLAN UPDATE

This Plan has been developed in consideration of the following:

Performance Assessment of 2004 Transportation Plan

New SAFETEA-LU Requirements for Long Range Plans

- Systemwide Environmental Mitigation
- Consistency of Transportation Plan with Planned Growth and Development Plans
- Transportation System Security
- Operational and Management Strategies
- Public Participation Plan
- Visualization Techniques
- Congestion Management Processes in Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)

2005 MPO Recertification Recommendations

- Congestion Management Process
- Environmental Justice Analysis

Recent State Planning Activities

- Land Use Plan
- Housing Plan
- Hurricane Evacuation Routes
- Freight Planning Needs Assessment
- Transit 2020 and Special Legislative Commission on Transit
- Strategic Highway Safety Plan



Public Participation

A Transportation Open House was held at the Blackstone Valley Visitors Center on March 1, 2007. Statewide Planning, in conjunction with the University of Rhode Island, conducted special outreach to inner city high school students in Providence. In addition, a survey was administered by mail and website to determine travel behavior and public opinion on transportation issues.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND TRAVEL TRENDS

The plan contains discussion and data related to population projections, age structure, households, employment, mode split, travel times, vehicle ownership, and auto registration. The RI Statewide Travel Demand Model was used to generate future vehicle miles traveled, trip length, trip time, and speeds. Also included are historic transit ridership and airline passengers.

INVENTORY OF FACILITIES

This section provides inventory and condition of roads and bridges; inventory of transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, freight network, and intermodal connections.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Four funding scenarios are briefly analyzed:

- Sink: resource constrained scenario that does not properly fund capital or maintenance programs
- Tread Water: needs based scenario to achieve state of good repair
- Swim: scenario that provides funding sufficient to improve condition of infrastructure and provide targeted expansion
- Win the Race: supports land use plan and long term vision of the state by creating walkable communities, making key bike path connections, and providing fixed guideway transit in Providence

FINANCING

This section explains federal funding programs from Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The State has borrowed against future federal funding allocations through a mechanism known as Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE). Rhode Island's current system for financing transportation consists of general obligation bonds to match federal funds and state gas tax used for highway maintenance and debt service on bonds. RIPTA also receives revenue from state gas tax. The plan notes that this funding source is unsustainable and



the State must consider additional funding sources. Fiscal constraint analyses for federal funding is included in this section.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The state's environmental resources, as they are adversely impacted by transportation, are discussed in this section. Conversely, there are transportation facilities that may be vulnerable to environmental conditions (such as sea level rise and dam failure) which are also briefly explored.

A scenario analysis based on the urban services boundary, as delineated in the State's Land Use Plan, was undertaken. Travel implications (vehicle miles traveled [VMT] and transit ridership) were calculated using the travel demand model and state projections for population growth for the following 3 scenarios:

- Current trend – population distributed per town level population projections
- Sprawl – more population growth in rural area, less in urban area
- Compact – more population growth inside urban service area, less in rural area

The analysis concluded that the compact growth scenario was more efficient, with lower VMT and higher transit ridership.

Environmental Justice (EJ) analyses were performed to measure whether the transportation system had equitable benefits and burdens for populations of concern (low-income, minorities, and disabled). To measure transportation benefits, EJ populations were mapped against bus transit routes. The results show that populations of concern have greater access to transit than the general population. To measure burdens, the same populations were mapped against congested freeway segments. Exposure to auto emissions causes and/or aggravates respiratory diseases and constitutes a burden. The results of that analysis did in fact show that the EJ community does bear a disproportionate burden by increased exposure. Recommendations are offered to address this.

Lastly in this section, an air quality analysis demonstrates that the projects included in the Plan conform to the Clean Air Act. Emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides (NOX) were calculated for future years, and fall within budgets established for the State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goals, objectives, policies, strategies, and performance measures under fourteen topic areas are included in the plan. This overview contains only the goals and policies.



BICYCLE

GOAL	B	Maintain and expand an integrated statewide network of on-road and off-road bicycle routes to provide a safe means of travel for commuting, recreation, and tourism in order to improve public health, and reduce auto congestion and dependency.
POLICIES	B.2.a	Maintain existing bicycle paths and on-street lanes in a clean, safe, and attractive condition.
	B.2.b	Expand the on and off-road bicycle network – prioritizing projects that provide links between bike paths, seamless connections to other modes, or have the potential to reduce automobile traffic. This includes provision of facilities such as bike racks, lockers, showers, etc.
	B.2.c	Encourage cities and towns to address bicycle transportation in comprehensive plans. Promote locally sponsored bicycle facilities which connect with and complement the state system.
	B.2.d	Adhere to the "bicycle tolerant" design philosophy in all highway reconstructions. Include experienced bicyclists in the design review process for both on and off road bicycle routes.
	B.2.e	Promote bicycling as a viable transportation choice for commuters, students, and tourists. Businesses receiving state funding for expansion should accommodate bicycle commuting by providing user facilities if safe and reasonable connections can be made to an existing bicycle route.
	B.2.f	Provide ADA compliant accommodations for pedestrians, skateboards, non-motorized scooters, roller blades/skates, strollers, motorized and non-motorized wheelchairs on off-road paths.
	B.2.g	Cooperate with public and private sector entities to promote and provide a resource for healthy recreation activities.

BICYCLE	DESIGN	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	EMERGENCY RESPONSE	ENVIRONMENT	EQUITY	FINANCE	HIGHWAY	INTERMODAL	LAND USE AND CORRIDORS	PEDESTRIAN	PLANNING	SAFETY	TRANSIT
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DESIGN

GOAL	D	Strive for excellence in design of transportation projects to enhance safety, security, mobility, environmental stewardship, aesthetic quality, and community livability.
POLICIES	D.2.a	Utilize context sensitive design solutions for roads and streets which respond to the environs in which they are located, while adhering to appropriate requirements for safety and capacity. These must be flexible to adapt to different situations and must consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations where feasible.
	D.2.b	Emphasize effective and attractive signage that clearly conveys essential safety and directional information to travelers. Where appropriate, employ gateway signage to distinguish regions and themes and to provide increased identification for transportation facilities, business and civic centers, historic districts, institutions, tourist destinations, and natural features like rivers and watersheds.
	D.2.c	Enhance community livability and create inviting public spaces through traffic calming, pedestrian amenities, view corridors, and attractive landscaping, where appropriate.
	D.2.d	Manage vegetation in transportation rights-of-way for multiple objectives: safety, air and water quality, noise reduction, community aesthetics, and natural habitat values.
	D.2.e	Encourage communities to identify design objectives (including bicycle, pedestrian, landscaping and aesthetic goals) for arterials, gateways, major intersections, and collector streets in local comprehensive plans, especially for designated scenic routes and connection to appropriate business areas.
	D.2.f	Consider environmental enhancements, noise reduction, and energy efficiency in facility design and construction.
	D.2.g	Support reduction in the number of billboards and other outdoor advertising to enhance the visual quality of the transportation system. Ensure that electronic outdoor advertising is limited to avoid driver distraction.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | *employment, freight, downtown, and tourism*

GOAL	ED	Support a vigorous economy by facilitating the multi-modal movement of freight and passengers within Rhode Island and the northeast region.
POLICIES	ED.2.a	Proactively work with state agencies and other stakeholders to determine needs of employers, employees, un- and under-employed individuals, and students, and strive for transportation options that support full employment and educational opportunities.
	ED.2.b	Provide viable and affordable transportation options.
	ED.2.c	Support regional examination and planning of interstate transportation-related economic development issues.
	ED.2.d	Ensure that freight rail continues to serve the region. Join with other New England states in participating in decision-making on changes in regional rail service, such as changes in ownership, rate structure, maintenance of the network, and accommodating intercity passenger rail service.
	ED.2.e	Encourage provision of all appropriate transportation services and facilities at key freight locations including freight rail, highway, port, airport, transit, and commuter alternatives. Consider short sea shipping opportunities.
	ED.2.f	Use transportation to support economic development that takes place in existing built-up areas or on prime sites suitable for intensive development. Transportation investments should support both intra and interstate regional economic development opportunities. Examples are development of prime industrial sites in Quonset Davisville, Cranston and East Providence; Warwick's proposed mixed-use center near the airport; and the Blackstone Valley in a way that preserves its historic and natural character.
	ED.2.g	Use transportation investments to support community economic development including village centers, "Main Streets", central business districts, and brownfields.
	ED.2.h	Utilize transportation investments to support tourism, one of the state's most important industries. Strengthen linkages between the Providence metropolitan center, air and rail terminals, and tourist attractions in Newport, South County, and the Blackstone Valley.
	ED.2.i	Recognize Narragansett Bay as a critical waterway and transportation asset for fuel transport and other freight.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE

GOAL	ER	Develop transportation and communication systems that serve Rhode Islanders and the region in the event of natural disasters, accidents, and acts of terrorism in a manner that minimizes injury, loss of life, and disruption to the economy; facilitates evacuation of people; and allows emergency response and recovery activities to occur.
POLICIES	ER.2.a	Projects that serve a dual purpose (such as congestion relief and emergency response) should be given greater consideration than single purpose projects.
	ER.2.b	Invest transportation resources in infrastructure such as communications facilities that benefit the transportation system.
	ER.2.c	Continue to improve and enhance interstate communication and cooperation through the I-95 Corridor Coalition and direct contact with agencies in Massachusetts and Connecticut.
	ER.2.d	Employ prevention and mitigation strategies in design of new projects.
	ER.2.e	Coordinate with US Coast Guard and others in assessing safety risks of transporting potentially hazardous cargo on Narragansett Bay and throughout the state on other modes.
	ER.2.f	Promote redundancy in key transportation infrastructure (including highway, transit, rail, airports, pipeline, ports, and shipping channels) to ensure continued passenger and freight service in case one or more modes becomes unavailable for any reason.
	ER.2.g	Emphasize training for state and local officials as a means to maintain highest state of readiness and preparedness. Encourage training exercises with federal and regional partners.
	ER.2.h	Emphasize the importance of communication and coordination between state and local governments to achieve effective response and recovery.
	ER.2.i	Disseminate information to the general public in a timely manner to improve preparedness and facilitate response and recovery.
	ER.2.j	Ensure that RI's 911 system remains functional and that dedicated funding streams are not diverted to other uses.
	ER.2.k	Proactively plan for evacuation of transit dependent populations and people with disabilities.



ENVIRONMENT

air, water, energy, community livability

GOAL	EN	Recognize, protect and enhance the quality of the state's environmental resources and the livability of its communities through well-designed transportation projects and effective operation of the transportation system.
POLICIES	EN.2.a	Reduce emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases from mobile sources, and conserve energy by reducing vehicles miles traveled; reducing the number of single occupant vehicle trips; promoting increased usage of high efficiency vehicle technologies; and retaining vegetated buffers.
	EN.2.b	Manage stormwater runoff from roadways and reduce pollutants through retrofit and maintenance of stormdrains, implementation of best management practices, retention of trees within rights-of-way to provide vegetated buffers for infiltration, limiting the use of de-icing chemicals (consistent with safety), and other approaches, especially within the watersheds of impaired waters and over groundwater aquifers. Promote the use of "grassy strips" for snow storage.
	EN.2.c	Utilize transportation programs and projects to maintain and enhance environmental quality and community livability, by including practices such as historic and scenic preservation, open space acquisition, landscaping, streetscaping, and recycling to improve aesthetics, and contribute to water and air quality improvements.
	EN.2.d	Ensure that the transportation planning and project programming embrace the principles of environmental stewardship through measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate cumulative environmental impacts on affected communities. Utilize existing and new environmental resource data to estimate the additional burdens or benefits projects will have on wildlife, air quality and water quality.
	EN.2.e	Minimize conflicts between the transportation system and wildlife resources.
	EN.2.f	Acknowledge that sea-level rise may threaten transportation facilities, and plan infrastructure improvements accordingly. (See PL.3.v)

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EQUITY

GOAL	EQ	Ensure that the transportation system equitably serves all Rhode Islanders regardless of race, ethnic origin, income, age, mobility impairment, or geographic location.
POLICIES	EQ.2.a	Proactively work with state agencies and other stakeholders to determine needs of underrepresented population, and strive for transportation options that encourage independence.
	EQ.2.b	Ensure that transportation projects do not place disproportionate adverse environmental or other impacts on any community or population group.
	EQ.2.c	Avoid displacement or loss of transportation services to populations of concern. Work to improve transit and other transportation services which directly benefit low income, minority, elderly, and disabled populations.

FINANCE

GOAL	F	Provide a sustainable financial base for the transportation system that is adequate for supporting needed infrastructure and services with an emphasis on preservation and management of the existing system.
POLICIES	F.2.a	Aggressively seek additional financing sources and mechanisms for transportation projects, including joint development opportunities.
	F.2.b	Allocate existing user fees to transportation uses and explore new user fees.
	F.2.c	Phase out the use of general obligation bonds to match federal funds. Repayment of bond debt is a burden on transportation resources. Projects and programs should be funded on a pay-as-you-go basis except for large projects with a long useful life.
	F.2.d	Support RIPTA with a long term dedicated and sustainable funded program to maintain and improve bus, trolley, and ferry service.
	F.2.e	Clarify and publicize the priorities for transportation investments and procedures for allocation of funds.
	F.2.f	Ensure that commitments to existing (approved) projects are met before initiating major new projects which require substantial new funding commitments (except under extraordinary circumstances).
	F.2.g	Provide RIDOT and RIPTA with the necessary resources to track revenues, expenditures, cost increases, contracts, etc. and report periodically to the Transportation Advisory Committee.
	F.2.h	Congressional earmarks that result in the deferral of other TIP projects are discouraged.



HIGHWAY

GOAL	H	Maintain the highway and bridge network in a safe, attractive, and less congested condition to carry passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, government vehicles, and transit vehicles, as well as bicycles and pedestrians. Recognize roadways as vital public spaces that accommodate travel, commerce, community activities, and utility infrastructure.
POLICIES	H.2.a	Give priority to preserving and managing the transportation system. Follow regularly scheduled programs of pavement and bridge management to prevent highway structures from premature deterioration, resulting in safety hazards and the need for more frequent and costly full rehabilitation or replacement.
	H.2.b	Address deficiencies in the transportation system (safety, condition, capacity, sidewalks, etc.).
	H.2.c	Minimize recurring and non-recurring congestion through increased use of other travel modes, effective incident management and access management, and traffic flow improvements.
	H.2.d	Encourage alternatives to single-occupant auto travel, such as transit, carpools, vanpools, and bicycle and pedestrian travel to help reduce vehicle-miles of travel, conserve energy, improve air quality, benefit the environment in other ways, and support the economy.
	H.2.e	Consider expansion of capacity on key regional transportation facilities where it is shown to be cost-effective and justified by long term system benefits, and following evaluation of alternate modes and community impacts.
	H.2.f	Continue support of RIDOT's Incident Management Program and Transportation Management Center (TMC). Aggressively implement Intelligent Transportation Systems to all limited access highways and appropriate state routes. Encourage private sector participation in deployment of hardware. Evaluate the effectiveness of the TMC before any major expansion is approved.

INTERMODAL

GOAL	I	Provide convenient intermodal facilities and services offering seamless connections for passengers and freight.
POLICIES	I.2.a	Provide convenient and attractive intermodal connections for passengers between all modes, especially to encourage greater use of public transit and non-motorized transportation.
	I.2.b	Provide ample infrastructure for intermodal movement of freight to grow business and sustain residences at reasonable costs.
	I.2.c	Work with the private sector to improve intermodal connections.
	I.2.d	Improve coordination with the private sector in freight planning.



LAND USE AND TRAVEL CORRIDORS

GOAL	LU	Continue to integrate land use and transportation planning using a travel corridor framework and promote responsible development practices in the public and private sectors.
POLICIES	LU.2.a	Achieve more concentrated development patterns, emphasizing growth in existing urban places -- older cities and their downtowns, historic town centers, and other built-up areas. Promote higher housing densities and greater mix of land uses, within the limits of basic compatibility. Support and stimulate this development pattern with multi-modal transportation investments and other essential services.
	LU.2.b	Support the preservation of open space within transportation corridors to maintain the character of rural areas of the state, to protect critical resources, provide recreational opportunities, and enhance and reinvigorate urbanized areas.
	LU.2.c	Organize transportation planning in Rhode Island around a travel corridor framework. Encourage the state and cities and towns to work together to control land development along arterial highways so as to preserve their function, capacity, safety, and appearance. Coordinate land use and congestion management planning and strengthen the state's role in access management and corridor preservation through corridor plans developed in close cooperation with cities and towns.
	LU.2.d	Promote protection of property and rights of way to secure the long term transportation needs of the state.

PEDESTRIAN

GOAL	PE	Create and maintain safe and attractive walkable communities to encourage more walking trips, enhance transit usage, improve public health, and reduce auto congestion and dependency.
POLICIES	PE.2.a	Elevate pedestrian transportation to a priority level. Every trip involves walking, making it the most pervasive form of transportation. According equal status to pedestrian transportation will require a fundamental change in the way state and local agencies do business. This will not be a quick change, but rather, an evolutionary process.
	PE.2.b	Ensure that all pedestrian facilities accommodate the needs of the physically challenged.
	PE.2.c	Recognize pedestrian planning considerations as a priority to be fully integrated in all transportation and land use planning processes.

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PLANNING

GOAL	PL	Conduct a comprehensive, cooperative and continuing planning process that responds to public interests and concerns, strives to meet the needs of underserved communities, and fosters productive relationships with elected and appointed officials from all levels of government and the private sector.
POLICIES	PL.2.a	Participate as necessary at the federal level in policy development and authorization legislation, and maintain good relationships with federal agency staff and Congressional delegation.
	PL.2.b	Continue integrating a regional perspective into the planning process for all aspects of the state's development across both functional and jurisdictional lines. Obtain a high level of official commitment to, and a high degree of public participation in, this process. Maintain contact with counterparts at various regional levels (North Atlantic, Northeast, New England, I-95 Corridor), especially through professional associations. Support efforts to establish a regional transportation authority.
	PL.2.c	Support state planning efforts and maintain good working relationships with sister state agencies, quasi-public entities, higher education, and the General Assembly.
	PL.2.d	Improve and expand corridor level planning to ensure connections to land use planning and congestion management as well as coordination among local jurisdictions, regional planning agencies, neighboring MPO's and transit authorities.
	PL.2.e	Continue to work with cities, towns, and the Narragansett Indian Tribe, on their comprehensive plans; land development, subdivision, and zoning regulations; and design standards and guidelines to ensure consistency with and implementation of state policies and plans.
	PL.2.f	Support inclusive transportation planning and resource allocation processes that are accessible to, understood by, and constructively engage all population groups and interests in defining and addressing transportation needs.
	PL.2.g	Actively engage the private sector, interest groups, non-profits, and transportation providers in the planning process.
	PL.2.h	Periodically monitor plans and transportation system performance to assess progress made and identify deficiencies.



SAFETY

GOAL	S	Improve the safety of all transportation modes through education, enforcement, and engineering solutions.
POLICIES	S.2.a	Support educational efforts directed toward all population groups regarding safe use of all modes of transportation.
	S.2.b	Strengthen safety laws and programs and improve enforcement, including more stringent driver training, licensing, and re-licensing; seat belt and motorcycle helmet requirements; and drunk driving penalties.
	S.2.c	Improve the operating characteristics of the transportation system through safety improvements to the right of way including pavement, signage, signalization, lighting, sight distances, sidewalks, traffic calming, access management, etc.
	S.2.d	Improve crash reporting system and data analysis.
	S.2.e	Integrate safety considerations into all transportation planning documents.

TRANSIT

GOAL	T	Provide a safe, robust, and convenient network of transit and shared ride services with seamless intermodal connections in support of increased employment opportunities, improved environmental quality, and reduced congestion and auto dependency.
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TRANSIT

POLICIES

T.2.a	Improve the present overall level of RIPTA Service. RIPTA is a public investment that is crucial to the economy, contributes to the fabric and strength of urban areas, provides a means of transportation for people who can not or choose not to drive (whether commuters, shoppers, low-income, elderly, students, disabled, or others), improves the environment, and conserves energy.
T.2.b	Continue existing commuter rail service to Providence through the Pilgrim Partnership. Extend Boston-Providence commuter rail service south in incremental steps to T.F. Green State Airport and Wickford Junction under a Phase I start-up service. Additional sites in Cranston, East Greenwich, Kingston, Pawtucket/Central Falls, Westerly, and West Davisville should be considered and evaluated based on demand, operations, infrastructure requirements, site availability, economic development opportunities, community support, and cost. Long term passenger rail opportunities may include Blackstone Valley and Aquidneck Island. Support extension of MBTA commuter service to Fall River. Use the FRIP track for passenger rail service.
T.2.c	Study growth impacts of new rail service and work with affected cities and towns to implement growth management measures in concert with extension of rail service. This includes areas of RI along the northeast corridor as well communities impacted by rail service outside the state (such as New London, CT; Fall River, MA; and Franklin, MA)
T.2.d	Maintain water transportation between Providence, Newport, and other Bay communities, and consider expansion to other activity centers as appropriate.
T.2.e	Adjust transit operations to the changing needs of a dynamic population -- the increasing proportion of elderly people, the large number of people with limited capability in English, the requirements that welfare recipients find work, the increasing number of disabled people seeking to travel, the number of students on evening schedules and the prospects for a twelve-month school year, and the dispersed location of many critical facilities and services. Consider routes, time of service, and other operational characteristics in selecting equipment. This is particularly important for low-income individuals, transitional housing or shelter residents, and the homeless.
T.2.f	Market transit services conscientiously and efficiently to all segments of the public as a convenient and reliable alternative to the automobile. Make the transit system and intermodal connections user-friendly for all members of the riding public.
T.2.g	Develop state policy on using the least-cost, most efficient mode of travel for state-funded programs (e.g., transit over paratransit with rates structured to give priority to transit usage, and service to the nearest service outlet). Provide that all agencies purchasing paratransit services contract with RIde and that social service agencies be located along transit routes.
T.2.h	Coordinate all state and municipal-funded transportation services, and consolidate operations where feasible. This includes fixed-route, paratransit, school districts, Head Start, temporary employment agencies, and human service agencies outside of the RIde system. There should be no fare-free service unless supported by a third-party payee. RIPTA should be the custodian of the Coordinated Plan for Public Transit - Human Services (a plan required by SAFETEA-LU).

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MAPS

The plan includes 30 maps displaying existing facilities, demographic characteristics, highway congestion, natural resources, and future transportation facilities.

APPENDICES

- A. Congestion Management Process
- B. Survey Results
- C. Transportation Funding Scenarios
- D. Glossary, Acronyms, and Links
- E. Public Review of the Plan

