



Chart Tip: The size of each wedge on this sunburst chart represents the number of workshops (out of five) that identified the transportation strategy

What measures did Smart Growth America propose?

Based on feedback from participants in the March technical workshops and a review of national best practices, Smart Growth America proposed a framework for evaluating economic vitality to WSDOT executives in July 2018. Because accessibility is already measured in WSDOT’s mobility performance framework, WSDOT executives decided to focus on measures of business growth and diversity and quality of life to evaluate economic vitality. Next, WSDOT will explore the feasibility of implementing the proposed measures. The Performance Framework will be completed in December 2019.

Mobility	Business Growth & Diversity	Quality of Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to Employment • Accessibility to Non-work Destinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment serves infill development in priority growth areas • Support for growth in an identified Opportunity Zone • Alignment with state freight plan • Land value added • Transportation cost effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for areas of health disparities • Monetized health benefits of improved access to active transportation • Access to affordable housing

For more information:

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Executive Summary

Learning from our Partners – Transportation’s Role in Economic Vitality

Transportation agencies across the country are looking at ways to tie their decisions more directly to supporting economic vitality. In Washington, economic vitality is one of six transportation policy goals established by the Washington State Legislature and is reflected in state transportation plans as well as eight of fifteen Regional Transportation Planning Organization plans.

Transportation investments affect the economy in many ways: attracting development, increasing property values, creating jobs, connecting people to needs, reducing travel costs, improving freight access and reliability, reducing energy use, and more. However, the state of the practice in measuring the impacts of transportation projects on the economy is fairly limited.

WSDOT is working with our partners to explore how economic vitality performance should drive WSDOT’s project development, design, and delivery decisions and inform legislative decisions. This folio summarizes the input provided at statewide workshops on what economic vitality means and which transportation strategies contribute most to achieving it. WSDOT will use this information to select measures and metrics that will shape WSDOT’s Practical Solutions Performance Framework.

What is WSDOT’s Practical Solutions Performance Framework?

WSDOT is working to create a Practical Solutions Performance Framework that will help WSDOT make the right investments, in the right place, at the right time. The Performance Framework will provide WSDOT a consistent agency approach to performance-based decision-making, help us align with our partners, demonstrate transparency, think more systemically, and understand tradeoffs across our transportation policy goals. It will reflect community values and be developed with the help of our partners.

Washington’s Economic Vitality Goal for Transportation

“Public investments in transportation should support achievement of...economic vitality: to promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.”

- RCW 47.04.280

How did WSDOT’s partners help us understand economic vitality?

In November 2017, WSDOT held five workshops in Vancouver, Olympia, Seattle, Spokane and Richland. The workshops were sponsored by Smart Growth America. Participants were asked:

- What does economic vitality mean to you and your community, region, and state?
- What transportation strategies have the biggest effect on these economic outcomes?
- What are the roles of private, local, regional, state, and federal partners in implementing these transportation strategies?
- What are the guiding principles we should consider when assessing economic vitality performance?

WSDOT analyzed the responses and Smart Growth America proposed measures based on the analysis. The proposed measures were discussed at technical workshops in March.

Who attended the workshops?

Over 161 people attended the November workshops representing cities, counties, regional transportation planning organizations, transit agencies, economic development organizations, health and housing agencies, tribes, elected officials, ports, airports, WSDOT, and other state agencies. A similar cross-section of 84 partners attended the March technical workshops.

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What were the workshop results?

The table to the right summarizes the feedback workshop participants provided regarding what economic outcomes were important to them. WSDOT analyzed the ideas generated by workshop participants to reveal patterns and themes.

What did economic vitality mean to partners?

Participants across the state identified key concepts such as job creation, business diversity, freight mobility, and quality of life as important economic outcomes. Some concepts were emphasized more in particular places. For example, participants in Seattle emphasized social equity. Vancouver participants highlighted sustainable funding and Tri-Cities participants talked about the importance of energy and industry. WSDOT organized the key concepts (represented in colored circles in the table to the right) into three strategic themes that were common to all workshops: quality of life, business growth and diversity, and mobility. These themes are represented by rows in the table.

What transportation strategies did partners say affect economic outcomes the most?

During the workshop, WSDOT asked participants which transportation strategies were most important to support economic outcomes. The most commonly cited strategies were improving multimodal accessibility, improving freight mobility, and supporting transportation-efficient community design. The sunburst chart on the next page summarizes the transportation strategies identified in the workshops. The size of the wedge represents the number of workshops (out of five) that mentioned that strategy.

How did partners view WSDOT's role in implementing transportation strategies that support economic vitality?

Our partners want WSDOT to:

- Collaborate on planning, land use integration, grants, and maintenance
- Help align federal, state, region, and local:
 - Vision and goals
 - Identification of system needs
 - Prioritization and funding
- Manage state assets
- Coordinate and share data

