Introduction to Active Transportation Plans

ATP Training Session 1

Active Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP)
WSDOT Active Transportation Division
July 30, 2025

Julie Meredith, Secretary of Transportation

Today's Session

- ✓ Introductions
- ✓ Overview of Active Transportation Plans
- ✓ State Policies & Requirements
- ✓ Questions and Answers

Source: Toole Design

ATAP Overview

- The WA State Legislature directed WSDOT to **identify barriers to participation** in its active transportation funding programs.
- In 2024, WSDOT launched the invitation-based Active Transportation Assistance Program to assist city, county, and tribal governments with **addressing transportation needs in overburdened communities** and building capacity to support active transportation projects.
- WSDOT staff have supported projects to:
  - Improve **safety conditions** for walking and bicycling;
  - Engage communities in **project development**; and
  - Create **complete routes** to bolster network connectivity.

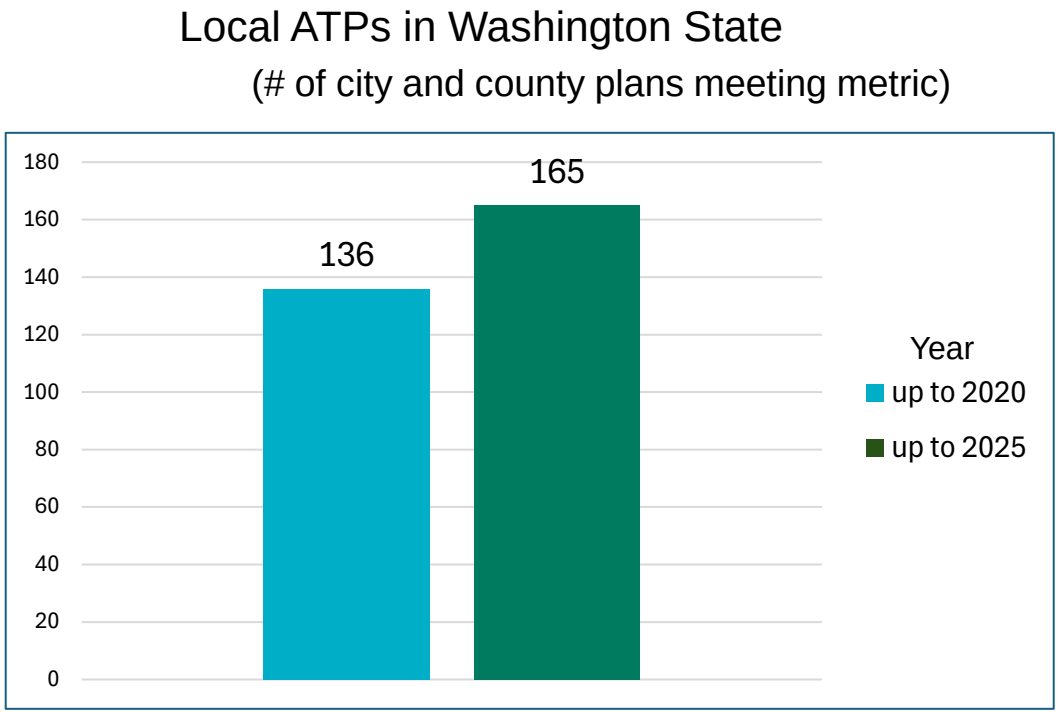
Source: Toole Design

WA State Active Transportation Plan

- First statewide active transportation plan adopted in 2021.
- Set a goal of building partnerships to improve networks across boundaries
- In funding programs, WSDOT uses a criterion around community engagement that checks for project in local plans

Local ATPs in Washington

- Most local jurisdictions in Washington have already done some AT planning.
- **145 cities/ towns** and **20 counties** now have active transportation plans (inc. bike or pedestrian plans) or comprehensive plans directly addressing facility needs.



WA Active Transportation Definition

- **Active transportation** (AT) includes walking or running, the use of a mobility assistive device, cycling, and the use of small personal devices such as foot scooters or skateboards, including both traditional and e-assist bicycles.

- Planning for active transportation must consider and address accommodations pursuant to the **Americans with Disabilities Act** and the **distinct needs of each form** of active transportation.

RCW 36.70A.030

Why Plan for Active Travel?

- Define community goals
- Build momentum among community members
- Prioritize projects
- First step for funding
- Coordinate state, regional, and local project work

Source: Toole Design

Project Life Cycle

ATPs Overview

Active Transportation Plans (ATPs) are most commonly developed for local jurisdictions or a region. They are used to:

- Outline the local/regional vision, goals, and strategies needed to support safe, convenient, and accessible active transportation options.

- Document the current state of walking and biking within a community/region.

- Identify local/regional programs, policies, and infrastructure improvements to meet the needs of people walking and bicycling.

Types of ATPs

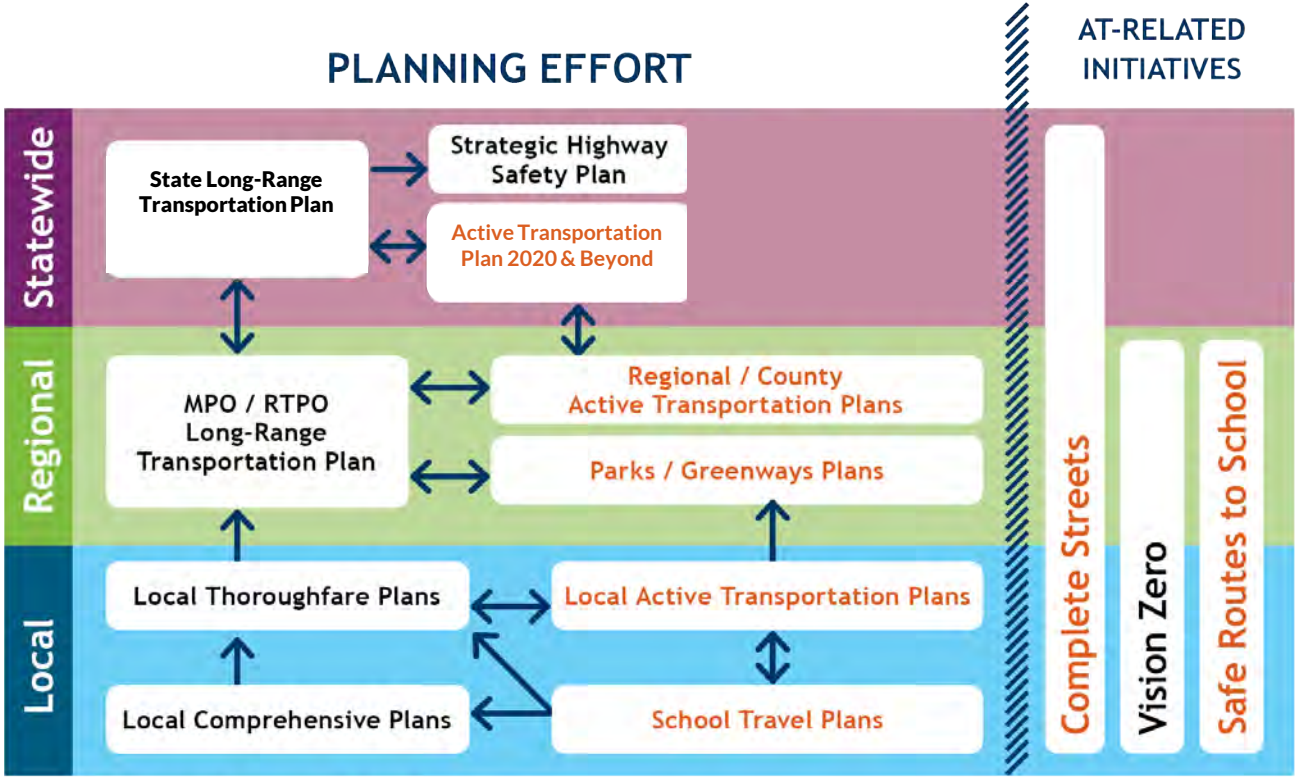
Different types of ATPs

- **Local Plans**: Communities can develop standalone ATPs or integrate active transportation into their comprehensive plans or transportation master plans (TMPs).

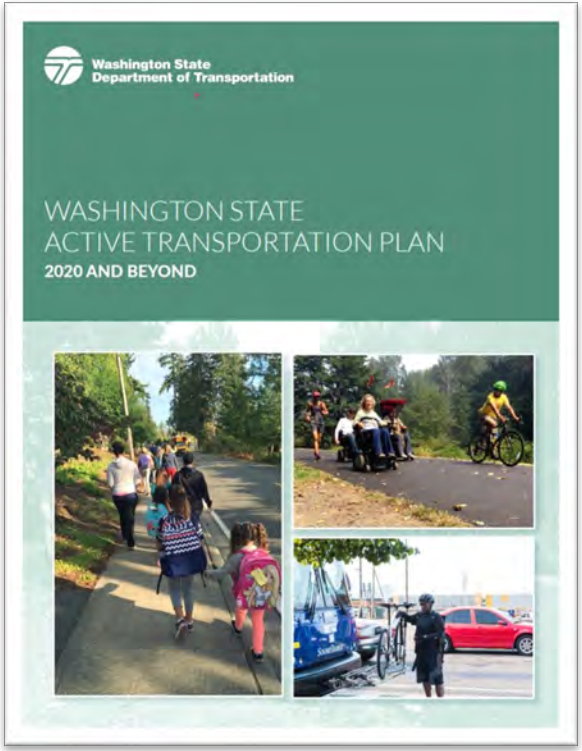
- **Regional/State Plans:** These plans are used to coordinate cross-jurisdictional approaches to AT infrastructure and programs.

- **Other Initiatives:** Vision Zero Plans, Local Road Safety Plans, Complete Streets Policies, Safe Routes to School Programs.

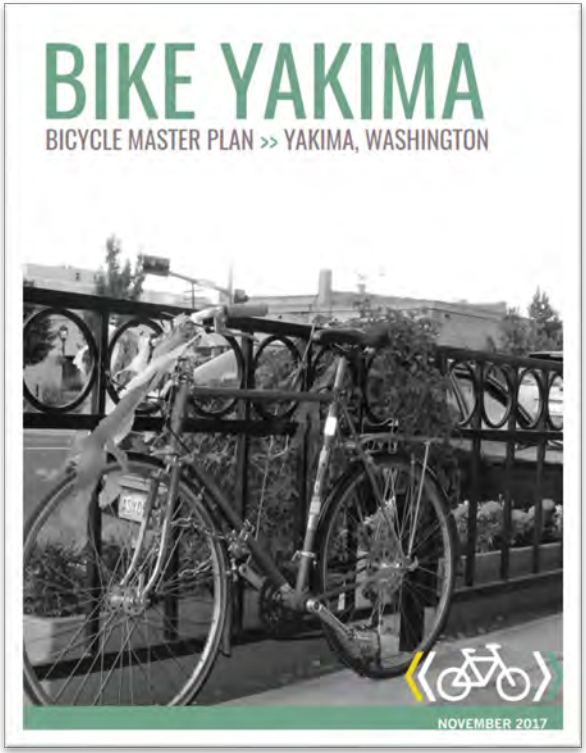
How plans relate to each other

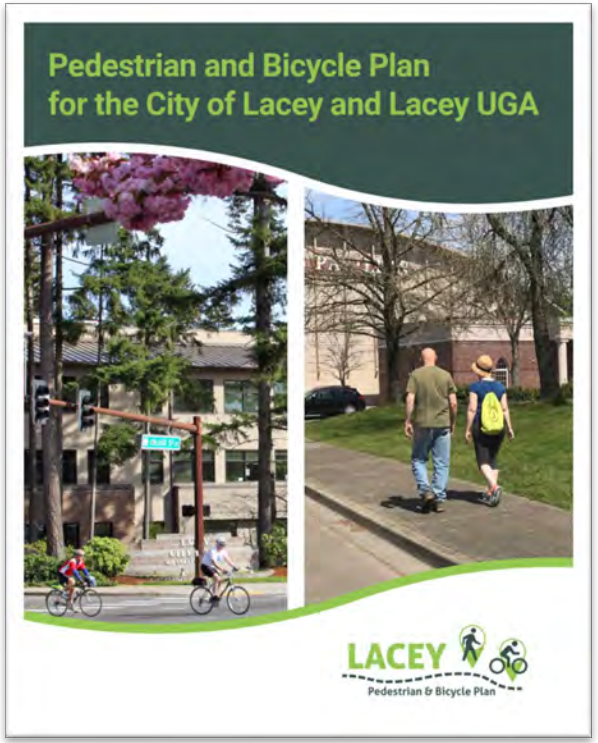


Standalone ATPs – State/Regional

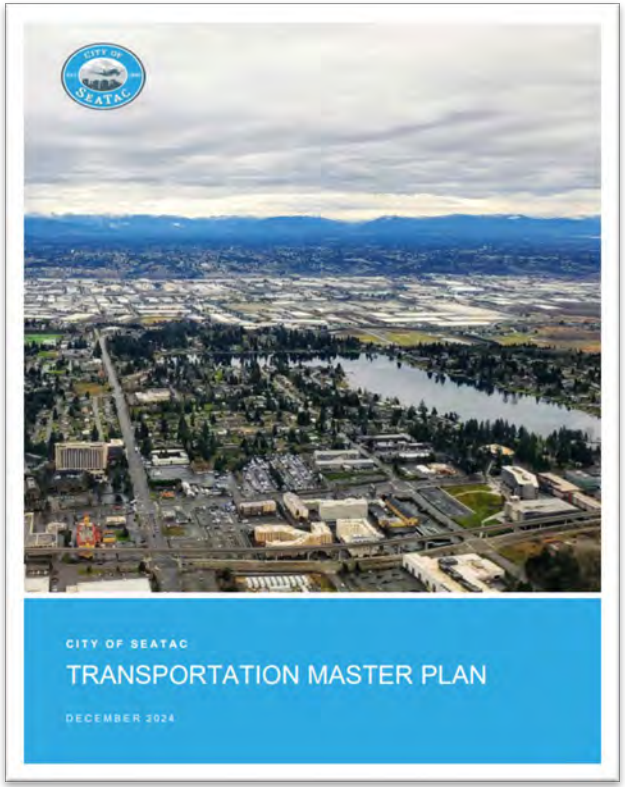


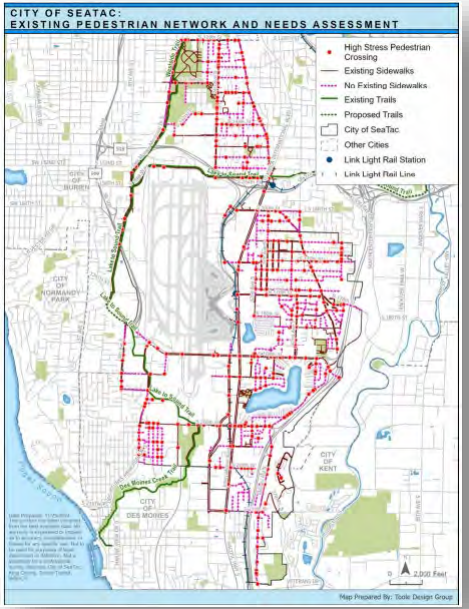
Standalone ATPs - Local

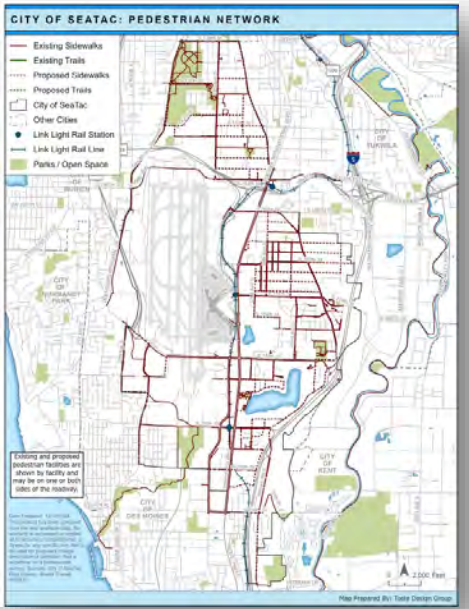




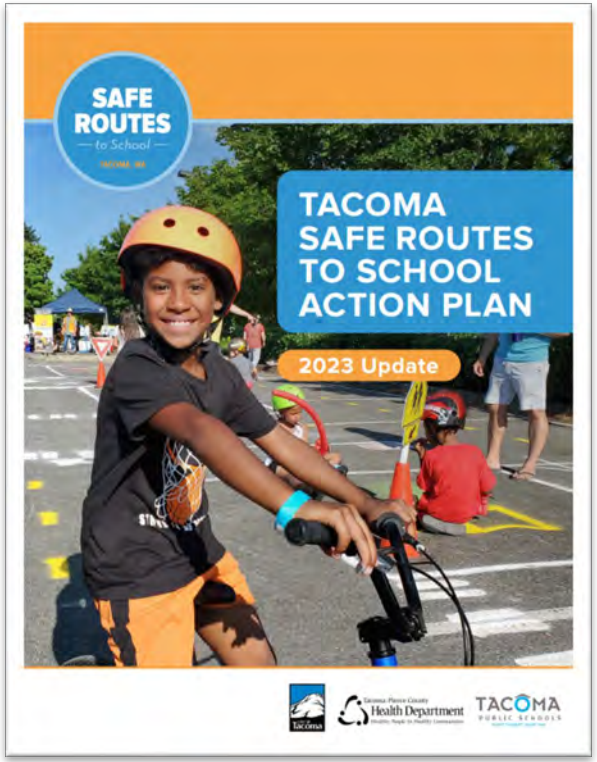
Local TMP Example







Related Initiative Examples



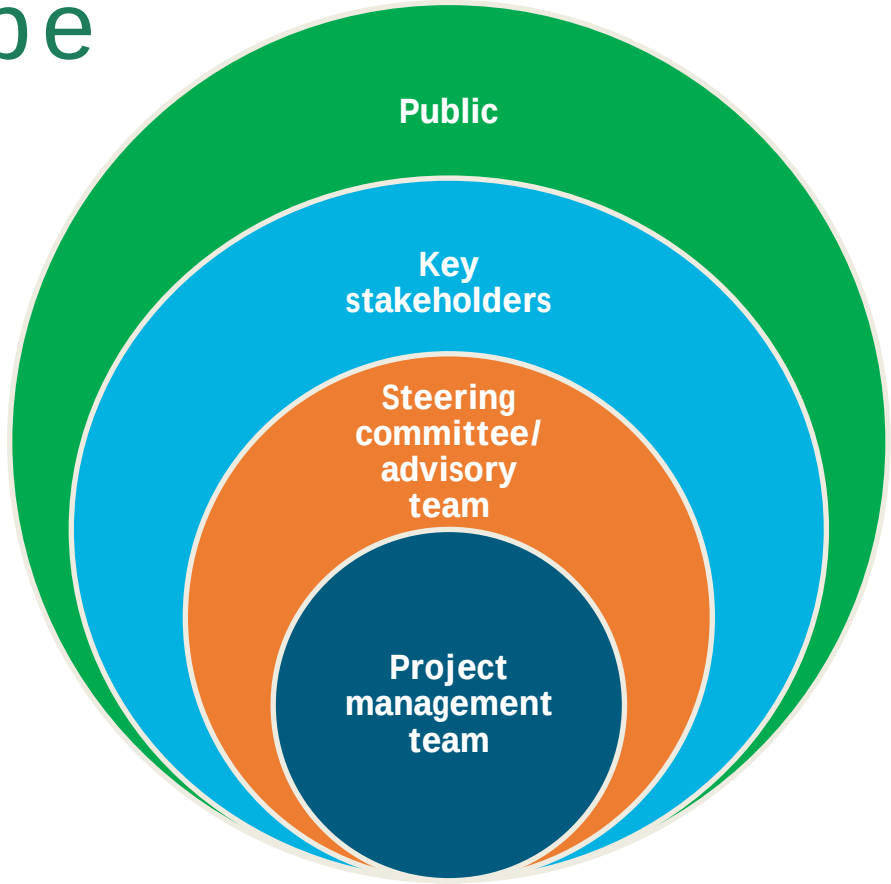
ATP Process

Plan timeline

- Timelines vary widely, from six months to one or more years
- Iterative process rather than linear
- Keep decisionmakers up to date on the planning process from the beginning

Defining the scope

- Establishing the plan's purpose
- Determining the project area
- Assessing available resources
- Identifying a project team, key stakeholders and audiences
- Determining development schedule



Engaging the community

Source: Toole Design

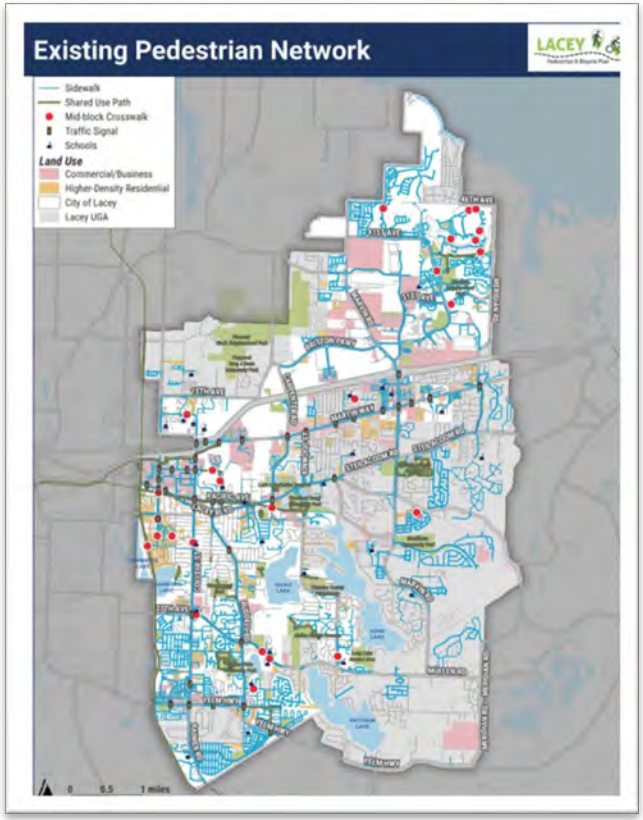
- Conducting engagement for plan development process
- Performing ongoing engagement
- Meeting legal requirements

Developing Vision and Goals

- Developing vision and goals based on:
  - Community engagement findings
  - Alignment with other planning efforts

Source: WSDOT

Assessing Existing Conditions



- Preparing data and creating a base map
- Reviewing existing plans, policies, and supportive programs
- Conducting analyses

Source: City of Lacey

Identifying Projects & Programs

- Developing approach to recommendations
- Identifying infrastructure projects
  - Pedestrian networks
  - Bicycle networks
- Creating or modifying programs and policies

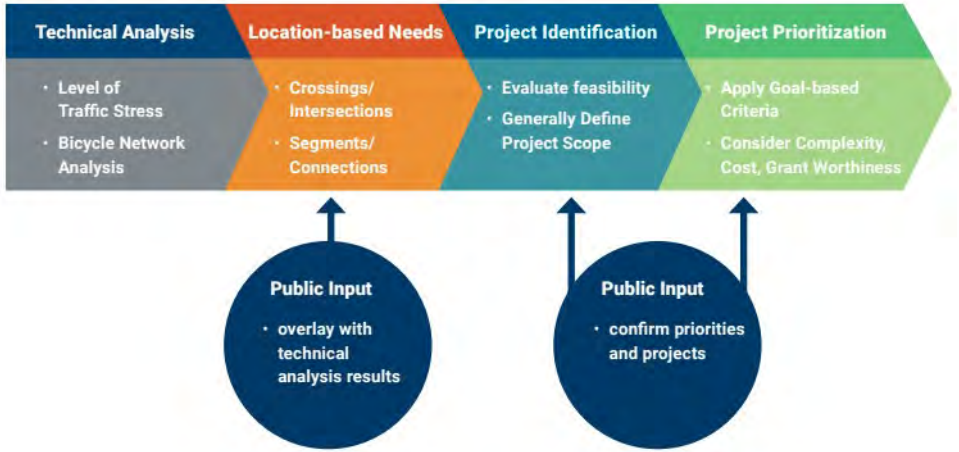
Developing Project Recommendations

Source: Ohio Department of Transportation

Prioritizing Proposed Projects

- Determining:
  - Qualitative approach
  - Quantitative approach
    - Project scoring
  - Project phasing
  - Project cutsheets
  - Network buildout

Figure 9: Project Recommendation Development Process



Source: City of Bellingham

Implementing the Plan

- Determining roles and responsibilities
- Identifying funding, implementation and maintenance strategies
- Facilitating plan adoption
- Monitoring plan performance

Source: Toole Design

Meeting State Requirements

- Washington has specific state requirements for active transportation planning.
- Local jurisdictions can use their active transportation plans to meet these requirements and for other needs by:
  - Using the ATP as part of the transportation element in their comprehensive plan.
  - Utilizing ATP data, analysis, and recommendations for policy/program formation, project programming, and grant applications.

Do you need a standalone ATP?

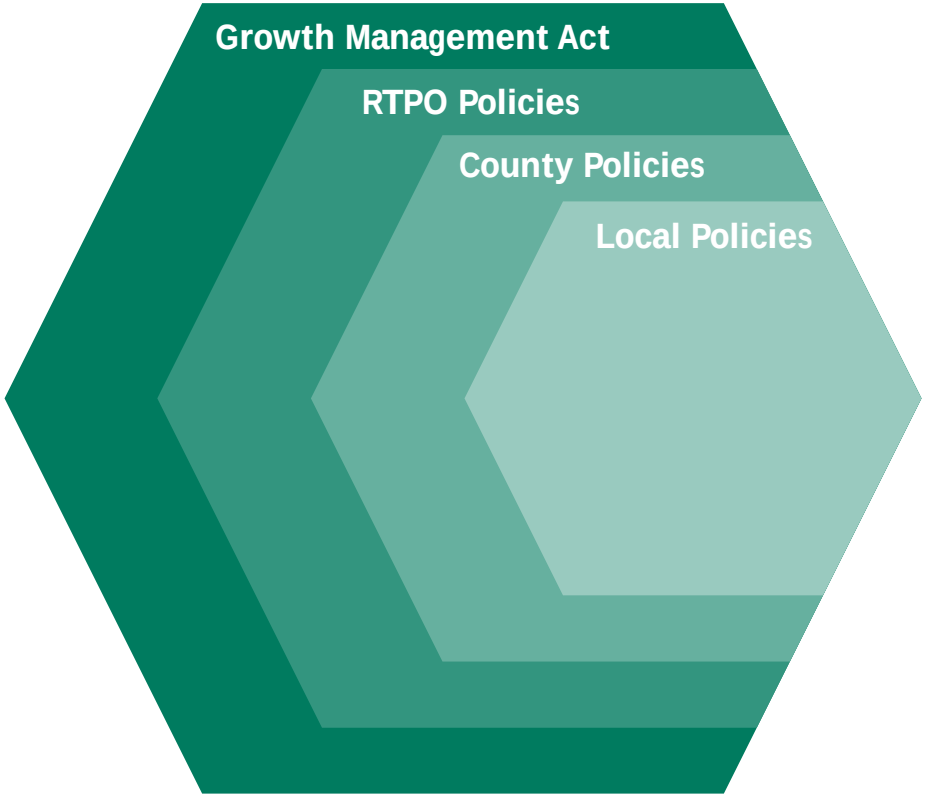
MAYBE	MAYBE NOT
Cities may need to update their ATPs more frequently than their comprehensive plan, in response to opportunities that arise.	Standalone ATPs may not be needed if active transportation needs already fully addressed by TMPs and/or comprehensive plans.
Standalone ATPs help build additional capacity for planning active modes, e.g., data collection, analysis, project planning.	

WA Requirements & Resources

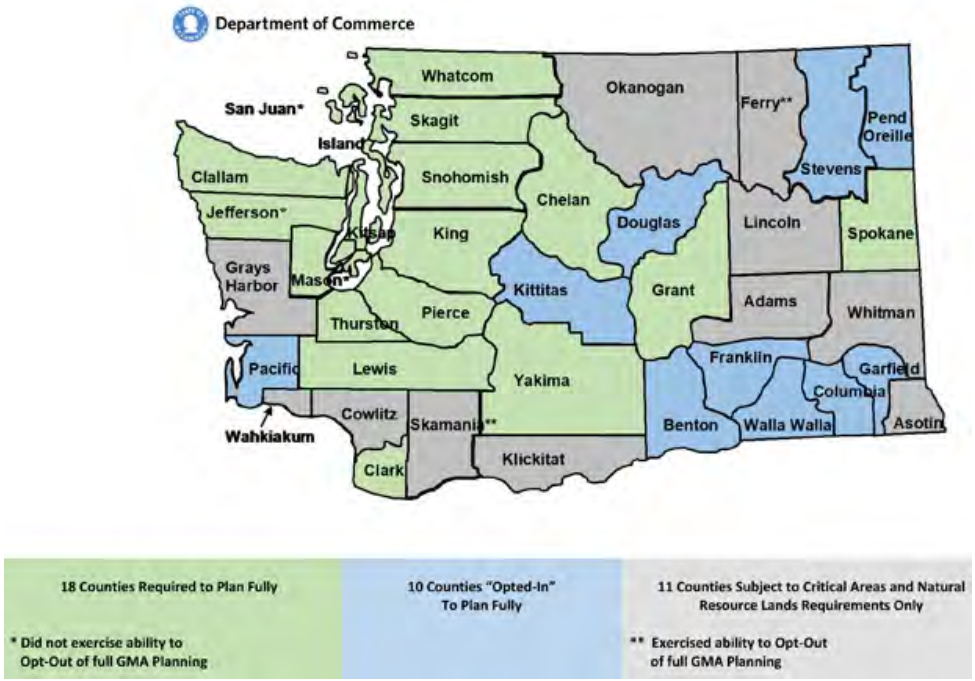
State Requirements & Policies

- Growth Management Act (GMA)
  - Transportation Element
  - Multimodal Level of Service
- Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) certification
- Complete Streets

Growth Management Act



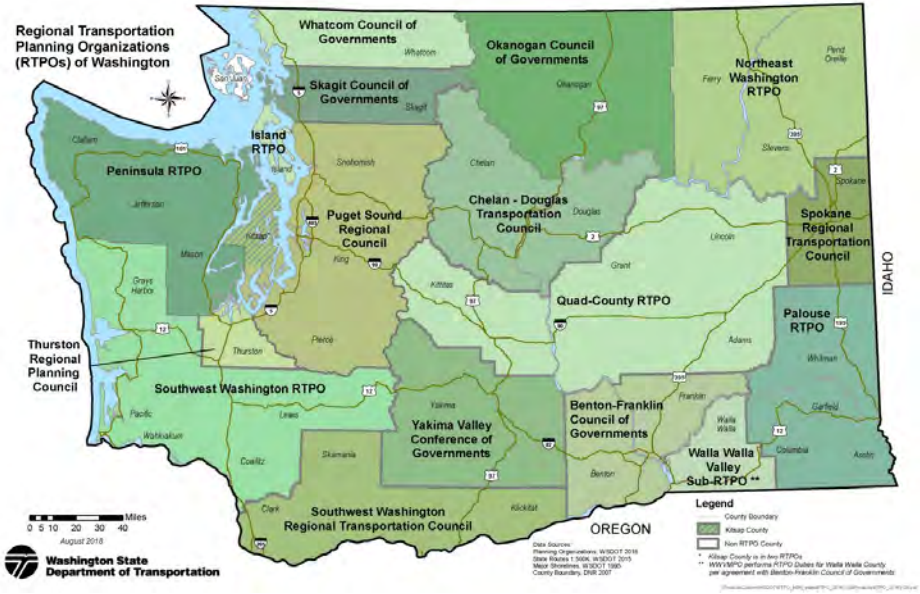
Who is required to plan under GMA?



Source: Department of Commerce

RTPO certification

The Regional Transportation Planning Organization legislation, which was adopted with the GMA, mandates that regional agencies certify that local comprehensive plans are consistent with regional transportation plans *RCW 47.80.023*.



Source: WSDOT

Transportation Element

"Encourage efficient **multimodal transportation** systems that will **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** and **per capita vehicle miles traveled**, and are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans." - *RCW 36.70A.020*

Required Components

- The GMA requires comprehensive plans to include a transportation element which discusses:
  - Land use assumptions
  - Multimodal traffic impacts
  - Facilities and service needs
  - Finance plan
  - Intergovernmental coordination efforts
  - Demand-management strategies
  - Active transportation component

TABLE 1: GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANS

REQUIRED ELEMENT	TMP SECTION REFERENCE
An **inventory of transportation facilities** and services, including roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit alignments and service, and general aviation airport facilities.	Roadways, Active Transportation, Transit
Level of service standards for all locally owned arterials and transit routes.	Roadways - Planning Standards, Active Transportation – Planning Standards
Traffic forecasts for at least 10 years based on the adopted land use plan.	Transportation System Performance
Analysis of **transportation demand** (existing and future forecasted) to provide information about the location, timing and capacity needs of future growth.	Transportation System Performance
Identification of **state and local transportation system needs** to meet current and future demand.	Roadways – Planned Roadway Projects
Identification of the **pedestrian and bicycle network** and listing of planned improvements for walking, rolling and biking.	Active Transportation – Pedestrian Needs Assessment, Bicycle Needs Assessment
Specific actions and measures for bringing locally owned transportation facilities or services that are below the established level of service standard into compliance.	Roadways – Planned Roadway Projects
A **multiyear financing plan** based on the needs identified in the comprehensive plan.	Funding and Implementation Strategies
Intergovernmental coordination, including an assessment of the impacts of the transportation plan and land use assumptions on state and adjacent local transportation facilities	Transportation System Performance

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council. Vision 2050 Planning Resources: Transportation Element Guidance, June 2023.

Active Transportation Element

"Active transportation component to include collaborative efforts to identify and designate **planned improvements** for active transportation facilities and corridors that address and encourage enhanced **community access** and promote **healthy lifestyles."** - *RCW 36.70A.070*

Multimodal Level of Service

- In 2023, the transportation element of the GMA was amended to clarify that jurisdictions must take a multimodal approach to level of service (MMLOS).
- The GMA requires MMLOS goals to estimate progress towards the GMA's environmental justice goals.
- Designing roadways to be consistent with WSDOT's Complete Streets approach helps to achieve MMLOS goals.

MMLOS Example

Table 4. Pedestrian Level-of-Service Summary

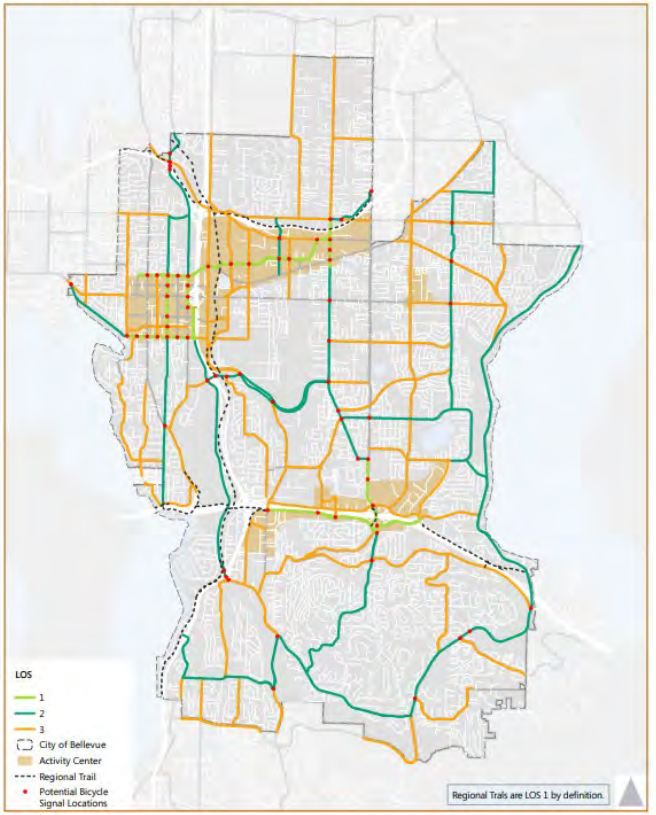
Pedestrian LOS	Metric	Implementation	How to Apply
Sidewalk & Landscape Buffer	Combined Width for sidewalk and landscape buffer	Frontage Improvements Capital Investment Program	Standard per Land Use Code and Transportation Design Manual
Intersection Treatment	Design Components	Frontage Improvements Capital Investment Program	Guideline
Mid-Block Crossings	Spacing of Crossings	Frontage Improvements Capital Investment Program	Guideline

Table 5. Sidewalk & Landscape Buffer Width Details

Land Use Context / Component	Downtown	Activity Center	Neighborhood Shopping Center	Pedestrian Destination	Elsewhere in the City
Sidewalk Width & Landscape Buffer Width	Downtown Land Use Code	BelRed Land Use Code or 16 ft. for other Activity Centers	13 ft. total adjacent to shopping center	13 ft. total at ped. destination or within 100 ft. of a FTN* stop	Bellevue Transportation Design Manual

Source: City of Bellevue

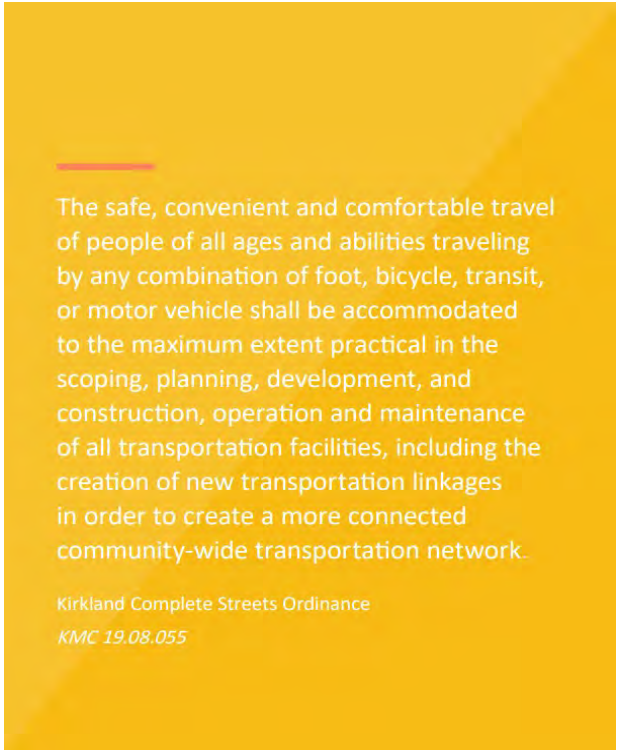
Figure 5: Intended Bicycle LOS on Bicycle Network Corridors, with Bicycle Signals at Designated Intersections



Complete Streets

Complete streets consider the needs of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit riders, and motorists of all ages and abilities.

In 2011, the State passed the Complete Streets Act (*RCW 47.04.320 -.340*), which encouraged cities to adopt Complete Streets ordinances by creating a grant funding program that requires an adopted ordinance for eligibility.



Source: City of Kirkland

Complete Streets

In 2022, WA added a Complete Streets requirement in *RCW 47.04.035* that requires state transportation projects costing more than $1 million to incorporate complete streets principles.

Source: City of Edmonds

State Funding Resources

- **WSDOT Programs**
  - Pedestrian and Bicycle Program
  - Safe Routes to School
  - Sandy Williams Connecting Communities
- **WA State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) Programs**
  - Complete Streets Program
  - Urban Arterial Program / Active Transportation programs
  - Small City Arterial / Active Transportation programs
- **WA State has additional resources eligible to fund planning process.**

Key Takeaways

- Local and regional jurisdictions develop ATPs to outline their goals, and strategies, document the current state of walking and biking, and identify programs, policies, and infrastructure improvements.
- ATPs can take the form of stand-alone plans or be incorporated into other planning efforts (comprehensive plans, TMPs, etc.).
- These plans can help jurisdictions meet state requirements, build additional capacity for planning active modes, and position projects for funding.
- Developing ATPs can be challenging for jurisdictions that lack staffing and other resources and/or expertise conducting the planning process. WA state provides funding and resources to help develop and implement your ATP.

7/31 Session: Focus Topics

- For tomorrow's session, we will be doing a deeper dive on priority outcomes and developing components of Active Transportation Plans.
- The agenda will cover best practices for the following topics, along with creative and practical strategies for challenges with resource constraints and different environments:
  - Priority Outcomes: Safety and Equity
  - Plan Components
    - Engagement
    - Data analysis
    - Project implementation

Questions & Answers

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TOOLE DESIGN Parametrix