



Framework for Developing the Priorities

The mobility team used five strategies to achieve the result of “moving people, goods and services: reliably, safely and efficiently:”

- **Preservation:** to maintain, preserve and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.
- **Safety:** to provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.
- **Mobility:** to improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state.
- **Environment:** to enhance Washington’s quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities and protect the environment.
- **Stewardship:** to continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

These strategies are aligned with the five statewide transportation policy goals established by the legislature in 2008.

The mobility team evaluated each of the activities to determine how closely they fit with the strategies and whether there was performance data to support the activities. The team ranked all of the activities to determine which activities are of the highest priority without any consideration to cost. A summary is provided below, organized by strategy.

Challenges and Uncertainties

Prioritizing activities to improve the movement of people, goods and services is complicated by numerous challenges and uncertainties.

For example, costs are rising dramatically for many of the activities, while at the same time, fuel tax revenues are declining. Costs associated with highway construction, (preservation and mobility, which account for about one-half of all expenditures in mobility activities) increased by 21.3% during the first six months of 2008. Yet, since the legislature adjourned in early 2008, the revenue forecast has declined by \$78 million for the current biennium and \$174 million for the 2009-11 biennium.

In addition, the current six-year federal transportation funding act expires in 2009 and there are many uncertainties about what the next act will include and how it will affect the state’s efforts to improve mobility. The state’s efforts to address global warming will require aggressive efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled, leading to a new look at how the mobility activities are aiding us in those efforts.



High-Priority Activities

Preservation

Replacing bridges and maintaining/operating bridges were the highest ranked activities. These two activities focus on either replacing structurally deficient bridges or maintaining bridges that are in good or fair condition to prevent them from becoming structurally deficient. Other highly ranked activities were ferry vessel maintenance and preservation, as well as addressing the highway maintenance backlog.

Safety

Activities that had a safety component were also ranked highly. Activities such as low cost enhancements (rumble strips, guardrails, median-crossover protection) were seen as good investments due to the low-cost/high reward nature of the investment. Stabilizing slopes along the highways also ranked highly.

Mobility

Mobility activities generally ranked higher than any of the other areas. This includes the urban mobility projects that were part of the Nickel and Transportation Partnership Act. Those projects are on the state highway system and are intended to strategically add capacity and relieve bottlenecks. Grant programs for cities and counties to improve mobility were also ranked highly.

Environment

Highly ranked activities included creation of and improvements to fish passages on the state highway system, and projects to control stormwater runoff.

Stewardship

By the nature of this exercise, activities that focus on administration, information technology, and policy did not rank as highly as preservation, safety and mobility activities.

Lower Priority Activities

Lower priority activities included ferry terminal improvements, passenger rail, safety rest area improvements, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, noise reduction, and roadside and landscape maintenance.

The mobility team also disaggregated some of the largest and most complex activities, such as the Urban and Rural Mobility activities, in order to communicate the need to address multiple competing priorities—such as preservation and congestion relief.