

# Guiding Principles & Policies

SRTC's core values are expressed in its Guiding Principles and Policies, which serve as the foundation for all agency plans and programs. These principles were updated for Horizon 2050 through a collaborative process with SRTC's committees and Board of Directors.

The Guiding Principles, shown in Figure 1.04, serve as the basis for Horizon 2050's policy framework. This framework directly addresses the federal planning factors discussed earlier, as well as the state's transportation policy goals. Together, these elements provide a structured approach for establishing performance measures that assess regional progress toward achieving adopted policies.

This section provides a detailed overview of each of the Guiding Principles.



Figure 1.04 **Horizon 2050 Guiding Principles**

# Quality of Life

*Improving the day-to-day experience for everyone across the county*

SRTC will promote plans and projects in urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods that offer safe and convenient forms of healthy active transportation options for people of all abilities. Decision-making will strive to create multimodal transportation choices through increased availability and improved service, and Level of Traffic Stress analyses and other relevant data will be leveraged in transportation planning. Strengthening existing connections and creating new connections will improve mobility for all users. Context sensitive design will be considered to preserve cultural, social, commercial, and natural elements of the region's neighborhoods and communities.

## Quality of Life Policies

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- A. Apply SRTC's Complete Streets Policy in transportation planning efforts to advance lower-stress and accessible active transportation options.
- B. Improve access and the quality of access to public transit for all people including those considered underserved, regardless of race, age, national origin, income, or ability.
- C. Support public transit that improves frequency, span and reliability of transit services with a variety of service levels and transit modalities within the region, with emphasis on investments in the Transit Priority Network.
- D. Support multimodal transportation options and complementary land use practices that encourage walking and enhance health and physical activity for users of all abilities.
- E. Support demand-management strategies to help safely integrate e-bikes and micromobility devices while reducing Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips.
- F. Support transportation projects that protect culture, value unique characteristics of communities, and contribute to a sense of place.
- G. Support projects that maintain and preserve active transportation facilities, with emphasis on maintaining and upgrading the Bicycle Priority Network, including extending and filling gaps in regional multi-use trails.

## Why Quality of Life?

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- SRTC strives to improve everyone's day-to-day travel experience through comprehensive planning processes such as Safe and Complete Streets.
- SRTC understands the need for public transportation options which serve all the diverse members of our community.
- SRTC sees the benefits that active transportation can have through economic vitality and physical and mental health.

## Example: Fish Lake Trail Connection (City of Spokane)

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The Fish Lake Trail Connection project will establish a long-awaited connecting segment between the Centennial Trail and the Fish Lake Trail. This further strengthens the regional trail network and allows for longer active transportation trips. Connecting communities, higher accessibility, and healthier trips are all facets of Quality of Life.

# Economic Vitality

*Working towards better economic opportunities and outcomes for Spokane*

Investments and improvements in the regional transportation system will promote economic vitality by moving people, freight, and goods to enhance the global competitiveness of the regional economy. Major transportation facilities, and the mobility they provide to, between and within economic activity centers, will stimulate commerce. Horizon 2050 should prioritize and coordinate regional transportation investments aimed at the development of a multimodal system that provides transportation opportunities that enhance accessibility and connections among city centers, regional service centers and attractions, towns, and areas of regional employment.

## **Economic Vitality Policies**

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- A. Prioritize transportation investments by mode that enhance accessibility and connections between city centers, regional centers, attractions, towns, and areas of regional employment.
- B. Support areas of potential economic development.
- C. Support the efficiency of freight movement and monitor associated performance measure progress around travel time reliability.
- D. Support projects that maintain and enhance the Freight Priority Network.

## **Why Economic Vitality?**

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- ▶ SRTC plans for supportive local infrastructure in coordination with land use to ensure an efficient and well-connected system.
- ▶ SRTC supports areas of potential economic development to ensure economic opportunity is afforded to all citizens of the region.
- ▶ SRTC understands the importance of local freight and air goods transportation to the regional economy.

## **Example: Argonne Bridge to I-90 (City of Spokane Valley)**

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The Argonne Bridge in western Spokane Valley is a critical connection between economic hubs in the Spokane region. On the North side of I-90, a large commercial and industrial hub spanning across jurisdictional boundaries is connected to the Sprague commercial corridor on the south side of I-90 via the Argonne bridge. This project maintains an important connection which is identified as one of the truck freight routes on SRTC's Freight Priority Network.

# Cooperation & Leadership

*Regional coordination and collaboration starts with SRTC*

SRTC will provide the forum to develop regional transportation priorities, to identify transportation funding needs, and to develop strategies to acquire funding in accordance with federal and state planning requirements. SRTC will help coordinate efforts to communicate with business and community groups and give the public sufficient time to review and comment at key milestones in the transportation planning process. These efforts will bring together all community stakeholders and transportation planning partners in order to present a unified voice in support of the region's transportation needs.

## **Cooperation & Leadership Policies**

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- A. Provide leadership by facilitating coordinated, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning.
- B. Incorporate public processes in significant planning efforts.
- C. Promote regional transportation interests, plans, and projects to federal, state, and local public and private entities.
- D. Coordinate transportation relevant data for shared use among regional stakeholders.
- E. Strengthen avenues of involvement for all people including those considered underserved regardless of race, national origin, or income in the decision-making process.

## **Why Cooperation & Leadership?**

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- SRTC takes a leadership role in regional and national advocacy to ensure local projects and agencies have as much access to support and funding as possible.
- SRTC sees cooperation as paramount to ensure a seamless transition across jurisdictional boundaries.

## **Example: Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities (SRTC)**

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The SRTC Unified List of Regional Transportation Priorities serves as a coordinated communication tool to inform state and federal legislators of the region's highest transportation priorities. Updated annually in collaboration with member agencies, the list identifies critical investments that enhance the efficiency, safety, and overall performance of the regional transportation system. Projects are evaluated using criteria that reflect quality of life, economic vitality, safety, and other factors demonstrating benefit to both the region and the state.

# Safety & Security

*Our commitment to zero fatal and serious injuries in Spokane County*

SRTC aims to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes for all road users. SRTC will promote and implement the FHWA Safe Systems Approach, thus the regional transportation system will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to ensure that all road users and their vehicles are able to travel safely, at safe speeds, and on safe roads. SRTC will prioritize investments that make the system safer for all users through best-practice design, operational improvements, education and outreach, and technology-based strategies. SRTC will promote strong regional post-crash care response.

## Safety & Security Policies

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- A. Support improvements to vehicle and roadway safety deficiencies to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes.
- B. Protect critical infrastructures from natural and human threats.
- C. Review, reassess, and renew data targets regularly to achieve Target Zero.
- D. Promote safety through supporting education, outreach and enforcement of rules of the road for all modes that use the roadways.
- E. Support strategies to ensure safe and efficient working conditions for roadway maintenance teams and emergency responders while they provide post-crash care.
- F. Support structural improvements to the active transportation network in accordance with SRTC's Complete Streets Policy.

## Why Safety & Security?

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- SRTC understands that protecting the most vulnerable network users trickles up to all modes of transportation.
- SRTC ensures the region has access to funding to protect its citizens through efforts such as the Regional Safety Action Plan.

## Example: Regional Safety Action Plan (SRTC)

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The Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) is a comprehensive planning document which details important points of data and demographics for the Spokane region. The RSAP gives crash information for each jurisdiction, including amount, type, and whether or not there were any fatal or serious injuries. It also outlines potential solutions for the crashes, from design treatments to behavioral fixes.

# System Operations, Maintenance & Preservation

*Maintaining, updating, and preserving the transportation network*

SRTC will strive to provide adequate funding for projects that preserve the region's physical infrastructure, optimize system operations, and reduce costs. SRTC and project proponents will establish performance targets and measures that promote efficient system management and well-maintained infrastructure. Technology solutions will be utilized where appropriate to maximize efficiency of the existing transportation system.

## System Operations Policies

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- A. Identify cost-effective strategies and utilize technology to optimize system performance and adaptability considering future growth and potential changes in transportation demand.
- B. During winter weather conditions, ensure snow and ice removal and snow storage is managed for roadways and sidewalks to improve user safety and mobility and to keep the transportation system operational for all users.
- C. Monitor and set performance targets for federally required performance management areas to improve travel time reliability and advance pavement and bridge condition.
- D. Promote coordination and collaboration with the Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center (SRTMC) and incident and emergency management agencies.
- E. Utilize the Congestion Management Process to identify areas of need and implement strategies to improve operational efficiency.

## Why System Operations?

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- SRTC sees technology as a growing area of opportunity for transportation efficiency and safety.
- SRTC understands the value that the Spokane Regional Transportation Management Center brings to the region.

## Example: I-90 TSMO Improvements (WSDOT)

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WSDOT's I-90 TSMO improvements project is currently focusing on increased efficiency and safety along the corridor. The project, which is in SRTC's Transportation Improvement Program, aims to add meters at on- and off-ramps all the way to the Idaho border. Other improvements include variable message signs, variable speed limit signs, and more. Currently installed ramp metering along I-90 has demonstrated safety benefits with a decline in crash incidents at the merging locations.

# Stewardship

*Stewardship is reflective of our effort to balance the human and natural environment*

Transportation decisions will strive to maximize the positive impacts to the built environment while minimizing negative impacts to air quality and the natural environment. SRTC will promote investments in the region that protect and enhance the environment and promote energy conservation. SRTC will leverage data for the benefit of the region and establish performance measures to ensure coordinated regional policies make progress towards established objectives. SRTC will ensure that the region plans for a resilient, redundant, connected, and equitable multimodal transportation network that can withstand unforeseen disruptions. Coordinated regional investment opportunities will be sought out to support the fiscally constrained planning program and fund project delivery.

## Stewardship Policies

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- A. Ensure transportation decisions minimize impacts to natural resources and conserve non-renewable resources.
- B. Make investments that maximize transportation benefits and support federal, state, and local goals and maintain a federally compliant TIP.
- C. Ensure plans and programs provide for the responsible use of public and private funds while demonstrating financial constraint.
- D. Encourage evaluating shared use of infrastructure for stakeholders and all transportation users.
- E. Use performance measures to evaluate how policies and investments support key transportation objectives.
- F. Enhance overall resiliency in the transportation network by prioritizing projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy efficiency, and ensure infrastructure redundancy and state of good repair.

## Why Stewardship?

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- SRTC understands the need to balance the continuous growth of the built environment with our natural environment.
- SRTC wants to ensure regional accountability through performance targets and competitive project investment processes.
- SRTC is a steward of public dollars and aims to invest wisely in transportation infrastructure.

## Example: STA Fleet Electrification (STA)

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The STA Fleet Electrification project will continue to reduce air emissions in the Spokane region for years to come. As part of that, it will increase the quality of life for Spokane County constituents and support the resiliency of the transportation network through less reliance on non-renewable fuels.

# Equity

*A Washington State effort and priority to ensure equitable access to transportation*

As the Washington state RTPO for the Spokane region, SRTC is responsible for considering equity and environmental justice issues as current transportation planning decisions will impact lives for generations. SRTC maintains that all people, regardless of their demographic characteristics or barriers they may face, should have safe, dependable, and accessible transportation infrastructure that connects to resources and opportunities and enables them to reach their full potential. As such, users' experience when using the transportation system should not be determined by race, socioeconomic status, age, or any other characteristic.

SRTC defines potentially transportation disadvantaged communities in terms of low income, disability status, lack of vehicle access, and age dependency. Transportation disadvantaged residents are present throughout Spokane County in both urban and rural environments, and statewide data indicates that these demographics are disproportionately represented as pedestrian victims in fatal and serious injury crashes. SRTC also considers vulnerable populations as defined in RCW70A.02.010.

## Equity Policies

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- A. Identify and elevate projects with community support as demonstrated by a robust and well-documented public engagement strategy that includes tailored outreach to vulnerable and transportation disadvantaged communities.
- B. Work to meet established safety targets and address fatal and serious injury crashes by supporting projects that build complete streets, mitigate modal conflict, and foster improved safety in areas where vulnerable and transportation disadvantaged residents make up a large share of the population.
- C. Ensure that all people can benefit from a well-connected transportation network by addressing multimodal connectivity gaps and supporting projects that improve access to employment and service centers for potentially disadvantaged communities.
- D. Employ established federal and state evaluation tools alongside local data in considering environmental justice and health disparities in transportation planning.

## Why Equity?

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- ▶ SRTC understands the state level priorities surrounding equity and advancing overburdened communities.
- ▶ SRTC understands that the Spokane region has a diverse community with many different cultural backgrounds and spoken languages.
- ▶ SRTC understands that there are historically overburdened communities within Spokane County.

## Example: US 2 Corridor Multimodal Improvements (City of Airway Heights/WSDOT)

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The US 2 Corridor Multimodal Improvements project will revitalize the corridor by adding new sidewalks and paths, upgraded intersections, safer pedestrian crossings, speed-management measures, and a more inviting streetscape that supports walking and local businesses. The project is located in areas of potential disadvantage, as identified in Chapter 2, and will improve access through a critical community corridor while creating additional opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations. SRTC awarded \$5 million to this project through the 2027–2029 Call for Projects.