# Section 6 Improvements and Programs by Subregion

# Transportation Improvements and Programs

**NOTE: For the Public Comment DRAFT version of the 2014-2040 M/RTP, the maps and tables for Section 6 are provided separately due to size of the map files. In the FINAL 2014-2040 M/RTP, the maps and tables will be inserted with the text that describes each sub-region.**

This section of the M/RTP summarizes the high-priority improvement projects and programs based on financial constraints, for the seven subregions shown on the ***Overall Plan Subregions*** map. It also identifies other high- priority improvements projects for consideration if additional funding is secured.

Improvement strategies for the state highways in the region are presented first. These highways connect the county and its cities to the rest of Washington State. They also serve the majority of intra-county travel. Other regional improvements on arterials or major collector routes are summarized for subregions of the county.

The ***HSS*** map in Appendix C shows the state highway system and its classifications. The current federal functional classification of the state highways and region's arterials and collectors are provided in Appendix C. Appendix C also summarizes existing traffic volumes, the classification of freight corridors, and other information on existing transportation conditions. These were used in defining the priorities of the regional transportation system.

## State Highways

The state highways form the core of the Yakima Valley regional transportation system. These highways connect the region with other parts of Washington and serve intra-county travel. Therefore, keeping them operating efficiently and safely is critical. WSDOT, local agencies, TRANS-Action and DRYVE have identified a wide range of improvements to these highways to address preservation, safety, congestion, operations, and other transportation system needs. Each of these regional state highway corridors are briefly described below. Improvement strategies and programs that are currently in process and high priority projects over the next 20 years are also identified.

A location and general description of the high priority M/RTP state highway projects is summarized on the project tables at the end of Section 6. Each table also shows the relative time frame for the improvement, with short-term projects targeted for completion by 2019, mid-term by 2029, and long-term by 2040. For each project, a relative cost range is shown as $, $$, or $$$ and an indication of which of the five regional priorities the project or program addresses is shown as a check mark. More detailed project descriptions and cost estimates are summarized in Appendix F.

WSDOT conducts several ongoing regionwide programs to enhance the regional transportation system. These programs supplement the targeted capital improvements and maintenance projects identified for the region's state highway system. These ongoing programs include bridge scour prevention, roadway resurfacing, environmental mitigation, and safety enhancements.

### I-82

I-82 is the only interstate highway serving the Yakima County region. It is the backbone of the region's transportation system. To the north, I-82 connects Yakima County to I-90 near Ellensburg. To the south and east, I-82 connects the region to the Tri-Cities and Eastern Oregon. Within Yakima County, the interstate highway provides access and connectivity to the population centers along the corridor from Grandview to Selah. I-82 is classified as a Highway of Statewide Significance (HSS) and is part of the National Highway System (NHS).

I-82 is a multi-lane divided freeway with full access control. Within the Yakima metropolitan area, it serves the region with eight interchanges, including its interchange with US 12. These eight interchanges are located within a distance of approximately 11 miles, with the six interchanges from south Selah to south Union Gap located within a distance of approximately seven miles.

Outside of the metropolitan area, interchanges along I-82 provide access to the smaller communities, agricultural lands, and recreation areas. The distance between interchanges along I-82 south of Union Gap is typically two to five miles.

## *Existing and Forecast Conditions*

**Traffic Volumes.** Within the Yakima metropolitan area, I-82 carries over 40,000 vehicles per day (vpd). North of Selah, existing volumes decrease to 16,000 vpd. South of Union Gap, the interstate highway carries 26,000 vpd. Near Sunnyside and Grandview, the volumes are approximately 19,000 vpd.

The 2040 travel forecasts for the metropolitan area show forecast volumes of 65,000 vpd between Union Gap and Selah. This represents an annual increase of around 2.3 percent per year. This is consistent with the annual growth rate between 1996 and 2009.

**Freight Travel.** I-82 is classified by the State of Washington as a T-1 freight corridor, which means it carries more than 10 million tons of freight per year. In fact, I-82 through the upper and middle Yakima Valley has some of the highest tonnage in the state, carrying nearly 24 million tons annually before falling to over 16 million tons in the lower Valley. This reflects both through truck traffic and local trucking and freight activities. All T-1 classified facilities are considered strategic freight corridors and receive priority for funding through the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB). (See Appendix C for discussion of freight classifications).

A relatively high percentage of the traffic along I-82 is trucks. Within the metropolitan planning area, approximately 14 percent of the daily traffic is trucks. This equates to an average of 6,000 trucks per day on the freeway through Yakima. North of Selah, trucks account for nearly one-quarter of the total daily traffic volume, with approximately 3,800-4,900 trucks per day. Near Sunnyside, trucks comprise about 17 percent of the 17,000 vpd or about 2,900 trucks per day.

**Safety and Operations.** Existing traffic volumes on I-82 in Yakima County do not, by themselves, result in any significant levels of congestion, even in the metropolitan area. However, the relatively close spacing of the interchanges in the metropolitan area, combined with the high volume of traffic entering and exiting the freeway, and the number of trucks has resulted in safety and operational deficiencies. These deficiencies occur both on the freeway and at the interchange ramps.

The forecast growth in traffic on I-82 by 2040 will result in the freeway mainline operating with increased delays due to volumes during the weekday peak periods, unless improvements are made. The increase in traffic to and from the interchanges will also result in additional safety and operations concerns.

**Other Modes.** I-82 primarily serves automobile and truck traffic. Inter-city buses use the corridor with connections to Seattle, Spokane, and Wenatchee. The Community Connector, operated by People for People, also uses I-82 for travel within the region.

The I-82 shoulders are open to bicycle use. However, I-82 can be a barrier for non-motorized travel, because people can only cross at existing interchanges or at the Beech Street undercrossing in Yakima. This can result in some out-of-direction travel for non-motorized travel crossing between the east and west sides of the freeway. Interchanges in the metropolitan area provide

crossing points, but these have relatively high volumes of traffic, which can impact safety for non-motorized travel. The high traffic volumes near the interchanges also can discourage non-motorized travel.

### *Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies*

Because I-82 is such an important transportation corridor to the region, several significant improvement projects are either underway or planned. These include maintenance, safety improvements, interchange upgrades, and planning for future widening of I-82 in the metropolitan area. Outside of the Yakima metropolitan area, DRYVE has identified future improvements to interchanges serving Grandview.

Within the Yakima metropolitan area, WSDOT has installed cable median barriers to reduce the number of crossover collisions. WSDOT also has identified paving, bridge deck, and slope stabilization projects to preserve the prior investments in the I-82 freeway. Supporting the overall corridor needs, WSDOT has recently installed weather sensors, cameras, and highway advisory radio to improve driver awareness of adverse roadway conditions. These systems also help improve maintenance response due to poor weather conditions.

A companion improvement to the completed I-82/Valley Mall Blvd. interchange project is the improvement to I-82/US 97/South Union Gap interchange. This project will complete the interchange by building the missing ramps connecting to/from I-82 and Main Street and northbound US 97 to eastbound I-82. In the future, the interchange will tie into the Union Gap Beltway which will connect between Main Street and Ahtanum Road. This improved interchange and associated arterial will provide access to the regional airport and to the associated industries near the airport. While not funded for construction, this improvement is in the preliminary engineering phase and is a high priority on the long range M/RTP.

The Yakima and Naches River recreational access project will provide more direct access to the area just south of the US 12/I-82 interchange. This will support the local communities and tourist activities.

By 2040, widening of I-82 in the metropolitan area will need to be considered to reduce congestion, operations, and safety problems. The project will be planned and constructed in phases. The highest priority for future widening of the freeway will be from US 12 to Yakima Avenue interchange. Widening of the freeway between Yakima Avenue interchange and South Union Gap interchange is the next highest priority, when funding is available.

## US 12

US 12 is generally a two-lane highway connecting Yakima County with Western Washington via White Pass. It serves both rural and urban area transportation needs. It also serves recreational traffic. US 12 connects Naches, Tieton, and other communities with I-82 and the Yakima metropolitan area. The US 12 designation follows I-82 between Yakima and Pasco, Washington.

US 12 is part of the National Highway System (NHS) and is also classified as a Highway of Statewide Significance. These classifications make it a higher priority for some state and federal funding sources. US 12 also is designated as a scenic byway by the State of Washington.

From its interchange with I-82 west to N 40th Avenue, US 12 is a four-lane divided freeway with full access control. Three interchanges provide access to the metropolitan area – I-82/1st Avenue, 16th Avenue, and 40th Avenue. West of 40th Avenue, US 12 is a four-lane divided highway with at grade intersections. In the Naches vicinity, US 12 provides access to local commercial developments and front warehouses. Within the corporate limits, access is the responsibility of the Town of Naches in accordance

with state law. West of Naches, US 12 generally has a limited number of intersections and functions as a high-speed rural highway.

## Existing and Forecast Conditions

**Traffic Volumes.** Daily traffic volumes on US 12 in Yakima County range from 37,000 vpd near I-82 to under 2,000 vpd at White Pass. Significant volume changes on the highway occur before and after its interchanges in the metropolitan area and in the vicinity of Naches.

The 2040 travel forecasts for the metropolitan area show an annual, compound growth rate of 2.0 percent per year between 2012 and 2040. This compares to the 2.5 to 3.0 percent per year recorded by WSDOT over the past 10 years.

**Freight Travel.** US 12 is designated as a freight corridor by the State of Washington. The highway is classified as a T-2 Strategic Freight Corridor between South Naches Road and 16th Avenue, and a T-1 from 16th Avenue to I-82. T-2s carry between 4 million and 10 million tons annually. West of Naches, the highway is classified as a T-3 freight corridor, carrying between 300,000 and 4 million tons of freight per year.

Within the Yakima metropolitan area, 11 percent of the daily traffic on US 12 is trucks. This equates to 3,000 to 4,000 trucks per day on the highway. Near Naches, almost 15 percent of the traffic is trucks. West of Naches, trucks comprise 15 to 24 percent, or more, of the 1,600 to 4,200 vpd.

The number and percentage of trucks illustrates the regional importance of US 12 to the Yakima County region. The high volume of trucks also can result in traffic delays on hills and curves. Safety problems also can develop when drivers following the trucks try to pass at unsafe locations or in inclement conditions.

**Safety and Operations.** There are a couple of high-collision locations or corridors along US 12. These include a short segment in the mountainous area southwest of SR 410. Safety has also been a problem at the at-grade, signalized intersection of Old Naches Highway/US 12 just west of Yakima. The high volume of traffic and high speeds on US 12 have resulted in collisions when the traffic signal changes. Traffic volumes on Old Naches Highway are continuing to increase with development in and west of Selah. The intersection also serves a large number of trucks.

Operational issues are likely to develop at intersections of US 12 at major cross streets as volumes continue to increase. The lack of access management in the vicinity of Naches also poses operational and safety concerns.

**Other Modes.** US 12 provides access to a range of recreational activities. Bicycling occurs along sections of the highway although alternate, parallel arterials and collectors are designated as non-motorized routes by Yakima County and other agencies. Pedestrian activity also can be fairly significant near Naches. Pedestrians cross the highway at unmarked and uncontrolled locations. Recently, the majority of the planned Greenway Gap to Gap trail system along the old rail line from Naches to Yakima has been completed.

## Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies

The M/RTP includes a range of improvements along US 12. They focus on preservation, safety, and operational needs. The most significant operational improvements are in the metropolitan area. Preservation and safety enhancements are identified for the highway in and west of Naches.

Within the metropolitan area, interchange improvements are identified at I-82 and North 16th Avenue. These improvements will address existing and forecast operational and safety issues.

The enhancement of the intersection at US 12/Old Naches Highway is also a high priority for the region. The intersection will see several ITS enhancements, including cameras, variable message sign, road weather information system, data stations, and a communications system.

WSDOT has several paving and slope stabilization projects scheduled for US 12. These projects are located from north Yakima to Rimrock Lake in the Cascade Mountains. Safety improvements, such as guardrails and repairing bridge decks, are also priorities in the plan. Within Naches, safety and access control improvements are a priority along US 12. These include rumble strips, turn lanes, access controls, and pedestrian facilities.

## SR 410

SR 410 connects with US 12 west of Naches. It provides access to and from Western Washington and Mount Rainier National Park via Chinook Pass. It is a State Highway of Regional Significance within Yakima County. The mountain pass is closed during winter months, although 410 provides access to regional recreation areas year-round. SR 410 is a two-lane, undivided highway. There are relatively few local access roads and forest service roads that intersect the highway. SR 410 is a National Scenic Byway and is designated as an All American Road.

### *Existing and Forecast Conditions*

**Traffic Volumes.** Within Yakima County, daily traffic volumes on SR 410 range from less than 1,000 vpd to approximately 2,000 vpd at US 12. These volumes are well within the capacity of the highway.

**Freight Traffic.** SR 410 is a T-3 freight corridor east of Bumping Road and a T-4 west of Bumping Road. T-4s carry between 100,000 and 300,000 tons annually. No commercial trucks are allowed within Mount Rainier National Park. Approximately 12 percent of the daily traffic at its intersection with US 12 is trucks. The vast majority of the truck traffic are single-unit vehicles and not semi-truck-trailer combinations.

**Safety and Operations.** No significant operations problems have been identified by WSDOT for SR 410. However, WSDOT data show a relatively high collision rate for a two mile segment of SR 410 just west of its intersection with US 12.

**Other Modes**. SR 410 is not a highly used corridor for non-motorized travel. Recreational use during summer months increases pedestrian and bicycle activities along some parts of the corridor.

### *Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies*

Due to its relatively isolated location in the county, and its low traffic volumes, the M/RTP focuses on preservation, safety and environmental enhancements along SR 410. In addition to constructing a permanent alignment in the Nile Road vicinity, these projects include paving, rock scaling and debris removal, erosion control, reducing roadside obstacles, installing guardrails, and removal of fish passage barriers.

## SR 821

SR 821, also known as the Canyon Road, follows the Yakima River between Selah and Ellensburg. It provides an alternative route to I-82 north of Yakima and is located west of the interstate. SR 821 intersects with I-82 at an interchange just north of

Selah. In addition to providing a regional connection to Ellensburg, this section of SR 821 provides access to local properties and agricultural lands. It also provides recreational access to the Yakima River. SR 821 is a State Highway of Regional Significance.

### *Existing and Forecast Conditions*

**Traffic Volumes.** Just north of I-82, SR 821 carries approximately 6,100 vpd. The volumes decrease to 1,400 vpd further north.

**Freight Traffic.** SR 821 is also a T-3 corridor. It primarily serves local truck traffic. Regional freight typically uses I-82 to connect to and from I-90 and other parts north. Commercial traffic is, however, restricted from using SR 821 during the summer months to reduce conflicts with recreational activities along the river.

**Safety and Operations.** No significant operations or safety concerns are noted for SR 821 within Yakima County.

**Other Modes.** SR 821 is not classified as a non-motorized corridor by Yakima County. The corridor does, however, provide for bicycle use and recreational access to the Yakima River, which results in some pedestrian activities along the corridor.

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) operates a rail mainline along this section of the Yakima River and a siding at Pomona. The rail line is located between the river and highway along the section of SR 821 in Yakima County.

### *Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies*

The M/RTP improvements along SR 821 focus on preservation and safety projects. WSDOT has identified projects to overlay the pavement, conduct crack sealing, improve signing and striping, remove roadside objects within clear zones, and install guardrails.

## SR 823

SR 823 connects Selah and its agricultural processing industries to other state highways. South of Selah, SR 823 directly connects with I-82 just north of US 12. This section is also called Selah Road. Within Selah, SR 823 is called 1st Street, and serves the primary north-south arterial in Selah's downtown. North of Selah, SR 823 connects to I-82 via a short segment of SR 821. The north segment of SR 823 is also called Wenas Avenue, which becomes Harrison Road.

### *Existing and Forecast Conditions*

**Traffic Volumes.** Within the Selah downtown area, SR 823 carries 24,000 to 28,000 vehicles per day (vpd). These volumes reflect its function as the primary downtown commercial street for Selah. Between Selah and its interchange with I-82, SR 823 carries 30,000 vpd. North of Selah, traffic volumes on the highway are just under 6,000 vpd. Between 1999 and 2005, traffic volumes on SR 823 grew at an average of 2.0 percent per year.

**Freight Traffic.** SR 823 is an important freight route connecting local agricultural processing industries with I-82 and other regional transportation corridors. Trucks bring fruits to Selah for processing and then the finished products are trucked out for distribution. Within Selah and connecting to I-82 south of Selah, SR 823 is classified as a T-2 freight corridor. This makes it part of the state's Strategic Freight Corridor system. North of Selah, SR 823 is classified as a T-3 freight route.

**Safety and Operations.** The high volume of traffic and truck activity within Selah results in significant operational problems. The state highway corridor makes several turns as it transitions from north of Selah into the downtown commercial core. Mixing of truck traffic with local commercial traffic also poses potential safety hazards, but it has not been classified as a high collision location.

**Other Modes.** SR 823 is also a transit route, operated by Yakima Transit. Bus stops are located throughout the City. Within Selah, the highway corridor has sidewalks on both sides of the street. North of Selah, sidewalks are located only on the west side of the highway.

### *Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies*

The M/RTP supports construction of a new corridor for SR 823 within Selah as a high priority. The new alignment parallels 1st Street, approximately one block to the east. This alignment provides a more direct highway route through Selah and better serves freight movement within the city. The alignment, supported by WSDOT and included in Selah's Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2011.

The new corridor helps resolve operations and safety issues on 1st Street by diverting traffic onto the new alignment. The improvement also includes traffic signals and sidewalks, which further improve traffic operations and safety for all modes of travel.

## SR 24

This east-west highway connects the Yakima metropolitan area with Benton County, Hanford, the Tri-Cities, and other Eastern Washington communities. It connects to I-82 at the Nob Hill Blvd interchange. Traveling east from I-82, it serves a range of industrial, agricultural, and residential land uses and connects Moxee to Yakima and I-82. Traffic signals provide traffic control at some intersections between I-82 and Moxee. East of Moxee, the highway serves agricultural land uses and a vast area of undeveloped lands north of the Rattlesnake Hills.

### *Existing and Forecast Conditions*

**Traffic Volumes.** Traffic volumes on SR 24 vary greatly between the metropolitan area and eastern Yakima County. Near I-82, the highway carries 21,000 vpd. Just west of Moxee, traffic volumes on the highway decrease to 12,000 vpd. East of Moxee, volumes of 2,700 vpd or less reflect the rural nature of the adjacent land uses. East of its intersection with SR 241 (from Sunnyside), daily traffic volumes are approximately 2,900 vpd.

Traffic volumes on SR 24 between I-82 and Moxee have increased an average of 1.5 to 2.5 percent per year since 1996. Based on the 2040 forecasts, traffic is expected to grow at a rate of 2.0 percent over the next 25 years.

East of Moxee, traffic volumes have grown at less than one-half percent per year since 1996. This reflects the limited change in land uses along the corridor and its relatively low use as an inter-regional connector to the Tri-Cities or other nearby communities. The I-82 freeway provides a higher speed connection for inter-regional travel, reducing the overall traffic volume on SR 24.

**Freight Traffic.** SR 24 is identified as a Strategic Freight Corridor (T-2) by the State of Washington from I-82 to the SR 24 intersection with University Parkway. From that intersection east, SR 24 is a classified T-3 Freight Corridor. Approximately 10 percent of the daily traffic on SR 24 between I-82 and Moxee are trucks. East of Moxee, truck traffic increases to 22 to 30 percent of total volumes.

**Safety and Operations.** The section of SR 24 near I-82 has experienced significant operations and safety concerns. These impacts are especially critical at intersections with the I-82 interchange ramps and Riverside/University Parkway. Problems at these intersections result from the high volume of traffic accessing I-82 and connecting between the east and west sides of the interstate freeway.

Based on the 2040 forecasts for the metropolitan area, SR 24 will also experience congestion between Riverside/University Parkway and Moxee. The increase in traffic reflects the ongoing commercial, industrial, and residential development in and around Moxee and the limited alternate east-west routes to connect to I-82 from the East Valley.

Existing safety problems also have been identified at the intersection of Bell Road/SR 24. Bell Road intersects SR 24 at less than a 90 degree angle, which contributes to the safety problem.

WSDOT has identified a corridor safety hazard in the vicinity of the intersection of SR 24 with SR 241. A number of crossover collisions have occurred on this segment of highway, even with the lower volume of traffic. The differences in travel speeds with traffic connecting between SR 24 and SR 241 also contributes to the safety hazard.

**Other Modes.** SR 24 serves bicyclists and pedestrians, especially near the I-82 interchange, because it is one of a limited number of corridors that cross the freeway and the Yakima River. This part of the corridor also provides access to the Yakima Greenway, parks and the Yakima Arboretum. Further east, the corridor provides access to the Yakima Sportsmen State Park. Non-motorized activity also is relatively high near Moxee, with schools, park, and residential development. Additionally, the Burlington Northern-Sante Fe railroad has a track that parallels a section of SR 24 between Moxee and Birchfield Road.

### *Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies*

There are plans to signalize the intersections of SR 24 with Moirier Road, Rivard Road, and Faucher Road in Moxee, but there is currently no funding for these projects. The intersection improvements will address safety and operations issues due to the increased growth in and around the City of Moxee. WSDOT has secured funding to construct a southbound right turn lane on Birchfield Road at the SR 24/Birchfield Road intersection.

To alleviate long-term capacity, safety, and operational impacts associated with the growth in the East Valley, the M/RTP supports future widening of SR 24 between Riverside Road/University Parkway and Faucher Road in Moxee. These improvements will provide a consistent 4-5 lane highway connecting residential and industrial uses in the East Valley to/from I-82 and the rest of the Yakima metropolitan area. This improvement is in the fiscally-constrained project list.

To address the safety hazard near SR 241, WSDOT has recently installed centerline rumble strips.

## SR 241

SR 241 is a two-lane north-south highway connecting Mabton and SR 22 in the south to I-82 and Sunnyside, and then to SR 24 in the north. SR 241 provides access to the Sunnyside Municipal Airport and the east side of Sunnyside, which contains some commercial and industrial areas.

### *Existing and Forecast Conditions*

**Traffic Volumes.** The highest volumes (13,000 vpd) along SR 241 are found between I-82 and the Yakima Valley Highway. North of the Yakima Valley Highway, daily volumes are approximately 4,400 vpd. Further to the north, traffic volumes drop below 2,000 vpd, reflective of the undeveloped areas in the Rattlesnake Hills.

Between the City of Mabton and Alexander Road existing traffic volumes range from 2,300 vpd to 4,500 vpd. The east-west segment of SR 241 along Alexander Road has volumes in the range of 1,400 vpd. This difference in volumes reflects traffic connections to the commercial areas in Sunnyside, which are most directly accessed by the continuation of Mabton-Sunnyside Road, which avoids traveling through the I-82 interchange.

**Freight Traffic**. SR 241 is classified as a T-3 freight corridor by the State of Washington. It serves local agricultural uses and provides access to I-82. North of I-82, the highway also provides access to the Sunnyside Municipal Airport. Between Sunnyside and SR 24, 15 to 20 percent of the daily traffic is comprised of trucks. Between the City of Mabton and I-82, seven percent of the traffic is classified as trucks.

**Safety and Operations.** The most significant potential for safety and operational problems are between I-82 and the SR 241/Yakima Valley Highway intersection. This section of highway has the highest volume of traffic, an at-grade railroad crossing, closely-spaced local road intersections, and a freeway interchange which can result in future congestion and queuing problems. Further growth in the area will likely result in potential problems in the future.

A relatively high number of collisions also have occurred at the two intersections on SR 241 near Sunnyside Municipal Airport – Edison Road and Sheller Road. These two roadways serve industrial developments and the existing intersections with SR 241 are not designed to adequately support the volume of truck traffic.

WSDOT also has identified a segment of SR 241 (Mabton-Sunnyside Road) north of Mabton as having a history of collisions. This segment includes the intersection of SR 241/Grandview Pavement Road, which connects to Grandview further to the east.

**Other Modes.** As noted above, SR 241 provides access to the Sunnyside Municipal Airport. This is a general aviation airport without scheduled commercial passenger or cargo service. It can, however, serve as an alternative airfield if weather or other disruptions restrict use of McAllister Field in Yakima.

A major BNSF rail line crosses SR 241 just south of its intersection with the Yakima Valley Highway. This can result in operational and safety problems due to the close spacing and traffic queues at the signals.

SR 241 is not classified as a non-motorized route by Yakima County. The county identifies alternative, lower volume roadways for non-motorized travel near Sunnyside, Mabton, and Grandview.

### *Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies*

The M/RTP includes projects for maintaining and upgrading safety along the SR 241 highway. WSDOT has a project programmed to repave SR 241 from Mabton to north of the airport within the next few years. The project will also include upgrading signing, striping, and other safety needs.

The Yakima River bridge, located just north of Mabton, also needs to be improved to current standards. Widening of the intersections of SR 241 with Edison Road and Sheller Road are needed to support growth of the industrial land uses near the airport. These improvements will address the existing safety deficiencies. These are proposed as improvements by the Port of Sunnyside, and are shown with the Southeast subregion projects discussed later in section 6.

## SR 22

SR 22 essentially parallels the I-82 freeway between Toppenish and Prosser (in Benton County) east of Mabton. It has two travel lanes, with turn lanes at some key intersections. SR 22 connects I-82 to Toppenish and to US 97. The section of the highway north of Toppenish is also called Buena Way. Within Toppenish, the highway is called Elm Street. A couple of intersections within Toppenish, including US 97, are signalized. This section is on the National Highway System and is classified as a Highway of Statewide Significance (HSS) because it connects US 97 to I-82.

East of Toppenish, the highway serves agricultural and rural residential land uses. Much of the highway is within the boundaries of the Yakama Nation.

## Existing and Forecast Conditions

**Traffic Volumes.** The highest traffic volumes on SR 22 are found within Toppenish. Daily traffic volumes within the city range from 10,000 to 11,000 vpd. This reflects the use of the corridor as a city arterial. Between Toppenish and I-82, daily volumes range from 8,000 to 10,000 vpd.

Southeast of Toppenish, volumes on SR 22 decrease to 5,000 to 5,400 vpd between US 97 and SR 223 (which connects to Granger). East of SR 223, daily volumes are less than 2,000 vpd.

During the past 10 years, traffic volumes on SR 22 near Toppenish have increased at an annual rate of 1.5 to 2.0 percent.

**Freight Traffic.** Between I-82 and Toppenish, SR 22 is a designated as a T-2 freight corridor by Washington State. Other segments of the highway are classified as T-3 freight routes. The highway primarily serves local farm to market needs between Toppenish and Mabton and Prosser. Between I-82 and Toppenish, SR 22 is part of the Strategic Freight corridor system. This section provides a direct connection between US 97 and I-82, as well as serving local freight needs. Trucks account for 10 to 12 percent of the traffic between I-82 and US 97, and 12 to 23 percent south of Toppenish to the County line. The lower percentages are found in or near Toppenish, reflecting the higher volume of general local community traffic.

**Safety and Operations.** Safety and operational issues have been identified on SR 22 between I-82 and north Toppenish. This corridor serves commercial, industrial, and residential traffic between I-82 and Toppenish. Safety problems have been documented on SR 22 just east of Toppenish. This section includes the transition from a high speed rural highway into a city arterial. Several major cross streets, such as Meyers Road also are located in the segment with safety hazards. There exists an at-grade railroad crossing and schools adjacent to the highway in this vicinity.

**Other Modes.** The section of SR 22 within Toppenish also supports non-motorized travel. It directly serves schools and parks, and provides access to commercial developments.

The BNSF rail line crosses SR 22 in the north part of Toppenish. This crossing is located in relatively close proximity to arterials, which can affect traffic operations when trains are present.

Between Toppenish and the Yakima/Benton County line, SR 22 parallels the BNSF rail line. The rail line is on the north side of the highway. At-grade crossings are located on intersecting streets on the north side of SR 22.

## Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies

The M/RTP builds off of currently planned improvements for SR 22. Projects to protect bridges along the corridor from scour and flood damage are planned by WSDOT. Repaving the highway between Toppenish and SR 223 near Granger is identified to preserve the facility and improve safety. This continues the recent pavement upgrade between SR 223 and Prosser.

Widening and reconstructing a 1.5 mile section of SR 22 just south of I-82 also is a priority to address safety and operations problems. This project will enhance mobility for freight, goods, and general travel between Toppenish and I-82.

DRYVE has identified a need for an alternative to SR 22 between US 97 and I-82 for freight movement. The current truck route travels through Toppenish. This section of highway provides access to schools, parks, and facilitates local circulation. The M/RTP

identifies improving Meyers Road and Larue Road to connect US 97 to I-82 at the west Zillah interchange. This corridor will help improve operations and safety along SR 22 in Toppenish. This improvement is presented with the South Central subregion projects.

## SR 223

SR 223 is a short state highway connecting SR 22 to I-82 at Granger. It is less than four miles long. It is a two-lane facility and all of its intersections are unsignalized.

### *Existing and Forecast Conditions*

**Traffic Volumes.** Traffic volumes on SR 223 range from 4,300 to 8,500 vpd. The highest volumes are near its interchange with I-82. Along some sections of the highway, traffic volumes have increased by 1,500 to 2,000 vpd during the past 10 years. Near I-82, the volumes have increased at an average annual rate of 2.5 to 3 percent since the mid-1990s.

**Freight Traffic.** Trucks account for 13 to 23 percent of the daily traffic on SR 223. The highway is designated as a T-3 freight route serving 300,000 to 4 million tons of freight per year.

**Safety and Operations.** No significant safety or operations concerns are currently noted along the highway. However, an increase in traffic volumes may result in increased delays and operations issues in the longer term future.

**Other Modes.** SR 223 is not classified as a non-motorized corridor by Yakima County. It does, however, provide the most direct link for bicyclists between Granger and SR 22. Some non-motorized activity also could occur near the commercial areas just south of the I-82 interchange area.

SR 223 crosses the BNSF rail line just north of SR 22. The crossing has automatic gates and lights.

### *Transportation Improvement Projects and Strategies*

No projects are identified in the priority list of this M/RTP for SR 223 in the 25-year planning horizon.

## US 97

US 97 connects the Yakima County region with Klickitat County and Oregon. South of Toppenish, it traverses very sparsely developed areas of the Yakama Nation. It intersects with SR 22 in Toppenish, providing a direct connection to I-82 via SR 22. West of its intersection with SR 22 in Toppenish, US 97 parallels I-82 to provide an alternative access connecting with the Yakima metropolitan area at Union Gap. This section of highway provides access to Wapato and adjacent developments. North of Union Gap, the US 97 designation follows I-82 to Ellensburg.

US 97 is designated as a Highway of Statewide Significance (HSS). Between Klickitat County and Toppenish, US 97 is designated as part of the National Highway System (NHS). The HSS and NHS designations raise the priority of funding for improvements to the corridor. US 97 also is designated as a National Scenic Byway.

South of Toppenish, US 97 is generally a two-lane, undivided highway. Hill climb lanes exist along sections of the highway to improve the operation and safety of this freight corridor.

West of Toppenish, US 97 is a four-lane, divided highway with limited access control. Frontage roads provide local property access along parts of this segment of the corridor. It has at-grade intersections. Within Toppenish and Wapato, some major

intersections are controlled with traffic signals. An interchange provides access to and from I-82 and Main Street within Union Gap.

## Existing and Forecast Conditions

**Traffic Volumes.** Between the south county line and Toppenish, US 97 carries 3,000 to 5,000 vpd. Traffic volumes of 10,000 to 12,000 vpd are found just west of Toppenish. These higher volumes near Toppenish are due to local travel patterns and use of US 97 to access I-82 via McDonald Road/SR 22. Between Wapato and Union Gap, US 97 carries 14,000 to 20,000 vpd, illustrating its use to connect to/from the Yakima metropolitan area.

Traffic volumes near Union Gap are forecast to increase to over 28,000 vpd by 2040. This is approximately a two percent annual growth rate. This compares to 1.6 percent historical growth just south of Union Gap. Near Toppenish, historical traffic growth rates have averaged just under two percent per year since the mid- 1990s.

**Freight Traffic.** US 97 is classified as a T-1 freight corridor, carrying almost nine million tons per year. Being classified as a HSS and NHS facility, US 97 in Yakima County is also part of the state's Strategic Freight corridor system. This designation increases potential funding options through the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB). Between Union Gap and Toppenish, trucks account for approximately 10 percent of the total daily traffic. Trucks comprise 35 to 42 percent of the daily traffic on US 97 between Toppenish and the south county line.

**Safety and Operations.** Several collision locations are identified by WSDOT on US 97. These include vehicle crossovers on the highway south of Toppenish, and collisions near major intersections in and between Wapato and Toppenish. No significant capacity concerns have been identified, although operations at major intersections can be impacted by the high volume of truck traffic.

**Other Modes.** US 97 is not designated by Yakima County as a bicycle route. Other arterials and collectors are designated for bicycle travel between Toppenish and Wapato and Union Gap. The highway corridor does provide access to schools in Toppenish and Wapato.

Between Toppenish and Union Gap, the highway parallels the BNSF rail line. Along most of the corridor, the tracks are located more than one-half mile from the highway, which limits the impact of rail crossings on highway operations. Between Wapato and Union Gap, the rail line and highway are located in fairly close proximity to each other. There are a few, low volume roads crossing the tracks adjacent to this section of US 97. The railroad crosses Jones Road and Lateral A Road north of Wapato, with limited distance between the intersections and rail crossings. A frontage road serves local access and circulation in this part of the corridor.

US 97 crosses the Toppenish, Simcoe, and Western rail line near Branch Road. This rail line serves two sawmills for the Yakama Nation.

## Transportation Improvements and Strategies

The focus of improvements along US 97 is preservation and safety. South of Toppenish, the M/RTP incorporates WSDOT projects to repave sections of the highway and replace substandard bridges. Other safety improvements include realigning the roadway near Satus Creek.

Safety and operational improvements are also identified for US 97 between Wapato and Toppenish.

# Regional Priorities by Subregion

**NOTE: For the Public Comment DRAFT version of the 2014-2040 M/RTP, the maps and tables for Section 6 are provided separately due to size of the map files. In the FINAL 2014-2040 M/RTP, the maps and tables will be inserted with the text that describes each sub-region.**

The regional state highway system, discussed above, connects Yakima County to the rest of Washington and provides for the most significant levels of intra-county travel. Other arterials and collectors connect individual communities with the state highways. They also provide for travel between communities in the region.

The needs for specific transportation improvements and strategies to meet the region's needs are summarized by seven subregions, shown on the ***Overall Plan Subregions*** map.

For each subregion, a summary of land use data is presented in graphs and pie charts. The land use summaries are based on boundaries from the regional travel demand model. The land use boundaries take into account census tracts, geographic features, and roadways; they closely match with the rectangular subregions used for presenting the M/RTP improvement projects.

For each subregion, high-priority transportation projects and strategies are summarized. These include the baseline improvements and secured-funding projects that best meet the regional priorities. In addition, high-priority transit and transportation demand management strategies that are appropriate for each subarea are identified. These summaries are intended to highlight those projects and programs that have the highest priorities, given the available funding.

Yakima County and local cities and towns also have a range of ongoing transportation programs to enhance the regional transportation system. Ongoing County programs include roadway overlays, traffic signal installation/upgrades, rural Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and roadway safety projects. Local ongoing programs are targeted to the specific needs of the respective agency. Smaller cities and towns tend to focus on maintaining the local roadway system through overlay and surface treatment programs, while larger agencies have a more extensive and varied transportation system that is reflected by the types of programs conducted. These programs range from local street maintenance to transit facilities and operations.

## Northwest Subregion

As shown on the ***Northwest_Projects*** map and associated projects table, the Northwest subregion is located along US 12 west of the Yakima metropolitan area. It extends west of the US 12/SR 410 intersection into the national forest lands. The cities of Naches and Tieton are in this subregion, as is the unincorporated community of Cowiche. Connections to the regional highway system are via US 12 in Naches. The other primary connection to other parts of the region is via Summitview Road which provides a link to west Yakima.

### Residential and Employment Growth

**Residential Growth.** During the next 25 years, 152 new residential units are expected to be added to the Northwest subregion. This represents a nominal average annual growth rate. Most of the growth is expected to occur in the eastern portion of the subregion, with more than 60 percent of the new units expected to be in or near Tieton. The rest are expected to be spread out east of Tieton and south towards the Yakima metropolitan area. Much of the housing growth is occurring on lands currently in agricultural use. The vast majority of this growth is expected to be single-family residences with just a few new units expected to be duplex and multi-family.

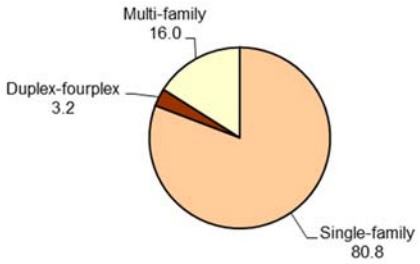


Figure 6.1 NW Region - Housing type by category for 2014

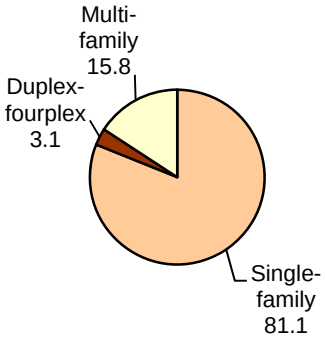


Figure 6.2 NW Region - Housing type by category for 2040

**Employment Growth.** More than 280 new employees are expected be added within the Northwest subregion during the next 25 years. This represents an average annual growth rate over 0.69 percent. Most of the employment growth is expected to occur in or near Naches. The services and public sectors are expected to increase more rapidly than industrial and retail.

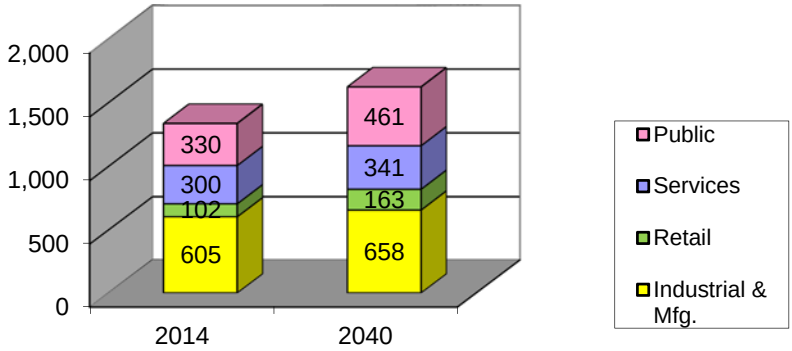


Figure 6.3 NW Region - Employment mix by category

## Transportation Improvements and Strategies

The relatively low densities of residential units and employment in the Northwest subregion have not resulted in any significant capacity deficiencies. Forecast growth also will not, by itself, result in roadway capacity issues. Therefore, the focus of the transportation improvements and strategies for the Northwest subregion is to improve connectivity to the broader regional highway and arterial systems. The high priority projects also are focused on preserving and upgrading the existing roadways. These projects will address safety concerns, support freight mobility, and fill in missing links of the non-motorized system. The high-priority strategies for the Northwest subregion are shown on the ***Northwest_Projects*** map and associated table.

**Roadways.** Tieton and surrounding communities are located on a plateau which restricts access to US 12 and other regional facilities. The topography also makes it more difficult for travel to and from west Yakima and the core metropolitan area.

The number of trucks serving the local orchards and related industries can impact traffic operations on the limited number of regional routes, such as Summitview Road and Naches-Tieton Road. Hill climb lanes are provided on a section of Summitview Road southeast of Tieton and Cowiche and on the recently re-constructed Naches-Tieton Road. In addition, the connectivity between the regional corridors within the subregion is limited, which results in more circuitous travel.

The only secured projects in the M/RTP in the NW region are WSDOT projects. There are no local agency projects for Yakima County, the City of Tieton, or the Town of Naches. Of the five WSDOT projects, three are preservation projects – two on US12 and one on SR410. The remaining projects include improvement of US12 Naches to Yakima corridor intersections and corridor enhancements to the US12/Old Naches Highway intersection.

Although there are no secured local projects, there are several planned projects for Naches, Tieton, and Yakima County. Naches includes several planned reconstruction projects to improve local streets. Tieton is planning several preservation and reconstruction projects for local streets. Yakima County includes several reconstruction projects for rural roads, including the replacement of two bridges.

**Non-Motorized.** Within the Northwest subregion, alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, are ever-increasing. New and improved regional non-motorized links have been constructed wich has encouraged more non-motorized transportation

There is one mile remaining of the Yakima to Naches trail project. This final section is planned to be constructed by the end of 2016. Upon completion, the Greenway trail system will span from Union Gap to Naches.

**Transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM).** This subregion does not have fixed route bus service, but is served by People for People paratransit service. Eligibility for the paratransit service is limited to special purposes and services. There is a need to expand demand response service in this area and to coordinate with existing and expanded rural transit service to regional services and facilities. In addition, expanded promotion of carpooling and vanpooling is appropriate to serve the added residential growth in the Northwest subregion. The expanded non-motorized routes also should be promoted as a TDM strategy. Promotion of transportation alternatives to residents and employees in this subregion is essential in efforts to reducing commuter trips. This includes information on carpools, vanpool ridership signups, and materials informing people of other transportation choices.

# North Subregion

The North (N) subregion covers both rural and urban areas north of the City of Yakima. Much of the geographic area is in unincorporated Yakima County and is mostly rural. The subregion includes the City of Selah and the unincorporated area of Gleed along US 12. Direct connections to the regional highway system are via SR 823 both north and south of Selah. Connections to US 12 are available via the Old Naches Highway at Suntides and at several other unsignalized intersections west of Suntides.

## Residential and Employment Growth

**Residential Growth.** During the next 25 years, approximately just over 1,000 new residences are expected be added to the North subregion. This represents a nominal average annual growth rate. More than 90 percent of these new units are expected to be in or near Selah. The rest are expected to be spread out east and west of Selah on lands currently being used agriculturally. Of this growth, approximately 26 percent is expected to occur in duplex and multi-family residences.

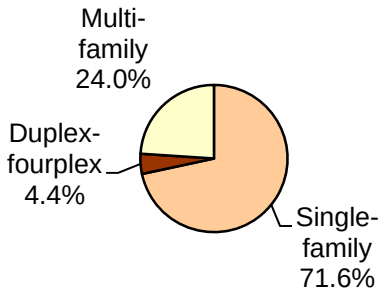


Figure 6.4 N Region - Housing type by category for 2014

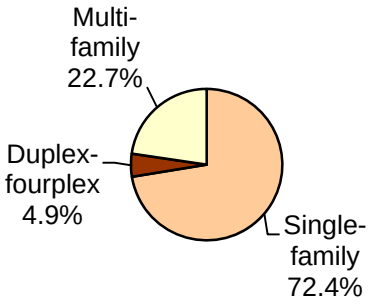


Figure 6.5 N Region - Housing type by category for 2040

**Employment Growth**. Approximately 1,400 new employees are expected be added to the North subregion during the next 25 years. This represents an average annual growth rate of 0.78 percent. Most of this employment growth is expected to occur in or near Selah. Many employees are expected to be added to the service and industrial employment sectors with the rate of growth of the industrial sector expected to exceed that of all other sectors.

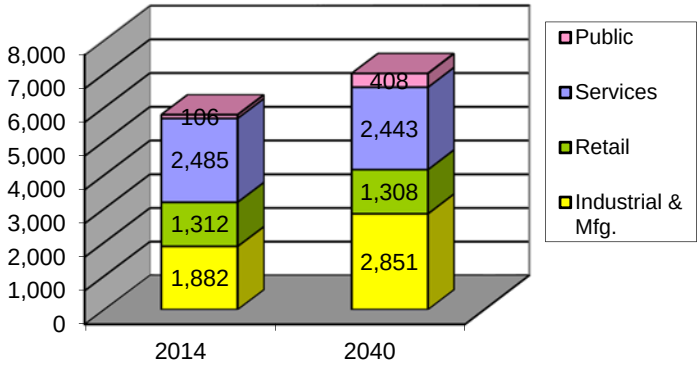


Figure 6.6 N Region - Employment mix by category

## Transportation Needs and Improvement Strategies

Transportation needs in the North subregion focus on addressing safety and operations issues in Selah, improving connections to the regional highway system, and improved corridors within the subregion. The ***North_Projects*** map and associated projects table summarize the high priority regional transportation improvements for the North subregion.

### Roadways.

WSDOT includes six secured projects in the M/RTP, spanning short to long range. There are four preservation projects on US12, and an additional new construction project on the US12/Old Naches Highway interchange. There is an additional preservation project on SR823 to repave and planned safety additions to the I-82/Selah Creek rest area interchange.

The City of Selah has two projects in the M/RTP, both of which are widening projects. The project on East Goodlander will reconstruct the 2-lane road and add a turn lane, sidewalks, and illumination. The other project on Valley View Avenue/South 3rd will widen the 2-lane road and add sidewalks. Both projects will enhance driver safety and walkability.

**Non-Motorized**. The new construction, widening, and reconstruction roadway projects, discussed above, also will improve non-motorized travel in the North subregion. The projects within Selah will include sidewalks, while Yakima County projects will provide wider shoulders which can be used for non-motorized travel. The traffic signals and repaving projects also support non-motorized transportation.

New and improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be constructed with roadway projects or as separate improvement projects. These will help encourage more non-motorized transportation, including making connections between existing pedestrian and bicycle routes and enhancing the connections to major employer worksites. These new bicycle and pedestrian routes should be compatible with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Transit and Transportation Demand Management.** Alternative modes of transportation such as transit, car pooling and vanpooling, walking and biking also should be promoted in this subregion. The improved non-motorized facilities encourage more bicycle and pedestrian use within Selah and its major employers. These new bicycle and pedestrian routes should be compatible with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The City of Selah is continuing to contract with Yakima Transit to provide fixed route bus service between Yakima and Selah. Currently there is one fixed route that has 10 morning trips and 10 afternoon trips, Monday through Friday; and two morning trips and seven afternoon trips on Saturday. The route has three stops in Selah and five stops in Yakima. Improved headways and frequency on this route is desirable to better serve Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) employers and other transit riders within Selah. Shorter headways also will provide more flexibility which could attract additional ridership. Yakima Transit also contracts with TC Transportation and People for People to provide a complimentary Dial-a-Ride service for persons with disabilities.

There are three CTR-affected worksites in Selah, which are required to meet the requirements of the Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act of 2006 (RCW 70.94.521), including reducing drive alone trips by 10 percent and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by 13 percent for all major employers by 2011. In the last four years, the employers in Selah have held steady at around 21% of trips that did not drive alone. Some strategies that may be used by the City of Selah and the CTR employers to discourage single-occupancy commute trips include:

- Continue offering the guaranteed ride home program.
- Work with Yakima Transit to increase number of vanpools at CTR-affected work sites.
- Work with employers to provide bicycling and walking amenities.
- Work with CTR-affected work sites to offer incentives.
- Encourage employers to provide preferential parking for high-occupancy vehicles.
- Encourage employers to provide subsidies for transit, carpooling or vanpooling.
- Encourage employers to offer alternative work schedules such as compressed work weeks.

- Encourage employers to permit employees to work part or full time at home or at an alternative worksite closer to their homes.

CTR worksites should have a designated Employee Transportation Coordinator training program that addresses issues such as marketing CTR programs to employees, trip planning, and ride matching services. Transit and demand management programs should continue to be promoted to residents and employees within the North subregion to help reduce drive-alone trips.

## West Subregion

The West (W) subregion covers rural and agricultural areas west of the City of Yakima and south of Tieton and Cowiche. The land use data for the West subregion primarily covers areas west of the MPO boundaries. The land use data for the West subregion covers existing low density rural residential and agricultural areas west of the Wiley Road corridor. Growth within the MPO area between Tieton Drive and Wide Hollow Road are included in the Central subregion, discussed below. The West subregion for the M/RTP is not the same as the west valley area of the City of Yakima, which is within the MPO boundaries and is included in the Central subregion.

### Residential and Employment Growth

**Residential Growth.** Much of the West subregion is outside of the MPO boundaries and therefore, there is only a limited amount of residential growth. The residential growth is estimated to occur in the east part of the subregion. Almost eighty percent of the housing in this subregion is single-family units.

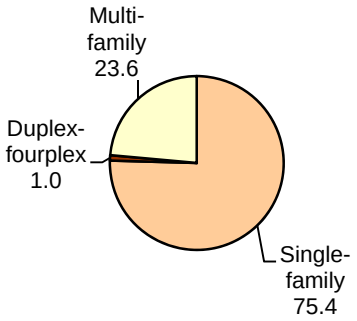


Figure 6.7 W Region - Housing type by category for 2014

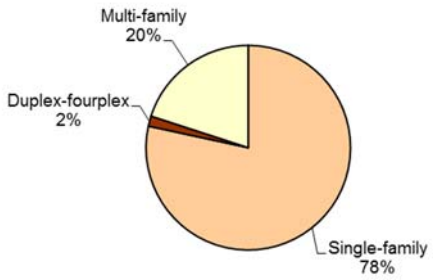


Figure 6.8 W Region - Housing type by category for 2040

**Employment Growth.** Total employment growth is also expected to be remain slow over the next 25 years in the West subregion. Approximately 350 employees are expected to be added. Most of the growth will be in service and industrial sectors. Retail employment is estimated to decline, as some lands are converted from agricultural use. By 2040, almost three-quarters of the employment are forecast to be in the industrial or service sectors.

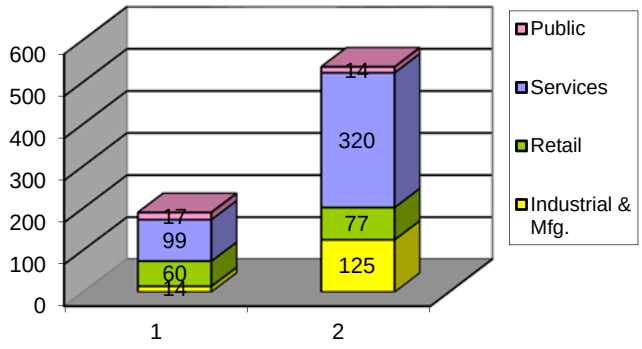


Figure 6.9 W Region - Employment mix by category

## Transportation Needs and Improvement Strategies

The low densities and location in the region do not result in any existing or forecast capacity or major operational deficiencies. East-west connections to and from Yakima are provided by Ahtanum Road, Washington Avenue, Wide Hollow/Nob Hill Road, Tieton Drive, and Summitview Avenue. Travel in some of these corridors requires a series of turns at intersections, because the roads are not continuous.

North-south travel in the West subregion is more difficult and circuitous because few links provide a continuous route. Connections from the West subregion to Cowiche, Tieton, and Naches typically require traffic to wind through a series of short road segments. This results in inefficient travel patterns and may result in some operational deficiencies in the future. The West_Projects map and associated project table are not included because there are no secured funding roads projects in this sub-region for the 2014-2040 M/RTP update.

**Roadways.** Yakima County and its TRANS-Action partners have defined needs for future north-south corridors serving the areas west of Yakima. While not funded for construction in the 25-year M/RTP, segments of these corridors should be preserved and constructed as properties develop. This process will reduce the ultimate agency-funded cost of these improvements.

The highest priorities are the reconstruction of the Fort Road and North Fork Road Bridges, and the conversion of South 62nd Avenue between Meadowbrook and South Ahtanum Roads from gravel to pavement.

**Non-Motorized.** The future development on north-south and east-west corridors will create a framework for the long-range non-motorized facilities in the West subregion. These will primarily consist of roadway shoulders for pedestrian and bicycle travel.

**Transit and Transportation Demand Management.** Due to the low density of development, fixed route transit service is not a realistic strategy for the West subregion. There is a need to expand demand response service in this area and to coordinate with existing paratransit service to connecting to regional services and facilities. The West subregion is served by People for People paratransit. The People for People program is limited to special needs transportation and does not provide general transit service for residents in the subregion. Regional carpool, vanpool, and other alternative transportation programs should be promoted within the subregion.

# Central Subregion

The Central (C) region covers the core of the metropolitan planning area, including the cities of Yakima and Union Gap and unincorporated portions of the metropolitan area. The Central subregion relies heavily on I-82 and US 12. Access to I-82 is via five interchanges with local arterials – 1st Street, Yakima Avenue, Nob Hill Boulevard, Valley Mall Boulevard, and the South Union Gap interchange. Access to US 12 is available via the 1st Street, 16th Avenue, and 40th Avenue interchanges. At-grade intersections at Fruitvale Boulevard and Old Naches Highway also provide access to US 12 via Powerhouse Road.

## Residential and Employment Growth

**Residential Growth.** Over the next 25 years, approximately 13,000 new residential units are expected be added to the Central subregion. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.21 percent. More than 80 percent of these new units are expected to be in or near Yakima through infill or redevelopment. Another 15 percent are expected to be in or near Union Gap. The rest are expected to occur west and south of Yakima on lands currently being used for low-density residential or agricultural uses. Multi-family and Duplex-fourplex units are expected to gain 9 % over Single family residences.

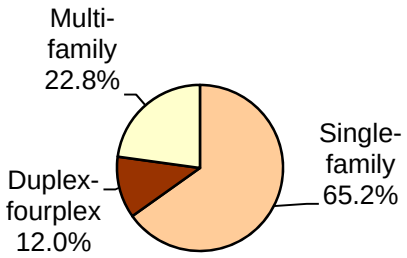


Figure 6.10 C Region - Housing type by category for 2014

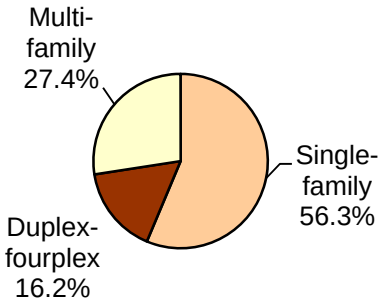


Figure 6.11 C Region - Housing type by category for 2040

**Employment Growth.** Approximately 13,300 new employees are expected be added to the Central subregion over the next 25 years. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.09 percent. Growth in retail and service employment is expected to be primarily concentrated within Yakima, while growth in manufacturing employment is expected to be roughly split between Yakima and Union Gap. The majority of growth in public sector employment is expected to be in Union Gap. In general all of the employment sectors will grow at approximately the same rate, though public and industrial sector employment will grow at slightly higher rates than others.

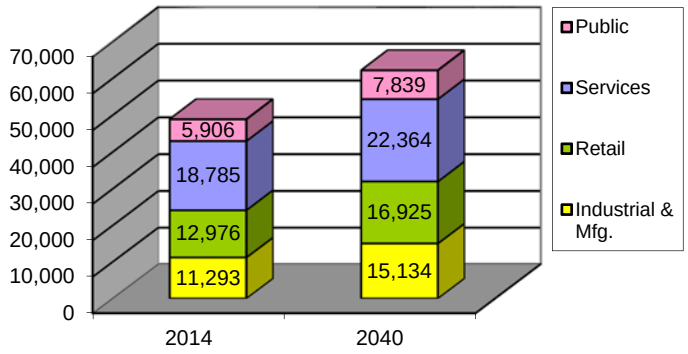


Figure 6.11 C Region - Employment mix by category

## Transportation Needs and Improvement Strategies

Being the heart of the metropolitan area, the Central subregion experiences a wide range of traffic operations, safety, and preservation issues. These issues are a result of significant levels of commuter traffic, access to/from the regional highways, freight movement, and access to regional shopping areas. The City of Yakima also is the region's center for major medical centers and the main campus of the community college. The regional airport – McAllister Field – is located along Washington Avenue in the south part of Yakima, west of Union Gap. The airport and associated industries are major generators of traffic that access I-82 and US 12. The State Fair Park and the Sun Dome are located near I-82 at the Nob Hill Boulevard interchange.

With a significant amount of the region's population and employment, the Central subregion has needs for a wide range of higher priority transportation needs. These needs support access to/from the regional highways and needs within the subregion. These are summarized on the ***Central_Projects*** map and associated project table.

**Roadways.** WSDOT and the local agencies have committed to several improvements to interchanges on I-82 and US 12. These improvements will directly tie into the most significant arterial improvements in the Central subregion. These projects are further described under the state highway system improvements, presented previously.

The Yakima Cascade Mill Parkway Development and East-West Corridor is a large multi-year/multi-jurisdictional project and is the highlight of the M/RTP. The Yakima Avenue-Terrace Heights corridor is heavily traveled, and the I-82/Yakima Avenue interchange is nearing capacity. Plans for a new street will connect the Terrace Heights neighborhood with Yakima, while modifications to the existing interchange design will relieve congestion. The Terrace Heights street extension will also provide access to the Cascade Mill redevelopment area, improve traffic flow, and encourage economic growth in the region. The specific jurisdiction components are listed below: Yakima County: Yakima County is working to relieve traffic congestion and improve safety along Terrace Heights and the Yakima Avenue Interchange The county will construct a new east-west corridor including a bridge over the Yakima River. *Project Schedule:* 2017-2023.

City of Yakima: The city is constructing a roundabout at the Fair Avenue, MLK Boulevard and Lincoln Avenue intersection. The city plans to build a north to south city street from Fair Avenue to R Street. Other improvements necessary to provide

adequate access to the site include rehabilitation of H Street and a connection to the county's east-west corridor roadway. Environmental clean-up will be primarily funded by the Washington State Department of Ecology. *Project Schedule:* 2015-2022.

Washington State Department of Transportation: WSDOT plans to improve I-82 between the US 12 interchange and the Nob Hill overpass by increasing capacity, replacing bridges and improving connections on and off I-82. *Project Schedule:* 2024-2026.

To better serve north-south travel patterns in the Central subregion the City of Yakima, the M/RTP identifies the North 1st Street revitalization project, North 1st Street is the northeastern entrance to Yakima from I-82/US12. Yakima includes another secured project that will improve the intersection of East Nob Hill Boulevard and Fair Avenue.

There are also several planned projects within the City of Yakima that includes upgrading roads to current standards to support higher traffic volumes and include adding turn lanes, where needed, to improve traffic safety and operations.

Completion of missing links of other north-south routes in the west part of the City of Yakima or adjacent unincorporated areas also are part of the regional plan. Many of these connections can be constructed as adjacent properties are redeveloped into residential subdivisions. The completion of these corridors will improve circulation and reduce potential operations and safety concerns associated with circuitous arterial routes.

In Union Gap and south Yakima, north-south corridor improvements are identified for Main Street and S. 1st Street. The improvements will reconstruct the corridor from Nob Hill Boulevard to US 97. The projects address existing and future safety and operations deficiencies. The corridor is also a freight route. Main Street connects with the I-82 at the US 97 interchange. A state highway project will complete the interchange by providing direct connections between southbound I-82 and Main Street and from Main Street to north I-82. Main Street also is an extension of S. 1st Street in Yakima, which provides a continuous arterial between US 12 and I-82 through the Central subregion. The Main Street Reconstruction Phase 1 project is secured in the M/RTP for the planning period.

Combined, these improvements will provide an urban arterial corridor providing access to/from the regional highway system, a major commercial district, local industries, and a regional connection to the 16th Avenue corridor and airport.

Ahtanum Road is the most southerly of the east-west arterials serving the Yakima metropolitan area. It connects from Main Street in Union Gap to the foothills in west Yakima County. The corridor serves a variety of land uses including residential developments and agricultural products in the West subregion to industrial developments near the airport and in Union Gap. The corridor is designated as a major freight route. The region has already completed improvements to some segments of the corridor; the M/RTP incorporates improvements to the rest of the corridor. These improvements generally call for completing a five-lane arterial from Main Street in Union Gap to 90th Avenue in Yakima County. Union Gap has a secured project in the M/RTP to resurface West Ahtanum Road.

To further enhance accessibility to I-82 from the Ahtanum Road corridor, TRANS-Action has defined a new corridor between the freeway and Ahtanum near S. 3rd Avenue. This project, known as the Union Gap Beltway, will tie into the I 82/US 97/South Union Gap interchange. This new route will especially support freight connectivity from the Ahtanum Road corridor to the regional highway system. It will shift freight traffic from the Valley Mall Boulevard interchange and nearby arterials.

The M/RTP supports limiting direct property access to Nob Hill Boulevard, Valley Mall Boulevard, Ahtanum Road, and other regional arterials. Limiting direct property access along these arterials will maintain the available capacity for regional through

traffic. Limiting direct property access to these regional corridors also reduces the number of potential conflict points, thereby minimizing future safety issues.

A range of other improvements to reconstruct existing arterials are also included in the M/RTP. Most of these arterials serve freight movement, commercial areas, or address safety or operational issues. Projects to upgrade or repair existing bridges are also included.

**Non-motorized.** The regional arterial widening and intersection projects will also include non-motorized improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps. These facilities will enhance non-motorized travel along major north-south and east-west corridors. Completion of missing links in the arterial system also will improve the connectivity of the non-motorized system.

The Yakima Greenway is nearing completion of the Yakima-Naches trail, which will connect Union Gap to Naches via a series of connected asphalt pathway systems.

In addition, sidewalk repair, street sweeping, and installing bike lanes or wide shoulders as part of arterial roadway projects will improve non-motorized transportation in the Central subregion. These improvements will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Transit and Transportation Demand Management Programs.**

In 2015, Yakima Transit operated at maximum service within the Cities of Yakima and Selah: 19 buses along 9 fixed routes; 18 vanpool vans travelling more than 20 miles to or from Yakima; and 25 paratransit vehicles. As a requirement for operating fixed-route service, Yakima Transit provides paratransit (Dial A Ride) services for persons with limited abilities during the same hours as the fixed-route bus service, serving both Yakima and Selah within their respective jurisdictions. Yakima Transit participates with the Washington State Department of Transportation, City of Selah, and Central Washington University in funding a commuter bus service that operates between Yakima (the Yakima Airport) and Ellensburg (Central Washington University). The commuter bus service operates along five stops in Yakima and Selah and two on Central Washington University's campus in Ellensburg. Planned strategies for Yakima Transit include extending service hours later into the evening, increasing frequency on high ridership fixed routes or fixed routes serving high density neighborhoods, and promoting the vanpool program.

The City of Selah contracts with Yakima Transit for fixed-route bus service in Selah. Currently, two buses operate in maximum service with more frequent half-hour service during the AM and PM peak times, M-F between the hours of 6am and 7pm. Hourly service is operated on the weekends on Saturdays from 9am-6pm and on Sundays from 8am-4pm. Route 10 operates from the Yakima Transit Center north along Yakima's North First Street, then into and throughout Selah, also connecting the Yakima Firing Center.

In 2015 there were 12 CTR-affected worksites in Yakima required to meet the CTR requirements of the Commute Trip Reduction Efficiency Act of 2006 (RCW 70.94.521), including reducing drive alone trips by 10 percent and VMT by 13 percent for all major employers by 2011. The 12 employers in Yakima, in the 2013-2014 biennium, produced an 18.7% rate of employees who did not drive alone. In addition, there were two CTR affected worksites in the City of Union Gap. Those employers maintained a 33.6% rate for employees who did not drive alone.

Some strategies that may be used by the CTR employers to discourage single-occupancy commute trips include:

- Continue guaranteed ride home program.

- Work with Yakima Transit to increase number of vanpools at CTR-affected work sites.
- Work with employers to provide bicycling and walking amenities.
- Work with CTR-affected work sites to offer incentives.
- Encourage employers to provide preferential parking for high-occupancy vehicles.
- Encourage employers to provide subsidies for transit, carpooling or vanpooling.
- Encourage employers to offer alternative work schedules such as compressed work week schedules (such as 4/40 or 9/80).
- Encourage employers to permit employees to work part or full time at home or at an alternative worksite closer to their homes.
- CT worksites should have a designated Employee Transportation Coordinator training program that includes issues such as marketing CTR programs to employees, trip, planning, and ride matching services.
- The strategies and programs should effectively promoted to be successful. Information about commute alternatives should be distributed regularly to employees. Examples of information to be distributed include:
- Transit system and non-motorized transportation maps.
- Vanpool rider signup information.
- Promotional materials informing people of their transportation choices.

## East Valley Subregion

The East Valley (EV) subregion includes the City of Moxee and surrounding rural residential and agricultural lands. In addition, the subregion includes commercial and industrial land uses adjacent to I-82 and along SR 24 and Terrace Heights Road. A slice of the City of Yakima between the Yakima River and I-82 is also within the East Valley subregion. This part of the City of Yakima includes several commercial developments and regional parks. The subregion also includes the low density areas north, south and east of Moxee. SR 24 and Terrace Heights Road connect the East Valley with interchanges at I-82. These corridors provide the primary access between East Valley and Yakima and Union Gap.

### Residential and Employment Growth

**Residential Growth.** During the next 25 years, almost 3,600 new residences are expected be added to the East Valley subregion. This represents an average annual growth rate over 1.12 percent. More than 70 percent of these new units are expected to be in Yakima's urban growth area and another 20 percent are expected to be in or near Moxee. The rest are expected to be spread out throughout the subregion on lands currently being used for low-density residential or agricultural uses. Single-family development is expected to comprise more than 80 percent of new residential growth, while duplex and multi-family residences are expected to comprise less than 20 percent.

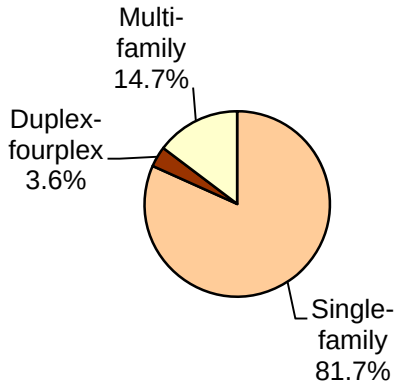


Figure 6.12 EV Region - Housing type by category for 2014

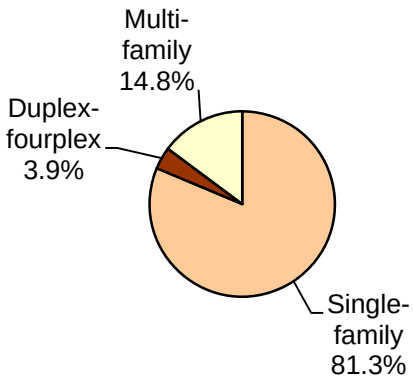


Figure 6.13 EV Region - Housing type by category for 2040

**Employment Growth.** Almost 2,000 new employees are expected be added to the East Valley subregion over the next 25 years. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.52 percent. Growth in retail, service and public employment is expected to be concentrated primarily within the Yakima UGA, while almost a third of growth in manufacturing employment is expected to occur in Moxee. The highest rate of growth is expected to be in the public sector.

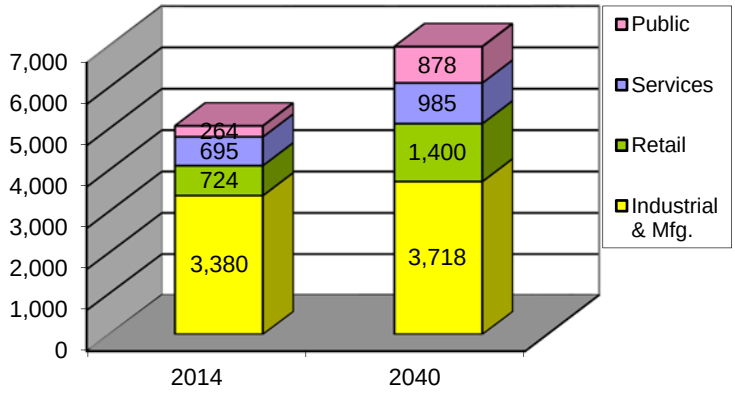


Figure 6.14 EV Region - Employment mix by category

## Transportation Needs and Improvement Strategies

The focus of improvement strategies for the East Valley subregion is on east-west capacity and connections to I-82 and the metropolitan area west of the freeway. Because only two routes, SR 24 and Terrace Heights Road, currently cross the Yakima River, the operations and safety of these routes is a priority. In addition, the M/RTP recognizes the need for improved north-south arterials within the East Valley. These connections will improve circulation, help reduce the volume of local area traffic on the east-west arterials, and improve emergency services. The ***EastValley_Projects*** map shows the location of high priority key regional projects for the East Valley subregion and the associated project table summarizes key elements of these projects.

**Roadways.**

Construction of a new east-west corridor over the Yakima River is included in the M/RTP as secured-funding project, and is discussed in greater detail in the Central Subregion.

WSDOT has one secured project which will add a southbound right-turn lane at the intersection of Birchfield and SR24.

The City of Moxee has two secured projects for new construction in the M/RTP which are connected. The projects will construct a new intersection on SR 24 in the alignment of the new Moirier Lane. This new intersection will add another access point off of SR24 to the City of Moxee, which will provide new economic development opportunities and provide relief on local roads for freight traffic.

**Non-motorized.** Recent improvements to University Parkway and current widening of SR 24 include non-motorized facilities. Future widening of SR 24 to Moxee also will support non-motorized transportation. Yakima County also has programmed an improvement to provide a pedestrian undercrossing on Beaudry Road to serve the schools on both sides of the road. The improvements will comply with ADA requirements.

**Transit and Transportation Demand Management.** The East Valley subregion is not served by fixed-route bus service from Yakima Transit. The subregion is served by People for People paratransit service for Medicaid or the Job Access Transportation Program, for people that qualify for these services. There is a need to expand demand response service in this area and to coordinate with existing and expanded rural transit service to regional services and facilities. A strategy to mitigate some of the growing congestion on SR 24 between Moxee and Yakima is to implement a park-and-ride and commuter service between the two communities. The fixed-route service could also serve areas near the larger employers in Moxee.

The City of Moxee has three employers affected by the CTR law. These worksites in Moxee can encourage commute trip reduction by providing incentives or subsidies for employees who use alternative modes of transportation such as carpooling, vanpooling, walking or biking; allowing alternative work schedules; and providing bicycle lockers and shower facilities to employees. These types of strategies should be effectively promoted in order to be successful. Information about commute alternatives should be distributed regularly to employees. Examples of information to be distributed include non-motorized transportation maps, vanpool rider signup information, and materials informing people of their transportation choices. The three worksites in Moxee maintained a 22.5% rate of employees who did not drive alone in the 2013-2014 biennium.

## South Central Subregion

The communities of Toppenish, Wapato, Harrah, and Zillah are within the South Central (SC) subregion. The subregion extends from South Union Gap to just north of Granger. The portion of the South Central subregion that is west of the Yakima River and I-82 is mostly comprised of Yakama Nation land. The core of the regional transportation system serving this area are the state highways, including I-82, US 97, and SR 22. Yakima County has a system of major collector roads, such as the Yakima Valley Highway, Meyers Road, Fort Road, Branch Road, and Donald-Wapato Road that serve travel within the subregion and connections to the state highway system.

### Residential and Employment Growth

**Residential Growth.** During the next 25 years, more than 1,000 new residences are expected be added to the South Central subregion. This represents an average annual growth rate of 0.11 percent. More than 30 percent of these new units are expected to be in or near Zillah. Another 28 percent is expected to be in or near the cities and towns of Wapato, Toppenish, and Harrah. The remaining units are expected to be spread out throughout the lands currently being used for low-density residential or agricultural uses. The majority of growth in residential development will be in single-family units.

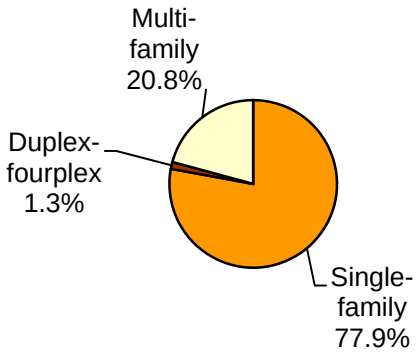


Figure 6.15 SC Region - Housing type by category for 2014

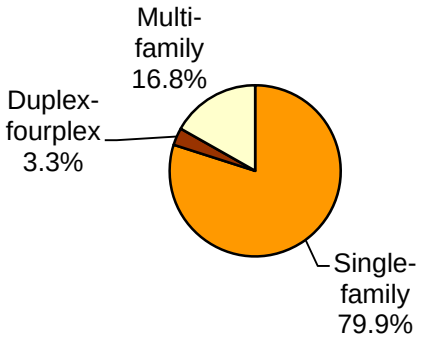


Figure 6.16 SC Region - Housing type by category for 2040

**Employment Growth**. Almost 1,200 new employees are expected be added to the South Central subregion over the next 25 years. This represents an average annual growth rate of 0.7 percent. The highest rates of growth are expected in the service and retail sectors.

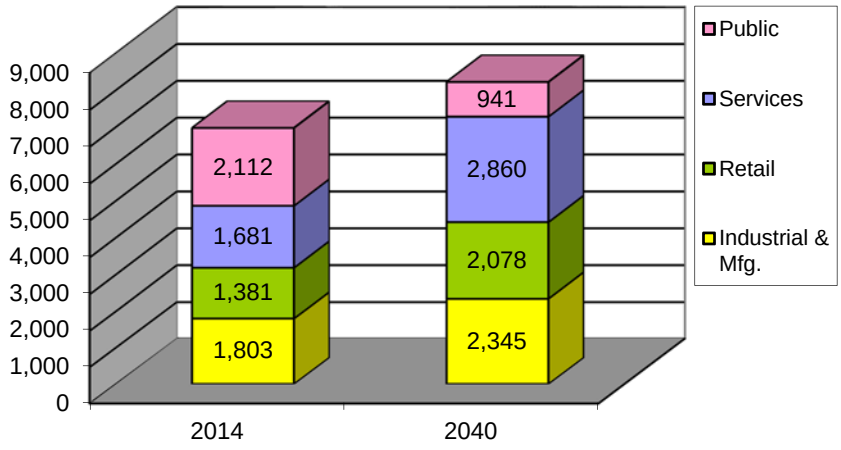


Figure 6.17 SC Region - Employment mix by category

More than half of new employment is expected to occur in or near Toppenish. Another 25 percent is expected to be in Wapato, and close to 10 percent is expected in Harrah and Zillah combined. Much of the growth in manufacturing and retail employment is expected to be concentrated primarily within Toppenish.

## Transportation Needs and Improvement Strategies

The primary focus of the M/RTP improvements in the South Central subregion are reconstructing and upgrading roadways to accommodate more traffic and freight safely. The ***SouthCentral_Projects*** map and associated project table summarize the highest priority improvements, which are discussed below.

**Roadways.** Several improvements to the state highway system are included in the subregion project lists. These include multiple intersection improvements on US 97, an at-grade railroad crossing on SR223, rehabilitation to the I-82/Yakima Valley Highway Bridge, and the replacement of the SR22.Yakima River crossing near Toppenish just to name a few. The multitude of highway system projects in the SC region will greatly enhance safety for motorists and efficiency for freight movement. .

The secured intersection at US 97 and Robbins Road is a proposed Roundabout. This is the first of many planned roundabouts on the US 97 corridor designed to enhance freight mobility in the lower valley. An alternative freight route connecting US 97 to I-82, on the east side of Toppenish, is also included in the M/RTP. This route designated as a regional priority by DRYVE will upgrade Larue and Meyers Road to connect US 97 to I-82 at the west Zillah interchange.

Other M/RTP improvements in the South Central subregion include preservation projects to roadways sections and bridges, along with the installation of a Variable Message Sign which is also an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) project.

Yakima County has one secured project to widen the intersection of Cheyne Road and Highland Drive. This project will greatly enhance safety at this rural intersection that sees several garbage trucks going to the Cheyne Landfill and seasonal agricultural traffic.

The City of Toppenish includes two secured projects in the M/RTP which include the reconstruction of Lincoln Ave., Dayton Ave., and Beech St.; along with a new construction project to extend Jackson St.

The Town of Harrah has several planned preservation and reconstruction projects through the M/RTP. There is one secured project during the planning period to construct new sidewalk on the east side of Harrah Road in front of the school.

The City of Wapato does not have any secured projects in the M/RTP, but does include several planned reconstruction projects that will enhance vehicle and pedestrian mobility throughout the city.

The City of Zillah includes one secured project in the M/RTP – the Vintage Valley Parkway Extension – which will significantly improve traffic and freight mobility on the west side of Zillah, along with opening a new corridor for commercial and industrial development.

**Non-motorized.** The roadway and intersection improvements will also support non-motorized travel, especially near Toppenish. The improvements that shift freight traffic to alternative corridors will also improve non-motorized travel by reducing total traffic and truck traffic along existing routes. Expanding facilities for non-motorized transportation should be incorporated into future roadway improvements and maintenance programs. These will help encourage bicycling and pedestrian travel in the subregion.

**Transit and Transportation Demand Management.** The South Central subregion is served by the People for People Community Connector, which connects Prosser and Yakima. This subregion is also served by People for People paratransit service for the Job Access Transportation program and the Medicaid transportation services program. There is a need to expand demand response service in this area and to coordinate with existing and expanded rural transit service to regional services and facilities. In addition, to provide better connections from this area to medical and educational facilities in Yakima, an extension

of Community Connector service should be considered within the City of Yakima in areas currently served by Yakima Transit to provide a one-seat ride directly to medical and educational opportunities.

The Yakama Nation has a Tribal Transit system, Pahto Public Passage, which provides a fixed route transportation service for the reservation and surrounding communities. The fixed route system provides traditional scheduled service at designated stops throughout the reservation and connects Yakima, Prosser, Sunnyside, Grandview, Wapato, Zillah, Toppenish, Harrah, Goldendale, and White Swan. The service improves accessibility to jobs, education, shopping, health care, social services, cultural, and other daily activities.

The South Central subregion should promote alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking, carpooling, and vanpooling. These traffic demand management strategies should be effectively promoted in order to be successful. Information about commute alternatives should be distributed regularly to employees. Examples of information to be distributed include:

- Non-motorized transportation maps and schedules.
- Vanpool rider signup information.
- Promotional materials informing people of their transportation choices.

## Southeast Subregion

The Southeast (SE) subregion includes the communities of Granger, Sunnyside, and Grandview along I-82, and Mabton along SR 22. Similar to the South Central subregion, state highways are used for much of the travel in this subregion. City arterials and County collector roads connect the communities to the state highways and serve local travel patterns.

### Residential and Employment Growth

**Residential Growth.** During the next 25 years, more than 230 new residences are expected be added to the Southeast subregion. This represents an average annual growth rate of about 0.07 percent. More than 34 percent of these new units are expected to be in and near Grandview. Another 15 percent are expected to be in or near Granger, Mabton, and Sunnyside. The remaining units are expected to be spread throughout the subregion on lands currently being used for low-density residential or agricultural uses. Single-family and duplex development are the categories that are expected to grow.

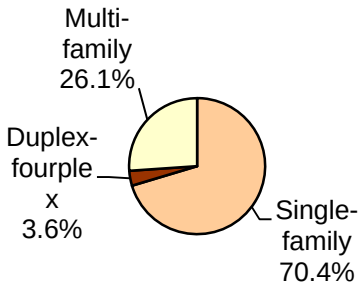


Figure 6.18 SE Region - Housing type by category for 2014

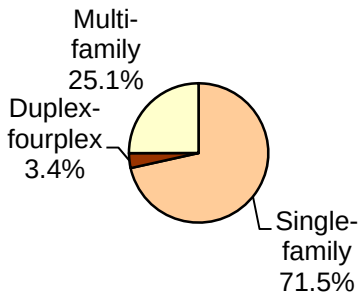


Figure 6.19 SE Region - Housing type by category for 2040

**Employment Growth.** Over 2,000 new employees are expected be added to the Southeast subregion over the next 25 years. This represents an average annual growth rate of 0.58 percent. The highest rates of growth are expected to be in the industrial and service sectors.

More than half of new employment is expected to occur in or near Sunnyside. Another 30 percent is expected to be in Grandview, and 11 percent expected to occur in Granger and Mabton combined. Growth in manufacturing employment is expected to be concentrated primarily within Sunnyside (50 percent of the total), Grandview (29 percent) and Granger (16 percent). Growth in the retail employment is expected to be roughly split between Grandview and Sunnyside, with smaller amounts of retail growth occurring in Granger and Mabton. In both the service and public sectors, over 60 percent of employment growth is expected to occur in Sunnyside and 30 percent in Grandview with Granger and Mabton seeing less than five percent combined.

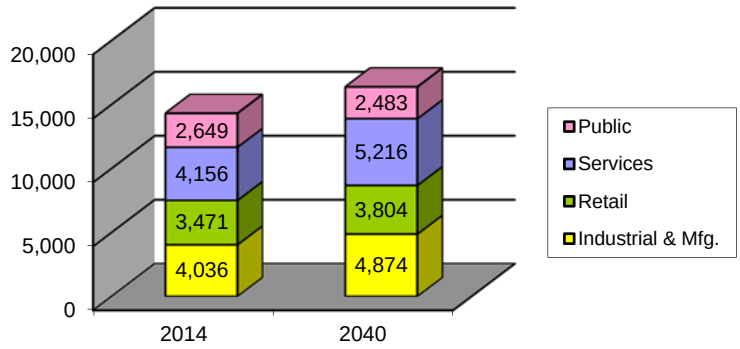


Figure 6.20 SE Region - Employment mix by category

## Transportation Needs and Improvement Strategies

The ***Southeast_Projects*** map and associated project table summarize the higher priority M/RTP improvements for the Southeast subregion. The improvements focus on regional access and connectivity. They also address existing or forecast safety and operations needs along regional corridors.

**Roadways.** Regional improvements in the Southeast subregion will address safety and operational needs on highway, arterial, and collector road corridors accessing I-82. In Granger, the M/RTP includes several planned reconstruction and preservation projects throughout the city which will enhance vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

WSDOT has secured funding for several projects, including plans to improve three intersections along SR241, one intersection along SR22/SR223, reconstruct a bridge on SR241 near Mabton, and reconstruct a portion of the SR241 corridor north of Sunnyside. These improvements will greatly enhance safety at rural state-route intersections and improve freight/vehicle traffic in the lower valley.

Sunnyside includes a secured project for the reconstruction of South 6th Street which will improve the roadway within the commercial district and near an elementary school.

The M/RTP includes the reconstruction and widening of Old Inland Empire Highway as a fiscally-constrained project which will improve the east-west traffic, including freight, through the industrial center of Grandview. Grandview also shows a

planned, but unfunded, project to signalize the intersection of Wine Country Road and McCreadie Road. This intersection is the eastern exit to Grandview off of I-82.

The City of Mabton includes a reconstruction project on Main Street which will greatly enhance vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the downtown. The project also includes a much-needed pedestrian crossing on SR22 which will provide a safe location for children walking to school from south Mabton.

**Non-motorized.** The roadway reconstruction and widening projects will include sidewalks or improved shoulders which will support non-motorized travel in these communities. These should be designed and constructed to comply with the ADA requirements. New and improved regional non-motorized links should be constructed to encourage more non-motorized transportation, including making connections between existing pedestrian and bicycle routes and adding bicycle and pedestrian routes to major employer worksites. These new bicycle and pedestrian routes should be ADA compatible.

**Transit and Transportation Demand Management.** The Southeast subregion is served by the People for People Community Connector, which connects Prosser and Yakima. This subregion is also served by People for People paratransit service for the Job Access Transportation program and the Medicaid transportation services program. There is a need to expand demand response service in this area and to coordinate with existing and expanded rural transit service to regional services and facilities. In addition, to provide better connections from this area to medical and educational facilities in Yakima, an extension of Community Connector service in the City of Yakima should be considered to provide a one-seat ride from the rural areas to these destinations.

Additional transit service will be developed to parts of the Southeast subregion through the Yakama Nation's Pahto Public Passage which provides fixed route service throughout the Yakama Reservation and surrounding communities. The service will provide access to employment, education, health care, social services, shopping and other activities.

The Southeast subregion should promote alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking, carpooling, and vanpooling. These TDM strategies should be effectively promoted in order to be successful. Information about commute alternatives should be distributed regularly to employees. Examples of information to be distributed include distribution of non-motorized transportation maps, vanpool rider signup information, and promotional materials informing people of their transportation choices.

**NOTE: For the Public Comment DRAFT version of the 2014-2040 M/RTP, the maps and tables for Section 6 are provided separately due to size of the map files. In the FINAL 2014-2040 M/RTP, the maps and tables will be inserted with the text that describes each sub-region.**