

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

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**SECTION 5 – REVIEW OF THE PLAN ELEMENT
SUCCESSSES AND SHORTCOMINGS s.163.3191 (2)(a)**

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this section of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report is to examine the Transportation Element of the Washington County Comprehensive Plan for its successes and shortcomings.

II. INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared by the Washington County Planning Commission and the Washington County Planning Department in cooperation with other County agencies. While many issues will be presented in this section, those identified at the scoping meeting will be presented and further elaborated on in the Special Issues Section of the report. Changes since 2000 dictate that the element should be revised for the EAR-based amendment process. Necessary policies will need to be drafted to incorporate changes in state and local policies regarding transportation policies. (See chapter 163 work table for recommended amendments)

III. THE EXISTING SYSTEM ANALYSIS – s. 163.319(2)(h)

Washington County is a sparsely populated rural county p, and its residents depend on the automobile as the main mode of transportation. The County has an excellent transportation system with I-10 running east and west through the northern part of the County. State roads (SR) also serve as key connections throughout the county; SR 79 and SR 77 connect Washington County with Alabama to the north and Bay County to the South. US 90 in the north and SR 20 in the south provide access to Jackson County to the east and Walton County to the West. While new development has placed some increased demand on the county highways and parking spaces for commercial development and motels (especially in Chipley), the overall pace of development in the county remains slow. This does not indicate that future growth will not increase, but the growth rate experienced by some counties in Florida since 2000 has not occurred in Washington County. The lack of economic development initiatives in the County and the slow growth in the housing market has failed to bring the influx of traffic generated by new growth. However, the future offers possibilities for growth and increased traffic circulation for which the County should be prepared.

Transportation projects in recent years within the County have provided an increase in the level of service standards for roadways, thus enabling the county to meet the demands of increased traffic arising from Future Land Use Map (FLUM) changes and the clustered subdivisions approved in the County (exception is portions of SR 77 and will be discussed later). Tracking of development remains vital to ensure that corridors retain level of service standards that will address the requirements of concurrency, hurricane evacuation, and roadway improvements.

The County has begun exploring appropriate methods to address expansion and revitalization of its small rural county road network. This system contains numerous miles of substandard roadways both paved and unpaved. With cooperation between the public and private sectors, emphasis is being placed on proactive paving and resurfacing programs that will result in improved traffic circulation within Washington County and add to the economic development attractors of the county in providing incentives for investors to locate in Washington County.

When using all of the available tools, the County will be able to adequately plan for the future based on the system's capacity to serve future demand. Those tools are:

- Future Land Use Maps
- Other Elements of the Comprehensive Plan
- The Land Development Code
- County's Future Adopted Levels of Service
- Existing and Future Transportation Maps
- FDOT Functional Classifications
- FDOT's Five-Year Work Program Funding Operational Responsibilities

A Transportation Plan for the County is the most significant tool missing from this list. While a start has been made, all departments must work together to ensure that all factors impacting the transportation system of the County are compiled into one publication, which is to be adopted by resolution by the Board of County Commissioners. This information should be available to buyers and sellers of real estate, developers, engineers, and planners. As the development process currently works, there is no central point for distribution of this information or for the collection of operational policies.

Recommendation: Include policies to ensure the creation of a county-wide Transportation Plan.

In July 2007, the Board of County Commissioners of Washington County, Florida, adopted Washington County Ordinance No. 2007-9, known as "Washington County Comprehensive Impact Fee Ordinance" authorizing the imposition of impact fees to fund capital improvements for additions to the County Fire Protection System (the "Fire Protection Impact Fee"), the Emergency Medical System (the "EMS Impact Fee"), and the County Road System (the "Road Impact Fee") necessitated by future growth. The Road Impact Fee rates shall be imposed upon all road impact construction occurring within the County in the unincorporated area. None of the municipalities have agreed to participate in the impact fee program, but retain the option for future inclusion.

Recommendation: Incorporate the impact fee provision into the EAR-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Transportation Map and FDOT Functional Classification of Roadways.

<u>Table 8-1. Functional Classification of FDOT Roadways</u>	
Name of Roadway	Classification
SR 10 (US 90)	Minor Arterial
SR77	Principal Arterial
SR79	Principal Arterial
SR20	Principal Arterial
CR 278 (Portions of)- Cecilia - describe portions	Major Collector
CR 276A (portions of) - describe portions	Major Collector
CR77A	Major Collector
CR273	Major Collector
CR277	Major Collector
Source: 2007 Florida Department of Transportation, "Levels of Service Analysis"	

B. Funding and Operational Responsibility

1. State Road System. This has not changed. Operational responsibility remains with the State of Florida Department of Transportation.
2. County Road System. Funding remains the same from state and local revenue sources. However, the County is fortunate to have received the following grants during the planning period, making a difference in the rate at which unpaved roads have been paved and resurfacing projects completed.
 - Small Counties Road Assistance Program (SCRAP)
 - Small County Outreach Programs (SCOP)
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - Small County Incentive Grants Program (SCIGP)
 - Economic Development Transportation Funds (EDTF)
 - Florida Forever Grants
3. All transportation improvement projects must appear on the Capital Improvements Element schedule as it is updated annually. The County should continue to actively pursue all grants and other avenues of funding for feasible road paving and resurfacing projects.

- C. FDOT Transportation Workplan 2008 - 12. See Table 8-4 at the end of this section for the listing of projects in the FDOT's tentative five-year work plan dated July 28, 2007.
- D. Washington County's Adopted Level of Service Standards (LOS). All references for LOS and revisions pertaining to level of service should be combined into one major subject area for the EAR-based amendment.
- E. Revision of the Plan's Format Required. There is a need to reorganize all of the LOS Standards, into Section V to be titled LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) STANDARDS FOR STATE AND COUNTY ROADWAYS. The reorganized Section V will include Section IV D, E, and Section V, (A) with applicable subsections that pertain to Levels of Service as follows:
 - 1. LOS for County Roads. There are currently no levels of service standards for County roads. The County is in the process of compiling LOS standards based on traffic counts (AADT) and stop conditions of the roadway as well as the roadway widths and shoulders. This data collection should be complete by the end of 2007, with the end product being consistent with the State LOS standards. Most roadways within the county have traffic volumes that allow operation at an acceptable level. However, during periods of inclement weather or extreme dryness, the unpaved roads require more frequent maintenance than during more normal periods.
 - 2. LOS for State Roads. The Florida Department of Transportation maintains the state roads. Standards for these roads are contained in FDOT's 2007 Quality/Level of Service Handbook.
 - a. Level of Services. The LOS for state roads ranges from A to F, with F being the worst. These levels of service measure the satisfaction of drivers on roads within the system. These standards are posted on the County website and appear in the tables section of this report. A complete description of the LOS standards can be found in the *Levels of Service Analysis for State and County Roadways for Washington County, July 2007 as published for FDOT by PBS&J*.
 - b. Level of Service (LOS) Analysis. There is only one road in the County with established LOS standards (FDOT) that is deficient. Two sections of SR 77 are considered deficient - that portion from the southern city limits of Chipley to the northern city limits is considered insufficient. The second section of the road not meeting capacity standards is from the Bay County line to CR 279. It is expected that these problems will continue until such time that SR 77 is widened.
 - c. Frequency of Accidents. The following table designates high-accident areas within the County. The intersection of SR 20 and SR 79 has now been

fitted with a traffic signal that allows a smoother safer flow of traffic through the Town of Ebro.

Accident Locations	Number of Crashes	Bodily Injury	Property Damage
SR 20 and SR 79 (Ebro)	54	87	15
SR 79 and Jackson Street (Vernon)	11	7	6
SR79 and SR 279 (Vernon)	9	3	6
SR 79 and Court Street (Vernon)			
SR 77 and Lost Lake (Chipley)	13	15	5

Source: FDOT - Crash Analysis Reporting System for State Roads

- d. Projected Needs. Pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 9J-5, FAC, projections were prepared for future traffic circulation levels of service and system needs based on future land use shown on the Future Land Use Map. The only road expected not to meet the LOS standards are the sections of SR 77 previously discussed in item 2-b above.

F. Paving/Resurfacing Development Project Management: In 1998, one extensive problem in the County was the need to repave and resurface roads in the County transportation system. The County's decision in 1999 to not accept any new unpaved roads has placed the requirement of paving new roads upon developers. Through attrition and the County's proactive road paving program, this has decreased the number of unpaved roads requiring future unpaved road maintenance. The Public Works Department does maintain a road repair list of projects that the Board approves annually. However, there is no formal publication of this list that can be used to update the capital improvement plan for the County. In the past, paving and resurfacing projects were accomplished in a disorganized manner with no particular criteria established to determine either the need or the financial feasibility for roads selected to be improved. To ensure more efficient selection of roads, a procedure has been adopted that will hopefully result in a professional methodology for selection of paving and resurfacing projects.

In 2007, a matrix system to determine the priority for paving and resurfacing County roadways was developed by the County Engineer. Based on several criteria, the different agencies within the County had the opportunity to rate all of roads and select the roads that most needed to be upgraded. Participating agencies in the survey used to identify these roads were the Postal Service, the School District, the Sheriff's Department and other agencies that heavily utilize the roads for delivery of services. From these rankings came the opportunity to prioritize roads and include these projects in the Capital Improvements Element schedule based on need rather than political pressure.

Recommendation: Incorporate the road management plan into the EAR-based Transportation Element

- G. Inventory of County Roads. Until 2007, there was no inventory of County roads; only maintenance records from the Public Works Department were used to determine what roads fell under the County's responsibility. In conjunction with establishing LOS standards, GASB 34 has corrected this problem and a list of county-maintained roads has been compiled with a disclaimer that the list did not guarantee concurrency. The policy of maintaining an up-to-date inventory of County roads should be included in the EAR-based amendment. The criteria for establishing this list should also be compiled and included in the Plan. The GASB list has enabled the 9-1-1 addressing coordinator to update the maps for the County, but the failure to upgrade the aerial Pictometry program due to the lack of funding is an issue that the county should address in the future.

Recommendation: Incorporate the requirement for including the updated list of County roads into the Comprehensive Plan with the provision that the list is to be approved as need by resolution by the Board as opposed to ordinance. Utilizing the resolution option will provide a timely manner of making changes to the list.

- H. Disclosure Ordinance Abutting Roadways for Development. A residential sale disclosure regarding abutting roadway and maintenance disclosure is required in Washington County. Sellers must reveal to the buyer the status of the road with regard to maintenance and how ingress/egress is furnished to any particular parcel of land. This is a requirement; however, there are no controls in place ensuring that this is being enforced.

Recommendation: Incorporated the Disclosure Ordinance into the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the buyers, sellers, and developers comply with this rule.

- I. Restrictions on Development on Inadequate Roadways. There are several methods in place to ensure that development does not occur on roads that are in poor condition.
1. The Land Development Code restricts development of subdivisions on unpaved roads when the total resulting lots will be more than ten lots (minor subdivision). Subdivisions larger than ten lots require access by continuously paved roads. However, the impact from a ten-lot residential development is sometimes greater than the unpaved road is capable of handling.

Recommendation: Reduce the number of lots for a minor subdivision to six lots in order to reduce maintenance requirements on existing unpaved roads.

2. Variance requests by property owners for one-time splits without platting are allowed but must be approved by the Planning Commission; these are being examined more closely in relation to ingress/egress to the County roads.

3. The State system does have one road (State Road 77 from north of I-10 to the northern city limits of Chipley and from CR 279 (Moss Hill Road) to the Bay County line) that has reached capacity along several sections. Developers are required to work with FDOT to insure concurrency by the use of proportionate fair share as provided for in the County's Land Development Code.

J. Drainage, Flooding and Environmental Issues. Drainage problems within the county contribute to problems with both paved and unpaved roads. The County continues to pursue funding as grants become available to address such drainage problems. A drainage plan for the County should be developed in order to address all areas posing a threat to safe traffic circulation. To this end, the development of a drainage plan appears on the County's Capital Improvements Element schedule. Environmentally sensitive lands continue to be avoided by both the private and public sector during road construction so as to minimize the impact to these areas. All permits required from state agencies are applied for, and when necessary, mitigation is required according to the requirements of the State.

Recommendation: Establish policies in the EAR-based amendments that promote the identification of and the development of a drainage plan for the County.

K. Impact Fees. Transportation impact fees depend on the amount of travel generated by new development, the impact of that new travel, and the cost to build new roadway facilities to meet the impact. The primary means to determine the impact is to calculate how much road capacity is used by the new development, and then to determine the cost to provide that capacity. Care must be taken to not "double charge" new development. The fee is reduced by a credit that considers other revenue sources. The fee is also calculated recognizing that Federal, FDOT and developer funded projects will meet some of the impact. The resulting fee, when combined with other contributions, will meet the County's growth related roadway improvement needs. Pursuant to F.S. 163.31801 (3) (a), "... the calculation of the impact fee [is required to] be based on the most recent and localized data." Trip generation data used throughout the impact fee study was from the most recent edition of "Trip Generation" by the Institute of Transportation Engineers; it was used because it contains the largest collection of trip generation data and it covers a wider variety of land use types than origin and destinations that could be prepared by the County. Furthermore, the ITE data is significantly more robust than what could be collected locally. Construction costs use the latest averages from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and recent construction bids from FDOT's District 3. Similar to trip generation data, construction costs collected statewide and FDOT district wide for many different types of projects represent the most robust and appropriate data.

Recommendation: The EAR-based amendments to Comprehensive Plan should include the provision for transportation impact fees recently enacted by the Board of County Commissioners.

L. Transportation Planning Organization. Washington County is part of the Regional Transportation Partnership (RTP). This organization is the result of an inter-local agreement between the Bay County Transportation Organization and the rural counties of Gulf, Holmes, and Washington to coordinate transportation planning through the

establishment of a regional transportation network. This regional partnership was developed in support of a trend toward regional transportation planning. West Florida Regional Planning Council assisted in the formation of the Bay, Gulf, Holmes, and Washington Regional Transportation Partnership and through the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) has been successful in obtaining funding for PD&E Study and Final Design for the Elkam Connector from SR 77 to US 231. The Bay, Gulf, Holmes, Washington Regional Transportation Partnership (RTP) was created for two purposes: (1) to implement regional coordination, which is a state planning emphasis area, between the Bay County TPO and the three surrounding rural counties, and (2) to establish the regional partnership required under Section 339.2819 F.S. to be eligible to apply for State Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) funding.

This program has been successful in applying for TRIP funds as in the case of the Elkam Connector. Since this is a multi-county entity it will continue to qualify for application of TRIP funds for unfunded projects that need to meet LOS demands. A further assessment of the success or failure of this program needs to be here. What is the common methodology for implementing the concurrency management system? For Washington County, this methodology analysis will include Holmes and Bay Counties as well as the City of Chipley and Bonifay.

Holmes County assesses LOS impact by following the FDOT figures for Peak Hour Trips occurring on each roadway in Holmes County. This is also the adopted methodology for the City of Bonifay. Washington County uses the FDOT figures for Average Annual Daily Trips (AADT) to measure development impacts to the roadways in Washington County. The City of Chipley uses the FDOT figures for Peak Hour Trips occurring on all roadways in the City of Chipley. Bay County uses the Peak Hour Trips as a measure of concurrency.

Recommendation: The RTP should continue as a tool for Washington County to meet future LOS needs and to help pay for critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce.

Recommendation: In order to have a common methodology, Washington County should add a policy to the Transportation Element to adopt the FDOT Peak Pm /Hourly Trips as their adopted measure of LOS for all roadways in the County as they are the only local government in the Regional Transportation Partnership that uses AADT as a measure of concurrency.

IV. OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The County transportation system consists of the following:

- A. State Roads. State Roads 77, 79, 277, and CR 279 are part of the secondary road system and provide north-south access. U.S. 90 extends through the cities of Caryville and Chipley, and 1-10 runs parallel to U.S. 90 just south of both cities. The City of Wausau lies at the intersection of SR 77 and CR 278. Ebro is at the intersection of SR 20 and SR 79, and Vernon is formed around the intersection of CR's 278, 279, and SR's 277 and 79. SR 79 will be undergoing a four-lane upgrade from the Bay County line north to Interstate 10 within the next 2 - 3 years, and the widening of SR 77 is in the planning stage.

1. Deficient Roadway Segments. Two segments of SR 77 have a level of service standard of D. One segment extends from the northern city limits of Chipley through the city to the southern city limits. The other section designated as deficient is that part of SR 77 from the Bay County Line to CR 279. There are currently no available trips left for major development along that section of the SR 77 roadway as capacity is exceeded. While this road does not appear in FDOT's Five-Year Plan, planning is currently underway for the widening of the roadway with progress expected if funding becomes available. All other state roads in Washington County carry a LOS of A, B, or C, and none are considered as being deficient at the present time.

2. Four-Lane Projects of State Highways in Washington County. Two roadways, SR 77 and SR 79, have been identified as four-lane projects by FDOT and are included in the Florida Intrastate Highway System Master Plan. The two four-lane projects will serve to alleviate some traffic congestion within the county, especially within the city limits of Chipley (north of Interstate 10) along the SR 77 corridor. The increase in the cost of road building materials has caused an unprecedented increase in cost of completing road projects. Many of the FDOT projects were deferred from 2006, 2007, and 2008 planning years to 2009, 2010, and 2011. The 2008-2012 Adopted FDOT Workplan can be found at 15.
 - a. SR 79 from the Bay County line to Interstate 10. A portion of this project currently appears on FDOT District 3's 2007 - 2008 Tentative Work Program and is described as, "SR 79 from Environmental Road to Strickland Road." The four-lane project's completed limits currently extend to approximately eight miles south of the Washington County line. Right-of-way acquisitions are presently underway along some sections of the roadway within Washington County with property values being determined by FDOT appraisers. This roadway serves as an evacuation route and any major pileup on this road could create a situation where the emergency medical and fire services become quickly overwhelmed.

 - b. SR 77 from the Bay County line to the Jackson County line. While no construction is scheduled for the portion of the roadway within Washington County, the four-lane section is complete within Bay County and up to the Washington County line. The status of the four-lane project within Washington County is described as being in the planning stage. This roadway serves as an evacuation route and any major pileup on this road could create a situation where the emergency medical and fire services become quickly overwhelmed.

3. All new connections to roads within the State-maintained roads system in the county must be permitted through the Florida Department of Transportation.

- B. County-Maintained Roads. According to the GASB inventory list of County roads, there are approximately 334 additional miles of paved county-maintained roads in the county and 507 miles of unpaved county-maintained roads. Adding 52 miles of driveways that receive regular maintenance by the Public Works Department to the number of miles of roadways maintained equates to approximately 893 miles of maintenance responsibility for the County. Along with regular maintenance, periods of excessive drought or rain create additional maintenance requirements. There are no levels of service assigned to any of the roads except for those designated as major collectors and there are no written policies of the levels of service standards that should be applied to the County road system. The FDOT accepted descriptions of LOS standards are used for planning purposes, dirt roads are considered to carry a designation of with paved roads designated with levels of service standard of D.

Paved Roads	Unpaved	Paved With Acceptance Pending	Total
334	507	20	861
Source: Washington County GASB and GIS Coordinator			

1. Paved County Roads. There are 345 miles of paved roads in the County transportation network. The GASB inventory is revised as dirt roads are paved to county standards. No LOS standards are assigned to newly paved roads to when paved, but it is presumed for planning purposes that these roads will carry an LOS of D until such time as the level of service standard is determined for that new road. New roads created as a result of new development or subdivision is considered as having a LOS of D, until such time as the road is accepted and a LOS standard is assigned by the County Engineer. County roads are maintained by patching pot holes, repainting center line, side line striping, installing and replacing road signs in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards, mowing shoulders and trimming of bushes and trees along the rights-of-way.
2. Unpaved County Roads. New dirt roads are not accepted by the county and the development of any subdivision in excess of ten lots is not allowed on any type of unpaved road. There are approximately 500 miles of unpaved roads that are currently receiving maintenance from the County. It is the policy of the Public Works Department to upgrade culverts that are being replaced by at least one size in order to create sufficient flow volume to mitigate future damage to the roadway and rights-of-way. Headwall retention is installed on culvert drainage pipes within the County maintenance areas. Milled asphalt, limestone, gravel, or other appropriate aggregate road base establishing material is placed on roads with problem areas such as rain slick clay, hills or other uniquely hard to maintain areas. Roads that have been abandoned using the prescribed system by the Board of County Commissioners are properly blocked.

3. Driveways. The County has adopted a policy that will provide maintenance on the first 50 feet of all driveways that provide access to county roads. Based on 9-1-1 addressing data, there are approximately 5,529 driveways or 52 miles of driveways that the County maintains.
 - a. The location of a driveway is inspected by a supervisor who makes a determination as to what type culvert, if any must be installed. Currently, all driveways must be a minimum of 30 feet wide, with all culverts on paved roads being required to be 30 feet wide plus have mitered ends. Mitered ends are required on all driveway culverts located on paved roads. In order to ensure safety, decrease required maintenance, and prepare for future paving, mitered should be required for all driveway installation.
 - b. County policy allows property owners to purchase and install culverts meeting or exceeding County standards. There is no requirement that a licensed contractor install the driveway if the developer elects to not have the Public Works Department perform the installation. This is a requirement that needs to be established in the operating policies of the County.
 - c. The operating policies of the County need be amended to require that on all new driveways, the first 50 feet from the roadway be paved or have a minimum of three (3) inches of compacted aggregate material installed at the time the driveway is constructed.
 - d. New driveways on private roads not maintained by the county are permitted at no cost with a stipulation that if the County assumes maintenance of the road in the future, the property owner will be responsible in bringing the driveway up to an acceptable level of service standard.
4. Private Roads. The County does provide maintenance on private dirt roads on a fee basis and request for maintenance by the property owner. Maintenance is given only as time and equipment availability allows.
5. Bridges. Inspections of bridges with lengths of 30 feet or more on county-paved roads is done by the Florida Department of Transportation. A report is submitted to the Public Works Department who completes the required work if within the scope of the department's capability. Wooden bridges are currently being removed and replaced with metal culverts, concrete headwalls, and wing walls. There is no formal inspection of any bridges of less than 30 feet. A formal inspection and maintenance program needs to be established by the County to ensure the structures are safe to handle the current traffic as well as increases generated by future growth. Bridge maintenance is another component of the county's road network that should be included in the Transportation Plan for Washington County.

6. Rights-of-Way. Well-defined and maintained rights-of-way are important on all roadways. Any type of fence, post, sign, or any obstruction other than mailboxes and newspaper receptacles should have a two foot setback from the right-of-way. This will prevent obstruction to traffic during storm hazards and also make the opening of roads during recovery less of an issue and provide conditions for efficient maintenance. Buried utilities would be beneficial in reducing needed recovery efforts and make right-of-way maintenance easier, neater, and safer. Rights-of-way are actively pursued in order to maintain, widen dirt roads, and install drainage structures and devices in order to protect both the unpaved road and the private property adjoining the road way. In most instances property owners are willing to assign the County the required easements in order to accomplish this. Every attempt is made to secure, at a minimum, easements to provide for a 60-foot roadway. Where necessary, in exchange for the required rights-of-way, the County will purchase and install fencing that has to be relocated. The maintenance of right-of-ways should also be included in the Washington County Transportation Plan.

C. CSX Rail System. The railroad runs through Chipley (one quarter of a mile north of the intersection of SR 77 and US 90) and Caryville (one fifth mile north of the intersection of US 90 and CR 179) in an East-West direction, connecting Washington County to Jacksonville in the east, Bay County to the south, and Pensacola to the west. Other points of connection include Orlando and South Florida via AMTRAK service from Chipley; however, this service was suspended following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. This service may be restored in 2008. The location of a industrial development in a second industrial park (Washington County Industrial Park) has the potential to create a rail siding that will allow access from the park, providing the County with a strategic point for which to load/unload freight. There is a passing site in Chipley that is 11,820 feet long, known as the "siding at Chipley," and is one of four used by CSX for train meetings along the Pensacola - Sneads route. All rail crossings over County roads are maintained by CSX.

D. Tri-County Airport. The airport is seven miles east of Bonifay in neighboring Holmes County and receives funding from Holmes, Jackson, and Washington counties. The Airport has a 4,014 foot runway supporting both general aviation and corporate aircraft activity. The site consists of approximately 80 acres of available land for industrial/commercial use. Although located in Holmes County, the site offers the potential of providing commercial industry in Washington County access to Tallahassee, Panama City, Jacksonville, and Pensacola.

E. Commercial Airports. Commercial aviation service in the County is provided by:

1. Tallahassee Municipal Airport located approximately 85 miles to the east.
2. Panama City International Airport. The present airport facility is approximately 30 miles to the south. Construction began in 2007 on a new regional airport facility located approximately 12 miles to the south with a completion date of 2009. This is expected to have a positive effect on growth for Washington County, especially Ebro. This will be discussed further in the Special Issues section.

3. Dothan Municipal Airport is located approximately 40 miles to the north of Washington County in Houston County, Alabama.
 4. Fort Walton Municipal Airport facility is 85 miles to the southwest, in Walton County.
- F. Ports. Port Panama City and Foreign Trade Zone #65 is located 46 miles south of Chipley, in Bay County. This is a deepwater terminal in St. Andrew Bay.
- G. Transportation for the Disadvantaged Program. The Tri-County Community Council (a nonprofit organization) presently serves as the designated provider for the Transportation Disadvantaged program in Washington County, working in concert with the West Florida Regional Planning Council (WFRPC). The Council provides client transportation services for local social services agencies for purposes such as medical, nutritional, shopping, education, and other purposes. The Council can also arrange transportation services for clients not sponsored by local social service agencies. Under legislation, the Washington County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board will be responsible for recommending the Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinator to the Transportation Disadvantaged Commission in Tallahassee. A County commissioner serves as the chairperson for the Washington County Council for Transportation for the Disadvantaged and assists in ensuring that the Florida Five-Year Transportation Disadvantaged Plan's established goal for the local community is met. Washington County has growth potential that will demand future transportation service for residents. Currently, the Sunshine Express serves Holmes, Washington, and Walton Counties with limited fixed-route service. With the addition of more fixed route service, Washington County will need to prepare to transition some riders from door-to-door service to fixed route. This will provide the riders more flexibility, independence and convenience. Additional funding approved by the legislature in 2002 has been eroded as transportation related expenses have increased.
- H. Share-A-Ride-Commuter Assistance Program. While provisions are made for this program in the Comprehensive Plan, it is not a functional program in Washington County and it is not clear if it has ever existed.

Recommendation: It is recommended that a determination be made as to whether this program exists at the current time. Eliminate or reword the description to fit current circumstances and provisions.

- I. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities. There are significant safety problems for both cyclists and pedestrians within the county. Later in this report, the need for sidewalks will be discussed. Currently, new subdivisions are required to address bicycle paths. Within the municipal areas there are some locations conducive to bicycling and a new bike path is currently planned and funded for the Chipley-Falling Waters State Park, while some rural areas of the County are not at all suitable for biking or pedestrian ways.

V. COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES WITH SUGGESTED CHANGES TO ADDRESS SHORTCOMINGS

These goals, objectives, and policies apply to all Washington County local governments including Caryville, Wausau, Ebro, and Vernon.

Assessment of Element Objectives and Policies.

Assessment The following assessment of the Transportation Element's Goals and Objectives is presented to analyze the element as it relates to the major issues listed in the Identified Issues section of this EAR, as well as to assess the overall performance of the Element. Specific attention has been placed on Identified Issue 6, 8 & 9. These Identified Issues address the protection of open space, the revision of the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code and the Public School Facilities Element. The Objectives, below, called for policies to support the needs for access to all types of facilities, to include both educational and recreational facilities in the future and this has been supported by policies in the PSFE. This element details many Objectives to secure more access to all portions of the county to include areas of open space throughout the County. Each Objective of this element has been assessed to determine if further revision is necessary for both the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code.

A. Purpose.

Recommendation: This purpose should be reworded as follows.

The purpose of the Transportation Element is to plan for a countywide multi-modal transportation system that meets all concurrency standards for safe, efficient, and economically feasible motorized and non-motorized transportation circulation as well as serves the needs of the people of Washington County.

B. Goals.

To provide a safe and efficient transportation system for all residents and visitors of Washington County.

Recommendation: This goal should be reworded as follows.

To provide and maintain a multi-modal transportation system that meets required concurrency standards and provides for safe, efficient, and effective travel for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, throughout Washington County.

Objective 1: Throughout the planning period, roadway facilities and levels of service shall be maintained and improved to at least maintain the minimum level of service (LOS).

Recommendation: This goal should be reworded as follows.

Throughout the planning period, roadway facilities and LOS shall be maintained and improved to maintain no less than minimum levels of service (LOS) until such time as an adequate multi-modal Transportation Plan has been adopted by the County that more accurately determines LOS standards.

Policy 1-1. All municipalities (except Chipley) Caryville, Ebro, Vernon, and Wausau have adopted the peak hour LOS standards for each roadway type.

Recommendation: This policy should be reworded to read as follows:

Washington County and all municipalities, with the exception of Chipley, shall adopt the Department of Transportation Peak PM/Hour trips as the measure of Level Of Service for all county roads. As such, each municipality agrees to accept the levels of services that are established by the County in order to maximize the efficient use and safety of roadway facilities among the County and other members of the Regional Transportation Partnership. This will effectively coordinate capital improvements planning with land use decisions to meet the requirement that adequate roadway facilities be available concurrent with the impacts of development.

Policy 1-2. Access to county roads shall be limited in the following manner by the county, municipalities, and FDOT to ensure traffic carrying capacity and safety: Using the functional classification as basis for determining the number of access point allowed; issuance of driveway permits; minimum number of driveways to make safe and reasonable access using the subdivision process; and assigning driveways located at the intersection of two roadways, the lower classification.

The County is currently meeting this policy. .

Policy 1-3. The County shall coordinate with the City of Chipley to request that FDOT begin preparation of a Corridor Management Study to identify possible solutions to relieve forecast levels of service deficiencies on SR 77 within Chipley's city limits.

This policy has been met by the County. A Washington County resolution dated January 27, 2000, requested that FDOT do a transportation corridor management study. FDOT scheduled a PD&E Study in conjunction with the four-lane project of SR 77 project from the Bay County line to the Jackson County Line that included the subject section of the road within the city limits of Chipley. The County will continue to work with the City of Chipley as the improvements and four-lane project for moves forward in the future. This policy can be eliminated or revised to reflect the following recommendation:

The County will coordinate with FDOT to assist the municipalities of Vernon and Wausau in order to identify and provide solutions to alleviate the hardships and disruption that will occur during the four-lane projects of SR 79 and SR 77.

- C. Recommended Changes to the Comprehensive Plan. It is recommended that the following policies be added to the EAR-based amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 1-4. For the purpose of identifying, scheduling and funding the major roadway improvements in the County, the Washington County Five-Year Paving and Road Improvement Plan will include a matrix system to evaluate and prioritize roads added the road improvement list. The matrix system will be utilized on maintenance issues, traffic issues, and connection of existing roadways and driveways, with priority being assigned as follows:

- a. Roads providing a connection from one major county paved road to another or to a state-maintained highway*
- b. Roads having a heavy daily traffic count*
- c. Roads partially paved should have paving completed*

Policy 1-5. All projects identified under the Washington County Road Paving and Improvement Program will be submitted to the Planning Office to be included in the Capital Improvements Element of this plan. At a minimum, submission will include the name of the improvement, the projected dates of commencement and completion, the cost of such improvement, which incorporates any in-kind contributions by the County and funding sources.

Policy 1-6. All roadway improvements shall be coordinated with adjacent counties where those counties might be impacted by a change in traffic patterns, capacity, or stormwater runoff.

Policy 1-7. Impacts from all proposed development(s) shall be assessed in order to ensure that the new trips created by such development(s) do not degrade the LOS below the adopted standard. If analysis of a specific development indicates that the impact will degrade the LOS below this standard, a plan to mitigate these impacts, such as proportionate fair share as outlined in the Land Development Code, shall be required as a condition of approval. If a generalized analysis indicates that degradation of LOS will occur, more specific traffic analysis (as detailed in subsection) and/or a speed study will be considered.

Policy 1-8. The Washington County Five-Year Paving and Road Improvement Plan shall include the policies that promote solicitation of state funds that will provide incentives for local governments and the private sector to help pay for critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce.

Policy 1-9. In cooperation with the Washington County District School Board, plans for new roads approved in Washington County will be constructed to provide adequate turning radius to turn buses around in parking facilities, driveways, and cul-de-sacs.

Policy 1-10. The County will place priority on the development and improvement of east to west corridors for vehicle traffic in the County. To that end, the completion of improvements and paving of Clayton Road from SR 77 to SR 79 will be actively pursued by the County.

Policy 1-11. The County will cooperate with and support FDOT in the improvements and widening of SR 77 and SR 79 to promote the efficient flow of traffic and increase the capacity of these roadways, which is crucial during hurricane evacuations.

Policy 1-12. Recognizing that the Elkcam Connector Road is an important addition to the east/west connection of SR 77 and US 231 for both evacuation and traffic concurrency for the south end of the County, the County will continue to actively pursue the Feasibility Corridor Study for the Elkcam Connector, East to US 231, under the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Joint Program Agreement (JPA) between the FDOT and Northwest Florida Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

Policy 1-13. It will be the policy to include the Town of Ebro roads into the County's paved road matrix for as long as the town receives no fuel tax income unlike the other municipalities, which do receive fuel tax income.

Policy 1-14. The County will establish a road paving and improvement program to be referred to as the Washington County Five-Year Paving and Road Improvement Plan to identify the funding sources, establish schedules, and prioritize all road paving and improvement programs within the County road system.

Objective 2: Throughout the planning period if infrastructure is not in place, the development shall bear the burden of the cost of roadway improvements necessitated by its future impacts to the roadway network generated by the development through the adopted development review and approved process.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

The current policy of the Board of County Commissioners grants approval to final plats only when the developer-financed infrastructure is the proper infrastructure and includes paved road construction, traffic signs, stormwater runoff, fire suppression systems, etc. Development permits and/or certificates of occupancy are not issued until the required infrastructure is in place. Note that this policy is fully supported by the Land Development Code; it remains permissible for developers to post cash bonds for the purpose of ensuring installation of infrastructure.

Policy 2-1: The principle of equitable cost participation shall be used in the following manner as a guide in development approval decisions, including allocation of costs among private parties benefiting from or creating the need for transportation improvements:

- a. Developers may be required to pay their fair share as a condition for development approval based on impact fees, special assessments or other local exaction methods.
- b. Existing land users who benefit from easier access shall be required to participate

in the cost of the roadway improvement in the form of user fees or special assessments. New construction, which is located on land improved with easier access, may be required to pay a pro-rata share of the costs.

- c. Provisions shall be made in development orders to include mitigation of adverse impacts on the State highway system

Recommendation: It is recommended that Policy 2-1-c be amended to read:

Provisions shall be made in development orders to include mitigation of adverse impacts on the State highway system only as approved by the Florida Department of Transportation.

The Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code make provisions for Proportionate Fair Share establishing a method whereby the impacts of development on transportation facilities can be mitigated by the cooperative efforts of the public and private sectors as required by and in a manner consistent with Chapter 163.3180(16), F.S.

Objective 3: Throughout the planning period, all rights-of-way for future roadway improvements necessary for adequate traffic flow and arterial spacing shall be acquired through purchase or dedication.

Recommendation: This objective should be reworded to read as follows:

Throughout the planning period, policies for county-owned and future rights-of-ways acquisition and maintenance shall be subject to the policies as outlined in The Washington County Five-Year Paving and Road Improvement Plan, the Land Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 3-1: Dedication of rights-of-way and easements for required improvements to support development traffic and to maintain adequate levels of service on the roadway network shall be required from private sector developers through the adopted development review and approval process in the following manner:

- a. Development-related improvements shall be at the expense of those that benefit to include donation or dedication of rights-of-way to the extent legally permissible.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Note: With regard to new development, the dedication of all rights-of-way are now required to be included on all new plats whether the development is on newly constructed roads or on existing County-maintained roadways.

- b. The value of the land taken (if the transfer of property is to be compensated by the entity building the roadway), shall be assessed at a rate which does not consider an inflated value due to the improved or new roadway, but be

based on the value of the land in its condition and use prior to the roadway improvements.

The County is currently meeting this policy. Note: Fair Market Value is used to determine compensation for taking of property.

Policy 3-2: Rights-of-way shall be pursued or reserved as far in the future as possible for planned roadway projects so as to minimize excessive costs for land purchases, and so that the locations and can be considered in ongoing transportation system planning.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Objective 4. Throughout the planning period, existing and future rights-of-way and county easements shall be protected from building encroachment.

Recommendation: The objective should reflect changes and broader policies as established by the Board of Commissioners by ordinance in 2007. This objective should be reworded as follows:

Throughout the planning period, existing and future rights-of-way shall be protected from the encroachment of any structure of any type, including fences, posts, signs, or any obstructions other than mailboxes and newspaper receptacles for a distance of two feet.

Policy 4-1: Building setbacks shall be maintained at an adequate distance from roadways to allow for future widening as determined by federal and state transportation guidelines and the adopted in the Land Development Code. The following minimum criteria/procedures shall be adhered to in the implementation of this policy:

- a. Dedication of rights-of-way necessary for roadway improvements identified in this Comprehensive Plan, as well as in any other state and regional long-range plans shall be initiated when such dedications are necessary to complete such improvements.

Note: To allow for roadway improvements, the dedication of all right-of-ways are now required on all new plats whether the development is on newly constructed roads or on existing County-maintained roadways.

- b. Setback requirements for building structures from roadways shall be adequate for eventual widening of the roadway as well as the minimization or mitigation of potentially adverse impacts such as noise, narrow pedestrian walkways and the close proximity of vehicular traffic to habitable structures. The determination of appropriate setback distances should be a coordinated procedure involving input from FOOT;

Recommendation: All development setbacks in the county should be reviewed to ascertain adequacy under this policy. The following changes should be considered.

1. Arterial Roadways – 100 feet development setback from right-of-way
2. Collector Roadway - 60 feet development setback from right-of-way
3. All Other Local Roadways - 40 feet development setback from right-of-way

Objective 5: Throughout the planning period, high accident rate locations shall be identified and action (roadway and/or signalization improvements) shall be taken to alleviate the hazard(s).

The County is currently meeting this objective. . At times, these are identified by the County Traffic Safety Team. (Insert additional information here when received from FDOT).

Policy 5-1: The five (5) highest accident rate areas determined by the County and municipalities shall be analyzed annually for improvements to lessen the accident occurrence.

The County is currently meeting this policy. . The Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) does, at times, identify the high accident areas and suggest follow-ups with the proper agency for solutions to diminish or alleviate the dangers to pedestrians and automobile traffic. (Insert additional information here when received from FDOT)

Objective 6: Provisions shall be maintained in the LDR's, which ensure safe and adequate movement of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy 6-1: Adequate pedestrian circulation and safety shall be ensured as a component of highway system management, with accomplishment through traffic analysis and roadway improvements.

- a. Pedestrian movement and safety studies shall be conducted as needed to determine high travel patterns;
- b. Remedial action shall be taken by the County to mitigate safety problems where conditions have been determined to be unacceptable;
- c. Sidewalks shall be provided where feasible and appropriate along all roadways in or near residential areas which lead to: 1) schools; 2) commercial centers; and 3) employment centers, where the need for such facilities have been identified.

The County is currently meeting this policy. However, it is recommended that in all subdivisions with 10 or more lots, sidewalks and curbs with gutters be required. The County is currently considered an agriculturally-based area and the need for these facilities are not always understood by developers and public. With continued growth and population expansion, these facilities will be vital to the County. When schools are built adjacent to municipalities, sidewalks are imperative to the safety of students. Adequate sidewalk facilities will help alleviate the traffic problems associated with school rush hours in the morning and afternoon.

Note: An alternative to curb and gutter is the construction of natural swales as stormwater system components- these BMPs are often effective in more rural areas.

Policy 6-2: In accordance with the adopted LDR's, all Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) shall include dedicated facilities for the movement of pedestrians and bicycles.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Policy 6-3: Bicycle facilities, pedestrian walkways, and associated facilities shall be included as integral components of roadways, with priority of implementation being oriented to the establishment of networks along roadways between residential centers and schools, employment and retail commercial areas, and recreation and other public facilities.

The County is currently meeting this policy.

Policy 6-4: The County shall review all proposed development for its accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic needs,

1. All Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) shall provide sidewalks adjacent to all roadways. Sidewalks shall also be provided where feasible and appropriate along all roadways in or near residential areas. Location of sidewalks shall be consistent with planned roadway improvements.
2. All major subdivision projects abutting collector or arterial roadways shall provide sidewalks adjacent to the collector or arterial roadway.
3. Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of all paved residential streets where the average lot width at the street is sixty (60) feet or less.
4. Sidewalks shall be provided on one side of all paved residential streets where the average lot width at the street is greater than sixty (60) feet but less than one hundred fifty (150) feet.
5. Where a proposed development includes improvements or new construction of collector or arterial facilities, facility designs shall include provisions for sidewalks or bikeways within the rights-of-way.
6. Residential projects adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of an activity center comprised of commercial, office, service, or recreation activities may be required by the Planning Commission to provide pedestrian and bicycle access from the development to the activity center.
7. Pedestrian-ways or crosswalks, not less than ten (10) feet wide with sidewalk meeting the requirements of this Code, may be required by the Development Administrator or Planning Commission to be placed in the center of blocks more than eight hundred (800)

feet long where deemed necessary to provide circulation or access to residential centers and schools, employment and retail commercial areas, transportation, recreation and other public facilities.

8. Design and Construction Standards. Design and construction of sidewalks, bikeways, or other footpaths shall conform to the requirements of the most recent edition of the FDOT Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Manual as well as provisions for access by physically handicapped persons. Sidewalks should be required on both sides of the street. Both the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code need to be revised to require that sidewalks be required on both sides of the street.

Objective 7-1: The County shall maintain design criteria for landscaping and signs along road ways as set forth in the adopted LDR's.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

Recommendation: Two issues of the planning period involve roadside memorials and campaign signs. Roadside memorials are now allowed by county ordinance and will be included in the update of the Land Development Code. Through an ordinance, the County has addressed campaign sign issues including proliferation, location, and perpetuation. This issue will be further addressed through the Land Development Code with a revision of Article 7 - Signs.

Policy 7-1: The County shall maintain design criteria for landscaping and signs along roadways as set forth in the adopted LDR's.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

Objective 8: Throughout the planning period, traffic circulation planning shall be coordinated with the future land uses shown on the Future Land Use Maps of this Plan, the FDOT 6-year Transportation Plan, and with the municipalities of Chipley, Caryville, Ebro, Vernon, and Wausau in order to update the element as necessary.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

Policy 8-1: The County shall review for compatibility with this Element, the traffic circulation programs of unincorporated areas of the County, and the municipalities as they may be amended in the future.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

Policy 8-2: All proposed amendments to this Transportation Element shall include a statement of findings supporting such proposals and the consistency of each proposal with the currently adopted Future Land Use Maps.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

Policy 8-3: Throughout the planning period, the County shall communicate verbally and in writing with FDOT and the municipalities to insure coordination between all entities and keep informed of pertinent issues and changes in land use and the associated impacts.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

Policy 8-4: The County shall remain informed of current regional transportation issues through written notification of changes in land use pertaining to proposed and or through periodic telephone conversations with FDOT.

The County is currently meeting this objective.

Recommendation: The following policies should be added to Objective 8 of the Transportation Element.

Policy 8-5: When necessary, the County will develop interlocal agreements with neighboring counties and Alabama that upgrade traffic circulation policies and transportation capacity to provide for the effectiveness of evacuations by residents of surrounding counties and Washington County.

Policy 8-6: It will be the policy for the County to deny permits for any development that reduces the LOS below the adopted level of service unless one of the exceptions in 9J-50055(3-c) is applicable.

Policy 8-7: The County will not place or construct or otherwise make available any roadway in any environmentally sensitive area that will provide access to or encourage development of such areas.

Policy 8-8: The County will perform the necessary PD&E study to examine the possibility of establishing an east/west connector between SR 77 and SR 79 in the southern section of the County between CR 279 and SR 20.

Policy 8-9: Through the Emergency Management Office, the County will notify the appropriate outside agency to handle a major transportation incident in the County.

Recommendation: These policies should be added to the Transportation Element.

Objective 9: The county shall maintain as part of its LDR's provisions (design standards, etc.) to provide safe and convenient, onsite traffic flow, taking into consideration necessary motorized and non-motorized vehicle parking.

Policy 9-1: The site development plan review applicable to all development will ensure that adequate and safe on-site traffic flow and parking conditions will exist for pedestrians and motorized and non-motorized vehicles.

Policy 9-2: The County and municipalities shall ensure through future recreational improvement projects, that adequate parking facilities are available in all developed and recreational areas in the County.

Objective 10: The following objective should be moved from Objective 1, renumbered to Objective 10 and elaborated on as follows:

Objective 10: *Access to county roads shall be limited in the following manner by the county, municipalities, and FDOT to ensure traffic carrying capacity and safety.*

Using the functional classification as the basis for determining the number of access points allowed; issuance of driveway permits; minimum number of driveways to make safe and reasonable access using the subdivision process; and assigning driveways located at the intersection of two roadways, the lower classification.

Policy 10-1. Driveway permits will be required for any access point to any state roadway, and no building permit will be issued without the issuance of the necessary permit from the Florida Department of Transportation to the developer or builder.

Policy 10-2. Driveway permits are required for any access point to any county roadway; therefore, it is the policy of the County that no building permit will be issued without the issuance of the necessary permit or waiver from the Washington County Public Works Department to the developer or builder.

Policy 10-3. All future developments will be required to include the installation of at least one driveway to access each lot (parcel) as identified in the plans or plat for the development. These driveways should be installed to meet County standards and at the cost of the developer.

Policy 10-4. Driveways will be considered part of the new infrastructure and are subject to the same construction and installation rules as other required infrastructure (paving, drainage, holding ponds, etc. The developer and property owner will be required to construct and maintain driveways in a manner that ensures that emergency first responders can readily access the residence or other structures located on the property.

Policy 10-5. The County will allow the use of shared driveways as a viable way of providing access to more than one lot where circumstances and practicality allow for this (normally only on a FDOT roadway).

Policy 10-6. The rules of the Washington County Land Development code will be followed with regard to driveway installation and permitting.

Policy 10-7. Using an orderly and uniform street numbering system to provide for the efficient delivery of mail, packages, goods delivery, and utility services, only the 9-1-1 Coordinator will assign street names and street numbers to new or existing structures or driveways.

Policy 10-8. It will be the policy of the County that no building permits are issued without the issuance of a property 9-1-1 address.

Policy 10-9. It will be the responsibility of each property owner to permanently and properly display the 9-1-1 address assigned to property within the immediate vicinity of the driveway that provides ingress/egress to that portion of the property where residential structures exist.

Policy 10-10. All driveways, whether from a public or private roadway will be required to have a driveway permit prior to the issuance of any building permits.

The following Objective should be added to the Transportation Element.

Objective 11: Rights-of-Ways. The County development regulations shall require the provision of safe and convenient on-site traffic flow for existing and new development rights-of-way within the County.

Policy 11-1. Rights-of-way will be actively pursued in order to maintain, widen paved and dirt roads, and install drainage structures and devices in order to protect both the roadway and the private property adjoining the roadway.

Policy 11-2. In order to reduce the needed recovery efforts and make right-of-way maintenance easier, neater, and safer, only buried utilities will be permitted within new developments.

Policy 11-3. The County will cooperate with all major electrical transmission and gas companies to ensure that all transmission lines are placed on the county rights-of-way to minimize any interruption to the roadway or the right-of-way.

Policy 11-4. Abandonment of right-of-way will be by petitions in accordance with Sect10.03.02-05

The following objective and policies should be added to the element.

Objective 12: The County will develop and utilize a process referred to as the Washington County Bridge Improvement and Safety Program that will ensure that all bridges in the County are inspected and maintained at a designated Level of Service (LOS) to ensure safe traffic circulation.

Policy 12-1: The County will assist the FDOT where needed with the department's inspections of all bridges that exceed 30 feet in length.

Policy 12-2: The County will establish an inspection schedule to ensure that all bridges less than 30 feet are inspected for Level of Service (LOS) to ensure safe use by the public.

Policy 12-3: The County's bridge improvement and safety program will establish a rating scale similar to FDOT's scale if I to 9 with 9 being "excellent."

Policy 12-4: The County will assign a deficient label if the bridge inspection scores a 4 or less.

Policy 12-5: The County will schedule required maintenance as soon as possible for any bridge that attains a deficient label.

Policy 12-6: It will be the policy of the county to place load limits on bridges that are identified as having a deficient LOS and retain that load limit until the necessary repairs are made and the bridge is declared safe by the County engineer.

Policy 9-7: Through the Emergency Management Office, the County will notify the appropriate outside agency to handle a major transportation incident in the County.

Recommendation: This objective and policies should be added to the Transportation Element.

VI. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT SUMMARY

Overall, the entire Transportation Element needs to be revised to include requirements for Levels of Services (LOS) Standards, the Five-Year Washington County Transportation Plan, 9-1-1 addressing requirements, financially feasible road improvements, and other revisions that clearly reflect the changes resulting from new growth and growth management laws.

Though LOS standards has not been established for county roads, maintenance routines are continually in progress to ensure that all roads meet maintenance criteria that promotes the evenly distributed and safe flow of traffic. An inventory of county-maintained roads has been completed and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The list is updated as the Board of County Commissioners accepts new roads by resolution as county-maintained. Only after being approved by the Planning Office using the prescribed methods in the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code will new roads be added to the list. New roads should not be added to this list without being reviewed by the Planning Department. It has been the County's policy since 1999 not to accept any new constructed roads unless they are paved to County standards. The County maintains communication with the Florida Department of Transportation regarding both local and state transportation issues related to new transportation facilities, new development and maintenance to roadways within the County. The County should only select projects to pursue based on the financial feasibility and these projects must also appear on the Capital Improvements Element schedule.

The paving of Clayton Road as an east/west should be accomplished as quickly as possible. Further, another east/west connector should be established in the southern section of the County between CR 279 and SR 20.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies need to be developed regarding the recent adoption of the Impact Fee Ordinance

Table 8-4. FDOT Work Program for Washington County 2007		
Description		Type of Work
Bahoma Road from SR 273 to Jackson County line		Road construction - 2 lane
CR166 Alligator Creek Bridge # 610036		Bridge replacement
CR 276 Piney Grove from SR 277 Vernon Hwy to CR276 Clayton Road		Widen / Resurface existing lanes
CR 278 Bonnet Pond from Roche Road connector to Mud Hill Road		Road reconstruction - 2 lane
CR 280 Corbin Road from CR 273 Orange Hill to Jackson County line		Widen / Resurface existing lanes
Duncan Community Road over Flat Creek Bridge #614131		Bridge replacement
River Road over Gum Creek Bridge #614134		Bridge replacement
SR 10 (US 90) Holmes & Alligator Creek Bridges #'s 610001 & 610002		Bridge repair / rehabilitation
SR 273 from SR 77 Main Street to Appx. @ Alligator Creek		Resurfacing
SR 277 Vernon Hwy from SR 79 in Vernon to SR US 90		Resurfacing
SR 77 at Nadia Avenue / Wendy's Intersection		Traffic Signals
SR 77 from Bay County line to Jackson County line	Emerging SIS	PD & E / EMO Study
SR 77 from Bay County line to North of CR 279	Emerging SIS	Prelim eng. For future capacity
SR 77 from S CR 279 Clayton Rd to N of Blue Lake Rd	Emerging SIS	Prelim eng. For future capacity
SR 79 from N Environmental Rd to Strickland Rd	Emerging SIS Connector	Add lanes & reconstruct
SR 79 from N of Mill Branch Br. To N of Reedy Branch Br	Emerging SIS Connector	Right Of Way - Future capacity
SR 79 from Strickland Rd to N of Mill Branch Br.	Emerging SIS Connector	Add lanes & reconstruct
SR 79 Holmes Creek Bridge # 610008	Emerging SIS Connector	Bridge replace & add lanes
SR 79 Open Creek Bridge #610910	Emerging SIS Connector	Bridge replacement
SR 8 (I- 10) Cypress Slough Bridge #'s 610951 & 610942	SIS	Bridge repair / rehabilitation
Washington Blvd from Elkcam Blvd to Hartford Blvd		Resurfacing
Source: Florida Department of Transportation		