THE CITY OF EVERSON

Comprehensive Land Use Plan
2004-2024

Adoption Date: December 14, 2004

6. Transportation Element

INTRODUCTION

The Growth Management Act of 1990 (RCW 36.70A) changes the way that cities in Washington State plan and develop comprehensive land use plans. The Growth Management Act requires fast-growing counties and the communities in them to consider and coordinate transportation and capital facilities planning with their comprehensive land use plans. The Act requires that the transportation chapters of the cities' comprehensive plans be consistent with plans for adjacent jurisdictions and the region.

Pursuant to the Growth Management Act, the transportation element of each comprehensive plan must include the following elements:

1. Inventory of all transportation facilities and services (land, air and water including transit alignments);
2. Land-use assumptions used in estimating travel forecasts;
3. Identification of system expansion needs and transportation system management needs to meet current and future demands;
4. Level of service standards for all arterial and transit routes;
5. Specific actions and requirements for bringing into compliance any facilities or services that are below the established level of service;
6. Traffic forecasts (based on an adopted land-use plan) to provide information on the location, timing, and capacity needs of the future;
7. Finance, including a multi-year financing plan and identification of additional funding sources if there is a funding shortfall;
8. Intergovernmental coordination; and
9. Demand management strategies.

GOALS AND POLICIES

In consideration of the needs and issues identified within this Transportation Element, the City of Everson adopts the following goals and policies:

Goal: Provide transportation systems that provide convenient and safe access to employment, educational and recreational opportunities for citizens and visitors, and that provide for the movement of goods and services.

Policy: Control access to arterials and connectors in order to minimize disruption of traffic.

Policy: Front new subdivisions on connectors and arterials rather than state routes.

Policy: Establish connectivity between new subdivisions, benefitting pedestrians, automobiles, utilities, and emergency services.

Policy: Keep industrial / commercial truck traffic off residential and local streets.

Policy: Within the city's financial ability to do so, bring old substandard roads up to standard.

Policy: Within the city's financial ability to do so, implement the improvements listed above under "system expansion needs," "system management needs" and "system maintenance needs."

Goal: Coordinate transportation planning and construction with neighboring jurisdictions and with the state.

Policy: For segments of state routes within city limits, set an LOS identical to that adopted by WSDOT for those segments.

Policy: Set LOS "C" (V/C ratio between 0.7 and 0.8 during p.m. peak hours) for city-designated arterial streets.

Policy: Participate in the regional (county-wide) planning process coordinated by WCCOG.

Policy: Coordinate with WSDOT with regard to state routes.

Policy: Coordinate with Whatcom County with regard to county arterials and collectors.

Policy: Coordinate with WTA with regard to transit.

Policy: Coordinate closely with Whatcom County during annexations and work toward solutions providing long-term benefit to citizens of both the city and the region.

Goal: Build and operate facilities as efficiently as possible.

Policy: Maintain and preserve the existing system.

Policy: Aggressively pursue low-cost funds such as grants and subsidized loans.

Policy: Undertake effective planning and build only what is planned.

Policy: Coordinate road projects with utility projects.

Policy: Adopt road design standards that are sensible and that do not needlessly impose cost.

Goal: Allocate costs fairly among those that benefit.

Policy: Use SEPA to mitigate off-site impacts associated with new development and redevelopment.

Policy: Initiate the use of LIDs, in conjunction with general funds, to reconstruct substandard local streets and sidewalks.

Policy: Use "no-protest" agreements, when appropriate, as a means of allowing approval of individual small-scale projects, while still providing for eventual construction of necessary improvements through formation of LIDs.

Policy: Facilities providing benefit to both newcomers and existing residents should be paid for by both groups, with each group paying a share proportional to their corresponding benefit.

Goal: Encourage energy conservation and minimize impacts to the environment.

Policy: Where feasible, encourage non-motorized transportation by developing marked on-street bike lanes on city arterial and connector streets.

Policy: Develop park-and-ride facilities when feasible.

Policy: Work with the WCCOG and major employers to encourage commute trip reduction.

Policy: Control stormwater run-off in order to reduce impacts to ground and surface waters.

Policy: Monitor and limit, where feasible, transportation of hazardous materials through the wellhead protection area.

GMA REQUIREMENTS

1. Inventory of Transportation Facilities

The Existing Conditions Report in this chapter includes an inventory and assessment of transportation facilities in the City of Everson.

2. Land Use Assumptions

The Land Use element of this comprehensive plan gives a detailed description of the land use assumptions for the twenty-year planning period. Additional forecasts may be found in the Housing element and the Capital Facilities element. Map 9a in the Capital Facilities element shows the expected pattern of development on which this transportation plan is based.

3. Identification of Needs

A citizen participation process identified the transportation issues of primary importance to the community. These issues were used to determine the areas of analysis in developing the transportation plan for the community.

The Citizen Participation Process

Citizen participation is key to developing a thorough plan and obtaining support for the plan. A Community Transportation Workshop was held on September 9, 1993 to identify the needs of the community. Twenty-four people attended the meeting. An opinion survey was distributed at the workshop, and in addition a number of people telephoned the WCCOG office for a copy of the survey. The meeting focused on the draft goals and objectives which were displayed, and on collecting citizen input on issues and needs. The workshop and opinion survey results are found in the Public Participation section later in this chapter. Multiple public hearings were also part of the process of adopting this transportation chapter.

Following is a list of community concerns as identified during the Community Workshop and reviewed by the Citizen Advisory Committee:

- The high speed limit within the city limits along Everson Road, south of the bridge. This portion of the road has many dangerous areas due to short sight distances.
- The high speed limit near the primary school on Everson-Goshen Road.
- Through truck traffic.
- Consideration of a second river crossing to alleviate through auto and truck traffic through Everson.
- Expansion of sidewalks throughout the city, especially along roads used by children going to school.
- Analysis of the intersections at Washington/Main Street, Kale/Everson, Aspen/Everson-Goshen, and Lincoln/Everson.

The following needs were identified by the City of Everson based on the inventory and assessment of existing transportation facilities and the recommendations of WCCOG.

System Expansion Needs

- Build connectors at north (between Trapline and Van Buren) and at south (between Mission and Everson-Goshen) in order to provide alternatives to the use of SR-544.
- Improve pedestrian access along both sides of SR-544 southwest of the Nooksack River.
- Adopt a priority list for acquisition of right-of-way for trail systems. These segments may include the following:
    1. For the Bay-to-Baker Trail, the section from Chestnut St. south to Mission Road.
    2. Right-of-way adjacent to the Nooksack River for a trail connecting the Bay-to-Baker Trail with Riverside Park, and right-of-way along W. Third Street for a trail connecting the north end of Riverside Park with the Bay-to-Baker Trail.

System Management Needs

- Adopt functional classifications for the city's street system. The highest classification should be "minor arterial," on those segments for which federal funding is anticipated.
- Adopt state design standards or, as a minimum, AASHTO design standards for the city's street system.
- Signalize major intersections along SR-544 when conditions warrant.

System Maintenance Needs

- Reconstruct existing, but failing, sidewalks (e.g., in the central business district between W. Main and Washington St.).
- Reconstruct substandard roads in order to preserve and enhance the existing system.

4. Level of Service Standards

The Growth Management Act requires that the transportation chapter of the county and city comprehensive plans set regionally coordinated level of service (LOS) standards on all principal arterial and transit routes. The definition of level of service is left to the discretion of the local jurisdiction.

Level of service is a road-use standard used to judge how well a road operates. Typically, LOS is based on the amount of time delay experienced by a motorist at a traffic signal or along a road segment. For roadways, LOS A means that the roadway is free-flowing and is free from congestion. LOS F means that the route is so heavily congested that traffic no longer flows in a steady stream—the number of cars exceeds the road's capacity. Although levels of service are normally defined qualitatively, a standard set of engineering calculations assigns LOS rankings to roads, intersections, or other facilities. Comparing traffic volume with the capacity of a given route segment defines existing levels of service. That same comparison, using projected future traffic volume, yields insight on future levels of service.

Volume to Capacity Ratio

Everson levels of service will be defined in terms of the peak hour volume-to-capacity ratio (V/C ratio). The V/C ratio is calculated by dividing existing or projected volume of a particular road segment by its capacity in trips per day or per peak hour. If the result ranges from zero (0) to one (1), the section is operating within capacity. As the result nears one (1) and exceeds it, the section will begin to operate less efficiently and safely. Increasing volume-to-capacity ratios imply that as growth occurs, road improvements may have to be made to maintain levels of service.

While a relationship between V/C ratio and level of service is not strictly defined, the relationship shown in Table 6-1 is typically regarded as a standard and is considered as such in defining the level of service classifications for the City of Everson.

Table 6-1 Relationship between Level of Service and V/C Ratios

Level of Service	V/C Ratio Range	Typical Flow Conditions
A	0.0 to 0.5	Free flow; individual users virtually unaffected by presence of others in traffic stream
B	0.5 to 0.7	Within range of stable flow, but presence of others in traffic stream begins to affect individual behavior and freedom to maneuver within traffic stream
C	0.7 to 0.8	Within range of stable flow; individual users significant affected by presence of others
D	0.8 to 0.9	High density, but stable flow; speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted; ability to maneuver within traffic stream becomes difficult
E	0.9 to 1.0	Operating conditions are at or near capacity level; all speeds reduced to low, uniform value; freedom to maneuver within traffic stream extremely difficult
F	Greater than 1.0	Forced or breakdown flow; amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount that can transverse point and queue forms; operations within queue characterized by extremely unstable stop-and-go waves

Everson Level of Service

Figure 6-3 in the Existing Conditions Report in this chapter shows that all of Everson's primary transportation network is currently operating at LOS C or better.

The Washington State Department of Transportation has adopted, as an element of its State Highway System Plan, LOS C for state highways in rural areas and LOS D for state highways in established or projected urban areas. Whatcom County is proposing LOS C for county roads, and levels of service matching the affected cities' LOS in Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). As seen in the policies above, Everson has adopted LOS C for city-designated arterial streets, and an LOS matching WSDOT's LOS for state routes within city limits.

5. Action Needed to Correct Existing Deficiencies

There are no facilities in the City of Everson that are currently operating below the established LOS standard.

6. Traffic Forecasts

Traffic forecasts were made using TModel2 transportation modeling software. The Transportation Demand Modeling section in this chapter includes a description of the modeling process. The model produced forecasts of the traffic volumes on Everson streets under two future scenarios: "expected growth" and "full build out." "Expected growth" means less-than-complete development of the potential available land in various zoning designations. This amount of development would not result in significant traffic congestion (all roads would continue to operate at LOS C or better, except for a short segment of Everson-Goshen Road which would be at LOS D). "Full build out" means complete use of potentially available land in the various zoning designations. This level of development would result in traffic congestion on SR-544, decreasing its level of service from LOS C to LOS F. Full build out as described in the Land Use chapter is, however, unlikely within this planning period.

7. Finance

Multi-Year Financing Plan

The City of Everson annually adopts a Six Year Transportation Program as required by the State of Washington. The adoption of the Six Year Program qualifies the city to receive either Urban Arterial Trust Account (UATA) or Transportation Improvement Account (TIA) funds. The city's Six Year Transportation Program displays all roadway improvements scheduled during the six-year period (Table 6-2 City of Everson Six Year Transportation Program: 1996-2001). Most projects upgrade or reconstruct road segments that serve SR-544. Projects receiving state funds require a local percentage match. The 1996-2001 Six Year Transportation Program sets aside $580,000 of local funds for road improvements, matched with $1,283,000 from state sources.

Table 6-2 City of Everson Six Year Transportation Program: 1996-2001

Project	Work	Non-Local	Local Funds	Cost	Expenditure

	Description	Funds			Year
Mission Rd. from south city limits to Robinson St.	Reconstruction	$1,223,000	$64,000	$1,287,000	Years 4 thru 6
N. Harkness from W. Main to W. 2nd St.	Reconstruction	$0	$67,000	$67,000	Year 2
N. Harkness from W. 2nd St. to W. 4th St.	Regrade, paving and widening	$0	$181,000	$181,000	Years 4 thru 6
Bay to Baker Trail	Construction	$60,000	$15,000	$75,000	Year 1
W. 3rd St. from Blankers St. to Park Dr.	Reconstruction	$0	$216,000 (developers)	$216,000	Year 1
Miscellaneous	Improvements	$0	$37,000	$37,000	Years 4 thru 6
Totals 1996-2001		$1,283,000	$580,000	$1,863,000	

Funding Sources

The Capital Facilities chapter identifies a funding deficit for local funds within the planning period and stipulates that new local revenue sources must be developed. As an alternative, the needed improvements may have to be delayed or implemented in stages.

8. Intergovernmental Coordination

Everson's policies supporting intergovernmental coordination are in the Goals and Policies section above.

9. Demand Management Strategies

Everson's policies supporting demand management strategies, including development of non-motorized transportation and park-and-ride facilities, are in the Goals and Policies section above.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Analysis of existing conditions provides a baseline of information about the city's transportation system: existing traffic conditions, roadway classifications and conditions, available non-automotive transportation options and currently identified needs. An inventory of these items, required by the Growth Management Act of 1990, provides a basis for developing the city's transportation plan.

The two transportation features defining Everson's form are the Nooksack River, which splits the city into eastern and western portions, and State Route 544 (Figure 6-1 Everson Road Map). SR-544 approaches town from the west along Pole Road, crosses the Everson Road bridge, and becomes Main Street through downtown to the Nooksack city limits. Other roads providing access to Everson include Nolte Road and Stickney Island Road from the west, Mission Road and Emmerson Road from the south, and Trapline Road and Van Buren Road from the north.

Roadway Classifications

There is a direct relationship between functional classification and design standards. Federal, state, and local agencies adopt roadway design standards to carry certain traffic volumes at specific speeds. The American Association of State Highway Traffic Officials (AASHTO) has adopted road design standards that are the bench mark accepted for most road designs. The city has adopted by ordinance the AASHTO standards for new roads as part of the city's subdivision development standards. However, these standards are not applicable to existing city roads.

R.C.W. 35.78.10 and R.C.W. 47.26.180 require jurisdictions to adopt a street classification system consistent with state and federal requirements. R.C.W. 35.78.010 identifies the classification system and definitions by which cities are to classify the street system. Everson has not passed an ordinance defining the city's functional classification of its street network. For example, SR-544 is classified as a major collector on the federal functional classification system by WSDOT. Main Street (SR-544) and Washington Street have been described by various city officials as arterials, collectors and local roads. The conflict in description of the local roads system makes it difficult to identify deficiencies on the system.

Washington State Department of Transportation Classification System

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has developed functional classifications for roads in rural areas based on R.C.W. 35.78.010 and 47.26.180. This classification system is based on the federal functional classification system.

Under this system, SR-544, W. Main Street and N. Washington Street/Van Buren Road are major collectors. All other roads within the city limits and the UGA are local access and not classified under this system.

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Whatcom County Road Classification System

Whatcom County Engineering has been responsible for the classification of rural roads, and in the past has been responsible for the classification of the streets within rural cities. Whatcom County roads entering the city are classified by Whatcom County Code 12.08.020. Whatcom County bases the county classification system on the state and federal functional classification system. Van Buren Road is classified as a major collector by Whatcom County. The remaining county roads entering the city are classified as either minor collectors or local access roads.

Access Control Classification

R.C.W. 47.50.010 requires that all state routes be designated by an access control classification. Highway access classifications identify the number of and distance between entrances on a particular roadway. Because turning movements disturb the traffic flow, roads with fewer access points will accommodate higher speeds. In July 1993, the Washington State Department of Transportation established classifications for all state highways. SR-544 is a Class 4 highway within the Everson city limits. Class 4 highways are those characterized by moderate speeds, moderate volumes, and short trips serving inter-city and inter-community travel. Posted speed limits are between 30 to 35 mph, intersections are a minimum 0.5 miles apart and driveways generally are at least 250 feet apart.

City Design Standards

Everson city ordinances include a limited number of requirements directly related to transportation issues. The city has adopted off-street parking requirements (Ordinance Number 282, Chapter 19.39) to meet the parking needs of residents. An exception exists for the designated core area (Main Street), where off-street parking requirements do not apply (Chapter 19.39.050). No mandatory street design standards have been adopted.

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes represent the number of vehicles that pass a point on a road during a specified time. Because volumes vary hourly, daily and seasonally, roads are normally designed to meet the highest volume (peak). Congestion occurs when the traffic volume equals and exceeds the road's capacity. As the population of a region grows, traffic increases proportionally, causing congestion on roadways. Figure 6-2 Current - Peak Hour Traffic Volumes shows the p.m. peak traffic volumes along the main arterials within the city. The highest peak volumes occur on SR-544 (Everson-Goshen Road, Mead Avenue, Kale Street, Everson Road, Main Street) and to a degree on North Washington.

As discussed earlier (section 4. -- Level of Service Standards), existing traffic volumes are so low that all of Everson's primary transportation network is currently operating at LOS C or better, as is shown in Figure 6-3 Current LOS and V/C Ratios.

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Pavement Condition

Most Everson arterials are in good condition, as shown on Figures 6-4a and 6-4b Pavement Conditions. This information was collected during a "windshield survey" and does not reflect an engineering analysis of pavement conditions. Streets needing repairs based on a poor or good-fair pavement condition rating include the following:

S. Washington Street
Lincoln Street
Blair Drive
Reeds Lane west of Emmerson Road
Shuksan Way between Baker Avenue and E. Third Street
W. Third Street east of Park Drive
W. Second Street east of Park Drive
W. First Street east of Park Drive
Blankers Street
Roeder Street east of Freda Avenue
Strandell Street
Robinson Street between Mead and Mission
Mission Road south of Chestnut Street
Chestnut Street east of Arrowhead Lane
Nolte Road north of Kale Street

Street Curbs

Curbing is present on less than one-third of all Everson streets. Curb locations are shown in Figures 6-5a and 6-5b Curb Locations.

Accidents and Safety

Analysis of five years of accident records provided trends and location information about roads with high accident rates. During the January 1988 to July 1993 period, 48 accidents occurred. Table 6-3 Accidents at Major Intersections 1988-1993 details the accident locations and associated 1993 peak hour intersection traffic volumes. This accident information represents only where accidents occurred at an intersection and a police report was filed.

As part of the September 9, 1993 Everson transportation workshop, residents were asked to identify unsafe intersections. Respondents indicated that the intersections of Everson Road and Kale Street, Main Street and Washington Street, Lincoln Street and Everson Road, and Aspen Drive and Everson-Goshen Road were unsafe. The City of Everson Police Chief was asked to complete a similar survey. The police department identified Kale Street/Everson Road, Harkness Street/Main Street, Washington Street/Main Street and Everson Road/Lincoln Street as intersections with significant safety problems.

Table 6-3 Accidents at Major Intersections: 1988-1993

Location	Number of Accidents*	1993 Peak Hour Vehicles
Everson/Kale Intersection	8	709
Main/Washington Intersection	8	789
Mead/Kale Intersection	2	624
Lincoln/Everson Intersection	3	709
Everson Bridge	2	709

* Source: *City of Everson Police Department Accident Report Records 1988-1993.*

Scenic and Recreational Highways Program

The 1991 Transportation Budget (E.S.H.B. 1231) directed a review of all state routes for possible inclusion in the Scenic and Recreation Highway system. The goals of the program are to identify those highways that have significant natural, cultural or recreational characteristics and to work with local governments to protect the resources from undesirable or inappropriate development. The nearest highway qualifying for the program to the City of Everson is SR-9. The entire length of SR-9 is currently designated as a Scenic and Recreational Highway.

U.S.-Canadian Border Crossing

The international border crossing at Sumas is a source of traffic for Everson. Over 1.9 million vehicles cross the border at the station annually. The international border crossing in Sumas is one of two 24-hour commercial and passenger vehicle crossings located in Whatcom County. Everson is located approximately 10 miles from the Sumas border crossing, and approximately 25 miles from I-5. The Sumas crossing is one mile from Canadian Highway 1 (the Trans-Canada highway). One of the most direct routes for border crossing trips to or from Bellingham is along SR-544 through the City of Everson.

A license plate study conducted by WCCOG and Western Washington University students in 1990 found that more than two-thirds of southbound border crossings at Sumas did not have destinations beyond the city limits of Sumas. However, over 18 percent of the people crossing at Sumas continued on to Bellingham.

A 1993 traffic count survey by JHK & Associates, sponsored by WCCOG and Whatcom County Planning and Development Services, counted passenger vehicles and trucks crossing the border and passing fourteen different locations in Whatcom County. The results of the JHK study tended to support the 1990 Western Washington University study, showing that 60 percent of the p.m. peak hour Canadian trips stayed, generally, in Sumas.

Commute Patterns

The 1990 census provides a variety of information on the commute patterns and behavior of Everson residents. Of the 645 employed residents of the city, 73 percent drove alone to work, 18

percent carpooled, 4 percent walked and 5 percent worked at home (Table 6-4 Mode of Transportation Used to Commute).

Table 6-4 Mode of Transportation Used to Commute

Mode	Number	Percentage
Drive Alone	472	73.2%
Carpool	116	18.0%
Motorcycle	0	0.0%
Bicycle	0	0.0%
Walk	24	3.7%
Other	2	0.3%
Work at Home	31	4.8%
Total	645	100.0%

Source: *1990 U.S. Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990.*

Table 6-5 Home to Work Travel Times

Commute Time	People	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
<10 min.	106	16.4%	16.4%
10-19 min.	194	30.1%	46.5%
20-29 min.	163	25.3%	71.8%
30-44 min.	128	19.8%	91.6%
45-59 min.	9	1.4%	93.0%
60+ min.	45	7.0%	100.0%
Total	645	100.0%	200.0%

Source: *1990 U.S. Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990.*

Table 6-6 Hour Leaving Home for Work

Time of Departure	Employees	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
12:00 a.m. to 4:59 a.m.	43	6.7%	6.7%
5:00 a.m. to 5:59 a.m.	55	8.5%	15.2%

6:00 a.m. to 6:59 a.m.	120	18.6%	33.8%
7:00 a.m. to 7:59 a.m.	158	24.5%	58.3%
8:00 a.m. to 8:59 a.m.	89	13.8%	72.1%
9:00 a.m. to 9:59 a.m.	29	4.5%	76.6%
10:00 a.m. to 10:59 a.m.	32	5.0%	81.6%
11:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	88	13.6%	95.2%
Worked at Home	31	4.8%	100.0%
Total	645	100.0%	100.0%

Source: *1990 U.S. Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1990*.

As shown in Table 6-5 Home to Work Travel Times, 16 percent of the employed population's place of work is less than ten minutes from their place of residence. The majority of the city's employed work force, 55 percent, spend between ten and thirty minutes commuting to work.. Over eight percent of the employed work force commute more than forty-five minutes.

Table 6-6 Hour Leaving Home for Work, shows that 8 percent of the work force begin their commute before 6:00 a.m.. Figure 6-6 Representative Commute Distance from City of Everson provides an illustrative guide as to the distances of employment locations based on time from Everson.

Freight Rail

Everson currently has no rail access. The rail line running through town was abandoned in 1980 after fire destroyed the Nooksack River rail bridge running parallel to Everson Road. Burlington Northern Railroad still operates a north-south rail line that runs east of Everson adjacent to SR-9. The line connects Sumas to Sedro Woolley, continues south to Burlington where it connects to the primary north-south rail corridor (Figure 6-7 1990 Rail Lines) between Vancouver, B.C. and Seattle. Operations on the route are moderate, with freight volumes between three and five million gross ton-miles per mile. This line will continue to be an active part of the Burlington Northern Railroad freight operations. A spur line connecting north of the city limits runs west to the City of Lynden. Freight trains use this spur approximately once a week.

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Passenger Rail

As of March 1995, passenger rail service in Whatcom County has been reinstated. West Coast Amtrak service from Seattle to Vancouver, British Columbia provides daily service along the coast with stops in Everett, Mt. Vernon, and Bellingham. Additionally, the State of Washington has begun specific upgrade programs including rail, signal systems, stations and rolling stock to expand inter-city rail passenger service. While these services do not directly affect the city's transportation system, access to inter-regional transportation is enhanced.

Overland Freight

Transportation of goods by trucks often affects a city's transportation system. Trucks accelerate more slowly, are less maneuverable and have longer stopping distances. Vehicle weight also affects local road conditions by decreasing the durability of the road surface. No truck routes have been designated either within the city or in the surrounding county road network.

In 1992 a study of Whatcom County international truck crossings was conducted by WCCOG and a WSU graduate student. As seen in Figure 6-8 Route Taken by Trucks with Whatcom County Destinations, only 11.1 percent of total observed truck trips chose the SR-9 and SR-544 route through Everson. Only 4.5 percent of trucks traveling to or beyond Bellingham use SR-9. Most trucks crossing the Sumas border use Badger Road (SR-546) to Guide Meridian (SR-539) to Interstate 5.

No information is available identifying locally generated truck trips or travel patterns.

Air Transportation

The nearest air facility is the Lynden Municipal Airport, primarily used by private aircraft and charters. The Bellingham International Airport, operated by the Port of Bellingham, provides commercial air carrier and charter services.

Port Facilities

There are no port facilities located in the City of Everson. The Port of Bellingham operates the public port locations in Whatcom County.

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Transportation Alternatives

Public Transportation

There is no fixed route public transit service in the City of Everson. Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) provides this service to Bellingham, Lynden, Ferndale, Blaine, and other areas inside the Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA). Although Everson is in the PTBA, the Whatcom Transportation Authority - Annexation Plan does not include plans for WTA to extend fixed route service to Everson.
The population of Everson is not adequate to support traditional fixed route transit service in a cost-effective manner. The traditional subdivision design now allowed by the city is not conducive to operating traditional fixed route transit service. Cul-de-sacs and narrow turning radii found in modern subdivisions do not allow efficient operation of transit coaches, and increase disproportionately the mileage and service time required to provide transit service. The residential densities that the city is proposing in the urban growth areas will not support traditional fixed route transit service in a cost-effective manner if development occurs in traditional subdivision patterns.

Disabled and Senior Transportation

Approximately 10 percent of the city's population is above the age of 65, and over 3 percent are over the age of 80. Whatcom Specialized Transportation discontinued its service to senior and disabled county residents on December 31, 1993. Recognizing the need to fill the gap left by Whatcom Specialized Transportation's discontinuation of service, the Whatcom Transportation Authority's Board of Directors directed the WTA staff to provide interim specialized para-transit service to Everson through March 31, 1995. On March 14, 1995, the residents of Everson and the surrounding areas voted to be included in the Whatcom Transportation Authority's Public Transportation Benefit Area. WTA has since continued to provide the interim specialized para-transit service and is working with the community to establish a permanent service plan.

Taxi Services

There are no taxi services based in Everson. However, City Cab of Bellingham provides county-wide service.

Demand Management Strategies and Commute Assistanc

Currently, specialized para-transit service is the only demand response and commute assistance program in Everson. The WTA annexation plan recommends that Monday through Saturday demand response services be extended to the general public. The implementation date and details of the service have yet to be worked out between WTA and city officials. The annexation plan recommendation is for feeder service to Lynden, mid- morning and afternoon commuter service, and community vanpools.

Bicycle Facilities

Bicycles serve many purposes in a community. Bicycles provide a low cost transportation and mobility alternative for nonlicensed citizens of all ages. The city has plans for building a small bicycle/recreation path as part of its Waterfront Improvement Plan for Riverside Park. The compacted gravel trail facility will provide an adequate trail for cyclists and pedestrians throughout the length of the park. This path will provide a connection to the Bay-to-Baker trail for pedestrians and bicyclists. In 1995, a city proposal for extension of the Bay-to-Baker trail was approved for ISTEA Enhancement funding.

The city is an active participant in the planning of the Bay-to-Baker Trail, which will provide a bicycle path from Bellingham to the foot of Mt. Baker 74 miles away. The Bay-to-Baker route follows the abandoned Milwaukee Road Railroad Line and would cross the Nooksack River at the Everson Road bridge (Figure 6-9 Bicycle Facilities). The enhancement project is on this route.

The City of Everson has already purchased the right-of-way from the area of the SELCO lumber plant on Mission Road, north, paralleling Mission Road to SR-544. WSDOT will provide right-of-way along SR-544 from Everson Road to the new Nooksack River bridge and construction of a shoulder on the bridge. Further right-of-way acquisition or alternative routing is required south of the city limits.

The Whatcom County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Open Space Plan of 1991 proposes an alternative alignment called the Nooksack Trail. This trail would run along the Nooksack River, through Everson, eventually to the Mt. Shuksan area. This trail would also be the northern portion of the proposed 70 Mile Loop Trail, which continues south along the Valley Highway and returns to Bellingham south of Lake Samish (also shown in Figure 6-9).

No other bicycle facilities exist within town. Bicycles must share the road with other vehicles and many streets lack adequate shoulders to safely accommodate both cyclists and automobiles.

Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks are found in a few of the city's residential areas (Figures 6-10a and 6-10b Everson Sidewalk Locations). Sidewalks are generally located in the newer developments where adopted subdivision rules require their installation, and along Main Street. On streets without sidewalks, pedestrians use the shoulder of the roadway. Many recent roadway improvement projects include the construction of sidewalks as part of the projects.

The city has adopted design standards requiring the construction of sidewalks in new developments. The city has not adopted design standards for existing areas, or developed a program for retrofitting sidewalks.

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TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MODELING

Land Use Planning Assumptions

The land use assumptions developed for the city's comprehensive plan provide the link between land use and the estimated future traffic generation due to growth within the existing city limits and in designated urban growth areas. The Land Use element gives a detailed description of the assumptions.

Traffic Forecasts

TModel2 software was used to develop a mathematical model portraying the City of Everson's primary transportation network and how it fits in with the surrounding system. The Whatcom County rural transportation model was used as the basis for developing a "subregional" model to evaluate traffic impacts of future land use strategies for Everson, Nooksack, and Sumas. The model was used to forecast future traffic volumes based on current, expected, and full build-out land use scenarios. Resulting computer-generated model volumes reflect an approximation of traffic volumes that might be expected in the future. Actual future land use and road network improvements may differ from assumptions used in the modeling process. This fact must be considered when using modeling results for policy decisions.

Current

The "current" scenario establishes a model baseline, or starting point, for comparison with future growth scenarios. Existing land use and zoning, retail and non-retail employment, and housing unit density are traditionally used as traffic generators and receptors in the modeling process. Those parameters were used in developing the Whatcom County rural traffic model, and thus are reflected in the small city "sub-regional" model. The small city model is a subset of the rural model.

Expected Growth

The expected growth scenario defines the manner in which Everson is most likely to develop in the twenty-year planning period. This anticipated level of development is built on expectations of residential and commercial growth that are considered both politically and technically reasonable and rational. The additional development expected under this scenario is identified as "plan-period" development in the Capital Facilities element and is depicted on Map 9a in that chapter.

Development levels are founded on less-than-complete use of potentially available land of various zoning designations. Traffic volumes and volume-to-capacity ratios for this expected-growth scenario are shown in Figure 6-11 Expected Growth LOS and V/C Ratios. This amount of development would not result in significant traffic congestion. All roads would continue to operate at LOS C or better, except for a short segment of Everson-Goshen Road which would operate at LOS D.

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Full Build Out

The full build-out scenario defines the maximum possible development based on available land supplies and projected zoning. "Full build out" means complete use of potentially available land in the various zoning designations. This potential level of development is based on high levels of residential and commercial growth. The additional development expected under this full build-out scenario is identified as “build-out capacity” in the Capital Facilities element.

Future traffic volumes and volume-to-capacity ratios for this scenario are shown in Figure 6-12 Full Build Out LOS and V/C Ratios. This level of development would result in traffic congestion on SR-544, decreasing its level of service from LOS C to LOS F. However, as is described in the Land Use chapter, full build out is unlikely within this planning period.

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