

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Our transportation and circulation system plays a pivotal role in building a livable community and strong local economy. Winthrop seeks to develop and maintain a system that serves the needs of residents, business owners, and visitors. Our transportation system must emphasize safety, mobility, accessibility, and connectivity for all users, including vehicular traffic, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users. As we describe and set goals for our transportation system, we need a common understanding of these central characteristics:

1. **Safety** - A *safe* transportation system minimizes the chances of people encountering physically harmful situations while walking, bicycling or as a driver or passenger in a motor vehicle.
2. **Mobility** - The *mobility* of our transportation system ensures people and goods can move through our community efficiently. Mobility is affected by the number of access points, parking, pedestrian crossings and other factors that inhibit travel.
3. **Accessibility** - The *accessibility* of our transportation system allows people to reach specific locations by different modes of legal travel (by foot, by bike, or by vehicle).
4. **Connectivity** - *Connectivity* refers to the extent that the network provides direct routes of travel and avoids circuitous routes. Increased connectivity improves accessibility.

Regional and Statewide Planning Context

Strong connections to population centers such as Wenatchee, the Puget Sound region, and Spokane help ensure a healthy local economy. Three main arterials facilitate travel to and from Winthrop: State Route 20, US Highway 97, and State Route 153.

State Route 20 passes through the heart of Winthrop, in the dual role of arterial thoroughfare and “Main Street.” SR 20 originates off of US Hwy 101 on the Olympic Peninsula and ends at the Idaho border where it intersects with US Highway 2. SR 20 is both a designated Highway of Statewide Significance and a Scenic Byway. The stretch of SR 20 that passes through the North Cascades west of Winthrop typically closes for 3-4 months each winter.

SR 20 connects with SR 153 approximately 10 miles south of Winthrop, and with US Hwy 97 in the county seat, Okanogan, approximately 35 miles to the east. SR 153 is a short highway segment that joins SR 20 at Twisp with Hwy 97 at Pateros. It provides a year round route through the lower Methow Valley for travelers from locations south or west of the Methow Valley. US Hwy 97 is an important north-south route from the

Canadian border to its intersection with Interstate 5 in Northern California. In addition to reaching Winthrop via Hwy 97 to SR 153 to SR 20, travelers can come via 97 the intersection with SR 20 in Okanogan. Although neither 153 nor 97 pass through Winthrop, they ensure that travelers and goods can reach our community. Once here connections to local, county, forest and private roadways and trails enable a further network of access.

Winthrop actively participates in local and regional transportation planning in order to maintain good connectivity to and through our town. Until 2014, the Town participated in region wide planning through the North Central Regional Planning Organization (NCRTPO). In 2013, NCRTPO moved to limit its area to Chelan and Douglas counties. In the wake of that decision, Winthrop has been working with other Okanogan County jurisdictions to establish a new county-wide council of governments to replace the RTPO functions. Together Winthrop and other Okanogan County jurisdictions intend to ensure our region remains vitally connected to larger statewide, national and international networks. This transportation element should maintain consistency with planning documents adopted by the new council of governments, or any subsequent regional transportation planning groups.

Local Transportation Planning and Data

Planning. At this update, Winthrop primarily utilizes our annual Six-year Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) to guide decisions about transportation improvement. We draft our STIP based on local inventory and assessment of roadway conditions, pavement ratings from the Washington Transportation Improvement Board, and local transportation planning priorities. Previous transportation studies – mostly compiled with the anticipation of the development of a major resort west of town - are out of date. In 2014, we lack current comprehensive data and analysis of how our transportation system is functioning. Without that information, we cannot accurately assess current level of service for key roadways and intersections. The Town should seek funding for transportation studies to assess the function of our system under current and projected conditions.

Traffic Data. WSDOT maintains an annual traffic report that includes actual counts or estimates at given locations along state highways. 2012 is the most recent year for which the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is figured based on actual counts. The table below shows AADT at 3 locations in Winthrop, along with a permanent counter that is approximately 1 mile west of town.

Milepost	Location	2012 AADT
191.90	1 mile west of Winthrop	1700
192.84	Chewuch River Bridge	2900
193.35	Main St Intersection	3900
193.47	White Avenue Y Intersection	4300

The traffic counts show concentrated traffic at the White Avenue “Y” intersection and at the intersection with Main Street, at the SR 20 metal bridge. On average, traffic is less concentrated at the Chewuch River Bridge and west of Town; however, it seems likely that average includes higher rates during the summer tourist season and lower rates in winter. Peak traffic counts were not available.

Level of Service. Typically, Level of Service (LOS) is measured based upon the delay experienced when traveling a roadway segment or when going through an intersection. The primary measure for LOS is time-delay, with speed and capacity utilization employed as secondary measures. An optimal level of service allows vehicles to flow through the system without significant delays. WSDOT recommends improving roadways when LOS drops to “D” or lower. Setting local LOS standards is up to the Town.

In rural areas and small towns, the typical measure of LOS is ineffective due to relatively low traffic volumes, especially when averaged over a year as in the AADT numbers provided above (table __). Because of this difference, a more complete measure of LOS for two-lane streets also rates *operation* and *condition*. *Operation* LOS rates a roadway in terms of how its characteristics compare with those necessary for it to function as intended. *Condition* LOS rates a roadway in terms of how its physical characteristics compare to those of an ideal facility.

In Winthrop, delays occur most often at the four-way intersection in downtown. An updated study of the Bridge Street – Riverside Avenue/SR 20 intersection, along with SR 20 through town would provide valuable information. Such a study should consider the broader measures of LOS, including operation and condition.

System Inventory and Characterization

1. Streets and Roads

The Town of Winthrop street system consists of just under 10 miles of roadways, including 6.5 miles of town streets, 1.7 miles of state highway, and 1.5 miles of private roads. In addition, the town holds several small segments of alley or undeveloped streets that are not presently utilized. Figure T-1 shows the existing street and road system. The majority of the system is bituminous surface treated (BST) with gravel shoulders. The remaining is a combination of BST without gravel shoulders, asphalt pavement with curb and gutter, and a small number of low maintenance dirt roadways.

Functional Classification. WSDOT assigns federal functional classifications to roadways across the state according to guidelines produced by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA). As stated on the WSDOT website:

Functional classification is the grouping of highways, roads and streets by the character of service they provide and was developed for transportation planning purposes... Comprehensive transportation planning, an integral part of total

economic and social development, uses functional classification to determine how travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner.

Three functional classifications apply to Winthrop's roadways:

- **Rural Minor Arterial.** SR 20 through town is a *rural minor arterial*. As an arterial route, the primary function of the SR 20 corridor is to provide mobility, allowing people and goods to reach Winthrop, as well as travel through our community. The rural minor arterial designation stretches from Sedro Woolley to Okanogan. From the west entrance to MP 193.85, at approximately the Virginian resort, the highway is two travel lanes with the paved lane width varying from 11 to 16 feet. From MP 193.85 to the south town limits (approximately 1/3 mile), the highway has a center turn lane.
- **Rural Major Collector.** Winthrop has three *rural major collector routes*. Collector routes facilitate mobility on a more local level and provide a backbone for accessibility within the community. Locally, our collector routes funnel traffic into Winthrop from key recreation destinations and the neighboring town of Twisp; they include:
 - Riverside Avenue north of Bridge Street and Bluff Street to the north Town limits. Bluff Street turns into the East Chewuch Road outside of Winthrop, and the rural major collector designation continues onto the county road.
 - Main Street from the intersection with SR 20 south to Center Street, then east on Center to Castle Avenue, and south on Castle Avenue to the Town limits. From the Town limits, the major collector designation continues south to Twisp along the Twisp-Winthrop Eastside Road.
 - White Avenue from the intersection with SR 20 to Town limits. At the Town limits, White Avenue becomes Twin Lakes Road. The entire Twin Lakes Road is designated a rural major collector.
- **Local Access.** The remainder of Winthrop's street network is considered *local access*. These streets provide access within and between neighborhoods and commercial areas. Improving the connectivity of local access streets for all modes of travel allows for more efficient circulation.

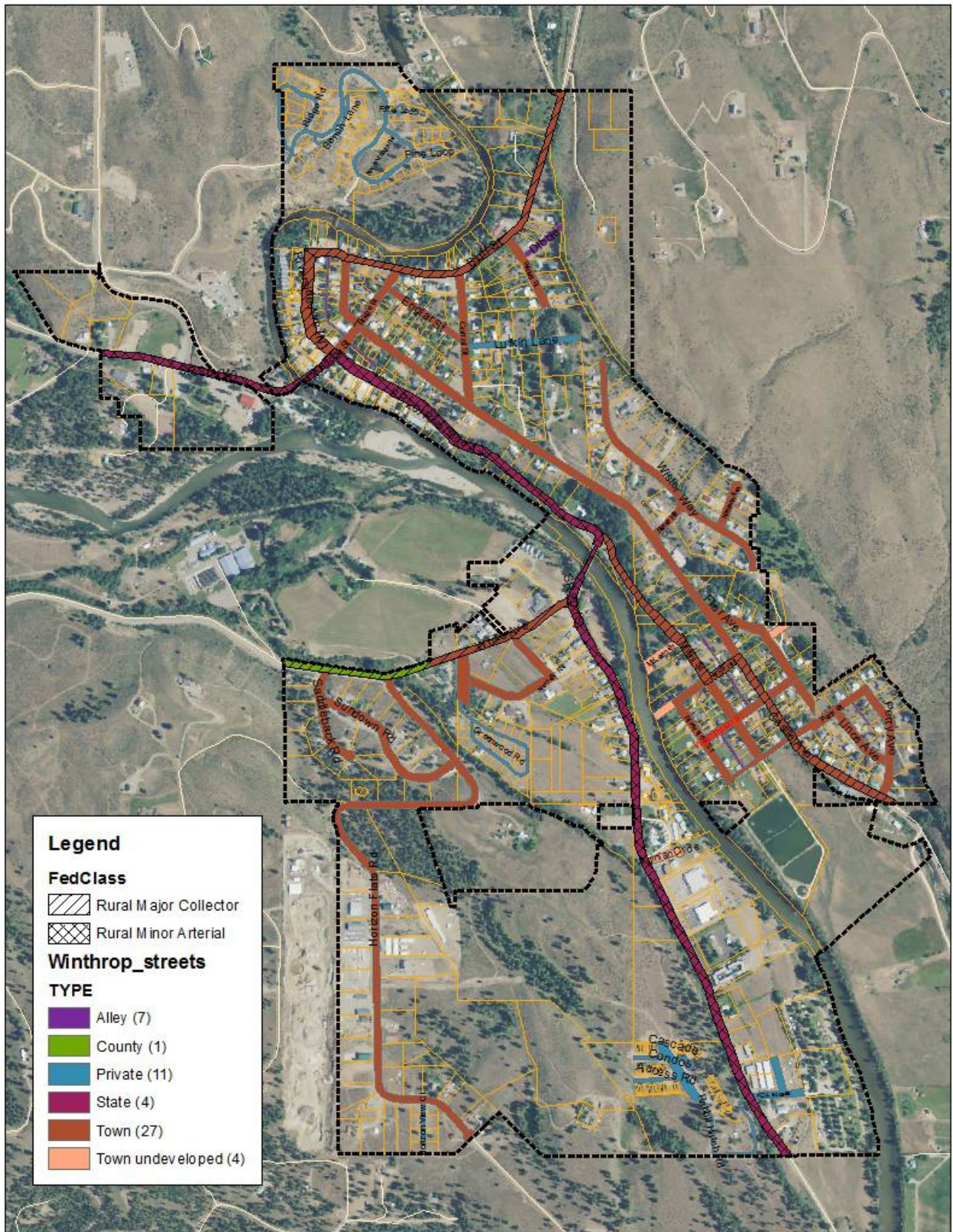


Figure T-1-Winthrop Street System

2. Parking

Due to the narrow confines of downtown, parking has been a long standing concern for downtown businesses. Throughout the downtown core, most parking is front-in angle parking, requiring use of the travel lane of SR 20 or Riverside Avenue for pulling in or backing out. Additionally there are some parallel parking stalls which also require maneuvering within travel lanes for access. The parking lot of the Winthrop Barn and the Town Trailhead also offer parking within walking distance of downtown.

In 2012, two Planning Commissioners conducted a *Parking Capacity Survey* to assess the numbers of public and private parking spaces serving the downtown core. Because off-street parking typically is unpaved, and stalls are not striped, the number of spaces is estimated based on area. The findings of the survey are summarized as follows:

Location	Public		Private		Mixed Public-Private, Sole Use, or Uncertain		TOTALS
	On-street	Off-street	On-street	Off-street	On-street	Off-street	
SR 20 – 4-way to Spring Creek bridge	84		1	28	6	21	140
Bridge St – 4-way to bridge	11	16				34	61
Riverside N of 4-way	83			44		48	175
Barn and Library		145					145
Behind the Duck				36			36
Ice Rink – Town Trailhead		120					120
TOTALS	178	281	1	108	6	103	677

On street parking provides the most direct access to downtown businesses, while public off-street parking at the Barn or Town Trailhead require the ability and willingness to walk. Currently, parking options at the Barn and Town Trailhead may be underutilized due to lack of signage.

3. Public Transit

A Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) for Okanogan County was established in 1996. Although an initial county-wide vote in 1997 to establish public transit failed, Okanogan County voters approved a resolution to fund public transit in November, 2013. The Okanogan County Transit Authority (OCTA) is currently working toward initiating services in 2015. OCTA intends to offer an initial service that includes two routes in and out of the valley: a Winthrop/Twisp to Omak route and a Winthrop/Twisp

to Pateros route. In order to decrease route travel time, bus stops will be limited and Park-and-Ride facilities are encouraged.

The new countywide public transit system will bolster existing service provided by the non-profit Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition (OCTN) which offers inter-city commuter routes and shuttles, typically serving senior and disabled citizens, but available to the general population. The service runs five days a week, but with a limited schedule. Annual ridership is approximately 70,000.

Wenatchee is the nearest city to offer rail and bus connections for more extended travel. Amtrack's Empire Builder route stops in Wenatchee once eastbound and once westbound each day. Bus service is available through Northwest Trailways.

4. Non-Motorized Circulation

Pedestrian Facilities: In keeping with the western theme, pedestrian access in the downtown area of Winthrop is provided via boardwalks. The Chewuch River Bridge (Bridge Street) possesses a separated walkway which permits safe pedestrian movement across the river and along the shoulder of State Route 20 (SR-20) to paved walkways in Mack Lloyd Park. The Methow River Bridge (Green Bridge) has a separated pedestrian walkway along its west side. However, this walkway is narrow, and has no connecting sidewalks or defined pedestrian walkways.

For nearly two decades, the Town gathered information and planned for a trail system that would create safe alternate circulation routes for pedestrians. The original concept of a "South End Pedestrian Trail" gradually evolved into a detailed plan for the Susie Stephens Trail. Other concepts, including a RiverWalk, a trail to the schools, a trail to Pearygin Lake State Park, and a loop through North Village have generated interest. Public input in various forums, including the 2012 Parks and Recreation Survey, continues to indicate decisive support for pedestrian trails and pathways.

The first segment of the Susie Stephens trail was completed in 2012. A second segment is scheduled for construction in 2015. These first two segments improve pedestrian and bicycle access by providing an alternate route to SR 20. The 12' wide multiuse trail stretches from the Methow Conservancy building in downtown to the Virginian resort. A third segment will complete access to the south end of town.

The RiverWalk – another long held vision for improving downtown pedestrian circulation – is poised for Phase 1 design and construction. The first segment of the RiverWalk consists of an underpass under the Chewuch River Bridge, and construction of a five foot wide pedestrian path along the left bank of the Chewuch River from the Farmer's Exchange to Carlos 1800. Future segments will connect RiverWalk to the Susie Stephens Trail at the south end of downtown and to the trail through SaTeekhWa Park at the north end. The RiverWalk project aims to extend the downtown Western theme along the Chewuch River to create opportunities for enjoyment of the river setting, provide activities for visitors and increase potential commercial ventures.

Over recent years, federal and state funded transportation projects have been required to provide pedestrian facilities. As a result, a 2013 project on Castle Avenue provided the first sidewalks in Winthrop outside of the downtown area. A reconstruction of upper Bluff Street in 2015 added another stretch of sidewalk. Future projects will extend sidewalks along Castle Avenue, Bluff Street and other high traffic local access routes. Eventually, these projects can be expected to greatly improve pedestrian safety and connectivity throughout Winthrop.

Bicycle: Winthrop has seen a significant rise in bicycle trips around and through town. In parallel with our efforts to improve pedestrian circulation, the Town strives to provide safer access for bicycle traffic and better connections to Methow Trails' facilities (formerly MVSTA). The initial steps taken to date include the first segment of the multiuse Susie Stephens Trail, and a short segment of bike lanes along Castle Avenue.

SR-20 has been designated as a state bicycle route recognized by WSDOT for many years. In 2014, Washington State approved the designation of a 407-mile leg of US Bike Route 10, passing through Winthrop and the Methow Valley on SR 20. The route stretches across the state from Anacortes to Newport. Eventually, US Bike Route 10 will cross the northern US from Washington to Maine.

Okanogan County has identified several bike routes that converge within town limits. These routes utilize SR-20, White Avenue/Twin Lakes Road, Riverside Avenue, Main Street, Castle Avenue, Center Street and Bluff Street within the town limits. At the edge of town, bike routes continue on the East Chewuch Road to Pearrygin, the West Chewuch Road to national forest lands, and along the Twisp-Winthrop Eastside Road to Twisp.

Efforts to improve bicycle circulation continue with the addition of bike lanes on the Upper Bluff Street reconstruction and extension of the Susie Stephens Trail. Promoting bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the town remains a high priority. In particular, we seek to provide strong connections to parks, downtown, and other high traffic areas; Pearrygin Lake State Park; and Methow Trails facilities.

5. Air Traffic

Four major airports are within 400 road miles of the Methow Valley: Seattle-Tacoma, Vancouver, Spokane, and Portland. Smaller airports can be found closer to Winthrop including Pangborn Field in Wenatchee, Omak City Airport Omak, Methow Valley State Airport between Winthrop and Twisp and the Twisp municipal airport. These airports hold the most potential to provide direct access to Winthrop.

Methow Valley State Airport, home of the North Cascades Smokejumper Base, is located about four miles south of Winthrop adjacent to the Eastside Winthrop-Twisp Road. Originally developed by the U.S. Forest Service, this airport is now owned and operated by WSDOT's Aeronautics Division. The 5,049 feet lighted runway is stressed

for 30,000 pound aircraft; it can accommodate all small airplanes and most commuter-type planes. The field has accommodated C-119's, DC-6's, and Lear Jets. Private planes may land and tie down and self service fueling services are available 24-hours per day.

Transportation Goals and Policies

Goal T1 Develop and preserve a safe, accessible transportation system for all users, including vehicular traffic, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.

Policy T1.1 Prioritize transportation/circulation improvements that enhance public safety and provide for all legal modes and system users.

Policy T1.2 Plan for future transportation corridors that enhance connectivity with the existing system, and create a comprehensive, integrated circulation network for all modes and persons of all abilities.

Policy T1.3 Develop and implement a “complete streets” policy to cover all transportation projects.

Policy T1.4 Adopt and implement design standards that achieve a connected, safe, accessible roadway network consistent with the goals and policies of this plan.

Goal T2 Ensure local transportation systems have strong links to regional and statewide routes so as to promote mobility of people and goods.

Policy T2.1 Participate in county and regional transportation planning efforts to promote strong regional and statewide links to the Methow Valley.

Policy T2.2 Develop and implement transportation improvements for reducing vehicular and pedestrian congestion and delays during peak periods.

Policy T2.3 Support and participate in the implementation of voter approved transit service through the Okanogan County Transit Authority (OCTA).

Goal T3 Develop and preserve a safe, connected, efficient and cost effective transportation system.

Policy T3.1 Preserve existing public roadways, shoulders, bike lanes, trails and sidewalks in functional condition.

Policy T3.2 New development should dedicate roadways as public, with sufficient ROW width to meet design standards and provide for complete streets.

Policy T3.3 New development should provide ROW easements from adjacent streets to adjacent developable property for purpose of connectivity.

Policy T3.4 New development adjacent to or accessed by substandard streets should provide ROW easements for construction of standard width streets and pedestrian facilities.

Policy T3.5 Wherever practical, require development of public roadways where public water and sewer utilities are located.

Policy T3.6 Require new commercial development or redevelopment to complete transportation and access improvements concurrent with development.

Goal T4 Design transportation/circulation improvements to promote the town's economy and enhance Winthrop's "western" theme.

Policy T4.1 Provide signs that enhance circulation, access and parking. Wherever possible, signs should be designed for consistency with the western theme.

Policy T4.2 Encourage acquisition of sites for rest and scenic stops by purchase, lease, or gift where deemed appropriate to the public interest.

Policy T4.3 Recognize and plan for the unique functions of SR 20 in the downtown core and the downtown and highway commercial districts:

- Downtown – SR 20/Riverside drive should reflect a traditional downtown feel. Access for all users of all abilities will be emphasized over through mobility. Context sensitive design should be employed for all transportation improvements.*
- Highway Commercial – SR 20 within the Highway Commercial districts should allow access to a vibrant mix of uses while preserving mobility for through traffic. Access management should be employed to limit driveways/curb cuts.*

Policy T4.4 Provide multimodal access from gate to gate along SR 20. Facilities for bicycles and pedestrians may be along convenient alternate routes where necessary, such as the Susie Stephens Trail.

Policy T4.5 Public access afforded by shoreline street ends should be made available and enhanced if appropriate. Potential street ends include Center Street, McLean Street, and Washington Street.

Goal T5 Provide for non-motorized transportation and circulation throughout the community with links to regional systems.

Policy T5.1 Provide connected walking and biking pathways throughout Winthrop.

Policy T5.2 Promote safe, connected foot travel and ADA access through the downtown core.

Policy T5.3 Provide sidewalks and bike lanes along arterial and collector routes, as well as significant local access routes.

Policy T5.4 Non-motorized facilities should connect with recreation facilities and regional trails.

Goal T6 Ensure that transportation/circulation improvements protect and enhance the environment.

Policy T6.1 Promote context sensitive transportation projects that minimize or mitigate impacts to the rivers and natural environment.

Goal T7 Manage parking availability to promote accessibility for all legal modes of transportation, all users and all abilities.

Policy T7.1 Manage on-street parking in the downtown core to preserve accessibility for all users.

Policy T7.2 Require that development or redevelopment outside the downtown core provide sufficient parking to serve demand created by the development.

Policy T7.3 Public bicycle parking facilities should be developed to discourage parking of bicycles on boardwalks.

Policy T7.4 Explore and implement funding mechanisms to improve off-street and overflow parking serving the downtown corridor.

Policy T7.5 Develop and maintain overflow/satellite parking, including bicycle parking, with good access to downtown and local recreation amenities.

Known Transportation and Circulation Challenges

Over the years, the Town has come to recognize several challenges in providing for safety, accessibility, mobility, and connectivity. These are areas where we continue to look for creative, context sensitive solutions that work for all users. Solutions to these challenges, and any other transportation issues, should be guided by the goals and policies of this element.

- Narrow downtown corridor. Downtown Winthrop is sandwiched between the Chewuch and Methow Rivers to the west and a steep hillside to the east. Downtown was platted and the built environment established more than one hundred years ago, and the existing pattern of development remains set. This leaves a narrow corridor, part of which doubles as “main street” and state arterial. SR 20 through downtown exists prescriptively, and existing buildings observe zero setbacks. Angle and parallel parking is provided throughout downtown. Consequently, boardwalks tend to be narrow and pedestrian circulation fairly confined. Improvements consistent with ADA would improve circulation. A reconfiguration of parking may be able to preserve access while improving pedestrian circulation. A RiverWalk may allow pedestrian traffic more access options.
- Four-Way stop. Winthrop’s most significant traffic congestion occurs at the four-way stop during the height of the local tourist season. Due to its location in the heart of downtown, and pedestrian use of crosswalks on each of the four legs of the intersection, traffic through the intersection slows causing traffic to backup. The configuration of the roadways and crosswalks creates some vulnerability for pedestrians, and ADA improvements would enhance the safety.
- Providing for pedestrian and bicycle access throughout town. The built environment, including existing streets were constructed long ago without pedestrian or bicycle facilities. Problems with safe non-motorized circulation are most pronounced along SR 20 due to higher levels of traffic among all users; however, the lack of sidewalks and bike lanes along other primary routes inhibits safe foot and bike travel, and means fewer people feel comfortable accessing local businesses, services and parks on foot. Although Methow Valley schools are located outside of town limits, another concern is the lack of a safe non-motorized route to the schools.
- SR 20 Methow River bridge alignment and White Avenue “Y” intersection. The Methow River (metal) bridge aligns at an angle rather than perpendicular to the intersections at either end. The alignment creates a sight distance problem on the east side of the river where SR 20 bends to the southwest and intersects with

Main Street. For traffic heading straight onto Main Street it can be difficult to see cars approaching on the bridge. On the west side of the bridge, SR 20 bends right at the intersection with White Avenue. The intersection has a wide open “Y” configuration that compromises safety for pedestrian, bicyclists and motorists.

- Lack of connectivity. Due to the pattern of development and a lack of policy emphasis on connectivity, there are areas of town that can only be accessed by dead end or loop roads without through connections. This pattern inhibits access and connectivity for all users of the transportation system.
- Signage. The SR 20 corridor and particularly the downtown core and recreation amenities lack comprehensive signage. A few consequences of poor signage are poor wayfinding among visitors unfamiliar with Winthrop and underutilization of satellite parking areas (the Barn and Trailhead). Inadequate signage contributes to confusion and compromises the overall safety of our transportation system.

Undoubtedly, additional challenges will be identified. In such cases, the goals and policies of this section provide important guidance for addressing any transportation issues that arise.

Recommendations for Action

The following recommendations for action should be considered; the list is not in priority order:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive signage program. Place signs to easily direct users to destinations and public facilities such as parks, parking, bike routes, trail heads, shopping areas, museums, etc.
2. Continue use of Six-Year Street Plan and Capital Facilities Plan processes to program resources for construction projects.
3. Pursue opportunities to complete a Downtown Streetscape study, looking at lane configuration, parking, signage, lighting
4. Develop and improve satellite parking areas, including areas designated for oversized vehicles and convenient ADA parking. Ensure parking areas are connected to downtown with good pedestrian access and signage.
5. Continue to seek context sensitive and creative solutions to parking and pedestrian access in the downtown core.
6. Establish multiuse trails/pathways throughout the Town with connections to other trail systems and town parks. Priorities include completion of the Susie Stephens Trail and the RiverWalk. Explore potential routes which connect to Methow Valley

Elementary and Liberty Bell Junior-Senior High School, Pearrygin Lake State Park, Methow Trails facilities, and a loop through North Village from SaTeekhWa Park to Mack Lloyd Park.

7. Adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance to implement the goals and policies of this Element.
8. Complete sidewalks, curb and gutter, storm drainage, and bike lanes along Castle Avenue from Bridge Street to Roses Hill.
9. Complete sidewalk, curb and gutter, and storm drainage from Corral Street to Riverside Avenue. (Bike lanes probably won't fit.)
10. Explore the potential for Lufkin Lane to become a dedicated town street.
11. Encourage greater roadway connectivity through:
 - Development of a network of transportation corridors that support connectivity in the south end commercial district;
 - Connection of dead end streets in existing neighborhoods;
 - Development of a transportation corridor to directly connect the Horizon Flats Industrial and Residential zones with SR-20; and
 - Requirements that new development provide ROW easements from adjacent streets to adjacent developable property for purpose of connectivity.