

CHAPTER 3 – METROPOLITAN AREA CHARACTERISTICS

The Lewis Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning organization will encompass a very diverse area with many unique characteristics that must be considered in the LRTP. The LCVMPPO spans two states, has a river running through the middle of it, and includes two counties and three cities. The counties and cities are:

- Asotin County
- Nez Perce County
- City of Asotin
- City of Clarkston
- City of Lewiston

Also included in the planning area are two different inland sea ports: the Port of Lewiston, and the Port of Clarkson (because of its proximity to the LCVMPPO, the Port of Wilma will also be considered in this document).

The following two sections contain: (1) descriptions of the local cities and counties, and (2) relevant excerpts from the planning documentation of all entities that lie within the LCVMPPO.

Local Cities and Counties

Asotin County

Asotin County is located in the southeastern corner of Washington State, bordering on the southwest side of the confluence of the Clearwater and Snake Rivers. The name, from the Nez Perce language, means "eel creek" as eels are abundant in the creek waters.

A majority of Asotin County is rural in character, with approximately 90% of the rural acreage held in private ownership and another 8% managed by the federal or state government; only 1.5% of the County area is characterized as urban. The County is served by approximately 2,150 acres of city and county public street right-of-ways, connecting the rural residential and agricultural areas with a grid street system.

The need exists to plan, develop, and maintain a comprehensive transportation system (including facilities and programs) to ensure the safe and efficient mobility of all segments of the population. To affect the pattern of desired development in the best manner, the plan must be balanced to address the needs of the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the residents of the county. To aid in this endeavor, both a twenty-year policy plan and a six-year road improvement plan have been established to ensure that a consistency of goals and policies is maintained through the Plan, and that the conditions of the streets and the traffic flow are examined relative to the prioritization for servicing.

Nez Perce County

Nez Perce County places a considerable emphasis on the visual character of both the rural and urban design of the community. With only 6.2% of the land area being federally owned, the County is largely responsible for the maintenance and development of the transportation system.

Located along the US 95 and US 12 corridors, and served by the Port District of Lewiston, the County sees transportation as an important element in its economic stability and development. The Clearwater and Snake Rivers have historically been the major travel corridors, which now include the major highways of the area as well as scenic and recreational amenities. The existing and future economical development of the County is heavily dependant on a well-functioning roadway system and sufficient access to other forms of transportation such as rail, air, and water. Additionally, adequate service roads must be provided for the increasing residential development occurring in the rural areas (the County's population is expected to be 43,000 by the year 2025).

City of Asotin

The City of Asotin is located in the northeastern portion of Asotin County along the Snake River at the mouth of Asotin Creek in the southeastern portion of Washington State. The development of port facilities on the Snake River and industries related to the river transport traffic has stimulated business growth in the area. The citizens of Asotin are concerned with how, where and at what rate this growth and change occurs. The desire is present to balance the historic rural identity with a diverse and growing community while maintaining the physical, educational, economic, and social activities in a safe, attractive, and healthy environment.

City of Clarkston

The City of Clarkston is the largest city in Asotin County. This Washington State city is located just across the Snake River from the City of Lewiston. Clarkston, with a population of 7,337 (according to the 2000 Census) was named after William Clark, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and was officially incorporated in August of 1902. Today Clarkston is home to the Port of Clarkston which has one of the largest cranes on navigable waterways east of Portland. This port helps to sustain two of the major industries in the area (lumber and agriculture) as it provides for the inexpensive transportation of goods to and from the Pacific Ocean. Some of the goals of the City of Clarkston include: encouraging citizen participation, maintaining/enhancing civic pride in the community, preserving the rural and friendly feel of the community, and maintaining a good working relationship with other government agencies toward the purpose of enhancing the quality of life for the local citizens.

City of Lewiston

Lewiston, the largest community in Nez Perce County (population of 31,164) is the county seat and Idaho's only seaport, located at the convergence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers. An emphasis is placed on maintaining high quality employment opportunities in the area to sustain an environment that will encourage area youth to remain in the community. One component of job retention is providing a transportation system that serves the diverse needs of the community, including both commercial and private traffic, as well as walkers and bicyclists.

Projections indicate that the City of Lewiston will remain a regional market center with a high number of commuters entering the area daily. Both commercial and residential construction is

expected to remain high to meet these travel demands, with the possibility that commuters will relocate to Lewiston to be nearer to work. This in turn places a higher emphasis on quality transportation systems, which will require alternative sources of funding aside from taxes.

Existing Planning and Land Use

An important component in studying the metropolitan area characteristics was reviewing the comprehensive plans of local governments, transportation authorities and recently completed traffic studies to identify any inconsistencies and implications for the 2030 LRTP. The relevant highlights of the goals, objectives, and policies from the transportation land use elements, as they pertain to the development of the LCVMPPO *Regional Long Range Transportation Plan*, are incorporated herein. It is important to note that several jurisdictions had not updated their Comprehensive Plan for several years or were in the process of doing so at the time of review. The following documents were reviewed for the 2030 LRTP:

- Asotin County Comprehensive Plan – 1999
- Asotin County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan – 2001
- Nez Perce County Comprehensive Plan – 1998
- City of Asotin Comprehensive Plan – 1998 (amended 2002)
- City of Clarkston Comprehensive Plan – 1999
- City of Lewiston Comprehensive Plan – 1998
- Nez Perce County Transportation Plan – 2004-2024
- City of Lewiston Comprehensive Transportation Plan – Macro Phase (1996)
- Palouse Regional Transportation Plan – 2004
- Port of Lewiston Strategic Plan (draft) – 2005

Relevant goals from these documents are outlined below. For specific information relating to the rationale behind the goals and policies, reference APPENDIX V. Figure 2 on page 23 shows the different land use designations for the area.

Asotin County Comprehensive Plan – 1999

Important goals of the Asotin County plan include a desire for coordination between the various government jurisdictions regarding transportation programs and facilities, development of transportation systems appropriate to the land use plan, and willingness to participate in countywide transportation planning organizations.

- Goal A: The development of transportation facilities must be coordinated with the land use plan, particularly those serving intensive economic activities.

- Goal C: Enhance the effectiveness of the transportation system by developing and improving coordination among government jurisdictions with regards to various transportation modes.
- Goal D: Plan, design, and manage transportation programs and facilities which maximize passenger miles per unit of energy consumed.

Asotin County Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan – 2001

Bike/Hike Pathways – The need for additional bike/hike pathways was established by comparing the length of Asotin County’s paths with minimum standards. Survey respondents indicated a preference for more paths. These paths could function as safe linkages between residential neighborhoods and existing recreational facilities (see APPENDIX IX for specific examples).

Nez Perce County Comprehensive Plan – 1998

Important goals of the plan comparative to the MPO include the desired cooperation between road district, city, county, and state agencies to improve roads and other transportation facilities, and support of the development of public transportation systems to serve populated areas.

City of Asotin Comprehensive Plan – 1998 (amended 2002)

The City of Asotin Comprehensive Plan lists goals, objectives, and policies that are relevant to the LCVMPPO *Regional Long Range Transportation Plan*:

- Goal A: Maintain and improve the city street system, pedestrian circulation system, and public transportation.

Important goals of the plan relevant to the LCVMPPO include the coordination with others regarding action on transportation issues, representation on the PRTPO, and the willingness to participate in countywide transportation planning organizations.

City of Clarkston Comprehensive Plan – 1999

The City of Clarkston Comprehensive Plan includes a Transportation element designed to identify the location and condition of the existing traffic circulation system, to identify current transportation problems, to project future transportation needs, and to establish level of service standards by which all transportation improvements will be measured.

Specific goals outlined in the Transportation Element of the City of Clarkston Transportation Comprehensive Plan which are relevant to this LRTP include:

- Goal A: Maintain and improve the city street system, pedestrian circulation system and public transportation.

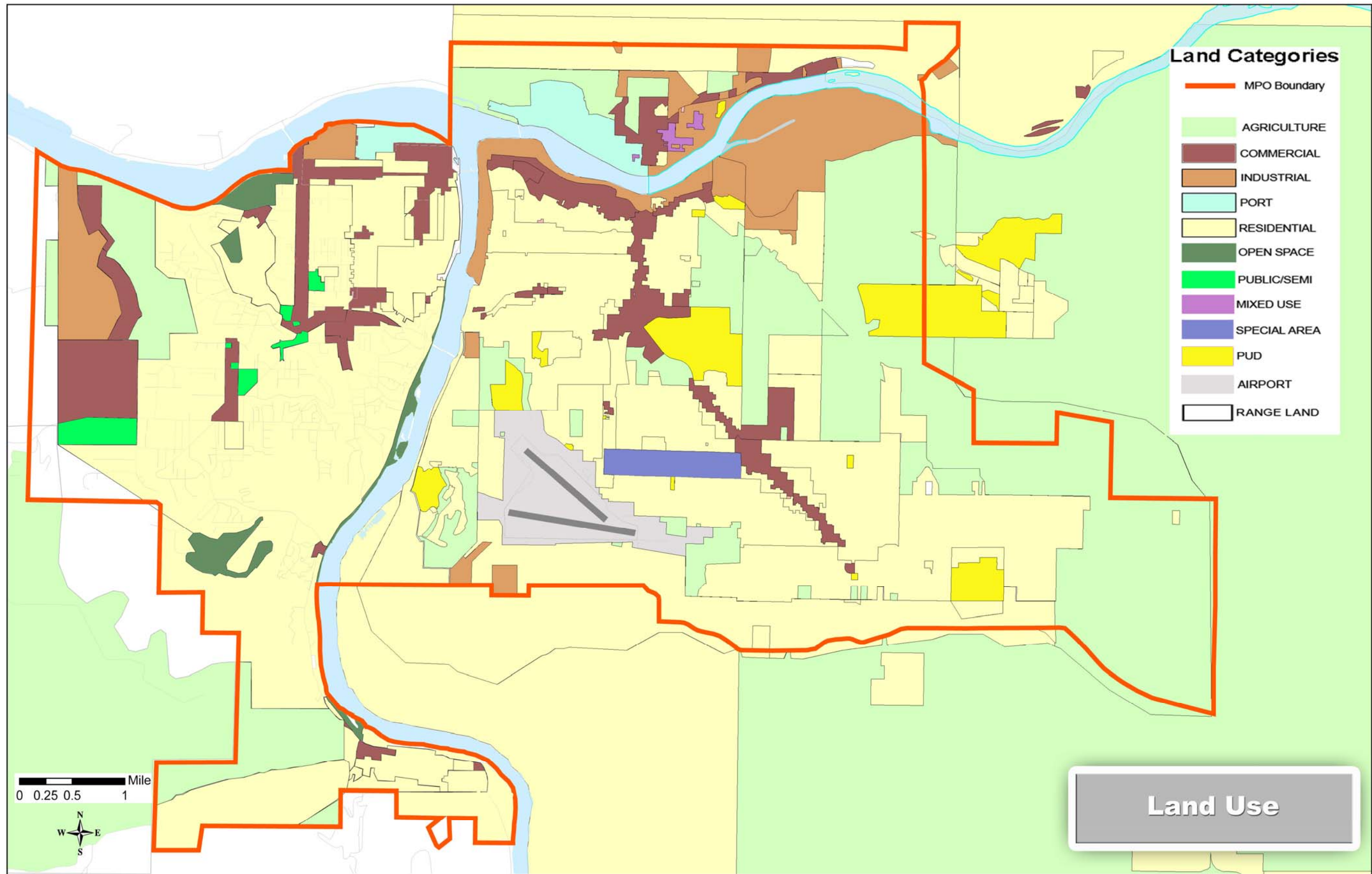


Figure 2: Land Use within the MPO Area

City of Lewiston Comprehensive Plan – 1998

The City of Lewiston Comprehensive Plan refers to the supplemental document titled City of Lewiston Comprehensive Transportation Plan Macro Phase, the policies of which are noted in the following section.

Nez Perce County Transportation Plan – 2004-2024

The Nez Perce Transportation Plan emphasizes the need for countywide access management as well as a plan for future corridor preservation; the plan also lists specific improvement projects that have been forwarded to the LCVMPPO for consideration.

The Nez Perce County Transportation Master Plan may be considered an extension of the County's comprehensive plan, providing a more extensive review and analysis of the ongoing planning and maintenance of the County's streets and related transportation facilities. The purpose of the Nez Perce County Transportation Plan is to provide a twenty-year plan of future projects and a six-year capital improvement plan (CIP) to identify the transportation deficiencies throughout the County. These improvement plans also prioritize the system projects that are needed to improve access and safety for businesses and the traveling public. The Plan recognizes that land uses, population, and employment directly affect the transportation needs of a community, and that an awareness of these elements is essential for the future planning of transportation system improvements.

The following goal in the Nez Perce County Transportation Master Plan was identified as relevant to the LCVMPPO *Regional Long Range Transportation Plan* goal relevant:

Goal: Plan a safe, efficient, continuous, coordinated, and convenient multi-modal transportation system that serves the needs of the County now and establishes the foundation for a transportation system that will serve future generations.

The following are recommended projects identified as priorities in the planning process and forwarded to the LCVMPPO for consideration:

- Lapwai Road – East Main Street to Lindsay Creek Road (current Level of Service (LOS) of C) (For definitions of the Levels of Service A-F see APPENDIX 8.)
- Gun Club Road – Lapwai Road to Stewart Avenue (future LOS of D and safety issues)
- Lapwai Road/Gun Club Road intersection (predicted LOS of F)
- Snake River Avenue/Bryden canyon Road intersections (left turns from Bryden Canyon Road onto Snake River Avenue expected to have LOS of F in 2025)

City of Lewiston Comprehensive Transportation Plan – Macro Phase (1996)

The City of Lewiston Comprehensive Transportation Plan is referenced as a supplemental document to the City's comprehensive plan, providing extensive review and detailed recommendations for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the City's streets and related transportation facilities. The purpose of the Lewiston Transportation Plan is to establish a continuing, comprehensive, and intermodal transportation planning process for the city. The plan recognizes (prior to the establishment of the LCVMPPO) that the development of a master transportation plan is necessary to

avoid the duplication of efforts, to speed up funding for projects and to establish a foundation to become a metropolitan area that would qualify for a Metropolitan Planning Organization. To be designated as a metropolitan area lends a stronger voice to the community with regard to funding and decision making concerning transportation projects.

The City of Lewiston Comprehensive Transportation Plan emphasizes the need to develop and maintain an active Public Transportation Management System (PTMS); to develop and maintain an active Congestion Management System (CMS) to monitor and analyze the entire transportation system performance; to create a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA); to develop a master transportation plan to avoid the duplication of efforts; and to promote transportation alternatives.

Specific City of Lewiston Comprehensive Transportation Plan goals relevant to the LCVMPPO *Regional Long Range Transportation Plan*:

- Goal B: To provide a transportation system that reflects and supports the values and objectives of the Lewiston Comprehensive Plan.
- Goal C: To seek stable revenues for new facilities and services, as well as the preservation and maintenance of those already in existence.
- Goal D: To provide a transportation system that enhances the City's economic vitality.
- Goal E: To provide transportation facilities and services that protect the environment and promote energy efficiency.
- Goal F: To establish and maintain an active Management Systems Program in the Lewiston planning area that will provide input for transportation planning.
- Goal H: To plan for public transportation to serve the most highly frequented destinations.

Palouse Regional Transportation Plan – 2004

Important goals of the Palouse Regional Transportation Plan relevant to the MPO include providing a multimodal transportation system based on regional priorities in coordination with county and city comprehensive plans, and optimizing resources devoted to transportation improvements for a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

Formed under the provisions of Washington's 1990 Growth Management Act, the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) was created by the Commissioners for the Counties of Asotin, Columbia, and Garfield (WA). The PRTPO was created to address the efficient use of resources to meet the region's growing transportation needs, the evaluation of which is the resulting plan (RTP).

Specific Palouse Transportation Plan goals relevant to the LCVMPPO *Regional Long Range Transportation Plan*:

- Goal 1: Provide multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and are coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans while optimizing the use of resources devoted to transportation improvements to provide a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

- Goal 2: Encourage development in areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
- Goal 3: Encourage economic development throughout the region that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of the region, especially unemployed and disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capability of the natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
- Goal 4: Protect the environment and enhance the planning area's high quality of life, including air and water quality and the availability of water.
- Goal 5: Encourage the involvement of citizens in the transportation planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.

Port of Lewiston Strategic Plan (draft) – 2005

The Port of Lewiston is a multi-faceted public organization structured around and within an economic development district and an intermodal transportation center. The Port operates a warehouse, a container yard, and a business incubator program while offering lease and purchase lands in the Harry Wall Industrial Park and the Business and Technology Park. The Port is important to Lewiston's economic interests and has a voice in such concerns as dam breaching, salmon and steelhead recovery, international trade, and job creation. The Port considers itself the "economic engine for the growth of the economy in the Valley and North Central Idaho".

As noted in the strategic plan, two major U.S. highways, 12 and 95, intersect at Lewiston. It is stated further in the plan: "While the Idaho Transportation Department has made significant investment into Highway 95, it still requires major improvements to adequately perform as a safe commercial route. Swift Transportation, the Port's largest tenant, often routes its trucks through Washington and Oregon due to safety issues. The condition of this roadway is a major obstacle to shipping product through the Port. However, the Port believes that the GARVEE Bonding bill passed by the 2005 Idaho legislature to improve state highways will positively impact this issue. The Port Commission will continue to lobby for improvements to Highway 95."

Port of Clarkston Comprehensive Plan – 2001

The Port of Clarkston, established in 1958, is the furthest inland port in the state of Washington. Originally the port's main purpose was encouraging industrial development because the waterways were not navigable by large vessels. In 1975 the construction of the Lower Granite Dam opened the rivers up to larger ships, however encouraging economic growth has remained a primary focus of the Port of Clarkston. The port's mission statement includes: developing land for economic purposes, leasing property, promoting tourism, protecting and preserving the environment, and promoting the intermodal transportation of commerce.

Port of Wilma Comprehensive Plan – 2001

The Port of Wilma is located across the Snake River from Lewiston and Clarkston. The comprehensive plan of this busy port warns against over-reliance on truck transport resulting from

abandonment of rail lines. The port's main transportation goal, then, is to "Encourage a balanced and economical multi-modal transportation system serving agriculture, commerce and industry."