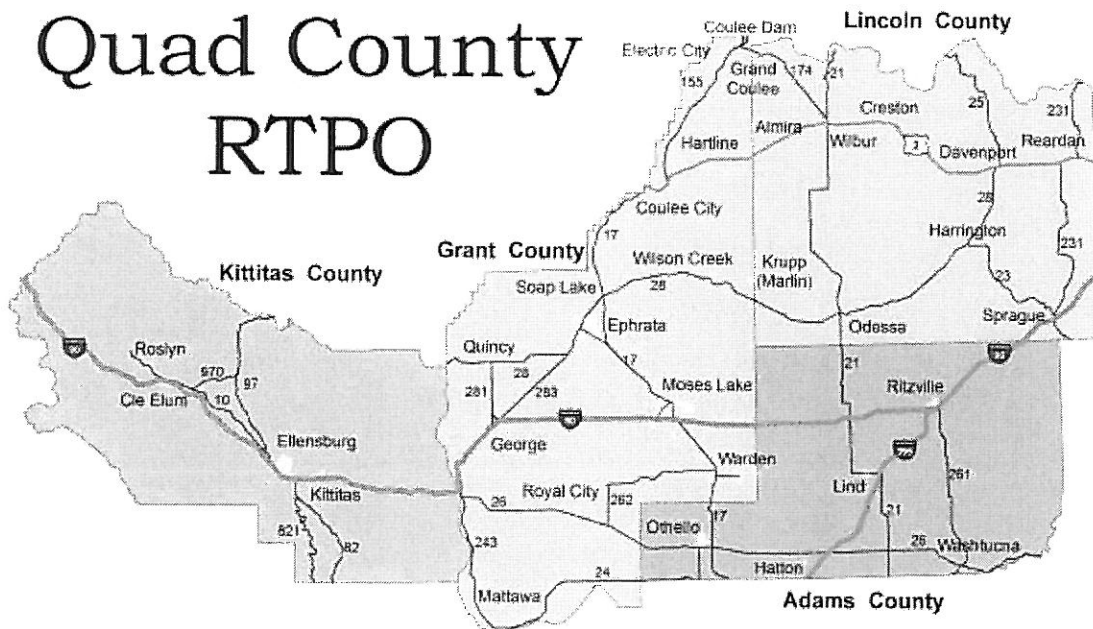


# Quad County RTPO



## Document Brief on the HISTORY, DESCRIPTION, PURPOSE, AND DIRECTION OF THE QUADCO RTPO

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## **INTRODUCTION**

If you stop someone on the street and ask them "Have you ever been to the QUADCO Region?" Chances are they will respond..... "QUADCO, what and where in the world is that?"

But if you ask, "Have you ever had the pleasure to visit Grand Coulee Dam, The Gorge Amphitheater, Lake Roosevelt, Pot Holes Reservoir, Sun Lakes, Banks Lake, Columbia National Wildlife Refuge, Ginkgo Petrified Forrest, Dry Falls, or Steamboat Rock?" (only to name a few). The answer is overwhelmingly "YES"!

## **WHAT IS "QUADCO"?**

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act authorizing the Regional Transportation Planning Program which allowed for the formation of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).

As a result of that legislation certain local government agencies came together and agreed to create an organization called the Quad County Regional Transportation Planning Organization. And so it was that QUADCO RTPO became the lead transportation-planning agency for the four-county region of Adams, Grant, Kittitas and Lincoln Counties.

Membership includes all four Counties, and the towns and cities lying within including Almira, Cle Elum, Coulee City, Coulee Dam, Creston, Davenport, Electric City, Ellensburg, Ephrata, George, Grand Coulee, Harrington, Krupp, Lind, Mattawa, Moses Lake, Odessa, Othello, Quincy, Reardan, Ritzville, Roslyn, Royal City, Soap Lake, Sprague, Warden, Washtucna, Wilbur and Wilson Creek.

## **UNIQUE AND DIVERSE IN MANY WAYS**

QUADCO RTPO covers an area of 9,214 square miles of central and eastern Washington. There are three distinct subregions within the area, each of which has unique and diverse characteristics that shape the transportation system into internally dependent local area networks.

- The drylands of Lincoln, Adams, and Grant Counties with their emphasis on grain production, and destination recreation;
- The irrigated areas of Grant County, Adams County Panhandle, and a large part of Kittitas County with their emphasis on the timothy hay industry, orchard and other perishable products; and
- The remainder of Kittitas County has a focus on urban, service industries, agricultural industries, timber industries as well as recreational facilities and opportunities.

The backbone and lifeblood of these sub-regions are the farm-to-market, and haul road systems, even though they are not necessarily the same in every portion of the region. The condition and accessibility of these roads is vital to regional economic development and require as much attention as major transportation facilities to meet current and projected future needs.

The success of all these enterprises is highly dependent upon an efficient transportation system that connects state produced commodities with their respective markets.

### **DIVERSE YET COHESIVE MEMBERSHIP**

The QUADCO membership is as diverse and unique as the land area it serves. Membership ranges from those representing local County Governments and Cities with populations in the thousands to small towns with a population of only a few hundred.

Each member providing a unique and special talent and total commitment for the benefit and betterment of the community or organization they represent.

On any given night you may see these representatives on opposite sides of a high school gym or ball field strongly supporting their local team in a spirited sports event with the neighboring community.

Yet, the very next day you may very well see these same representatives sitting side by side, shoulder to shoulder, at a QUADCO or other meeting demonstrating their combined and total support for that same neighboring communities attempt to receive planning or project funding.

### **UNIQUE MANAGEMENT STYLE**

QUADCO is unique in that unlike many other RTPO/MPO's, it does not hire a full-time administrative staff.

Each of the four member Counties take turns performing the Lead Agency and Management duties for the organization. Each County serves a two year term on a rotating basis. Lincoln County Department of Public Works is presently fulfilling the lead agency role and duties. They will have the lead agency role until June 2009.

This unique style has proven successful in keeping administration costs down and allowing more planning dollars to be available for local agency planning projects. On average QUADCO only spends 8 to 12% of the total funds it receives for administration and management of the RTPO. This is in dramatic contrast to larger RTPO/MPO's which may allocate as much as 35% and above for administration and management.

### **WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?**

The planning funds QUADCO receives go to three main categories.

- 1) Lead Agency Expense: To cover costs of Lead Agency Staff salaries, postage, copies and supplies.
- 2) WTP Update: To cover the costs of the work completed by the RTPO to update and incorporate the agencies long range planning into and in line with the Washington Transportation Plan.
- 3) RTP Maintenance and Update: To cover the costs for work completed to maintain and update their Regional Transportation Plan.

Each year the State allocates funds to the RTPO for the purposes described. Each year the RTPO submits their Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) describing the tasks to be performed with that money. The UPWP allows for various Work Elements that are projects the RTPO proposes as the work necessary to maintain and update their RTP.

The Charts in Appendix A demonstrates where the planning dollars go.

## **PURPOSE AND INTENT**

Since its formation, the QUADCO RTPO has focused on providing a planning process targeted toward "cooperation", "cohesion", and "dedication" to all members regardless of size or location within the region.

QUADCO is about local citizens, private interests, public interests, elected officials, and resource agencies partnering to jointly determine a future for their local communities, counties and region.

The QUADCO Membership has set up broad guidelines and planning procedures that bring regional interests together and coordinate the local and regional planning processes.

QUADCO provides a framework for the cooperative and dedicated effort to try and assist each and every member agency, regardless of size, answer their important transportation questions such as:

- What is the community/regional vision?
- What does the community want its transportation system to look like and perform in the years ahead?
- What are the individual communities, counties, and regions needs?
- What resources will it take to accomplish these tasks?

## **DIRECTION FOR REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES**

QUADCO supports all member projects directed at improving the regional transportation system. To that end QUADCO developed the following regional implementation priorities as part of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Transportation planning within each of the Counties and member city and town strives to ensure a functioning and efficient transportation system. Preservation and improvement projects

contemplated for selection to each member agencies Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) focus on the following strategies:

- **Improve transportation system safety (Safety).** Select projects, which improve safety characteristics such as increasing sight distance, improving curve radii, and improving rail crossings have a qualitatively higher rating than those that do not.
- **Implement projects with the highest investment value (Investment Value).** Any project should be economically viable. Funding should be readily available during the life of Plan. The project should meet the criteria specified for the funding source and should be as competitive as possible with similar projects elsewhere. The project should offer a viable solution to a recognized problem and do so in a cost-effective manner.
- **Ensure system continuity (System Continuity).** The Quad County regional transportation system is linked to the transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions and any project that facilitates that linkage provides value to both this region and the statewide system as a whole. System continuity is a characteristic, which ensures that access between facilities and areas is maximized, and that the capacities, conditions and other attributes of each planned element are considered.
- **Eliminate deficiencies that reduce system efficiency (System Efficiency).** Projects that increase capacity or otherwise increase the ability of persons and goods to move unhindered and without delay are examples of system efficiency.
- **Provide multimodal solutions to transportation problems (Multimodal Solutions).** This includes projects which utilize more than one mode or which provide more opportunities to choose between modes.

## **SOUND INVESTMENT OF PLANNING FUNDS - FUTURE DIRECTION**

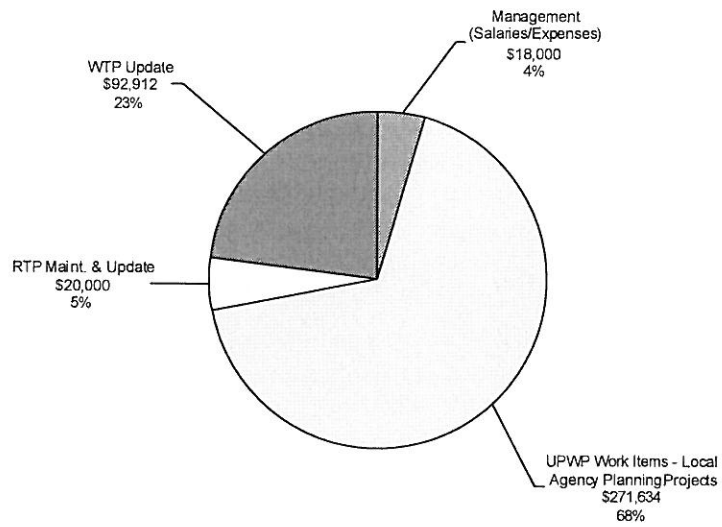
The QUADCO Council is and will remain committed to the wise investment of the limited UPWP Planning funds it receives.

QUADCO considers all member agency proposals for planning projects as work elements within the UPWP. The selection and award of local agency projects completed as work elements can provide both updated information valuable for the maintenance and update of the RTP, and provide the foundation to address the issues which have been identified in the RTP.

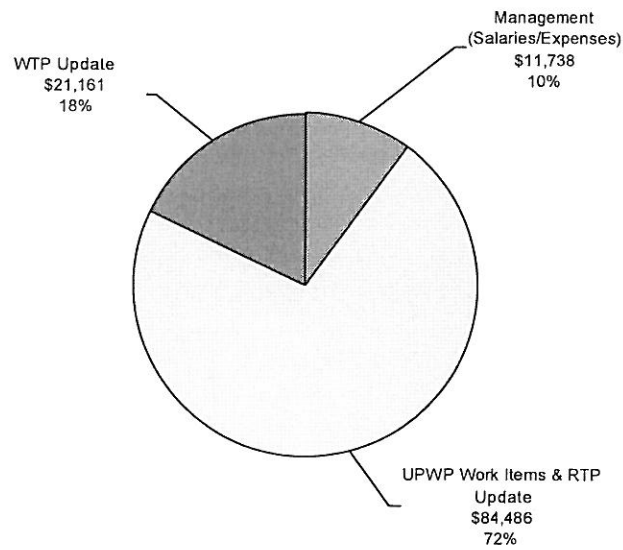
QUADCO knows first hand how the value of a single dollar of wisely invested planning money can grow 30 to 130 times in value as a construction project benefiting both the local community and region.

The charts in Appendix B provide examples of two local agency planning projects that were awarded UPWP work element funds. The planning money received became the initial seed to sprout, grow and culminate into viable and sound construction projects that addressed issues identified in the RTP and benefited the both the local communities and region.

WHERE QUADCO PLANNING FUNDS WENT IN 2004 - 2006



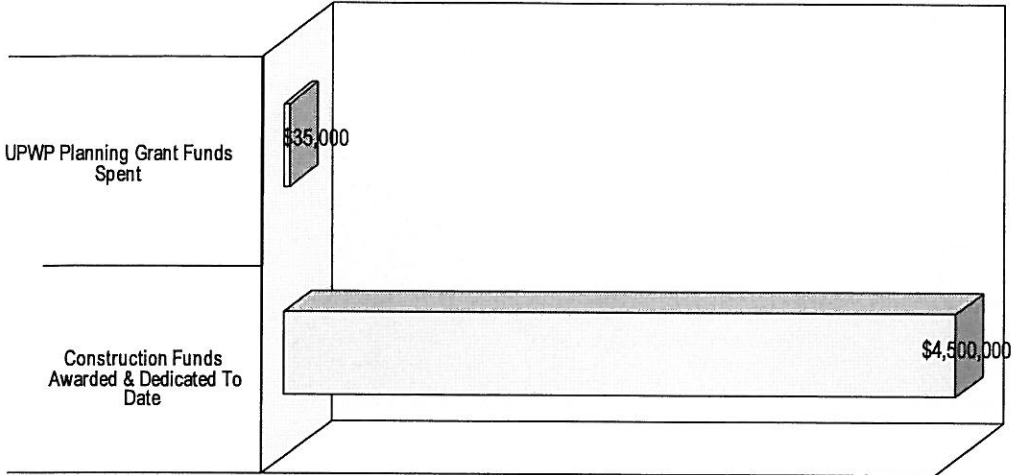
WHERE QUADCO PLANNING FUNDS WILL GO IN 2007



WHERE THE MONEY GOES

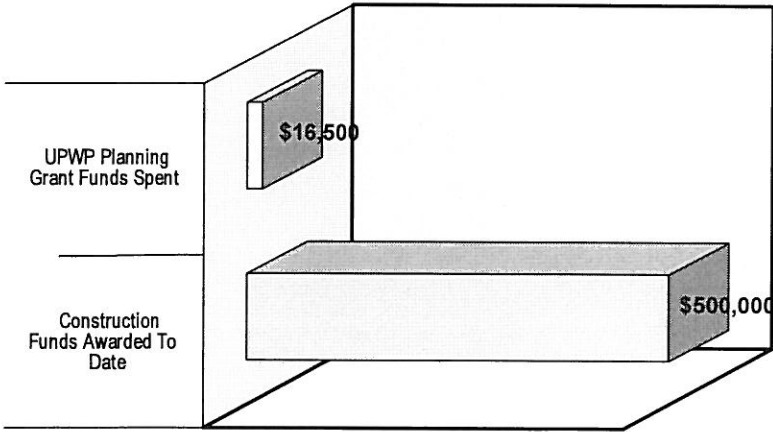
HOW UPWP PLANNING GRANT FUNDS GROW

Lincoln County - Transportation Needs Study



HOW UPWP PLANNING GRANT DOLLARS GROW

Town of Reardan - School Zone Traffic



Each dollar of wisely invested planning funds can sprout, grow and culminate in a completed construction project that is 30 to 130 times greater in value.

When you travel please remember,  
sometimes you just can't get there without  
first traveling through here! -

"QUADCO"

And of all those who travel through or  
visit..... many are choosing to stay!