V. TRANSPORTATION

PURPOSE

Huntington Avenue – Looking North

The Transportation Element establishes the City's goals and policies for improving the transportation system within the Castle Rock study area. It is intended to serve as a guide for making transportation decisions to address both short and long term needs. The Transportation Element discusses accessibility, enhancement, safety, pedestrian travel, and impacts of future land development activity. The transportation element is also consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan.

The comprehensive plan recognizes the importance of coordination and strong inter-jurisdictional action because transportation impacts do not stop at local boundaries. Inter-jurisdictional coordination is necessary for the region to maintain land use and transportation goals within Cowlitz County. In planning for transportation, it is important to link land use with transportation facilities.

LOCAL POLICY/REGIONAL COORDINATION

In 1990 The State of Washington developed a regional transportation planning program. The program led to the formation of the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO), made up of counties, cities, ports, transit agencies and other organizations within Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Lewis, Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. A board of directors addresses planning issues across county lines and is responsible for the adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan. The plan addresses levels of service on regional facilities. Levels of service in turn determine deficiencies and needed improvements in the regional system which must be funded through a financial plan. As Castle Rock grows and new infrastructure is needed to support additional development, levels of service provide a means to test whether existing regional roads are adequate or whether facility improvements or other strategies are needed to preserve traveler mobility. The Regional Transportation Plan will be critical to the future of transportation planning within Castle Rock because regional projects within the Castle Rock area will be prioritized against projects elsewhere in the region by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This section provides an inventory of the existing transportation system in the Castle Rock area. Data sources in this element consist of documents from Castle Rock planning, Cowlitz County, Federal Highway Administration, Washington State Department of Transportation, and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization.

Land Transportation

The existing street system for the City of Castle Rock is shown in Figure 5-1. The transportation network not only provides for movement of residents and goods, but it also serves as the major conduit for essential urban services (e.g., electric, water, sewer, drainage, communications, etc.) generally located above or below ground within the rights-of-way (ROW).

Castle Rock is served by a network of roads, totaling approximately 18 miles. Most of the arterials are built to an acceptable standard, in terms of lane widths and surface conditions, for their intended use. However, many of the older local access streets are narrow, have deteriorating pavement or are gravel, and are built on narrow right-of-way.

The basic roadway system providing circulation to and from Castle Rock is the federal and state highway system, Interstate-5, State Route 411 and State Route 504. The interstate links Castle Rock and surrounding areas to Portland to the south, and Olympia and Seattle to the north. State Route 411 is also a north south connection, although connecting to smaller urban areas such as Longview/Kelso to the south. State Route 504 is an east-west connection linking the Castle Rock community to Mount St. Helens, and the Community of Toutle.

Functional Classification:

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, according to the character of service they are intended to provide, as defined by the Federal Highway Administration. Transportation planning uses functional classification to determine how travel should be channelized within the overall road network. For example, roadways provide two functions, to provide mobility and to provide access. Higher speeds and fewer intersections are preferred for mobility, while lower speeds and more frequent intersections support access. In this sense, functional

classification defines the part that any particular route should play in servicing the flow of trips through a highway network.

The City of Castle Rock's functional classification map is shown in Figure 5-2. The map is produced and updated by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), who has ay

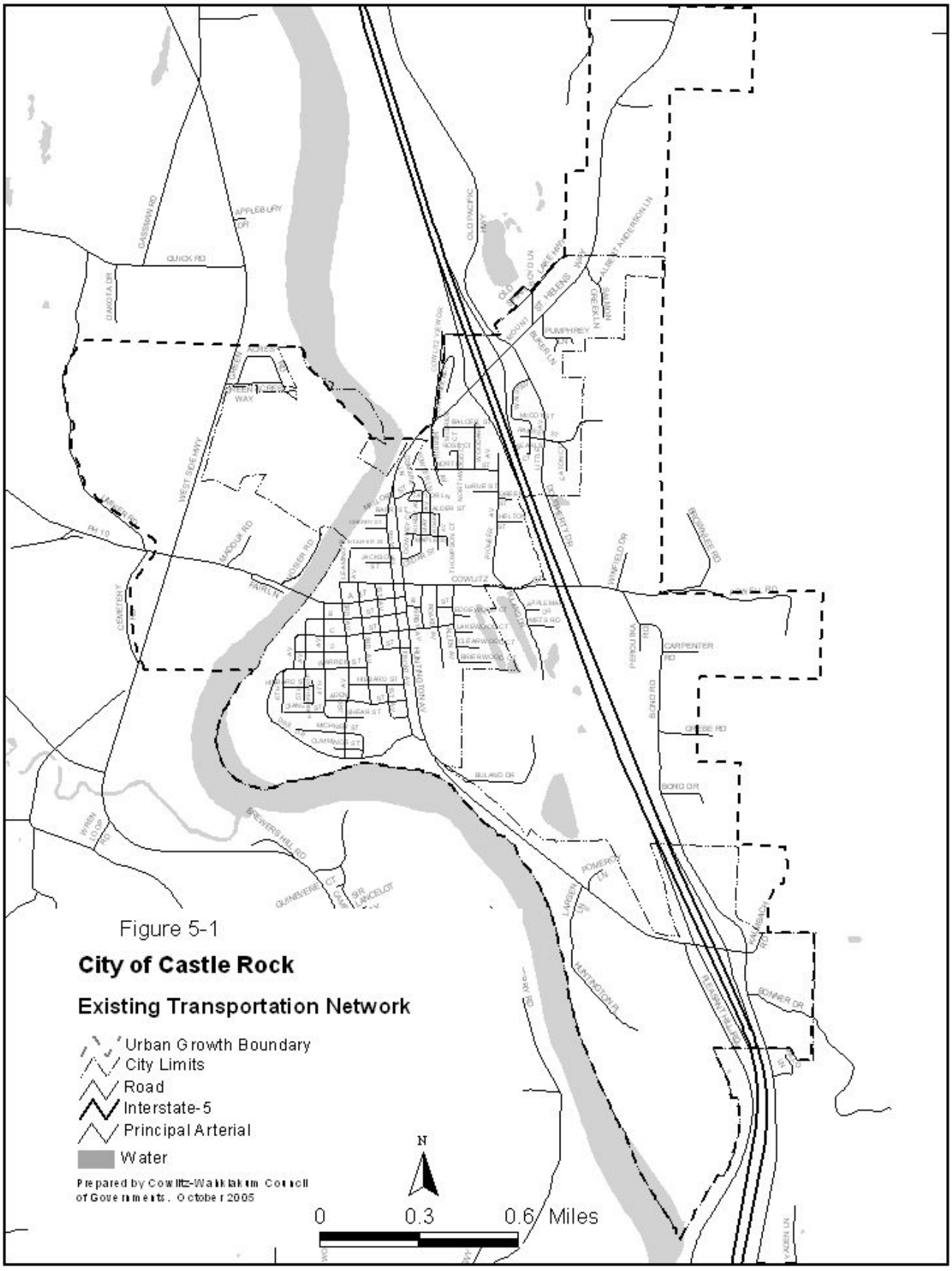


Figure 5-1
City of Castle Rock
Existing Transportation Network
Urban Growth Boundary
City Limits
Road
Interstate-5
Principal Arterial
Water
Prepared by Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, October 2005
N
0
0.3
0.6 Miles

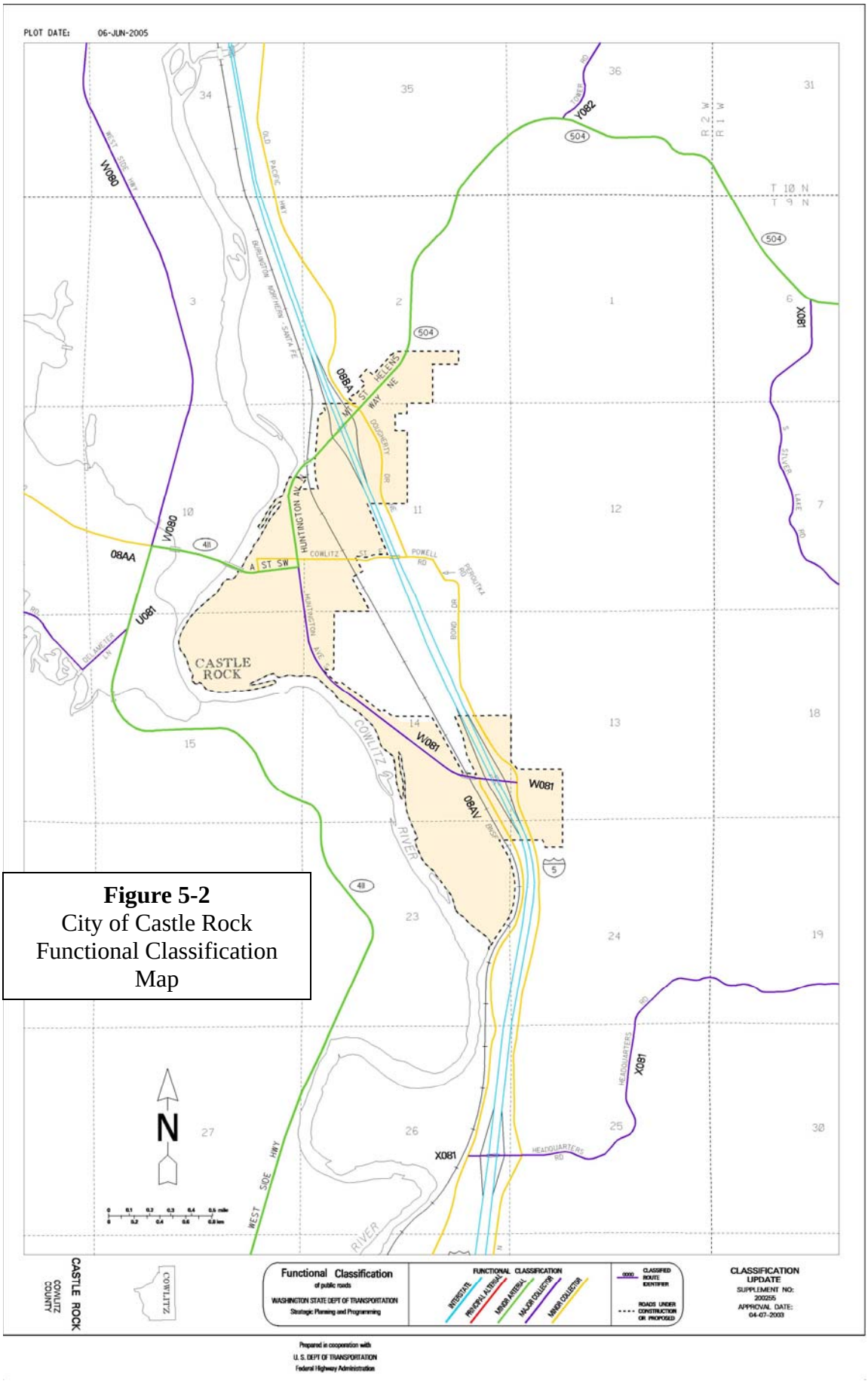


Figure 5-2
City of Castle Rock
Functional Classification
Map

primary responsibility for developing and updating the statewide highway functional classification for the existing transportation network. WSDOT uses five standard categories to classify roads according to their function and importance. They include interstate, principal arterial, minor arterial, major collector and minor collector. A summary of the various classifications in Castle Rock are described below.

Interstate: An interstate is a facility devoted entirely to traffic movement, characterized by multiple lanes, full control of access, and no intersections at grade. Interstate 5 provides this non-stop service from Castle Rock to the greater Portland area to the south and the Olympia area to the north. There are two interchanges within the city limits of Castle Rock, one located off of Huntington Avenue (Exit 48), and the other at Spirit Lake Memorial Highway (Exit 49). Both interchanges allow north and south bound access.

Arterial Roads: A minor arterial road is a two-lane facility that is oriented to land service (access) function but also carries through-traffic. It accommodates a lower level of traffic volume and mobility than the higher types of facilities, serves less concentrated traffic generating areas, and distributes traffic between neighborhood collector streets and principal arterials as well as traffic between principal arterials. Area examples include West Side Highway (SR 411), "A" Street, Huntington Ave north, and SR 504.

Collector Streets:
Major Collectors provides service to any county seat not on an arterial route, to the larger towns not directly served by the higher systems, and to other traffic generators of equivalent intracounty importance, such as consolidated schools, shipping points, county parks, important mining and agriculture areas, and links these places with nearby larger towns or cities, or with routes of higher classification. Some area examples are West Side Highway north and Huntington Ave south.

Minor Collectors are routes that are consistent with population density, to collect traffic from local roads and bring all developed areas within a reasonable distance of a collector road, provide service to the remaining smaller communities, and link the locally important traffic generators with their rural hinterland. Area examples are Cowlitz St, Powell Rd, Bond Rd, Old Pacific Highway, and Pleasant Hill Rd.

Local Residential Streets: Serves the primary function of providing direct access to abutting property and offers a low level of traffic mobility. It is a neighborhood street on which through-traffic is deliberately discouraged or prohibited. Local residential streets are the most abundant street form in Castle Rock. All remaining streets, not listed above, are considered local streets in the Castle Rock area. The condition of the local streets is anywhere from good to poor. Streets in poor condition have many potholes, lack of right-of-way, or have a gravel surface.

Parking Facilities:

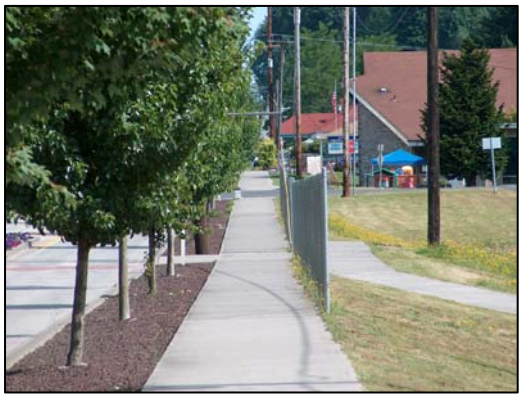
Parking becomes an important consideration when dealing with land use and desired density. The City of Castle Rock's parking needs are met by an abundance of free on-street and off-street parking. Currently all 74, downtown parking spaces, four of which are handicapped, are allotted a 2 hour time limit with 3 spaces held for 15 minute time limits. There are also 2 public parking lots in the downtown area to supplement the on-street parking. The residential neighborhoods have an abundance of on-street parking also.

Sidewalks and Pedestrian Facilities:

Sidewalks within the city are displayed in Figure 5-3. Sidewalks are provided in the downtown commercial area, and they are scattered throughout the residential areas.

The City has a sidewalk program that includes an inspection of the existing facilities once a year. From the inspection, a list of all the hazards is inventoried and the obstacles are marked with bright paint. The public works director then writes a letter to the property owners to inform them they have 60 days to make repairs.

The City does not have any designated bicycle or moped routes. Bicycles and mopeds share the city streets with the larger vehicular traffic.



Sidewalk on the east side of Huntington Ave

The City does, however, have the Riverfront Trail system which is a conduit for multimodal, non-motorized transportation to businesses, neighborhoods, parks, schools, and streets.

Transit Services:

Castle Rock is served by limited public transportation provided by Lower Columbia Community Action Council (CAP), which runs a *rural public transportation* route Monday through Friday between Vancouver and Tumwater. The transit route provides connection service to the C-Tran system in Vancouver (WA) at the 134th Street exit (Salmon Creek Park n' Ride), the CUBS transit system in Longview and with the Twin Transit system at Wal-Mart in Chehalis. The CAP also has a transportation system for seniors and Medicaid recipients.

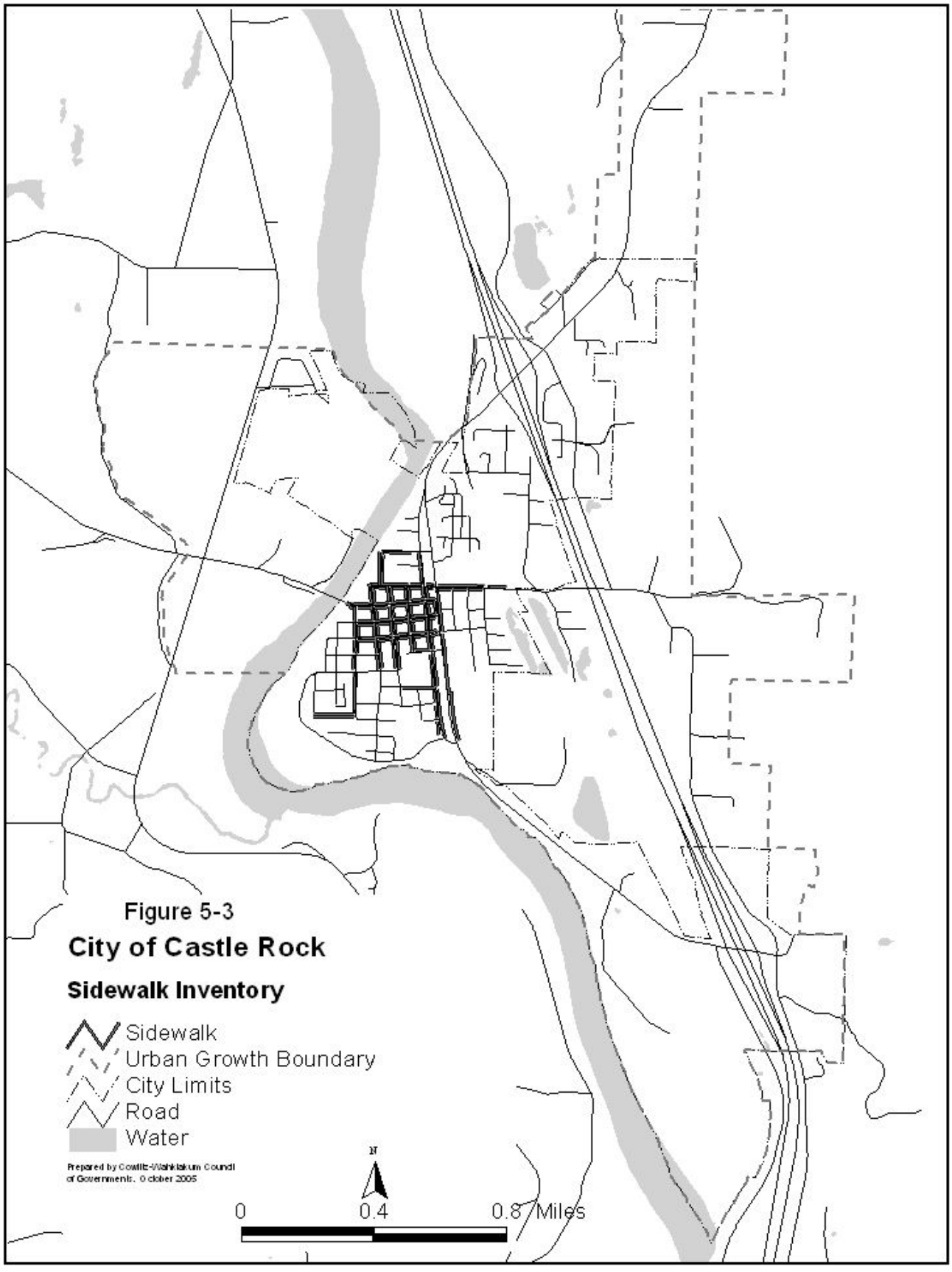


Figure 5-3
City of Castle Rock
Sidewalk Inventory
Sidewalk
Urban Growth Boundary
City Limits
Road
Water
Prepared by Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, October 2005
N
0
0.4
0.8 Miles

Rail Service:

The Burlington Northern railroad line runs through the City of Castle Rock to the west of Interstate-5 and the east of the major downtown area. The rail line is used for the transport of goods, and commuters. The City of Kelso is home to the closest commuter station or the rail line, with service provided by Amtrak.

Burlington Northern *Railroad Tracks*

Air Transportation

There is no air service to Castle Rock and no airport within the city limits. The nearest general aviation airport is located in Kelso. Portland International Airport (PDX) in east Portland, Oregon, provides the closest large-scale commercial service and is approximately one hour south of Castle Rock.

Marine Transportation

Castle Rock has no port facilities located within the city limits. Castle Rock is located along the Cowlitz River, which is not navigatable by large ships. The Port of Longview is the closest marine transportation site, located approximately 15 miles from the City.

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

This section identifies future transportation needs in the Comprehensive Plan. Secured and planned roadway improvements are identified in the annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Possible solutions to these issues may be implemented by the city or a private developer as part of a project. This list is designed to account for some general transportation issues facing the city.

Transportation Issues and Possible Solutions

- **Many local streets, especially collectors, are too narrow and deteriorated and they lack adequate shoulders and sidewalks for safe pedestrian use.**

Possible Solutions

1. Require new development to aid in the improvement of existing streets providing access to the site as well as developing streets with wide right-of-ways and pedestrian facilities.

2. A primary consideration in reviewing new development should be pedestrian safety and ease of travel.

3. Street improvement program should consider sidewalks, bike lanes, and other pedestrian improvements as a priority.

- **Downtown Revitalization such as streetscapes, improved traffic flow, and pedestrian access is needed.**

1. Support the Castle Rock Community Action Plan as it refers to downtown improvements.

2. Implement the Cowlitz Street West Improvement Project by constructing bulb-outs and crosswalks, planting vegetation, adding street lights, and making changes to parking spaces.

3. Work with local merchants to improve the aesthetics of downtown store fronts.

4. Designate loading zones for commercial businesses, to keep large vehicles from blocking several parking spaces during peak hours.

- **Improve connectivity of the overall Transportation network for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.**

1. Complete the middle section of Buland Drive to make it a through street.

2. Continue to improve the Riverfront Trail system, such as, complete the north link of the Riverfront Trail, east to Huntington Ave and west to the high school and on to Green Acres subdivision, and complete the south link west to West Side Highway near Arkansas Creek.

- **Provide regularly scheduled transit service to outside communities.**

1. Negotiate for a scheduled transit service between Castle Rock and Longview.

2. Research Funding opportunities for a Castle Rock transit system.

- **Improve the appearance of the south and north entrance off of Interstate-5.**

1. Continue implementing the Huntington Avenue entrance feature project at Lions Pride Park.

2. Make sign improvements for the city center off of Exit 49.

SIX YEAR PLAN

As mandated by law, the City of Castle Rock creates a six-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) annually. The plan lists all of the projects with secured local, state, and federal funding for a three year window as well as all of the planned projects without secured funding within a six year window. This six-year funding plan includes an analysis of the city's funding capabilities, and is compatible with the city's growth and development.

The City of Castle Rock's TIP is adopted by City Council for approval and then included in the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Improvement Organization's TIP, where the projects are prioritized against other regional projects for funding purposes. The city's projects are also included in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) which is adopted by the Washington State Department of Transportation (see Appendix A).

FUNDING SOURCES

Funding sources for the city's transportation system are listed under the Capital Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

Goal 1: Provide for a convenient, safe, and efficient transportation/circulation network.

Goal 2: **E**nsure pedestrian safety and convenience in the transportation/circulation system and further the use of alternative travel modes.

Goal 3: Establish sufficient funding to implement planned transportation projects and services. This plan gives high priority to maintenance, preservation and safety improvements.

Goal 4: Ensure that an adequate transportation network exists to support future development.

Goal 5: Provide a higher level of transit services to the citizens of Castle Rock.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Policy 1: Sidewalks or at least wide, paved shoulders for pedestrian movement should be integral parts of new or improved streets and highways in the Castle Rock Urban Area.

Policy 2: Prohibit on-street parking of large recreational vehicles, semi trucks and trailers, and logging trucks in residential areas.

Policy 3: Integrate land use and transportation decisions to ensure that the transportation system supports the community land use vision.

Policy 4: Provide attractive streetscapes through design standards that encourage appropriate traffic volumes, speeds, and pedestrian safety in the downtown area.

Policy 5: Encourage street networks in new development that create circulation between neighborhoods and subdivisions.

Policy 6: Bicycle and jogging trails identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of this plan and their maintenance should be incorporated into the transportation improvement programs of the city, county, and state.

Policy 7: Develop new public works standards for construction and maintenance of the transportation system.