

**BOARD OF ISLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MINUTES OF MEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2007 – SPECIAL SESSION**

The Board of Island County Commissioners met in Special Session on December 7, 2007 beginning at 8:30 a.m. for the purpose of attending a Walkability Forum sponsored by the Environmental Health Assessment Team (EHAT) at the Oak Harbor School District Office, Fireside Room, 350 S. Oak Harbor Street, Oak Harbor, Washington. Wm. L. McDowell, Chairman and John Dean, Member were present.

Attendees of the Forum (organized alphabetically by last name):

Terri Arnold	Director, South Whidbey Parks and Recreation
Malcolm Bishop	Public Works Director, Town of Coupeville
Connie Bowers	Traffic Engineer, Island County Public Works
Oliver Bronnbauer	Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Mark Brown	Island County Sheriff
Joyce Christiansen	Island County Public Health
Patty Cohen	Mayor, City of Oak Harbor
Maribeth Crandell	City of Oak Harbor Public Works
John Dean	Island County Commissioner
Marilyn Dessert	Walking School Bus volunteer
Tom Eisenberg	Friends of Camano Island Parks (FOCIP)
Sarah Felger	Island County Public Health
Bill Frederick	Friends of Freeland
Kerry Graves	Administrative Services Director, Island County Public Health
Karen Grossman	Island County Public Health/Whidbey in Motion (WHIM)
Joantha Guthrie	Project Manager, Island County Public Works
Jack Hartt	Park Manager, Deception Pass State Park
Lee Heinrichs	Transportation Director, Stanwood-Camano School District
Meghan Heppner	Island County Transit
Katie Hicks	EHAT
Maury Hood	Real Estate Manager, Goosefoot Community Fund
Nicole Craig	Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce
Cac Kamak	City of Oak Harbor Planning Department
Barbara Lyter	Lyter Photography & Design
William "Mac" McDowell	Island County Commissioner
David Macys	EHAT/Community Health Advisory Board (CHAB)
Ann McDonald	Port of Coupeville Commissioner
Tim McDonald	Health Services Director, Island County Public Health
Carrie McLachlan	Assessment/Comm. Dev. Supervisor, Island County Public Health
Jennifer Meyer	Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Mike Morton	Island County Public Works
Hank Nydam	City of Oak Harbor Parks Manager
Jim Patton	EHAT
Arnie Peterschmidt	City of Oak Harbor Engineering Department
Marie Piper	EHAT
Dan Poolman	Director of Business & Operations, South Whidbey School District
Richard Rhydes	Architect
Trish Rose	Whidbey General Hospital
Barbara Saugen	Whidbey General Hospital Commissioner
Veronica Schmidt	Transportation Director, South Whidbey School District

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Carol Sele	Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Celine Servatius	EHAT
Jim Slowik	Mayor-elect, City of Oak Harbor
Michelle Smith	Health Promotions, Naval Hospital Oak Harbor
Carl Stephens	EHAT
Leslie Stevens	EHAT
Joyce Swanson	Principal, Broad View Elementary
Aaron Terada	Fort Ebey State Park
Carol Triplett	FOCIP
Holly Troyer	PE Teacher, Oak Harbor Elementary
Ken Urstad	Sound Waters
Krista Voigt	CHAB
Rob Voigt	EHAT
Whitney Webber	EHAT Staff
Jill Wood	Island County Public Health
Elaine Woods	EHAT/Whidbey Walks
Bruce Worley	Operations Executive Director, Oak Harbor School District

Chair of the forum, Commissioner John Dean, welcomed forum participants. He highlighted the three focus areas identified for the first forum on walkability: Safe Routes to School, Convenience and Connectivity, and Recreation then noted that the objective for the second forum was to share accomplishments in these areas and work from the priorities to develop additional solutions.

Whitney Webber, EHAT staff, reviewed contents of the folders provided.

Commissioner Dean recognized EHAT members with certificates of appreciation. EHAT sponsored the first and second forums on walkability, and will continue to address walkability as one of their priority issues by forming an action team as part of the Community Health Advisory Board (CHAB) beginning January 2008. He asked forum participants to introduce themselves by stating their name and organization they represented and/or interest in walkability.

New Data from the Island County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and Other Data Sources

Presenter: Carrie McLachlan, Island County Public Health

Commissioner Dean introduced Carrie McLachlan, Supervisor of Assessment and Community Development with Island County Public Health. Ms. McLachlan gave a talk examining new 2006 data from the County BRFSS on obesity and overweight, physical activity levels, and walking.

How a Local Walking Program is Changing Lives

Presenter: Carol Sele, NASWI Fitness Coordinator

Commissioner Dean introduced Carol Sele, Fitness Coordinator with Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, to demonstrate how walking has made a difference in the life of a local sailor. Ms. Sele discussed her walking program, "Walk-it-Off," and led forum participants in an exercise routine, and highlighted the program's incentives. One of the participants from the program, Oliver

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Bronnbauer, told his story, which was accompanied by pictures illustrating his dramatic weight loss.

Recreation

Guest speaker #1: Terri Arnold, South Whidbey Parks and Recreation

Commissioner Dean turned the attention of forum participants to EHAT's accomplishments on walkability since their forum in October 2006. He introduced Terri Arnold, Director of South Whidbey Parks and Recreation, as the first speaker on recreational opportunities in Island County. Ms. Arnold discussed EHAT's trail mapping and signage project.

Guest speaker #2: Mayor Patty Cohen, City of Oak Harbor

Mayor Patty Cohen from the City of Oak Harbor delivered a speech accompanied by a slideshow presentation on how the City of Oak Harbor is promoting and sustaining walkability.

Convenience & Connectivity

Guest speaker #3: Rob Voigt, City of Oak Harbor Planning Department

Rob Voigt spoke about the importance of policy approaches to addressing walkability. He highlighted select projects in Oak Harbor where pedestrian activity is encouraged through integrated design and development, and emphasized our responsibility in creating built environments that are not just walkable, but livable.

Commissioner Dean thanked Mr. Voigt and briefly spoke about the efforts of Jack Lynch, President of the Clinton Progressive Association, who was scheduled to speak but could not attend the forum. Mr. Lynch is developing a community action plan for Clinton. The objective of the plan is to incorporate EHAT's Walkability Audit, the Scenic Byway Plan, SR525 Predesign Analysis Report by DOT, and similar reports and plans for Clinton into a single community action plan.

Safe Routes to School

Guest speaker #4: Holly Troyer, Oak Harbor Elementary

Commissioner Dean introduced Holly Troyer, PE Teacher at Oak Harbor Elementary, to share the successes of her Walking School Bus program.

Guest speaker #5: Joyce Swanson, Broad View Elementary

Principal Joyce Swanson from Broad View Elementary (BVE) talked about her school's efforts in helping her students increase their physical activity levels by increasing the number of children that walk or bike to or from school. BVE has instituted a walking program, a cycling enrichment class, and a no-idle zone for parents who drive their kids to school.

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Small Group Sessions on Recreation, Convenience & Connectivity, and Safe Routes to School

Commissioner Dean asked the forum participants to break out into small group sessions to brainstorm solutions, resources, and next steps for tackling the tougher issues that remain under EHAT's three focus areas. EHAT facilitators led the discussions in small groups.

Commit to Action

The forum participants reconvened in the larger group to share their insights from the small group sessions. The major points addressed by each group are described below.

Recreation:

- Changes in Island County park structure are needed; Camano is isolated from Whidbey
- Pursue management of parks by agencies other than Island County
- Concerned citizens need to continue to advocate for change
- Strengthen political will for this issue; get a County Commissioner on board to advocate for changes in park structure
- Establish separate parks departments for Central Whidbey and Camano Island

Convenience & Connectivity:

- SR525 "Frontage Rd. cul-de-sac"
- Island County Planning (Andrew Hicks)
- Pre-design agreements
- More public participation on comprehensive plans needed; too late for public to provide input during application and public hearing processes
- Road standard design to increase walkers and bikers when design is revisited
- January is annual update time for comprehensive plan
- County roads – asphalt redo
- Barrier – SW ditches/retention (state law)
- Policy change/exemption needed
- Review SEPA – safety, etc.
- Rural development incentives for trails/paths (PRDs?)
- City of Oak Harbor presentation on the road

Convenience & Connectivity:

Ideas Raised and Discussed

- SR525 "Frontage Rd. cul-de-sac" – too late in the process to address now
- Island County Planning – Land Use – good place to find out about projects
- Pre-design agreements – better place for input regarding walkability features
- More public participation on comprehensive plans needed; too late for public to provide input during application and public hearing processes – best place for input regarding walkability features and requirements
- Road standard design to increase walkers and bikers when design is revisited
- January is annual update time for Island County Comprehensive Plan – review and comment on plan
- County roads – during an asphalt overlay is the time for enhancements, not during chip sealing of the roads. Provide comments to Public Works annually to

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incorporate walkability features into their Transportation Improvement Plan and Trails Plan.

- ❑ Barrier – storm water ditches/retention (state law) take up valuable right-of-way space
- ❑ Policy change/exemption needed at the state level for the storm water retention barrier issue vs. the safety of non-motorized transportation
- ❑ SEPA review includes safety considerations
- ❑ Rural development incentives for trails/paths (PRDs?)
- ❑ City of Oak Harbor presentation on the new design standards –“take it on the road” to educate more people on it

Summary

To affect positive change with regard to convenience and connectivity, it is important to start early on in the land use and community development process. This includes understanding the many agencies affecting decisions, including:

State agencies

- Department of Ecology (DOE), Storm water regulations: provide exemptions for pedestrian projects?
- Department of Transportation (DOT): provide more than a shoulder as a barrier between vehicle and pedestrian traffic?
 - Mike Morton is involved in Island County Public Works’ Transportation Improvement Plan and a county-wide bike map

Local agencies

- Island County Planning and Community Development: annual Island County Comprehensive Plan updates
- Land use review: SEPA provides opportunity for mitigation; agreements provide opportunity to introduce restrictions and conditions not specifically required by code

Also, it is important to learn from nearby community successes. For example, Mr. Voigt provides an excellent presentation about Oak Harbor’s design standards and positive examples of increasing convenience, connectivity, and livability.

Safe Routes to School:

- ❑ Cooperation between agencies for grants
- ❑ Share information between all agencies to fill missing gaps – improve grant opportunities (e.g. school route maps)
- ❑ Camano issues are different – need to bring Island County programs to Camano – work with agencies to make Walking School Bus easier
- ❑ Create hub for agencies to communicate needs and solutions
- ❑ Need parking availability for Walking School Bus on Camano
- ❑ Want to establish a trail system at Honeymoon Bay and primary school for children to walk to and from school (grant funds would help)
- ❑ Walking School Bus program and cycling program
- ❑ No-idle zone
- ❑ Island County Public Works is working on connecting trails to school system
- ❑ To enhance safety, must address certain needs:

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- A crossing for Broad View Elementary at Whidbey/Fairhaven
- Hillcrest crossing at Swantown
- Map of walking areas and map of concerned areas
- Maps available on school website by beginning of next school year

Commissioner Dean summarized the key points from the forum and thanked the attendees for their time and energy in meeting to work on this issue, acknowledging their hard work and dedication to making a difference in the County. He reminded participants to complete an evaluation form and stated that proceedings and other materials from the forum would be distributed to all participants.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ISLAND COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Wm. L. McDowell, Chairman

John Dean, Member

[Phillip Bakke, Member: Absent]

ATTEST:

Elaine Marlow
Clerk of the Board