

MEETING SUMMARY
IRTPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
November 8, 2018

Member Attendance List

Pete Schrum, Island Transit
Connie Bowers, Island County Public Works
Cac Kamak, City of Oak Harbor
Bob Monize, District 3 Citizen Rep.
Stan Berryman, City of Langley
Elizabeth Sjostrom, WSDOT
Brian Tyhuis, NAS Whidbey Island
Sharon Sappington, Island County EDC
Owen Dennison, Town of Coupeville

Other Attendees

Thera Black
Nick Pinch, Island Transit
Ronald Still, citizen (Navy employee)

Members not in Attendance

Don Meehan, District 1 Citizen Rep.
Alex Warner, City of Oak Harbor
Christine Boswell-Still, District 2 Citizen Rep.
Beverly Mesa-Zendt, Island County Planning
Ports Representative

Facilitator

Brian Wood, IRTPO Staff

Jack Lynch, Clinton Community Council
Stacy Clauson, WSDOT Public Transportation
Mehrdad Moini, WSDOT Local Programs

Meeting began at 1:00 PM

Action Items:

- Prepare draft Bylaws revisions
- Bring transportation funding presentation to TAC
- Capture elements of RTP conversation and bring them to the IRTPO Board

Actions:

- Summary from July meeting was approved

Updates:

- IRTPO developments from October TAC meeting were reviewed:
- The EB cancelled its December meeting.
- The EB approved the 2019 Regional Transportation Improvement Program and the projects were sent to WSDOT for inclusion in the STIP.
 - Sponsors will be able to obligate those projects in January. If a project is in the 2018 STIP, sponsors can still obligate this year (but, will be using 2019 funds).
- The Board approved the consolidated grant rankings/gradings from the Transportation Equity Committee and these were forwarded to WSDOT Public Transportation.
 - It was noted that the County Connector transit service was among the top ranked. If awarded, operations funding for that project would continue for 4 years, instead of 2.
- EB discuss the Washington State Transportation Commission visit and made recommendations regarding presenters, topics, and tour items.
- EB received a presentation on RTP progress.
 - No concerns were raised regarding the direction of our efforts at this time.
 - Regarding including performance measures (other than some adopted by reference) in the RTP or including a potential project to study appropriate measures to adopt for future RTP updates, the Board appeared to favor the study approach.

- A presentation by WSDOT regarding project funding/development was made that would be useful to bring to TAC members in the future.

Regional Transportation Plan Workshop (copied from consultant report):

The workshop kicked off with discussions about economic vitality and ways in which transportation and the economy intersect. It then moved into discussions about land use, and the ways in which transportation and land use intersect. This provided the foundation for discussions about specific issues and opportunities to strengthen the region's transportation system and the ways in which it supports other community objectives.

This recap summarizes ideas by specific topics, regardless of when in the discussion the points were raised. Where possible, the recap retains the linkage between transportation and other community objectives.

This information will be merged with the context and strategies developed over the last couple of months to create a more complete picture of regional issues and opportunities shaping the IRTPO long-range plan.

Economic Considerations:

- **Scenic Isle Way**, Island segment of 400-mile Scenic Highway corridor. Note "Isle Way" and not Highway, on Whidbey. Economic opportunity is associated not just with the Isle Way itself but in the adjacent communities and businesses. There is much untapped opportunity waiting to be tapped. Opportunities include signage and visual indicators, maps, ferry promotional brochures, online and web-based tools. Also, Intersection design and other driver cues? Innovative partnership opportunities. Broaden participation – for example, State Parks is missing from today's discussion.
- **NASWI**, in terms of direct employment as well as spin-off economic benefits. NASWI presence in Oak Harbor and the County is a community within a community. Overlapping interests related to transportation, housing, land use.
- **Goods and freight movement** supports the economy. The production economy – manufacturing and agriculture – is important part of the Island Region economy. Unique needs and considerations, in terms of materials and freight shipment as well as workforce commute (ancillary but related, housing affordability for work force). Transportation reliability is paramount in keeping these businesses. These are good paying jobs that support Island economy. Nichols Brothers Boat Builders – important employer and business; also important business for Washington, in meeting the boat-building needs of WSF.
- **I-5 proximity** is factor in business recruitment – challenge is that the measured distance is not the actual distance. Mukilteo ferry schedule issues and congestion on Deception Pass bridge during summer months make those unreliable connections. IRTPO initiative - SR 532 corridor strategy in collaboration with Stanwood, Island Transit, WSDOT, etc, is an opportunity to integrate economic opportunity into the corridor planning process – business recruitment, jobs-housing balance, workforce mobility-transit-regional connections. Ensuring reliable access supports regional business development efforts. If Island Region hopes to reduce demand for outbound commuting by growing more family-wage jobs within the region, it has to overcome unreliable connections to the I-5 corridor as an impediment to business recruitment.
- **Tourism**. Notable, highly visible component of the economy. But tourism is a catch-all phrase that warrants better definition when thinking of how it relates to regional transportation opportunities. Of particular interest is recreational or active tourism – biking, hiking, paddling, more. Excellent bike and trail facilities already in place, with more to come. Waterfront access. Temperate, rain-shadow climate. Why aren't Whidbey and Camano as renowned for biking, outdoor recreation opportunities as San Juan Islands when conditions here are even better? Untapped transportation-economic leverage opportunity. Effort

should be made to encourage getting here by bike or transit via promotional efforts but also with supporting infrastructure that supports longer-duration park-and-ride/park-and-bike opportunities.

- **Commuters** are a huge part of the Island Region’s economy, bringing home paychecks that support local businesses. That commuter economy depends in large measure on the ferry system that connects Island residents to jobs in the Puget Sound region – there’s a particularly strong relationship with Everett and the Boeing employment center that doesn’t seem to be reflected in state analyses. Doing that efficiently by ferry requires reliable and efficient transit connections on both sides of the ferry, and adequate park-and-ride facilities offering reasonable accommodation and access. The alternative is just getting ever more cars into and out of ferry terminals and their host communities, and over the water. Ferries need transit, to reduce drive-on demand. Transit needs ferry schedule reliability to make timed connections. Transit and ferries both need high quality park-and-ride facilities and good pedestrian connections between park-and-ride and ferry terminals, boarding.
- **Missed economic opportunity.** How much of the traffic entering the Island Region is merely passing through? Or, in the case of Deception Pass, merely entering and then turning around after looking at the bridge? How much tourism traffic is passing through on its way to San Juan Islands without stopping? What about freight avoiding I-5 on its way to/from Whatcom County or Canada? To what extent is SR 525/SR 20 part of the I-5 corridor? There are big data gaps of interest to many stakeholders – region, cities and county, economic development councils and ports, WSDOT, WSF (also PSRC, FMSIB).

Land Use Considerations:

- **RAIDs** (Rural Areas of Intense Development) provide targeted opportunities in rural areas to create conditions that support walking, biking, and transit as well as driving. Close coordination needed between transportation and land use, other considerations like economic development and sewage. Strategies should be targeted to needs and objectives of specific areas:
 - **Clinton** – untapped potential as mixed-use transportation hub that can capture some economic benefit of the ferry terminal for the region. Note that Mukilteo ferry terminal retrofit will create significant economic opportunity on that side of the ferry crossing.
 - **Freeland** – mix of housing and jobs, important manufacturing jobs and freight mobility needs. Direct access to/from SR 525. Planned improvements will enhance SR 525 pedestrian crossing opportunity at the Freeland park-and-ride. Highway intersection treatments affect visibility, access to/from Freeland. They can be optimized.
 - **Terry’s Corner** – predominant RAID opportunity on Camano Island, though not the only commercial center. Limited pedestrian or bike access between Terry’s Corner businesses/park-and-ride and the neighborhoods on Arrowhead Road, North Camano Drive, intersection of E Cross Island Road/Arrowhead Road/Camano Drive.
 - **Bayview** – prime candidate for future South Whidbey Transit Center for Island Transit, coordinated with park-and-ride. This RAID already has a diverse mix of businesses in the area – better multimodal connections can link together the adjacent activities with the center and the potential additional regional connections. Opportunity for better and more cost-effective service to/from Langley, improved coordination with Clinton ferry terminal.
- **Gateways** are critical access points to/from the Island Region. Each of the four gateways has a unique set of constraints and key stakeholders. Tailored strategies will support mobility at each gateway and tap other regional and local objectives.
 - **Clinton** – also a RAID, the Clinton gateway is dominated by the Clinton-Mukilteo ferry and terminal, and the traffic passing through to and from the ferry. This hub supports regionally-significant inbound/outbound commuter and tourism traffic associated with the region as well as being a critical link for pass-through traffic not stopping in the region. Combination of

transportation and land use strategies can help make this a more effective transportation hub. Regional partners include IRTPO, County, IT, WSDOT, WSF, Mukilteo, PSRC.

- **Coupeville** – the ferry terminal at Coupeville/Keystone is outside of any developed area and is located in a state park. This is not an area for future mixed-use development. However, access to and from the ferry terminal is problematic, as are the traffic impacts on the town of Coupeville. A ferry reservation system is in place here that is not in place at Clinton – extends to commercial and freight traffic. Critical route linking NASWI to Naval bases in Kitsap County. This hub supports regionally-significant inbound/outbound commuter and tourism traffic associated with the region as well as being a critical link for pass-through traffic not stopping in the region. Regional partners include IRTPO, County, IT, Coupeville, WA State Parks, WSDOT, WSF, Port Townsend, PRTPO.
- **Deception Pass** – access via a historic bridge located in the most visited state park in Washington creates significant congestion in summer months, and vulnerabilities year-round. Inefficiencies associated with turning movements, shoulder parking, pedestrian sightseers. There is a question as to the role that the Discover Pass may play in encouraging inefficient shoulder parking by people looking to avoid the need for a pass. Can State Parks limit shoulder parking as a means of minimizing this? Note that SR 20 through Deception Pass is on an easement granted by State Parks – it is not on WSDOT right-of-way. All fuel deliveries to Whidbey Island come over the Deception Pass bridge – no bridge, no fuel. Fuel trucks cannot use the ferries. Question as to how much economic benefit spins off to Oak Harbor – congestion impacts with no economic benefit? Regional partners include IRTPO, State Parks, Oak Harbor, County, IT, WSDOT, Skagit County, SCOG.
- **Terry's Corner** – access via a bridge (to/from Camano Island). Strong outbound/inbound commute patterns – 17,000 residents and 400 jobs on the island. Future growth is constrained by water availability though that may be changing somewhat. Gateway considerations here must include Stanwood. Possibly also entirety of SR 532 corridor for its linkage to I-5? Southern terminus of SR 532 at Camano Drive and Sunrise Boulevard is good candidate for roundabout treatment. Improve traffic flow and reduce platoons and queueing, improve non-motorized connectivity. Vulnerability associated with bridge access; crashes on or near the bridge impacts the network upstream and downstream. Regional partners include IRTPO, County, IT, WSDOT, Stanwood, Snohomish County.

Opportunities:

- **Active Travel Plan** - Assess conditions for biking, walking, and transit access region-wide – a coordinated regional approach - and develop tailored strategies to improve those conditions based on needs and opportunities in different locations. This would include the region's municipalities – Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Langley – and its rural centers – Clinton, Bayview, Freeland, Terry's Corner – as well as rural areas in general. Bike access onto NASWI should be included, especially mechanisms to alleviate the queue delay with cars at a minimum of one gate (Saratoga?). Potential Deception Pass opportunity? Link Active Travel Plan to other local and regional community objectives related to land use, economic vitality, multimodal connectivity, equitable access for all.
- **Freight Insights** – Understand regional perspective on freight shipping to/from businesses and industries across the region. What are their concerns, considerations? NASWI actively works to avoid I-5 due to unreliable travel. Others? How does this affect truck traffic on the Coupeville ferry? Need to understand from the perspective of the region's shippers and industry how the system works before knowing how to best support their mobility needs.
- **NASWI On-base Transit Access Pilot Program** – New pilot program starting soon. Island Transit will provide direct access onto base. Gates are not set up to handle HOV differently than single-occupant vehicles. Identify and pursue opportunities to create an HOV access incentive, for transit as well as carpool

and vanpool. Queue jump lane? Expedite entry as incentive to reduce number of vehicles entering/exiting base every day, on-base parking demand. Could also apply to bike riders. Collaborate with NASWI staff on best approach for coordination, and to identify leverage opportunities unique to the military.

- **Freeland Access** – RAB opportunities on SR 525 to improve access onto and off of SR 525, define entry and exit into town, support local economy and land use objectives. Strong RAID potential. Opportunity for transport to help catalyze other land use, economic objectives. Central location at Fish and Main. Eastern entry at Harbor Avenue or Scott? Western entry located to support NBBB – at Woodard? Look at IT access issues and opportunities, community place-making goals, freight and commercial access.
- **SR 20 Oak Harbor Strategy** – Construction funding for roundabouts is available beginning in 2027, meaning there is less than ten years to do a refresh of the corridor study in light of current plans and objectives, recent investments, to be ready for CN funding. Ensure corridor limits are correct – seems that it needs to go further north than the prior study to achieve full effect. Transit access, operational considerations need to be a factor from the start. How does corridor design/operations support local land use objectives throughout the city? Currently SR 20 divides the city in half – look for ways to minimize that effect and support better cross-town circulation. Look at opportunity to direct more traffic to Midway Boulevard, the historic waterfront downtown, and its business district by the treatment of the SR 20 intersection at Goldie Street/Midway Boulevard. Pedestrian crossing opportunities must be considered. Economic opportunities, better utilization of whole street grid, visual and directional cues to drivers – local and tourists. Use roundabouts not just as a tool to manage congestion, turning movements, but also potential for economic development role, gateway into Oak Harbor, dispersal of traffic throughout the Oak Harbor grid. This would be good opportunity to look at value of a SR 20 alternate route, perhaps Heller/Ault Field, which would avoid much of the business district.
- **State Parks** – vital stakeholder in Island Region’s transportation future. Economic, too – how much of current congestion yields any economic benefit for Island Region, Oak Harbor? Can there be economic opportunity for State Parks, too, that has transportation benefit for Parks and the Region? Especially on the north end of Whidbey, but perhaps some untapped opportunities at Coupeville. State Parks has to feel pressed, too, to deal with congestion issues. Is there a role for an off-site shuttle system to alleviate issues, and what would that take? Work together. See this as a fresh opportunity to collaborate and find win-win measures that improve access, mobility, and perhaps even increased economic opportunity for all the partners.
- **Census Urban Boundaries** – Refine designated urban-rural boundaries resulting from the decennial Census that are used in the apportionment of transportation funds. Use the window of opportunity right after the 2020 Census to adjust urban/rural boundary designations to best align with desired land use and transportation context.
- **Island Region Ferry Strategy** – how do ferries fit into the Island Region’s long-range future? Inter-island connectivity via a foot ferry or water taxi? Passenger-only ferry between Whidbey and Everett, via Clinton or Langley? Estimated long-range demand for existing ferry service? Clarify role for park-and-ride facilities, bike and pedestrian access, overhead boarding, importance of back-up or reserve ferries when one is out of commission.
- **Travel Data** – origin-and-destination survey data at each of the four gateways, surveying passenger and freight traffic (includes ferries). Purpose is to better understand characteristics of traffic originating or terminating in the Island Region, and characteristics of traffic passing through the region. Other findings may include: better understanding how SR 20/SR 525 is serving as an alternate route / relief valve for I-5; economic spin-off benefits associated with pass-through traffic; potential to divert more vehicle traffic to transit or non-motorized with the right mix of infrastructure, services, and incentives. Note: Island Transit has been monitoring and recording usage, conditions of the region’s park-and-ride lots for about 1 ½ years.

Funding Considerations:

- Projects resulting from a regional planning process or other coordinated effort are often awarded additional points in a competitive process. Strategic initiatives identified in the RTP will identify projects with a competitive advantage in state funding processes, as well as IRTPO's own STBG award process.
 - Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) is primary source of state grant funds for city and towns.
 - Highways and Local Programs (H&LP), within WSDOT, has its own funding programs.
- Maintenance and preservation of the existing system is a regional funding priority. Current collaboration between Island County and its municipalities helps maximize benefits of the regional pavement preservation program. Comparable maintenance and preservation needs exist for other elements of the transportation system, including sidewalks, park-and-ride lots, and minor roads.
- Oak Harbor has established a Transportation Benefit District (TBD) but not yet established a revenue source. It is anticipated that this will occur in 2019, providing some additional discretionary revenues for Oak Harbor. Creates opportunity to target specific roadways to improve walk and bike conditions, pavement conditions, access to key destinations and centers.
- The ability of NASWI to expend non-DoD funding on the base itself is constrained and entails significant coordination with and approval by the Navy's real estate division. It may be more productive to focus on improvements at the perimeter where the installation intersects the County and Oak Harbor jurisdictions, access to the base on surface streets, and at the gates. The Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) provides funding for planning activities near military installations where community growth may interfere with the ability of the base to fulfill its mission; a Joint Land Use Study is one such study typically funded by OEA. There's a new DoD funding program called the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program, launching in FY 2019. This program will provide funding to civilian governments for off-base infrastructure projects. Terms of the program are as yet unknown; funding for FY 2019 is estimated at \$100 million.

Other Questions:

Do the pullout lanes on SR 20 north of Oak Harbor help or hurt mobility? They are short and seem to encourage more aggressive driver behavior/frustration. Ideal role is as a passing lane, but how do they really function?

How effective are the modest speed limits changes all throughout the SR 20/SR 525 corridor? 50 to 55 to 50 to 45 to 50 – do they really contribute to desired behaviors or do they lead to frustration?

How much economic benefit comes to Oak Harbor due to its proximity to Deception Pass? What share of people who 'visit' Deception Pass bridge actually stay at the park and/or visit Whidbey Island communities?

What is the relationship between Eisenberg Airport and access to SR 20 in support of industrial development?

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 PM

Next Regular TAC Meeting: November 8, 2018