



ISLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
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TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE - MINUTES OF THE MEETING

November 18, 2021

**TAC Member Attendance List**

- Elizabeth Sjostrom, NW Region Mt Baker Area - WSDOT
- Alex Warner, City Engineer – City of Oak Harbor
- Stan Reeves, Executive Director - Port of South Whidbey
- Bob Monize – District 3 Citizen Representative
- Randi Perry, Director of Public Works – City of Langley
- Chloe Bonsen, Current Use Planner – Island County
- Ed Sewester, Assistant County Engineer – Island County
- Cac Kamack, Senior Planner - City of Oak Harbor
- Kelly Riepma, Public Works Superintendent - Town of Coupeville
- Donna Keeler, Town of Coupeville – Planner Director
- Todd Morrow, Executive Director - Island Transit

**Facilitator**

Heather Bickford, Transportation Planner - Island County

**Heather Bickford called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm**

**1. Approval of Minutes**

Bob Monize moves to approve the meeting minutes of October 14, 2021, as written. Ed Sewester seconds. All yeas, motion passed.

**2. Holbrook Road and NW Broadway Street Intersections**

*Donna Keeler from Town of Coupeville:* Holbrook Road and Highway 20 is in an area we call San de Fuca, just north of Penn Cove and Coupeville, where there’s a small community with a store, a church, and a post office. Holbrook has a strange alignment to the highway and we’ve had a few issues in that section. One of the members of our Planning Commission, Ralph Gamble, did an accident study of the corridor between Deception Pass and Coupeville and found 2,544 collisions with 21 fatalities. 19 bicyclists and 29 pedestrians were involved with those collisions. What Ralph was proposing was a traffic signal in this location that would slow traffic down. We

just wanted to bring that to your attention and ask WSDOT if they have any plans to do any improvements within that corridor? *Elizabeth Sjostrom, WSDOT*: I asked our traffic division about this intersection specifically, and they said it has a low crash frequency with less than one crash per year and no fatalities within the last ten years. We've heard former transportation planner Brain Wood was clipped by a vehicle while he was bicycling in that area. So while the data might not show it's of concern, we've heard about this area a few times now. While WSDOT doesn't have any money right now, still send us your concerns and I can get the information to our traffic division, and we'll try to figure out if there's something we can do that might improve the area.

*Donna Keeler*: Since I've moved back to this area, in February of this year [2021], there's been two serious accidents, and Kelly [Riepma, Public Works Superintendent - Town of Coupeville] mentioned there's one accident here a month, but not all of them are reported. So we're going to look at this intersection a little more carefully. Also, the Town is in the middle of updating our Comprehensive (Comp) Plan with the Transportation Element, so we'll include some recommendations for this intersection. But I wanted to get WSDOT's thoughts on this intersection as well. *Elizabeth Sjostrom*: Our traffic department lowered the speed limit in that area and installed flashing LCD signs. Since 2016, there's been two reported crashes per year, with no fatalities or serious injury reported. There's about 1000 vehicles per day on the approach to that intersection with very few left turns, but that doesn't mean we can't address operational issues that may improve the intersection while you're looking at it in your Comp Plan. We can observe it a little more closely. *Kelly Riepma*: We've had accidents with pedestrians trying to run across the highway to get to Kettles Trail, so we would want to look at pedestrian and bicycle traffic also. *Donna Keeler*: I'll collect some data from our Marshal's Office.

### **3. Brief Update on the RTP-HSTP 2022 Proposal**

*Heather Bickford*: If you remember, we went out to ad for the Regional Transportation Plan and Human Services Transportation Plan that's due in December 2022. These are long range planning documents. It seemed like we had many interested parties, but we only received one proposal from Fehr&Peers, who we're working with on our Data Collection and Analysis Project, and interestingly, with Susan Driver as the Project Manager. I'm checking with WSDOT to see if it would be kosher to work with Fehr&Peers and the former IRTPO Planner because we're using federal funds - and the feds are a little more picky - or should we go back out to ad? Have any of you had this issue where you've only had one proposal come back for a project? *Alex Warner, City Engineer – City of Oak Harbor*: We've had the situation before where there has only been one proposal, but if it's in line with what we're looking for and the cost seems reasonable, we'll move forward with the consultant. But this was only using local funds.

### **4. Preventative Measures for Hazards on Deception Pass Bridge**

*Heather Bickford*: Commissioner Bacon received an email from a Coupeville citizen yesterday. He was on the Deception Pass Bridge during the windstorm and had a large truck blow into his lane, but it did not cause an accident. Later on when he came back to the bridge, the traffic was backed up for hours because a second truck had blown over and was hanging from the bridge. You may have seen that in the news. Luckily, no one was reported injured. But do we have any ideas of

what we might do about this? I know this is WSDOT territory, but it's our citizens. Does anyone have any suggestions? *Bob Monize – District 3 Citizen Representative:* Make a barrier like Mount Vernon did. They put a barrier alongside their beach to prevent the rising tide and the wind. They put it on each side of the bridge, maybe a four foot barrier, a corrugated fence to prevent the water going through. Maybe the same thing could be applied to the bridge to prevent the wind from hitting vehicles. *Heather Bickford:* I know the citizen suggested an electronic board that tells drivers that a particular hazard, like strong wind, is occurring on the bridge, but would people pay attention or dismiss it? *Cac Kamack, Senior Planner - City of Oak Harbor:* I'm a commuter, and I depend on the bridge to get to work and home every day. There are some public safety questions that could be asked, and as a region, are there any safety protocols we could make? Someone would have to make a call if the wind was over a certain mph, not to permit trucks of a certain size or weight for a period of time. And this would involve WSDOT and perhaps the State Parks, but this is a good place to discuss this. *Randi Perry, Director of Public Works – City of Langley:* Would the Department of Emergency Management make that call? *Bob Monize:* That would be WSDOT because it's a state highway; they would have the jurisdiction. *Elizabeth Sjostrom:* Bob is right, but the State Patrol makes those kind of calls for us. I'm actively listening to this discussion so I can bring this back to our experts. But I know we also had this same issue with a truck back in January, so this has happened twice this year. *Alex Warner:* Could this be handled like the Hood Canal Bridge or the 520 floating bridge before it was reconstructed? Where during heavy storm events, WSDOT would have to close the bridge until the storm passed. So maybe with a warning sign "trucks and trailers do not proceed when the lights are flashing". *Cac Kamack:* A sign would have to be in place well before the infrastructure so people would know. Then would we have a place for them to stay, a side road, parking lot? How would we accommodate them? *Elizabeth Sjostrom:* Let me bring this back to our experts to find out, but Cac is absolutely right, we would need something farther back. In regards to Bob Monize's idea, we probably couldn't put anything up like that because this is a historic bridge, and there is a lot of concern about the aesthetics of it. Plus this is an older bridge, and the wind would hit the barrier very hard, so we would need additional structural engineering to accommodate that barrier. But this is a good thing to think about as a regional issue, because I don't think it's been brought up with these specifics yet.

## **5. Member Round-Table**

*Heather Bickford:* I sent out an interesting email on the Hat Island ferry, but I know there's parking issues in Langley and would there be transit availability on the other side in Everett? *Stan Reeves, Executive Director - Port of South Whidbey:* The Port of Everett, the Port of South Whidbey, and the Hat Island ferry people are ready to do this. We're just looking for some money. The transportation organizations on the Everett side are willing to change routes to get workers and people to Providence Medical Center. The only thing that's stopping is the funding availability and the transportation issue on the Island County side. We would need to work with Island Transit to support a shuttle route that's already running from Bayview Park & Ride and Langley Park & Ride on a loop to the Clinton terminal to being dropped off at the harbor in Langley. It's about 300 meters off of Island Transit's route. So we would need to coordinate times and it would be an additional expense for Island Transit. *Ed Sewester, Assistant County Engineer –*

*Island County:* What are you looking for from Island County? *Stan Reeves:* It would be nice if they could help pay for it, but it's my understanding that two of the three County Commissioners are not interested in spending the money to support this. *Heather Bickford:* Stan, where are you looking for funding? *Stan Reeves:* Anywhere and everywhere! The City of Everett, Snohomish County, the State Legislature. The idea started from Providence. They said our employees can't get to work, so they can't see patients during the pandemic, and this is a big problem. This is a solution to that particular problem. Everybody thinks it's a great idea, but no one wants to pay for it. This is a short term issue in response to the unpredictable ferry schedules out of Clinton. People working at Providence are unable to make their shifts or get home in a reasonable amount of time. Maybe this will go away once WSF can offer routine, on-schedule ferry service. *Heather Bickford:* What about federal Covid funding or emergency appropriations? *Stan Reeves:* Initially, when this idea came up we approached the County Commissioners in possibly using some of those funds to subsidize this. But the Commissioners felt this was a WA State problem, not an Island County problem. The folks who are leading this effort are the Hat Island Manager and their community association, because they own the boat. They've been approaching the various state representatives, our congressional delegation, and other municipal entities. But this validates the Port's need for our Clinton dock project. If we hadn't had to remove those floats in 2020, this would be a non-issue, and we would be running that ferry right now out of Clinton. *Bob Monize:* There used to be a ferry boat that ran between Camano and Whidbey Islands, it could take about five cars and a number of people. It stopped, and I don't know why it stopped. But my idea is how many people would use that ferry. People could use it to get from island to island without going around. It used to land on the south end of Camano. *Elizabeth Sjostrom:* I think the biggest issue we've had is where they used to land on Camano. I know State Parks wouldn't be keen on having their park turn into a park & ride. But maybe we could have Island Transit or someone else pick the people up and take them to a staging area away from the park. *Donna Keeler:* Heather might be able to dig this up, but there was a study done, maybe 15 years ago, on the number of employees who work on one island but live on the other. One of the obstacles we ran into was Coupeville was willing to be a landing spot, but we could not find a place on Camano. This issue keeps coming up, there's a lot of inefficiencies in driving from one island to another.

*Cac Kamack:* Oak Harbor has been awarded money for our Active Transportation Plan and we're going to start working on that at the beginning of 2022.

## **6. Adjourn**

Heather Bickford adjourned the meeting at 1:47 pm.

***Next Meeting: January 13, 2022***

**Common Acronyms:**

EDC – Economic Development Council

HSTP – Human Services Transportation Plan

IRTPO – Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization

NAS – Naval Air Station

PT = Public Transit

RFQ – Request for Qualifications

RTIP – Regional Transportation Improvement Program

RTP – Regional Transportation Plan

SR - State Route

STBG – Surface Transportation Block Grant

TAC – Technical Advisory Committee

UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program

WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation

WSF – Washington State Ferries