

**Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting Summary**

August 18, 2016
Jefferson County Rural Library
Port Hadlock, WA

Attendees

Rich James, Clallam County
Zoe Ann Lamp, Jefferson County
Sara Crouch, Jefferson Transit Authority
Frank Burns, Jefferson Transit Authority
David Forte, Kitsap County
Edward Coviello, Kitsap Transit
Jeff Davidson, Kitsap Transit
Carol Brown, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Jeff Bartlett, Makah Tribe
Dave Smith, Mason County
Mike Oliver, Mason Transit Authority
Jonathan Boehme, City of Port Angeles
Chris, Hartman, Port of Port Angeles
Dick Taylor, Port of Shelton
Bek Ashby, City of Port Orchard
Marty Allen, Skokomish Indian Tribe
Emily Wittman, Office of U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell
Kathy Johnston, WSDOT Public Transportation
Dennis Engel, WSDOT
Debbie Clemen, WSDOT

Welcome Introductions

TAC Chair Rich James welcomed those in attendance and then initiated self-introductions.

Legislative Update

Emily Wittman, the Outreach Assistant and Grant Coordinator for the Office of U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell relayed that she is here to assist members in any way that she can.

She noted that if you would like Senator Cantwell to advocate for your grant funding request with a letter of support, please do not hesitate to contact either Emily or William.

Emily commented that Senator Cantwell and her staff would appreciate it if members would continue to engage her on any issues and suggestions to increase funding in rural areas. She then provided contact information for herself and William Hazzard, who is Senator Cantwell's Legislative Aide specializing in Surface Transportation, Indian Affairs, and FEMA matters.

Legislative Update continued

Emily Wittman

Outreach Assistant & Grants Coordinator

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Seattle, WA 98174

William Hazzard

Legislative Aide – Surface Transportation,
Indian Affairs and FEMA

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Washington D.C. 20510

A member commented that it seems like all Federal dollars are geared toward larger municipalities. She exclaimed that her jurisdiction has trouble competing at the same level. How can we get the funding to the rural communities?

Emily asked if she had specific examples of this? The Seattle's Lander Street Overpass project is a good example of a larger municipality receiving all of the available funding. This project was awarded a \$45 million FASTLANE federal grant for the construction of a five-lane bridge span. The Lander Street Overpass project also received \$10 million for Planning. This is just one example of projects that seem to be double-dipping in the funding pool.

Another member commented that the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) is also geared for high capital roads which doesn't include rural roads. We need grant funding specifically for rural roads like the previous Forest Highway Grant program.

The Federal Lands Access Program was established in 23 U.S.C. 204 to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The Access Program I is funded by contract authority from the Highway Trust Fund and subject to obligation limitations. Funds will be allocated among the States using a statutory formula based on road mileage, number of bridges, land areas, and visitation.

Resource agencies require too much turn-around time. DOT having another checklist just adds to the burden. Rural communities would like to see a group of federal agencies available exclusively to process rural area grant applications. It seems like re-paving projects are the only projects that don't need environmental. Rural communities cannot construct any complicated projects because of the amount of time it takes to complete the environmental requirements.

Emily shared that Senator Cantwell has been a leader in pushing for long-term continuation of both the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) and Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) programs, and played a critical role in their 2012 extension. Senator Cantwell recognizes that the SRS program is critical for Washington's rural and timber communities and serves as a lifeline to communities all across Washington state. A long-term extension is crucial to allow counties to plan for their annual budgets and long-term projects. Emily then provided the following quick facts regarding Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program:

- The Secure Rural Schools program expired at the end of fiscal year 2015. The president's budget request for fiscal year 2017 supports reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program for four years before phasing it out, but has not identified an offset to pay for the program nor includes any details of changes to the program. Continued funding of the SRS program is dependent on budget negotiations as we approach the end of the fiscal year.
- Without reauthorization of SRS, counties in Washington would receive only \$2.1 million in future years, down from roughly \$19 million.
- For FY16, PILT payments are included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113), which contains \$452 for PILT.
- Senator Cantwell has supported every reauthorization of SRS and PILT.
- Counties in Washington received roughly \$19 million in their Secure Rural Schools payment for FY15. However the payments, usually made in January, were delayed. In a March 2016 Energy and Natural Resources committee hearing. Senator Cantwell reprimanded the Forest Service for the delay and called on Chief Tidwell to make the payments. The Forest Service did finally distribute the FY15 dollars later that month.

Emily commented that the following projects were recently awarded federal grant funding:

TIGER VIII	Port of Everett South Terminal Intermodal Modernization Project	\$10 million
FASTLANE	City of Seattle South Lander Street Grade Separation and Railroad Safety Project	\$45 million
	City of Tukwila Strander Boulevard Extension and Grade Separation Phase 3	\$5 million
LOW OR NO EMISSIONS DEPLOYMENT GRANTS	Link Transit Zero-emission low-floor battery electric buses & wireless charging station to replace aging diesel buses.	\$3,768,489
	Pierce Transit Battery-electric transit buses and fast-fill charging stations.	\$2,550,788
	Everett Transit Low-floor zero-emission electric buses to replace high-floor diesel buses that are 20-22 years old.	\$3,358,459

Sara Crouch from Jefferson Transit asked when the 5339 Buses and Bus Facilities Grant projects would be announced? Emily replied that FTA did have a specific date for announcement of these awards, but she expects grantees to be notified within the next two weeks.

Dave Smith asked Emily if she could share some of the benefits of the Public Private Partnerships? Emily responded that Public Private Partnerships advance important

transportation projects and priorities by engaging the private sector and other public partners in joint ventures that benefit the citizens of Washington. Emily also encouraged Dave to contact Build America Bureau program at the federal level or WSDOT's Innovative Partnerships Office at the state level for more information.

The Build America Bureau builds upon the foundation established by the Build America Transportation Investment Center (the "BATIC"). The BATIC which has served as the single point of contact and coordination for states, municipalities and project sponsors looking to utilize federal transportation expertise, apply for federal transportation credit programs and explore ways to access private capital in public private partnerships.

The Build America Bureau combines the BATIC, Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation (TIFIA) and the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF) loan programs, Private Activity Bonds (PABs), and the new \$800 million FASTLANE grant program all under one roof within the Office of the Undersecretary for Transportation Policy.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is encouraging projects to make BATIC their first stop when thinking about accessing federal credit programs, or if they are interested in pursuing a public private partnership.

The BATIC team can be reached at:

Email: BuildAmerica@dot.gov

Phone: 202-366-2300

For more information on WSDOT's Innovative Partnerships Office, call or check the web: 360-705-7023, or on the web at <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Funding/Partners/>

Peninsula RTPO's Travel Demand Model Update

David Forte from Kitsap County commented that the model development is progressing. Jim Rogers has been rehired by Kitsap County to complete the model. The confidentiality contract with Employment Security has been signed. The population and employment data has been formed into Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ) or block group data. Kitsap County's goal is to have the initial model up and running by October. Members will then assist in the calibration of the model. David also relayed that Kitsap County looked into the option of performing the model maintenance for the PRTPO and they're not sure that it is something that they want to take on at this time.

Q: What is the end project?

A: See outputs similar to the comprehensive plan level of effort.

Q: Is the model designed to show concurrency?

A: Yes, Giving land use in 20 years this roadway would show a deficiency.

Peninsula RTPO's Travel Demand Model Update continued

Q: Zoe Ann Lamp commented that Jefferson County is in the process of hiring a consultant to update their comprehensive plan and was wondering if the modeling information would be available to supply to their selected consultant.

A: David commented that Kitsap County will do whatever they can to support members. However, they may have a legal concern with Employment Security due to the confidentiality agreement they signed. David will research the issue and get back to the TAC.

Brainstorming Unfunded Work Program Items and Recommendations

Debbie Clemen disclosed that the Peninsula RTPO has \$52,000 in unspent Planning type dollars from last year's budget. The Peninsula RTPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) identifies four unfunded work program efforts: 1) Regional Mobility Program; 2) Regional Trails Plan; 3) Comprehensive Communications & Outreach Package; and 4) At-grade Intersection Project for members to choose from. TAC members discussed each of the following unfunded work programs at length, and determined that some of the work program items could be combined together. It was determined that a TAC recommendation was not possible without more specific direction from the Executive Board. Below is a summary of the discussion for each work program item.

- **REGIONAL MOBILITY PROGRAM**

Phase 1 of the Regional Mobility Program task would consist of the implementation of a Feasibility Study that would establish the configuration of a comprehensive program to encourage and facilitate the use of transportation alternatives.

Note: During the 2016 legislative session, WSTA's Small and Medium Transit Alliance sub-group (SMTA) requested a supplemental transportation budget proviso directing WSDOT to conduct a statewide study on all transit systems that provide regional connections beyond their boundaries and are funded with local sales tax revenue and or grant funding. The study is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

Peninsula RTPO staff recommended holding off on implementing the Regional Mobility Program until the study was complete.

However, another version of the Regional Mobility Program option was presented for consideration. Sara Crouch from Jefferson Transit presented a proposal that would improve transit service throughout the Peninsula RTPO's region immediately and is not dependent on the outcome of the legislative proviso's transit study. She relayed that the Peninsula RTPO's unspent funds could be used to purchase various specialized transit scheduling software would provide for better connections along US 101. The transit software such as Ken's run Cut and Google Transit Map Enhancement software would provide a level playing field for the smaller transit agencies such as the Quileute Tribe, Dungeness Lines and Mason Transit Authority.

- **REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN**

Rich James proposed creating a Regional Trails Plan for the Peninsula RTPO. This plan would document all existing and proposed trails, the identification of any trail gaps, and list potential trail connections with neighboring counties.

Dave Smith then presented another version of a Regional Trails Plan. His version consists of an electronic non-motorized trip planning map. The online electronic map would assist users in planning their bike trip around the peninsula. The map would identify the best route and provide detailed route conditions for each trail such as trail versus roadway shoulder, shoulder or trail width, trail or pavement condition, if roadway is high or low speed, available amenities, family friendly etc.

Bek Asby commented that the end product would need to be linked to a visitor type page for maximum visibility. She also commented that the responsible party for maintaining the web based map should be identified.

Note: There is an existing electronic Washington State Trails Database maintained by the Washington State Office of the Chief Information Officer that features 12,000 miles of trail data collected from federal, state and local agencies. This map however, doesn't provide trip planning. The map can be accessed at the following link:

<https://ocio.wa.gov/programs/geospatial-program-office/washington-state-trails-database-project>

- **COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH PACKAGE**

This package would develop a comprehensive communications and outreach package to better promote the needs and priorities of the Peninsula RTPO. The scope of this effort may include the identification of future transportation needs in the region and options for outreach to the public and legislature.

Zoe Ann Lamp voiced her support for funding the Comprehensive Communications & Outreach Package. She relayed that our members of Congress want to hear what our needs are. Legislators appreciate hearing from their constituents. Legislative outreach can get our projects funded. Member counties need to present a consistent message of what our priority projects are.

Staff then asked Emily Wittman if she had any helpful tips to help the PRPTO communicate better with the legislators. Communicating with legislative staff is the key to success, and it is very beneficially to develop a working relationship with staff assigned to your area or issue. Emily suggested that consistent communications with legislative staff is a much better strategy than once a year. Emily also suggested having a one page handout depicting the PRPTO's priority projects.

- **AT-GRADE INTERSECTION PROJECT**

This work program would examine the Level of Service (LOS) of 15 selected intersections with a state route in each member county that are suspected of failure of at least one turning movement level LOS standard.

LOS is a term used to qualitatively describe the operating conditions of a roadway based on factors such as speed, travel time, maneuverability, delay, and safety. The level of service of a facility is designated with a letter, A to F, with A representing the best operating conditions and F the worst.

The original intent of this work program was to use the Peninsula RTPO travel demand model to determine the LOS. However, after a short discussion, it was determined that a consultant could just use the Highway Capacity Manual selected method with turning movements provided by the jurisdictions.

Rich James commented that there are quite a few at-grade intersections with crash histories in the Peninsula RTPO region. Obtaining LOS intersection data gets the jurisdiction one step closer to fixing the problem. Jurisdictions need to gather all of the support data possible to support a solution focus for a legislative fix. Otherwise these types of intersections just don't prioritize statewide. The question is how do you get funding to address these types of intersections if they don't meet WSDOT statewide safety criteria without a legislative fix?

2016 Peninsula RTPO's Legislative Handout

Debbie Clemen referenced the Peninsula RTPO's Legislative handout. She asked members if they had any recommendations for updating the handout.

Bek Ashby commented that you need your elected officials talking in Olympia. All of our legislators in the region need to be utilized. We need to come together as a group and voice a consistent message.

Note: The City of Port Orchard is a member of the West Sound Alliance. The West Sound Alliance is a remarkable partnership among 19 jurisdictions and economic development organizations in Mason, Pierce and Kitsap counties created to address their joint traffic congestion concerns on the west side of Puget Sound. It was readily apparent that the group's united effort to secure funding for desperately needed transportation improvements would be more successful than if they pursued their project individually.

Another suggestion was to incorporate comprehensive information into the legislative handout. This would enable members' elected officials, when flying to Washington D.C. on other business, to also champion the PRTPO projects. The handout should feature our priorities, and indicate what legislators can do for the PRTPO. The final version of the handout should also be wordsmithed for the best understanding. Staff will requested additional suggestions on creating a more comprehensive legislative handout from the Executive Board members.

WSDOT's Corridor Sketch Initiative Phase II

WSDOT's Corridor Sketch Initiatives is a new way for the WSDOT to work jointly with partners to capture and document consistent baseline information about each transportation corridor around the state in order to make informed future investment decisions.

Dennis Engel commented that fifty-five corridors have been identified within WSDOT's Olympic Region boundaries. A majority of the Peninsula RTPO members have participated in Phase 1.

Now in Phase 2 of this effort, WSDOT will identify the Economic Vitality and Mobility deficiencies the economic vitality portion will not be started until sometime next year. Funding for Phase 2 runs out the end of June 2017, so Phase 2 will be started promptly.

WSDOT will schedule meetings in the November timeframe with cities, counties, transit, and tribes to identify strategies to achieve the performance expectation identified in Phase 1. A public outreach component for this phase is also planned. Dennis relayed that WSDOT recently implemented an online survey through SurveyMonkey instead of hosting an open house. WSDOT received 2,150 responses to the survey. WSDOT was pretty excited about the level of interest in the survey. The survey availability was announced by Postal Customer mailer, on the study's webpage, through stakeholders' mailing lists, on Facebook and Twitter.

Zoe commented that when Jefferson County implemented their online survey, they experienced a low participation rate because participants were required to identify themselves.

Consolidated Grants Application Schedule

Debbie Clemen reviewed the draft schedule for the Consolidated Grants Application with the group. She commented that the Public Transportation Office hopes to release the Consolidated Grants Application soon. Debbie reviewed the milestone dates and commented that the Peninsula RTPO's ranking workshop would be held on November 2nd at the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal Center. Ranking Committee Members are neutral participants. Ranking committee members and their respective agencies may not submit a Consolidated Grants application for consideration. She then noted that applications are due to Public Transportation on October 14th and no additional information will be accepted unless specifically requested by WSDOT. In the 2014 process, applicants had through December to submit additional paperwork. The biggest change this round is that applications will be funded at 100% with not partially funded projects. Thus overall a fewer number of projects will receive funding.

Public Comment & Announcements

Rich James asked the group if they would like to share any public comments or announcements?

No public comments or announcements were shared.

Next Meeting

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 20, 2016.

Rich James adjourned the meeting.