



Port Angeles Meeting Summary
September 12, 2018

Chairman Jerry Litt opened the meeting at 9:00 am.

Mayor Sissi Bruch welcomed the Transportation Commission to Port Angeles. She reported that the City's Pavement Condition Index is about 43. She also noted the isolation of the Peninsula; only one road, with eight bridges, connects Sequim and Port Angeles.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chairman Jerry Litt introduced the Commissioners and staff.

Commissioner Jennings moved and Commissioner Tortorelli seconded the motion approving the July 17 & 18, meeting summary. The motion was approved unanimously.

TRANSPORTATION 101

Paul Parker, Deputy Director, Washington State Transportation Commission, presented an overview of transportation planning and finance.

[Transportation 101](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

OLYMPIC PENINSULA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES: THE BIG PICTURE

Annette Nesse, Chair, Executive Board, Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization, presented an overview of Peninsula RTPO (PRTPO). PRTPO spans four counties and includes nine cities and nine tribes within its territory. PRTPO is a leader in including tribes at the table and collaborating on issues. Tribes also have resources to bring to the table. For instance, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe is the first "bike-friendly" tribe in the nation. This speaks to how the tribe can provide family friendly recreation and transportation opportunities.

Priority transportation needs for PRTPO include:

- Dedicated funding for alternative fuel requirements
- Rural transit needs
- Access to transit in rural and urbanized areas
- Washington state ferries & Kitsap Transit passenger only ferries

- At-grade intersection safety improvements. The Chicken Coop/Zaccardo Road realignment is a \$3 million project designed with WSDOT, and funded by the tribe
- Regional Trails Plan. Phase 1 is funded at \$60,000; Phase 2 is unfunded and includes plans and cost to connect to Jefferson County. There are 200,000 trips a year on the Discovery Trail at Dungeness River

PRTPO Legislative Priorities include:

- Clallam County - Elwha River Bridge
- City of Port Angeles - Peabody Creek and Lincoln Street Culvert Restoration
- City of Sequim – US 101 Simdars Road Interchange Completion and Frontage Road Extension
- Jefferson County – SR 19 / SR 20 from the SR 116 intersection to the Port Townsend Entryway
- Region wide Tribal Transit
- Kitsap County - SR 104 Paradise Road to SR 3 Vicinity of Hood Canal Bridge Improvements, and SR 16 Tacoma Narrows Bridge to SR 3 Congestion Study

PRTPO is the only RTPO that still has WSDOT as its staff. Although PRTPO liked it that way, WSDOT has announced that it could no longer be the lead agency. PRTPO has looked at its options and is considering a contract with Grays Harbor County COG for lead agency services.

[The Big Picture](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

COUNTY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Joe Donisi, Assistant County Engineer, Clallam County, stressed the importance of US 101 to Clallam County. People rely on US 101 on a daily basis. West of Port Angeles SR 112, SR 113, and SR 110 provide similar roles. US 101 has transitioned from a moderate volume to a high volume, limited access highway.

Rich James, Transportation Program Manager, Clallam County, thanked the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) for the four-lane completion from Carlsborg Road to Shore Road. The Deer Park underpass was a \$9 million collaboration between Clallam County and WSDOT.

Clallam County has developed a great relationship with the Western Federal Lands Division of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal Lands Access Program funding has assisted with county roads that provide access to Olympic National Park.

Recommendations: Federal funding typically adds 25% to project costs. Clallam County and another county reached an agreement to buy obligated federal funds from an Eastern Washington county to add federal funds. WSDOT would not agree to transfer the funding authority, although this type of purchase had been approved in the 1990s.

- Facilitate the exchange of STP obligation authority between agencies within the state
- Adopt Oregon model of STP exchanges

These recommendations would deliver more improvements, more quickly, while reducing oversight costs.

David Sullivan, Commissioner, Jefferson County Commission, reiterated previous comments that the North Olympic Peninsula is interconnected and emphasized that everybody listens to each other. Everything comes and goes by truck.

The Hood Canal Bridge is the most important transportation link to the Olympic Peninsula, Port Townsend Paper and the Marrowstone Island Navy Depot relies on the Hood Canal Bridge and the ferry system for its input and output. The Bridge opened in 1961 to replace the Lofall/Southpoint Ferry. The bridge was significantly rebuilt in 2009 and now has 18,000 average trips a day.

The bridge creates significant delays (over 1 hour) when opened for vessel traffic. The Coast Guard has agreed not to open the bridge for pleasure craft between May 22 and September 30 from 3 pm to 6:15 pm.

- Signal controlled turn movements at east end cause traffic backups on SR-104 and SR-3
- Traffic can backup for 5 miles to the SR 19 turnoff to Port Townsend on summer weekends
- Blocks through traffic (and driveways) on SR-3
- Disrupts transit service makes it difficult to reliably plan trips on/off the Peninsula

Monte Reinders, P.E., Public Works Director, County Engineer, Jefferson County added that the Hood Canal Bridge approaches were never completed, adding to the problem. A Hood Canal Bridge holding lane would solve some of the problems.

Jefferson County is struggling with pavement preservation, now at a 20-year average between chip seals and only \$277,000 local dollars a year for capital improvements. The County supports the concept of federal/state “swap” for more flexibility as mentioned in the Transportation Commission’s 2017 Annual Report (page 3).

SR 19 and SR 20 are the primary travel corridor for Port Townsend, Port Hadlock Urban Growth Area, and the majority of Jefferson County population, A Corridor Plan was completed in 2011, intersections in the corridor are at Level of Service F, and traffic continues to increase.

Jefferson County characterizes the Washington State Ferries Reservation System as a big success! Predictable travel. Saves time.

The Upper Hoh River Road covers 18 miles from US 101 to the world famous Hoh Rainforest entrance to Olympic National Park. Critical to the tourism economy of the Olympic Peninsula, the road carries over 300,000 visitors annually –85% of road traffic is tourism. The road has a

new washout every 2 to 3 years and emergency expenditures average \$400,000 per year. Jefferson County has discussed a Route Jurisdiction Transfer but has not yet proposed one. There is now an MOU with County, WSDOT, FHWA, and National Park Service with Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) investments of \$13 million allocated for bridges and bank protection and \$2 million allocated for pavement/guardrail and safety improvements [Jefferson County](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

CITY TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Tourism brings Port Angeles 3.5 million visitors a year. It also has timber and marine traffic.

The city faces many challenges. Port Angeles has a tax base of only 9000 households and 37.8% of city land is untaxed. There are 310 miles of road, results of 100 years of sprawl. The city has used street reserves for three years to maintain streets and make improvements. Some of the improvements were driven by seven suicides over eight years on the 8th Street Bridge. Community self-initiated grass roots donation movement collected \$124,000 and WSDOT contributed \$350,000 in transportation funds to the project.

It is challenging for small town projects to compete against bigger cities.

Port Angeles needs an east/west alternate to US 101. It is impacted by serious accidents, heavy truck traffic in the downtown core, and limited alternatives in the event of emergencies. What is needed is a truck route delineation that removes the current adverse impacts to the downtown core, yet does not create a problem to residential areas.

Other challenges include culvert replacements. The Peabody Creek and Lincoln Street (US 101) Culvert Rehabilitation project is needed to prevent a high potential for the loss of a portion of the highly traveled Lincoln Street corridor and to restore salmon. Other future culvert removal or replacement projects can be identified throughout the city due to six creeks traversing the city.

Electric charging stations are needed to accommodate the growing number of electric vehicles.

Following the tragic unearthing of tribal burial grounds in the recent past, Port Angeles is now taking a proactive, diligent approach to cultural resources. The city now has an excellent relationship with Lower Elwha Tribe.

The Olympic Discovery Trail is a boon to tourism. It has contributed to six years of growth.

There is great infrastructure at the airport; the need is for maintenance. The airport has a lot of traffic; FedEx flights arrive every day.

David Timmons, City Manager, City of Port Townsend, for 15 years, said that grant programs are important. FEMA hazard mitigation grants helped to rehabilitate the sidewalks in downtown Port Townsend. Cities also face a capacity issue; only so many things can be done at one time.

Local, non-federal aid roads are the biggest problem to fund. Port Townsend has 80 miles of roads; it should be adding \$1 million a year for maintenance and preservation. 50% of Port Townsends property is exempt from property tax. A \$20 license fee generates only \$120,000.

Reliable ferry service is very important to economy and mobility. The Coupeville/Keystone terminal is a problem; that location is responsible for groundings and cancellations.

Mr. Timmons also said that joint and several liability is a problem for counties and cities. A recent ruling held that city should design a project assuming that a drunk driver will use it. Another case from King County involved brush maintenance. Roads are not designed for scooters and e-bikes; what is our responsibility with those?

David Garlington, City of Sequim, made the case for completing the Simdars Road interchange to enable industrial and commercial growth in the east end of Sequim.

Mr. Garlington also noted that Transportation Improvement Board does not like to see federal money involved in a project because it adds costs and complication. Sequim's Transportation Benefit District added \$700,000 to its budget. It is sunset for 10 years and one renewal is allowed. Why not make it permanent?

Port Angeles acknowledged there is a lot of development along the state highway. It is discussing construction of frontage roads to reduce conflicts. Most of the development we see happened in the 1990s. The four-laning was a huge step in the right direction. Nathan West is optimistic that the jurisdictions have improved the countywide planning policies and address

[Transportation City of Port Angeles](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Jefferson Transit has fixed routes that connect to Clallam Transit in Sequim, Kitsap Transit in Poulsbo, and Mason Transit in Shelton. It also operates a route-deviated service from Forks to Lake Quinault. Route-deviated means it will deviate up to ¾ mile upon request.

Sales tax reliance is a poor revenue source for a county with only 30,000 population and no big box stores or car dealerships. Currently at 0.9% sales tax. Fare is \$1.50.

Clallam Transit cannot find enough operators for service expansion. The "Strait Shot" provides direct service for 1,300 passengers at a \$10.00 fare.

Challenges:

- Transit agencies need to be involved when roads are built and improved to ensure there are spots to pull off and on
- Clallam Transit has worked on improvements with Olympic National Park

- Lack of sidewalks and curb cuts cause people to use paratransit at a much higher cost
- Adding Sunday service adds high costs for paratransit; lots of church traffic early in the morning and then none after church

[Clallam Transit](#)
[JTC Rural Transit Funding](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES LONG-RANGE PLAN

Ray Deardorf, Senior Planning Manager, WSF, briefed the Commission on the draft long-range plan. The Draft Plan emphasizes:

- Reliable service
- Customer experience
- Managing growth
- Sustainability and resilience

Preliminary findings and strategies:

- Near term: Stabilize the fleet by building five new vessels
- Implement technology and adaptive management strategies to ease congestion
- Expand reservations
- Leverage vessel replacements to increase capacity
- Invest in technology to enhance customer experience
- Invest in workforce development to ensure system reliability for future generations
- Establish training and mentorship program

Cost of the Plan:

- Capital and operating costs through 2040: \$14.2 billion
- Dedicated tax revenue and fare collection: \$7.5 billion
- Capital and operating funding needs through 2040: \$6.7 billion

[WSF Long-Range Plan](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

Bill White, CEO, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, reported that Lower Elwha Tribe is a small, rural tribe spread out over a large area. With a population of about 900 and dispersed. They have to be able to move from A to B efficiently.

Successes include work with WSDOT on adding turn lanes to a wellness center and convenience store. The reduced speed also helps to get people on and off the highway safely. With assistance from the county and state, there are now alternate routes into the reservation.

The main challenge facing the area and the tribe is construction of the new US 101 Elwha River Bridge. How to rebuild the bridge while respecting and maintaining cultural needs and values. Everyone benefits from understanding their history and technology.

Marine access will be the only access following a 9.0 quake.

Kyle Johnson, Executive Director, Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe Economic Development Authority, reported that the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe is the second largest employer in the area. The Emerald Coast Opportunity Zones include much of the Northern Peninsula, along US 101. The Sequim Opportunity Zone needs completion of the Simdars Road interchange.

Commissioner Litt suggested a Transportation Improvement District as a way to get landowner investment in needed improvements.

The Tribe is planning to build a 100-room, 4 star hotel in Blyn.

[Economic Development and Transportation](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

WSDOT REGIONAL PROJECTS AND PERSPECTIVES

John Wynands, Olympic Region Administrator, Washington State Department of Transportation, WSDOT is investing about \$40 million a year in Clallam and Jefferson Counties on preservation and maintenance only. There is no investment in new capacity.

The Elwha Bridge work must be done between fish windows. The plan is to open to traffic in fall 2020. Mr. Wynands joked that he might be willing to trade SR 112 for the Hoh River Road. WSDOT has identified 125 unstable slopes on SR 112.

The Simdars Road Interchange must compete with many other projects when there is so little un-programmed construction money.

Work at SR 112 at Olsen Creek replaced a small culvert with a bridge to allow the stream to move naturally. A \$3.5 million investment. About half the culverts slated for replacement are in the WSDOT Olympic Region.

On average, the Hood Canal Bridge opens 400 times a year. It accommodates a 16’ tidal change.

[Olympic Region](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, RECREATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Sarah Creachbaum, Superintendent, Olympic National Park, said the Olympic National Park (ONP) has about 1,000,000 acres.

ONP has 611 miles of trail, 168 miles of road, and 64 trailheads. Within park boundary, \$28 million improvements on Lake Crescent, \$7 million on Hurricane Ridge Road. A few good things:

- Federal Lands Access Program helped pay for Race Road improvements
- Olympic Discovery Trail
- Cooperation with WSDOT

Challenges:

- Olympic Hot Springs Road repair is a \$10 million project, slated for 2019- 23
- Road maintenance and safety. Very difficult to identify hazard trees
- Hurricane Ridge access. Visitation increasing 6% a year, but no access to funding for a shuttle
- Law enforcement
- Conflicting visitor experiences, Olympic Discovery trail helps alleviate vehicle-bicycle conflicts

Marsha Massey, Olympic Peninsula Visitors Bureau, explained that the Olympic National Park draws people here. Without the taxes visitors generate, residents would see their taxes go up by \$450 per year.

For a visitor industry, air service would be good, but probably not as important as it is to commerce. People like driving the loop. Safety is a big concern. Residents are alert to safety points, but international visitors are not.

She recommends:

- Consider expanding ferry reservations to the Kingston-Edmonds, at least for the summer season. Ability to promote a two-nation vacation is a big draw
- Public transportation is important. The Strait Shot is great. All the new Puget Sound residents are visitors here. Many come from places that have great public transportation and have trouble when they discover that there is no Uber or Sunday bus service
- The section of Discovery Trail from Chimacum to Discovery Bay is dangerous

Carolyn St. James, Vice Chair, Clallam Economic Development Council, said that the Hood Canal Bridge can make or break a weekend. She recommended improving communications and limiting bridge openings, especially during festivals. From a commercial standpoint, it costs \$110 per hour to wait in line. Their logging representative suggests a bridge opening schedule.

She also noted that drivers need reeducation about bicycles. Most roads have no shoulders. Where there are shoulders, there often is debris that forces the bicyclist onto the road.

Chris Hartman, Port of Port Angeles, said that remoteness is a major barrier to employer recruitment. The Port has looked at a dedicated barge facility for short sea shipping routes. They need an anchor tenant.

Port Angeles had commercial air service until 2014. When one of the manufacturing companies located here, there were nine flights a day. They would not have located here today with no air service. It is 95 miles from Sea-Tac. The Port also has two marinas, in Port Angeles and Sequim.

Ryan Burles, President, Black Ball Line, said that his ship MV Coho carries 450,000 passengers a year; 80% of passengers are leisure travel. They expect the Coho to last another 20 -30 years. They dry-dock it for 16 days in January and February.

The Black Ball has had a reservation system in place since 2014. In order, Washington, BC, Oregon, California, and Texas are reservation makers. Hope is that Washington State Ferries would expand reservations; more certainty would help improve our numbers.

The population in Victoria is 390,000, with 800,000 on Vancouver Island. Look long-term at the US 101 Corridor it will continue to grow.

[Olympic National Park](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

Mark Ozias, Vice-President, Olympic Peninsula Healthy Communities Coalition, spelled out reasons to build trails:

- To get healthy and stay healthy.
- To increase safety for bicycle transportation.
- To realize the economic benefits of tourism for our economy

The McFee Tunnel opened last summer as part of the Olympic Discovery Trail. Last year people made 180,000 trips on the trail in Port Angeles. Trails are an example of “If you build it, they will come.” Make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Ashley Probart, Executive Director, Transportation Improvement Board, said the mission of the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) is to fund good projects.

Complete Streets was enacted and funded in 2015 as part of the Connecting Washington initiative. The program received \$3.1 million in 2015; \$14.67 million in future biennia, not codified. The program goals:

- Promote healthy communities
- Improve safety
- Protect the environment
- Improve community character

To qualify for a grant, a city or county must have a complete streets ordinance. Grant recipients must have completed initial work before getting a second grant. The City of Wenatchee was awarded Best Complete Streets Policy, nationally in 2016. TIB awarded 39 grants for \$10.5 million in 2017. Changes in program: lower grant amount starts at \$100,000 up to \$1 million.

Is TIB benchmarking, measuring results? We track most things, but with only six projects complete, we do not have any feedback yet.

[The Olympic Discovery Trail
Complete Streets 2019](#)

ACTION: None

FOLLOW-UP: None at this time

PUBLIC COMMENT

Hall Bates, resident of Seattle and Jefferson Beach, where he has a place near the end of the Larry Scott Trail. From Four Corners to Discovery Bay, the trail is on the state highway, also part of a Pacific Northwest National Scenic Trail. On behalf of motorists, he urged action to get the hikers and bicyclists off SR 20. Please ensure that the crossings on SR 20 are built by WSDOT.

REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Collaboration is important. Experience the Peninsula.

Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization works with all nine tribes in the Peninsula. This is extremely important; tribes have resources and can be good partners.

Commissioner Jennings noted that you need safe ways for people to use rural transit. Even with a crosswalk, someone with a wheelchair or a walker could never safely cross the highway. Hood Canal Bridge, Elwha Bridge both need a little work. He is not sure he would drive a car over the Elwha Bridge.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

JERRY LITT, Chairman

ROY JENNINGS, Vice-Chairman

SHIV BATRA, Member

JAMES A. RESTUCCI, Member

HESTER SEREBRIN, Member

JOE TORTORELLI, Member

DEBBIE YOUNG, Member

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL