Island Access 2040

A Practical Approach to Regional Transportation Planning in the Island Region

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In collaboration with

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➢ Island Context
➢ Island Approach
➢ Policy Framework
➢ Challenges and Opportunities
➢ Island Strategic Action Plan
➢ *Island Access 2040* Implementation
Island County separated from the Skagit RTPO in 2016, becoming a single-county rural RTPO.

*Island Access 2040* is the region’s first long-range plan since becoming a new RTPO.
One county, two islands. 
So close yet so far away.
Active Inter-regional Collaborations

IRTPO - Island Context

Anacortes
Skagit County
Whatcom County
San Juan County
Whatcom Transit
Skagit Transit
SCOOG
WCOG
NSTA

Port Townsend
Olympic Peninsula
Hood Canal
Jefferson Transit
Naval Base Kitsap
PRTPO

Stanwood
Snohomish County
Community Transit
SnoTrac and NCTC
PSRC
NSTA

Mukilteo
Everett
Snohomish County
Sound Transit
Community Transit
Tulalip Indian Tribe
PSRC
IRTPO considerations for building a better regional plan:

- Embrace regional planning as a complement to local and state decision-making
- Put transportation in its broader community context
- Don’t promise what IRTPO can’t deliver
- Leverage opportunities that IRTPO and regional cooperation can provide
- Make transportation work better for everyone
- Link policy objectives to implementation activities
- Don’t worry about how others do their plans – make this work for IRTPO
- Build a regional planning framework that supports development and implementation of practical, common-sense solutions
“...practical solutions begin in the regional transportation plan; they don’t end there.”

Island Access 2040 takes a practical approach to long-range regional planning in an era of rapid change and disruption.

Island Access 2040

- Identifies pinch points, opportunity areas, and disruptions meriting closer scrutiny over the next several years and information gaps to address

- Frames issues and provides coordinated transportation, land use, and economic development context to be considered before project scoping begins

- Does not presuppose what the solution should be other than that it be the right solution at the right cost at the right time
Select Trio of Challenges and Opportunities:

- Island Access
- Ferry Pulse
- Economic Resiliency
Challenges:

Island Access

Four regional Gateways that include:

(2) State Parks
(2) Ferry Terminals
(1) Historic Bridge
(1) National Historic Reserve
Challenges:

Island Access

Strategic Opportunities:

Island Access Gateway Plans

Gateway Travel Data Initiative

Traveler Information Resources

Rural Ferry Connector Pilot Program

Coupeville Ferry Terminal Safety & Navigation Study
Ferry traffic has a pronounced pulse with a character all its own.
Ferry Pulse

Economic heartbeat of the region

Strategic Opportunities:
Public education
TSMO strategies
Roadway design
Enforcement
Ferry Pulse

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IRTPO - Challenges and Opportunities

Official Route to/from ferry:
- 4 miles distance
- Protected left turn
- Impacts state park, historic ag district and Coupeville school campuses and downtown Main Street district

Official Route to/from ferry:
- 8.8 – 10.8 miles distance
- Unprotected left turn uphill onto SR 525
- Avoids historic and community impacts
Challenges:

Island Access

Ferry Pulse

Economic Resiliency
Strategic Opportunities:

How to leverage transportation policies and investments to better support economic health

- Tourism
  - Scenic Isle Way
  - Active transportation destination
  - Car-free and/or EV travel culture

- Freight Mobility
  - Agriculture
  - Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
  - Nichol Brothers Boat Building

- Commuter Efficiency and Reliability
  - Imported paychecks support local businesses, the arts, service orgs and community programs, gov, etc
  - Capture gateway economies
Aligning *Island Access 2040* Policy Framework with IRTPO’s Roles & Responsibilities

IRTPO wears different hats at different times.

- Support efforts at maintaining a safe, efficient, cost-effective transportation system.
- Make transportation decisions that support environmental, economic, and social needs.
- Anticipate and plan ahead for big events that will impact transportation.
- Provide visionary leadership on regional transportation issues and opportunities.

Craft a policy framework that supports the various dimensions of IRTPO’s responsibilities.
SYSTEM MANAGEMENT GOAL:
IRTPO’s goal is to support partners’ efforts at building, maintaining, and operating a transportation system that safely and efficiently meets mobility needs for all forms of travel while keeping life cycle costs as low as possible.

System Management Policies:
- Support efforts to maintain the transportation system in a state of good repair.
- Promote transportation system efficiency and reliability.
- Work towards a safer transportation system for all users.

Situations when this goal may be pre-eminent include determination of regional STP and TAP funding priorities, pursuit of pedestrian improvements at the Clinton ferry terminal, and collaboration with WSDOT on a Whidbey Transportation Circulation System Plan.
**SUSTAINABILITY GOAL:**
IRTPO’s goal is to make transportation decisions today that support the Island Region’s environment, economy, and social justice without compromising future opportunities.

**Sustainability Policies:**
- Support the economic health and vitality of the Island Region.
- Facilitate a healthier environment for current and future generations.
- Promote expanded options and innovative solutions that enable all people to have access to their daily needs and maintain mobility independence.

Situations when this goal may be pre-eminent include development of an EV Charging Plan for the Region, facilitation of a Human Services Transportation Coalition, and consideration of freight mobility needs in regional transportation advocacy.
PREPAREDNESS GOAL:
IRTPO’s goal is to anticipate disruptive forces outside the control of any one agency and strategize on ways to mitigate negative impacts while harnessing beneficial opportunities.

Preparedness Policies:
- Maximize system resiliency in the face of climate change, extreme weather events, natural disasters, and other forces outside the control of IRTPO partners.
- Prepare for new technology alternatives and innovations that are transforming transportation decision-making.

Situations when this goal may be pre-eminent include participation in Cascadia Rising response and recovery exercises, evaluation of role for transportation network companies in supporting off-schedule ferry arrivals, promoting region-wide broadband access, and supporting deployment of new technologies that enhance traveler safety.
LEADERSHIP GOAL:
IRTPO’s goal is to provide visionary leadership on regional transportation issues and opportunities.

Leadership Policies:
• Advance consistency between transportation and land use plans as well as other community-based plans working to achieve adopted visions.
• Promote the Island Region and its unique character through strategic transportation decisions.
• Continue to manage the public’s resources in an open and cost-effective manner.
• Advocate for increased multimodal connectivity for the Island Region.

Situations when this goal may be pre-eminent include participation on the North Sound Transportation Alliance, weighing in on the State’s strategic investment plan, and reviewing local Comprehensive Plans.
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The Leadership Goal can be a lens through which to consider other regional policies and apply vision, coordination, and strategic decision-making to advance key objectives.
Leadership

Leadership refers to actions that establish a shared vision or common goal, motivate others to pursue that direction, foster collaboration and innovation, and advance regional objectives.

Leadership Goal

IRTPO’s goal is to provide visionary leadership on regional transportation issues and opportunities.

Leadership Policies

It is IRTPO’s policy to:

1. Advance consistency between transportation and land use plans as well as other community-based plans working to achieve adopted visions.
2. Continue to manage the public resources in an open and cost-effective manner.
3. Advocate for increased multimodal connectivity for the Island Region.
4. Promote the Island Region and its unique character through strategic transportation decisions.

The Leadership Goal can be a lens through which to consider other regional policies and apply vision, coordination, and strategic decision-making to advance key objectives.

Situations when the Leadership Goal may prevail include:

- IRTPO participation on the North Sound Transportation Alliance
- Consistency review of local Comprehensive Plans
- Pursuit of grant funding opportunities for high priority planning efforts

Challenges Warranting a Regional Leadership Initiative

- Access to and from the region is by way of four gateways, each with its own distinct constraints and each controlled by an agency other than IRTPO’s local partners.
- Seamless multimodal connections require collaboration across jurisdictions, regions, and sectors.
- IRTPO ferry interests are similar to, but not the same as, those of WA State Ferries, but there isn’t a clear statement of regional need to inform statewide planning and investment decisions.
- The ability for walking, biking, and transit to be viable alternatives to driving is heavily dependent on supporting land uses, with different infrastructure needs in urban areas than in rural areas.
- There is insufficient travel data at the four gateways to support informed regional decision-making.
- Capron refunds support essential preservation and maintenance activities on rural roads throughout the Island Region that would be impossible to replace if those funds were eliminated.
Regional Mobility Strategy

- Demonstrate regional leadership
- Increase equity and access for all
- Support strong local economies
- Conduct strategic regional planning
- Minimize transportation’s environmental impacts
- Improve multimodal system performance
- Support coordinated gateway planning
- Monitor and assess system performance
- Prepare for future uncertainties

This Regional Transportation Plan recommends a number of strategic actions intended to better understand and address chronic mobility issues, and harness emerging opportunities for the Island Region and its partners. Some of the strategies will result in specific projects or programs for implementation by one or more partners. Others will produce important data needed to support analysis while still others will lead to policy decisions.

Strategies align roughly with a handful of key planning objectives, which are highlighted in bold in the boxes below. The strategies are bulleted. Many of the strategic actions support multiple objectives. Following are recommendations included in Island Access 2040.

Demonstrate Regional Leadership

- Strengthen Inter-Regional Coordination
- Maintain and Expand Regional Transportation Awareness
- Explore Regional Military Community Partnerships
- Minimize Barriers to Transportation Efficient Communities

Support Strong Local Economies

- Update the Scenic Isle Way Action Plan
- Explore Potential for Active Recreation Tourism
- Develop a Regional Freight Mobility Plan

Minimize Transportation Impacts on the Environment

- Develop and Implement Electric Vehicle Action Plan
- Establish an Online One-Stop Traveler Information Portal

Support Coordinated Gateway Planning

- Contribute Regional Perspectives to Coordinated Gateway Planning Processes
- Coupeville Ferry Terminal Study 1: Circulation and Access Management Assessment of Ferry Terminal and Vicinity
- Coupeville Ferry Terminal Study 2: Evaluation of Ferry Traffic Impacts on Coupeville
- Coupeville Ferry Terminal Study 3: Safety and Navigation Study of the Coupeville Ferry Terminal
- Coupeville Ferry Terminal Study 4: Multimodal Circulation and Access Management Plan
- Clinton Study: Short-range Multimodal Access and Circulation Strategy
- Camano/Stanwood Study 1: Engage in Coordinated SR 525 Multimodal Corridor Implementation Activities
- Camano/Stanwood Study 2: Improve Transit Access between SR 525 and I-5

Prepare for Future Uncertainties

- Participate in Coordinated Emergency Management Processes
- Support Development of Requisite MOUs for Mutual Assistance
- Maintain and Acquire Updated GIS Data to Support Regional Analysis
Strategic Opportunities to address regional challenges will help shape IRTPO work program and leadership initiatives, and support the work of local and state partners

“The Project List”
Strategic Action Plan

> Four types of planning work program activities:
  - Coordinate, collaborate, cooperate
  - Collect and evaluate data
  - Complete plans and investigations
  - Participate in gateway planning activities

> Work details scoped when action moves forward for funding

> Activities may be conducted by IRTPO as a part of its UPWP or by any of its partners

> Implementation may result in capital or operations improvement, or alternate strategies, based on coordinated, practical solutions process
Strategic Action Plan

- Standard format
- Align with regional mobility strategy
- Align with goals and policy objectives
- Clarify need and key context factors
- Identify partners and stakeholders
- Establish gateway relationship
- Build in accountability
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## Strategic Action Plan

- **Standard format**
- **Align with regional mobility strategy**
- **Align with goals and policy objectives**
- **Clarify need and key context factors**
- **Identify partners and stakeholders**
- **Establish gateway relationship**
- **Build in accountability**
- **Actions address a variety of needs**
- **Actions cue up future activities, implementation**
- **Actions can be led by IRTPO or by others**

### Island Access 2040 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Camano Study 1: Engage in Coordinated SR 532 Multimodal Corridor Implementation Activities</td>
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**Intent:** Improve multimodal transportation system performance along SR 532.

**Mobility Strategy:** Support coordinated gateway planning.

**Need:** SR 532 operates inefficiently during peak periods and experiences a high number of crashes related to stop-and-go traffic. Transit is impacted by delays. Bike and pedestrian access to destinations along the corridor is challenging. Incidents on the bridge create frequent and extensive back-ups. Meanwhile, Stanwood is revitalizing its downtown core along this main street highway. A WSDOT Stanwood scoping meeting identified some issues and strategies, as did adopted transportation and non-motorized plans from Stanwood and Island County. Stanwood's SR 532 Beautification Plan, and the January 2019 IRTPO Camano-Stanwood scoping session. A unified approach involving all the corridor stakeholders is needed to identify an effective, cohesive implementation strategy.

**Description:** Convene a multi-agency, multimodal, multi-disciplinary group to assess recommendations of the various plans and the issues they address. Develop an integrated implementation strategy supporting the wide range of needs those plans address, identifying low-cost/high-value and quick fix strategies, funding and partnership opportunities, and leveraging other community objectives.

**Partners and Potential Stakeholders**

**Accountability Log**
- **Project Start:** May 2019
- **Project Completion:**

**Cost Estimate Key**
- $ < $100,000
- $100,000 - $100,000
- $ > $100,000
Oct 2019 TAC Discussion of Data Sources, Tools and Analysis Needs

New data element in SFY 2021 UPWP
### Notable Implementation Activities Underway:

#### Gateway Planning
- Clinton Gateway Planning – Island County Long-Range Planning Department
- Coordinated SR 532 Corridor Plan – City of Stanwood

#### Electric Vehicle Action Plan – IRTPO
- Monitor / Evaluate Park-and-Ride Usage – IT
- Collect Travel Data for Systems Analysis – IRTPO

#### On Deck:
- Scenic Isle Way Action Plan – Tourism Board
- Explore S Whidbey Transit Options – IT

#### Mutual Assistance MOUs – Dept. Emergency Mgmt
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https://www.islandcountywa.gov/PublicWorks/Roads/Planning/Pages/Regional.aspx

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