PRTPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

August 18, 2024 | 10:00 – 12:00
(Please note the format below)
Zoom Meeting – Login Below

1. 10:00 – 10:05 **Welcome and Introductions**

2. 10:05 – 10:10 **Consent Calendar** ACTION
   - *Approval of Agenda*
   - *Approval of Minutes from May 16, 2024 (Attachment)*

4. 10:10 – 10:30 **Regional Transportation Plan: The RTIP::RTP Project List Proposal** *(Attachment)* ACTION
   TAC members have discussed various aspects of the proposed integration of the RTP project list into PRTPO's regular annual RTIP update and adoption process. The TAC now is asked to consider the complete proposal for accomplishing this and forward a recommendation to the Board on its use starting with October's RTIP approval.

5. 10:30 – 10:40 **2025-2030 Regional TIP Development** DISCUSSION
   PRTPO is getting ready to develop the 2025-2030 RTIP. This will be the first year when some RTIP projects may also be included on the Regional Transportation Plan project list. Members who have not previously contributed projects to the RTIP may want to participate in its development this year. Projects must be input into the SAW database in order to be included in the RTIP and subsequently, on the RTP project list. There is support for those not familiar with that SAW process.

   10:40 – 10:45 **Proposal for 2024 Consolidated Grants Review Process** DISCUSSION
   PRTPO plays a role in WSDOT's Consolidated Grants process every two years by ranking projects WSDOT receives from the region to assign scores of A, B, C, and D. These scores then inform the final cumulative statewide scores. That process will occur again this fall. I am looking for feedback as to whether the TAC could assume the ranking role instead of convening a separate stand-alone review team, to help streamline the process a little. TAC members have experience ranking each other's projects for Transportation Alternatives; this would be similar to that.

   10:45 – 10:50 **PRTPO Role in Planning: TAC Insights and Next Steps** *(Attachment)* BRIEFING
   This is a brief update on results of the quick-turnaround TAC poll in May, responding to a request from the Board's Funding Work Group about those aspects of PRTPO's work program that members find valuable. It includes information on the resulting Board initiative which aims to increase the base level for RTPO funding.

6. 10:50 – 11:00 **Member Roundtable** ALL
   An opportunity to share information on activities and other topics of interest.

   At this point, City, County, and Port members are welcome to stay or can leave. The rest of the meeting is focused on public and tribal transit, and rural intercity bus service that connects our rural communities across the region and beyond.

   11:00 – 12:00 **RTP: Rural Transit and Intercity Bus Service Deep Dive** *(Attachment)*
   This is the first of two conversations focused on the challenges and opportunities facing the region's public and tribal transit providers and what it means for the communities these services connect. It includes takeaways from the first two

meetings of the Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program Strategic Advisory Group and messages that PRTPO should carry forward as it participates in that program. We are also going to talk about potential needs that our transit partners have in common as well as some opportunities to look at innovations in other places that could have applicability here. The aim is to develop a short list of strategic measures that PRTPO can highlight in the RTP with potential to move the needle on some intractable issues or cue up new partnership opportunities that enhance transit and access to transit across the region. This is a chance to explore big ideas!

NEXT TAC MEETING – September 19, 2024
2025-2030 RTIP and RTP Project List – Action
2025 Transportation Outlook Legislative Agenda
Hood Canal Bridge – Streetlight Data and Upcoming Study

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89497902562?pwd=RTVaRFFhLzVzZXdPeGVpekQrRC8xQT09
Or by phone: 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma). Meeting ID: 894 96790 2562 Pass Code: 4780

Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting Summary

Meeting Location:

Remote Meeting via Zoom software

May 16, 2024

Attendees

Technical Advisory Committee Members
Chair Jayme Brooke – Jefferson Transit
Melissa Mohr – Kitsap County
Steve Gray, Clallam County
Wendy Clark-Getzin, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Amy Asher, Mason Transit
Vicki Grover, City of Bremerton
Vice Chair Marty Allen, Skokomish Tribe
Micheal Bateman, City of Poulsbo
Steffani Lillie, Kitsap Transit
Monte Reinders, Jefferson County
Chris Hartman, Port of Port Angeles
Arne Bakker, Port of Bremerton
Aaron Nix, City of Shelton
Kobree Glaser, Mason County
Ryan Jeffries, City of Port Angeles
Paul Hampton, City of Forks
Monica Nerney, Squaxin Island Tribe
Dave Smith, Mason County

Staff/Guests
Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator
Edward Coviello, PRTPO Coordinator

Welcome & Introductions

Chair Brooke opened the meeting at 10:02 AM and initiated self-introductions.

Approval of the May 16, 2024, TAC Agenda and the March 21st, 2024, TAC Meeting Minutes (Consent Calendar)

The TAC approved, with a motion to approve with corrections and seconded.

Regional Transportation Plan: Deep Dive Topics and TAC Leads

Coordinator Black began with how the TAC is going to address RTP topics from the annual transportation outlooks that the Executive Board presents to State lawmakers each fall. There are about half a dozen topics to examine further over the next few months. The Hood Canal bridge is one topic of concern the TAC may look at. The second topic is intercity bus service in the PRTPO Region. Third, is issues and opportunities for the Ferry systems. Innovative measures to increase resilience in the Region is the fourth topic. The fifth is regional strategies for safer streets for all. This topic is where complete streets, state highways and local plans come together. Target Zero is a guiding principle behind this topic.

What role is the PRTPO in the above topics? Member Bateman commented on the availability of resilience in transportation systems. An example shared an example of a power outage and its impact on transportation and other critical public services. More formal engagement with Western Federal Lands is a possible outreach activity to begin the resilience effort. Coordinator Black may reach out to them for a possible appearance at a TAC or EB meeting. Member Gray noted their relationship with WFL is through project development. It was also mentioned that the hazard mitigation planning is occurring

in Clallam County as part of the Comprehensive Plan. Vice Chair Allen asked which department WFL reports to? Coordinator Black noted that they are under the US Department of the Interior. The Vice Chair will reach out to contacts. Further discussion followed on this topic.

The regional strategies to promote safer streets for all topic will be addressed through an inventory approach early in the assessment process to allow local participation. How do older designed state highways through small urban places be adjusted to meet contemporary planning principles. Local road safety plans are a requirement that could be a coordination jumping point into the topic.

Intercity bus service in the Region is limited to one route currently operating from Port Angeles to Seattle via Kingston and Edmonds. The service is funded through a State grant funded by the Federal Transit Administration. Coordinator Black explained that the State is updating its Intercity Bus Plan with PRTPO as a stakeholder. A subgroup of the TAC will be formed to provide feedback to the Plan.

The RTP consistency element will be examined as to how the PRTPO can certify local land use plans transportation elements.

Regional Transportation Plan: RTIP::RTP Project List Logistics

The development of a reoccurring RTP project list was outlined by the PRTPO coordinators. When the local Transportation Improvement Programs are developed – which ones would the members like included in the upcoming RTP. The intent is to develop this as an annual event. Please let the PRTPO Coordinator know which projects they would like in the RTP. A question was asked if the PSRC process can be skipped? The answer is for Kitsap jurisdictions they cannot skip the PSRC RTIP process. Detailed discussion followed about the role of Kitsap in this proposed methodology.

The Washington State RCW for rural regional planning organizations mirrors the urban regional planning organizations. This allows for the PRTPO to leverage coordination between regions in the RTP. This will be the first year adding a list of RTP projects in the RTIP. The draft resolution language will be brought to the next TAC meeting in July. Member Lillie highlighted the need to be careful about how Kitsap projects are submitted and what are the ramifications. Member Bateman noted that there is an opportunity to show the disproportionate impacts on smaller communities from the large influx of travel from and to the Seattle-Tacoma-Everrett urbanized area.

The Value to Members of Regional Collaboration and Cooperation

In February the Executive Board appointed members to a workgroup to look at the PRTPO baseline funding currently being received and what is the best strategy for the future as the funds become less reaching for the Unified Planning Work Program tasks. The workgroup will likely recommend to the Board in June that PRTPO sign onto a request from rural RTPOs for an increase in annual funding. The funding amount budgeted has not changed for over 10 years. Yet, the workload has increased with additional State requirements for rural RTPOs. The subcommittee has asked the TAC what the Value to Members of Regional Collaboration and Cooperation is.

Member Black provided an overview of the current funding dynamic for both urban RTPOs, like the Puget Sound Regional Council, and rural RTPOs. The input the TAC provides is important for the workgroup.

The TAC members will get a survey via email shortly after the meeting. The survey will ask questions about the value of the PRTPO to the TAC members. The survey was guided on Zoom and questions were answered.

Discussion followed about the value of coordination among members. For example, the electrification of transportation. It was noted that different requirements are challenging at times. Coordinator Black thanked the TAC for their help.

Member Roundtable

Member Lillie announced that the new Silverdale Transit Center is opening on June 24th. The group is invited to attend at 11am.

Member Bateman announced that Poulsbo won the Noll Road transportation / corridor plan American Public Works Association Small Project of the Year award. They will be presented the award this summer at the national conference in Atlanta.

Vice Chair Allen explained that there are many gravel roadways that will be receiving maintenance to improve access to residents and economic opportunities.

Members Nerney from the Squaxin island Tribe and member Nix from Shelton were introduced. Welcome new members!

Adjourn

11:41 a.m.

ACTION ITEM

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black and Edward Coviello, PRTPO Coordinators
Date: July 11, 2024
Subject: **Regional Transportation Plan: TAC Recommendation on the RTIP::RTP Project List Proposal**

REQUESTED ACTION:
Recommend to the Executive Board that PRTPO integrate its RTP project list into its six-year RTIP as an appendix and update it every year when it adopts the new RTIP, as spelled out in the final proposal.

Background
We've been talking the last few meetings about a concept that would marry PRTPO's RTIP development process with a new process for developing and maintaining a perpetual Regional Transportation Plan project list. To be effective it needs to take minimal extra effort on anyone's part – member or staff. It needs to stay current and reflect the latest understanding of funding priorities, schedules, and costs. And it needs to include projects from all PRTPO's members and not just those who regularly participate in PRTPO's RTIP process; that process excludes all of our Kitsap members.

Today we are coming to the TAC looking for your reaction to, refinement of, and finally your recommendation to the Board on a proposal for implementation this fall, when the 2025-2030 RTIP is adopted. Incorporating insights and feedback we've gotten from members over the last few months, we are presenting to the TAC a proposal spelling out how this RTIP::RTP Project List integration we've been talking about would play out.

The aim of this whole effort is to establish an on-going process for maintaining a list of near-term priority projects that members are pursuing over the next year or two – projects that PRTPO and members can point to as included on the RTP Project List. Importantly, we are working to leverage the RTP Project List to better support members in their funding efforts.

To be included on the RTP Project List your project(s) must also be in the RTIP. And to be in the RTIP, your project(s) must come from your own recently adopted six-year TIP, TDP, TTIP, and whatever equivalent ports might have AND your project needs to be put into the SAW database (the "STIP format"). Many of you already do that but for those who do not, this is not terribly hard and there is support. Kitsap members, you're already doing this for PSRC; we cover you later.

For everyone else, when you submit your project(s) to Ed for inclusion in the RTIP via the SAW database, you will also let us know which of those you would like to see featured on the RTP Project List. For those of you who put all of your projects into the RTIP, this will be a subset of those – we don't want your whole six-year TIP on the RTP Project List! We expect that most of you have a project or three in mind for a grant run in the next year or so, or a legislative ask. Those are great candidates for this RTP Project List.

Kitsap partners, when you submit your projects to PSRC for their RTIP, you will simply notify us as to which of those projects you want to include on PRTPO's RTP Project List. Inclusion in PSRC's RTIP satisfies PRTPO's RTIP nexus. Ed confirmed the information you provide to PSRC ports the right information into SAW so he can access your projects with no extra input effort on your part.

The RTIP and RTP list go through public review before adoption. The new list will be a featured stand-alone appendix and include the SAW page for each project. PRTPO will adopt it by resolution like it does the RTIP. That will be PRTPO's RTP Project List until October 2025, when it is refreshed. It will be refreshed annually from then on.

A draft of the proposed approach is attached, for TAC discussion and refinement.

What kind of projects can be included on the RTP Project List?
Practically any kind of project you are doing will be eligible for inclusion. Pavers, bus replacements, interchanges, EV chargers, fish passage retrofit, ferry replacement, trail connection, zero-emission forklifts, signal controllers – it takes all this and more to keep the region's transportation system operating reliably and safely. We expect to see a range of project types and project sizes on this list given the diverse make-up of PRTPO's members and the range of concerns all of you are addressing.

How many projects can a member include on the RTP Project List?
Right now, we are not recommending any constraints on the number of projects until we see what kind of response we get. It may take a year or two for everyone to develop their own strategy about how to approach the RTP Project List. Certainly, if you know that you're planning to pursue a grant next spring for a particular project – say, the RW phase of a construction project under design this summer or replacement of five vehicles - you should want that project in your TIP and in the RTIP and RTP. We will update this list every year so you can focus on your nearest-term funding priorities.

Does the RTP Project List roll over from year to year?
No, it's a fresh list each year. If your project(s) ends up back in your TIP the following year you can resubmit it to the RTIP and for inclusion on the RTP list again. If it doesn't make it back into your TIP again then it can't be on the RTP list.

Can we amend projects onto the RTP Project List during the year?
Going into this we are expecting that this RTP Project List will be updated just once each year, for adoption in October. If there are extenuating circumstances, we can look at this closer.

How is this RTP Project List different that the project list for the legislature?
It raises interesting questions as to why a project might be included on the legislative list and not also be in a local TIP, the RTIP, and the RTP Project List. It seems like the legislative list would be a subset of the RTP list, which in turn is a subset of the RTIP. This will be our first year to develop those two lists side by side. It will give us a chance to see if there are good reasons for a project to be on the legislative list and not be on the RTP Project List. It would certainly enhance messaging for the legislative list if we could assert that those projects are on the RTP Project List too.

Next Steps
The Board was briefed on this topic in June and raised no concerns or questions at the prospect. The final proposal that the TAC recommends will be presented to the Board for approval in August. We will work more closely with members in developing this next RTIP and the RTP Project List than we might normally, while we work through logistics for the first time. If all goes as planned, PRTPO will have an adopted RTP Project List in October that can support member funding efforts in calendar year 2025.

Attachments:
RTIP::RTP Project List – Draft Proposal July 2024

For More Information:
Thera Black | 360.878.0353 | TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org
Edward Coviello | 360.824.4919 | EdwardC@KitsapTransit.com

RTIP :: RTP Project List

Draft Approach for TAC Approval. July 2024

Purpose

Establish a perpetual RTP project list that reflects current local and state project needs and funding priorities, to be maintained in conjunction with PRTPO's Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Intent

Transform the RTP Project List into a useful resource that supports the efforts of PRTPO members in securing funding for their priority projects and which can be maintained with a minimum of effort by local and regional staff. It will serve to highlight projects that member agencies have identified as near-term funding needs. Such a list will demonstrate consistency between local and regional plans.

Process Overview

The RTP Project List will be developed in tandem with the six-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) PRTPO is required to produce every year. The RTP Project List will be a subset of projects included in the RTIP. In order for a project to be included on PRTPO's RTP Project List it must also be included in an RTIP. Projects from Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason County members must be included in the PRTPO RTIP. Projects from Kitsap County members must be included in the PSRC RTIP. In order for projects to be included in either RTIP, they must come from locally adopted six-year TIPs.

RTP Project List Development

1. PRTPO member agency adopts a six-year Transportation Improvement Program, Transit Development Plan, or Tribal Transportation Improvement Program after opportunity for public review and comment.

2. For members from Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason Counties: Member agency determines which project(s) from their six-year TIP to include in PRTPO's RTIP. If they are not already, member agency puts those projects into the SAW database and forwards them to PRTPO Coordinators for inclusion in PRTPO's RTIP. Member agency notifies PRTPO Coordinators which project(s) should also be included on the RTP Project List.

3. For members from Kitsap County: Member agency submits RTIP projects to PSRC in accordance with PSRC policy. Member agency then notifies PRTPO Coordinators which of those projects it would like included on PRTPO's RTP Project List.

4. PRTPO Coordinator assembles a compendium of RTP projects using the SAW database to extract content. The folio of project pages is assembled into a stand-alone appendix highlighted as such in the draft RTIP.

DRAFT

5. PRTPO Coordinator reviews the draft RTIP and RTP Project List with the TAC in September, seeking a recommendation to the Board on adoption of the RTIP and of the RTP Project List.

6. PRTPO Coordinator notifies the public of an opportunity to review and comment on the draft RTIP and the draft RTP Project List. Coordinator presents any public comments to the Board for its consideration in October.

7. PRTPO Executive Board considers the draft RTIP and the draft RTP Project List and adopts them by resolution in October. The final RTIP with RTP Project List as well as the RTP Project List as a stand-alone appendix document will be posted on PRTPO's website.

8. The entire process repeats itself the following summer, when agencies adopt their new six-year TIPs and PRTPO begins developing its new RTIP and RTP Project List. Every October thereafter the Executive Board will adopt the current six-year RTIP and a current RTP Project List, which will supersede previous documents upon adoption.

PRTPO will review this process in 2025 and 2026 to be sure it is working effectively and make any refinements necessary to ensure it meets the purpose and intent of this effort.

DRAFT

Briefing Item

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator
Date: July 11, 2024
Subject: **PRTPO Role in Planning: TAC Insights and Next Steps**

REQUESTED ACTION

No action. This is an update on May's discussion about funding and PRTPO's future capacity as a regional transportation partner.

OVERVIEW

In May the TAC heard about efforts of an Executive Board subcommittee working to understand and address underlying budget issues facing PRTPO and other RTPOs across the state. As a part of its background research, the Funding Work Group asked for input from the TAC as to those aspects of PRTPO's work program they find of particular value personally, and for their organization. This input was used by the Work Group to determine that there is member support for the kind of work PRTPO does and that there are things it could do that would add value to its members, if it had a more adequate budget. The Work Group subsequently recommended, and the Board approved, to pursue an increase in the statewide funding that PRTPO relies on to support its work program.

To keep TAC members in the loop, I am attaching to this a copy of the results from the TAC member poll the Work Group received. It was immensely helpful to see what things different members derive value from. If you did not have an opportunity to complete that poll, it is still open. These insights from members will be used going forward to inform Board decisions about the work program as well as to communicate to others how regional planning supports local members.

I am also attaching to this a letter that PRTPO Chair Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin has sent on behalf of the PRTPO Board to the chairs of the other 16 RTPOs across the state. Responses of support are coming in from urban and rural RTPOs, and from the eastside and westside. If you have any questions about this initiative – why PRTPO is pursuing this, how PRTPO is coordinating with other agencies, how it is educating its legislators – please reach out. I'm happy to answer any questions or point you to those who can.

Attachment:
TAC Poll Results: PRTPO Work Program Value to Members

PRTPO Executive Board Letter to Other RTPO Boards re: Program Funding

For More Information:
Thera Black | 360.878.0353 | TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org

Value of PRTPO's Regional Planning Program
TAC member poll results: 23 May 2024

Q1: How would you describe the value of regional transportation planning as practiced by PRTPO?

- Informative, relationship building, connections to the big dogs at State level.
- I would describe it as very valuable because of the collaboration between all the region's stakeholders.
- Although, I haven't been able to attend to represent Port Townsend, I do believe PRTPO to be a value to region to coordinate and advocate for transportation
- Inherently valuable, as connections and partnerships are critical to success of addressing systemic and often complicated transportation related issues.
- Highly valued. A good mechanism and clearinghouse for projects in the region.
- The PRTPO serves as a strategic roadmap for the region's transportation system. It provides a current analysis of how transportation will work in the region over a 20-25 year time frame and supports coordination among jurisdictions.
- Hard to nail down, especially since my jurisdiction shares a border with fewer other jurisdictions than most.
- Great group. Thera does a fantastic job of facilitating and running these meetings. The Peninsula (and Kitsap) is a distinct region and it is important to have a forum to discuss and advocate for transportation solutions that affect us all. Bringing one voice to legislative priorities is very important.

Q2: What benefit do you get from your own participation in PRTPO activities?

- Sharing appropriate project-level information with the non-tribal locals. Witnesses the changeover of many key roles in state and local government. Be ready for new RCWs including GMA changes.
- Information on all things in transportation.
- Support, especially around legislative priorities and regional planning efforts.
- Too early in this process for me to offer much in this area. Just not enough time working within the group, but this will change as I work with the group into the future. Beneficial to have a venue in order to discuss these issues.
- Communication with neighboring jurisdictions, especially regarding projects in region.
- It provides integrated solutions by balancing transportation policy, infrastructure investments, technology, and land use.
- Lately the biggest benefit has just been getting some face time with my counterparts at other agencies. We may not be working on any joint projects at the moment, but some day I'll need to contact them and we'll already have an established relationship.
- Interaction and networking with other transportation professionals. Ability to talk about issues that affect all of us or that we share in common.

Q3: Please let us know of any other benefits to your organization or colleagues that may come from your PRTPO participation.

- Keeping the Tribe's staff on relevant notifications at the SEPA and NEPA process.
- It shows that we care as a tribe for our region. I gain valuable information for our tribe.
- Understanding of regional issues and how agencies are dealing with challenges.
- Communication and the chance to discuss similar issues with transportation professionals.
- Again, the gathering of individuals from the region discussing projects and ideas.
- PRTPO's aim is to support long-term growth and strategic accessibility. Successful transportation planning analyzes community needs, travel patterns, and demographics before developing plans.
- Distribution of grant funds (TAP). Good process. Alerting us to other opportunities (FMSIB) and Thera's help with those applications.

Q4: What should PRTPO try to preserve if it has to cut back a little on its work program?

- No more high paid outside consultants like the ones on the Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. Not much value for what was paid out. Thera could have done a better job.
- Our people that manage PRTPO are important. Our meetings.
- Coordination of regional priorities. Legislative advocacy. Representation of the NOP.
- Collaboration with relevant agencies, members.
- I feel that the PRPTO process is already as lean as it can be and I would not recommend any reductions.
- Keep the "Three C's" of the regional transportation planning process; keep it comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing.
- I wouldn't attempt to cut the meeting frequency at all.
- Preserve legislative priority work. TAP process. Regional planning. Maybe meetings could be less frequent if cuts are required.

Q5: What would you like to see PRTPO do - or do more of - if it were better resourced?

- Write grants to sustain the unfunded UPWP sections.
- Probably more outreach to educate people on transportation. Training to help newbies understand the planning part.
- Continue with legislative advocacy.
- Advocacy towards getting the 4-County area more funds, resources in order to construct needed infrastructure improvements.
- I think the communication with regional jurisdictions and the ability to meet perhaps throughout the peninisula.
- Keep the transportation planning process a cooperative process, meant to foster involvement by all users of the system, such as businesses, community groups, environmental organizations, the traveling public, freight operators, and the general public, through a proactive public participation process.
- I work for one of the largest agencies, so I have access to a lot... I'll leave this up to the smaller agencies that rely on PRTPO more.

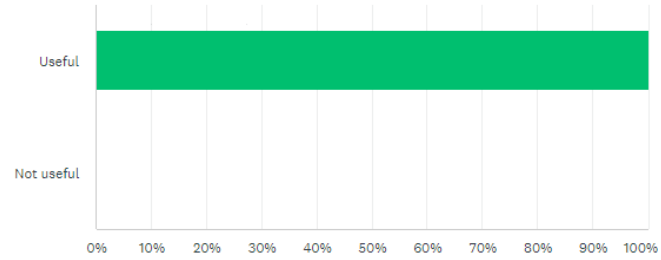
- Continue to focus on solutions for the Hood Canal Bridge. Advocate for funding intersection improvements along the SR-19/20 corridor working with the County/City/Port. Opportunities to discuss priorities with legislators more often. More opportunities for WSDOT to let us into their black box about what they are thinking as far as priorities, plans, projects. More opportunities to partner with WSDOT Planning. Increased collaboration.

Usefulness of Potential PRTPO Work Program Activities

TAC members were also asked to weigh in on the usefulness of potential work program activities that PRTPO might undertake if it were better resourced.

EDUCATION: Expanded educational opportunities for members on relevant topics, bringing in outside subject matter experts via webinar, work session, or other format to enhance skills, understanding, and capacity.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



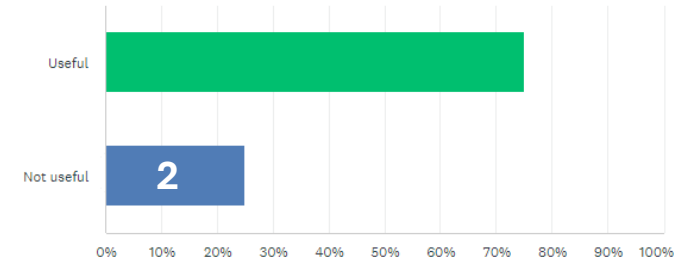
Comments:

I could use help understanding the planning side of things.

Insights into transportation planning practices.
Comprehensive planning topics.
Strategies for concurrency as it relates to development.
Transportation modelling techniques and resources.

COMMUNICATION: Enhanced information synthesis and communications to keep members apprised of relevant activities or matters across the region.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Comments:

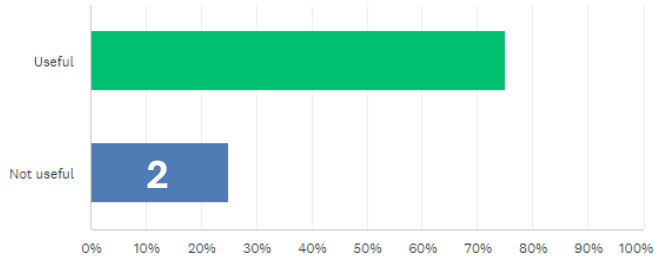
I get too many duplicate emails. The Paul Hamptons of this world need to get on the correct listserv and then work with their IT department to let these "spam"-like emails pass through tough cyber-security protocols. PRTPO can update once a year a recommended enroll list and make it accessible from its website.

This could be useful to everyone.

Very important. The PRTPO is a clearinghouse for projects in the region and the ability to discuss and update other jurisdictions is very valuable.

REGIONAL INFORMATION: Compile data products and other resources for use by members and other stakeholders, including a robust data portal and enhanced ready-to-use mapping and infographic products from the PRTPO website.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Comments:

Recommend skimming off the top STPBG funds (at all 3 counties) to sustain this tool. It will level the playing field between regional partners when grant funds are pursued and Title VI Plans are developed.

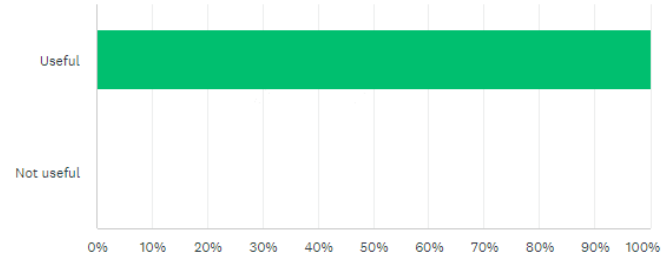
A lot of the data overlaps to each other in PRTPO.

I don't need this for anything I do, but I don't want to suggest getting rid of something that other people find useful.

LOS present/future mapping. Accident maps. ADT (traffic volume) maps. LOS intersection maps (present/future). Regional prioritization maps. More information related to what WSDOT is planning in the short/long term.

CONVENER: Expand upon PRTPO's convener role to bring new stakeholders to the table to explore common issues and potential areas for future cooperation and collaboration, and to increase exposure to new opportunities.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



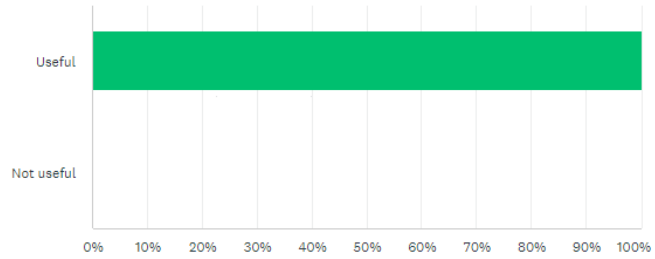
Comments:

I would like to see more tribes involved. That could bring a lot to the table.

I think this could be useful, but I'd have to see how it plays out to know for sure.

GRANT SUPPORT: Support members with information about grant opportunities of potential interest, and expanded resources to support equity analysis, RTP consistency, etc via the PRTPO website.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

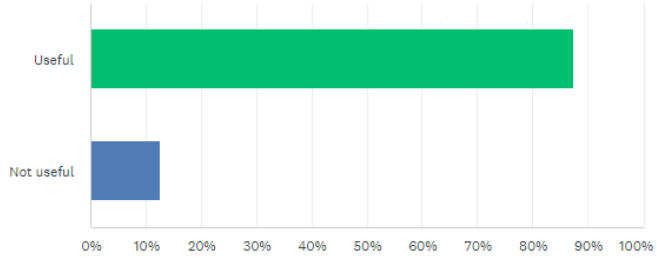


Comments:

None.

DATA COLLECTION: Facilitate a coordinated regional approach to select data collection needs shared by members, such as that needed to compete for freight mobility grants or some safety grants, or coordinate planning studies to generate needed information for use by members.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Comments:

As related to accessible GIS/ArcInfo systems.

Continuing the SR 3 freight corridor study to include impacts to the City of Shelton. Freight brought through the City of Shelton significantly impacts local roads within the City, with minimal resources granted to rectify these issues. Shelton roads are in poor shape, as indicated within our most recent asphalt condition index study.

Again, I don't need it, but I don't want to take a useful tool away from someone else.

Anything else to share about what PRTPO is doing or could do that would be useful for Board members to consider?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 2

Suggestions:

Legislative Education and Annual Reports just like what WSDOT Departments do by December 31 of every year. Be a shining example of what a PRTPO is about.

Thank you.

No, but thank you.

I appreciate the work of the PRTPO and the helpfulness and the knowledge of the staff especially when working on federal and state projects and grant applications.

Freight Mobility: Enhance freight corridors and inter-modal connections to facilitate goods movement into, within and out of the region.

Keep up the good work. Continue to advocate for regional priorities with legislators.

PRTPO Members

Clallam County

Jefferson County

Kitsap County

Mason County

Bainbridge Island

Bremerton

Forks

Port Angeles

Port Orchard

Port Townsend

Poulsbo

Sequim

Shelton

Clallam Transit

Jefferson Transit

Kitsap Transit

Mason Transit

Port of Allyn

Port of Bremerton

Port of Port Angeles

Port of Shelton

WSDOT Olympic Region

Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

Makah Nation

Skokomish Tribe

Squaxin Island Tribe

www.PRTPO.org

June 28, 2024

Dear RTPO Chair,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO), as our Executive Board Chair. PRTPO's Executive Board is reaching out to the boards of every RTPO in Washington State regarding the inadequate level of funding appropriated by the legislature for regional transportation planning work described in RCW 47.80 and embedded in the Growth Management Act.

Specifically, I am writing to ask for your board's concurrence on the proposed funding request:

Increase Washington's base RTPO funding program by $6.8 million, bringing the RTPO funding program total to $11.7 million in the SFY 2026-2027 biennium and thereafter, adjusted periodically for inflation. If successful, this request will result in a minimum of $400,000 per biennium per RTPO, with some RTPOs receiving much more. This is the minimum needed to ensure that all 17 regions in the state can afford the basic forum for regional transportation coordination, cooperation, and collaboration that RTPOs are meant to provide, in compliance with the statutory requirements currently in RCW 47.80.

Before we begin educating our legislators on this matter, we need to be sure PRTPO's Executive Board is on the same page as other RTPO policymakers so that we are speaking with a unified voice to our state lawmakers.

Second, I invite your members to join with PRTPO policymakers in building legislative support for a long-overdue programmatic increase. RTPOs are a creature of the Legislature, not WSDOT. Legislators established and fund RTPOs and are legally ex officio members of each of our boards. They know their regions. That is why we believe it is important to work directly with legislators to educate them on the funding need and ask for their support.

To accomplish these goals, we will need to use our roles as elected officials from local communities, since we have relationships with our legislators that planning staff don't have. I welcome the chance to communicate with you further about this. You'll find my contact information at the end of this letter.

What follows is a summary of the funding situation facing all RTPOs, regardless of size or geography, and the PRTPO Executive Board's proposed "funding ask" developed collaboratively among all of our staff. It concludes with my specific ask of you and your Board.

The RTPO Funding Situation

To ensure on-going cooperation between local jurisdictions and WSDOT, the 1990 Legislature "declare[d] it to be in the state's interest to establish a coordinated planning program for regional transportation systems and facilities throughout the state," and authorized the creation and funding of RTPOs as a part of Growth Management Act enabling legislation. Since then, each of our RTPOs has become the recognized forum for regional collaboration and cooperation envisioned in RCW 47.80.

The Legislature appropriates funding to WSDOT to distribute to RTPOs for regional planning purposes it establishes in state law. In the 1991-93 biennium the Legislature appropriated $3.4 million to fund 15 RTPOs; thirty years later an allocation of $4.9 million supports 17 RTPOs. Funding has not kept up with inflation *($3.4M in May 1991 has the same buying power as $7.8M today*), it has not kept up with growing responsibilities, and it has not accounted for the increase in the number of RTPOs.

The PRTPO Executive Board determined that regional transportation program funding is inadequate for RTPOs to participate with local and state partners as envisioned by the legislature and erodes the capacity for interagency coordination and collaboration. This at a time, perhaps, when our regions need it the most with growing understanding by state lawmakers of the important role of transportation in economic development, public health and safety, community resilience, and a healthy environment.

Our Executive Board understands RTPO staff across the state have been collaborating on this funding matter for a year. It is time for RTPO policymakers to do the same if this situation is to be rectified. The PRTPO Executive Board has committed to pursuing an increase in overall RTPO program funding. This is our understanding of the funding ask developed by staff that we want to confirm with you.

The RTPO Funding Ask

Increase the RTPO funding program by $6.8 million to be distributed evenly among the 17 RTPOs to provide each RTPO with $400,000 per biennium, enough to support an FTE's worth of work including fixed overhead expenses. This will result in **a total on-going RTPO budget of $11.7 million per biennium, adjusted periodically for inflation**.

Additionally, though separate from the funding increase, a successful outcome will trigger an update to the formulaic distribution of the existing RTPO funding. **The formula used to distribute the existing $4.9 million will be adjusted to account for the additional responsibilities of large or complex regions.** RTPO staff, in coordination with WSDOT, will negotiate that adjustment once an increase in budget is approved. **Combined with the requested increase, this will ensure that every RTPO receives a minimum of $400,000 per biennium for core activities, with some RTPOs receiving much more.**

Statewide, staff concur that core RTPO responsibilities currently in statute require a minimum of one full-time equivalent (FTE) level of effort to adequately accomplish activities, plus fixed overhead expenses associated with each RTPO. That means every RTPO should receive base funding of at least $400,000 per biennium to fund its work program activities, while some will receive significantly more.

RTPO staff believe that many of the intractable issues that have dogged the distribution formula over the last decade will be easier to resolve once every RTPO is assured of a more reasonable base level of funding. Adjustments to the funding formula are implicit in our understanding but they are not part of the specific legislative funding ask.

The PRTPO Query of Your Board

The PRTPO Executive Board is confident in the staff collaboration and coordination that resulted in this proposed funding ask, but we need to know where the other RTPO boards stand on this matter. It is not sufficient for staff to identify a need for more funding. The actual RTPO governing boards must recognize an issue and importantly, agree as to the funding request that we collectively make to our state legislature.

I would very much like to hear from you as to where your board stands on these questions:

- Is there any disagreement that statewide RTPO base funding is inadequate for the work described in RCW 47.80 and should be increased?

- Is there any disagreement that statewide RTPO program funding should be increased by $6.8 million per biennium and distributed to provide $400,000 per biennium to each RTPO, sufficient to fund an FTE's worth of work?
- Is there any disagreement that formulaic adjustments to the $4.9 million currently supporting RTPOs can be adjusted once an adequate base funding level is established, to account for the additional responsibilities of large or otherwise complex regions? Such adjustments would be developed in collaboration between the RTPOs and WSDOT; formula adjustments would not be addressed specifically in this legislative funding request.
- Finally, is one or more of your Board members interested in connecting with other policymakers for a strategic discussion about approach, messaging, and other opportunities to sustainably fund our regional transportation planning organizations?

Please get in touch with me at your earliest convenience to let me know where your RTPO board is on these questions, and I will relay this back to my board. You can reach me by cell phone at (360) 406-4321. Alternatively, you can email me though I request you include our PRTPO Coordinator as well:

Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin lswawrin@cityofpa.us

Thera Black TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org

The state budget process is getting underway; it is important for us to make this funding ask as soon as possible. Together we can make a compelling case for increased legislative support for the important work each of our RTPOs does for our respective regions. Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Respectfully,

Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin
Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization Chair
Port Angeles City Councilmember
Clallam Transit Boardmember

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Technical Advisory Committee – Transit and Tribal Partners
From: Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator
Date: July 11, 2024
Subject: **RTP: Rural Transit and Intercity Bus Deep Dive**

Requested Action

This is a work session discussion and brainstorming topic. No action is requested but feedback, input, and ideas are sought.

Background

A Tough Topic on the Regional Transportation Plan agenda pertains to rural and intercity bus travel. What are measures PRTPO can take to increase the availability of long-distance bus service and interconnectivity between services?

To flesh this out we are working initially with PRTPO's transit and tribal partners who have specific insights into how things work, what could work better, and opportunities worth a closer look. When we have a reasonable list of potential activities, we will then vet that with the TAC and Executive Board for inclusion in the RTP or in some cases, sooner.

We are approaching this from two angles. First is that of the Intercity Bus Program, the private and state-funded services that provide long-distance bus service of 50 miles or more. PRTPO is participating in the statewide plan update and has opportunities to shape its recommendations. The second angle is that of system innovations that could make the provision of rural transit service by public transit and tribal transit partners more efficient or enhance coordination between systems. This memo is organized around those two basic areas of interest.

The aim of this discussion is to start exploring ideas and determine which ones have enough merit that they ought to move forward for some deeper consideration. In most cases that will result in some small "next steps" that will fit into a new strategic action agenda in the RTP update. In other cases, as you will see, it may result in measures that PRTPO should pursue now.

I am uncertain if we will be able to get through everything in one discussion. We will schedule a second meeting if needed to be sure we have time to fully air ideas and consider strategic initiatives. Following are proposed concepts to advance PRTPO's rural and intercity bus objectives.

1. Intercity Bus Travel

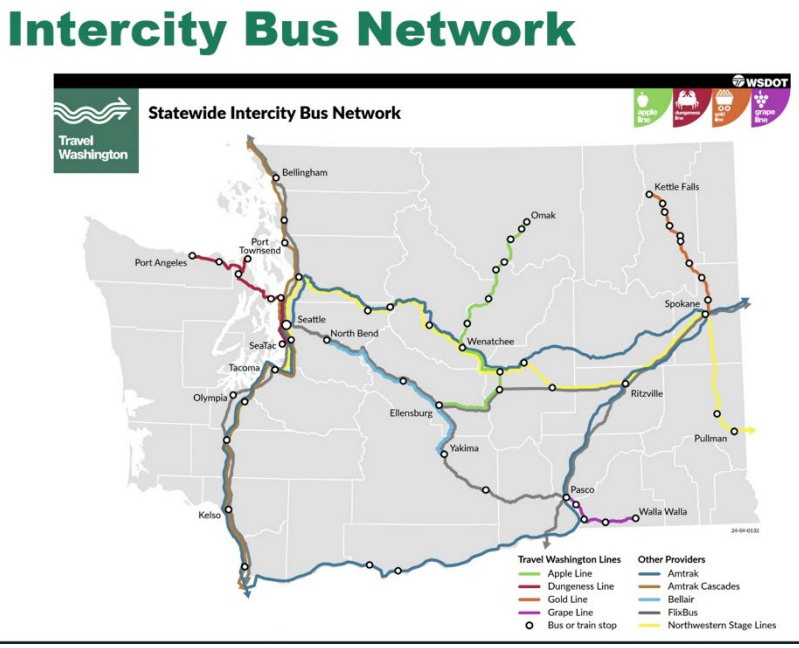
Intercity Bus has a specific meaning to the Federal Transit Administration. Think Greyhound or Flix. Or importantly, the Dungeness Line. Per FTA, Intercity Bus:

- Provides regularly scheduled, fixed-route passenger bus service that connects rural communities with urban centers
- Makes meaningful connections to the national network of intercity bus services
- Includes public and private operators
- Excludes commuter service like the Strait Shot (though it is not just commuter…)

WSDOT is conducting a regular update to its statewide Intercity Bus Program Plan. It is doing so in the face of significant upheaval in this transportation sector. Two meetings have occurred and two more are anticipated before the end of the year when a draft plan will be released.

There are two major points to date that I want to highlight with PRTPO transit partners.

First, going into this effort it was clear that there has been little consideration of travel needs along the US 101 corridor. This is the existing Intercity Bus map for Washington State. The red line is the Dungeness Line. It goes between Port Angeles and SeaTac Airport twice a day with connections at downtown Seattle hospitals.



At this time WSDOT is looking to add additional routes in Eastern Washington but has no plans to add routes west of I-5. I have reached out to my RTPO colleagues along the US 101 corridor and found strong support for intercity corridor service that connects 101 communities to each other, with connections to the transit hub in downtown Olympia and the Amtrak train station, and to transit and Amtrak in Vancouver at the south end.

Second, because of major shake-ups since December 2022 in the intercity bus industry, **the future of the Dungeness Line that connects Port Angeles with SeaTac Airport is in serious jeopardy.** That is because the Dungeness Line operates on FTA Section 5311(f) funding provided by WSDOT through the *Travel Washington* program. WSDOT contracts for that service from Greyhound. The reason the Dungeness Line is in jeopardy is the local match for that 5311(f) grant comes from credits attributed to certain services that Greyhound provides on the I-5 corridor. Since Greyhound was acquired by the parent company of Flix in 2022, all but one route that Greyhound operates on the I-5 corridor has been discontinued and is now operated by Flix. The Dungeness Line receives no credits from the service that Flix has taken over and Flix recently indicated it is not interested in continuing that contracted Dungeness Line service with Greyhound if it is responsible for the local match. Industry insights indicate the last route Greyhound operates on the I-5 corridor will be assumed by Flix in a little over a year. Without something to takes its place, the Dungeness Line may cease operations by the end of 2025. WSDOT is trying to figure out how to backfill that local match to prevent this from happening.

Something called “toll credits” can be used for this. WSDOT has accrued over $3.25 billion dollars in toll credits and had used just over $1 billion of that by the end of 2020. Per WSDOT’s toll credit policy:

> Previously, toll credits were made available to transit agencies as directed by the legislature, typically through a proviso in the Transportation Appropriation Bill. Under this policy document, the Public Transportation and Rail Division would be provided an allocation of toll credits to be used for transit programs authorized by Chapter 53 of Title 49, U.S.C.

It is unclear that WSDOT is willing to use its toll credits to backfill the local match for the Dungeness Line, since this wasn’t previously in their plans. This suggests that the legislature could be asked to provide a large enough allocation of toll credits to WSDOT’s Public Transportation Division to cover the local match for the Dungeness Line.

PRTPO Perspectives on Intercity Bus Program and Dungeness Line Specifically

I am looking for feedback on the following positions and potential strategies, as well as thoughts on what is missing in terms of position or strategy.

PRTPO Position 1: WSDOT should apply toll credits to satisfy the local match needs of the Dungeness Line to enable its on-going operation between Port Angeles and SeaTac Airport.

Potential Strategies:

a. Verify WSDOT's intent to use toll credits. If not, request the legislature to direct sufficient toll credits to WSDOT to offset the local match and preserve Dungeness Line operations. ***This needs to happen soon.***

b. Enlist relevant stakeholders who benefit from the service Dungeness Line provides to submit comments to the legislature or sign onto PRTPO's statement. This includes public transit agencies, health care providers, veterans groups, tribes, and others whose constituents rely on this service to meet their travel needs. ***Ditto.***

PRTPO Position 2: The Intercity Bus Program should provide greater connectivity between tribes and other rural communities along the US 101 corridor with connections to the Olympia along the SR 108 corridor and to the Vancouver area along the SR 104 corridor.

Potential Strategies:

c. Engage SWRTPO and Grays Harbor Council of Governments to coordinate a joint letter to WSDOT speaking to the need for better consideration of the US 101 corridor and the many tribes and small rural communities it connects, and the urban centers they need to reach in Vancouver and Olympia. ***This should happen soon,too.***

2. Rural Transit Innovations

PRTPO's four transit partners and five tribal partners all provide transit or shuttle services. Long-standing relationships have fostered a degree of cooperation and coordination that offers residents across the four-county region a level of regional service that is much greater than the sum of its individual parts. The Strait Shot, the Kingston Express, coordination between the Makah and Clallam Transit and between Squaxin Island Transit and Mason Transit – these are examples of how PRTPO partners expand access for the region's residents.

Could it be better? Sure.

This aspect of expanding rural access and intercity service looks to build on the strong foundation that is already in place. This includes innovations in other rural areas that may have applicability here as well as coordinated approaches towards shared needs.

Following are three concepts to explore with this group to see if they are worth a closer look. I am looking for feedback on these ideas – do they make sense, are they relevant, would they have value? I am also interested in what is missing. The aim of each is to enhance the capacity of PRTPO partners to collaborate and coordinate among each other and with other system partners to increase access to rural "intercity" transit that connects residents of the Peninsula Region with their destinations here and beyond. Ideas described below include:

- Tap Expertise of Rural Innovators to Explore Emerging Strategies (rural transit webinar series)
- Brainstorm "OlyPen" Circulator Possibilities
- Maximize Remix and GTFS Capabilities

d. Tap Expertise of Rural Innovators to Explore Emerging Strategies

This concept adapts the framework of the EV Infrastructure Exchange Group to rural transit concerns. Initially it would convene subject matter experts via a webinar series to offer PRTPO partners and other stakeholders insights into innovative programs and tools deployed elsewhere to better understand whether these measures have applicability to the Peninsula Region. Depending on the nature of the innovation and its applicability, further follow-up may be indicated. The aim is to figure which innovations, if any, are worth pursuing here in the Peninsula Region and then, what the first steps are in that pursuit.

Here are some examples of potential innovations to feature via a webinar series.

i. The NE Washington RTPO is housed within the Economic Development District. The NEWRTPO established a Regional Mobility/Veterans Service Center that performs coordination and outreach on behalf of the NEWRTPO members, keeps the three transit providers' Google Transit data for trip planning up to date, focuses on initiatives related to regional transit, updates and expands regional marketing materials, searches for sustainable funding, develops rider training programs, and connects local veterans with veteran transportation options and services. RM/VSC is not a transportation agency, and it does not own or operate services. It handles back-of-the-house activities in support of the partner providers.

ii. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) set out to address the fact that trip planning software is urban centric and does not meet the need of rural residents. VTrans used two technologies – GTFS-flex and OpenTripPlanner – to develop a new tool that enables uniform route planning across an array of flexible transit services to plan trips across the state.

iii. Pierce Transit completed an FTA study in 2019 that looked at how contracted Lyft services could be used to address first-/last-mile connectivity issues in outlying areas. This included before and after passenger surveys to understand how people would (or would not have) accessed service without Lyft, comparisons of costs from contracted Lyft services versus transit service, changes in public attitude, and more.

iv. Transit electrification in rural areas presents challenges that urban systems don't face. This webinar topic would engage rural transit systems from other regions to learn from their experience and include both battery-electric and fuel-cell electric bus considerations. As a part of this or separate, it could take a close-up look at Washington's own hydrogen-fuel celled bus innovations, which are shaping up to be noteworthy at a national level and involve at least one PRTPO member.

v. This webinar would look at the long-distance intercity bus travel needs for medical purposes, linking with stakeholders from the Human Services Transportation Plan process and new stakeholders. Specifically, it would begin forging new relationships and increased understanding between PRTPO's transportation partners and health care partners through Accountable Communities of Health organizations, or ACH. ACHs are to the health care and social service sectors in Washington what RTPOs are to transportation providers. Olympic Community of Health (OCH) is the ACH for Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap Counties. CHOICE, the Community Health Organization Improving Care and Equity, is the ACH for Mason County as well as Thurston, Lewis, Cowlitz, Pacific, Grays Harbor, and Wahkiakum Counties. Many rural residents get specialized medical procedures far from where they live. Better coordination with health care and social service providers underpins many of the concerns in PRTPO's Human Services Transportation Plan, including where medical or social services are located, facilities accessing those services, awareness of available travel services among service providers, matching client eligibility with services, etc.

vi. North Dakota State University (NDSU) is a national center for research into rural transit issues. NDSU recently completed a study looking at the practical application of Shared Use Mobility in rural settings.

Shared Use Mobility, often referred to as SUM, includes such things as transit, ferries, and taxis, but also carsharing, ridesharing apps, shuttles, microtransit, etc. This webinar would invite researchers and representatives from a couple of the most relevant case studies involving microtransit to talk with members about their experiences and lessons learned from the integration of microtransit into their rural services.

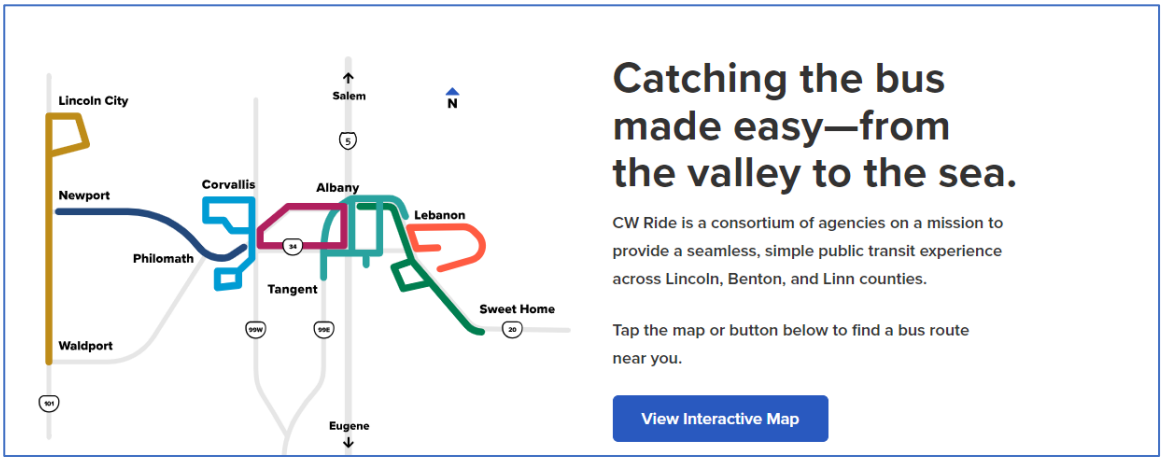
e. Brainstorm Olympic Peninsula Circulator Concept

This concept came up as a result of conversations with intercity bus experts. It is highly unlikely WSDOT or a private provider will step up to establish intercity bus service around the Olympic Peninsula in the foreseeable future (though effort should be made to move that forward). In light of strong interest on the part of PRTPO, this strategy would explore the potential of establishing an Olympic Peninsula circulator through inline connections between the existing transit agencies, including Grays Harbor Transit and to the extent practical, the tribal transit systems. Steve Abernathy of David Evans and Associates, formerly of WSDOT Public Transportation Division and then Greyhound, has offered to help facilitate a brainstorm process about how something like that could work, conceptually, so that members could better understand if there is enough potential to look at this any closer. He points to two similar transit alliances in Oregon for inspiration.

NW Connector



Cascades West Transit and Ride Options (CW Ride)



The intent of this webinar(s) would be to hear from the managers of those systems and get insights to help know whether there is potential application for something like this in the Peninsula Region at some point and what logical "next steps" to evaluate that would be.

f. Maximize Remix and GTFS Capabilities

This is really something different than the others. I am interested in hearing how transit partners are doing managing their GTFS responsibilities, and whether everyone has the capability to use Remix. Does this fit comfortably within organizational responsibilities and staff resources? I am curious whether the scale of this for small rural systems is such that a consolidated approach could be beneficial in providing dedicated resources and deep expertise to handle this for multiple agencies.

Those are some ideas to get your bus wheels turning. Ideas that have merit will move forward and get refined into bite-sized action items that PRTPO can tuck into its work program or cue up for a future funding request by PRTPO or any of its members. Completion of any one of these would likely lead to additional follow-up measures informed by fresh insights or addressing specific questions. Or it could help put to rest infeasible ideas that just needed a chance to be aired more fully.

What do you think? Do these have value? How can they be improved? What's missing?

Bring your ideas and curiosity and sense of collaboration and help us flesh out ways that PRTPO can help increase access to rural and intercity bus service for the region's residents.

For More Information:
Thera Black | 360.878.0353 | TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org