PRTPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 18, 2021 | 10:00 – 11:30

Remote meeting via Zoom
Login found on Agenda Page 2

10:00	**Chair's Welcome and Introductions**	
10:05 – 10:10	**Consent Calendar** • *Approval of Agenda* • *Approval of Minutes from September 16, 2021 (Attachment)*	ACTION *Chair Clark-Getzin*
10:10 – 10:15	**2021-2026 RTIP Amendment *(Attachment)*** *The TAC is asked to review a proposed amendment to the 2021-2027 RTIP from the Skokomish Tribe and forward a recommendation on its approval to the Executive Board.*	ACTION *Edward Coviello, PRTPO Coordinator*
10:15 – 10:25	**2022 TA Process Kick-off *(Attachment)*** *PRTPO will launch a Transportation Alternatives Program (TA) call for projects at the end of February. This meeting is a kick-off to that process, which is based on the process used in 2020. The TAC is asked to forward a recommendation to the Executive Board on the overall approach.*	ACTION *Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator*
10:25 – 10:40	**RTP Biennial Currency Review *(Attachment)*** *PRTPO must certify that its long-range Regional Transportation Plan is still current, two years after adoption. The TAC is asked to review the Biennial Currency Statement and forward a recommendation on its approval to the Executive Board.*	ACTION *Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator*
10:40 – 10:50	**Nomination of Officers for 2022-2023** *In January the TAC will elect new officers for the 2022-2023 calendar years. Wendy Clark-Getzin has served two consecutive terms as Chair and so must rotate off. Nominations will be opened for TAC Chair and Vice-Chair, and the slate presented for election in January.*	NOMINATIONS *Chair Clark-Getzen*
10:50 – 11:10	**PRTPO Legislative Priority – Efficient Use of Federal Funds *(Attachment)*** *On November 4th PRTPO Executive Board members talked with legislators about regional priorities in Transportation Outlook 2022 and found support for more efficiency in the funding of small rural projects. TAC members will discuss measures reviewed and approved in 2020 and provide input to the Board as to what priorities, if any, they represent and other considerations.*	DISCUSSION *Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator*
11:10 – 11:20	**PRTPO Interactive RTIP Mapping Tool – *Beta-Test Drive!*** *The first GIS web tool PRTPO is developing as a part of its GIS services contract is an RTIP mapping tool. The TAC will preview the first public beta version.*	DEMONSTRATION *Edward Coviello, PRTPO Coordinator*
11:20 – 11:30	**Member Updates** *This is a chance to share information with colleagues about activities of interest.*	DISCUSSION *All*
11:30	**ADJOURN**	

Additional Attachment

PRTPO Transportation Outlook 2022 Legislative Folio

Remote Zoom Meeting Information

PRTPO TAC Meeting – Zoom Login

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3608780353?pwd=MFQvOHpjdENsMjdCQ3BEdFBKSHcxUT09

Meeting ID: 360 878 0353

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PENINSULA RTPO

PRTPO.org

Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization

TAC Meeting Summary

Meeting Location:

Remote Meeting via Zoom software per Washington Governors order #20-28-15 of the Open

Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act

September 16, 2021

Attendees

Technical Advisory Committee Member

Bek Ashby – Port Orchard, PRTPO Chair
Wendy Clark – Getzin – Jefferson County, TAC Chair
Steve Gray – Clallam County
Jayme Brooke – Jefferson Transit
Sara Crouch – Jefferson Transit
Mike Oliver – Clallam Transit
Annette Nesse – Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Matt Klontz – City of Sequim
Dennis Engel – WSDOT Olympic Region
Steffani Lillie – Kitsap Transit
Jonathan Boehme – City of Port Angeles
Melisa Mohr – Kitsap County
Amy Asher – Mason Transit
Ken Gill – City of Shelton
Chris Hammer - City of Port Orchard
Katie Cole – City of Sequim
Tracy Parker – Squaxin Island Tribe
Marty Allen - Skokomish Tribe

Staff/Guests

Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator
Edward Coviello, PRTPO Coordinator
Elizabeth Safsten, WSDOT Public Transportation

Welcome & Introductions

TAC Chair Wendy Clark-Getzin opened the meeting at 10:00 AM and initiated self-introductions.

Approval of the September 16th 2021 TAC Agenda and the July 15th TAC Meeting Minutes

The TAC approved, with a motion and seconded.

2022-2027 Regional Transportation Improvement Program

Approved after my presentation

2022 Legislative Agenda – Project List Development

Thera explained the process this year, last year's process and meetings with legislative staff and elected officials. She noted how well PRTPO members were in devoting time and efforts. This year will be one forum to bring all the members together, especially, the committee members for infrastructure and transportation. This should occur in November. This should help bridge district boundaries by bringing together. Thera asked for input from the group about projects needing to be reflected in this year's effort. Chair Clark-Getzin explained this year's format is similar to last years. Chair Clark-Getzin asked if we are sending clear messages to our legislative members. Thera highlighted that the language submitted by PRTPO members is similar to the language as the local level. Chair Clark-Getzin provided that some local projects are bundled together when presented at the regional level to ensure clarity.

Chair Clark-Getzin asked if there are other joint regional issues that should be submitted with this document such as pavement preservation. The City of Port Angeles and Kitsap County projects need to be added to complete the outreach document.

Thera noted that the fish barrier projects might be a good idea to present on the regional level – highlight the progress and urgency of the projects.

PRTPO Chair Ashby commented that she will be working with members as needed on the process.

Regional Support for EV Readiness Through PRTPO Work Program

Thera wrapped up the efforts on Electric Vehicle study noting that the effort was driven by comments from the RTP about Climate Change. The Work Program began with a contract with DKS in the spring of this year and wrapped up in June 2021. A resource library webpage was created to begin collecting relevant documents that can help members plan and implement projects. Coordinator Black saw an increase in interest around the Region after the workshop held in the spring. This showed that PRTPO can continue support in the future as a convener and way to bring messages to the regional level.

The Board will be briefed in October 2021 about future efforts in this area as part of the follow up on the RTP activities. We have 40 hours budgeted this fiscal year to support RTP elements such as EV support.

Grant programs were provided to the TAC and how the PRTPO can be of help to members. Much discussion followed among TAC members.

Local Agency Check-in on USBRS Designation Interest

This agenda item was addressed before the Regional EV item on the agenda to accommodate members as needed.

The last meeting of the TAC had two presentations and the question of how does the TAC address the USBRS designation. Thera Black guided the discussion that the USBRS process is best handled at the local level as there are many details and work involved. Each member agency would have to develop a local process to designate routes. Different members have unique needs.

The PRTPO's main contribution to the USBRS designation process is to provide support letters, if acceptable, to requesting members. It is unknown if members would be able to meet an April 2022 designation deadline.

The TAC at past presentations noted that the primary benefit for the Region might be for tourism and the economic benefits of tourism by bike.

PRTPO might be able to provide a forum, if needed, to bring members together concerning the USBRS.

Steve Gray of Clallam County provided information that the County would want to hear from the three Cities and WSDOT before moving forward. It was explained that there are many gaps remaining along the Olympic to Discovery Trail among other routes. It was not clear if WSDOT would support the USBR designation routes. At the local level bicycle suitability of the routes will be brought up. A first step might be to share the current status of the ODT.

Thera explained that the WSDOT Olympic Region may have to provide further input. She explained the differences between routes and facilities. Member Gray welcomed WSDOT involvement.

Member Engel noted that the staff at WSDOT Olympic Region has looked at the USBR and would ask the Regional Administrator about their thoughts on the process.

Chair Clark-Getzin explained that current efforts for facility suitability should be used to help the designation of USBRs. When the ODT trail is completed and separated from SR 20 would improve the chances of designation.

Kitsap County member Mohr asked if the letters of support are at the individual member level. Some members would not always support the concepts of another member based upon local conditions.

Member Nesse offered support of the discussion and that the idea is good but there is more work to be done before moving forward. However, the designations can improve project delivery success to show regional support through a USBR designation.

PRTPO Coordinator Black provided that the PRTPO Region is not fully ready to embrace designation efforts. Chair Clark-Getzin asked if the Mason and Kitsap connections should be shared with the Board on progress connecting the counties. Coordinator Black asked if the TAC is alright with the PRTPO backing efforts at the local level as needed going forward. Chair Clark-Getzin agreed and the item will be brought before the PRTPO Board in October.

Hybrid Meetings in PRTPO's Future

Chair Clark-Getzin briefed the TAC about the future of virtual meetings and how they save time and have resulted in expanded participation. The Chair asked if the TAC would like to meet twice per year in person or to continue to meet virtually.

The TAC will continue to meet virtually.

Member Updates

Chair Clark-Getzin highlighted Annette Nesse's work with the PRTPO over the years.

Annette shared how she became involved in the PRTPO and how transportation has been one of her careers highlights! The PRTPO will miss her contributions and presence. Many members provided positive comments about her leadership over the years and the resulting successes!

Annette announced that Wendy Clark-Getzin will be her replacement!

Jefferson Transit provided an update on the Kingston service will not be in October but in February due to a driver shortage.

WSDOT Public Transit's representative gave an overview of her upcoming family leave. She announced her fill in until she gets back in a few months.

Ken Gill of Shelton gave an update on the chip seal projects and the Safe Routes to School project.

Dennis Engel announced that the WSDOT Olympic Regional Administrator will be retiring in January.

Steffani Lillie and Thera announced the Human Services Transportation Plan funding arrangement. Kitsap Transit will be administering the grant funds on behalf of the PRTPO. The grant is for $80,000 of FTA 5311 rural transportation funding. Chair Ashby thanked both Kitsap Transit and the WSDOT Public Transportation Division.

ADJOURN

11:45 a.m.

ACTION ITEM

To: PRTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
From: Edward Coviello
Date: November 18, 2021
Subject: **PRTPO Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP) Amendment – Skokomish Tribe**

REQUESTED ACTION:

For the TAC to recommend for approval at the December PRTPO Executive Board the S*kokomish Tribe Project WA-14002: SR 106/Reservation Rd/Tribal Center Rd Sidewalk Extension - Hood Canal,* to be included in the January Amendment of the 2022-2025 State Transportation Improvement Program.

Overview

Skokomish Tribe has requested that the project titled "WA-14002 SR 106/Reservation Rd/Tribal Center Rd Sidewalk Extension - Hood Canal" be added to the PRTPO 2022-2027 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) originally approved by the PRTPO Board on October 15, 2021.

The project is for ADA curb ramp retrofits, sidewalk with curb, walkway with bio-swale/ditch buffer, pedestrian-scale lighting linking to the Hood Canal Elementary School. The funding source is from Safe Routes to School grant program in the amount of $318,465 with a local match of $25,590 totaling $342,055. The funds are secured at this and the project will be added to the January 2022-2025 State Transportation Improvement Program Amendment.

The project request supports Regional Transportation Plan 2040 Goal 4 – Barrier-free Transportation and Goal 9 – Environmental and Human Health.

For More Information:

Edward Coviello | 360.824.4919 | EdwardC@KitsapTransit.com

Washington State S. T. I. P.

2022 to 2025

(Project Funds to Nearest Dollar)

MPO/RTPO: Peninsula RTPO N Inside Y Outside **November 5, 2021**

County: Mason

Agency: Skokomish Tribe

Func Cls	Project Number	PIN	STIP ID	Imp Type	Total Project Length	Environmental Type	RW Required	Begin Termini	End Termini	Total Est. Cost of Project	STIP Amend. No.
05			WA-14002	28	0.250	CE	No	Various	Various	342,055	

SR 106/Reservation Rd/Tribal Center Rd Sidewalk Extension - Hood Canal Elementary School

ADA curb ramp retrofits, sidewalk with curb, walkway with bio-swale/ditch buffer, pedestrian-scale lighting.

Funding

Phase	Start Date	Federal Fund Code	Federal Funds	State Fund Code	State Funds	Local Funds	Total
PE	2022		0	SRTS	35,385	0	35,385
CN	2022		0	SRTS	283,080	23,590	306,670
		Project Totals	**0**		**318,465**	**23,590**	**342,055**

Expenditure Schedule

Phase	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th & 6th
PE	35,385	0	0	0	0
CN	306,670	0	0	0	0
Totals	**342,055**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

	Federal Funds	State Funds	Local Funds	Total
Agency Totals for Skokomish Tribe	**0**	**318,465**	**23,590**	**342,055**

ACTION ITEM

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black and Edward Coviello, PRTPO Coordinators
Date: November 11, 2021
Subject: **2022 TA Process Kick-off**

REQUESTED ACTION:

The TAC is asked to recommend the Executive Board approve the proposed process and timeline for conducting the 2022 Transportation Alternatives Program Call for Projects.

Overview

In June 2020 PRTPO concluded its first Transportation Alternatives Program (TA) funding process since 2014-15, allocating $1.3 million in FY 2020-2024 funding to four projects. The process called for biennial allocations thereafter, making the next call for projects due in late winter of 2022. That process will allocate a minimum of $413,500 in FY 2025-2026 funding to priority projects.

TAC members were instrumental in developing the 2020 process at the time and in helping to implement it. The approach proposed for the 2022 process is a refresh of that same process. Details of the proposed approach are attached for review and discussion. A TAC recommendation to the Board on the proposed approach is requested.

How much money is available?

Based on past funding levels the region can expect to allocate $413,500 in TA funds to priority projects. The infrastructure package passed by Congress on November 5th reauthorizes the federal Surface Transportation Act and is expected to increase somewhat TAP funds available to PRTPO for programming. How quickly the appropriation details get worked out at the federal and state levels remains to be seen. If it occurs in time we may get updated funding estimates to work with. While an increase in TA funding is expected, it is not anticipated to be a substantial amount for PRTPO. Even a 15% bump in allocations is only a $30,000 increase in funding.

How soon can projects selected in June 2022 proceed?

While we are programming FY 2025 and 2026 funding, we should expect that projects selected for funding will be able to obligate and get underway before then. At a minimum, project sponsors can count on funding authority by 2024 though projects may be able to get underway as early as 2023. We will have more information on this as we get closer to launching the call for projects and will work with sponsors wanting to accelerate project delivery to get WSDOT support.

Do urban and rural targets apply to this small amount of available funding?

WSDOT expects a minimum of $145,222 to be allocated to projects in rural areas and $108,468 to projects in urban areas. This is an incredibly inefficient way to program federal transportation funds. We believe we can use averages over a multi-year period to demonstrate satisfactory compliance with WSDOT's expectations in order to avoid having its targets drive PRTPO project priorities. We expect to confirm this before launching the call for projects. **If waiving the urban-rural targets for this pot of revenue raises concerns, please let us know.**

Can agencies in Kitsap County apply?

No, agencies in Kitsap County participate in PSRC's TAP process, which programs several million dollars in funds. PRTPO's TAP authorization is based on the populations of Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason Counties.

Attachment:

Proposed 2022 Transportation Alternatives Program Project Selection Process

For More Information:

Thera Black | 360.878.0353 | TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org
Edward Coviello | 360.824.4919 | EdwardC@KitsapTransit.com

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM FUNDING
PROPOSED APPROACH FOR CY 2022 CALL FOR PROJECTS

In 2022 PRTPO will award a minimum of $413,500 in Transportation Alternatives Program (TA) funding. This is the minimum amount of TA funds available for federal fiscal years 2025 and 2026 and may increase somewhat when the federal infrastructure bill is passed.

Following is a summary of the proposed 2022 process.

KEY MILESTONES

18 Nov TAC makes process recommendation to the Board

17 Dec Board considers TAC recommendation on 2022 TA process (1st reading)

18 Feb Board approves process for 2022 TA allocations and authorizes call for projects

28 Feb Launch Call for Projects and distribute/post application packets and support materials

4 Apr Deadline for draft application review [optional application pre-submittal check (new)]

11 Apr Final applications due

15 Apr Board receives report on number of applications received, funds requested

2 May Final video recording deadline for project presentations

5 May TAC members receive application packages and begin the individual review process

19 May TAC conducts formal project evaluation and prioritization process and recommends TA awards to the Board

17 Jun Board considers TAP applications, TAC recommendation, and awards funding to priority TA projects

Projects selected for funding will be identified in the appropriate year as funding secured projects in the local 2023-2028 TIPs under development at the time of project selection.

PROCESS FUNDAMENTALS

Available Funds

PRTPO will program at least $413,500 in FY 2025-2026 funds. Projects are not constrained by annual funding amounts. This 2022 process does not commit post-2026 funds.

Funding Cap

There is no cap on the amount of funds that can be requested for a project. *Sponsors understand that it PRTPO's intent to generate as much regional benefit as possible with this investment.* The larger the funding request, the more value and regional benefit the project sponsor should expect to demonstrate in the proposal. At the same time, PRTPO recognizes that putting small amounts of federal funds on projects is inefficient. It is the Board's prerogative to award all TAP funds to a single project if, in its determination, that project is worthy of such an award.

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Limit on Number of Proposals

There is no limit on the number of proposals that a single sponsor may submit, however, any sponsor submitting more than one project must indicate its own priority ranking of the proposals.

Rural-Urban Balancing

As a final element in the project evaluation process, PRTPO may adjust priorities, if required, to achieve minimum levels of rural and urban funding distributions. Of the two-year allocation, WSDOT expects a minimum of $145,222 be awarded to projects in rural areas and a minimum of $108,468 be awarded to projects in urban areas. The following table summarizes total funding availability and WSDOT's minimum expected rural and urban distributions. PRTPO will seek to have these minimums waived in the interest of more responsible use of federal funds.

	TAP Funds Allocated to PRTPO			
	Total	**Rural**	**Urban**	**Anywhere**
FFY 2025	**$ 214,944**	$ 72,675	$ 54,282	$ 87,987
FFY 2026	**$ 198,548**	$ 72,547	$ 54,186	$ 71,815
Unprogrammed $$	**$ 413,492**	**$ 145,222**	**$ 108,468**	**$ 159,802**

Ability to Proceed in a Timely Way

Project sponsors are expected to provide realistic estimates of the proposed timeline, including when projects will obligate and get underway. Sponsors should indicate the realistic fiscal year that requested TA funds will be obligated. Project obligation is a time-consuming WSDOT process; applicants should be realistic about when projects will obligate. Funding recipients will participate in an annual status review of their projects.

Use of Federal Funds

Applicants seeking a TA grant should be aware of the complexities associated with using federal funds for project delivery and ensure this is the right funding source for the intended project before applying.

Contingency Awards

In addition to identifying projects to receive a confirmed award of TA funds, the Board may identify Contingency Awards. Contingency Awards specify how any additional funds available in this time period should be allocated, or what project moves forward if a project selected for funding is unable to proceed as planned. Contingency Awards retain no special standing when the next Call for Projects is conducted in two years.

Next Call for Projects

It is PRTPO's intent to conduct another call for TA projects in 2024 with funding attributed to FFY 2027 and 2028, maintaining a biennial program with annual check-ins for all federally funded projects. Future processes will account for differences between actual and projected funding in earlier processes.

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MINIMUM QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for consideration, each proposal will need to demonstrate the following:

- **Eligible Project Type**

All project types eligible for TA funding under federal law may be considered in this process. Eligible TA activities account for a wide range of project types. See Attachment A for the list of eligible project types.

- **Eligible Project Sponsor**

All entities eligible to receive TA funds under federal law are eligible to apply. Eligible project sponsors include municipalities, transit agencies, tribes, natural resource or public land agencies, non-profit entities responsible for local transportation safety programs, and regional planning agencies. State DOTs (and MPOs) are not eligible to apply for TA funds, but they can partner on project delivery.

- **CA Status or Sponsor**

Federal funds have special project administration requirements over which PRTPO has no control. Applicants must have Certification Acceptance (CA) status or provide evidence that WSDOT or another CA entity will oversee the project.

> *Important: Project sponsors who do not have Certification Acceptance (CA) status from FHWA are not disqualified. However, they must demonstrate they have obtained a commitment from WSDOT Olympic Region Local Programs or a CA agency to administer their project if awarded federal funds. [Include contact information for WSDOT and local CA agencies.] Non-CA project sponsors are advised to contact WSDOT or a potential CA administrator early in project development to make this commitment easier to obtain.*

- **Minimum Match**

This is a reimbursement-type grant program with a minimum 13.5% match. This means that project sponsors are reimbursed for 86.5% of their expenses up to the total grant award. Match can come from local or state sources, or from federal BIA funds. Note that previously expended funds do not qualify as match.

- **Evidence of Project Standing**

Eligible proposals must advance a project, program, or service included in a locally adopted TIP, TDP, CFP, or regional plan, or that is explicitly identified in another public plan that has gone through a public input or review process. This helps to address needs vetted through a public process as well as ensure regional consistency with local plans.

- **Consistency with 2040 RTP**

Applicants are expected to describe how their proposals support 2040 RTP goals and policies.

- **Public Access**

Project applicants certify that the proposed project will be open for general public access and benefit. Title VI Civil Rights reporting is required.

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Regional Priorities

Each project will be evaluated on its own merits and in consideration of the wide range of benefits associated with different project types. The application will offer each applicant the latitude to explain the unique merits of each proposed investment in a manner appropriate for that project type. There are also some universal factors that will go into determining regional priorities regardless of project type.

- **Feasibility of Proposed Project and Schedule**

Feasibility is an assessment of the complexity of the project compared to the proposed schedule and budget. In addition, successful project delivery requires sufficient staff resources in light of other project delivery commitments an agency has already made and will have underway in the same delivery window. Applicants juggling multiple projects in the same time frame as the proposed project – especially if they are federally funded projects – should be prepared to explain how the proposed project can proceed without disrupting existing commitments.

- **Availability of Matching Funds**

Applicants will be asked to indicate the source of their matching funds. Proposed matching funds that require the applicant to obtain a state grant to secure the funds are a riskier proposition than those proposals that have already secured local or state match funds.

- **Over-Match**

The minimum required match for a TA grant is 13.5 percent. An applicant that commits more than the minimum 13.5 percent is demonstrating local commitment to that project and is helping to stretch limited resources further.

- **Partnerships**

Proposals with financial partners demonstrate buy-in from other entities and help to stretch limited TA funds. Applicants will be asked to demonstrate financial commitment from funding partners, if included.

- **Infrastructure "Shovel-Readiness"**

Infrastructure projects have more than one phase, culminating in a construction phase. Infrastructure proposals for which all pre-construction work has been completed and environmental permits secured are considered "shovel-ready" infrastructure projects. There are multiple benefits to a shovel-ready infrastructure project over one that still has pre-construction work to do: public benefit sooner rather than later; vastly lower risk of project delays or cost overruns including environmental surprises that can create setbacks; and locally demonstrated progress on project delivery.

Right-of-Way Certification While right-of-way (ROW) is an element of shovel-readiness, it has its own inherent risks. Proposals that entail ROW acquisition or are dependent upon its completion before the project can proceed to construction have inherently more risks to project schedule, viability, and cost than those that do not. Proposals that require right-of-way acquisition should demonstrate that the proposed schedule is realistic.

- **Scale-ability for Partial Funding**

Partial funding is often an option for projects with multiple phases or functional segments or elements. For example:

  - funding might be sought for all phases of an infrastructure project, but the agency is willing to accept funding for only the PE phase rather than forego any funding

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- a proposal would repave a corridor segment from Point A to Point D but if not funded in its entirety, the agency is willing to accept funding for Point A to C
- the project sponsor would like to fund a three-year program but is willing to accept funding for two years rather than forego any funding

Applicants will indicate whether their proposal is scale-able and if so, describe a logical segment that can proceed if full funding is not available.

Project Evaluation Process

New in 2022 – Applicants are invited to submit draft applications for pre-submittal internal review to ensure completeness of the project package and identify any potentially ineligible components. This allows project sponsors to make any corrections before the final application due date. It is expected that applications formally submitted by the due date are complete and correct, ready for the formal review and prioritization process.

Applicants are expected to prepare a brief presentation to augment their application package and enhance the review process. PRTPO Coordinators will work with all applicants submitting completed packages to schedule a recording of their proposal via Zoom. Project videos will be included with application materials for project evaluation.

The rest of the review and all of the prioritization process is conducted by members of PRTPO. The TAC conducts the initial review and recommends a priority funding array to the Executive Board. The Board reviews the proposals and TAC recommendation before making its funding decision. Following are details of those two processes.

TAC Project Review and Prioritization Process

Projects will undergo a multipart review before the TAC makes its funding recommendation to the Board.

1. **Initial Review**
   By May 5, 2022, TAC members will receive an application package for initial review along with review guidance. Each member will be asked to individually review the application materials and videos and note any questions or follow-up information needed to understand the project proposals. A two-week window is scheduled for this prior to the TAC's full evaluation and prioritization meeting.

2. **Prioritization and Funding Recommendation**
   The TAC's evaluation process will begin with a general discussion of the projects and materials received for review. This is an opportunity for TAC members to talk with project sponsors about any questions that came up during their individual reviews. The objective is for every member of the TAC to be clear on what each proposal entails, the likely benefits it will generate, the cost and funding ask, and the overall project feasibility and suitability as described, before the evaluation and prioritization gets underway.

   TAC members will use a Pairwise forced choice model to evaluate and rank the applications. The Pairwise model compares every proposal to every other proposal, resulting in a composite score from high to low of the relative priorities. This is an effective way to compare different types of projects and build consensus on rank order priorities. The recommended funding array will rely on rank priorities but may entail some additional adjustments based on funding limitations or extraordinary factors identified in the review process. Documentation of the prioritization and funding recommendation process will summarize the process and highlight any notable issues, opportunities, or points of dissent. The TAC's recommended funding array and process documentation will be forwarded to the Board for its consideration.

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Board Project Review and Funding Action

The Board will conduct its own review of the applications, relying heavily on the TAC vetting and prioritization process to inform its discussion. The Board will receive a package including a summary matrix of the TAC's funding recommendation with any key findings or considerations as well as a complete package of the proposals and a summary of the TAC evaluation process.

The Board will consider the TAC's recommendation in its discussion as well as any other policy considerations that may be warranted in its determination of funding awards. The Board will take action to award up $413,500 to priority TAP projects and identify a list of contingency projects to proceed if selected projects are delayed.

Completion of 2022 Funding Process

The Board will make its funding decision in June, allowing time for local agencies awarded funding to include the secured projects in their 2023-2028 TIPs. Recipient agencies are expected to include these as funding secured projects in the appropriate year of their TIP, ready for inclusion in the new RTIP in August and later, in the new STIP. For that reason, it is advantageous for these projects to be already in draft TIPs as planned projects when the TIPs are developed for public review and adoption.

DRAFT

ACTION ITEM

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black and Edward Coviello, PRTPO Coordinators
Date: November 11, 2021
Subject: **RTP Biennial Currency Review**

REQUESTED ACTION:

The TAC is asked to recommend the Executive Board approve the PRTPO Biennial Currency Review of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan.

Overview

A requirement in state law governing activities of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations is the need to review the long-range regional transportation plan two years after it is adopted and every two years thereafter to determine if it is still "current" – that is, whether it still complies with state requirements. If regionally significant changes have occurred in the previous two years that make some or all of the adopted RTP sufficiently outdated, then a plan update may be warranted. The RCW calls for findings of this biennial review to be forwarded to WSDOT.

WSDOT notified PRTPO that it expects a biennial currency certification to be completed this year since PRTPO adopted its 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in October 2019. This is the first such currency review PRTPO has conducted.

The currency review we conducted for the 2040 RTP entailed two tests to determine whether the long-range plan retains its usefulness or if an RTP update is warranted.

The first test looked at statutory requirements associated with the RTP, found in RCW 47.80.030 and in WAC 468-86-080 through 468-86-140. These are the standard checks that WSDOT uses to ascertain whether the RTP meets minimum state requirements. The second test was a general assessment of whether the RTP adequately supports the Executive Board in its direction of the regional planning work program and decision-making processes.

Results of both tests indicate that the 2040 RTP is current and remains a relevant resource in supporting regional transportation planning activities and decision making. Our preliminary findings conclude that an update of the 2040 RTP is not warranted at this time.

The TAC is asked to comment on the attached Biennial Currency Review and preliminary findings. We are particularly interested in hearing if members come to different conclusions than we did about the need for another RTP update at this time. Such an effort will necessarily curtail other PRTPO activities if it is needed.

The Board will consider the Biennial Currency Review in December. A recommendation from the TAC to the Board on its approval is requested.

Attachment:

PRTPO Biennial Currency Review of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan

For More Information:

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PRTPO Biennial Currency Review of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan

PRTPO's 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was adopted by the Executive Board in October 2019. Per a statutory requirement in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 47.80.030(2), PRTPO must review the RTP every two years for currency and forward this biennial review to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). That is the rationale for this 2021 biennial currency review.

2021 Statement of Currency

PRTPO's 2040 Regional Transportation Plan is current with all state requirements and continues to support the Executive Board's on-going planning and decision-making processes. No update to the long-range plan is warranted at this time.

The next biennial review will occur in late 2023.

Biennial Review Documentation

PRTPO's 2021 biennial review involves two tests to demonstrate that the RTP adopted in October 2019 is still current and useful for its intended purpose:

1 – It continues to comply with RCW and WAC requirements

2 – It continues to support PRTPO's work program and decision-making activities

The following brief documents findings of the biennial currency review.

1. Currency with RCW and WAC Requirements

Requirements spelled out in RCW 47.80.030 and in WAC 468-86-080 through 468-86-140 describe the elements of a statutorily compliant Regional Transportation Plan for state RTPOs. This biennial currency review of PRTPO's 2040 RTP looks for regionally significant changes in the last two years that render some or all of the required elements in the existing RTP outdated and thus meriting an update. Statutory requirements are summarized below. Reviewers wishing to read the full legislative language as well as the Growth Management Act implementing legislation governing the corresponding local planning processes are encouraged to follow the above links to the Washington State legislative website.

a. Identify existing and planned facilities of regional significance

Have plans for new regionally significant facilities been developed in the last two years that were not included in the RTP and now warrant an update for the RTP to remain relevant and useful for PRTPO?

No new plans for regionally significant facilities or services have been introduced in the last two years.

b. Establish level of service for state highways of regional significance

Have changes been made to LOS standards on state highways of regional significance in the last two years that warrant a plan update for the RTP to remain relevant and useful for PRTPO?

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No changes have been made to established Level of Service standards on state highways of regional significance in the last two years.

c. Include a financial plan

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to the financial plan for the RTP to remain relevant and useful for PRTPO?

No significant changes to revenue sources or likely availability of project funds have occurred in the last two years that can be reasonably forecasted in the RTP.

d. Promote preservation and efficiency of existing system

Have any changes in the last two years reduced the RTP's support for system preservation and efficiency such that it needs to be updated to support PRTPO decision-making?

The RTP continues to emphasize the importance of system preservation and efficiency.

e. Regional transportation goals and objectives

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to any of the RTP goals and objectives for the RTP to remain relevant and useful for PRTPO?

PRTPO policy makers regularly use the RTP to inform on-going transportation planning and decision-making processes, to promote regional perspectives, to encourage partnerships and collaboration between local, state, and tribal governments, and to support public education and involvement. The current RTP supports Executive Board decisions about work program development (e.g. EV readiness, system resiliency), legislative priorities, and other regional transportation planning concerns relevant to PRTPO members.

f. Regional transportation strategy

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to the regional transportation strategy for the RTP to remain relevant and useful for PRTPO?

No changes to the transportation strategy or fundamental approach to coordinated regional transportation planning have been introduced in the last two years.

g. Needs, deficiencies, data requirements, and assumptions

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to any of these elements for the RTP to remain relevant and useful for PRTPO?

- Existing regional transportation facilities and services
- Identification of regional transportation needs
- Forecasts of future travel demand
- Future regional transportation system deficiencies
- Common regional assumptions used for modeling purposes

No significant changes have undermined the inventory and assessments of the existing RTP, nor have pronounced shifts in travel mode or demand materialized sufficiently to support any kind of long-range forecast update for the region.

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Have new performance monitoring metrics been identified to augment traffic volumes and vehicle miles of travel (VMT), which the RTP already includes?

No new regional performance metrics have been introduced in the last two years.

Have regional growth patterns changed sufficiently that the RTP is no longer consistent with local Comprehensive Plans?

No regionally significant changes to local land use plans were proposed in the last two years.

h. Least cost planning

Have significant changes occurred in the last two years that warrant updates to PRTPO's least cost planning approach for the RTP to remain relevant and useful for PRTPO?

PRTPO's advocacy for responsible, cost-effective strategies and investments, including emphasis on system preservation and multimodal efficiency, is still appropriate for the region.

2. Support for PRTPO Work Program and Decision-Making

The second test to demonstrate currency of the existing RTP is whether it adequately supports the Executive Board in developing the regional transportation work program and in its decision-making processes.

a. Work Program Support

Demonstration of how the RTP supports the on-going regional transportation work program is evident in the commitment PRTPO has made to RTP follow-up planning activities in the areas of climate response and system resilience.

- With its modest planning budget PRTPO is convening a diverse group of regional stakeholders in exploring and pre-positioning for grants to expand the region's capacity to support electric vehicles (EV) and other zero-emissions mobility options in the future.
- PRTPO established an online EV resource portal to support the work of its members and other agencies working to establish a regional network of charging facilities across the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas.
- PRTPO supports efforts of the WA Department of Fish & Wildlife in obtaining construction funds to elevate US 101 six feet over the Duckabush River estuary, restoring vital salmon habitat and increasing the seismic and inundation resilience of the vital US 101 route.

The RTP clearly provides guidance that supports practical and meaningful planning activities that are feasible within PRTPO's financially constrained work plan, the SFY 2022-2023 UPWP.

The UPWP also identifies some Unfunded Needs derived from the RTP that could be undertaken with additional resources, including efforts to enhance multimodal resilience, expand rural intercity bus travel, increase multimodal system safety, and innovations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in rural and small urban settings. These can all be traced back to recommendations and public input on the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan and will be pursued by PRTPO or other partners as funding allows. This further demonstrates the currency and usefulness of the 2040 RTP to PRTPO in identifying planning activities that can support regional planning objectives.

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b. Decision-making Support

Demonstration of how the RTP supports Executive Board decision-making is evident in the Transportation Outlook priorities PRTPO develops annually to educate legislators about regional concerns. Consistent with the RTP, Board priorities include stable and reliable funding for system preservation, support for ferry vessel replacement and operations, coordination with WSDOT to get funding support for important state projects, and more efficient use of existing resources. Funding concerns of local agencies reflected in the RTP drives PRTPO support for more efficient and flexible use of federal funds for small local projects. And the Board continues to promote support for EV readiness and system resilience as well as universal broadband access with its legislative delegation.

All projects identified in the 2022 Transportation Outlook are consistent with and supportive of the RTP. The Board has identified no regional policy concerns or priority project needs that conflict with or are inconsistent with the RTP. The RTP continues to adequately support Executive Board decision making and inform its communications and information outreach.

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DISCUSSION ITEM

To: PRTPO Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator
Date: November 11, 2021
Subject: **PRTPO Legislative Priority – Efficient Use of Federal Funds**

Purpose

The TAC is asked to discuss federal funding efficiency measures and whether there are priorities and other considerations for the Board as it initiates efforts to increase efficient use of federal funds.

Overview

On November 4th PRTPO Executive Board members met with Senator Rolfes (23rd), Representative Tharinger (24th), Representative Chapman (24th), and Representative Griffey (35th) for the region's annual legislative forum. Policy makers presented legislators with Transportation Outlook 2022 and discussed priorities and opportunities to work together.

Legislators found the need to increase efficient use of federal funds for small rural projects a compelling issue. Among themselves they agreed that this is an issue that warrants attention and that they can work together to address, and they asked for specific "fixes" they can pursue.

Chair Ashby requested input from the TAC on the measures identified a year ago, to inform what the Board presents to legislators. Specifically, the TAC is asked to revisit the measures approved by PRTPO and determine if there are any priorities or other strategic considerations the Board should make in preparation for legislative follow-up.

Federal Funding Flexibility for Local Agencies

Last year the TAC provided input on issues local agencies face in their use of federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds and helped vet various measures before they were presented to the Board. The attached white paper dated October 2020 describes the issues agencies face when working with small pots of federal funds and an array of measures to mitigate the impacts and inefficiencies. Note this is specific to STBG funds managed by Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason Counties, not Kitsap.

The preferred solution for many – an exchange of federal STBG funds for state funds – remains optimal, but as a solo endeavor it was deemed too big for PRTPO to take on itself though it may sign onto such an effort at the statewide level. Focus was directed to other useful strategies that would increase flexibility and efficiency in the use of federal STBG funds.

In October 2020 the Board accepted all three proposed measures to make the use of federal funds more efficient and cost-effective for small rural projects. The measures reflect modest but escalating levels of regional effort as well as potential commensurate benefits. Each supports PRTPO's commitment to making the most efficient use possible of existing transportation resources as a means of lessening revenue shortfalls member agencies face.

The first measure, not included here, was to grow the local knowledge base. To that end, PRTPO scheduled two training sessions in 2021 on managing federally funded projects and posted session videos online for wider viewing.

The other two measures seek to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness by increasing the level of federal funding available for project programming and reducing the number of small, federalized projects in the region.

- **Eliminate Arbitrary Urban/Rural Sub-allocation Targets.** Urban/rural sub-allocation funding targets for the rural STBG countywide allocations limit project selection and result in small, administratively inefficient federalized projects. This is a discretionary WSDOT requirement at this level, not a federal requirement. This measure would eliminate these sub-allocation targets for rural counties administering STGB funds.

- **Authorize Multi-Year Obligation Authority.** Multi-year funding allocations and obligations will generate a different array of projects for funding in rural processes than can be considered when only one year of funding is available. This measure would grant rural counties the opportunity to program and obligate anywhere from two to five years of the new federal funding program without regard for annual obligation limits.

Both measures have pros and cons, as discussed in the attached Federal Funding Flexibility brief from October 2020. Both measures have efficiency benefits for Local Programs, not just local agencies, and reduce waste in project administration.

Local Programs engineers advise putting no less than $500,000 of federal funds onto an infrastructure project, preferably much more to avoid inefficiencies of scale in project delivery and administrative costs. This is nearly impossible under current allocation rules. The table below shows how much each of the three counties is authorized to allocate and obligate on an annual basis and the effect of WSDOT's urban and rural sub-allocation targets on the project selection process.

County	Annual Funding Limit and Obligation Target	Annual Minimum Rural Distribution	Annual Minimum Urban Distribution	Annual Unrestricted Distribution (R or U)
Clallam	$1,100,000	$629,939 *(59%)*	$240,486 *(23%)*	$194,054 *(18%)*
Jefferson	$438,000	$125,542 *(29%)*	$213,885 *(49%)*	$99,402 *(22%)*
Mason	$800,000	$279,556 *(34%)*	$357,716 *(43%)*	$186,372 *(23%)*

TAC Input to Board Discussion

In December the Board will discuss which measure(s) to pursue during the 2022 legislative session. The Board will benefit from TAC insights. Questions the TAC might consider in its discussion:

- Should the Board consider one measure a priority measure to focus on, or are both worth putting on the table?
- Would either of these measures have benefit if somehow federal funds are swapped out for state funds?
- To date any discussion about funding flexibility has explicitly excluded Kitsap County agencies and focused only on federal funding in the three rural counties – is that still appropriate?
- Is there anything else the Board should consider when deciding how to engage legislators in obtaining greater federal funding flexibility for local agencies?

Over the next few weeks, we'll gage the interest of other rural RTPOs and their counties in this initiative. If it benefits other regions, there may be more statewide legislative support to bolster efforts of this region's legislators.

We'll also communicate with WSDOT about PRTPO's legislative priorities and present them with details of the measure(s) advanced by the Board. Ideally that is met with Local Programs support and follow-up coordination efforts are initiated. If not, PRTPO will work with the region's legislators and support their efforts to resolve inefficiencies in the federal STBG funding program affecting PRTPO members.

Attachment:

- *Federal Funding Flexibility for Local Agencies – PRPTO Exploration of Options [October 2020]*

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FEDERAL FUNDING FLEXIBILITY FOR LOCAL AGENCIES
PRTPO EXPLORATION OF OPTIONS

This staff analysis supports an evaluation by PRTPO's Executive Board of challenges local agencies face in their use of federal transportation funds and possible measures to reduce those impacts. The PRTPO Executive Board may pursue one or more actions that can improve conditions for local agencies facing small awards of federal funds for their transportation projects.

This paper is informed by two meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee. TAC members shared insights both on the challenges of using federal funds and the potential value of various measures to address those challenges. TAC insights shaped key findings for Board consideration and will continue to provide important contributions going forward.

KEY FINDINGS:

- **Grow Local Knowledge Base.** There is value to member staff if PRTPO hosts a professional training class with WSDOT Local Programs to review details of the federal project obligation and project delivery process, tips for ensuring a smooth process, issues that commonly trip up agencies and the implications, and resources.

  This would be a more in-depth version of a planned briefing with Local Programs which was cancelled in March at the outset of COVID-19. It would be developed in coordination with Olympic Region Local Programs staff and can include specific project questions or examples put forward by local agencies. This training would be most relevant for city and county staff in all four counties and would not be limited just to the TAC members. Zoom facilitates participation for members across the region.

- **Eliminate Unnecessary Barriers.** Eliminating the urban/rural sub-allocation funding targets associated with the small rural STBG countywide allocations would relieve a burden that counties and their transportation partners face and which limits project selection.

  The requirement of urban/rural funding targets at the rural county STBG allocation level is a WSDOT policy, not a federal policy. WSDOT does not need sub-allocation at the rural county level to meet its federally mandated statewide urban/rural minimum distributions. Unnecessary sub-allocation at this level hinders local project selection without accruing benefit to the state. PRTPO could pursue a change to this policy on behalf of its local members with some degree of confidence of a successful outcome but should expect initial lack of support. Local benefits would be greater flexibility in project selection.

- **Authorize Multi-Year Funding Allocations.** Multi-year funding allocations will generate a different array of projects for funding in rural county STBG processes than can be considered when only one year of funding is available.

  Full funding of a six-year transportation act for PRTPO's rural counties would enable them to program six years of funding at one time, if locally desired. This would enable consideration of projects currently not viable with one year's worth of funding while creating minimal effect on statewide obligation levels. Timing is beneficial; the current act expired September 30, 2020 and most likely will be replaced in the next year. PRTPO could pursue a change to this WSDOT policy on behalf of its local members with real but modest expectations of success and certain expectations of reluctance at WSDOT Headquarters. Local benefits in terms of project flexibility and predictability would be significant though some projects that competed successfully with limited funds may be disadvantaged in a larger pool of funds.

INTRODUCTION

Transportation revenues are generally categorized as three broad types: local, state, and federal. This review concerns federal transportation revenue. Specifically, it is about **Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)** funds managed by rural counties.

The purpose of this brief is to assess potential strategies PRTPO might pursue in support of greater flexibility in the use of those funds by its local members. The Executive Board will determine what efforts, if any, should be pursued.

Four potential measures have potential value to the region and its members and were discussed with the Technical Advisory Committee:

1. Eliminate Urban / Rural Funding Targets for Rural County STBG Allocations
2. Authorize Local Agencies to Program and Spend Ahead
3. Grant Rural Counties Full Funding Authority for the Next Transportation Act
4. Arrange Local Agency Training in STBG Project Obligation and Delivery Requirements

Each of these are discussed below. This paper also identifies a small number of important strategies that are not suitable for PRTPO to pursue now. It begins with a high-level overview of how the rural STBG funding program works and the challenges local agencies face, providing context for potential strategies.

OVERVIEW OF RURAL STBG FUNDING PROGRAM

Washington State receives federal funds which it then apportions to various purposes according to federal law. 23 US Code 133 describes the rules governing apportionment of STBG funds by state DOTs. Some of the rules WSDOT applies in the programming of STBG funds at the state level are directed by federal law and other rules are established by WSDOT, often in consultation with entities like Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO).

A mix of federal and state rules govern Washington's rural STBG funding program. Under WSDOT rules, PRTPO's three rural counties are responsible for administering STBG funds they are allocated by WSDOT[1] for this purpose. A variety of project sponsors are eligible to apply for and use these STBG funds, including counties and cities, tribes, transit agencies, ports, and others. Each county has a pre-determined amount of federal STBG revenue to award every year. That amount is based on a formula WSDOT develops in consultation with RTPOs through the statewide coordination process at the beginning of every new federal transportation act, as allocated on an annual basis.

> *Rural counties share the same responsibilities as MPOs in administering and managing STBG funds, though they don't receive federal planning funds for this purpose like MPOs do.*

Discussion in this brief is specific to Clallam, Jefferson, and Mason Counties because of their role in administering the STBG programs for their rural counties. Kitsap County participates under a different set of rules governing funding allocations and obligations that are applicable to urban regions over 200,000 in population. However, local jurisdictions in Kitsap County face many of the same challenges as their more rural counterparts in the use of federal funds, and potential flexibilities may benefit them as well.

[1] There is significant context and additional background on federal transportation funds and their use and management in Washington State that is not covered here. WSDOT's Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) Manual devotes a chapter to federal funding here, including rural county STBG responsibilities: https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/publications/manuals/fulltext/M36-63/Lag12.pdf

WSDOT has a long history of working with local and regional agencies and is interested in ensuring Washington State fulfills its federal funding requirements. WSDOT is committed to maximizing the efficient and productive use of transportation funds. Measures that PRTPO might pursue would support WSDOT in this effort.

FEDERAL FUNDING OF LOCALLY DETERMINED PRIORITIES IS COMPLICATED

The reason why PRTPO is investigating federal funding flexibility on behalf of its members is because of challenges associated with the use of STBG funds and how those challenges impact the ability of local agencies to deliver priority projects cost-effectively. These challenges are widely recognized and primarily affect cities and counties attempting to complete construction projects. Transit agencies typically have an easier time using federal funds.

Challenges affect various aspects of project selection and development, and greatly inform what projects local agencies can submit for funding consideration regardless of their priority needs.

- **STBG funds can be expensive to use.** STBG funding drives up construction costs by 15%-30% depending on project type and size and increases delivery time for many types of projects due to additional requirements associated with the use of those funds. This is true even for small or otherwise uncomplicated construction delivery projects. It is why TIB awards points to proposals that do not have federal funds. This is not true for other project types like bus purchases or planning studies which are more straightforward than construction projects.

- **Federal restrictions limit what can be done and where.** Restrictions on where STBG funds can be used and on what greatly influence what locals submit for funding regardless of their funding priorities. For example, with few exceptions STBG funds cannot be spent on local roads or rural minor collectors even if they are preservation priorities. And right-of-way acquired for new sidewalks, bike lanes, or roads must comply with inflexible federal certification requirements before construction expenditures can be authorized, even if the property was acquired long before the project was awarded federal funds.

- **Annual allocation amounts are too low to justify federalizing many priority projects.** Counties are authorized to allocate each year a limited amount of STBG funds on priority projects countywide. Low annual funding allocation in the rural counties ($438,000 for Jefferson, $800,000 for Mason, $1,100,000 for Clallam) limits the kinds of projects that can reasonably be done with federal funds and restricts what is submitted for prioritization.

- **Project awards must meet countywide rural and urban spending targets.** Counties must ensure STBG funds are allocated between urban and rural projects based on a formula from WSDOT. Federal policy is to ensure that STBG funds spent in Washington meet minimum statewide distributions between urban and rural areas, with the rest of funds eligible for spending anywhere. It is a WSDOT policy to apply statewide targets all the way down to the individual county level in rural regions. This means each PRTPO county must allocate every year a minimum amount of funds to federally classified rural facilities, a minimum amount to federally classified urban facilities, and the rest can be spent anywhere.

- **Counties must meet annual Obligation Authority targets or face funding sanctions.** In addition to awarding funds to priority projects, each county is responsible for ensuring annual countywide "obligation authority" targets are met. This is the amount of STBG funding countywide that must be obligated every year – that is, get under approved contract with WSDOT – and begin work. Annual Obligation Authority (OA) targets established by WSDOT equal each county's annual allocation amounts.

The ideal state is a steady flow of STBG funds from project selection through project delivery. WSDOT's updated 2020 OA Policy stipulates a penalty for counties that fail to meet their OA targets two years in a row, sanctioning unobligated amounts and distributing them elsewhere in the state. Sanctioned funds are not reimbursed at a later date.

The table below details how these annual funding limits and obligation targets, and rural/urban minimum distributions play out in each of the three affected counties.

County	Annual Funding Limit and Obligation Target	Annual Minimum Rural Distribution	Annual Minimum Urban Distribution	Annual Unrestricted Distribution (R or U)
Clallam	$1,100,000	$629,939 *(59%)*	$240,486 *(23%)*	$194,054 *(18%)*
Jefferson	$438,000	$125,542 *(29%)*	$213,885 *(49%)*	$99,402 *(22%)*
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- **Approval to "spend ahead" is uncertain and affects project selection.** Sometimes local agencies are allowed to spend ahead beyond their low annual funding allocations and other times they're not. This makes it hard for them to know with any certainty when they can tackle a larger project with these resources. For example, Jefferson County cannot program $750,000 towards a priority project unless there is certainty that obligation and reimbursement will not be limited to its $438,000 annual allocation.
- **Federal restrictions prohibit the use of local agency forces.** Rules prohibiting the use of local forces require a cumbersome approval process to modify and is on a project by project basis with no certainty of approval. This affects the kind of projects that agencies submit for funding consideration because it drives up the cost and delivery time of even simple preservation projects or pedestrian facilities. These are rigid federal rules with little opportunity to modify at the state or local level. They should inform local decisions about what projects to pursue for federal funding.

PRTPO CONSIDERATIONS GOING FORWARD

The Executive Board is interested in supporting greater flexibility in the use of federal funds by its members if there are feasible measures worth pursuit that will increase efficient use of STBG funds. The goal is to identify feasible strategies with a reasonable chance of success given PRTPO's resources, and to recognize which ones are not feasible despite having great value.

Strategies Too Big for PRTPO to Tackle

Two reasonable strategies have been discussed for some time and are actively promoted by some PRTPO members and others around the state.

- *Exchange federal STBG funds for unencumbered state funds, reducing project administration and delivery costs.* Even accepting 86.5 cents on the dollar to account for match requirements, many local agencies would come out ahead for many projects compared to constructing them with federal funds. WSDOT administrative burden would be greatly reduced by administering fewer federally funded projects statewide, delivering more mobility value for the traveling public.

- *Allow local agencies to negotiate with each other to buy-out or swap federal funds where it makes sense.* This concept would allow multiple agencies to negotiate federal funding exchanges that would concentrate their small amounts of STBG funds onto a single project via interlocal agreement, making project delivery more cost effective for the federally funded project and the buy-out projects, and reducing WSDOT administrative burden by managing fewer local projects.

These are both logical strategies with significant potential benefit for local agencies, helping them to keep administrative and project delivery costs down and generate more project value for the traveling public. There's also significant benefit to WSDOT in concentrating federal funds onto fewer, larger projects statewide, reducing the statewide cost of administering so many projects and putting more money into the project itself. Ten states have already established programs to defederalize funds for small local projects and effort is underway on the part of various stakeholder groups to develop suitable mechanisms for doing this in Washington, though WSDOT is not one of the partners.

Though they are important strategies, they are not ideal efforts for PRTPO to pursue independently on behalf of its members. PRTPO resources are dwarfed by what has already been directed to this by other efforts over the last several years. These ideas have been met with resistance from the Local Programs division of WSDOT Headquarters, which oversees federal funding. PRTPO might support those other efforts where appropriate, but it is beyond the region's capacity to pursue its own funding swap initiative.

Potential Strategies for PRTPO Pursuit

If local agencies were authorized to swap federal funds for unencumbered state funds, many challenges affecting STBG project funding and delivery could be eliminated. There are, however, a few things PRTPO might pursue on behalf of local agencies that are achievable and would benefit members in their use of STBG funds.

1. Eliminate Urban / Rural[2] Funding Targets for Rural County STBG Allocations

Federal law specifies that of the funds a state receives, a minimum amount must be spent on rural projects statewide and a minimum amount on projects in urban areas; the rest of the funds can be spent on either rural or urban projects. Federal law does not require that same level of granularity be applied all the way down to the rural county STBG allocation process. That is a WSDOT rule with negligible value to the state in meeting its federal statewide distribution requirements. For reference, the combined Clallam-Jefferson-Mason County annual allocations account for 1.6 percent of 2020 STBG funding targets for all MPO and county awards in the state, and less than one percent of statewide federal funding targets that include WSDOT projects in the other applicable funding programs. Washington does not need Mason County's STBG allocations to meet its rural and urban targets, or Jefferson County's or Clallam County's. In fact, all rural county STBG allocations *statewide* account for only 6.2% of Washington's federal funding associated with the STBG programs, so this could even be eliminated for all rural RTPO counties without impacting WSDOT's ability to meet its statewide totals.

- *How would this change county processes?* Each county could better program its funding on priority projects without creating even smaller pots of "rural funding" and "urban funding" within their already limited countywide allocations.

[2] For this purpose, rural refers to anything below 5,000 population and urban anything above it. For MPOs, there is further definition of urban areas between 50,000-200,000 and large urban areas greater than 200,000. Federal law is explicit about funding allocations to large urban areas over 200,000 but gives state DOTs great latitude how they work with smaller urban areas and rural areas.

- *What obstacles would have to be overcome?* Any change to the way WSDOT administers its federal program entails getting approval from the Local Programs division at Headquarters and that is certain to encounter strong resistance. However, this is a WSDOT policy interpretation, not a federal policy. It could be beneficial to engage WSDOT's Tribal and Regional Transportation Planning Office in this effort.

- *What would this entail for PRTPO?* This is one of the most straightforward efforts PRTPO could pursue, entailing a small number of letters or memos and likely a small number of meetings.

- *Likelihood of success?* As with any change whatsoever to WSDOT's federal funding program, PRTPO should expect initial resistance. However, this should be an easy win for WSDOT to make it easier for rural counties to program their small pots of federal STBG funds they are responsible for managing without any impact on the state's ability to meet its statewide urban and rural spending targets.

2. Authorize Local Agencies to Program and Spend Ahead

Annual obligation targets ensure mega projects in central Puget Sound do not obligate more than their fair share of STBG funds and restrict available funds to complete other projects statewide but that is not a risk for small local projects in rural areas. Authority to program STBG funds on a priority project in excess of a county's annual funding target is a way to overcome limitations associated with low annual funding amounts. This would have the effect of "accumulating funds" for bigger projects while keeping federal funds flowing. For example, a rural county might award 1½ years' worth of STBG funds to a project for obligation this year and the remaining funds next year. We are talking about very small numbers in terms of the state's federal funding capacity on an annual basis. While no special mechanisms should be needed to do this, it is possible to come up with one or more mechanisms to formalize this process, if necessary, to get WSDOT approval. An alternate approach follows.

- *How would this change county processes?* Each county would have more flexibility to identify priority projects that require more than its annual funding limit, effectively committing some of its future funding to that project without having to resort to Advance Construction procedures. Importantly, that project could move to obligation without concern about bumping up against the County's annual limit.

- *What obstacles would have to be overcome?* PRTPO would need to get approval from WSDOT Local Programs at Headquarters. WSDOT develops its own rules pertaining to rural county obligation authority. PRTPO is not likely to receive a receptive initial response but the numbers are in its favor.

- *What would this entail for PRTPO?* This would entail letters or memos, and at least a few meetings. It would likely take some back and forth to get past initial opposition. PRTPO should expect resistance, especially if rural counties are having difficulty keeping up with current obligation targets.

- *Likelihood of success?* Key is coming up with something simple and straightforward for counties and for WSDOT. The more complex the mechanism for enabling this, the less likely it is to get WSDOT support. For that reason, the following strategy - though more ambitious – may have more potential.

3. Grant Rural Counties Full Funding Authority for the Next Transportation Act

On September 30, the federal FAST Act that has been in place since late 2015 expired. A year-long Continuing Resolution has been put into place until a new federal transportation bill is passed, and may be extended if necessary. The next bill is likely to look a lot like the FAST Act and every transportation bill preceding it back to 1991. PRTPO should expect the next act to continue the federal STBG program with minimal change and to be 4-

6 years in length. PRTPO could begin working now to get WSDOT support for giving the three rural counties their full federal funding authority at the beginning of that new act instead of doling it out year by year in small amounts. This would enable each county to conduct one or two larger processes early in the new funding bill, if desired. For example, instead of allocating $438,000 a year, Jefferson County might conduct a single process to program $2.6 million instead, awarding all six years of funding to projects in a single process. The range of projects that could be considered in this scenario will be quite different than when $438,000 is available. This could only work because rural county allocations are so low that even six years of funding at one time is not much compared to the state's annual federal funding authority. However, it would also entail greater accountability in the countywide processes to get any support from WSDOT.

- *How would this change county processes?* Each county would have more flexibility in developing its funding program to best meet countywide needs. Key would be for counties to know at the beginning of the new act what their multi-year funding is and move early to launch their allocation processes. Under this scenario it would be vitally important that selected projects obligate and proceed as planned.

- *What obstacles would have to be overcome?* PRTPO would need approval from WSDOT, preferably before the next act is finalized. This will take some time under the best of circumstances but if PRTPO waits until after the next act is passed, WSDOT Local Programs cannot be expected to take the question up due to lack of time. Expect WSDOT concerns that rural counties will not conduct their allocation processes in a timely manner and selected projects will not proceed as planned. WSDOT will worry that rural counties will default on delivering their projects. There will likely be a close evaluation of allocation and obligation track records of each county over the last several years.

- *What would this entail for PRTPO?* This would entail letters or memos, and likely a couple of meetings to get some traction in the right offices. Expect a bit more coordination between PRTPO, local agencies, and WSDOT to formalize an agreement if this is successful. This is another good opportunity to engage the Tribal and Regional Transportation Planning Office. They are looking for ways to support rural RTPOs, including in the federal funding process. As with the previous strategy, PRTPO should expect firm resistance initially, especially if local partners have difficulty keeping up with funding and OA targets even though those small dollar amounts are often the problem. Strategically, this would be a logical opening request if looking for multi-year agreement with the smaller two-year authorization described above as a fallback strategy.

- *Likelihood of success?* Though it is more sweeping than the previous "spend ahead" strategy, tying this one to authorization of the next act may be strategically advantageous if PRTPO initiates efforts during the year-long Continuing Resolution phase that just started. It is simple and straightforward from a WSDOT perspective. Likelihood of success is higher if interested counties can commit to two implementation milestones: conduct the first (or possibly only) allocation process by a date certain (e.g. 1 year from receiving the new funding allocations), and fully obligate all projects within a certain time period (e.g. 4 years). That would give WSDOT assurance of local commitment as well as benchmarks for everyone to know that everything is on track. It would also leave local agencies in a position to receive additional STBG funds if any come to the state late in the next act, as they did in 2019.

4. Arrange Local Agency Training in STBG Project Obligation and Delivery Requirements

Staff at WSDOT Local Programs-Olympic Region work with local agencies across the region in reviewing and approving their obligation submittal packages, processing expenditure reimbursements, closing out projects,

and more. Local Programs staff know there is a lot of back and forth with jurisdictions trying to get their projects obligated because obligation packages are often inaccurate or incomplete. Project obligation is a rigorous, time-consuming process. WSDOT rejects any project prospectus that is incomplete or includes any inaccuracies, resulting in more time, expense, and frustration for local agencies before projects can get started. They see local issues with project closeout procedural requirements that regularly leave agencies with expenses that cannot be reimbursed simply because of the closeout date on the original project prospectus. With some appropriate scheduling and coordination logistics, PRTPO can arrange for a professional training session for local agency staff responsible for submitting obligation packages and complying with federal project delivery requirements. A similar but less comprehensive overview of federal funding requirements was planned for the TAC meeting in mid-March but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

- *How would this change county processes?* This would not necessarily result in changes to county allocation processes, but better knowledge of the whole process might influence what projects are submitted for funding and inform local agency commitments about obligation deadlines.
- *What obstacles would have to be overcome?* PRTPO would need to organize this with WSDOT Local Programs-Olympic Region. These are the people that local agency staff work with on a regular basis to get their projects approved and completed. Zoom facilitates this in many ways, but it would need to accommodate the schedule of Local Programs staff and the format demanded by the times.
- *What would this entail for PRTPO?* This is the most straightforward effort PRTPO could pursue, entailing no changes to WSDOT Local Programs policies or procedures. Doing it in conjunction with or in advance of any other strategies would demonstrate regional commitment to making the federal funding process work better for everyone.
- *Likelihood of success?* This would benefit any local agency staff that work with STBG and many other federal funds. For those who are new to working with federal funds, it will provide essential background and contacts. Those with a lot of experience almost always learn something new and can provide real-world insights to those who are getting up to speed.

Technical Advisory Committee Considerations

In its discussion of potential strategies and their relative merits, TAC members found training to be a universal need with sweeping benefit regardless of any other pursuits.

Eliminating the urban / rural targets would likely be easier than getting support for multiple years of funding and would be beneficial.

Getting approval to program and obligate the full funding authority allocated in the next transportation act would generate the greatest flexibility to local agencies, assuming that federal funds must be used. Full funding for the next act is a worthy objective, with the two-year funding authority a suitable fallback position.

Though it is bigger than PRTPO can tackle, the measure with the greatest benefit to local agencies and which would eliminate need for the other measures would be to swap federal funds for unencumbered state funds.

For More Information

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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

Squaxin Island Tribe

Skokomish Tribe

www.PRTPO.org

To our legislators in the 23rd, 24th, 26th, and 35th Districts,

Thank you for your support through difficulties and uncertainties this past year. As ex officio members of Peninsula RTPO and valued state partners, your support helps ensure projects and policy objectives that benefit mobility on the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas get fair consideration at the state level. Regional collaboration and cooperation make PRTPO strong. Our partnership with you is important to our success.

We see some key opportunities on the near horizon where we can work together to benefit communities across the region.

- **Support for a fair and balanced transportation revenue package**
  Cities and counties haven't had an increase in their share of direct gas tax revenue – the only non-competitive state revenue they receive for transportation – since 2005-06. And our transit agencies provide essential rural mobility, lifeline, and intercity bus service on shoestring budgets. Our members must compete for useful but unpredictable grants to support core programs as well as major improvements and retrofits. Let's mitigate those effects and create more sustainable, predictable local revenue streams with a comprehensive multimodal transportation revenue package.

- **Advocate for more WSDOT input earlier in the funding process**
  Our regional transportation system depends on the state highway and ferry system. WSDOT has discretion over just 16% of gas tax collected. This is not enough to do the preservation and retrofits to ensure facilities continue to function as intended and avoid expensive disruptions. WSDOT is not at the table when big funding decisions are made. We support participation by the Secretary of Transportation early and often during legislative discussions about transportation revenue.

- **Harness a rare opportunity presented by Federal infrastructure packages**
  We have long faced severe funding deficits for core programs and project needs. An unprecedented infusion of federal funds can kickstart action on large projects and support important local, state, and tribal needs that have languished for lack of funding. We have both. The PRTPO can be a partner in helping identify multimodal project and programmatic needs for the legislature to consider for these new funds and vet potential delivery mechanisms to ensure rural equity and efficiency.

- **Make better use of existing transportation revenue**
  Washington requires rural counties to allocate small amounts of federal funds to priority projects across jurisdictions. This is an inefficient use of existing revenue. Small pots of federal funds inflate local project costs and slow delivery. It increases WSDOT Local Programs administration and overhead. Swapping federal funds with state funds for small local projects is smart and efficient and is standard practice in other states. We want to help you make it standard practice here, too.

These are priority areas where we can work together to make a difference for our communities. Action in these areas will have ripple effects throughout the region as communities have more certainty about transportation funding and can prioritize and budget in ways that keep life cycle costs low while making efficient use of scarce resources.

There are other regional concerns we will track with interest this session.

- We continue to **advocate for completion of *Connecting Washington* projects** and the funding commitments made to local, state, and tribal projects back in 2015. The SR 3 Freight Corridor / Belfair Bypass project is a case in point. Let's complete this project and keep these long-standing commitments to our local communities and the traveling public.

- **Ferry vessel replacement is essential** to the safe and reliable operation of our marine highway system. Over half of all ferry trips begin or end in the Peninsula Region. Old vessels and deferred maintenance have led to service disruptions felt by business, freight, individual travelers, and the ferry terminal communities themselves. Effective state action can grow state revenues and tap new federal funding to get more vessel replacements underway.

- We are coordinating with stakeholders throughout the Olympic and Kitsap Peninsulas to **expand EV readiness of our rural routes.** Rural communities have the same needs for electric vehicle infrastructure as urban communities but lack the densities, resources, and economies of scale of those places. For Washington to meet its EV goals, and for the Peninsula region to keep up, we need charging stations all along US 101 and other key regional corridors.

- We need to **improve the resilience of our regional transportation system** and the communities it serves. Olympic and Kitsap Peninsula geographies limit us to just a few critical lifeline routes. A disruption on one is felt throughout the region. Innovative partnerships and projects, like elevating a stretch of US 101 six feet as part of Fish & Wildlife's Duckabush Estuary Restoration project, help us better withstand future shocks and adapt to a changing world while also restoring critical habitat.

PRTPO is pleased to see **broadband access** getting the attention and funding it deserves. This is what can happen when local, regional, state, and federal agencies along with their private sector partners lean into an issue of such paramount importance. We appreciate your support in ensuring communities throughout the Peninsula region are not overlooked during rollout of these investment programs.

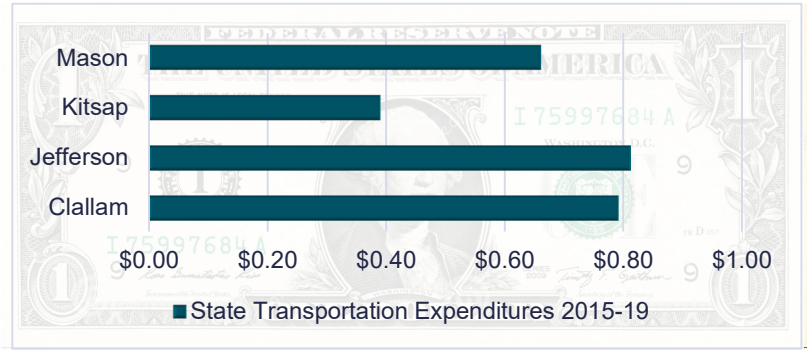
The work we face is daunting but doable with your continued support and partnership. We look forward to working with you to improve mobility throughout the Peninsula region and keep travel safe, reliable, and sustainable.

Peninsula RTPO Key Contacts
www.PRTPO.org

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PRTPO Coordinator, LPA	Edward Coviello	edwardc@kitsaptransit.com	360.824.4919

Residents Pay More than Their Fair Share

For every dollar residents paid in state transportation taxes and fees from 2015-2019, they only got back anywhere from 81¢ to just 39¢ in state transportation investments.

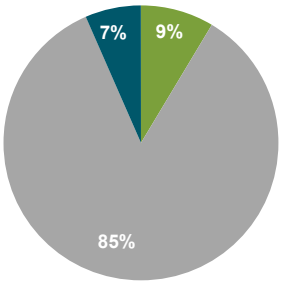


Source: WSDOT 2019 County by County Analysis, 2015-2019 Historical Analysis

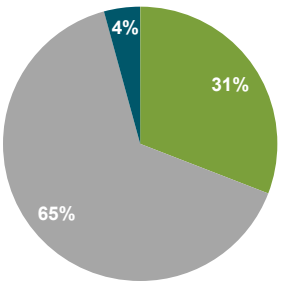
Lifeline Services Expensive to Provide

Demand-response services are a lifeline for our most vulnerable residents and, on a per-trip basis, are also the most expensive service provided by transit. **Reliable funding for rural mobility and intercity bus travel ensures people with special mobility needs can access essential services.**

Share of Transit Trips



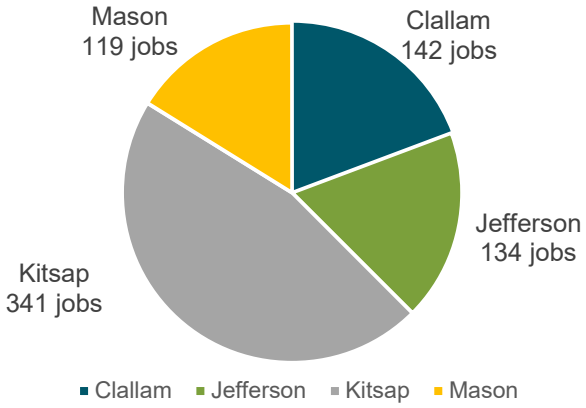
Share of Operating Expense



Source: National Transit Database, 2017 data for Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, and Mason Transit.

Transportation Projects = Jobs

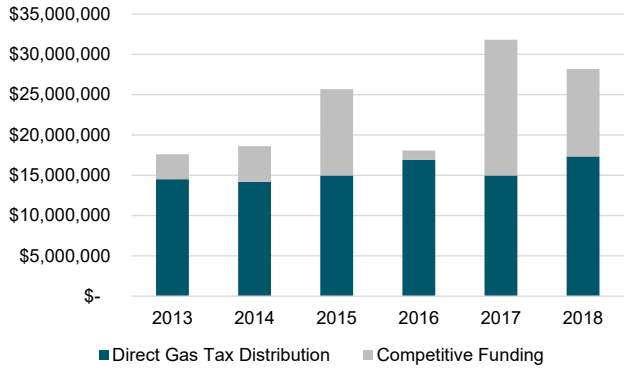
This chart shows the estimated growth in 2018-19 jobs, by county, attributed to WSDOT transportation investments.



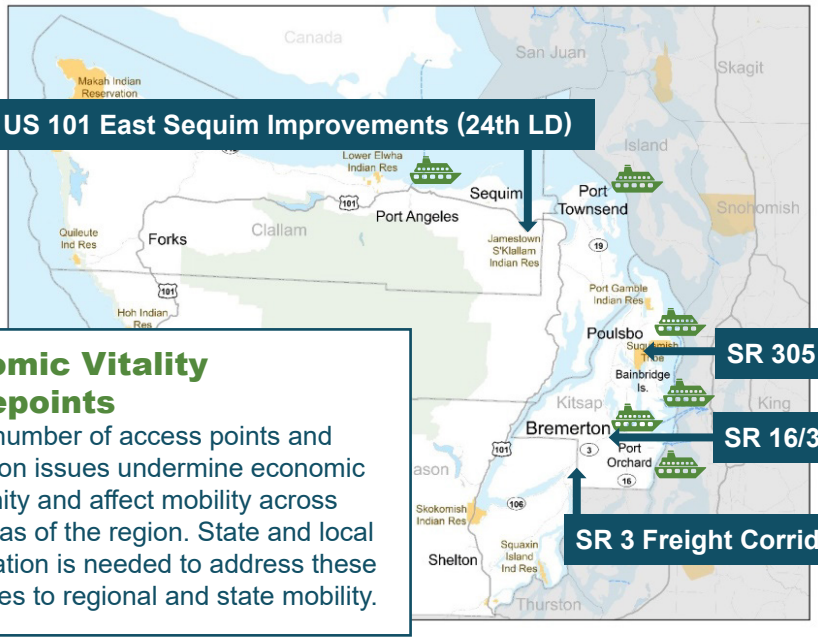
Source: WSDOT 2019 County by County Analysis - Return per dollar contributed by citizens within each county, state and federal transportation funds – 2019 analysis

Roller Coaster Budgets for Locals

Local agencies must rely on competitive grants for a large share of their transportation revenue. Agencies need more funding discretion. **Local agency shares of gas tax distribution haven't increased since 2005-06.**



Source: County Road and City Street Revenues and Expenditures, for Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, and Mason Counties and their respective cities.



Essential Marine Highway System

The majority of ferry trips in Washington begin or end in our region and the Coho is an international gateway for the State. This marine highway system is essential to our regional mobility and economic health.

Economic Vitality Chokepoints

A small number of access points and congestion issues undermine economic opportunity and affect mobility across wide areas of the region. State and local collaboration is needed to address these challenges to regional and state mobility.

Transportation Outlook 2022
Peninsula RTPO Investment Priorities

Project	Agency	LD#	PRTPO Priority Project Characteristics: Multiple Modes	Shovel-ready	Economic Chokepoint	System Preservation	Improve Safety	Special Needs Mobility	Increase Resiliency	Connecting WA	Local TIP	Total Cost	Already Secured
SR 104 Kingston Congestion Mitigation *Realign and improve SR 104 and holding capacity, manage ferry traffic in Kingston*	Kitsap County	23	*	*	*		*	*			*	$20 M	$2.76 M
Noll Road Corridor Improvements *Three phases of corridor projects will improve multimodal mobility, increase system safety, and improve traffic flow along SR 305 corridor*	Poulsbo	23	*		*		*		*	*	*	$28.3 M	$21.4 M
Elwha River Bridge Replacement *Replace deficient 1926 bridge with new structure designed to current standards*	Clallam County	24	*	*		*			*		*	$30.3 M	$30.3 M
Olympic Discovery Trail - Forks to La Push *Complete next 13 mile segment of ODT connecting Forks to La Push and the Quileute Nation, Olympic National Park coastal trailheads*	Clallam County	24	*				*	*	*		*	$21 M	$7.6 M
SR 19 Chimacum Rhody Drive Ped-Bike Improvements *Build Safe Routes to School and active transportation facilities on a Tourist Corridor from Anderson Lake Rd to Beaver Valley Rd*	Jefferson County	24	*	*			*	*	*		*	$1.7 M	$0.3 M
Olympic Discovery Trail - Larry Scott Trail to US101 S Discovery Bay *Construct accessible 10.12 mile segment of the ODT and Pacific NW National Scenic Trail systems (East Olympic Peninsula)*	Jefferson County	24	*				*	*	*		*	$15.6 M	$3.8 M
Peabody Creek/Lincoln Street Culvert Repair *Critical culvert repair to minimize potential for collapse and property damage, and improve fish passage*	Port Angeles	24		*		*	*		*		*	$3.5 M	$0.3 M
SR 20 Improvements at Mill Road and at Kearny Road *Joint project with WSDOT to replace signals and improve SR 20 intersections at Mill Road and at Kearny Road.*	Port Townsend	24	*				*				*	$1.7 M	
US 101 East Sequim Corridor *Complete Simdars Rd/US 101 interchange, build frontage road connector*	Sequim	24	*		*		*		*		*	$37 M	$1.9 M
SR 112 Repair and Repaving Project - Clallam Bay to Neah Bay *Complete repairs and repaving of 23 mile state highway from Clallam Bay to Neah Bay, the only road access to the Makah Reservation*	WSDOT / Makah Nation	24	*	*		*	*	*	*			$30 M	
Bay Street Pedestrian Pathway *Complete pathway construction between Port Orchard Boulevard and Annapolis ferry terminals for 1.2 mile waterfront pathway*	Port Orchard	26	*	*			*	*			*	$3.0 M	$3.0 M
Sedgwick Rd/SR 160 Corridor Improvements *Design and construct near-term improvements described in WSDOT's 2018 SR 16 Corridor Congestion Relief Study.*	Port Orchard	26	*		*		*		*		*	$6.0 M	
SR 3/16 Gorst Project - Resiliency, Mainline Capacity, & Non-Motorized Connectivity *Improve SR 3/16 in Gorst*	Kitsap County	26, 35	*		*		*		*			$425 M	
7th Street Preservation and Signal Upgrade - Alder to Park Street *Pavement preservation project with a signal upgrade at 7th and Railroad Avenue*	Shelton	35	*		*	*	*				*	$1.5 M	
SR 3 Freight Corridor *(Belfair Bypass)* *Construct new corridor parallel to SR 3 in Belfair, providing alternate route and improved freight access*	Mason County	35	*		*		*		*	*	*	$66.9 M	$66.9 M

Pavement Preservation and Transit State of Good Repair

PRTPO stands with its local, state, and tribal partners in emphasizing the need for adequate funding to preserve and maintain the existing transportation system - streets and highways, bridges, ferry terminals and vessels, transit infrastructure, trails and pathways, sidewalks, and technology. Existing revenues are insufficient to maintain a State of Good Repair which increases the funding deficit.