

**PRTPO TECHNICAL ADVISORY
COMMITTEE MEETING**

September 17, 2020 | 10 AM – 12 PM

**Remote Meeting by Zoom Video
Conferencing**

**Information found on Second Page of the
Agenda**

10:00	Chair's Welcome and Introductions	
10:05 – 10:10	Approval of Agenda Approval of Minutes from July 16, 2020 (Attachment)	ACTION <i>Chair Clark-Getzin</i>
10:15 – 10:20	Review and Recommendation of the 2021-2026 RTIP to the Executive Board (Attachment) <i>The Draft 2021 -2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is in the 45-day public review and comment period. The TAC may provide comments. https://prtpo.kitsaptransit.com/publications.htm</i>	DISCUSSION <i>PRTPO Coordinators</i>
10:20 – 10:40	Review of Regional Strategies to Support Federal Funding Flexibility (Attachment) <i>The Executive Board requested input from the TAC on one or more strategies that PRTPO might pursue to increase federal funding flexibility for local agencies. The TAC is asked to weigh in on some proposed measures.</i>	DISCUSSION <i>PRTPO Coordinators</i>
10:40 – 11:00	Project List Development for 2021 Legislative Information Package (Attachment) <i>In August, the Executive Board requested input from the TAC on a project list to include as part of PRTPO's legislative outreach package. The TAC will review the draft list and help refine key messages.</i>	DISCUSSION <i>PRTPO Coordinators</i>
11:00 – 11:15	2040 RTP Follow-up Strategies – Assessing Range of PRTPO Opportunities (Attachment) <i>This is the first of two discussions to review follow-up needs for the 2040 RTP and propose suitable work program activities for the Board to consider.</i>	DISCUSSION <i>PRTPO Coordinators</i>
11:15 – 11:45	Update on the SR 3 Freight Corridor Project – WSDOT briefing (Attachment) <i>This briefing will update the TAC on this Connecting Washington project that is constructing a new regionally significant, limited access corridor in Belfair.</i>	DISCUSSION <i>Michele Britton, WSDOT</i>

11:45 – 11:50 **Update on the Consolidated Grants Ranking Process**
WSDOT's Consolidated Grants process kicked off in July. This update will inform the TAC on that process and what to expect from PRTPO's regional ranking process.

DISCUSSION
PRTPO Coordinators

11:50 – 12:00 **Member Updates and Adjourn**

DISCUSSION
Chair Clark-Getzin

Remote Zoom Meeting Information

PRTPO TAC Meeting – Zoom Login

Topic: PRTPO TAC Meeting - 10:00 - 12:00

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3608780353?pwd=MFQvOHpjdENsMjdCQ3BEEdFBKSHcxUT09>

Meeting ID: 360 878 0353

Passcode: 4780

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,3608780353# US (Tacoma)

Dial by your location

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 360 878 0353

Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization

TAC Meeting Summary

Meeting Location:

Remote Meeting via Zoom software per Washington Governors order #20-28 of the Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request

July 16, 2020

Attendees

Technical Advisory Committee Member

Penni Giles Restivo, Squaxin Island Tribe
David Peterson, Port Townsend
Debbie Clemen, WSDOT Olympic Region
Melissa Mohr, Kitsap County
Davis Forte, Kitsap County
Michael Bateman, Poulsbo
Jonathan Boehme, City of Port Angeles
Dick Taylor, Port of Shelton
Ken Gil, Shelton
Steve Gray, Clallam County
Sara Crouch, Jefferson Transit
Steffani Lillie, Kitsap Transit
TAC Chair, Wendy Clark-Getzin, Jefferson County

Staff/Guests

Edward Coviello, Kitsap Transit / PRTPO Coordinator
Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator

Welcome & Introductions

TAC Chair Wendy Clark-Getzin opened the meeting and initiated self-introductions around the table.

Approval of the July 16th 2020 TAC Agenda and the May 21st TAC Meeting Minutes

The TAC approved, with a motion from member Taylor and seconded, the agenda and draft minutes from the May 21st meeting.

SFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

PRTPO Coordinator Thera Black provided a summary of the approved UPWP and the task elements within. Coordinator Black highlighted the upcoming WSDOT Consolidated Grant program. There was discussion about the PRTPO Title VI Plan and possible changes since the lead agency change over in 2019. Coordinator Coviello noted that the PRTPO has a different Title VI role than a project sponsor may have. Rather, PRTPO has an oversight role of regional planning processes. Chair Clark-Getzin expressed the importance of Title VI responsibilities for the PRTPO. A rich dialogued followed about the UPWPs role and future processes.

Legislative Agenda Work Group

Chair Clark-Getzin explained that the Executive Board called for the creation of a working group to develop a Legislative Agenda for PRTPO for the upcoming Legislative session in 2021. The Work Group will meet to develop an agenda addressing PRTPO member transportation goals, highlight the needs and funding gaps in the Region. Coordinator Black introduced the Work Groups role in relation to the timing of the next Legislative session in early 2021. Several TAC members are on the Work Group. Online polling has been developed to allow PRTPO members to provide suggestions for the Group. Chair Clark-Getzin expressed that the Work Group members had a well-balanced discussion about sources of revenue for local governments. The Chair noted that safety, preservation and maintenance are top goals from the State's prospective. The TAC members provided context about the current Legislative landscape. The PRTPO staff explained that the PRTPO staff is not lobbying on behalf of the members of the RTPO but rather providing coordination of the member's messages for the Legislative handout document.

Regional Support for Local Funding Flexibility

Coordinator Black outlined to the TAC the idea of PRTPO pursuing some flexibility for local agencies in their STBG funding processes overseen by the WSDOT. The Executive Board is interested in the TAC's viewpoint whether this is a worthwhile pursuit for PRTPO. Members shared details of the four county processes in place for identifying STBG funding priorities. Each process is different and reflects local interests. Members then discussed various challenges they face in using STBG funds and how it impacts their processes. Though details varied, issues associated with the following challenges were familiar to all: not enough money to federalize most projects; federal constraints and funding levels severely restrict the projects that agencies submit for funding; project costs and schedules increase when federal funds are added to projects; getting through the obligation process is cumbersome; urban / rural distributions exacerbate issues by further dividing the already small funding allocations for rural counties; it is difficult to get approval to use local forces on simple projects; if counties "program ahead" there is uncertainty whether WSDOT will allow projects to spend ahead. There was general agreement that most of these issues would go away if federal funds could be swapped for state funds. Clallam County and Port Angeles have actively pursued this for several years but have not gotten anywhere with WSDOT. Chair Clark-Getzin observed the urban/rural distributions work out to Jefferson Transit's advantage. Transit agencies provide a backstop in county processes since they can use federal funds easier than municipalities. Members acknowledged there may be some measures PRTPO can pursue that would be useful, but more work is needed to better understand those options. Coordinator Black

advised she will brief the Board in August. She will share insights from this discussion and ask for direction to explore promising measures in more detail with the TAC before presenting the Board with specific strategies to pursue. She expects to return to the TAC in September for a follow-up discussion.

2021-2026 RTIP/STIP Update

Coordinator Coviello briefed the TAC about the upcoming RTIP project submittal deadline of August 1st. The RTIP will be brought back to the TAC at its September meeting for review and comment. The RTIP is currently on the Executive Board agenda for October.

Human Services Transportation Plan Review

Coordinator Coviello provided an announcement of the upcoming WSDOT Consolidated Grants that provide funds for rural transit and human services capital and operations expenses. He noted that the current HSTP has a list of providers in the Region and that he would like to know of any missing providers who may be eligible to for the Grant Program.

Member Updates and Adjourn

Chair Clark-Getzin closed the meeting.

ACTION ITEM

To: PRTPO Technical Advisory Committee
From: Edward Coviello
Subject: **Recommendation of the 2021-2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program**

REQUESTED ACTION:

Recommend the 2021-2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program to the Executive Board for approval at its October 16, 2020 meeting.

Overview

One of PRTPO's annual responsibilities is to develop a six-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) in cooperation with WSDOT, local jurisdictions, and transit agencies.¹ The RTIP is effectively a compilation of all the locally adopted six-year TIPs and WSDOT's TIP into a single Regional TIP.

Certain projects in the first four years of the Regional TIP move automatically into the Statewide TIP (STIP) by virtue of their inclusion in the RTIP. Those projects include:

- a) Local agency or transit projects that have any federal funds AND are funding secured for that phase
- b) All WSDOT projects

Inclusion in the STIP is a prerequisite for agencies before they can obligate federally funded projects obtained through a grant or an earmark, and inclusion in the RTIP is a prerequisite for inclusion in the STIP. Obligation is the process of getting federal funds that have been *awarded* to a project *committed* to that project contractually for ten years and is a critical step in securing federally funded projects.

Other local projects in the first four years of the RTIP don't move automatically to the STIP. This includes any local projects showing only local or state funds, or those showing federal funds, but the projects are still planned and not yet secured. Inclusion in the RTIP for those projects anticipating federal funds is good because they can be amended into the required STIP more efficiently if they receive funds unexpectedly. It takes longer to add brand new projects to the STIP if they receive federal funds when they have not already been vetted through local, regional, and state TIP reviews.

The report can be found on the PRTPO website at: <https://prtpo.kitsaptransit.com/publications.htm>

Upon the Board's approval the RTIP will be forwarded to WSDOT where it will be aggregated with those from other RTPOs across the state, and a STIP derived as described above.

For More Information:

Edward Coviello | 360.824.4919 | EdwardC@KitsapTransit.com

¹ [RCW 47.80\(5\)](#)

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black
Date: September 10, 2020
Subject: **Review of Regional Strategies to Support Federal Funding Flexibility**

REQUESTED ACTION:

No action is requested. This item is for your discussion and feedback.

Overview

In July the TAC shared insights on challenges associated with the use of federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds and ways in which those challenges impact project selection and delivery. TAC members noted that there may be opportunities for PRTPO to support local agencies in the use of these funds.

We presented this information to the Executive Board for its consideration in August. The Board expressed interest in further follow-up to determine what specific measures, if any, PRTPO might pursue and directed staff to work with the TAC in exploring options in some detail.

The attached briefing paper is developed for this purpose. It summarizes for a non-technical audience key issues associated with the use of STBG funds to help policy makers understand why changes may be warranted. It identifies some familiar strategies and explains why they are not feasible at this time, and then outlines four strategies that may be feasible. Only one is a sure bet, though each of the other three have merit and some degree of likelihood or else they would not have been presented.

Underlying all of this is recognition that WSDOT Local Programs is working to manage the state's federal resources as efficiently and wisely as possible. So are local agencies. This regional evaluation is an effort to identify strategies that can help WSDOT and locals, both, to succeed in those efforts and maximize mobility benefits to the traveling public.

The TAC is asked to discuss measures presented in the briefing paper and any other plausible strategies that may have been overlooked. Input from the TAC provides useful insights to help the Board understand how agencies might be affected by various strategies and whether they are worthwhile efforts. Many of you are directly involved in managing and delivering STBG projects, or administering the countywide programs. Your perspectives are valuable.

We are particularly interested in hearing how similar or different TAC member perspectives are on the various strategies presented here and which, if any, would have benefit for local project delivery.

We'll brief the Board in October and seek direction on specific follow-up activities they may want to pursue.

Attachment:

- *Federal Funding Flexibility for Local Agencies – PRTPO Exploration of Options (working draft)*

For More Information:

Thera Black | 360.878.0353 | TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org

FEDERAL FUNDING FLEXIBILITY FOR LOCAL AGENCIES – PRTPO EXPLORATION OF OPTIONS *(WORKING DRAFT)*

Transportation revenues generally come from three key sources: local, state, and federal. This briefing paper is about federal transportation revenue. Specifically, it is about Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds managed by rural counties. The purpose of this brief is to provide background on potential strategies that PRTPO might consider in support of greater flexibility in the use of those funds by its local members.

Four potential measures may have value to the region and its members:

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, as well as other important strategies that are not suitable for PRTPO to pursue at this time. An high level overview of how the rural STBG funding program works and the challenges local agencies face provide 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 others.

A mix of federal and state rules govern Washington's rural STBG funding program. Under WSDOT rules, the Region's three rural counties are responsible for administering STBG funds they are allocated by WSDOT¹ for this purpose. A variety of project sponsors are eligible to apply for and use these 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.

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.

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.

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>

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. 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 most 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 in accordance with a formula provided by WSDOT. Federal policy is to ensure that STBG funds spent in Washington meet minimum statewide distributions between urban and rural areas. It is a WSDOT policy to apply statewide targets all the way down to the individual county level in rural regions. This means that 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%)
Mason	\$800,000	\$279,556 (34%)	\$357,716 (43%)	\$186,372 (23%)

- **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.

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. TAC input to the Board’s decision is important to help understand the viability and benefit of potential measures. Some strategies are naturally more complex or risky than others. This evaluation is to identify feasible strategies with a reasonable chance of success given PRTPO’s resources for Board consideration.

Strategies Too Big for PRTPO to Tackle

One possible strategy that came up when the TAC discussed this in July pertains to getting more flexibility in the use of local forces for straightforward projects like preservation since this would stretch resources further. In talking with Brian Moorehead at WSDOT Local Programs-Olympic Region in preparation for the TAC discussion, it was clear it would be very difficult for PRTPO to succeed in this regard. This is very inflexible at the federal level with little room for interpretation at the state level and applies to other funding programs beyond STBG.

Two other 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 some projects compared to constructing them with federal funds.

- *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 one a single projects via interlocal agreement, making project delivery more cost effective for the federally funded project and the buy-out project.

These are both logical strategies with significant potential to benefit local agencies, helping them to keep administrative and project delivery costs down and generate more project value for the traveling public. Ten states have already established programs to defederalize funds for small local projects and effort is underway on the part of stakeholders to develop suitable mechanisms to do this in Washington.

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 is already being directed to this by others. 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, most of the challenges affecting STBG project funding and delivery would be eliminated. There are, however, a few things that PRTPO might pursue on behalf of local agencies that are achievable and would have member benefit in their use of STBG funds.

1. Eliminate Urban / Rural² 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 these programs and so this could probably even be done for all rural RTPO counties without impacting statewide totals.

- *How would this change county processes?* Each county could program its funding on priority projects without creating even smaller pots of "rural funding" and "urban funding" within their limited countywide allocations.
- *What obstacles would have to be overcome?* PRTPO would need to get approval from WSDOT Local Programs at Headquarters as this is a WSDOT policy, not a federal policy. It could be beneficial to engage the Tribal and Regional Transportation Planning Office in this effort.

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 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 couple of meetings.
- Likelihood of success? This should be an easy win for WSDOT to make it easier for rural counties to program the 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 "aggregating 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 warm initial response.
- What would this entail for PRTPO? This would entail letters or memos, and at least a couple of 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 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 will expire. It will be replaced by one or more Continuing Resolutions until a new federal transportation bill is passed, likely sometime in 2021 but possibly later. The next bill is very likely to look a lot like the FAST Act and every transportation bill preceding it back to 1991. We should expect the next act to continue the federal STBG program with minimal change; we should also expect it to be 4-6 years in length. PRTPO can begin working now to get WSDOT support for granting its 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 possibly 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 in a single process. The range of projects that considered in this scenario may 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 considering the state's annual federal funding authority.

- 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 to get approval from WSDOT Local Programs at Headquarters, preferably before the next act is finalized. WSDOT Local Programs is not likely to be agreeable, but will be less so if PRTPO waits until after the next act is passed to initiate this. Going in, it would be useful to know counties might be interested in this option and possibly engage them in the discussion with WSDOT at some point. Expect WSDOT to be concerned that rural counties won't conduct their allocation processes in a timely manner or selected projects won't proceed as planned, leaving more than just a small annual allocation amount on the table for sanctioning if things don't go as planned. WSDOT will look closely at the allocation and obligation track records of counties and is unlikely to see small annual STBG levels each county manages as an obstacle to overcome.
- What would this entail for PRTPO? This would entail letters or memos, and likely a couple of meetings to get some traction. 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 resistance, especially if our local partners have difficulty keeping up with funding and OA targets even though those small dollar amounts are often the problem.
- 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 Continuing Resolution phase. 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 certain date (e.g. 1 year from receiving the new funding allocations), and fully obligate all projects within a certain time (e.g. 4 years). That would give WSDOT assurance of local commitment as well as benchmarks 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

In talking with Brian Moorehead at WSDOT Local Programs-Olympic Region, we learned that many local agencies – not just in the Peninsula region - have difficulty getting their projects obligated because the obligation packages are inaccurate or incomplete. Project obligation is a rigorous, time-consuming process. WSDOT rejects any project prospectus that is incomplete or includes any inaccuracies. This results in more time, expense, and frustration before projects can get started. He also spoke of issues with project closeout procedural requirements that leave many agencies with expenses that can't be reimbursed simply because of the closeout data on the project prospectus. With some appropriate scheduling and coordination logistics, PRTPO can arrange for a training session for local agency staff responsible for submitting obligation packages and complying

with federal project delivery requirements. Something similar was envisioned for the TAC when COVID-19 hit, and that session was cancelled.

- How would this change county processes? This wouldn't necessarily result in changes to county allocation processes, but it might influence what projects are submitted for funding and 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.
- 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.
- Likelihood of success? This would benefit any local agency staff that work with STBG and many other federal funds. For those who are new, 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.

For More Information

Thera Black, PRTPO Coordinator
TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org | 360.878.0353

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black
Date: September 17, 2020
Subject: **2021 Legislative Information Framework**

REQUESTED ACTION:

No action is requested. The TAC is asked to discuss the project list under development and key data points to underscore in the information package.

Overview

PRTPO is developing an information piece to inform the region's legislative delegation about transportation project and policy concerns going into the 2021 legislative session. An ad hoc Legislative Work Group (LWG) has been convened to work with staff in developing draft materials for Board consideration. Several TAC members are participating on this work group.

Over the summer the LWG met twice, polling members about the characteristics of regional priorities and attitudes about various issues facing the region. Their input shaped early messages presented to the Board in August for discussion as well as priorities that can shape a project list. The Board also considered a more regionally based approach of characterizing key system issues and opportunities.

In the end, the Board supported development of a project list and an infographic depicting a select few regional facts. The final format will be a single two-sided information sheet with projects on one side and regional infographics on the other, with a single-sided cover letter offering a legislative greeting and speaking to the priority message topics generated by the summer poll, providing information on PRTPO.

To develop the project list, members were asked to submit input on projects they would like to see included on the list and how those projects align with the priority characteristics derived by the LWG in July. That information request closed this week. Results to date are found in the table on the following page.

This is a work in progress. Some additional projects may come forward between now and the TAC meeting. The TAC discussion will help identify what is missing from this list. We will also have some updated graphics for the TAC to discuss.

TAC input on projects and system information will inform the LWG's final work session when they will help refine a draft folio and cover letter for the Board to review and finalize in October.

Attachment:

- *Working Draft of PRTPO Investment Priorities for 2021 Legislative Outreach*

For More Information:

Thera Black | 360.878.0353 | TheraB@PeninsulaRTPO.org

Transportation Outlook 2021 - PRTPO Investment Priorities

[Approximate working format, for sense of scale and legibility]

Project	Agency	LD#	PRTPO Priority Project Characteristics										Total Cost	Already Secured	Notes:
			Multiple Modes	Shovel-ready	Economic Chokepoint	System Preservation	Improve Safety	Special Needs Mobility	Increase Resiliency	Connecting WA	Local TIP				
US 101 East Sequim Corridor <i>Complete Simdars Rd/US 101 interchange, build frontage road connector</i>	Sequim	24	*		*		*		*		*	\$37 M	\$1.9 M	Partners include Clallam County, JSK. Support from Legislative Reps	
SR 3/16 Gorst Project - Resiliency, Mainline Capacity, & Non-Motorized Connectivity <i>Improve SR 3/16 in Gorst</i>	Kitsap County	26, 35	*		*		*		*			\$425 M		Partners include WSDOT, Bremerton, Port Orchard, Port of Bremerton, Kitsap Transit, Naval Base Kitsap	
SR 104 Kingston Congestion Mitigation <i>Realign and improve SR 104 and holding capacity, manage ferry traffic in Kingston</i>	Kitsap County	23	*	*	*		*	*			*	\$20 M	\$2.76 M	Partners include WSDOT, WSF, Kitsap Transit, Port of Kingston	
Bay Street Pedestrian Pathway <i>Design & acquire ROW for multi-use path, Tremont to Bay St foot ferry, along waterfront</i>	Port Orchard	26	*	*			*	*			*	\$1.5 M	\$566,000	Funding request is for design and right-of-way acquisition	
SR 16/SR 160 Sedgewick Interchange Improvements <i>Complete operational imp identified in WSDOT SR16 Study (2018)</i>	Port Orchard	26	*		*	*	*		*		*	TBD		Partner includes WSDOT. Need identified as near-term priority in WSDOT SR 16 Congestion Study.	
SR 305/Johnson Parkway - S Segment Noll Rd Construction <i>Complete RAB and ped tunnel, other elements of Noll Rd impr .</i>	Poulsbo	23	*				*		*	*	*	\$18.7 M	\$18.7 M	Partners include WSDOT, Kitsap County, Suquamish Tribe. It completes segment 1 of Noll Rd corridor improvements.	
Pt Townsend Project Package <i>- work underway to break information out into individual project elements</i>	Port Townsend	24	*		*	*	*	*	*		*	TBD		Package elements include Mill Rd/SR 20 and Kearny/SR 20 intersections, ODT connections at Sims Way, Ped improvements, and pavement preservation	
Olympic Discovery Trail Connection from 4 Corners to Anderson Lake State Pk <i>Build accessible multi-use shared trail</i>	Jefferson County	24	*	*			*	*	*		*	\$3.4 M		Partners include Peninsula Trails Coalition, Clallam County, RCO. Part of greater NW Scenic Trail and ODT.	
Park and Ride Development Project <i>Construct two new park & rides and upgrade three existing park & rides</i>	Mason Transit Authority	35	*	*	*		*	*		*		\$10.2 M	\$10.2 M	Protect funding to build facilities, including a new building and bus parking lot at one facility	

DISCUSSION ITEM

To: Technical Advisory Committee
From: Thera Black
Date: September 10, 2020
Subject: **2040 RTP Follow-up Strategies – Assessing Range of PRTPO Opportunities**

REQUESTED ACTION:

No action is requested. The TAC is asked to provide feedback on the topics and help identify those to look at closer. This is the first of two TAC discussions about RTP follow-up measures that PRTPO could pursue.

Overview

In October 2020, PRTPO adopted the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Chapter 7 of that plan synthesized public comments received during the outreach period with meeting notes and identified a range of needs to improve mobility in the Peninsula Region. A copy of that chapter is attached for your reference. The full range of public comments as well as meeting materials from the outreach effort are in Appendix B of the 2040 RTP and can be [found online](#).

As promised in Chapter 7, PRTPO is looking at those big ideas in 2020 to assess which ones can be pursued with available resources and which are beyond pursuit at this time without additional resources. Even those beyond pursuit may have modest measures that PRTPO can support.

The Board will consider potential follow-up measures in December and identify priority pursuits for the SFY 2021 UPWP or for inclusion in the SFY 2022-23 UPWP. It is not expected that any follow-up activities will trigger an amendment to the RTP but instead, will inform work program activities over the next few years. Expanded regional insights will be reflected in the next RTP.

Approach

Each of the broad topic areas in Chapter 7 represent a variety of related viewpoints and insights. We'll talk about the topics at a high level in this first discussion and determine which are the most actionable given PRTPO resources. Your discussion and feedback will provide us with insights we'll use to develop specific measures PRTPO might pursue on those topics, the level of effort involved, and any other spinoff benefits that might be leveraged as a result. We hope to identify a short slate of candidate activities for the Executive Board to consider based on TAC input in these two discussions.

The table on the next page provides a summary of the topics, initial thoughts about potential PRTPO roles, and any efforts already underway. We'll work from this table to make a first cut on topics to pursue in more depth in the next discussion along with early thoughts from the TAC on possible specific activities.

Attachment:

- *PRTPO Regional Transportation Plan 2040 – Chapter 7: Next Steps*

For More Information:

Thera Black | 360.878.0353 | TheraB@PeninsulaRTPPO.org

PRTPO Regional Transportation Plan 2040 – New Horizons (Chapter 7)

Which of these topics seem most promising for PRTPO follow-up activities? Are there specific activities you would like to see PRTPO pursue, if it could? Might any of these leverage other opportunities or partnerships?

General Topic Area	Feasible PRTPO Roles	Activities or Other Support Underway?	Closer Look?
Identify ways to increase system resiliency	Coordination, secure funding, convener role	Exploring funding opportunities for local/state/federal/tribal effort	
Support rural intercity bus travel	Legislative and policy support, regional support for grants	Legislative support, grant support	
Recognize economic benefits of active transportation	Funding support for ODT and others, legislative support	TA Grant administration	
Address climate change and GHG emissions	Policy support, EV strategy, resiliency strategy, planning	ID'd EV Strategy in UPWP	
Minimize conflicts between freight mobility and walkable places	Legislative support for projects, coordination	TA grant administration	
Improve Hood Canal Bridge travel time reliability	Communications, regional coordination, convener role		
Address electric vehicle infrastructure	Coordination, secure funding, convener role	ID'd EV Strategy in UPWP	
Ensure equitable access to services and opportunities	Grant administration, convener role, legislative support	CG grant administration	
Promote regional planning and coordination	Communications, convener role, RTPO processes	On-going UPWP, WSDOT and other coordination	
Create more meaningful public engagement	Communications, outreach activities, coordination	Updating PRTPO public participation plan in 2021	

7: Next Steps

This *Regional Transportation Plan 2040* identifies system information and conditions, describes trends and needs, and lists performance measures. **Chapter 6** lists the strategies on state highways and problem areas without easy solutions that the Peninsula RTPO will collectively work towards over the 20-year planning horizon.

Beyond the strategies and problem areas identified in Chapter 6, the PRTPO plan informs local and state transportation policies and investments through its vision and goals and the overarching inter-jurisdictional coordination resulting from the on-going regional transportation planning process. The many individual day-to-day decisions and investments made by PRTPO's partners in building, maintaining, operating, and planning for the region's multimodal transportation system are all important elements of plan implementation.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Peninsula RTPO will coordinate RTP implementation and updates with members over the life of the plan. Moving the region towards a more integrated, multimodal transportation system requires partnership and collaboration among the PRTPO's members and its many stakeholders. Roles and responsibilities for implementing this plan are diverse because responsibility for managing the multimodal transportation system is shared by many entities.

On-going implementation activities that PRTPO undertakes will be identified in the agency's annual Unified Planning Work Program, or UPWP³². Implementation activities that individual members undertake may be reflected in their local Comprehensive Plans, Transit Develop Plans, Transportation Improvement Programs, and Tribal Transportation Improvement Programs, depending upon the nature of the work and funding availability. Regional implementation activities will be consistent with local Comprehensive Plans, furthering the iterative and enduring collaboration between local and regional planning partners in providing for community needs.

New Horizons

In 2019 PRTPO completed its transition to an independent RTPO responsible for setting its own direction and identifying and implementing its regional planning priorities. In 2020 PRTPO will begin exploring regional issues and opportunities to identify those priority needs that it is best suited to address in its capacity as the regional transportation planning organization for the Clallam-Jefferson-Kitsap-Mason County region.

Input to that strategic planning process will come from public comments received during the review of this 2040 plan in its draft form. Details on that public engagement process can be found in Appendix B.

³² The most current version of PRTPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) can be found on the Publications page of PRTPO's website at: <https://prtpo.kitsaptransit.com/publications.htm>

Substantive topics emerged from the draft review that merit further discussion as PRTPO members consider the array of issues and opportunities facing the region.

Focus on system resiliency

The region relies on a fragile transportation system and there is little or no plan in place to increase resiliency or system redundancy. Many areas have only a single route for ingress and egress. Consider the role the region's many small ports and public launch facilities might play in emergency access and response in the event of a major disaster. Also consider potential standards for new infrastructure development that enhance overall community resiliency.

Rural intercity public transportation provides critical connections and should be increased

Build on existing partnerships and innovative services to create more frequent and reliable connections between the rural destinations people are traveling between. Expand Sunday service, at least during peak festival and biking season, recognizing the region cannot attract more tourists arriving by bus and ferry for weekend activities if they can't get home by those same means on Sunday.

Active transportation offers untapped opportunities for economic vitality

People come to the Olympic and Kitsap peninsulas to enjoy active recreation which directly supports the essential tourism economy, creating incentives to expand biking and walking opportunities and the ability to arrive and depart without needing a car. Harnessing this opportunity supports other aims. Efforts to complete the Olympic Discovery Trail, expand the network built on that trail, and increase multimodal access to and from the national park and forest support many regional objectives including economic vitality.

The plan is silent on climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

The plan does not explicitly mention climate change nor does it describe efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and growth in per capita vehicle miles traveled. Climate change considerations entail a stronger focus on active transportation, intercity transit and passenger-only ferry connections, demand management, and electric vehicle infrastructure as well as pragmatic pursuit of system resilience and adaption measures.

Inherent frictions between freight mobility and walkable places call for innovative strategies

Truck freight underpins the region's economic lifeline, but when highways bisect urban centers it also conflicts with other mobility goals like walkability and creating people-oriented urban spaces. Conflicts between reliable and efficient freight mobility and walkable, people-centric downtown environment require innovative strategies to resolve, ranging from designated routes and reconsideration of one-way couplets to street design and land use strategies.

Travel reliability on the Hood Canal Bridge affects the entire region.

Congestion on the east side of the Hood Canal Bridge and extensive delays when the Bridge is opened for marine traffic create impacts felt all the way to Port Angeles and beyond, generating travel time delays for the region's freight shippers and dampening the region's tourism economy. What happens in Kitsap County matters to the rest of the region's economic health, especially in terms of the Hood Canal Bridge and central Puget Sound ferry service.

A 21st century plan should address electric vehicle infrastructure and new mobility options

While most of the region is highly rural, that is no reason the long-range regional plan shouldn't speak to the role of electric vehicles (EV) and their supporting infrastructure. The EV infrastructure model will be different in a rural region than in a metropolitan area, and the regional planning process is the right process to describe what it looks like. Similarly, with new mobility options like ride-share companies (Lyft, Uber) and other emerging travel options, it is appropriate for PRTPO to explore the future role of these in meeting regional mobility needs.

Conscious effort needed to ensure equitable access to opportunity in the future

Equitable access to transportation services and the opportunities that access affords can be eroded without a vigilant focus. This quickly encompasses issues ranging from housing affordability to broadband access throughout the region. Without explicit consideration, the divide between those with means and those without will increase in the Peninsula region as transportation becomes less affordable for more people.

Regional planning and coordination makes sense

Though most people were not familiar with PRTPO specifically, the concept of regional collaboration and partnership resonated with people, who also expressed interest in learning more and having more opportunity to engage in regional planning. Partnerships and collaboration to get things done just makes sense.

Create more meaningful opportunities for community engagement

It is hard to expect people to know how to participate and provide informed input to regional planning processes if they are not engaged on a regular basis. Regional transportation planning underpins things people care about – quality of life, access to jobs and health care and affordable housing, environmental health, a strong economy. It should be easier for people to learn about PRTPO and its work. There can be more opportunities for people to participate in the regional transportation planning process and contribute to a thriving region.

Big ideas emerging from public review of the draft RTP 2040 merit more deliberate discussion about their implications and regional opportunities, and the potential role that PRTPO can play in shaping a strategic direction.

In early 2020, PRTPO will undertake work to develop a strategic direction for the Peninsula Region with near term and longer-term priorities. That process begins with big ideas including those generated by the public in its review of the regional plan.

Near-term priorities will inform PRTPO's Unified Planning Work Program and support for local agency grants and partnership opportunities. Work on longer-term priorities will proceed as resources and opportunities allow. Both near- and long-term priorities will inform the required biennial plan review and a rewrite of the next regional transportation plan, which may get underway as early as 2021.

In the course of its regular work program activities PRTPO will review this plan and update it in accordance with state regulations and regional need.

SR 3 Freight Corridor

Project Update
PRTPO Technical Advisory Committee

JoAnn Schueler, PE, Assistant Regional Administrator
Michele Britton, PE, Project Engineer

SR 3 Freight Corridor

Agenda

- ❑ Project Overview and Alignment
 - Mainline Alignment
 - North End Connection
 - South End Connection
- ❑ WSDOT Limited Access Hearing Process
- ❑ Next Steps
- ❑ Q&A



SR 3 Freight Corridor

Project Overview

- ❑ Project Details
 - 6 miles of new highway
 - Limited intersections
 - North & South end connections
- ❑ Maintain old SR 3 as Business Loop
- ❑ More Route Choices
- ❑ Improved Intersection Efficiency



SR 3 Freight Corridor

North End Connection

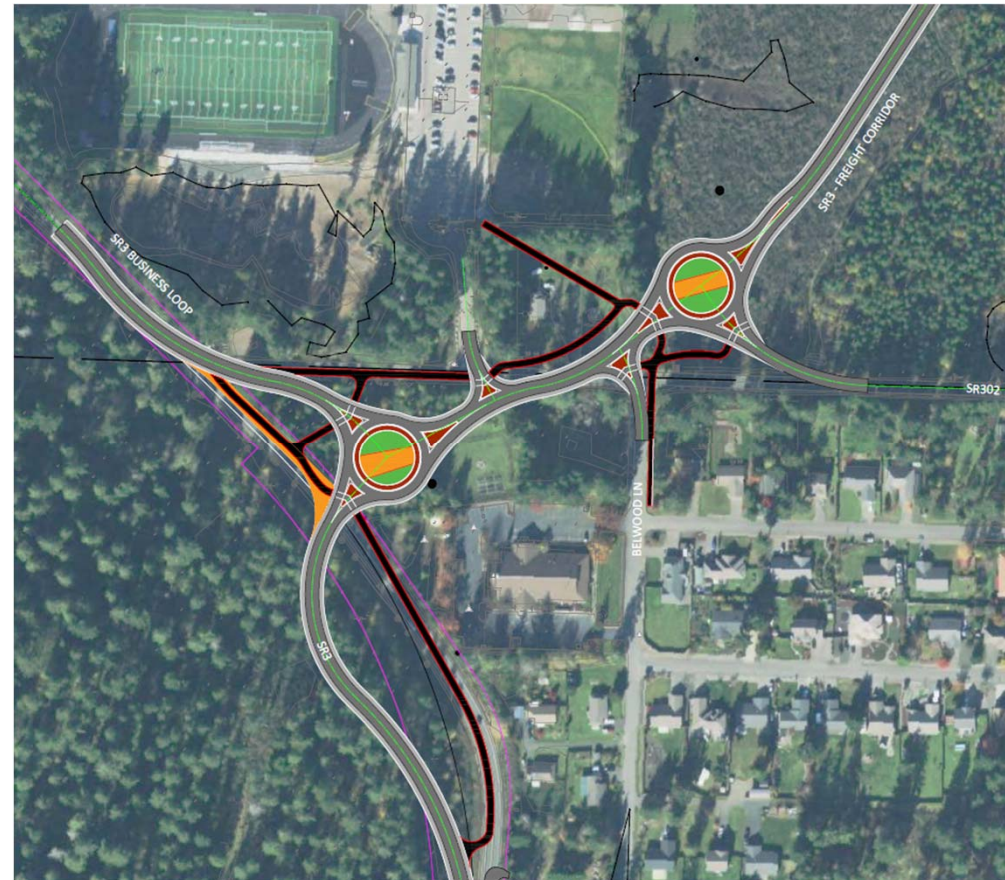
- ❑ Project Details
 - New roundabout
 - Realign LK Flora Rd
 - Reconnect old SR 3
- ❑ Local business access
- ❑ FAA Regulations
- ❑ Maintain old SR 3 as Business Loop



SR 3 Freight Corridor

South End Connection

- ❑ 2 Roundabouts
- ❑ South school driveway
- ❑ New Belwood connection
- ❑ Separated multi-use pathways
- ❑ Oversize vehicle accommodation
- ❑ Improved connection to Allyn



SR 3 Freight Corridor

WSDOT Limited Access Hearing Process

- ❑ Finalize Alignment
- ❑ Complete Plan For Approval (PFA)
- ❑ Complete Access and R/W Plan
- ❑ Access Report and Pre-Hearing Packet
- ❑ Hearing Advertisement to Legislature, local agencies and tribes.
- ❑ Hearing Information to Abutters
- ❑ Affidavit of Publication
- ❑ Hearing
- ❑ Comment Period
- ❑ Findings and Order (F&O) Review and Approval
- ❑ Mail Approved F&O Plan

Start



12 months

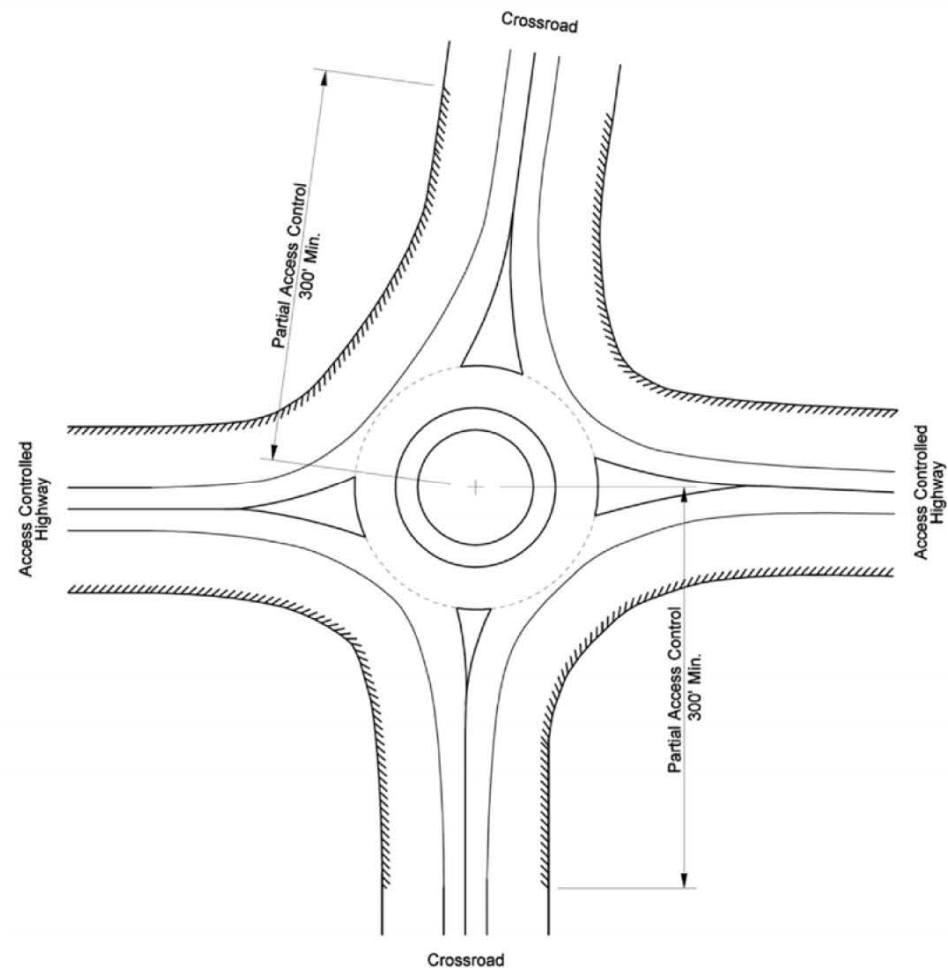
Finish



SR 3 Freight Corridor

WSDOT Limited Access Limits

- ❑ Access control extends 300 feet on the connecting roadways
- ❑ Driveway access restricted in access control zones
- ❑ New connections need WSDOT approval for break in access control



SR 3 Freight Corridor

Next Steps

- ❑ Advance design of end connections
- ❑ Finalize alignment
- ❑ Start environmental documentation
- ❑ Ad date Winter 2023/2024

SR 3 Freight Corridor

Questions? Comments?