

GMVUAC November 5, 2018

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Called to Order – 7:00 pm

Members Present:

Steve Hiester	Lorraine Blacklock
Peter Rimbo	Rhys Sterling
Adam Sterling	Susan Harvey
Celia Parker	Warren Iverson
Luke Hansen	Sue Neuner
LarKen Buchanan	Mike Thompson
Stephen Deutschman (Dutch)	

Members Absent:

Hank Haynes (proxy to Peter)

Agenda:

Rhys moved to approve the agenda, Lorraine seconded.

Motion passed

Public Comment Period:

Dutch: I would like to take this chance to honor our veterans. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the fighting of World War I ended in 1918. November 11th became a universally recognized day of celebration. So, today we honor all of our veterans who unselfishly placed their lives on the line for our freedom. As we honor our veterans and remember their great deeds, let us also salute those who are currently fighting for our freedom. Thank you for honoring our veterans today. Let us walk toward tomorrow still honoring them be living in the freedom they protected.

Val Paganelli: I'm your Tahoma School Board member, I wanted to thank the council for bringing attention to transportation issues, I also have a follow up for bus stop changes, I will forward it to Dutch, they adjusted where buses stop relative to students, now door-side to property, and there continue to be conversations about the Issaquah-Hobart Road. Next month Tony Giurado will give a presentation, so I wanted to know the top 3 things you wanted to talk about.

Rhys: I can coordinate, we did our survey before and we will do another one next year, I can give you a copy of the results, then I will ask our members and the

public for questions. Also next month, Aaron Tyerman from the fire department will give us an update on the contract relationship with Puget Sound Regional Fire Authority (PSRFA).

Guest Speakers:

I-90/Front Street Interchange Justification Report:

Jilma Jimenez, Vice President of Corporate Operations, BergerABAM
Kyengo Ndile, Project Engineer, Washington State (WS) Department of
Transportation (DOT)
Tim Nau, Assistant Project Engineer, WSDOT

Susan: Welcome to our meeting on the Issaquah-Hobart Road/I-90/Front Street studies, I am the chair of the GMVUAC Transportation Committee. We've extended out to unify other unincorporated area councils (UACs), in what we call our Joint Transportation Initiative (JTI), because transportation is difficult to deal with in little pockets, and that is who's putting this on tonight. We've been looking at regional approaches, now looking at this corridor involving all stakeholders, from Issaquah to Hobart to Black Diamond. Something needs to change, the ultimate goal is to bring all stakeholders together to talk with each other. This is a 25 mile stretch of road with 5 different responsible organizations, I-90 is under federal government, then there's the City of Issaquah, King County (KC) unincorporated area (UA), in the middle is SR-18, which is run by the state, and on the other end is another city, Black Diamond. Not that anyone is doing anything wrong, each are following the current rules, but some rules are prohibiting progress. The first thing we're looking at is an Issaquah bypass, considering a local improvement district (LID), had some support. Because we're in the UA, which has a quarter million people, we also need to be at the table, even though our council doesn't have any legal power. We've received a lot of support from KC, Alan Painter is in the back, and Marissa Alegria, Alan retiring soon, so this will be his last meeting, KC has been patient and very helpful. Starting with WSDOT, Jilma Jimenez will be giving their presentation, KC and Issaquah are working in an alliance here, but will first hear from WSDOT first.

Rhys: We've also put together a lot of handouts, and please visit our website.

Jilma Jimenez: I'm with BergerABAM, we're supporting the delivery of the I-90/Front Street Interchange Justification Study, we presented this to the Issaquah City Council last week. I will discuss background, stakeholders, data findings, purpose, study processes, alternatives, results of screening, next steps, and key takeaways. For background, in 2012 WSDOT completed the Bellevue to North Bend Corridor Planning Study, it might have gone all the way to I-5, as a result of a promise to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), promised not to do additional work on the Sunset bypass until there was a more comprehensive study. At the same time, Issaquah made its

Central Issaquah Plan to track its course for growth, both studies mentioned the Front Street interchange as a central point. The legislature apportioned \$2 million for a study and identified its objective to advance prior studies and answer certain questions. First, is congestion due to local network issues or the interchange, then what is the preferred alternative to relieve congestion, and finally what are the costs so that WSDOT can give recommendations to the legislature next year. WSDOT did not do this alone, they talked to many local businesses and the general public, and chose to partner with cities in the area as well as KC, Sound Transit, etc. to create an interchange justification study team. We also spoke to Peter at that time. Key themes we heard was congestion due to regional traffic, there needs to be both local and regional improvements, need to encourage traffic to go around Issaquah, more congestion will occur with growth, need more north/south crossings, now only Sunset, Front Street, and SR-900, and need to consider all modes. We noticed on Google maps that backup goes from Gilman Boulevard to the Issaquah-Hobart Road, cameras show most of the traffic is heading north, more than two thirds of vehicles. The needs we found are 30% of cars are just trying to get from one side to the next, left turns are critical, many more than capacity, going west to south and east to north, very limited turning movement pockets from Front Street onto I-90. 41% of collisions are at these turn lanes, 53% are rear ends, which is typical of congestion. The purpose of improvement is to increase capacity, improve circulation and safety, and provide solutions for expected growth. Our study process, we collected data from agencies, the first phase was traffic modeling to answer whether local improvements alone will answer, if yes then we would have concluded the study there since I-90 is only for regional traffic, it's owned by the federal government, not dealing with local, so I-90 is not for moving cars from SR-900 to Front Street. Phase 2 was if the answer was no, we would then go about choosing alternatives to address, the deadline is December 2018. Our consultant team came up with 36 options, including more north/south crossings, widening roads, and other transit or access improvements. We had a 2-tiered screening process, fatal flaw screening eliminated 27 options as not meeting the area's problems, then we did additional modeling on the other 9 alternatives, and I will share those. First is a NW Gilman T intersection, would create an overpass by building a ramp in the middle of Gilman, would have to go up 27 feet, so not the best option. Next was NW Maple at grade by raising I-90, would connect Issaquah on 62nd Street with Costco. Next was similar, widening Maple, but there's an existing trail so it cannot be widened, and it would cause issues with existing businesses, so it was dropped. Next was widening SR-18 from I-90 to the Issaquah-Hobart Road, this would be in addition to the 6-mile project already being proposed to widen SR-18 north of Deep Creek, our study examined widening the remainder, but most of the benefit would happen due to the current widening project, the reason was that the climbing lanes are already 2 lanes, should see some improvements between now and 2045, this project is underway now. We also looked at the Sunset bypass, the original study was

shorter, our study looked at widening Issaquah-Hobart Road to Cedar Grove Road, would improve local mobility, but the connection is much shorter, so it would just divert traffic from SR-18. Next was constructing a diverging diamond interchange, first one will be in Lacey, but more than 100 across the country, it favors left turn movements, many safety improvements, can look at the WSDOT webpage for more information, it's also being considered for SR-18 to I-90, provides various benefits. Next was a single point urban interchange with a single light in the center, but this works best with a balance of left turn movement, with 200 cars in the PM peak hour, it was only benefiting one side. Next was a partial cloverleaf, but this would have conflicted with Gilman. Finally, a new flyover similar to Sunset straight into Sammamish Parkway, but this would have run into culverts and would require blocking access to 229th Street. One alternative was flawed and 4 were eliminated, the other 4 went through more modeling, then we recommended the diverging diamond. We also looked at coupling options, such as a diverging diamond with a Maple Street underpass, would improve intra-city movements, operated much better, but the diverging diamond was addressing most of the need. Because we found that local improvements alone will not meet the needs, we're now finishing traffic modeling on phase 2, then will give WSDOT a cost estimate by the end of next month. Key takeaways, need greater capacity for left turns, but that's not the only reason for congestion, a double diverging diamond addressed needs the best, other options would improve, but by themselves would not meet the study needs.

Susan: Is this going to actually happen?

Jilma Jimenez: We will conclude our study, then WSDOT will offer recommendations to the legislature in January, hoping for funding, this area has done a great job lobbying and getting attention in the past, but it's all predicated on getting funding from the legislature.

Susan: Going west on I-90, the exit to SR-18 is backed up for miles, are you looking at regional improvements? Snoqualmie insisted on widening SR-18, there were 8 deaths, I heard it became a priority, but it was moved back?

Jilma Jimenez: There are issues in the area, it's a major freight corridor, our study began before the SR-18/I-90 study, but we shared our modeling with that team, both studies are informing each other. Now there's a \$100 million project to redo that interchange, add a new weigh station, and widen SR-18 from the interchange to Deep Creek, not as far as Raging River, if they get additional money it may go further.

Tim Nau: That's still in the study phase, it's a single pot of money, saving on one project does not go into another.

Warren: What's the timeframe for the SR-18/I-90 interchange? How long until it's completed? Could also turn shoulders into new lanes?

Jilma Jimenez: They're trying to begin construction in 2020, now doing documentation and design, still working on issues, it's hard to tell how long it will take, but definitely more than 1 year.

Chad Magendanz: According to my information, the total budget should be \$150 million, and construction starts in 2021.

Luke: This study focuses on one issue, left turns at the interchange in the afternoon, but what about other traffic? Are you looking at other intersections?

Jilma Jimenez: In our study we picked an option based on the worst scenario, but we're confirming for AM as well as PM in our detailed modeling. An interchange justification report is a study the state must do to convince the federal government to allow improvements on a federal highway, by law it must include interchanges before and after, so we're going north past 22nd Street and south past Newport Way, studying the whole area to make sure.

Peter: Drivers will use the road of least resistance, improving one road will draw more cars, Newport Way is already bumper to bumper, what did you find? What are the cost estimates?

Jilma Jimenez: Our study indicates that when the interchange is redone it will produce more capacity, it offers some benefits to SR-900, some of that traffic will come to Front Street. Also the combination of the diverging diamond interchange and connecting Maple is something the City of Issaquah is interested in pursuing, that provided the most mobility and benefits for local traffic. Options range between \$60 and \$100 million, there's a similar project in another city, we know it's doable. (Other discussion on interchanges) Over-the-top options were problematic, whereas raising I-90 provided the most amount of improvements.

Mike: My concern is stoplights, you're not curing congestion by changing the intersection, cars will hit a stoplight as soon as they get into the city, and 6,000 more homes are going into Black Diamond.

Jilma Jimenez: That's a good point, modeling showed that two thirds of growth is happening to the north, would lead to 100 more vehicles in peak hour, but because traffic is already so constrained, anything beyond will go to SR-18.

Dutch: What about 4th Avenue NW?

Jilma Jimenez: It's been closed during construction on 62nd Street, but it will open by the end of this year, 5% of vehicles just crossing were vehicles heading to 4th Avenue, one option was widening 4th but land is constrained due to businesses and trails.

Mike: What about a bypass?

Jilma Jimenez: We looked at it, it increases mobility, but it would only draw more vehicles from SR-18 to Issaquah.

Susan: In the Issaquah Hobart Corridor Study, most of the data was from north of SR-18, yet one third of traffic comes from the south and is not accounted for, including Ravensdale and Black Diamond. There needs to be a holistic corridor approach, did you meet with Black Diamond or Maple Valley?

Jilma Jimenez: Aileen and Rose should be able to answer that. WSDOT does not have authority to do anything within those cities, the analysis demonstrated that the interchange was an issue, that is what WSDOT is working on.

Susan: Between presentations while KC is setting up, I wanted to ask what brought people here tonight.

???: I wanted to know how changes to Issaquah-Hobart Road will affect SR-169.

???: All roads affect me, I can't get anywhere anymore, it's not cohesive under the Growth Management Act (GMA), everyone is going to Issaquah, we need a

cohesive approach looking at Black Diamond. I heard about this meeting from the Nextdoor app.

???: I'm a stakeholder, ran for Issaquah City Council, I was pro bypass, an earlier report said that option would be best, but it was changed. The reason why I'm here is that in Issaquah political resolve is somewhat lacking, they had a contractual obligation to do a bypass but weaseled out, it takes political resolve and commitment.

???: I've lived in Hobart for 30 years, it took an hour to travel to Eastgate before, now Renton and Kent-Kangely roads are backing up, can't go shopping, want to reduce greenhouse gas too.

???: I haven't heard environmental impact of idling cars mentioned yet, it's a significant problem.

Issaquah-Hobart Road/Front Street Corridor Study:

Rose LeSmith, Managing Engineer, Road Design & Traffic Engineering, KCDOT
Aileen McManus, Supervising Engineer, Road Design & Traffic Engineering, KCDOT
Kurt Seemann, Transportation Manager, City of Issaquah

Rose LeSmith: I will be presenting the Issaquah-Hobart Road/Front Street Corridor Study, it was a joint effort between KC and Issaquah, involving 8.2 miles of road, 5.9 miles in KC, 15-20,000 cars per day, and a range of speed limits from 25 to 45 mph. The purpose was to evaluate safety and mobility improvements to provide the most efficient and reliable traffic flow. Our 3 main criteria were safety, mobility, and implementation. The study objectives were to provide a comprehensive inventory for a baseline, investigate safety issues, develop strategies, and estimate costs. Problem identification, there are high rates of rear ends, run-off-road crashes, and turning conflicts, it's very congested with heavy PM traffic over a mile long. Looking at the collision history over the last 5 years, largest severity and number are at the northern end near the city, and in the southern portion around May Valley Road. We looked at traffic distribution, 80% is traffic coming from SR-18, most is heading to the city and I-90, in the PM 50% is through to SR-18 and south. We reached out to stakeholders, such as the Issaquah School District, etc., consistent themes were that congestion is worsening, and it impacts businesses. Safety is our highest priority, we looked at intersection controls, transit or park & rides, providing real-time messages, and localized improvements. We evaluated and prioritized projects on those same criteria, 4 main projects in Issaquah, intersection improvements at Sunset, adaptive signal controls, adaptive message signs, etc. In KC there are 3 projects, intersection improvements at May Valley and Cedar Grove Roads, and message signs. Also have a brief overview and cost estimates, our study is done and it's been published, I will provide the link. Next I wanted to talk about what KC is doing currently, a signal enhancement project, installing fisheye cameras at 5 locations in the Issaquah-Hobart corridor, they let us know how many cars are in the queue, then we can change timing at signals,

trying to make it automated, cameras have been installed. We also have variable message signs, letting drivers know how long their commutes will be. Other projects, high friction surface treatment, May Valley intersection is a high collision location, it was completed in September. We also added 3 permanent radar speed signs in Hobart, will add 2 to the north to deal with speeding. Also looking at a speed limit reduction to 40 mph from Mirrormont to Issaquah in early 2019. Many links to sites on our slides. We're also doing another study for this year and 2019, no construction dollars, just looking at what would be best, turn lanes, roundabouts, etc.

Mike: Do we need message signs? Everybody is looking at Google maps anyway.

???: I'm wondering if anyone looked at safety from adding school bus turnouts?

Rose LeSmith: We worked with the schools, busses are one reason why there's congestion, but they were reluctant to allow pullouts because then the buses can't get back in, no good solutions other than building another lane.

???: Are you looking at new lanes? But no budget? What about self-driving cars?

Rose LeSmith: Widening is a different issue, we know other technology is coming, it depends on our budget, much is not planned yet.

Chad Magendanz: Safety is the highest priority, I was on the school board, traffic flow was congested, 2nd Street has become the de facto bypass.

Kurt Seemann: Safety is a big concern, 2nd Street traffic has increased, we're working with the school district to see what we can do to resolve that, both are 2-lane roads not built for this level of congestion, also trying to balance the character of our downtown corridor so we cannot expand, we don't want to turn those roads into thoroughfare.

???: The study started at SR-18, I'm assuming traffic is coming from SR-18 or from Black Diamond, Maple Valley, etc.? Why were they not stakeholders? Larger employers like Microsoft in Issaquah, why have they not been forced to implement carpools, etc.?

Rose LeSmith: If we included everyone the study would have been a lot bigger, but the graph does include traffic coming from the south. For alternatives, we looked at park & rides, incentives, also reached out to Microsoft, but we had to limit what we were looking at, had to draw lines somewhere, WSDOT's study is a much larger scope, also can't ask Maple Valley to do improvements.

Peter: We understand these studies have different focuses, but we need to look at the problem regionally, its something for the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to handle, nothing's working, each jurisdiction is doing its own thing and just adding more development, UA people suffer when KC roads are used by mostly urban commuters, everyone is looking at their own subset, but we need someone at the top to look at it in a holistic manner. We've all worked on this for many years, problem has not been defined properly, nobody above you is looking at this.

Susan: Our goal is to facilitate conversations, we've heard over and over that nobody wants to step on each other's feet.

Jilma Jimenez: The study we're doing is informed by PSRC, they have growth projection models, our study uses those models, it's not solving the issue but we are accounting for what those cities have projected for the future.

Rose LeSmith: We use that data too.

Peter: We don't agree with Black Diamond's projections, poor analyses means that that data is useless.

Dutch: You mentioned the 45 mph speed limit will be reduced to 40 mph, how was that justified?

Rose LeSmith: That was an independent speed limit study separate from the Issaquah-Hobart corridor, recommendations came out of that study that 40 mph was proper. 45 mph would be too fast for the conditions of the roadway, looking at the speed of traffic, but also curves, driveways, etc., we plugged that data into an algorithm and it said that 40 mph is what it should be.

Susan: Closing comments, as WSDOT improves traffic flow from I-90, hopefully Issaquah will be able to handle local increases.

Kurt Seemann: We're working closely with the WSDOT team, the bypass was looked at, it does have some advantages, it has a long history in Issaquah, wouldn't say it's off the table, but I'm not sure if it's time to revisit, it's a political question. As the study showed, whenever a new route is built you will attract more cars, might get new vehicles, drivers then use cross routes, there's a negative impact throughout.

Susan: We appreciate everyone coming out.

Peter: On our website we have links to the original studies.

Rhys: Please send anything else you have to us.

Council Business: - 8:55

Budget: Steve Hiester

Steve: Need to pass budget under bylaws, should we postpone it until next month?

Rhys: We need to present it in November, don't need to approve it until next year, I have provided a best-guess estimate.

Steve: I paid for website posting renewal, less than last year, and our business license renewal.

Rhys: Web costs should be included in our PR Committee grant.

Peter: The \$1,000 loss assumes we get all grants we asked for?

Rhys: Yes.

Steve: A part of our grant expenses should include insurance, should be some consideration.

Rhys: This is long overdue, we need a budget.
(Other discussion)

Rhys: The Train Show is our only money-maker.

Susan: Alan, what do other UACs do? What kind of events do they hold?

Alan Painter: You're probably in the best shape, each do events, but they struggle, others do some fundraising, the successful ones do it by events. West Hill has an active website, they use Facebook as a fundraiser, others are not as aggressive. They hold a Halloween bowl-o-rama, then raise funds from businesses to support.

Peter: Does everyone have the same insurance problems?

Marissa Alegria: Most usually just have event insurance, Bear Creek UAC spends \$500 just for music in the park.

Alan Painter: You're a much more active UAC.

Rhys: In terms of holding meetings.

Marissa Alegria: Others have just general liability, not for officers.

Steve: That's a third of our insurance, we also have a rider for the Train Show.

Rhys: We also just added PSRFA to our list of insured.

Steve: Many years ago we were under the Citizens Participation Initiative (CPI) with KC, all expenses were covered, but now we're paying expenses out of pocket.

Rhys: Take a look at the draft budget, we will discuss it next month, let me know of any comments.

Marissa Alegria: We will not hear about grants until February.

Committee Reports:

PR: Rhys Sterling

Lorraine: MailChimp update, currently 38 people subscribed, but due to family issues my time is limited, I need someone to take over MailChimp duties.

Rhys: It's within PR, we can do it as part of our committee, we just need to know how to do it.

LarKen: We can have PR Committee meeting to discuss.

Rhys: Luke is tracking down info on Maple Valley Market, permit application was submitted to renovate the existing restaurant, would be the first step precursor to the rumored mini-casino. Lakeside is working on its application for the asphalt plant, they submitted one on October 7 but it was not complete, that will happen imminently. Marijuana processing facility lawsuit lost in court, it will be located on 200th Street and Waxe Road, at the old WSDOT staging area, Kramer and Maple Valley Industries LLC own the site, but looking to sell, they have a vested permit, KC claims the building permit is also vested, but the court was unclear. I also sent out a notice today on the on-site sewage (OSS) regulations, it's self-explanatory, Warren is an alternate on that committee.

Warren: I haven't attended the last two, and I will not be there next meeting.

Rhys: I was disappointed that we weren't selected for the watershed committee, the Center for Environmental Law & Policy (CELP) is biased against rural exempt wells.

Peter: I had a telephone conversation with the guy from CELP on the WRIA 8 restoration committee, he's also the representative on WRIA 9, they had their first meeting in Redmond on WRIA 8, I tried to impress on him the importance of rural views.

Growth Management: Peter Rimbo

Peter: Last week KC Council approved the comprehensive plan update, switching from 4 to 8 years, although it looks like most of our concerns have been

answered, most of Councilmember Joe McDermott's amendments were passed out of the Planning, Rural Service & Environment (PRE) Committee. I already got approval to submit comments on the proposed adult beverage ordinance, the deadline for two other UACs to sign on is this Friday, Four Creeks cannot sign, once the letter is sent I will put it on our website.

Warren: CELP has a past history of suing the Department of Ecology, the Hirst decision came about from Futurewise, I don't know if they're suing in other counties.

Peter: I'm also talking to the Sierra Club, they're not on any committee, most of the cities at the meeting wanted to know why they were there, had no interest. There are several KC employees in the committees, but none live in the rural area.

Approve Minutes:

Rhys moved to approve the October meeting minutes, Peter seconded.

Motion passed

Open Discussion:

Alan Painter: You're the strongest UAC in KC, it's been a pleasure to learn about this area and work with you all, thank you for working with the community, I hope you keep it up. I will be retiring, I plan to do hiking here, in Arizona, and England, then figure out where to volunteer. The new Department of Local Services (DLS) was approved by KC Council, they're going through the budget now, it includes Roads and the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review (DPER), John Taylor was selected to lead it, he will be affirmed by the council in January, he met with Marissa and me this morning, you will see him a lot. Marissa will continue to be part of the new department, DLS will have agreements for delivery of services and an outreach section. Marissa's been fantastic, she'll be a critical part of the team, might be more proactive with community organizations, etc. We need to look at bringing UACs together, synergy, I'm excited about John Taylor, I worked closely with him in Fall City, he's good at bringing people together to look at problems, good things are ahead depending on resources, they're looking at how to have different mindset. For permitting, it's always controversial, DPER lacked for communication, can do better there, talking about getting information and getting it out, Marissa will be a part of that communication section, that should help DPER. It's great that the Executive's Office is bringing the rural area up into department heads, issues brought up should get a higher level of attention. You need to keep connections going, there will be many new faces, Randy Sandin is also retiring, Roads lost its 2 heads, but it's an opportunity to bring in new ideas.

Rhys: I've invited John Taylor to come present after the first of the year, Marissa has our support, and Alan will be missed.

Alan Painter: You've improved too, even rural committees don't have the same depth. GMVUAC provides an honest opportunity for people to ask questions.

Chair adjourned.

Meeting Adjourned - 9:26 pm