



## The Second FORUM ON WALKABILITY TO ADDRESS WALKABILITY IN ISLAND COUNTY

Sponsored by:

**Island County Environmental Health Assessment Team (EHAT)**

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### **Attendees of the Forum (organized alphabetically by last name):**

Terri Arnold	Director, South Whidbey Parks and Recreation
Malcolm Bishop	Public Works Director, Town of Coupeville
Connie Bowers	Traffic Engineer, Island County Public Works
Oliver Bronnbauer	Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Mark Brown	Island County Sheriff
Joyce Christiansen	Island County Public Health
Patty Cohen	Mayor, City of Oak Harbor
Maribeth Crandell	City of Oak Harbor Public Works
John Dean	Island County Commissioner
Marilyn Dessert	Walking School Bus volunteer
Tom Eisenberg	Friends of Camano Island Parks (FOCIP)
Sarah Felger	Island County Public Health
Bill Frederick	Friends of Freeland
Kerry Graves	Administrative Services Director, Island County Public Health
Karen Grossman	Island County Public Health/Whidbey in Motion (WHIM)
Joantha Guthrie	Project Manager, Island County Public Works
Jack Hartt	Park Manager, Deception Pass State Park
Lee Heinrichs	Transportation Director, Stanwood-Camano School District
Meghan Heppner	Island Transit
Katie Hicks	EHAT
Maury Hood	Real Estate Manager, Goosefoot Community Fund
Nicole Craig	Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce
Cac Kamak	City of Oak Harbor Planning Department
Barbara Lyter	Lyter Photography & Design
William "Mac" McDowell	Island County Commissioner
David Macys	EHAT/Community Health Advisory Board (CHAB)
Ann McDonald	Port of Coupeville Commissioner
Tim McDonald	Health Services Director, Island County Public Health
Carrie McLachlan	Assessment/Comm. Dev. Supervisor, Island County Public Health
Jennifer Meyer	Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Mike Morton	Island County Public Works
Hank Nydam	City of Oak Harbor Parks Manager
Jim Patton	EHAT
Arnie Peterschmidt	City of Oak Harbor Engineering Department
Marie Piper	EHAT
Dan Poolman	Director of Business & Operations, South Whidbey School District
Richard Rhydies	Architect

Trish Rose	Whidbey General Hospital
Barbara Saugen	Whidbey General Hospital Commissioner
Veronica Schmidt	Transportation Director, South Whidbey School District
Carol Sele	Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Celine Servatius	EHAT
Jim Slowik	Mayor-elect, City of Oak Harbor
Michelle Smith	Health Promotions, Naval Hospital Oak Harbor
Carl Stephens	EHAT
Leslie Stevens	EHAT
Joyce Swanson	Principal, Broad View Elementary
Aaron Terada	Fort Ebey State Park
Carol Triplett	FOCIP
Holly Troyer	PE Teacher, Oak Harbor Elementary
Ken Urstad	Sound Waters
Krista Voigt	CHAB
Rob Voigt	EHAT
Whitney Webber	EHAT Staff
Jill Wood	Island County Public Health
Elaine Woods	EHAT/Whidbey Walks
Bruce Worley	Operations Executive Director, Oak Harbor School District

**Program Description:**

**Agenda**

**8:30**

**Opening Remarks & Summary of First Forum**

- I. Chair of the forum, Commissioner John Dean, welcomed forum participants.
- II. Commissioner Dean highlighted the three focus areas identified for the first forum on walkability: Safe Routes to School, Convenience & Connectivity, and Recreation.
- III. Commissioner Dean noted that the objective for the second forum was to share accomplishments in these areas and work from the priorities to develop additional solutions.
- IV. Whitney Webber, EHAT staff, reviewed contents of the folders provided.

**8:35-8:45**

**Recognition of EHAT members**

Commissioner Dean recognized EHAT members with certificates of appreciation. EHAT sponsored the first and second forums on walkability, and will continue to address walkability as one of their priority issues by forming an action team as part of the Community Health Advisory Board (CHAB) beginning January 2008.

**8:45-8:55**

**Introductions**

Commissioner Dean asked forum participants to introduce themselves by stating their name and organization they represented and/or interest in walkability.

**8:55-9:15**

**New data from the Island County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and other data sources**

Presenter: Carrie McLachlan, Island County Public Health

Commissioner Dean introduced Carrie McLachlan, Supervisor of Assessment and Community Development with Island County Public Health. Carrie gave a talk examining new 2006 data from the county BRFSS on obesity and overweight, physical activity levels, and walking.

**9:15-9:30**

**How a local walking program is changing lives**

Presenter: Carol Sele, NASWI Fitness Coordinator

Commissioner Dean introduced Carol Sele, Fitness Coordinator with Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, to demonstrate how walking has made a difference in the life of a local sailor. Carol Sele discussed her walking program, "Walk-it-Off," led forum participants in an exercise routine, and highlighted the program's incentives. One of the participants from the program, Oliver Bronnbauer, told his story, which was accompanied by pictures illustrating his dramatic weight loss.

**9:30-9:45**

**Recreation**

Guest speaker #1: Terri Arnold, South Whidbey Parks and Recreation

Commissioner Dean turned the attention of forum participants to EHAT's accomplishments on walkability since their forum in October 2006. He introduced Terri Arnold, Director of South Whidbey Parks and Recreation, as the first speaker on recreational opportunities in Island County. Terri discussed EHAT's trail mapping and signage project.

Guest speaker #2: Mayor Patty Cohen, City of Oak Harbor

Mayor Patty Cohen from the City of Oak Harbor delivered a speech accompanied by a slideshow presentation on how the City of Oak Harbor is promoting and sustaining walkability.

**9:45-10:00**

**Convenience & Connectivity**

Guest speaker #3: Rob Voigt, City of Oak Harbor Planning Department

- I. Rob Voigt spoke about the importance of policy approaches to addressing walkability. He highlighted select projects in Oak Harbor where pedestrian activity is encouraged through integrated design and development, and emphasized our responsibility in creating built environments that are not just walkable, but livable.
- II. Commissioner Dean thanked Rob and briefly spoke about the efforts of Jack Lynch, President of the Clinton Progressive Association, who was scheduled to speak but could not attend the forum. Jack is developing a community action plan for Clinton. The objective of the plan is to incorporate EHAT's Walkability Audit, the Scenic Byway Plan, SR525 Predesign Analysis Report by DOT, and similar reports/plans for Clinton into a single community action plan.

**10:00-10:15**

**Safe Routes to School**

Guest speaker #4: Holly Troyer, Oak Harbor Elementary

Commissioner Dean introduced Holly Troyer, PE Teacher at Oak Harbor Elementary, to share the successes of her Walking School Bus program.

Guest speaker #5: Joyce Swanson, Broad View Elementary

Principal Joyce Swanson from Broad View Elementary (BVE) talked about her school's efforts in helping her students increase their physical activity levels by increasing the number of children that walk or bike to/from school. BVE has instituted a walking program, a cycling enrichment class, and a no-idle zone for parents who drive their kids to school.

**10:15-11:00**

**Small group sessions on Recreation, Convenience & Connectivity, and Safe Routes to School**

Commissioner Dean asked the forum participants to break out into small group sessions to brainstorm solutions, resources, and next steps for tackling the tougher issues that remain under EHAT's three focus areas. EHAT facilitators led the discussions in small groups.

## **11:00-11:25                      Commit to Action**

The forum participants reconvened in the larger group to share their insights from the small group sessions. The major points addressed by each group are described below.

### **Recreation:**

- Changes in Island County park structure are needed; Camano is isolated from Whidbey*
- Pursue management of parks by agencies other than Island County*
- Concerned citizens need to continue to advocate for change*
- Strengthen political will for this issue; get a county commissioner on board to advocate for changes in park structure*
- Establish separate parks departments for Central Whidbey and Camano Island*

### **Convenience & Connectivity:**

- SR525 "Frontage Rd. cul-de-sac"*
- Island County planning (Andrew Hicks)*
- Pre-design agreements*
- More public participation on comprehensive plans needed; too late for public to provide input during application and public hearing processes*
- Road standard design to increase walkers and bikers when design is revisited*
- January is annual update time for comprehensive plan*
- County roads – asphalt redo*
- Barrier – SW ditches/retention (state law)*
- Policy change/exemption needed*
- Review SEPA – safety, etc.*
- Rural development incentives for trails/paths (PRDs?)*
- Rob's presentation on the road*

### **Convenience & Connectivity:**

#### Ideas Raised and Discussed

- SR525 "Frontage Rd. cul-de-sac" – too late in the process to address now*
- Island County Planning – Land Use – good place to find out about projects*
- Pre-design agreements – better place for input regarding walkability features*
- More public participation on comprehensive plans needed; too late for public to provide input during application and public hearing processes – best place for input regarding walkability features and requirements*
- Road standard design to increase walkers and bikers when design is revisited*
- January is annual update time for Island County Comprehensive Plan – review and comment on plan*
- County roads – during an asphalt overlay is the time for enhancements, not during chip sealing of the roads. Provide comments to Public Works annually to incorporate walkability features into their Transportation Improvement Plan and Trails Plan..*
- Barrier – storm water ditches/retention (state law) take up valuable right-of-way space*
- Policy change/exemption needed at the state level for the storm water retention barrier issue vs. the safety of non-motorized transportation*
- SEPA review includes safety considerations*

- Rural development incentives for trails/paths (PRDs?)
- Rob's (City of Oak Harbor) presentation on the new design standards –“take it on the road” to educate more people on it

### Summary

To affect positive change with regard to convenience and connectivity, it is important to start early on in the land use and community development process. This includes understanding the many agencies affecting decisions, including:

#### State agencies

- Department of Ecology (DOE), Storm water regulations: provide exemptions for pedestrian projects?
- Department of Transportation (DOT): provide more than a shoulder as a barrier between vehicle and pedestrian traffic?
  - Mike Morton is involved in Island County Public Works' Transportation Improvement Plan and a county-wide bike map

#### Local agencies

- Island County Planning and Community Development: annual Island County Comprehensive Plan updates
- Land use review: SEPA provides opportunity for mitigation; Agreements provide opportunity to introduce restrictions/conditions not specifically required by code

Also, it is important to learn from nearby community successes. For example, Rob Voigt provides an excellent presentation about Oak Harbor's design standards and positive examples of increasing convenience, connectivity, and livability.

#### **Safe Routes to School:**

- Cooperation between agencies for grants
- Share information between all agencies to fill missing gaps – improve grant opportunities (e.g. school route maps)
- Camano issues are different – need to bring Island County programs to Camano – work with agencies to make Walking School Bus easier
- Create hub for agencies to communicate needs and solutions
- Need parking availability for Walking School Bus on Camano
- Want to establish a trail system at Honeymoon Bay and primary school for children to walk to/from school (grant funds would help)
- Walking School Bus program and cycling program
- No-idle zone
- Island County Public Works is working on connecting trails to school system
- To enhance safety, must address certain needs:
  - A crossing for Broad View Elementary at Whidbey/Fairhaven
  - Hillcrest crossing @ Swantown
  - Map of walking areas and map of concerned areas(?)
  - Maps available on school website by beginning of next school year

11:25-11:30

#### **Closing & Adjourn**

- I. Commissioner Dean summarized the key points from the forum.
- II. Commissioner Dean thanked the attendees for their time and energy in meeting to work on this issue and acknowledged their hard work and dedication to making a difference in the county.

III. Commissioner Dean reminded participants to complete an evaluation form and stated that proceedings and other materials from the forum would be distributed to all participants.

**Evaluation:**

Following is the form that was used for the event. We received 35 evaluation forms. Some forms did not contain a response for certain questions.

**Walkability Forum Evaluation Form**

The Environmental Health Assessment Team (EHAT) would like to know your opinions on today's forum. We appreciate your response to the following questions.

**Please return this form to the organizer at the end of the forum. Also, if you have not done so already, please sign the sign-in sheet and update the participant list with your contact information. Thank you for your time and participation!**

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		<b>Strongly agree</b>				<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1.	The forum was applicable to my job/interests.	1 (24)	2 (6)	3 (3)	4 (2)	5
2.	The program was well paced within the allotted time.	1 (21)	2 (5)	3 (2)	4 (4)	5 (2)
3.	The material was presented in an organized manner.	1 (23)	2 (7)	3 (1)	4 (2)	5 (1)
4.	The presentations provided adequate background on the topic.	1 (18)	2 (11)	3 (5)	4	5
5.	I would be interested in attending trainings and/or workshops on this issue.	1 (21)	2 (9)	3 (3)	4	5 (1)
6.	The forum did a good job of bringing together people in the community working to address this issue.	1 (28)	2 (4)	3 (1)	4 (1)	5 (1)
7.	The objectives of the forum were met.	1 (21)	2 (6)	3 (5)	4 (1)	5
8.	Given the topic, was this forum:	<input type="checkbox"/> a. Too short (11)		<input type="checkbox"/> b. Just right (21)		<input type="checkbox"/> c. Too long
9.	Please rate the following:	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
	a. Visuals	<input type="checkbox"/> (14)	<input type="checkbox"/> (11)	<input type="checkbox"/> (7)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	b. Acoustics	<input type="checkbox"/> (19)	<input type="checkbox"/> (10)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c. Meeting space	<input type="checkbox"/> (23)	<input type="checkbox"/> (8)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	d. Handouts	<input type="checkbox"/> (14)	<input type="checkbox"/> (10)	<input type="checkbox"/> (7)	<input type="checkbox"/> (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	e. The program overall	<input type="checkbox"/> (19)	<input type="checkbox"/> (12)	<input type="checkbox"/> (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Please list organizations missing from the forum that could contribute input to this issue:					
	NAS Whidbey, City of Langley, including Langley planning staff, Clinton, city councils, better school district representation, WADOT, state parks, hospital prevention and rehab programs, local law enforcement, walking and bicycling groups					

11. How could this forum be improved?

More time needed for discussion, extend to an all-day event, place a higher priority on small group sessions where action was planned to solve problems/further progress, provide handouts on presentations, position the screen so all participants can view it, provide breaks during the presentations, look at rural issues, be more inclusive of Camano, place key information/data on website, establish collaborative website for follow-up discussion on forum, provide alternative evaluation form for individual speakers, allow speakers to roam with wireless, remote control, make the presentation bigger on the screen