

Rep. Rick Larsen - Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Member Designated Projects

1. Project Name: South Whidbey – Clinton area transportation infrastructure improvements

2. Project Sponsor/Lead Agency: Port of South Whidbey
3. Point of Contact (name): Stan Reeves
4. Point of Contact (email): execdir@portofsouthwhidbey.com
5. Point of Contact (phone number): 360-331-5494
6. Type of Project: Multi-modal
7. Location of Project (city and Congressional district): Clinton, WA; WA-02; 98236
8. Total project description, including description of benefit of project:

Project Description: This project consists of three components: re-construction of a dock adjacent to the Washington State Ferries vehicle ferry terminal in Clinton, WA capable of passenger-only ferry service; a feasibility study and strategic plan on passenger-only ferry operations at Clinton Dock; and, the construction of crosswalks on SR-525 in the Clinton community just west of the ferry landing.

Clinton Dock Passenger-only Ferry. Storm damage over the past four years rendered the dock floats unsafe at the Clinton Dock, adjacent to the Washington State Ferries terminal at Clinton, WA; half of the floats were removed in 2018, the remaining floats were removed in December 2020. Existing pilings remain in place; existing gangway is stored and to be re-installed during reconstruction. Project consists of the preliminary engineering, permitting and construction of a new dock configuration, utilizing existing pilings if feasible, that will accommodate Passenger-Only Ferry operations at the Clinton Dock.

Clinton-Everett Passenger-only Ferry Feasibility Study and Strategic Planning. The Port of South Whidbey is in the process of upgrading the passenger-only ferry dock in Clinton. At this time, the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO) is seeking funding to complete a detailed feasibility analysis of a Clinton – Everett passenger-only ferry route and create a South Whidbey Passenger Ferry Strategic Plan; to include an analysis of the feasibility of operating an electrically powered passenger ferry on a Clinton – Everett service route.

Clinton Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements. Final engineering and construction for two raised pedestrian-activated crosswalks with appropriate signage and lighting in the Clinton central business area and the broader community need for multimodal connectivity by ensuring those crossings are part of a wider non-motorized circulation strategy for the community. The

crosswalks will connect the two sides of downtown Clinton, currently divided by State Route 525, which accommodates the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry vehicle traffic. The two crosswalks are planned to cross SR-525 near Commercial Street and at Deer Lake Road. This project will follow several other large and small investments by Washington State Ferries and Island County intended to help keep the ferry service sustainable, including:

- \$3 million that improved passenger loading and safety at SR-525/ Ferry Dock Road, a project that enhanced passenger pick up and drop off and ADA access - completed in 2019.
- \$1.6 million to improve pedestrian connections and access to/from the Clinton Park-and-Ride to the Clinton Ferry Terminal – to be completed in 2022.
- A Clinton to Ken's Corner non-motorized trail is in design phase, part of a long-range concept for a trail that extends along the full length of Whidbey Island. This segment will connect Clinton to the next rural center area on Whidbey Island, approximately 2 miles away along SR-525.

The crosswalks are consistent with, and compliment, the other transportation improvement projects planned for the downtown Clinton area, including the non-motorized trail in preliminary design for the north/east side of the highway.

Summary of Project Benefits:

Clinton Dock Passenger-only Ferry. The Washington State Legislature funded a Passenger-Only Ferry study in 2019 conducted by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The primary purpose of the study was to identify potential future routes and dock/terminal locations for Passenger-Only service. The study was presented to the state legislature in January 2021. The potential Clinton – Everett route is one of seven (from an initial 45 routes considered) recommended to the state legislature for further consideration. The Clinton – Mukilteo vehicle ferry route experiences more vehicle traffic than any other ferry route in the state (2,276,967 vehicles in 2019) and the second highest number of total riders (4,133,699 in 2019); a logical enhancement/alternative for this route is Passenger-Only service to meet demands without increasing vehicle trips. In the event of an interruption of vehicle ferry service to the island, a Passenger-Only ferry service at the Clinton Dock would provide an ideal alternative. The dock's location adjacent to SR-525, with parking available at the Humphrey Road hourly/daily parking lot, the Clinton Park-and-Ride lot on SR-525, and the small pay lot to the right of the tollbooths, allows for those driving to the ferry to easily park vehicles and walk-on. Additionally, Island Transit provides routine scheduled bus service to the ferry terminal with stops easily accessible to the proposed Passenger-Only ferry dock.

Clinton-Everett Passenger-only Ferry Feasibility Study and Strategic Planning. The PSRC study referenced above also noted that the proposed Clinton – Everett route, with current technology, is a promising candidate for electrification. The shorter route distance and short transit time require much less power to support service than other routes. Current electric battery and vessel technologies could store all needed power on the vessel. Power to support an electric route is readily available at both the Everett and Clinton landings which provides great opportunities for charging an electric vessel and will likely require minimal utility

improvements. Electric ferries meet state and local objectives through: 1) carbon reduction (electric ferry + reduction of motor vehicle use), 2) encouraging economic development (more efficiently moving people and goods, as well as supporting local ship building), and 3) reducing impacts of travel along our marine highway by providing a small, quiet transportation option that minimizes impacts to the marine environment.

Clinton Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements. There has been a consistent message for more than a decade regarding the public benefit of providing non-motorized access in the Clinton area. The Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route has historically accommodated the highest vehicle ridership of the Washington State Ferries system annually. In 2020 the Mukilteo-Clinton route experienced the highest ridership of the system overall. The downtown area of Clinton is divided by SR-525, which accommodates this extremely high number of vehicles. Retail locations, the Post Office, restaurants, a food market, services, churches, etc. are located equally on both sides of SR-525. This project is essential to Clinton's economic vitality, allowing people to safely traverse between businesses and services, or to travel from their homes to the ferry. This project reflects strong community input regarding the need for better crossings of SR-525. The project focuses on crossings, but also considers the broader community need for multimodal connectivity by ensuring those crossings are part of a wider non-motorized circulation strategy for the community. Issues that need to be resolved include:

- Missing pieces of active transportation infrastructure discourage walking, biking and transit.
- Existing active transportation infrastructure not in a state of good repair.
- Active transportation infrastructure is currently not attractive to users, thus discouraging effective multimodal connections.
- Existing infrastructure lacks design strategies to enhance safety and mobility for people who choose to walk or bike.

The Clinton to Ken's Corner Trail is currently in design, as is the SR-525 Clinton Park-and-Ride Improvement project. This proposed pedestrian and bicycle safety project is the last segment of the Clinton-area improvements to be funded.

9. Is project included on most recent relevant transportation improvement program (State, Tribal, municipal, etc.): Yes

10. Total Cost of Project: \$1,989,000 (Clinton Dock Passenger-only Ferry, \$1.2 million; Clinton-Everett Passenger-only Ferry Feasibility Study and Strategic Planning, \$150k; Clinton Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements, \$639k)

11. Amount requested in this legislation: \$1,620,200.

12. Additional sources of funding. (The Committee will not designate funding for projects for which the requested amount represents a portion of the projects costs without the remainder of funding identified.): Port of South Whidbey General Funds are available for the current STBG match requirement of \$49,800; and, if required, can contribute an additional \$150,000 in matching funds under this request.

13. Has the project received federal funding in the past (yes/no)? If yes, list source and amount:

Clinton Dock Passenger-only Ferry. Yes, the project was awarded a Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) set-aside, Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Award of \$319,000, through the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO), in April 2020. This award funding may be increased to \$650,000 by the IRTPO in late April 2021, and has not been obligated yet.

Clinton-Everett Passenger-only Ferry Feasibility Study and Strategic Planning. No.

Clinton Pedestrian/Bicycle Improvements. Yes, Island County received \$120,000 in Federal Funds for Public Engagement and 90% Design plans in 2015.

14. Has the project applied for U.S. DOT discretionary grants in the past? If Yes, e-mail project application to SurfaceMDPs.WA02@mail.house.gov: No

15. Project Phase: Preliminary Engineering/Permitting/Construction

16. NEPA Category of Action: Undetermined

17. Status of Environmental Review: Pre-review

18. Description of process that was used or will be used to provide public opportunity to comment on project: Public will be invited to participate in public meetings of the Port Board of Commissioners to provide comment on the project. Significant public involvement was included in both the Clinton gateway planning effort (*Island County Comp Plan*) that defined the need for the pedestrian improvements, and the development of *Island Access 2040*, IRTPO's regional transportation plan, that includes Clinton-area projects identified in item 24, below. Public involvement for PRSC's Passenger-only Ferry Study included personal outreach, surveys, and multiple online meetings and webinars available for a 12-county region. All referenced documents include reporting of public involvement.

19. This project has a letter of support from the public agency responsible for carrying out the project (yes/no). If yes, e-mail the letter to SurfaceMDPs.WA02@mail.house.gov. See linked T&I documents above for letter requirements: Yes

20. Is the project on the state or Tribal transportation improvement program? If Yes, please provide a link or e-mail as an attachment to SurfaceMDPs.WA02@mail.house.gov. If No, please see Questions #22-24 for additional requirements: No

21. Is the project on the metropolitan transportation improvement program (Yes/No/Not Applicable) If Yes, please provide a link or e-mail as an attachment to SurfaceMDPs.WA02@mail.house.gov. If the project is not on the TIP because it is not

located in a metropolitan planning area, enter Not Applicable. If the project is in a metropolitan planning area and is not on the TIP, enter No and see Questions #22-#24 for additional requirements: Not Applicable

22.If funding is provided for this project, can it be added to the STIP/TIP in a reasonable timeframe? (If Yes, please e-mail a confirmation letter from the relevant agency to SurfaceMDPs.WA02@mail.house.gov. If No, please answer Question #23): Yes

23.(If the answer to Question #22 was no) Is the Project eligible for federal funding under title 23 (highways) or chapter 53 of title 49 (public transit)?

24.Is the project included on a regional or statewide long-range transportation plan? (if Yes, please e-mail as an attachment to SurfaceMDPs.WA02@mail.house.gov): Yes, these projects are included in *Island Access 2040*, the Island Regional Transportation Plan. Pieces of the collective projects are referenced in Strategic Action Items 8, 18, 26, 28, 29, and 31. (Additionally, the Clinton pedestrian projects are included in Island County Comprehensive Plan's Economic Development Element, Subsection 2A: The Clinton Gateway.)

25.If you have submitted this request to additional Congressional offices, please list those here: None

26.I have e-mailed all required additional documentation (see questions 14, 19, 20, 21 and 22-24, if applicable) to SurfaceMDPs.WA02@mail.house.gov, using the project name as the subject line: Yes (only for 19 and 22; sent additional letters and supporting documents).

27.If your agency is submitting multiple requests, please rank the importance of this project: 1