

Clinton marketing study focus group workshops

Business owners

- Bed and Break, VRBO and Airbnb rentals increasing
- Large market for long term rental and home purchase, limited stock available
- Need for additional multifamily opportunities
- VRBO and AirBNB rentals are increasing rapidly
- Rentals are hard to come by
- Housing costs still cheaper than mainland
- Boeing runs a shuttle from the ferry landing
- Financing of projects a problem
- WILL - Whidbey Island Local Lending, a local group of investors willing to lend for local businesses
- Cozi's is the local tavern
- Septic systems seem adequate for single family developments
- A retirement community in Freeland has a small centralized sewer system
- There are a number of fiber artists and processors in the area but no local retail outlet
- Need a community-gathering place - café, coffee shop, etc.
- Dodge Building a possible site for café/coffee shop
- Two banks in the Clinton area - Whidbey Bank and Wells Fargo Bank
- Chamber of Commerce not operating at this time - motivating party gone
- 3 Farmers Markets in S. Whidbey area
- Clinton Water District added sewer responsibility
- Specialty weddings a booming business - venues needed
- Ferry issues -
 - Slow down traffic along highway
 - Need an uphill holding tank for cars
 - Need some type of system that tells people how long they will wait prior to moving car toward or on to ferry
- Signage along highway needs to be more frequent and clearer
- On Mukilteo side - Sound Transit needs a much fuller schedule to serve commuters and access to the City
- Improve the tourist marketing of South Whidbey

Workshop recommendations

- **Promote the a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit in the area**
- **Create a community identity**
- **Create a gathering place for friends to meet**
- **Address ferry traffic issues and opportunities**

Property owners

- Most larger property owners don't live on the Island
- Most property in the RAID is occupied by single family homes
- Septic tank issues make it very difficult serve multi-family and commercial uses. (A clearer discussion of these issues is needed)
- Limited water supply is seen as an issue
- Attributes of the area include -
 - Inexpensive
 - Friendly
 - Outdoors
 - Close to urban area amenities
 - Quite
 - More affordable housing
- Downside includes -
 - Change
 - Little community feeling now
 - Long term rentals hard to find
 - No place to meet, eat, have a cup of coffee (coffee shop, bakery, local foods)
 - Need a full service hardware and expanded grocery outlets
 - Possible expansion of the Payne Field role
 - Lack of healthcare options
 - Limited water supply
 - Limited transit links into metro area (Sound Transit improvements)
- Ferry Issues -
 - Traffic speed is too high
 - Traffic circulation due to ferry traffic is VERY difficult
 - Queuing needs to be better organized to enable for people to leave their cars during waits
 - Need for public bathrooms along queuing area
- Changing demographics point out a need for senior services and housing

- Increased multifamily opportunities are needed
- Enhance farm to table opportunities that exist
- Promote the specialty wedding market and provide more overnight lodging opportunities for guests
- Business startup financing hard to find
- Several attendees (2) stressed the idea that “many” people like the area just as it is

Workshop recommendations

- **Create opportunities for new business**
- **Create a community gathering place**
- **Manage ferry traffic needs to the community’s benefit**
- **Improve utility services to the area**
- **Address senior citizen service needs**

Public agencies

- State and local planning has started for sewer services in the district if a larger development comes in
- Freeland business district area has a package sewer (septic) plan in place
- Water district can provide for 50 to 60 hookups a year
- County Transit operates 5 days a week 4am to 8pm
- Van Pooling takes riders onto ferry and to several destinations in metro area and on to Olympia
- 68 vans in the pool with walk on numbers increasing
- Transit is gearing up for Saturday service in 2017
- VRBO and AirBnB rentals really expanding
- A third ferry, reducing sailings to 20 minutes headway, in the State Plan
- Easier loading of walk-ons, such as overhead walkway, is needed
- South Whidbey Parks and Recreation is separate from Whidbey Island Parks and Recreation

Workshop recommendations

- **Resolve solutions to sewer/septic services for new development in Clinton**
- **Initiate the corridor enhancement planning project for SR-525**
- **Initiate a subarea planning process for Clinton in 2017**

Clinton Community Council

- Ferry Advisory Committee is active and helpful
- A functional and successful Chamber of Commerce is needed help with plan implementation and management
- The larger ferries take longer to load and scheduled sailing times run behind as day advances
- The condition of existing buildings need to be improved
- A sense of community needs to be promoted
- The Clinton “client” should be young middle class residents
- Capitalize on the “pleasant environment” of Clinton and easy access to urban area
- The management of ferry queuing needs to be improved
- Allow for passengers to get out of cars to eat and shop prior to ferry leaving
- Facilitate walk on traffic and overnight parking
- Provide for bus traffic on weekends
- Slow down traffic leaving the ferry with traffic calming techniques
- Expanded grocery and pharmacy needed with easy in and easy out
- Street scene enhancements and pedestrian amenities should be provided along the highway
- However the “funkiness” needs to remain
- Increase senior and workforce housing, including increased multifamily opportunities
- Encourage the development of nearby RV parking, camping, and walker/biker trails and access
- Pedestrian crossing of the highway needs to be improved
- South Whidbey State Park out of use could potentially be resourced for some other needed use
- Distillery industry could be capitalized on to complement the wine/vineyard tours
- Look into changing the ferry route name to something like Mukilteo/Whidbey Island

Workshop recommendations

- **Address ferry issues and opportunities**
- **Increase housing opportunities**
- **Improve transit connections on both ends of the ferry**
- **Improve highway corridor appearances**

Residents

- Provide for ferry traffic improvements including:
 - Public bathrooms
 - Queuing that allows for passengers to get out of car
 - Overnight parking
 - Slowing down cars leaving Clinton
 - Increase ferry headway to 20 minutes
- Improve transit connections to metro area on Eastside
- Sound Transit needs to expand service throughout the day
- Provide for expanded transit service on weekends
- Create a summer transit loop that connects Clinton, Langley and Freeland
- Encourage the growth of all senior services, including, health care, short and long term housing and recreational activities
- A big need for senior health specialists
- Clinton should create an “entryway” to Whidbey Island appearance to people coming off the ferry
- The “funky” atmosphere needs to remain
- There is a fear of the costs of sewers for the area
- Provide for better childcare services in Clinton to support working couples
- Seniors are the growth demographic now but Clinton needs to support and encourage young couples
- Promote the arts by creating an arts council
- Fabric arts is a local industry that could be promoted to visitors
- There is a need for a place for local to gather and strengthen community
- A café/bakery or coffee shop is needed
- Hardware, pharmacy and grocery shopping opportunities need promotion
- Local traffic circulation needs to improve and be made easier and safer

Workshop recommendations

- **Address ferry traffic issues and opportunities**
- **Expand local transit services**
- **Solve senior citizen health and housing needs**
- **Enhance community-gathering places and environment needs**
- **Encourage younger couples to move into the area**