

Transportation Element

Introduction

The Transportation Element guides the development of the Town's transportation system to accommodate existing and future growth described in the Land Use Element. Planned transportation system improvements will support growth, provide alternatives that enable system users to travel via motorized and active transportation routes more easily, and contribute to Coupeville's character as an attractive place for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Transportation Element supports sustainable programs, projects, and services that address economic, social, and environmental needs in the context of transportation planning. It incorporates local, regional, and national transportation policies and focuses on interjurisdictional collaboration to support infrastructure connectivity for local and regional users.

The Transportation Element is organized into five sections:

- A. Goals and Policies
- B. Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities and Conditions
- C. Travel Forecasts Evaluation
- D. Transportation Systems Plan
- E. Financing Program

The Transportation Element Goals and Policies are presented here in the Comprehensive Plan document, while the Inventory, Forecasts, Systems Plan, and Financing Program are provided in Appendices to the Comprehensive Plan.

The Transportation Element is intended to serve as a guide for making transportation decisions to address both short- and long-term needs. To meet GMA requirements, the



A street in Coupeville.



Canoe racers (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



M/V Salish in service on the Port Townsend/Coupeville route (photo credit: VIGOR/Dean Wallace).

Transportation Element must identify existing transportation system characteristics, establish standards for levels of service (LOS), and identify existing and future deficiencies based on land use growth projections.

The Transportation Element also discusses multimodal transportation mobility and accessibility needs, identifies improvements necessary to enhance safety, comfort, and connectivity for people walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, and driving. Consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Plan establishes a flexible policy framework for making decisions consistent with this vision and describes a strategy for accomplishing the vision over the 20-year planning horizon.

Regulatory Setting

Growth Management Act (GMA)

The Transportation Element is intended to satisfy GMA requirements for long-range planning and to supplement information and implement goals and policies within the Comprehensive Plan. Under GMA (RCW 36.70A.070), the Transportation Element is required to assess the needs of a community and determine how to provide appropriate multimodal transportation facilities for current and future residents.

The GMA also requires that the Transportation Element contain a funding analysis of the capital transportation projects it recommends (RCW 36.70A.040(6)). This analysis should cover funding needs and resources and should include a multi-year financing plan. The purpose of the analysis is to ensure that the Town's transportation systems plans are affordable and achievable. If it is not, the Element must discuss how additional funds will be raised or how assumptions used in the analysis will be reassessed.

Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization

The Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) was established in 2016 and is the region's designated regional transportation planning organization.



Vehicles on Front Street (photo credit: John Feit).



Sailboat seen from Front Street (photo credit: John Hummel).



Racing canoes (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Bike route sign (photo credit: Esther Reid).

The Island RTPO represents the local government agencies within Island County for the purpose of coordinating on regional transportation planning issues.

[Island Access 2045 RTP](#), adopted in March 2024, is the regional transportation plan (RTP) for Island County and acts as the region's long-range transportation strategy.

The successful implementation of Island Access 2045 relies on the successful implementation of local comprehensive plans.

[Island RTPO Comprehensive Safety Action Plan \(CSAP\)](#), adopted in April 2025, includes all communities within Island County in a systemic analysis of public safety issues and concerns on the regional multimodal transportation network. The CSAP uses the Safe Systems Approach in an effort to reduce and potentially eliminate fatal and serious injuries, and to identify opportunities to lower risks for vulnerable road users.

Goals and Policies

Goal T-1. Multimodal Transportation System. Develop an integrated and balanced transportation system that creates complete streets to increase access, mobility, and health for all users and addresses the Town's climate change goals.

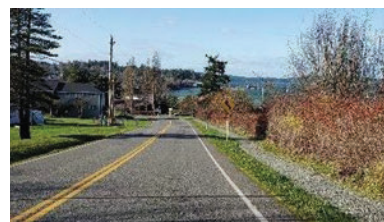
T-1.1 In conjunction with, or as part of the development of a PROS Plan in Policy PR-1.1, develop an Active Transportation Network and strategy to identify and resolve connectivity gaps. Coordinate with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, Island County, WSDOT, and the Whidbey-Camano Land Trust for connections to bikeways and trails outside the town.



The Rhododendron Trail on the south side of Highway 20.

T-1.2 Encourage pedestrian and bicycle connections between adjacent developments, even when topographic or other constraints prevent connections for motorized vehicles.

T-1.3 Maintain a street grid system to support efficient pedestrian circulation. Where street connections are not feasible, active transportation connections should be considered.



A gravel pedestrian path

T-1.4 Preserve unimproved public rights-of-way when reasonable to assure they are available in the future for development of connections.

- T-1.5 Support the continued operation and expansion of Island Transit to provide frequent and comprehensive transit service within the Coupeville area.
- T-1.6 Evaluate the safety and efficiency of the transportation system across all modes on an ongoing basis so it continues to adequately serve the Town's residents and businesses.
- T-1.7 Adopt a Complete Streets ordinance and incorporate pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-friendly designs into roadway improvement projects where feasible.
- T-1.8 Develop an ADA Transition Plan to integrate accessibility into the Town's multimodal transportation system.
- T-1.9 Support the continued operation and expansion of Washington State Ferries to provide sustainable ferry service to Whidbey Island.
- T-1.10 Provide safe and convenient non-motorized crossings along SR 20 on the east and west ends of town, where logical connectivity to local and regional trails is needed.
- T-1.11 Prioritize small-scale transportation upgrades throughout the Town over large projects that may not be economically feasible.
- T-1.12 Support regional non-motorized trail network development, specifically the "Bridge to Boat" trail.



Protected bike lane (photo credit: SDOT).



Washington State Ferry (photo credit: Ken Lane).

Goal T-2. Support the Land Use Element. Provide a multimodal transportation system that supports the Land Use Element and is consistent with the Island County Countywide Planning Policies and the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization's Regional Transportation Plan.

- T-2.1 Ensure that transportation policies, projects, and programs are coordinated and consistent with land use plans and further the Town's land use, climate, and environmental goals.



Front Street (photo credit: John Feit).

T-2.2 Ensure that public and private projects systematically implement the policy objectives of the Transportation Element through the development review process.

T-2.3 Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Island County to ensure the regional highways and major arterials that provide access to Coupeville function as efficiently as possible.



Looking north across Dugualla Bay on SR 20 on Whidbey Island (photo credit: WSDOT).

T-2.4 Town vehicle LOS standards are:

- LOS C average delay per vehicle for signals, roundabouts, and all-way stop control intersections.
- LOS D for the worst traffic movement at unsignalized two-way, stop-controlled intersections.

T-2.5 Pedestrian LOS Standards on the Active Transportation Network are listed below:

- Within Town: Urban standard sidewalks on both sides or a shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.
- Within Town, where approved: Urban standard sidewalk on one side or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.

UGA: = or > 5-foot-wide shoulder on roadway.

T-2.6 Bicycle LOS Standards on the Active Transportation Network are listed below:

- A. Within Town: Urban standard marked bike lanes on both sides or a shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.
- B. Within Town, where approved: Shared lane markings or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side.

UGA: = or > 5-foot-wide shoulder on roadway.

T-2.7 The Transit LOS Standard is based on ADA accessibility of Island Transit bus stops within the public road right-of-way. The prioritization and completion of ADA upgrades at all Island Transit bus stops provides mutual benefit to Island County and Island Transit.

Goal T-3. Support the Town's Historic Character. Encourage transportation facility design that supports and enhances the Town's historic character and Ebey's Design Guidelines.

T-3.1 Develop street standards for arterials, collectors, and access streets that provide guidance on the number and width of lanes, intersection spacing, driveway access, right-of-way width, setbacks, lighting, landscaping, and other appurtenances. The street standards should identify design needs for accommodating transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists as appropriate for each roadway classification and consistent with the Town Complete Streets ordinance.



Front Street (photo credit: John Feit).

T-3.2 Consider alternatives to gravel for public pathways that retain rural streetscape character and are functional for a wide spectrum of users.

T-3.3 Where allowed within the right of way, encourage well-designed, low-maintenance landscaping on road frontages and adjacent public rights-of-way that is attractive to the traveling public and easily maintained by private property owners.



Coupeville Inn sign (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

T-3.4 Encourage appropriately scaled and designed parking to support business and recreational uses.

T-3.5 In coordination with Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve and Island County, develop a signage and wayfinding program that directs vehicles and pedestrians to parking areas, public facilities, and attractions.

T-3.6 Implement regulations that prohibit or highly limit the use of cul-de-sacs and other modern suburban/subdivision design trends that are inconsistent with historic street patterns. To achieve this, develop historic road design standards for Design Review Areas 1 and 2.

Goal T-4. System Preservation. Preserve and extend the service life and utility of transportation investments.

- T-4.1 Prioritize essential maintenance, preservation, and safety improvements of the existing transportation system.
- T-4.2 Maintain and preserve the transportation system in a way that is mindful of lifecycle costs associated with delayed maintenance.
- T-4.3 Coordinate prevention and recovery strategies and disaster response plans with regional and local agencies to protect the transportation system against major disruptions.
- T-4.4 Incorporate measures to increase system resiliency in all new and reconstructed transportation improvements.



WSDOT contractor crews working on SR 20 (photo credit: WSDOT).

Goal T-5. Financial Stability. Provide a stable, long-term financial foundation for improving the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

- T-5.1 Use grants, local taxes, and funds, and other funding sources to implement capital projects as identified in the Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- T-5.2 Continue to partner with WSDOT, Island County, the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO), and Island Transit to fund improvement projects and programs that serve the Town.
- T-5.3 Ensure that new growth pays a proportionate share of the transportation improvements needed to support growth and adequately mitigate its impacts on the transportation system.
- T-5.4 Consider adopting a Transportation Impact Fee program for new development.



Children riding scooters.

Goal T-6. Community Safety and Connectivity. Provide safe, well-connected mobility options for all users.

- T-6.1 Identify, prioritize, and implement traffic calming measures on roads to slow vehicle traffic to posted speed limits, reduce potential accidents, and keep the community and animals safe.
- T-6.2 Coordinate with WSDOT, Island County, and the cities of Oak Harbor and Langley to develop a Countywide Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. The plan should identify areas of high risk for collisions and sustainable/implementable solutions.
- T-6.3 Connect missing links within the Town's multimodal transportation network for all modes of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and automotive vehicles.



Traffic calming choker (photo credit: Seattle Department of Transportation).

Goal T-7: Vehicle Miles Traveled Reduction. Reduce vehicle miles traveled to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals.

- CR-7.1 Partner with the school district to promote safe, walkable routes.
- CR-7.2 Create a safe, well-connected, and attractive bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to encourage active transportation.
- CR-7.4 Continue supporting Island Transit's endeavors to improve transit speed, frequency, coverage, and reliability in Coupeville and Island County.
- CR-7.5 Prioritize and promote public transit, and active transportation expansion and use through coordination of land use and transportation planning.
- T-6.4 Coordinate with WSDOT, Island Transit, Island County, and the cities of Oak Harbor and Langley to develop a Countywide Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program to help reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).



Joggers and bicyclists ride along a path (photo credit: Cindy Shebley).