

**Report on
Coordination of Transportation Services in
South Pierce County and North Thurston County**

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Secretary of Transportation

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March 13, 2019



On behalf of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), this report summarizes work completed by WSDOT consistent with Section 218 (8) of the supplemental transportation budget Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6106.

Background

The Legislature directed WSDOT, within existing resources, to meet with local stakeholders in south Pierce County and north Thurston County to discuss: potential solutions to traffic congestion, emergency management concerns, and transportation investments to benefit the economic development of the area (Section 218 (8) of the supplemental transportation budget (ESSB 6106)):

11 (8) Within existing resources, the department shall meet with
12 local stakeholders in south Pierce county and North Thurston county
13 to discuss potential solutions to traffic congestion; emergency
14 management concerns regarding routes away from natural disasters and
15 around incidents similar to the train derailment that occurred on
16 December 18, 2017; and what state transportation investments would
17 benefit the economic development of the area. The department shall
18 provide regular updates on its progress to the joint transportation
19 committee.

Working with local stakeholders

Since it was formed in 2014, the Interstate 5/Joint Base Lewis-McChord Joint Operations Group (I-5/JBLM JOG) has provided a forum to discuss transportation issues. While the signatories to the JOG Charter are WSDOT, Washington State Patrol (WSP) and Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), local agencies in Pierce and Thurston County are listed as Ancillary Partners in the Charter document and are routinely invited to attend as well.

WSDOT and our partners are connected and working together to plan for the worst situations, make improvements jointly as funds are identified, and are committed to maintaining a forum for continuously vetting all the possibilities for joint multi-agency coordination, communication, and collaboration.

Progress

The following actions have been taken to date:

- We met with Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) in Spring 2018 to present our response to the 2018 Amtrak derailment and provide an overview of the I-5/JBLM JOG. At that time, we shared the proviso and detailed how the requirements fit well under the umbrella of the existing working group. Recognizing the direction to WSDOT to perform the work within existing resources, we shared our intention of leveraging the process and partnerships at the JOG, particularly given the stakeholders noted in the proviso were/are active participants in JOG activities.

- Last fall, representatives of the I-5/JBLM JOG met with local agency partners at several meetings hosted by TRPC including: The Cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater; WSP; JBLM; Intercity Transit; and Thurston County Sheriff/Public Works. The goal was to review and update our existing pre-planned detours in Thurston County. These detours have been established since the early 2000's, and this was the second time this group has reviewed and made adjustments to the detour plans and specifically identified pre-planned detours. Minor changes were identified for future planning and implementation such as considering both State Route (SR) 121 and Littlerock/Case Road (both sides of I-5) in the event of a complete freeway closure to reduce head-on conflicts and dangerous left turns. The planning done to date illustrates how the partners are working together to identify any and all available detour routes to be implemented during a critical incident.
- In an effort to ensure every partner has the same plans in the same format, TRPC agreed to take on the task of updating the pre-planned detours into a GIS format.
- The I-5/JBLM JOG also has pre-planned detours in development in Pierce County, particularly in the areas surrounding and through JBLM itself which have been started in a GIS format. One example of this was the detour using Perimeter Road within JBLM installation right-of-way during the derailment. These, and other Thurston County pre-planned detours are housed in the common multi-agency shared platform jointly paid for by WSDOT, WSP, and JBLM called "ReadyOp".
- The core partner agencies are looking into the requirements and sharing costs to purchase a GIS license under the I-5/JBLM JOG name. This would allow for all agency partners (core and ancillary) to build and manage new and updated pre-planned detours in a common system. The I-5/JBLM JOG would continue to house the final products in the "ReadyOp" system as well. We plan to identify and use partner agency volunteers who have existing GIS staff to produce and maintain these plans going forward.
- On February 6th, the JOG conducted a joint workshop that included approximately 70 law enforcement officers and emergency responders and officials from JBLM, WSP, WSDOT, Pierce County, Thurston County, the Nisqually Indian Tribe and the Cities of DuPont, Lakewood, Steilacoom, Roy, Yelm, Rainier, Tenino, and Shelton. The scenario-based workshop was conducted to further prepare communities, counties and state agencies to respond to traffic issues along the I-5 JBLM corridor if a major incident blocks the interstate for an extended period of time. The workshop was led by WSDOT, JBLM and WSP.

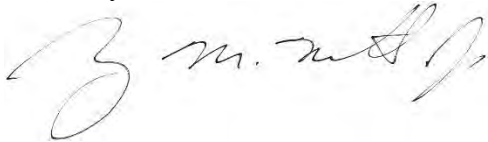
Next steps

Discussions on how to manage traffic on the more regional detour routes through Yelm and Shelton are ongoing. There are some items such as routing that need new plans developed. There are additional items for discussion that would carry a cost and could improve our response by taking advantage of technology (e.g. devices for remote signal operations, travel time information between signals, “Big Data” contracts to consider, etc.), and physical improvements (e.g. minor paving/widening, ability to implement cross-overs in the event that one direction of traffic on I-5 is completely blocked and restriping at the Old Pacific Highway/SR 510 connection). Additional funding would be needed to move those options forward.

WSDOT continues to work with our partners through the Joint Operations Group. While a presentation on this work has not yet been scheduled for a Joint Transportation Committee meeting due to the committee’s busy schedule, we remain available for additional updates.

Please contact John Wynands, Olympic Region Administrator, at (360) 357-2658 or wynandj@wsdot.wa.gov if you have any questions regarding the department’s Coordination of Transportation Services in South Pierce County and North Thurston County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Millar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a stylized "M".

Roger Millar, PE, FASCE, FAICP
Secretary of Transportation