

# ISLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (IRTPO) EXECUTIVE BOARD

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 26, 2021

### **Executive Board Member/Seat Attendance List:**

Chair: Commissioner Melanie Bacon, Island County  
Vice Chair: Commissioner Curt Gordon, POSW  
Commissioner Janet St. Clair, Island County  
Commissioner Mohammad Mostafavinassab,  
Port of Coupeville  
Blaine Oborn, Administrator, City of Oak Harbor  
Mayor Tim Callison, City of Langley  
Sharon Sappington, EDC  
Director Todd Morrow, Island Transit  
Todd Carlson, WSDOT  
Brian Tyhuis, NAS Whidbey  
Councilwoman Beth Munns, Island Transit  
(City of Oak Harbor)

### **Members not in Attendance:**

Commissioner Jill Johnson, Island County  
Mayor Molly Hughes, Town of Coupeville  
Jay Drye, WSDOT  
Jennifer Ferguson, City of Stanwood

### **Guests:**

Stan Reeves, Port of South Whidbey  
Bob Monize, Citizen Advisor to TAC  
Henry Rood, Island County Planning

### **Presenters:**

Kendra Breiland, Fehr & Peers  
Marissa Milam, Fehr & Peers

### **Staff:**

Susan Driver, IRTPO Planner  
Kelly Ojala, Island County Public Works  
Bill Oakes, IRTPO Director

**Commissioner Bacon, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:02 am**

### **1. Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Gordon made a motion to approve the agenda. Second by. Councilwoman Munns. All yeas, motion passed.

### **2. Minutes of April 28, 2021**

Commissioner Gordon made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 24, 2021 as presented. Second by Councilwoman Munns. All yeas, motion passed.

### **3. Unified Planning Work Program for State Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023**

Susan went through the sections that had been revised since the Board last talked about this UPWP. One of the main items still in question is an additional grant coming from the state for the update to the Human Services Transportation Plan. The grant has been confirmed to be at least \$20,000, but may be as much as \$50,000. Until we have a definite number, \$20,000 has been added to the budget as a placeholder. If additional funding is provided, this budget will change, requiring an amendment to the UPWP.

Commissioner St. Clair asked if we were locked into the identified work elements for two years. She indicated that she would like to see the IRTPO include some vehicle electrification implementation projects in the future. As long as we're able to amend the UPWP, Commissioner St. Clair is favorable.

Commissioner St. Clair also thanked Todd Carlson and WSDOT for their continuing coordination on the SR 532 congestion and safety issues and asked that we continue working on that situation as part of this

plan. Mr. Carlson indicated that we will be looking at additional analysis of SR 532 as part of Element 4 – Data Collection & Analysis.

Commissioner St. Clair made a motion to adopt the plan as written, pending an amendment to the budget when additional grant information is available. Second by Commissioner Gordon. All yeas, motion passed.

#### **4. Data Collection & Analysis Presentation**

Marissa Milam and Kendra Breiland of Fehr & Peers presented selected sections of The IRTPO Data Book, a high-level overview of the data collection & analysis work they have completed in the past nine months. The complete IRTPO Data Book was sent to each board member electronically, prior to the meeting.

Marissa gave a recap of the project scope and discussed how the data was collected. She explained that she worked with staff representatives of all IRTPO member agencies, including WSDOT and WSF to gather existing data and discuss the data and analysis needs/wants of each agency. She then worked with Susan and TAC members to identify data gaps and priority study areas. Marissa created a series of travel zones for which to purchase additional “Big Data” from a company called StreetLight.

Todd Carlson indicated that WSDOT has recently started using StreetLight data. He stated that he like this “Big Data” because it helps to peel away the layers so we can better understand who is using state, county, and local streets and how they are using them. This helps direct our planning.

Kendra stated, now that they’ve gathered and organized data and insights from member agencies for phase 1, its time to determine how to help members use the data to plan better infrastructure and show why funding is needed for projects such as SR 532, SR 20 through Oak Harbor, etc. Hopefully, the team can help IRTPO tell the story of why our projects merit state and federal investment.

The IRTPO Data Book illustrates some of the uses of the collected data, and gives an easy to understand graphic example of travel patterns and traffic flows in specific areas selected for study. This document and presentation is representative only. More detailed (granular) information has been gathered, that includes number of trips by hour, direction and length of trips, and comparisons between fall of 2019 and fall of 2020. [All data collected to date was delivered to the Island County GIS manager. A repository has been created for use of all IRTPO member agencies.]

A section of the The IRTPO Data Book also highlighted accessibility issues, with maps showing how many jobs are accessible to Island County residents (by Census Block Group) via car or transit. Similar maps showed accessibility of grocery stores by car or transit. These maps are overviews that simply show us where gaps exist so we can work on plans for the future.

Todd Morrow stated that Island Transit is working separately with the Fehr & Peers team to help with its route planning and looking at better accessibility. He noted that the data collected to date as part of this effort is a great starting point for Island Transit’s planning.

The IRTPO Board asked additional questions related to accessibility, a possible SR 532 alternative route, cross-collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions, safety issues, breaking out ferry usage in more detailed maps, and the need to transport an aging population to medical services off-island. One item discussed was the perception that people from Oak Harbor tend to stay in the northern portion of Whidbey Island, and people from South Whidbey tend to avoid Oak Harbor. The StreetLight data and mapping confirmed this assumption to be correct.

In the future, Fehr & Peers would like to do a deeper dive into the identified problem areas such as SR 532, SR 20 through Oak Harbor, ferry ridership, and consideration of pass-through freight traffic.

#### **5. Fehr & Peers Supplemental Agreement**

Susan stated the UPWP for SFYs 2022-2023, as adopted earlier today, includes a continuation of Element 4 – Data Collection and Analysis. Our WSDOT liaison proposed that we extend the contract of the existing consultant, rather than going through the consultant selection process again and starting with someone new. Per this advice, Susan created a draft contract supplement, proposing to extend the Fehr & Peers Data Collection & Analysis contract for the next biennium (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2021). This supplement has been reviewed and approved by WSDOT. As indicated in the UPWP budget, this element is funded entirely with state funds. The draft was presented to the Board for a first reading.

Councilwoman Munns stated that with the unique data Fehr & Peers has gathered, and the work they've done to date, it would save time and money to keep the same team moving forward. She suggested there was no need to delay the decision until next month. No disagreement was voiced.

Councilwoman Munns made a motion to extend the Fehr & Peers contract through June 30, 2023. Commissioner St. Clair seconded. All yeas, motion passed.

*[Because this agreement was still in draft form, Susan will need to pass it through risk management and legal review before it can be signed.]*

#### **6. Island Region Vehicle Electrification Policy**

The Island Vehicle Electrification Study has concluded. This policy document was distributed to the Board in March, revised slightly per member comments, and brought back in April. Due to time constraints, it was tabled at the April meeting. No changes have been made to the document in the interim.

Todd Morrow stated that his requested changes had been incorporated in the April version. He was concerned about supporting a policy that did not consider equity. Encouraging purchase of electric vehicles as a regionwide policy discriminates against the low and middle class who may not be able to purchase vehicles – especially electric vehicles which are currently more expensive than traditional combustion engine vehicles. He indicated that the added points to include alternate fuel buses addressed this issue, providing zero-carbon options for all travelers.

Commissioner St. Clair requested a language change on page 2 item 1. The term ‘ownership’ should be replaced with ‘utilization’ again providing access to all users, including those who may rideshare or rent vehicles, but are not able to purchase.

Commissioner Gordon expressed a concern about item 4 on page 2, supporting the adoption of electric vehicle-ready building codes. With the shortage of affordable housing on Whidbey Island, he would not like to see municipalities require anything that increases the costs of housing and home construction. Mayor Callison pointed out that the language at the top of the section states “the IRPTO supports the following potential actions,” so nothing is recommended or required. After much discussion, it was determined that the word ‘Adoption’ in item 4 would be changed to make it more flexible.

*[Susan has replaced with the word, ‘Consideration’.]*

Commissioner St. Clair made a motion to adopt the Island Vehicle Electrification Policy with the changes to page 2, items 1 and 4, as discussed. Councilwoman Munns seconded. All yeas, motion passed.

## **7. Title VI**

Susan presented the proposed Title VI Plan and Assurances document for review of the Board and gave the background of this effort. Last fall the WSDOT Title VI Coordinator informed her that the IRTPO needed to have its own Title VI Plan, separate from Island County. At the time, WSDOT was in the process of uploading new guidelines for Title VI compliance, based on new FHWA guidance. It was recommended that IRTPO create a plan that meets the new guidelines, to avoid additional work in the future. This plan was created and reviewed by the Title VI office in October of last year. When the new guidance was posted on the WSDOT website and added to the manual, this plan was again sent in for review (just in case). It received preliminary approval from the WSDOT Title VI coordinator both times. The document will be on the June agenda for action.

## **8. Member update roundtable**

**Commissioner Bacon, Chair, Adjourned the meeting at 12:25 pm.**

***Next Meeting: June 24, 2021***

The recording of this meeting will be available on the IRTPO meetings page:

<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/PublicWorks/Roads/Planning/Pages/ltpominutesandagendas.aspx>

### **Acronyms:**

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration

HSTP – Human Services Transportation Plan

MOA – Memorandum of Agreement

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NAS – Naval Air Station

RTIP – Regional Transportation Improvement Program

RTP – Regional Transportation Plan

SFY – State Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)

STBG – Surface Transportation Block Grant

TAC – Technical Advisory Committee

WSDOT – Washington State Department  
of Transportation

WSF – Washington State Ferries

TRIP – Tribal and Regional Integrated Planning  
UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program