



## ISLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (IRTPO) EXECUTIVE BOARD

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

September 22, 2021

#### **Executive Board Member Attendance List**

Melanie Bacon, Chair and County Commissioner - Island County  
Curt Gordon, Vice Chair and Port Commissioner - Port of South Whidbey  
Janet St. Clair, County Commissioner - Island County  
Chris Damitio, Assistant Regional Administrator - WSDOT  
Molly Hughes, Mayor - Town of Coupeville  
Scott Chaplin, Mayor - City of Langley  
Ray Deardorf, Senior Planning Manager - WSF  
Brian Tyhuis, Community Planning and Liaison Officer - NAS Whidbey

#### **Island County Staff Attendance List**

Ed Sewester, Assistant County Engineer  
Nikki Davis, Interim IRTPO Planner/Traffic Engineer  
Heather Bickford, New IRTPO/Transportation Planner

#### **Interested Parties in Attendance**

John Shambaugh, Planning Manager - WSDOT  
Todd Carlson, Planning and Engineering Services Manager– WSDOT  
RB McKeon, Communications - WSDOT  
Sharon Sappington, Executive Director - EDC

#### **Executive Board Members not in Attendance**

Jill Johnson, County Commissioner - Island County  
Blaine Oborn, City Administrator - City of Oak Harbor  
Todd Morrow, Executive Director - Island Transit  
Patricia Love, Community Development Director - City of Stanwood  
Mohammad Mostafavinassab, Port Commissioner – Port of Coupeville  
Beth Munns, Mayor Pro Tem Councilmember - Island Transit Board Chair and City of Oak Harbor

## **Commissioner Melanie Bacon, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 am**

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

Commissioner Bacon added/introduced a new item to approve along with the presented agenda: a Request For Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to update the IRTPO Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and combined Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). Commissioner Bacon made a motion to approve the original agenda as presented, with discussion about the RFP as a separate item. Seconded. All yeas, motion passed.

### **2. Minutes of July 25, 2021**

Before the Board approved the July 25, 2021 minutes, Commissioner Bacon pointed out two typos: Mayor Scott Chaplin from the City of Langley was present for the July 25 Executive Board meeting, so the “Mayor of Langley” under “Members not in Attendance” should be removed. Also, under “Guests” was the name “Charles”. This name was referring to Charles Prestrud, who was representing WSF’s Ray Deardorf. Mr. Deardorf will be retiring, and Charles Prestrud will now represent WSF in the Executive Board meetings. Commissioner Bacon made a motion to approve the Minutes of July 25, 2021, as presented. Seconded. All yeas, motion passed.

### **3. RFP Approval**

Interim Transportation Planner Nikki Davis explained that we would like to move forward with getting the RFP to add to hire a consultant to update the IRTPO Regional Transportation Plan and Combined Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan. These Plans require updating every four years, and the next update is due by December 2022. Questions arose. This included: 1) what was the budget for the consultant work, and, 2) where does the budget reside? Nikki explained the budget was \$90,000 and that the money is with the IRTPO. It was further clarified that the IRTPO has allocated \$90,000 in federal funds for consultant work on this project, no additional funds were available, and no future funding is anticipated. Commissioner Bacon made a motion to approve this additional agenda item as presented. Seconded. All yeas, motion passed.

### **4. Six-Year Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)**

Nikki sent out the RTIP to the Executive Board during the meeting because two projects have been added and needed approval from the board. The two projects have been added by Island Transit, project numbers 17 and 18. Project 17 will provide 200 parking stalls and a small operations building to provide better access to ferries, a park and ride, facilities for staff and electric vehicle charging stations. Nikki explained that Island Transit is concerned there won’t be enough charging stations on the south end because the island is very long. Project 18 is also through Island Transit and is a transition to zero emissions vehicles. Nikki said Island Transit could provide more information on this project. Vice Chair Curt Gordon asked if there is any urgency to get these additional projects approved this month and Nikki said not that she was aware of. Commissioner Bacon said the board will need more time to read the additions and the board will take it up again next month. Commissioner Janet St. Clair, Vice-Chair Gordon and Mayor Molly Hughes asked several questions about the RTIP. Nikki clarified that the two new Island Transit projects are to be added to the already approved RTIP plan (pending the Executive Board approves

the new projects). There was some confusion regarding how the IRTPO's RTIP intersects with the TIP Program, and how certain projects fit in. For example Mayor Hughes asked about Oak Harbor's NE 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Reconstruction Project and SR 532. Nikki said she would look into how these processes work together.

#### **4. Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Final Year-End Report**

A discussion continued from last month regarding a discrepancy between the amount of money budgeted and the amount of money spent. \$769 dollars were overspent. Historically, overages have been covered by the County Road Fund, but now that the IRTPO has been separated from the Road Fund, we no longer have that option. Public Works Director Bill Oakes is prepared to find the funding, and will be in discussions with the Board of County Commissioners next month.

#### **5. SR 532 Camano Island Data Collection and Analyses**

Nikki explained that the project is broken up into different parts: the commute time from Camano Island using pre-Covid data, the roadway between Terry's Corner and Stanwood, and commercial development and how that affects the commute. Nikki remembers there's a fourth component, but she wasn't sure what it was, so she gave the floor to John Shambaugh from WSDOT since he is heading up the SR 532 Project. John said there will be a meeting next week between Island County, the City of Stanwood, Snohomish County and the Transit Agencies to draw up a work plan for the initial study effort. Data collection includes speed and turning movement counts at intersections. There is already data available from Stanwood through a grant. The data looks at traffic volumes and how it moves into and out from the City. Some traffic light data and Google data is also available. John said the City is working with WSDOT using Streetlight data to see how the traffic is moving. One of the ways to address congestion is to use a bypass option that does not go through Stanwood. John met with Fehr and Peers in July to talk about using Streetlight data at Terry's Corner.

#### **6. Suicides at Deception Pass Bridge**

Nikki said she was still researching and looking to agencies for the numbers. Even though WSDOT owns the bridge, one side is in Skagit County and the other side is in Island County. The Everett Herald had some data: in 2020, Island County had a total of 21 suicides, one of those were from a jump or fall. As of July 26, 2021, there has been a total of 12 suicides, one was from a jump or fall. Nikki does not know where the Herald got the data from. Skagit County reported zero deaths from a jump or fall in both 2020 and 2021 (to date). *Note: Island County contacted us after the meeting. In 2020, there was one jump from the bridge and the body was recovered. In 2021 (to date), there have been four jumps with two bodies recovered and two not found.* Chris Damitio from WSDOT lamented that this was a challenge for WSDOT: we are a transportation group funded solely for transportation, so we are not trained for this, but we're looking for solutions through safety features. Commissioner St. Clair said if we're going to talk about suicide, it has to be in a broader concept, like safety in the community outside the transportation group. Jumpers are not the highest percentage of suicide according to the data, the leading method in males is with guns. How do we address this? RB McKeon from WSDOT said one of the problems is there's always incomplete data. How do we know if it's a suicide if there's no witnesses or other evidence? RB and Todd

have a study they can send out: *Suicide Prevention on Bridges*, which looks at suicides on bridges across the world. Perhaps it will have helpful resources.

## **9. Member Update Roundtable**

**Commissioner Bacon, Chair, Adjourned the meeting at 12:00 pm.**

***Next Meeting: October 20, 2021***

### **Acronyms:**

EDC – Economic Development Council  
HSTP – Human Services Transportation Plan  
IRTPO – Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization  
NAS – Naval Air Station  
RFQ – Request for Qualifications  
RTIP – Regional Transportation Improvement Program  
RTP – Regional Transportation Plan  
UPWP – Unified Planning Work Program  
WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation  
WSF – Washington State Ferries