

ISLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (IRTPO) EXECUTIVE BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

October 23, 2019

**Executive Board Members in Attendance:**

**Member/Board Seat Attendance List:**

Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner  
Tim Callison, Mayor, City of Langley  
Brian Tyhuis, NAS Whidbey  
Jay Drye, WSDOT  
Patricia Love, City of Stanwood, Planning  
Janet St. Clair, Island County Commissioner  
Jill Johnson, Island County Commissioner  
Bill Oakes, IRTPO Executive Director  
Mohammad Mostafavinassab, Port of Coupeville Commissioner

**Members not in Attendance:**

Molly Hughes, Mayor, Town of Coupeville  
Todd Carlson, WSDOT  
Todd Morrow, Executive Director, Island Transit  
Blain Osborne, Administrator, City of Oak Harbor  
Bob Severns, Mayor, City of Oak Harbor  
Curt Gordon, Port of S. Whidbey Commissioner  
Beth Munns, Island Transit

**Facilitator:**

Susan Driver, Regional Transportation Planner

**Other Attendees:**

Connie Bowers, Island County Public Works

**Commissioner Price Johnson called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm**

**Actions:**

- Agenda: Motion to approve agenda by Mayor Callison and second by Commissioner St. Clair; all yeas, motion passed.
- Minutes of September 25, 2019: Motion to approve minutes as presented by Mayor Callison and second by Commissioner St. Clair; all yeas, motion passed.
- Regional Transportation Improvement Program for Federal Fiscal Year 2020: Motion to adopt the 2020 RTIP by Commissioner St. Clair and second by Commissioner Johnson, with reservations; all yeas, motion passed.
- Unified Planning Work Program Annual Report for SFY 2019: Motion to approve by Commissioner Johnson and second by Mayor Callison; all yeas, motion passed.

**Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) for FFY 2020:**

The annual list of federally funded projects for all of the IRTPO member agencies. A 'cheat sheet' was attached to show you what projects changed and how they changed. Ms. Driver led the group through a line by line look at the list. Many projects had been moved from 2019 to 2020 due to difficulties with getting the federal funds obligated.

Jay Drye, of WSDOT, indicated that staff turnover at WSDOT has slowed the processing of the paperwork. He also noted that there are a large number of projects in the process this year.

Mr. Oakes noted that the Bos Lake project grant funds were returned because of high mitigation costs related to wetlands.

Commissioner Johnson stated a concern about the cost of the Goldie to Hoffman trail. She made it clear that she would not support the work on this trail if three million dollars for one mile is the actual cost of construction. Mr. Oakes agreed that it seemed a little high and stated that he would check into it further.

Mr. Oakes discussed the obligation of the three bicycle tour route projects and the paperwork challenges in demonstrating the public benefit of installing the signs with County staff, rather than contractors.

Ms. Driver noted that the Clinton to Ken's Corner trail project is not federally funded, but added to the list for tracking. It does not currently have construction funding.

Two County safety projects are still listed on the RTIP, but funding was returned for a third project. Mr. Oakes stated that addressing stormwater needs, primarily in right-of-way, drove the costs out of reasonableness. He indicated that he is thinking about scaling back and doing it in smaller pieces.

Mr. Oakes noted that the good news is that the IRTPO met the funding obligation target (maybe over-obligated) for the year.

Commissioner St. Clair moved to adopt the 2020 RTIP, noting that we will continue to look at some of the costs. Commissioner Johnson seconded with the comment that the \$1M number on the Goldie to Hoffman Trail project is acceptable, but the \$3M is not. Mr. Oakes agreed that it seemed high and reiterated that he would check.

Commissioner Price Johnson called for the vote. All yeas; motion passed unanimously.

#### **Unified Planning Work Program Annual Report for SFY 2019:**

Ms. Driver indicated that this report was a bit of a challenge because all of the work was done before she got here. The report was due to WSDOT on September 30<sup>th</sup>, but she was granted an extension due to her unfamiliarity with the work. She asked that if there are any concerns with the report as written, please adopt with changes so we can get it in.

The most challenging piece was putting together the budget numbers. The funding numbers reported were generated with the assistance and coordination of the accounting department.

The text portions of the report reflect items that came out of the original plan; what was accomplished and when. Again, this is for State Fiscal Year 2019, which was July first through June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Price Johnson interjected that this was really the group's first full year as an RTPO.

Ms. Driver stated that as an IRTPO, they checked all the boxes and did all of the things they were supposed to do.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Annual Report for the IRTPO Unified Planning Work Program for State Fiscal Year 2019. Mayor Callison seconded.

Commissioner Price Johnson asked that the group take a moment to celebrate where they've come from and the work that they've done. These included bringing Stanwood on board, working with the North Sound Transportation Alliance, hosting the Transportation Commission, conversations with public health and other innovative, positive steps.

Commissioner Price Johnson called for the vote. All yeas; motion passed unanimously.

## **WSDOT Updates:**

Jay Drye stated that there were not a lot of active WSDOT projects going on in Island County except the Deception Pass Bridge project. They have finally started some of the blasting and painting work. Because it's a critical structure in a critical location, it's been a slow, intentional process to make sure things are done right. There is a very likely risk that the project will run long.

Commissioner Johnson stated frustration about the impacts during peak tourist season when nothing seemed to be getting done. Mr. Drye indicated that WSDOT was frustrated as well and that conversations between the agency and the contractor were ongoing.

Commissioner St. Clair noted that she lived on Mercer Island when the bridge sunk. She thanked WSDOT for taking care with the Deception Pass Bridge because she didn't want to have the route to work sink.

Other than just Island County, Mr. Drye said the big push for WSDOT right now was fish passage. Commissioner Price Johnson stated that Island County has done a prioritization of fish passage culverts and watersheds. She was very interested in making sure that the efforts are aligned.

## **New Items:**

**Patricia Love of Stanwood** gave an update the 532 study. She reported that they had the kick-off meeting for the traffic study along 532 from Ovenell to 88<sup>th</sup>. The City met with WSDOT and Transpo Group. It's not a big contract, only \$10,000, but is intended to provide updated traffic information and modeling for different scenarios along that segment of the road.

Two interesting things came up. First, Stanwood asked if WSDOT could get some origin and destination information that would help when looking at different scenarios, just to see where people are going. Second WSDOT opened the door to Stanwood looking at the internal alignment of 532 instead of just beyond the curb. That provides an opportunity to look at more of a complete street, maybe even look at bike lanes and things where pavement already exists.

Traffic information is expected in 5-6 weeks. Hopefully by early December she will have more information to share with the IRTPO.

**Brian Tyhuis of NAS Whidbey** expressed gratitude for the Banta/Highway 20 project. He stated that it was a huge improvement for base personnel entering and exiting. Commissioner Price Johnson asked about the Island Transit route on the Navy base from housing. Mr. Tyhuis stated that it is increasing slowly but they are hoping for more. They had been trying to collaborate for a while and are hoping for more runs in the future.

**Commissioner Price Johnson** reported on the North Sound Transportation Alliance meeting that she attended, along with Ms. Driver. She shared information about the PSRC project to study Passenger-only Ferries, and that it will include all 12 Puget Sound counties, not just the four PSRC counties. The RFP is out now, and the project will be starting soon. She is grateful that PSRC is managing it, and also that they are including the other counties in the study.

Commissioner St. Clair asked about opportunities for aqua-bus between Whidbey and Camano. Commissioner Price Johnson noted that there are no public docks on Camano.

Commissioner Price Johnson went on to say that there an update on the Washington State Ferries long-range plan at the meeting, and the huge challenge for capital. There was some discussion about diverting traffic to passenger ferries, which are much less expensive to build and replace than vehicle ferries. Demand for ferries continues to increase.

Ms. Driver added that she was shocked to hear that the Coupeville/Port Townsend route carried more fifty-foot and larger trucks than any other route, including the larger ferries.

Commissioner Price Johnson stated that she didn't see this trend diminishing. With the Coupeville / Port Townsend route down to one ferry over the winter months, it is problematic. Washington State Ferries doesn't have capacity or funding for any additional ferries there, but certainly the region's economy is dependent on that access. Helping to tell that story to the legislature is going to be important. The Commissioner is very fearful of a hole being blown in the State transportation funding with the threat of I-976. Some of the frustration that lead to the initiative is legitimate, but this is a blunt instrument to try to address it. She said she hopes people are paying attention when they vote.

**Commissioner Price Johnson Adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.**

**Next Meeting: January 22, 2020**

**Acronyms:**

RFP

PSRC

WSDOT