



ISLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (IRTPO) EXECUTIVE BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

December 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
Beth Munns, Mayor Pro Tem Councilmember - Island Transit Board Chair and City of Oak Harbor
Blaine Oborn, City Administrator - City of Oak Harbor
Jill Johnson, County Commissioner – Island County
Patricia Love, Community Development Director - City of Stanwood
Todd Morrow, Executive Director - Island Transit
Molly Hughes, Mayor - Town of Coupeville
Scott Chaplin, Mayor – City of Langley

Island County Public Works Staff Attendance List

Connie Bowers, Director of Public Works/County Engineer – Island County
Ed Sewester, Assistant County Engineer
Heather Bickford, Transportation Planner

Interested Parties in Attendance

John Shambaugh, Planning Manager - WSDOT
Todd Carlson, Planning and Engineering Services Manager– WSDOT
Elizabeth Sjostrom, NW Region Mt Baker Area - WSDOT
Carmen Bendixen, Senior Transportation Planner – WSF
Virginia Shaddy, Clerk of the Board – Island County
Katie Bunge, Transportation Planner - WSDOT
Megan Cotton, Tribal and Federal Relations Director - WSDOT

Commissioner Melanie Bacon, Chair, calls the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

1. Approval of Agenda and Draft Minutes from December 22, 2021

Vice Chair Curt Gordon moves to approve the draft agenda. Commissioner Janet St. Clair seconds. All yeas, motion approved. Vice Chair Curt Gordon moves to approve the minutes. Commissioner Janet St. Clair seconds. All yeas, motion approved.

2. Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) PowerPoint

WSDOT Tribal and Federal Relations Director, Megan Cotton presents the Executive Board with a PowerPoint summary on the IIJA. The new Act includes an estimated \$550 billion in new funding nationwide with an estimated \$5.443 billion in federal-aid highway funding and \$1.79 billion in Transit funding coming will to Washington State. This is a re-authorization of federal funding 50% over what the State usually gets. But we won't see this money for quite some time because it still needs to go through the federal process of appropriations. It's also not decided *how* the money will flow to us yet. But there will be money for ports, transit, carbon reduction, air quality, transportation resiliency, ferries, bike and pedestrian programs, Intelligent Transportation Systems, traffic control, street lighting, rail, roads and bridges, as well as broadband and water. Many of these will be funded through new programs. Under IIJA, there are three programs that require sub-allocation to local governments: Surface Transportation Block Programs, the planning funds for MPO's and the Carbon Reduction Program.

Question: How does the Deception Pass Bridge rate in the State's bridge system?

Answer from WSDOT: The funding for the preservation of the bridge, which is the project we've been doing for the last two years, has come from a mix of state and federal money. The federal money came from the National Highway Performance Program. The bridge is on the Highway of State Significance, the National Highway System, and the Strategic Highway Network because of NAS Whidbey. It's as high in priority as you get for a bridge.

Question: What does eligible corridors mean [in the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Program]?

Answer from WSDOT: These are the corridors the feds have approved first for electric charging facilities.

Question: Is the \$250 million electric or low-emitting ferries a national or state total?

Answer from WSDOT: National, spread out over five years.

Question: The National Culvert Removal, Replacement and Restoration Program. Will the bulk of that money be directed towards Washington State because of our programs and the lawsuit?

Answer from WSDOT: There is language in there that particularly suits our program, but it's not specific to one State DOT or entities under a federal injunction. But this has been the program most people seem interested in! We are going to put forth a bundle of culverts and see what kind of partnerships we can get and maximize funding for WA State. No other state has a program as robust as ours.

3. Executive Board Meetings – Housekeeping

- *New length of 90 minutes:* Approved
- *New start time:* Approved 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
- *Approval of 2022 meeting schedule:* Dates approved, the time will change to reflect the new start and end times.

Commissioner Janet St. Clair moves to approve all items. Vice Chair Curt Gordon seconds. All yeas, motion approved.

4. RTP/HSTP Consultant Update

Heather Bickford, Transportation Planner: We went out to ad for a combined update for our Regional Transportation Plan and Human Services Transportation Plan and only received one proposal from Fehr & Peers with Susan Driver as the Project Manager. Because these updates are federally funded, we will need to go back out to ad to see if we can get additional proposals. There was also an ethics question whether Susan Driver could be part of the consultant team because she was employed by Island County less than two years ago. According to the IRTPO Ethics Bylaws, we are to meet or exceed RCW 42.52 [see: <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=42.52.080>], so that may be an issue. But by going out to get additional proposals, would we be able to bypass the ethics issue? *Vice Chair, Curt Gordon:* I don't understand how that would solve the immediate ethics issue. *John Shambaugh, WSDOT:* Gabe Philips said it was really up to the IRTPO to determine whether it's an ethics issue or not. WSDOT is not saying yes or no, they're just saying it should be considered. By going out to ad again, you may get multiple proposals, but you also may get the same firm. So it's your decision to make whether this is an issue. *Commissioner Jill Johnson:* Check with the Prosecuting Attorney, get an interpretation, and he'll tell us if we're good to go or if we have a problem. That phone call is our safest next step. *Curt Gordon:* I agree, let's do both. Let's go out to ad again and get an opinion from the P.A.'s Office.

5. Member Roundtable

Curt Gordon, Commissioner - Port of South Whidbey: We met with Rick Larsen and talked about all the infrastructure bills coming through and how we might find funding, and one of the best places will be right here through the IRTPO.

Molly Hughes, Mayor – Town of Coupeville: We're going to buy and install two chargers for the Town in the first quarter of next year [2022].

Todd Morrow, Executive Director - Island Transit: Next month our Board of Directors will be introduced to different options of service improvements, then we'll be shopping them around to the public, but our Board will make the final decision on what services should improve. After that's done, we'll undertake our zero emissions feasibility analysis that will produce our fleet transition plan.

Blaine Oborn, City Administrator - City of Oak Harbor: 7th Avenue is continuing to progress in the design phase, and we're looking to expand it a bit. We're adding a left turn lane and a possible roundabout. Alex Warner, our City Engineer, reached out about additional funding, and we appreciate the help and support we got. Our other projects are also moving ahead.

Carmen Bendixen, Senior Transportation Planner – WSF: We're working on trying to restore all our ferry service, so stay tuned!

Chair Melanie Bacon adjourns the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: January 26, 2022

Common Acronyms:

HSTP – Human Services Transportation Plan

IRTPO – Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization

MPO – Metropolitan Planning Organization

NAS – Naval Air Station

RFQ – Request for Qualifications

RTIP – Regional Transportation Improvement Program

RTP – Regional Transportation Plan

STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program

WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation

WSF – Washington State Ferries