

ISLAND SUB-REGIONAL RTPO POLICY BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

September 24, 2014

Policy Board Members in Attendance:

Aubrey Vaughan, Island County Commissioner
Bob Clay, Vice Chair / Public Transit Benefit Area
Fred McCarthy, Mayor, City of Langley
Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner
Jill Johnson, RTPO Chair / Island County Commissioner
Nancy Conard, Mayor, Town of Coupeville
Scott Dudley, Mayor, City of Oak Harbor
Todd Carlson, WSDOT

Members Absent:

Jennifer Meyer, NAS Whidbey
Marshall Bronson, Port of Coupeville
Ray Deardorf, Washington State Ferries
Ron Nelson, Economic Development Council
Todd Harrison, WSDOT

Also in Attendance:

Connie Bowers, Island County Public Works
Doug Cox, RTPO Staff
Mark Hamilton, Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG)

The Island sub-RTPO Policy Board met in the Island County Commissioners Hearing Room on September 24, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 11:22 AM by Chair Johnson.

Note: To listen to the audio recording of this meeting, go to the Island RTPO web page at:

<http://www.islandcounty.net/publicworks/SkagitIslandRTPO.asp>. Click on "meeting recordings."

Approval of the August 27, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Price Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2014 meeting. Commissioner Vaughan seconded. The motion passed without discussion. Mayor Dudley abstained.

Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) Project Prioritization

Mark Hamilton from SCOG presented the recommended implementation strategies (i.e. prioritization criteria) to be used in ranking projects in the upcoming HSTP. He explained that the Skagit Transportation Policy Board revised two of the recommended weights set by the HSTP Committee. Specifically, the Skagit board decreased the "Preserve Existing Services" strategy from 20 to 15, and increased the "Address High Need Area" strategy from 10 to 15. After discussing the various strategies in detail Chair Johnson moved to recommend using the Skagit weights, but with an additional 10 points allocated to the "Improve Regional Connections" strategy. The total points thus changed from 110 to 120. Commissioner Vaughan seconded the motion, which then passed with all in favor.

SIRTPO Organizational Structure Discussion

The board continued the discussion from the past two meetings regarding the potential changes to the current Skagit-Island RTPO organizational structure. Board members were asked to consider three questions:

- What benefits do you see in the SIRTPO now?
- Looking ahead what does Island County want to achieve?
- What issues or challenges do you see that would benefit from Skagit and Island working on collaboratively?

Todd Carlson helped explain some of the history and technical aspects of why the organization was initially formed in the early 1990's. One particular reason is because under Washington State law, a county must have a minimum of 100,000 residents in order to be eligible to be a RTPO. At that time, neither Island nor Skagit counties met that requirement. As of the 2010 Census, Skagit's population has grown beyond 100,000 and therefore Skagit is eligible to be a RTPO on its own. Ultimately the board agreed that they understand why Skagit may want to pursue an independent arrangement. However, Island does not want to lose RTPO status. The board would like to give it a year so that a change in legislation to reduce the 100,000 requirement can be pursued (or perhaps other options). The board requests that the current organization does not disband quite yet. The board also requests assistance from the Skagit Transportation Policy Board in advocating for these options so that Island can be successful when standing on its own.

Draft 2015-2020 Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

Doug provided an overview of the 2015-2020 RTIP, which is scheduled to be adopted by the SIRTPO board at the October 15th meeting in Anacortes. This years' RTIP also includes a set of policies that are intended to provide guidance and assistance in the effective administration of regionally managed federal grant funds. The policies reflect how the organization has already been operating, with two exceptions:

- Proposed projects must also be listed in a local TIP or CIP to be eligible for regionally managed grant funds
- Projects scheduled for obligation in the upcoming fiscal year are to be given a one-year grace period to obligate regionally managed funding

After discussing the nuances of the first point above, the board instead proposed that a project must be approved by all of the relevant governing bodies prior to submittal. This could be reflected through meeting minutes, letter of support, etc.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Project Selection Process

Doug explained a proposed revision to the TAP selection process, which would use completely objective evaluation criteria and streamline the process to avoid having to prioritize projects at the sub-region level. In keeping with the Island TAC's recommendation, the board did not endorse this revision due to skepticism that the new evaluation criteria could be 100% objective.

New Items

Commissioner Price Johnson shared a letter from the Island County Board of Commissioners to Governor Inslee expressing concern about upcoming ferry service reductions.

The meeting adjourned at 12:47 PM.

NEXT MEETING: October 15, 2014 (SIRTPO, Anacortes City Hall, 2:30 p.m.)