

ISLAND SUB-REGIONAL RTPo POLICY BOARD
P.O. BOX 5000, COUPEVILLE, WA 98239

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 18, 2012
TO: Island RTPo Sub-region Policy Board Members
FROM: Angie Homola, Chair
RE: Policy Board Meeting: **10:30 A.M, Wednesday, January 25, 2012**
Meeting will be held in **the Commissioner's Hearing Room**, Island County Courthouse Annex Building, Coupeville, Washington.

You are invited to attend the RTPo Policy Board meeting on Wednesday, January 25, 2012. The meeting is scheduled to commence at 10:30 A.M. following the COG meeting. The primary items of business are:

1. *Welcome and Introductions*

2. *Approval of December 14, 2012 Minutes*

3. *Discussion: Deception Pass Bridge System*

Harvey Coffman, Bridge Preservation Engineer for WSDOT will give a brief overview of the maintenance regimen and structural status of Deception Pass Bridge and Canoe Pass Bridge.

4. *Concurrency White Paper Update*

Board members will meet Randy Young, of Henderson and Young, who is in the process of developing a white paper on transportation concurrency in Island County.

5. *Regional Transportation Priority Project List*

Staff will give a brief presentation on the update on the Regional Priority Project list (formerly known as the "top 20") and new software known as Paladin developed to display RTPo projects statewide on the new "Forward Washington Website Site". To view the list on the website, go to:

www.forwardwashington.net. Click on the "regions" tab and a state map will pop up. Then click on the Skagit/Island area of the map for a list of draft projects and a local map.

6. *Comment Letter on Shoreline Master Program update*

During the December RTPo meeting staff was directed to prepare a letter to the County Commissioners requesting the inclusion of language for future passenger ferry service in the SMP update. Members will review the letter for signature by the Chair.

7. *New Items*

Encl: December 14, 2011 Policy Board Meeting Minutes
Regional Draft Priority Projects from Forward Washington Website
Draft SMP Comment Letter



SKAGIT/ISLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION



*P.O. Box 5000
Coupeville, Wa 98239-5000*

January 25, 2012

Helen Price Johnson, Chair
Board of Island County Commissioners
P.O. Box 5000
Coupeville, WA 98239

RE: Shoreline Master Program Update

Dear Commissioner Price Johnson,

With the Island County Shoreline Master Program update in progress, the Island Sub-Region RTPO Board believes this is an opportune time to address future evaluation of a small scale ferry service between Whidbey and Camano Islands as a potential water-dependent use. As you well know, this is not a new issue. Since the early 1990's the Port Districts of South Whidbey and Coupeville, along with private parties have expressed interest in assisting with the creation of passenger-only ferry service. Furthermore, with the expansion of the Langley Marina, Port Commissioners believe local passenger ferry service would offer significant economic development opportunities in our community.

We encourage the County to include language in the Draft SMP update as a place holder to provide for future work and discussion on inter-island ferry service. Language should include potential opportunities for private and public partnerships and plans for a feasibility study to locate an appropriate small ferry boat landing site on Camano Island. Extensive public involvement should be an integral part of the study and evaluation of options for parking and transit connections.

We understand a few years ago the County considered a pilot program for a ferry taxi service between Coupeville and Camano Island in partnership with a private provider. This Board is willing to work with the interested parties on exploring a pilot program again in the future. We look forward to discussing this opportunity further with you and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Angie Homola, Chair
Island Sub-Region RTPO

Cc: Port Districts of South Whidbey and Coupeville

**MINUTES OF MEETING
ISLAND SUB-REGIONAL RTPOLICY BOARD
December 14, 2011**

Policy Board members in attendance were:

Angie Homola, Chair, Island County Commissioner
Curt Gordon, Vice Chair, Port of South Whidbey
Bob Clay, Public Transit Benefit Area
Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner
Jennifer Meyer, NAS Whidbey
Kelly Emerson, Island County Commissioner
Mayor Jim Slowik, City of Oak Harbor
Mayor Nancy Conard, Town of Coupeville
Mayor Paul Samuelson, City of Langley

Members absent:

Ray Dearforf, WSDOT Ferries
Todd Carlson, WSDOT

Also in attendance:

Bill Oakes, Island County Public Works
Ron Rhinehart, Port of South Whidbey
Karen Stewart, Island County Planning Department
Marilynn Abrahamson, Citizen
Rufus Rose, Citizen
Donna Keeler, RTPOL Staff

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by Chair Homola. No changes were made to the agenda. Mayor Samuelson moved to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2011 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Emerson. The minutes were approved as written.

Discussion: Letter from the Port of South Whidbey on Ferry Taxi Service

Curt Gordon introduced Ron Rhinehart, Finance Director of the Port of South Whidbey. Curt and Ron gave a brief overview of a letter sent to the Island County Commissioners from the Port of South Whidbey expressing interest in assisting with the creation of a passenger-only ferry service to connect Langley, Camano Island, Coupeville and Oak Harbor. They made it clear the Port is not interested in leading the charge on implementing ferry service, but is very interested in participating in – and supporting such an endeavor. Curt added that the Port Commissioners feel this would tie in well with the services provided by the Port at the Langley Marina. The purpose of the letter is to continue the discussion on the topic and discuss options.

Ron Rhinehart discussed research he conducted on market demand surrounding a ferry taxi service. He said core groups / users would likely include County employees, shoppers, Camano Island residents and tourists. There are issues surrounding lack of facilities/dock on Camano Island, zoning and shoreline regulations, liability/legal and others. In order to make a sound business case, significant costs would be borne by the users unless subsidies or other forms of funding are identified. Various stakeholders would need to be involved and an entity needs to step forward and take the lead.

Commissioner Homola clarified the County reimbursement process for mileage. Mayor Conard suggested talking to the owner of the Whidbey Seatac Shuttle. Jennifer Meyer asked if the Port has looked at connections. Ron said he is still researching the matter and realizes Camano may not be the end destination in many cases.

Donna introduced Karen Stewart of the Planning Department who provided a brief overview of the Shoreline Master Program Update in progress. Karen said her Department is in the beginning stages of developing goals and policies and updated shoreline regulations. Water dependent uses are encouraged

by the state, and Karen suggested this would be a good time to address future ferry service between the islands while the SMP is being updated. Nancy added this is important to consider and is interested in seeing a private party take this on.

Martha Rose said a landing site at Cama Beach State Park would not work well for transit service/access to pick up ferry passengers. Bob Clay suggested looking at the Pt. Townsend and Port of Kitsap for passenger-only business models. Commissioner Price Johnson suggested it would make sense to start with sites that already exist and are available - and expand from there. Curt agreed and said the Port District has discussed ferry service from Langley to Everett. Commissioner Homola said passenger ferry service would give Camano residents dramatically better access to services on Whidbey. Commissioner Emerson agreed.

Members discussed bringing the tribes into the conversation, looking for grants and finding ways to encourage private/public partnerships. Staff suggested submitting a letter to the County Commissioners requesting a placeholder in the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update for future passenger ferry service. Proposed SMP language would include the future evaluation of a small scale ferry service between Whidbey and Camano Islands as a potential water-dependent use. Due to past concerns raised in Oak Harbor and Camano Island, board members agreed there should be ample provision for public involvement. Karen added there will also be opportunities to amend the SMP in the future. Donna said she would draft a letter for review by the Board at the next meeting.

Island Transit Letter of Support for Grant Application

Martha Rose gave an overview of a Public Highways Discretionary Grant Program application by Island Transit to construct Kineth Passage, an underground tunnel to provide safe pedestrian access across SR 20 to bus pullouts and trails on both sides of the highway. The project will tie in with the Parker Road realignment project. Martha said she has contacted Ebey's Landing Reserve staff on the project for input. Bill Oakes added it will link to the Rhodie and Kettles Trails.

Commissioner Homola asked if this was a priority project for Island Transit and Martha said it is and would appreciate a letter of support from the Policy Board. Mayor Samuelson moved to approve the signature of a letter of support for Island Transit's grant application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Price Johnson.

Mayor Conard expressed concerns over the cost of the project and overall discomfort with being considered a high priority, given other projects that are needed. Other members expressed their support for the letter and the project. Chair Homola called for the vote which passed 7-1.

Mukilteo Multimodal Project Update

Staff said the Draft EIS for the Mukilteo Multimodal Project is scheduled to go out for public review at the end of January or early February. Donna said she will start attending Mukilteo "Tank Farm" committee meetings with representatives from WSDOT/WSF, City of Mukilteo, Port of Everett, Air Force and others in 2012.

New Items

Staff said a bridge engineer from WSDOT will attend the January meeting to discuss the condition of the bridges at Deception Pass.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15

Next Meeting: January 25, 2012 at 11:00 AM