

**MINUTES OF MEETING
ISLAND SUB-REGIONAL RTPO POLICY BOARD
January 25, 2012**

Policy Board Members in Attendance:

Angie Homola, Island County Commissioner
Bob Clay, Public Transit Benefit Area
Curt Gordon, RTPO vice Chair, Port of South Whidbey
Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner
Kelly Emerson, RTPO Chair, Island County Commissioner
Larry Kwarsick, Mayor, City of Langley
Nancy Conard, Mayor, Town of Coupeville
Todd Carlson, WSDOT
Todd Harrison, WSDOT

Members Absent:

Ray Dearfor, WSDOT Ferries
Scott Dudley, Mayor, City of Oak Harbor

Also in Attendance:

Bill Oakes, Island County Public Works
Donna Keeler, RTPO Staff
Eric Brooks, Island County Emergency Management
Gabe Philips, SCOG
Harvey Coffman, WSDOT
Jeff Lauderdale, Citizen
Marilynn Abrahamson, Citizen
Martha Rose, Island Transit
Rufus Rose, Citizen

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM by Chair Homola. Bob Clay moved to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2011 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Price-Johnson. The minutes were approved as written.

Commissioner Emerson called for a Point of Order and said she believed it was time to vote for a new chair and vice-chair. Chair Homola asked staff when the Chair and Vice-Chair are usually elected and Donna said the last elections were held in March of 2011. Commissioner Emerson made a motion to take over as Chair, seconded by Commissioner Homola. The motion was approved. As the new Chair, Commissioner Emerson moved to nominate Curt Gordon to continue as vice-chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Price-Johnson and was approved unanimously.

Discussion: Deception Pass Bridge System

Todd Harrison introduced WSDOT Bridge Preservation Engineer, Harvey Coffman, who was invited to discuss the condition of the bridges at Deception Pass. Harvey met with the Policy Board about three years ago to discuss the same topic. Todd added the group may want to have a discussion "capacity" following Mr. Coffman's presentation.

Harvey Coffman explained that Canoe Bridge and Deception Pass Bridge are inspected thoroughly every two years and are still in good condition. Areas of corrosion are being identified for spot repairs and repainting until the bridge is fully repainted again in 2022. The deck is structurally sound but packed rust accumulating in areas, which may ultimately lead to further repairs of the deck system. A seismic study will be done in 2015-2017 period. Todd Harrison added that two years ago work was done to pin down and strengthen the deck.

Bridge inspection reports are generated regularly which are available to the public upon request. The results are also helpful when determining eligibility for State and Federal funds. Harvey explained that the federal funding qualification of a bridge is determined using a sufficiency rating system from 1 -100 (the higher the better). Deception Pass Bridge is currently rated at 46, which is considered to be in good condition. It's important to note the bridges at Deception Pass are not built to current Federal roadway standards. The roadway standard criteria has been modified over the years by FHWA.

Bob Clay said we have constituents who believe the bridge will fall down soon due to its age. Harvey said there are older bridges in Washington State that are still in good shape and newer bridges in worse condition. Bridges tend to die slowly but once they reach a certain stage of deterioration, they require more attention. WSDOT takes actions at various levels as a bridge ages. Often that can mean more or enhanced maintenance, load restrictions or even load posting of the bridge below legal weight limits.

Commissioner Homola asked if we wait until the bridge reaches a lower rating (thus increasing eligibility for funding) will more money be spent on repairs. Harvey said WSDOT is looking at implementing a preventative maintenance program which would address this issue. However funds will need to be moved from other areas to be more proactive. Under the Statewide bridge program, WSDOT uses a 20-year horizon which includes maintenance and rehabilitation work. Additionally there is ongoing active work addressing corrosion issues on a 2 – 6 year basis. Bob asked about the impacts of speed and Harvey agreed should be one of the first things to look at. By reducing vehicle speeds on the bridge, drastically reduced impacts.

Mayor Conard said she was the only one person on the board when the North Whidbey Access Feasibility Study was done and suggested digging it up and sending it to current board members. Todd Carlson added the study was funded by the RTPO and was completed in 2000. At that time a new bridge was determined to be infeasible due to environmental concerns and costs. The report recommended assessing the situation every five years which WSDOT has been doing. The plan is to maintain a 2-lane highway system on Whidbey Island and the bridge is adequate for that. Harvey cited an example of the Mennette bridge in Bremerton, Washington which had a sufficiency ratings that was below 10.

Commissioner Homola asked if it is appropriate to start planning now for future replacement. It would be helpful to get a better understanding of the window of time for planning and implementation. Harvey said the planning horizon will likely not begin for another 20-30 years given the current condition of the bridge. Todd Harrison discussed an example of another bridge in the State and agreed the planning timeframe can take a long time in addition to finding funds for construction. Costs are even higher for Deception Pass as it is a historic bridge through a National Park. Cash flow, technical issues, political will, environmental issues addressed / permitting – all need to align in order to move forward.

Commissioner Homola stated she felt more comfortable with the timeline as long as the bridge is kept at the forefront for ongoing review. Mayor Conard agreed. Donna said the conversation on the Deception Pass bridge system will continue. Eric Brooks of the County's Emergency Management Division will attend a future meeting to discuss emergency preparedness at Deception Pass.

Discussion: Concurrency White Paper

Donna introduced Randy Young, of Henderson and Young, hired by the County to prepare a white paper on Transportation Concurrency in Island County. Randy gave an overview of his background and extensive experience working with concurrency since the mid 1980's in Florida. He was a central member on the 1998 Advisory Committee to the State Legislature on Highways of Statewide and Regional Significance. Randy noted he was not involved in the Island County decision.

Randy explained he does not anticipate the paper will result in "silver bullet" solutions but instead provides a list of ideas for discussion and to bring the conversation to the next level. He sees this project

as a policy driven exercise. Upon Randy's request, members shared their thoughts and ideas on the purpose of concurrency.

Regional Transportation Priority Project List

Gabe Philips of SCOG gave a brief presentation on a new software known as "Paladin" developed to highlight RTPO priority projects statewide on a website: www.forwardwashington.net. Gabe displayed a few of the Island County projects (listed as "draft" on the site) and discussed how a representative from the State Legislature is able to view the projects by type and/or area. Donna said she would bring the list of projects to the board at the next meeting for further discussion and formal approval.

Comment Letter on Shoreline Master Program Update

Staff requested approval to have the RTPO Chair sign a comment letter from the RTPO with comments on the Shoreline Master Program update. (The draft letter was included in the board packets). Donna said she requests a "place-holder" in the Shoreline Master Program update to provide for future work and discussion on inter-island ferry service between Whidbey and Camano Islands. Commissioner Emerson asked that the letter be amended to specify passenger and vehicle ferry service. After further discussion Bob Clay moved to approve the letter with the requested modification to include "vehicles" and passengers. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Homola and approved.

New Items

An RTPO 101 Workshop and Legislative update is scheduled for February 24th in Mt. Vernon. Staff will forward information on the event as it becomes available.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10

Next Meeting: February 22, 2012