

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 19, 2012

TO: Island RTPo Sub-region Policy Board Members

FROM: Kelly Emerson, Chair

RE: Policy Board Meeting: **11:00 A.M, Wednesday, April 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, April 25, 2012. The meeting is scheduled to commence at 11:00 A.M. The primary items of business are:

1. *Welcome and Introductions*

2. *Approval of February 22, 2012 Minutes*

3. *Letter to Snohomish County*

Chair Emerson and Staff will discuss a proposal to extend an invitation to initiate a conversation with officials at Snohomish County on regional transportation issues. A draft letter is attached.

4. *Comment Letter: Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal Draft EIS*

Staff will request a formal vote on a comment letter (enclosed) sent to WSDOT Ferries on the referenced project signed by individual RTPo Policy Board members.

5. *Unified Planning Work Program Update*

Staff is coordinating with SCOG and WSDOT on updating the Island-Skagit RTPo Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). A copy of proposed revisions will be distributed for review and discussion. A final updated version will be voted on at the Island RTPo meeting in May.

6. *Transportation Concurrency White Paper Update*

Staff will provide a brief update on the progress of the white paper and the schedule for review and discussion by the Policy Board.

7. *New Items*

Encl: February 22, 2012 Policy Board Meeting Minutes
Draft letter to Snohomish County
Comment letter on the Draft EIS - Mukilteo Multimodal Project

**MINUTES OF MEETING
ISLAND SUB-REGIONAL RTPO POLICY BOARD
February 22, 2012**

Policy Board Members in Attendance:

Bob Clay, Public Transit Benefit Area
Curt Gordon, RTPO vice Chair, Port of South Whidbey
Hal Seligson, Councilmember, City of Langley
Helen Price Johnson, Island County Commissioner
Kelly Emerson, RTPO Chair, Island County Commissioner
Jennifer Meyer, NAS Whidbey
Nancy Conard, Mayor, Town of Coupeville
Ron Nelson, Executive Director, Economic Development Council
Todd Carlson, WSDOT

Members Absent:

Angie Homola, Island County Commissioner
Larry Kwarsick, Mayor, City of Langley
Ray Dearfor, WSDOT Ferries
Scott Dudley, Mayor, City of Oak Harbor

Also in Attendance:

Benye Weber, Port of Coupeville
Bill Oakes, Island County Public Works
Donna Keeler, RTPO Staff
Eric Brooks, Island County Emergency Management
Jeff Lauderdale, Citizen
Martha Rose, Executive Director, Island Transit
Rufus Rose, Citizen
Sandy Glover, representing WSDOT Ferries
Tom Stacey, WSDOT NW Regional Office

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 AM by Chair Emerson. Following introductions there was a brief discussion on the January 25, 2012 draft minutes. Chair Emerson said she would like to insert her question on the impacts of a wheel base on the Deception Pass Bridge system. Curt Gordon asked if the minutes could clarify the purpose for doing a white paper and include information on concurrency being a moving target; it's difficult for the County to be held to a standard that the state cannot meet. After further discussion Councilmember Bob Clay moved to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Price Johnson. The minutes were approved as written.

Presentation: Update on the Concurrency Intersection Analysis

Tom Stacey of WSDOT's Northwest Regional Office reviewed work done to date analyzing key intersections on Whidbey Island facing level of service (LOS) and concurrency issues. Tom and his team gathered traffic data, conducted counts and looked at traffic delays for 10 intersections (see handout). The purpose of the work is to determine if any intersections are at risk for failing LOS standards now or in the future. Tom handed out a one-page summary with a graph depicting results to date which showed two intersections failing (Troxell and Banta) and five others projected to fail before 2030.

The next step is to evaluate design options for each of the intersections and conceptual planning level cost estimates. Jennifer Meyer explained one of the reasons there is a problem at the intersection of SR 525 and Banta Road is that the gate on the north end of the base (providing access to Banta Rd), is only open during certain times, therefore cars queue up before the gate open creating a surge of cars at one time. Councilman Bob Clay asked if something can be done on base to reduce the congestion.

Commissioner Emerson noted any solutions should account for the water line that serves Oak Harbor and the Navy Base. Tom said these factors should be part of the conversation. In some cases, the solution may not be building something but changing traffic patterns or habits. WSDOT's job is to provide technical analysis to help the discussion along and help the County and the RTPO. Going forward, WSDOT will provide some conceptual layouts, designs and cost estimates in a final report by the summer.

Todd Carlson added WSDOT's role has a very narrow focus on the project which his agency considers a mobility problem. WSDOT is particularly concerned about potential safety hazards and drivers taking risks if they end up waiting too long at an intersection. Tom Stacey added that with the exception of Freeland, traffic volumes on the state highway have been flat in the last ten years but that is expected to change when the economy begins to recover and more intersections may come into play. There are 127 intersections on Whidbey Island, of which 18 are signalized.

Mayor Conard asked if the LOS standards have been revised by WSDOT in the past 20 years. Todd Carlson said the LOS threshold was dropped around 2001. Mayor Conard said she believes concurrency can be a tool to manage growth but instead of sharing costs to address LOS issues, the standards have been lowering. It is not too late to look at an incremental fund to contribute to investments down the road. Todd Carlson added it is a difficult situation and we can't expect a single developer to pay for the full cost of an improvement. As a region we need to determine where our priorities are.

Port Commissioner Gordon asked if the methodology (in terms of peak hours) has changed over time. Todd responded that the way WSDOT measures delay of vehicles has not changed. Commissioner Gordon suggested looking at methodology for peak times which led to a brief discussion on LOS as a long term approach for planning.

Mukilteo Multimodal Project

A short power point presentation on the Mukilteo Multimodal Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement was given by Sandy Glover, a consultant representing WSDOT Ferries. WSDOT ferries is soliciting comments on four proposed alternatives for a new terminal. Council member Clay asked if the proposed "existing site improvements" alternative would remove the fishing pier and Ivars restaurant which Sandy replied in the affirmative and addressed additional questions on the percentage of passengers using transit, and timing to make train and bus connections.

Sandy Glover provided a summary of the environmental impacts for each alternative and addressed questions on costs, critical area issues, and anticipated demand for vehicles and pedestrians over the next twenty years and timing for construction. Todd Carlson said past studies have substantiated the overall benefits of having more people get to the ferry by transit.

Commissioner Gordon added that the projected no. of passenger (73%) includes people who arrive on foot and in vehicles (non drivers). He added that many people who travel want to walk across need to access a vehicle on the Mukilteo side and he is concerned the four options do not include overnight parking. Sandy said WSDOT Ferries is working closely with the City of Mukilteo on this issue. Ray Deardorf added this may be an opportunity to share resources. Martha said if Island Transit was not servicing the ferry, there would be a need for eleven additional ferry trips. Sandy concluded by encouraging members to submit comments. The full EIS and summary documents are available on the WSDOT website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/ferries/mukiltoeterminal/multimodal/

Update: Washington State Ferries

Ray Deardorf provided a brief report on the status of the state budget for ferry service: Following the loss of the motor vehicle tax a significant portion of the capital and operating budget was lost. Despite an 80% increase in ferry fares statewide, WSDOT Ferries has not been able to keep up with costs and the state has transferred \$900,000,000 from the Highway fund in the past decade to help keep the ferries

going. Future funding sources are being discussed but the State may need to reduce ferry service in the future.

Ray said ridership on the Port Townsend – Coupeville route is back up to 2007 levels due the restoration of the second boat. The Mukilteo run is now the highest vehicle route and second highest in passengers. Ray is working with the Ferry Advisory Committee on hours of operation for the PT / Coupeville Summer runs to allow people to attend events and festivals on both sides. Curt asked if there will be an increase in runs to allow more vehicles to go back and forth. Ray said that for this year they will need to stick with the budgeted schedule and will not extend more hours. Mayor Conard said she interested in maximizing the reservation system in conjunction with drive-ups. Bob Clay suggested restoring coffee and food service on the Port Townsend run.

Regional Transportation Priority List

Staff distributed an updated list of the former “top 20” transportation projects for the region. The list is be posted on the Forward Washington website developed by all the RTPO’s and can be updated at any time at www.forwardwashington.net. Donna emphasized the projects are not listed in order of priority. The website has received positive comments from members of the State Legislature as a useful tool to help prioritize transportation funding statewide.

Commissioner Helen Price Johnson moved to approve the Regional Transportation Priority list, seconded by Commissioner Curt Gordon. The motion was approved.

New Items

Staff provided an overview of a request to record the Island RTPO meetings. After further discussion Mayor Conard suggested changing the format of the written minutes to a brief summary - if the meetings are going to be recorded. Members agreed and Donna said starting the next meeting in April, the meetings will be recorded.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00

Next Meeting: April 25, 2012