



MINUTES FROM THE SKAGIT-ISLAND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (SIRTPO) POLICY BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2014

POLICY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Table listing Policy Board Members Present with names and affiliations: Mayor Jill Boudreau (Co-Chair), Commissioner Jill Johnson (Co-Chair), Mayor Mike Anderson, Commissioner Marshall Bronson, Todd Carlson, Councilman Bob Clay, Mayor Joan Cromley, Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt, Councilman Rick DeGloria, Commissioner Sharon Dillon, Mayor Laurie Gere, Commissioner Helen Price Johnson, Mayor Fred McCarthy, Commissioner Ray Niver, Commissioner Aubrey Vaughan, Commissioner Ron Wesen.

SUB-RTPO MEMBERS PRESENT

Table listing Sub-RTPO Members Present: Mayor Jason Miller (Town of Concrete), Ron Nelson (Island County Economic Development Council), John Pope (Business Representative).

STAFF PRESENT

Table listing Staff Present: Pam Carlson (SCOG), Doug Cox (Island County), Mark Hamilton (SCOG), Kevin Murphy (SCOG), Gabe Philips (SCOG).

AGENDA ITEMS

The October 15th, 2014 Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board meeting was called to order at 2:30 PM.

- 1. INTRODUCTIONS: Roll was taken with a quorum present.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comments.



### 3. ACTION ITEMS:

- a. APPROVAL OF MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2014 MEETING MINUTES: Commissioner Jill Johnson moved to approve the March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 SIRTPO Policy Board meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillon. The motion carried unanimously.

At this point Commissioner Bronson arrived at the meeting.

- b. APPROVAL OF PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTS FOR REGIONAL HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS: Mark Hamilton gave a brief overview of the Human Services Transportation Plan update and project selection process. In March, the SIRTPO Policy Board approved the formation of the Special Needs Human Services Transportation Committee. They have been involved in two tasks: coordinating the development of the update to the Human Services Transportation Plan and developing strategies and weights to be used in the selection of special needs transportation projects.

The committee presented both the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board and the SCOG Transportation Policy Board (TPB) with recommended strategies and weights. The SCOG TPB approved the strategies and adjusted the weights to reduce the criteria "preserve existing service" to 15 points and increase "address high need area" to 15 points. The Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board agreed with the recommendation of the SCOG TPB but increased the point value of "improve regional connections" to 15 and the total points possible to 120.

Commissioner Dillon moved to approve the strategies and weights with "improve regional connections" receiving 10 points. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Niver. Commissioner Jill Johnson said that regional connections are very important to Island County and she therefore would not vote in favor of the proposed motion. Commissioner Wesen said that he also thinks regional connections are very important. Commissioner Dillon withdrew her motion. Commissioner Niver agreed with the withdrawal of the motion. Councilman Clay moved to approve the recommendation made by the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board, which includes 15 points for "improve regional connections" with 120 total points possible. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Niver. The motion carried with Mayor Anderson opposed.

- c. PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING 2015-2020 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: Gabe Philips gave an overview of the 2015-2020 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). A notable change to the RTIP this year is the proposed policies. The 2015-2020 RTIP includes a policy on dormant or inactive projects which allows the governing board to remove regionally managed funds from inactive projects. Another policy was proposed to require that projects sponsors must have the proposed projects included in their local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prior to applying for regional funds. Gabe explained that this policy was proposed to ensure that the submitted projects are priorities of the project sponsor and to allow the project to go through a public hearing process.

Gabe informed the SIRTPO Policy Board that the SCOG TPB recommended the RTIP for approval as it was presented to the SIRTPO Policy Board. The Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board recommended that the policy regarding the requirement to have a project identified in the project sponsor's local TIP prior to applying for regionally managed funds be changed to require only proof of project sponsor approval at the time of application for regional funds.



Commissioner Jill Johnson explained that the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board recommendation was an attempt to add flexibility for project sponsors as they prepare to apply for regional funds. Mayor Boudreau said that the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board recommendation would still require council action, and council meetings are open to the public. Commissioner Price Johnson said that it would ensure that there would be enough projects to meet all of the funds available and that being too restrictive could limit projects and funds could go unused.

Commissioner Niver said that some of the public commented that there was not enough of a public process in the development of the RTIP.

Following the presentation from staff and preliminary discussion among the SIRTPO Policy Board, Mayor Boudreau opened the public hearing for those in the audience that were interested in commenting on the 2015-2020 RTIP.

Randy Good, Sedro-Woolley ([link to written comments](#)): Randy said that SCOG had funded the Cascade Trail West Extension project before it was included in Sedro-Woolley's TIP. He is concerned about SCOG's public input process. There is no public input taken at the ACT and TAC level. The Policy Board has minimal time to consider public input given prior to the decision being made. No level of service or demand has ever been done to determine need for the Centennial Trail project. Randy also mentioned that he felt SCOG had a conflict of interest with a consultant promoting the Centennial Trail.

Connie Muncie, Anacortes: Connie said that she has an objection to having trail projects in the RTIP. Because Skagit and Island Counties are rural, natural places, it is ludicrous to include trail projects through them. She urged the Policy Board to not use taxpayer dollars to fund trails until the economy can handle such actions.

Carol Ehlers ([link to submitted handout](#)), Fidalgo Island: Carol said that there are 44,000 Skagit County residents that do not have a city council to provide input to. Carol said that public comments should be considered at the beginning of the process. She encouraged the Policy Board to consider the elderly in their planning. She also said that SR 20 at Best Road should have a right hand turn lane. Carol also said that the Revised Code of Washington states that unused land which is not entirely fenced can legally be trespassed on. Trails should include fencing so that trespassing does not occur.

At this point the public hearing regarding the 2015-2020 RTIP was closed.

Commissioner Bronson moved to approve the 2015-2020 RTIP as recommended by the Island Sub-RTPO Policy Board. Councilman Clay seconded the motion. Commissioner Wesen said that Skagit County often amends its local TIP and it is not difficult. Commissioner Price Johnson said that Island County often has a difficult time getting public input at the beginning of the planning process but when the project is about to be implemented many people show up to voice their concerns. Mayor Miller said that the Congress for New Urbanism has a great practice of having charettes to get public input. He said that this process creates an astonishing amount of buy-in. At this point the motion on the table was put to a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Boudreau left the meeting at this point. Commissioner Jill Johnson became the chair of the meeting.



#### 4. DISCUSSION ITEM:

- a. **SIRTPO AGREEMENT AND STRUCTURE:** Kevin Murphy gave a brief overview of the history and function of the SIRTPO. He also highlighted some of the administrative challenges associated with the 20-year-old agreement. He said at a minimum the agreement needs to be updated. Skagit County's population is over 100,000 and could stand alone as its own RTPO. Another option could be to separate Skagit-Island RTPO. This option would mean that Island County would no longer be part of an RTPO, but would be able to join other neighboring RTPOs. Kevin said that staff could use direction on this issue as they are beginning to update the Regional Transportation Plan, the Unified Planning Work Program, and plan a call for Transportation Alternatives Program projects.

John Pope said that in the development of United States Bike Route 10 he travelled across the northern tier of Washington State. He found that the separation of the North Central RTPO created a lot of dysfunction in that region. He thinks that cooperation should occur at the SIRTPO and that the alternative can be messy.

Commissioner Jill Johnson wanted to know what the Skagit jurisdictions' concerns are with the current state of the SIRTPO.

Commissioner Dahlstedt said that for 14 years there has been a good working relationship across the SIRTPO. He thinks that counties have strength when they work together. His opinion is that the agreement should be updated to maintain the current organization.

Todd Carlson said that this is a difficult issue and it should be considered very carefully. There are pluses and minuses with separating an RTPO.

Kevin said that when the SCOG TPB discussed this at their meeting last month, there was a strong sentiment, particularly from the cities, that separating the sub-RTPOs was a favorable option. He has heard from individual board members that the transportation focus between the two counties is different with issues unique to each county. Skagit County's transportation system is linked to a much greater degree with Whatcom and Snohomish counties than with Island County.

Mayor Anderson said that he understands that the relationship between the two boards of commissioners is important, but Sedro-Woolley is not impacted by Island County decisions and is therefore not closely related.

Mayor Gere said that Anacortes is on the west end of Skagit County and as a result they are more closely linked to Island County. She said she agrees with John Pope's earlier statement.

Commissioner Price Johnson said she doesn't think the current organization is broken. She does think it is a good idea to reassess the agreement to ensure it is working properly.

Commissioner Dahlstedt moved to direct staff to continue operating as SIRTPO and update the interlocal agreement to be consistent with current methods of operation. Commissioner Bronson seconded the motion. There was discussion if an action by the Board was necessary or appropriate because this item wasn't identified as an action item. It was determined that this would be an advisory motion to provide guidance to staff. The motion carried unanimously.



b. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: Kevin Murphy said that this item was not critical to discuss at this point. It will be delayed until the next SIRTPO meeting in December. Staff distributed draft schedules for the update to the Regional Transportation Plan.

5. NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:12 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Jill Johnson, Island County  
Chair, Island Sub-RTPO

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Jill Boudreau, City of Mount Vernon  
Chair, Skagit Sub-RTPO

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT