



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

DECEMBER 3, 2014
ISLAND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' HEARING ROOM
COUPEVILLE, WA

POLICY BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Table listing Policy Board Members Present with names and affiliations: Mayor Jill Boudreau (Co-Chair) - City of Mount Vernon, Commissioner Jill Johnson (Co-Chair) - Island County, Commissioner Marshall Bronson - Port of Coupeville, Councilman Bob Clay - Town of Coupeville, Mayor Nancy Conard - Town of Coupeville, Mayor Joan Cromley (entered meeting at 2:59 PM) - Town of Hamilton, Commissioner Sharon Dillon - Skagit County, Mayor Laurie Gere - City of Anacortes, Todd Harrison - WSDOT, Commissioner Helen Price Johnson - Island County, Mayor Fred McCarthy - City of Langley, Mayor Steve Sexton - City of Burlington, Commissioner Ron Wesen - Skagit County.

SUB-RTPO MEMBERS PRESENT

Table listing Sub-RTPO Members Present: Todd Carlson - WSDOT, Sami Postma - Island County Economic Development Council, John Pope - Business Representative.

STAFF PRESENT

Table listing Staff Present: Doug Cox - Island County, Mark Hamilton - SCOG, Kevin Murphy - SCOG, Gabe Philips - SCOG.

AGENDA ITEMS

The December 3rd, 2014 Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board meeting was called to order by Commissioner Johnson at 2:42 PM.

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



3. ACTION ITEMS:

- a. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 15TH, 2014 MEETING MINUTES: Commissioner Price Johnson moved to approve the October 15th, 2014 SIRTPO Policy Board meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillon. The motion carried unanimously.
- b. APPROVAL OF REGIONAL HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PROJECT LIST: Mark Hamilton gave a brief overview the recommendations made by Skagit and Island sub-RTPOs regarding the prioritization of the Human Services Transportation Project List. Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SIRTPO) was allocated fourteen letter grades (five "As," five "Bs," and four "Cs") by Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to assign regional projects submitted to the statewide selection process. Mark gave a brief description of the projects that were submitted and explained the scores that each received by the Human Services Transportation Committee. It was noted that Island Transit's proposal requesting operating assistance for the Tri-County Connector was removed from consideration.

Commissioner Price Johnson said that funding the Tri-County Connector is a top priority for Island Transit, but the matching funds are not available at this time. She asked if the project prioritization can be amended once it has been approved. Mark explained that WSDOT has not provided an amendment process for changing the project list, but the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) can be amended.

Mayor Cromley entered the meeting at this point.

Todd Carlson said that just because there is not a documented amendment process for changing the project prioritization, it does not necessarily mean whatever action taken by the Policy Board today cannot be changed at a future date. Mayor Boudreau said she appreciates the footnote provided in the proposed project prioritization that late submittals will not be considered in future calls for projects.

Mayor Gere made moved to approve Resolution 2014-01 to prioritize Skagit-Island human services transportation projects for the 2015-2017 state biennium as presented. The motion was seconded by Mayor Boudreau.

- c. APPROVAL OF REGIONAL HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN: Mark Hamilton reviewed the process to develop the HSTP. Public engagement was a major component of the update process. Mark also reviewed the strategies and activities identified in the plan that informed the human services transportation project selection. Commissioner Price Johnson said she would like future updates to investigate Snohomish County travel data to supplement the needs assessment done in the plan.

Commissioner Price Johnson moved to approve Resolution 2014-02 to Approve the Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bronson. The motion carried unanimously.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- a. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE: Gabe Philips gave a brief overview of the chronology of previous versions of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). According to federal guidelines a new RTP must be updated by April of 2016. Staff recommends that the next update only be a minor update due to requirements of Moving Ahead for Progress in



the 21st Century (MAP-21) likely being implemented after the upcoming plan update. The subsequent update will incorporate the new guidelines and will be a more comprehensive update. Some of the things that will be addressed in the upcoming plan update include: Regional transportation strategy, identification of regional facilities, project list, and the financial plan.

Commissioner Wesen asked who determines what is defined as “regional.” Todd Carlson said that regional facilities at a minimum include state routes, but can include other major transportation facilities that the Policy Board feels have a regional impact.

It was proposed by staff that the development of the RTP update be done by the SIRTPO Policy Board and a Skagit-Island Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) rather than being developed independently by sub-region. Mayor Sexton asked if it will be an issue if non-Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) agencies are included in the decision making for the MPO’s plan. Kevin Murphy explained that the update is driven by MPO requirements. By federal law, the MPO cannot include Island County. Kevin said that there is some degree of risk by having the RTP approved by governing bodies with different boundaries. Mayor Gere asked why this is a risk now compared to previous iterations of the RTP. Kevin said that the law has not changed, but in preparing for the update, staff has identified the risk. Commissioner Johnson suggested that a separate action to adopt the plan occur by each governing body. Mayor Sexton said that the current SIRTPO agreement is 20 years old and needs to be updated. Commissioner Johnson reminded the Policy Board that action was taken at the previous meeting to direct staff to prepare the RTP update to include both Skagit and Island Counties. Kevin said that staff is moving forward with the RTP but if certain members of SIRTPO are not happy with the agreement, something should be done so that everybody is satisfied. The Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) Transportation Policy Board (TPB) has the agreement issue as an action item on the agenda for their next meeting. Mayor Conard recommended that staff move forward based on the current understandings and adjust accordingly if the TPB meeting suggests a different outcome.

- b. TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS: Gabe Philips gave a presentation on the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) project selection process, including the projects that were selected at the last call for projects. Gabe outlined some points for the Policy Board to consider as they prepare for another call for projects. The Policy Board may decide to limit what types of projects can be considered, such as allowing only regional trails or projects that address significant safety concerns. They may also decide to emphasize projects that address some regional goals over others. The criteria used can be more objective to eliminate subjectivity in the ranking process. Staff recommends that a TAP project selection committee be formed to guide the development of the selection criteria as well as overseeing the ranking of the projects. This committee would make its recommendation to the Policy Board rather than the recommendation coming from the sub-RTPO Policy Boards and TACs. Gabe also suggested that enhanced public engagement occur at the outset of the project selection process to gauge the public’s preferences on what these funds should be used for.

Mayor McCarthy asked what the original intended purpose of the TAP funds was. Kevin said that it was a federal decision to set aside a certain percentage of federal funds for non-motorized transportation improvements. Mayor Sexton said that he prefers to have all subjectivity removed from advisory committees and is in favor of developing objective criteria. Councilman Clay said that if the criteria become too objective, it limits the value of input by the advisory committee. Commissioner Johnson asked if previous projects could be used to test the new criteria. Gabe said that is a good way to gauge the effectiveness of the new criteria.



Commissioner Wesen said that based on the relatively small amount of funding available, the Policy Board should keep the process somewhat simple. Gabe said that prior to the next SIRTPO meeting staff can distribute a weighting exercise to the Policy Board to help determine what the priorities are. Staff can also begin public engagement to identify public preference to inform the Policy Board.

- c. MEETING FREQUENCY AND LOCATION: It was determined that the next meeting would be in Anacortes and meetings would generally be quarterly as the RTP is being updated.
- d. DECEPTION PASS BRIDGE PAVING: Todd Harrison informed the Policy Board about Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT's) upcoming project to repave SR 20 from Frostad Road to Sharpes Corner, including the Deception Pass Bridge. They are planning on closing the bridge for five nights for the repaving. Commissioner Johnson said that WSDOT should ensure that the ferry system will be working properly when the bridge is closed.

5. NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:36 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: _____