

SKAGIT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS SKAGIT SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 8th, 2016
SCOG, Room C
Mount Vernon, WA

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

- Center for Independence Shawn Latham
- Northwest Regional Council..... Alyssa Horry
- Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe..... Kevin Lenon, Natalie Misanes, Joni Soriano
- Skagit Transit Coni Jones, Marcy Smith, Brad Windler
- Swinomish Indian Tribal Community..... Tara Satushek
- Volunteers of America: North Sound 211 Elisa Delgado

STAFF PRESENT

- Mark Hamilton Transportation Planner
- Gabe Philips Transportation Planner

MINUTES

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

1. Introductions: Mark Hamilton welcomed everyone to the 4th meeting of the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee (Committee) and then members went around the table introducing themselves and their employers.
2. October 4th, 2016 Meeting Minutes: Mr. Hamilton presented draft minutes from the last Committee meeting. Committee members reviewed the minutes and had no changes to suggest.
3. Committee Evaluation of Projects: Mr. Hamilton noted that 8 of 12 Committee organizations submitted project evaluations to him. The evaluations were presented by Mr. Hamilton in a consolidated evaluation that showed average scores for each criterion, total scores for each project and ranking of each project based on total scores.

Committee members discussed the difficulties in evaluating some projects as it seemed some of the criteria were not applicable. Alyssa Horry suggested that another way to get more information about projects and assist with scoring would be to have applicants give a presentation about their projects. She said that the Whatcom Council of Governments had project presentations this year and it seemed to work well for their regional prioritization process.

Marcy Smith suggested that in the future, it may be beneficial to have different criteria for different types of projects (e.g. capital, operations, mobility management and planning) so when projects are scored, they are being compared to similar projects and the scoring will be more consistent. Mr. Hamilton noted that SCOG has conducted several project selection processes where planning projects do not seem to score well, as criteria are more appropriate to other types of projects. He said that this will likely always be an issue when you have a broad range of projects being scored using the same set of criteria.

4. Committee Project Letter Grade Recommendations: The Committee discussed different approaches to assigning letter grades to the projects, and Committee members disagreed on how the “B”s and “C”s should be assigned. Mr. Hamilton mentioned that the total scores for the projects can be used as a guide to assign the

letter grades, but the Committee is not bound to recommend letter grades based on scores. He suggested that whatever the Committee decides, they should explain the basis for their recommendation so that he can convey that to the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) along with the recommendation on project prioritization.

The following table includes the recommendation from the Committee on project letter grades to assign to projects:

Applicant	Project Number	Project Name	Total Score	Rank	Recommended Letter Grade*
Skagit Transit	#1	Bus Stop Design Standards	40.36	8	B or C
Skagit Transit	#2	Preservation of Mobility Specialist Position	70.00	1	A
Skagit Transit	#3	Expansion of Skagit Transit Route 40X	68.41	2	A
Skagit Transit	#4	Replacement Paratransit Vehicles	55.83	6	B
Skagit Transit	#5	Replacement of Operations Support Radio Equipment	58.58	4	B
Town of Concrete	#1	Town Trolley Project (Purchase 12-16 Passenger Trolley)	53.92	7	C
Town of Concrete	#2	Town Trolley Project (Operate Fixed-route Trolley Service)	55.90	5	B or C
Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe	#1	The DC (Darrington-Concrete) Shuttle Bus Service	65.85	3	A

*Note: Skagit has three “A”s, three “B”s and three “C”s to assign to projects.

The Committee had a split advisory vote on two projects – Bus Stop Design Standards and Town Trolley Project (Operate Fixed-route Trolley Service) – without agreement on what letter grades to recommend. Skagit Transit and Sauk-Suiattle representatives decided to abstain from the vote due to also being applicants.

Before voting, Committee members discussed the merits of simply recommending letter grades to projects based on rankings vs. taking into account other factors such as existing transit services provided, the regional scope of the projects and how projects “fit” with human services transportation. Some Committee members suggested that the Bus Stop Design Standards project was more of an Americans with Disabilities Act project having better alignment with human services transportation and greater regional benefit than the Town Trolley Project, and did not score well because it was a planning project that did not fit well with the scoring criteria. Other Committee members expressed that letter grades should be assigned as projects were scored and ranked without taking into account any factors outside of the scoring criteria. The Committee also discussed the transit services already being offered in Concrete by Skagit Transit and the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, including what parts of Concrete are already being served, on what days and how many times per day.

Alyssa Horry and Elisa Delgado voted to use the ranking to assign all grades in the order of the ranking, assigning a “C” to the Bus Stop Design Standards project and a “B” to the Town Trolley Project (Operate Fixed-route Trolley Service), while Tara Satushek and Shawn Latham voted to assign a “B” to the Bus Stop Design

Standards project and a “C” to the Town Trolley Project (Operate Fixed-route Trolley Service). Mr. Hamilton said that he would convey the rationale for the split decision to the Transportation Policy Board.

Mr. Hamilton said that the Committee’s recommendation would be presented for discussion at the November 16th Transportation Policy Board meeting. He mentioned that he anticipates that the TPB would take action on assigning letter grades at either their December 2016 or January 2017 meeting.

- 5. Reflection on Evaluation and Recommendation Processes: Committee members had several suggestions for the next time human services transportation projects are prioritized. Ideas included: (1) having a supplemental application submitted to SCOG that addresses the evaluation criteria – this application would not also be submitted to the state, but would act as a regional compliment to the state application and ease scoring for reviewers; (2) having project presentations by applicants, whereby reviewers would get to see and hear more about projects than what is included in application materials, and be able to ask applicants questions; and (3) considering developing different criteria for different project types so that similar projects can be evaluated similarly, instead of evaluating a wide range of projects with one set of criteria that may only fit well with certain project types.

The Committee also discussed the timing of the evaluation process to ensure that an “A” or “B” is not assigned to a project that the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) later determines does not qualify for funding. This would be wasting a regional letter grade. Mr. Hamilton said that this happened in 2014 where the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization assigned an “A” to a project, only to find out later that WSDOT determined the project was ineligible for funding. He said it would be ideal if the regional process could follow the WSDOT process, occurring after the state has reviewed applications and determined what is eligible, but SCOG will likely not know what process the state will follow in 2016 until after SCOG has set up its process. Since both processes occur concurrently every two years, it is difficult to get the various process milestones to align with the multiple decision points and different parties involved.

- 6. Roundtable: Committee members shared updates about their current activities.
- 7. Schedule Another Meeting?: The Committee determined that another meeting would be unnecessary and this would be the final meeting. Mr. Hamilton said that he would provide updates to Committee members as the process continues following their recommendation and thanked them for their service on the ad hoc Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Hamilton, AICP
Skagit Council of Governments

Date _____