

SKAGIT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 4, 2021
GoToMeeting Remote Meeting

AGENCIES REPRESENTED

- City of Anacortes..... Tim Hohmann (1:45 p.m.)
- City of Mount Vernon Bill Bullock
- Samish Indian Nation.....David Strich
- Skagit County Torey Nelson
- Skagit PUD..... Chris Shaff
- Skagit Transit..... Brad Windler (1:42 p.m.)
- Town of La Conner Scott Thomas
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)..... John Shambaugh

STAFF PRESENT

- Kevin Murphy Executive Director
- Mark Hamilton..... Senior Transportation Planner
- Katie Bunge..... Associate Planner

1. Call to Order: 1:34 p.m.

Roll Call: Roll was taken with a quorum present.

2. Approval of January 7, 2021 Technical Advisory Committee (Committee) Meeting Minutes:

Mr. Bullock moved approval of the January 7, 2021 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes as presented, and Mr. Shambaugh seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. February Regional Transportation Improvement Program Amendment: Mr. Hamilton presented one proposed amendment submitted during the February 2021 amendment cycle for the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP):

- Skagit County
 - Guemes Ferry Terminal (Girder Replacement)

Mr. Hamilton explained that the RTIP amendment would add the project back to the RTIP. The project was previously programmed in the 2020 RTIP and was expected to obligate construction funds at that time; obligation did not occur as expected before the end of the calendar year, and the project must be reprogrammed in this year’s RTIP in order to obligate remaining federal funds for the project.

An additional administrative modification was also submitted during this month’s amendment cycle. The Francis Road Section 3 project modification would revise the project termini and total project

length. This administrative modification does not require action by the Committee nor the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) and is provided for informational purposes.

Mr. Shambaugh moved to recommend the February Regional Transportation Improvement Program amendment as presented, and Mr. Strich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. 2021 Highway Safety Targets: Mr. Hamilton said that it is SCOG's responsibility as a metropolitan planning organization to set highway safety targets corresponding to federal performance measures each year. Each year, SCOG has the choice of either agreeing to plan and program projects in our region to help meet statewide targets, or to set quantifiable targets for our region.

State and regional safety data related to the performance measures is now available for the most recent five-year rolling average, 2015–2019. In general, all performance measures are trending in the wrong direction both statewide and regionally. Fatalities and fatality rates, serious injuries and serious injury rates, and non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries are all increasing both statewide and regionally.

Mr. Shambaugh asked if SCOG is aware of the cause of crashes, and whether they could be attributed to behavioral factors or characteristics of the roadways. Mr. Nelson noted that municipalities were given more specific crash data and could conduct this kind of analysis. Mr. Bullock mentioned that for those who develop local road safety plans, local crash data is available, but it still takes a judgment call for staff to determine the cause of a crash and whether or not there is a correctable action around a specific crash location. Mr. Hamilton said that SCOG is provided statewide and regional data each year on fatalities and serious injuries by WSDOT, and the cause of crashes is not provided.

Mr. Strich moved to recommend the option to plan and program projects to help Washington state meet its statewide targets for the performance measures to the TPB, and Mr. Hohmann seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Unified Planning Work Program Amendment: Mr. Hamilton presented an amendment to the unified planning work program (UPWP) and reminded the Committee that the work program guides SCOG transportation activities for the state fiscal year. Staff was made aware there could be additional regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) funding available to SCOG this year. The staff recommendation is to amend the UPWP to better position SCOG to utilize additional funding if it is available to complete the Skagit Walking Trail Guide. The update to this work product had been postponed due to the funding climate around the COVID-19 pandemic; the map is typically funded through solicitations to non-profit groups and private donors. The UPWP amendment would update funding tables to reflect an additional \$7,500 in potentially available RTPO funds, and add the product of the walking trail guide for completion by June 2021. The TPB makes the decision whether or not to amend the UPWP.

Mr. Windler moved to recommend approval of the Unified Planning Work Program Amendment as presented to the TPB, and Mr. Bullock seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

6. 2021 Obligation Authority Plan: Mr. Hamilton presented the 2021 Obligation Authority (OA) Plan, which was approved by the TPB at their October 2020 meeting and is revised as necessary. Mr. Hamilton noted that since October, Skagit County had obligated funding for their Josh Wilson Phase 1 project, and that obligation will impact estimates. The estimated OA target is around \$1.88 million,

and SCOG has already delivered \$1.06 million this year. SCOG will need to obligate approximately \$800,000 more by the end of the federal fiscal year.

Project sponsors with projects in the 2021 OA plan gave updates on their projects. Mr. Nelson noted that it will be difficult for Skagit County to obligate their project by April 1, and they may request an extension. Mr. Strich shared that the SR 20/Campbell Lake Road - Intersection Improvement project is on track to obligate funding, and engineers are working on wrapping up preliminary engineering by the end of the month. Mr. Hamilton confirmed that SCOG will obligate funding for the SCOG Admin project by the August 1 deadline for the project.

7. Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan: Mr. Hamilton informed the Committee that the public comment period for the draft Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (Skagit 2045 or Plan) is underway, and ends on February 5. Timely comments received will be presented to the TPB at their February meeting.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the draft Plan with the Committee, including a list of projects in Section 5 of the Plan along with minor revisions to the regional transportation system. The Plan also includes baseline and forecast scenarios from the regional travel demand model, and a financial element forecasting available revenues and expected expenditures between now and 2045. Fish passage barrier removal, maintenance and preservation, and ferry projects are major fiscal needs for the Skagit region included in the Plan.

TAC members noted needed revisions to the project list in Section 5 of the draft Plan. Mr. Strich noted that he appreciated the Environmental Justice and Equity Analysis included in Skagit 2045.

8. 2021 Project Selection: Mr. Hamilton told the Committee that a project selection is included the UPWP for completion this year. SCOG staff recommends combining funding from the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program and Transportation Alternatives into one project selection, along with Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funds, if there is an allocation available to SCOG this year for project selection. There are no estimated funding amounts for any of the funding sources yet, as SCOG staff has been waiting on final 2020 calendar year obligation information and HIP funding information from WSDOT.

Mr. Hamilton noted that historically, the TPB has chosen to set aside 10% of available STBG funds for non-roadway projects. This may or may not continue, and is at the discretion of the TPB. There is no federal nor state requirement to set aside funding in this way - it is a regional decision. The SCOG staff recommendation for the project selection criteria is to increase relative weights for safety and maintenance and preservation. Bonus points are also included for those project sponsors who delivered projects early under the RTIP procedures gap strategies 1 or 2. Projects will again be selected for a contingency list during this project selection.

Mr. Hamilton said that at the March meeting, the Committee may make a recommendation to the TPB on the project evaluation process. The Non-Motorized Advisory Committee has an advisory role on the project selection as well.

Mr. Hamilton noted that some of the information on the project application forms included in the meeting materials had been updated, and he would send around the most recent version following the meeting. He asked Committee members to reach out to him with any feedback on draft project selection materials prior to the March meeting.

9. Roundtable and Open Topic Discussion: Technical Advisory Committee members gave updates on their current projects. Mr. Murphy noted that the Washington state House and Senate have both put out transportation packages, and that more information will be coming throughout the state legislative session.

10. Next Meeting: March 4, 2021

11. Adjourned: 2:55 p.m.

Attest:

Kevin Murphy
Skagit Council of Governments

Date _____

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