

## SKAGIT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 16, 2020  
GoToMeeting Remote Meeting

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Julia Johnson, City of Sedro-Woolley, Vice-Chair; Mayor Jill Boudreau, City of Mount Vernon; Commissioner Bonnie Bowers, Port of Anacortes; Treasurer Jackie Brunson, Skagit County; Jay Drye, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT); Mayor Laurie Gere, City of Anacortes; Commissioner Joe Lindquist, Skagit PUD; Commissioner Steve Omdal, Port of Skagit; Auditor Sandy Perkins, Skagit County; Mayor Steve Sexton, City of Burlington; and Commissioner Ron Wesen, Skagit County.

### STAFF PRESENT

Kevin Murphy, Executive Director; Katie Bunge, Associate Planner; Pam Carlson, Finance Manager; and Mark Hamilton, Senior Transportation Planner.

### OTHERS PRESENT

Todd Carlson, Washington State Department of Transportation.

### MINUTES

1. Call to Order: Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.  
Roll Call: Roll was taken with a quorum present.
2. Chair's Report: Mayor Johnson had nothing to report.
3. Executive Director's Report: Mr. Murphy informed the Board that while the current Federal transportation bill has been extended another year, there has been talk of a new transportation bill. A new bill may be introduced in the first quarter of 2021.
4. Written Public Comments: Mr. Hamilton explained that while there is no opportunity for verbal public comment during the remote meeting, written comments were accepted between the time when the meeting materials were released, and the day prior to the meeting. During that time, one public comment was received from Todd Carlson at WSDOT. This comment corrected the draft meeting minutes regarding Mr. Drye's update during the roundtable discussion. Rather than stating "paving" in the Deception Pass bridge area, the minutes should describe the current painting work on the Deception and Canoe Pass bridges.
5. Consent Agenda
  - a. Approve November 18, 2020 Transportation Policy Board Meeting Minutes  
Commissioner Omdal moved to approve the November 18, 2020 meeting minutes as corrected, and Mayor Gere seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
6. Action Items
  - a. Skagit Regional Transportation Priorities: Mr. Murphy reminded the Board that a few years ago, the TPB had requested a list of Skagit Regional Transportation Priorities be compiled and

adopted annually prior to upcoming legislative sessions. Similar to last year, no new projects were added to the regional legislative priority list for 2021. The cost estimates and description of current projects were updated as necessary. Under the highway system needs, WSDOT estimates that around 36% of the annual needs are currently being funded through available revenues. Upon adoption of the Skagit Regional Transportation Priorities list, this would be submitted to legislative staff in early January.

Mayor Boudreau moved approval of the Skagit Regional Transportation Priorities as presented, and Commissioner Omdal seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## 7. Discussion Items

- a. Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan: Mr. Hamilton reminded the Board that staff have been presenting on the Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) over the past several months. Staff expects a draft RTP to be ready for release for public comment in January. Staff is currently holding consultation meetings with local, regional, state, and federal agencies and groups. Public involvement for the plan update is ongoing. To date, SCOG staff has met with the Skagit Watershed Council and the Federal Highway Administration; staff will meet with other state agencies later this week. Staff has worked with the TAC to compile a project list for the RTP, and the project list is nearly finalized. Staff will then begin prioritizing the projects based on regional priorities; these are included in the plan as high, medium, or low priorities.

Mr. Murphy is working on the fiscal constraint for the RTP update, forecasting available revenues and expenditures through 2045; as a reminder, the plan must be fiscally constrained. The travel demand model is also being updated. The model tells a congestion story for the region, and forecasts congestion issues into the future. A new section is required in the plan to address Federal performance measures; this is the first RTP update to include those new requirements. This will be included as a system performance report within the plan.

Some emerging regional issues have come out of the planning process thus far. These include an increased emphasis on maintenance and preservation. Staff is working closely with WSDOT to estimate the funding needed to keep the regional system in a state of good repair. As an example, delays in bridge painting at the Deception Pass and Canoe Pass bridges lead to an increased maintenance cost. Ferries are also an emphasis in the plan; the Guemes Ferry Terminal is anticipated to be enhanced to support a new electric ferry vessel during the planning horizon. Additionally, five Washington State Ferry vessels are anticipated to be replaced during the planning horizon, along with a new terminal replacement at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal. Finally, fish passage is a new emphasis and focus area for the plan.

In terms of next steps, the draft Regional Transportation Plan is anticipated to be released for public comment in January. At that time, SCOG will also complete a SEPA checklist for the project. After adoption, the Regional Transportation Plan will be submitted to WSDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Mayor Johnson noted that Governor Inslee had announced a new green plan, and was curious how those priorities would impact transportation plans around the state.

- b. Human Services Transportation Project Prioritization: Mr. Hamilton informed the Board that seven project applications had been received during the HSTP Call for Projects. These applications included five applications from Skagit Transit, one application from Community Action for continued funding of a Mobility Manager position, and an application from the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe for continued operations funding for their D-C Direct transit service. Committee

members have submitted evaluations of their projects for the process. As a reminder, SCOG is able to award letter grades to the projects; there are 2 As, 3 Bs, and 3 Cs to award.

8. Roundtable and Open Topic Discussion: Mr. Drye recognized SCOG staff for their continued work moving forward with planning and programming for the region. Regarding the recent collision on the I-5 Skagit River bridge, WSDOT was able to quickly respond and manage traffic signal operations on detour routes because of its integrated traffic management center. The fish passage program continues to expand, with five fish barrier replacements on track for construction in 2021.

Mayor Boudreau noted that the City of Mount Vernon was reviewing its legislative asks for the upcoming legislative session, and how they fit in with the newly identified state priorities. Mount Vernon has specifically looked at fish barriers on the local transportation system, along with future electrification of the city's vehicle fleet.

9. Next Meeting: The next meeting is Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at 1:30 p.m., via the GoToMeeting remote meeting platform.

10. Adjourned: Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 1:59 p.m.

Information Items: The Board was provided with draft minutes from the December 3, 2020 Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

Approved,

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Murphy, Executive Director  
Skagit Council of Governments

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Julia Johnson, Sedro-Woolley  
Transportation Policy Board Vice-Chair  
Skagit Council of Governments