

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 2, 2011

TO: MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee members

FROM: Gordon Rogers

SUBJECT: Connecting Washington Task Force and the Regional Transportation Priority Projects lists

Hello, all.

You may know that our Governor has formed a transportation advisory group (called Connecting Washington Task Force) which is charged with developing a 10-year investing and funding plan for the state's transportation system and presenting it to the 2012 Legislature. The task force met on July 19 and received a "Transportation 101" briefing covering the broad nature of transportation needs in the state. While their direction is not set in stone, the Governor, who is chairing the task force personally, clearly stated that the group's job was not to come up with a project list, but instead, develop principles for a statewide transportation revenue package which would focus on sources of revenue, but might also broadly get into types of appropriate uses without a specific listing of projects (see link).

<http://www.governor.wa.gov/news/news-view.asp?pressRelease=1740&newsType=1>

Earlier this year, Page Scott, Charlie Howard and I met with Secretary Hammond, Dave Dye, and Teresa Berntsen, the Governor's Policy Advisor. We discussed the RTPO role relative to the emerging task force. During the discussion we assured Ms. Berntsen and Ms. Hammond that RTPOs want to participate and provide any assistance they can to the Governor in addressing local issues as part of the task force's focus.

Underlying all this is the possibility that there could be a new revenue package in play for the 2012 Legislative Session. If that appears to be evolving, the question is begged: what of the locally identified Regional Transportation Priority Projects lists we all worked hard to prepare for the Transportation Commission last year. I am sure many of you have heard that STC Chair, Senator Haugen, District 10, is very pleased with having the Commission report which included our lists, and frequently carried it with her during the last session.

Since the Connecting Washington Task Force seems to be focusing their discussion more on sources of new revenue and broad principles for uses, perhaps it would be useful for the RTPOs across the state to have updated priority project lists that could augment the Task Force's work. It seems prudent, considering the foregoing, to encourage use of the lists we created as a fairly accurate characterization of high priority local transportation needs, statewide. Arguably, however, you may not feel that your respective list currently or sufficiently reflects your region's needs. One example of this is the 20-project limit imposed by the Transportation Commission, another is the fact that some

projects might be underway, some are no longer top priorities and some new priorities may have emerged.

I speculate that many of you may wish to update your list, and therefore am proposing that we take this up as an agenda item at the August Coordinating meeting in the interest of list uniformity, utility and bulk. Please come prepared to discuss the following:

1. How we make the lists strategic statements of priority without strict limits on the number of projects;
2. Whether we broaden the lists to include state highways and transit projects (if not already included),
3. How we consider and communicate preservation needs in a uniform manner,
4. What information we include,
5. How projects should be categorized,
6. How do we align with principles developed by the Connecting Washington Task Force and
7. How can we produce an updated report that reflects our product?

I am interested in your feedback on this. Page and I had an agenda-building discussion yesterday with WSDOT planning staff, and feel this is an important component for the August meeting. I realize that this implies some level of work for everyone, but with a potential for new revenue, it seems warranted. Let me know what you think.