

MINUTES
February 28, 2005 Highway 2 Safety Coalition Meeting
Community Center Room
319 Main Street
Sultan, Washington 98294

Meeting called to order at 7:07 PM

Attendees:

- Fred Walser, H2SC Chairman
- Donnetta Walser, Mayor of City of Monroe
- C. H. Rower, former Mayor, City of Sultan and H2SC Charter member
- John Seehuus, Councilman, City of Sultan and H2SC Charter Member
- Kamuron Gurol, Corridor Planning Mgr., Urban Planning Office, WSDOT,
- Loreena Eng, P.E., Regional Administrator, Northwest Region, WSDOT
- Rick Mitchell, WSDOT (no title available for these minutes)
- Tina Rogers, Snohomish County Public Works Department (no title available for these minutes)
- John Light, Public Works Director, City of Gold Bar
- George Schmidt, Stevens Pass Resort
- Loren Sand, Public Works, Perteet, Inc. (engineering & consulting firm)
- Loretta Storm, Temporary H2SC Secretary

Introductions

OLD BUSINESS

Kamuron Gurol has attended a couple of working group meetings and had several discussions since the H2SC Jan. 31st meeting, and there seems to exist a two-part thrust for future action: (1) getting started with the Route Development Planning process led by WSDOT, and (2) obtaining other potential funding sources that could be pursued by the H2SC or others, and many of his discussions have taken place in the context of those two fronts. Hiller West (City of Monroe Community Development Manager) has communicated that he was against filing for the PSRC grant funds, either by the City of Monroe or H2SC, but Gurol believes that should be discussed in further detail tonight. Sees both pluses and minuses in not filing for that particular funding. Kamuron wishes to explore that in more detail, insofar as explaining what is to be contained within the RDP as well as some additional funding sources which could be complimentary to the RDP process. The \$500,000 federal grant should be able to complete the Plan, although it's too early in the process for him to determine for certain whether that is true. Two of his current RDP projects, each of which contain some similarities to the SR 2 corridor, one of which has run a bit higher than that, with the other being considerably higher. So uncertainty still exists as to whether the \$500,000 will be sufficient. He is therefore in favor of, and recommends, a strategy to pursue additional funding wherever it may exist. He said WSDOT's Northwest office has already submitted paperwork for additional federal appropriations, a second \$500,000 request, but he won't know what the timing might be, as it's dependent upon Congressional action. It would hopefully be within the next few months.

Mayor Walser asked if this was the federal revenue request, and **Loreena Eng** indicated it was funding as outlined by Larsen's aide Evan Shatz during his recent visit related to TEA-21 funds. **Chairman Walser asked** Ms. Eng whether another \$500,000 request through Senator Murray's office would be a waste of time, or if it was compatible with the TEA-21 effort, and she responded that she should review it again and determine whether the Coalition's and WSDOT's request for TEA-21 funds could be combined. She will check on that and report.

Kamuron Gurol indicated that the \$500,000 request had made it past the first hurdle, but he was not sure about the Coalition's request.

Brief discussion ensued on tactical strategies to follow relative to the funding requests. **Mayor Walser** indicated that Rep. Rick Larsen's office had contacted the Coalition to offer their help in supporting U. S. 2, due to the importance of the highway in his district.

Loren Sand of Perteet, Inc. indicated that the important aspect is that any requests clearly indicate the purpose of the funding so they don't become confused about the various projects. **Loreena Eng** needs to discuss with her federal liaison person that if both WSDOT and the Coalition is asking for funding for essentially the same project, is it better for the Coalition to ask for it and have WSDOT support that effort.

Kamuron Gurol commented that it would be ideal if the second \$500,000 is awarded, any overage could be allocated to some complimentary projects along the corridor, or towards some of the initial design work for particular projects. He thinks RDP's generally cost between \$500,000 and \$700,000, depending upon their scope. A good part of his job is to ensure that recommendations they produce make really good technical sense, that they're supported by a consensus of jurisdictions along the corridor and that they find their way into the relevant regional planning documents; in this case the PSRC's transportation plan, as well as into the State Highway Systems Plan. Once the RDP is included within those documents, competition for funding becomes both more efficient and likely. He said another concern is the legislative session timing and process. Insofar as future funding for the U.S. 2 corridor and the RDP plan, it will probably not be completed in time for formal submitting into the next-session budgeting process. And because of the biennial twist, the RDP process integration with state budgeting will probably not occur until the 2007 legislative session. **Gurol** brought maps depicting weekend traffic counts and will leave them with the Coalition.

Gurol stated that the next step in going forward with the RDP process is looking to select a consultant to assist, and he's discussed this briefly with Hiller West regarding that process. Gurol's goal is to try to get that process completed in March. Hiller will be phasing out as coordinator of the working group, while Kamuron phases in to take over in that function. He indicated that each jurisdiction along the corridor needs to assign a staff person as a representative to the "Corridor Working Group." Normally, these staff members have been a public works director or planning director or senior planner, someone who can participate on a regular and ongoing basis, who can act in a relatively-reliably way in representing the city and its officials. The group will meet more often than the Coalition to massage and work out the details as the RDP proceeds, with the representatives reporting back to the individual city councils.

Gurol then briefly explained the RDP process of SR169, using the sample flowchart he distributed. He said a key component in this process is to determine what, precisely, are the real transportation problems along the corridor and to define them well. For instance, is it a safety problem, a congestion problem or some other problem that had been previously missed? It's critical that the Plan reflects the true existing problems as they currently exist and may in the future. The alternatives listed in the flowchart are simply a compilation of projects that could be done along the Corridor. The final step is the adoption process. It is during this process where mechanisms are found through which local jurisdictions will accept, adopt and implement the recommendations contained within the RDP. In other words, all jurisdictions need to be in sync and working as a team for effective implementation to occur. We're projecting about 15 months or so for the SR 169 process, while U.S. 2's is a longer corridor with more jurisdictions, combined with more environmental/rural considerations.

Gurol indicated that finding the time to work on this project will be challenge for him, personally, as he tries to get it launched while he determines who will be the day-to-day project manager for WSDOT, as it will take some time to fill that position. He'll do the best he can to keep up, but the train may be a little slower getting out of the station than some might like. A consultant can assist with this, and one should be secured fairly soon. **Chairman Walser** indicated that it is now apparently known that the Coalition will be working on a Route Development Plan, as the City of Sultan received a letter from Berryman & Heniger, soliciting interest in the project. **Gurol** indicated that's one reason he is looking for some help in the consultant selection process. **Chairman Walser** said that the coordinating committee that we had set up seems to be the committee that Gurol needs, based upon its compilation (Hiller from Monroe, Dunn from Sultan, John Light from Gold Bar, Snohomish County is represented), but there's no one from

Skykomish or Index, and there's a question whether they could provide someone, and the City of Snohomish has been receiving meeting notices, but has not been attending.

Gurol said the effort will become a WSDOT process, at least to start. The next meeting on 3/17 will still be contained within the Coalition, under Hiller's organization, during which a determination will have been made, hopefully, of the source for more federal funding, more discussion of the details of the PSRC grant, and organizational issues that will help the group get started on the RDP. That meeting should be the transition point at which Hiller's role will decrease, for which both he and Mayor Walser will be grateful, due to his other workload. Gurol stressed that the public works folks are vital.

C. H. Rowe asked whether King County was involved in this effort, and **Tina Rogers** responded that Don Dean said he would be willing to participate, but wishes to join the process when more detailed agendas are on the table. Kamuron said that Dean would probably be included in his working group/committee.

Chair Walser indicated that Stevens Pass groups (The Greenway, Stevens Pass Resort) are becoming involved in this effort. **Gurol** stated that the scope of the project has been defined right now as Snohomish to Skykomish. **Rowe** asked where Gurol's responsibility cut-off was, and he responded that Skykomish was his eastern limit. **Mayor Walser** said that the City of Snohomish is a bit different from the rest of the jurisdictions in that U. S. 2 doesn't actually cut through their city, but some of the problems are from Monroe westward to Snohomish, and **Chairman Walser** reinforced that comment but highlighting some of the safety concerns along that stretch.

Gurol mentioned that he has not yet seen the City of Snohomish participate in the RDP effort, and suggested outreach to the elected official level would be appropriate at this juncture. **Rick Mitchell** said that Snohomish is currently going through a process within their community that involves U.S. 2 from Bickford to the main downtown exit, along with some SR 9 and Bickford Avenue issues, and suggested that this might be part of the RDP project-identification phase. Mayor Walser said she would talk with Mayor Liz Loomis to determine their progress on these issues.

Chairman Walser indicated that during the 2/17 working group meeting, the group seemed to think that the tight timelines in submitting the PSRC application would preclude them from filing, as well as the question of being able to meet the grant match requirements. Loren Sand said he might help with the application, but the group decided that they would probably not pursue the grant. But now it looks as if we should revisit this issue. Walser requested feedback on whether or not they should pursue the grant, and if so, how will the group meet the obligations?

John Light from Gold Bar said they could only participate in the match in terms of staff time and expertise, and **Chairman Walser** concurred that Sultan has the same situation. **Gurol** believes (although he'd have to check with PSRC's King Cushman) that if all affected jurisdictions (six cities, two counties) participate in the RDP process, then staff in-kind match should not be any problem when one considers the scope and 15-month (or more) timeframe when one considers the meetings, the "homework," local engineering/planner expertise. He recommended that someone take on the responsibility of performing that rough calculation. He also stated that the application contains a considerable amount of "filler" pages and it is not "brain surgery," so it may not be as daunting a task as it initially appears from its bulk. His opinion is that those considerations should not deter the group from filing, and he knows of a consulting firm who has already volunteered to assist, but conflict of interest guidelines need to be strictly followed. **Tina Rogers** said it was her understanding that the staff at one of the meetings did do a calculation and their preliminary number was \$8,000. She thinks the real question is how much did they wish to supplement the \$500,000 with? \$100,000? \$200,000? She suggested that they might wish to attempt for another \$100,000 grant, using local staff matching; if they came up short, they could "pass the hat," with larger jurisdictions assisting by trying to find some additional funds. One question is whether mitigation funds are eligible to use for a local match. But she thinks it's safe to say that if the grant application was in the \$100,000 ballpark, local staff in-kind would probably be sufficient. **The other main objection she heard to applying for the grant** was that it was just "one more thing" the staff needed to do. It made sense to her to say "we're producing only one product": an RDP. And the money will just supplement the federal \$500,000. This would allow them to do more in the RDP, because if the group

finds out it doesn't have enough money to complete the process, you can carve things out of the scope and some of the things that would be carved out are some things that might be of interest to smaller communities such as Gold Bar and Index, and that's exactly what the PSRC program is for; to ensure that each individual community along the corridor has their means met and included in the process. Additionally, this grant would allow the Coalition to "get its foot in the door" for future grant applications.

C. H. Rowe suggested "passing the hat" around in the private sector and asked if that would make any impression on PSRC's consideration of the grant? He said he knew there would be half a dozen different businesses that would kick in \$1,000 apiece and if they could get 100 businesses, that's \$100,000. He indicated that as far as he and his trucking business goes, if they could streamline U. S. 2 a little bit, he could save \$1,000 in fuel costs in a short period of time, so that's an incentive. Also, other companies, such as construction businesses (Cadman or Riverside Sand & Gravel, etc.), might be willing to contribute, if they could see past the end of their nose. **Chairman Walser** asked whether Mr. Rowe was volunteering to be chairman of the fundraising committee.

Rogers that any private commitments would need to be secured by April 1st, the application due date. But they could attempt to write something that indicated the group would be exploring methods to develop private partnerships to raise additional funds. Rogers said that the application needs to identify the source(s) of the local matching funds, but she doesn't think it's a stretch to state that during this process, local jurisdictions could spend up to \$13,500 in time, but diligent accounting is required. It adds up pretty quickly.

Mayor Walser raised Hiller West's concern that the goals of the H2SC have been primarily the large, broad-picture issues of safety and capacity, whereas the SR 203 corridor was concerned mostly with gateways in each individual community, so she wonders whether their concerns would be compatible with the grant's purpose.

Loren Sand was involved in the 203 corridor and said that it was a demonstration (i.e., "pilot") project, essentially and was therefore more of a planning and conceptual approach. But the PSRC program is open to a variety of goals and functions, from planning through to actual construction.

Tina Rogers also responded by stating that the PSRC's additional funding could help address some of Mayor Walser's concern above and beyond the safe movement of as many vehicles as possible through the corridor. For instance, the process may start with that problem statement, but it may, and probably will, change through the open house public process when specific issues are identified, such as, "I can't cross the street and the elementary school is on the other side of the highway. So we need to slow people down." She believes the 203 corridor is very different than U. S. 2, and believes its needs are very well-suited for the PSRC funds.

Chairman Walser said he would entertain a motion on whether they should apply to the PSRC grant, as it represents a commitment for a 13.5% match. **C. H. Rowe motioned (seconded by John Seehuus) restated by Chairman Walser) that the Highway 2 Safety Coalition apply for a PSRC grant of \$100,000.** Asked for discussion, there was none. All ayes, no opposition was voiced.

Chairman Walser stated that Perteet, Inc. has offered to do the application for the grant, confirmed that their offer was still on the table (per Loren Sand, it is), then **asked if there was a motion to have Perteet, Inc. do the PSRC grant.**

Loren Sand of Perteet, Inc. explained that this was not an unusual activity for their company to participate in, especially with smaller communities. It is not something they are offering up just because they wish to have the business. It's both a good investment and good PR. **Chairman Walser** then stated that Mr. Booth had explained that and volunteered to do this (during their coordinated meeting) with no strings attached. **Mayor Walser** asked whether Perteet's time could be included in the matching funds, and **Rogers** responded that it would probably not count until the grant was successfully awarded.

John Seehuus motioned (seconded by C. H. Rowe) that the H2SC accept Perteet's offer to complete the application for the PSRC grant. No discussion; verbal vote all ayes.

Tina Rogers stated there should be a representative at the March 11th I.C.C. meeting to present the application. She does not know whether a member of the H2SC can "legally" sign the application, so a city official should sign it. **Mayor Walsler** asked if it was appropriate for all cities to sign the application, and **Rogers** indicated that would even better, but a presenter needs to attend.

Chairman Walsler asked if C. H. Rowe was going to work on the fundraiser and report at the March 28th meeting. Rowe agreed.

NO NEW BUSINESS.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM

[Minutes authored and submitted by H2SC Temporary Secretary L. Storm.]