

MINUTES
Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board
Thursday, January 25, 2007
Regional Council Board Room

Excerpted by John Niles

Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting of the Executive Board was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Executive John Ladenburg, President. The signatures on the Attendance Sheet, as well as documentation by staff, determined attendance and that a quorum was present.

Members and *Alternates* present for all or part of the meeting included:

Executive John Ladenburg, Pres.
Mayor Pro Tem Sue Singer, Vice
President
Mayor Katrina Asay
Councilmember Linda Bird
Councilmember Shawn Bunney
Councilmember Mary Alyce
Burleigh
Councilmember Richard Conlin

Mayor Suzette Cook
Councilmember Jan Drago
Commissioner Bob Edwards
Commissioner Christene Endresen
Commissioner Jack Fabulich
Councilmember Linda Kochmar
Councilmember Marko Liias
Deputy Mayor Mike Lonergan
Councilmember Nancy McCormick

Mayor Steve Mullet
Councilmember Phil Noble
Commissioner A. Daniel O'Neal
Councilmember Bob Overstreet
Councilmember Julia Patterson
Councilmember Michele Petitti
Councilmember Sonny Putter
Councilmember Laurie Sperry

Members absent included

Councilmember Carol Arends
Mayor Ron Hansen
Mayor Kathy Keolker
Mayor Darlene Kordonowy
Mr. Doug MacDonald

Commissioner Bill Mahan
Mayor Dean McColgan
Councilmember Richard McIver
Mayor Greg Nickels
Commissioner Connie Niva

Executive Aaron Reardon
Executive Ron Sims
Councilmember Dave Somers
Mayor Raymond Stephanson

A list of guests present for all or part of the meeting is included with the official record of these minutes.

Communications and Citizen Comments. There were none.

President's Remarks

Executive Ladenburg reported on the changes to the Executive Board, introducing Mayor Katrina Asay from Milton, as a new alternate for the other cities in King County. Councilmember Laurie Sperry from Kenmore is a new alternate for the other cities in King County. Commissioner Josh Brown will be the new alternate for Kitsap County. He also noted that Mayor Joe Marine is now the representative for the other cities in Snohomish County. Councilmember Marko Liias from Mukilteo is the new first alternate and Councilmember Jerry Wood from Gold Bar is the new second alternate. "We are still waiting to hear from a few jurisdictions as to their status."

He then said he had asked Councilmember Mike Lonergan from Tacoma to become the official Chair of the Growth Management Policy Board. "Mike has served as Vice-Chair for more than a year. He has proven leadership ability and a firm understanding of the issues. His distinction will help the Board move forward through the final stages of the VISION 2020 update. Mike has said he is willing to accept that and I am looking to the Board for agreement on that appointment.

"Seeing nodding heads, Mike, you're officially the new Chair." Councilmember Overstreet added that "he is a very good leader of the group."

meetings that took place during the creation of the regional economic strategy and the Partnership's successful trip to Eastern Washington last summer. These trips will be quarterly, one in each county, and they are designed to both highlight the important economic development efforts throughout Puget Sound, and educate on community partnerships between business and elected government leaders.

"The Snohomish County field meeting will highlight economic impacts of the aerospace and life science clusters and its workforce development system. The cost will be \$30 per person for lunch. Contact Eric Schinfeld or me and we'll make sure you are in attendance."

Executive Director's Report

Bob Drewel said "staff certainly wants to join in appreciation to Councilmember Lonergan for stepping forward and taking on this responsibility. There has been remarkable work done, there has been a special effort up to this point, and clearly needed between now and March to be sure that we stay on the time schedule. The March action represents a major milestone in this project. This action will allow the staff to pull together a draft VISION document and supplemental environmental impact statement for public review. We have to stay on schedule so we can deliver our responsibilities to the region."

Mr. Drewel noted, "like you, we are spending time in Olympia on this organization's behalf. Your request that I and staff spend some time getting the word out about the Puget Sound Regional Council, we're certainly doing that in Olympia and next Wednesday I will be in Spokane where they are combining their economic development district and chamber of commerce into one, what they describe as one powerhouse activity, and I have the honor of giving the keynote as a representative of this organization to talk about the work of the Prosperity Partnership and how that came together.

"On February 28, I will be in the Tri-Cities doing essentially the same thing and we have had an overture from Kittitas County to try to learn what it is we're up to as well. I know that you have had some interest that this organization has a broader presence and we're trying to react to that as best we can."

He explained that "Rick Olson is the person who you and I depend on greatly for analysis and work and good judgment when it comes to the Legislature." He asked Mr. Olson to review what "has been happening in Olympia."

Mr. Olson said, "We have a number of things in front of the Legislature this year, more than ever before. The Higher Ed proposal is important and working well. Transportation is difficult. We're expecting a hearing on an RTID-Sound Transit ballot bill on February 1. The day before that the Regional Transportation Commission will report to both the House and Senate on its recommendations. Conventional wisdom right now in Olympia on their proposals for a change is the following—the Senate and the House will probably introduce a bill that is being drafted right now as a courtesy to the Commission, and leadership in the Senate expects to take it seriously. They are going to start with the Commission's recommendation—they don't know where they are going to land. Conventional wisdom is that the bill will have a little more trouble in the House. So it's the flip side of how things have occurred on that subject in the past.

"We have a little bill that should be out of the code reviser's office tomorrow that is your recommendation to adjust representation on the PSRC's Executive Board. Once we have the bill out of the code reviser and primes and sponsors signed up I'll let you know about it so we can work off the

same bill number on the same page. Prospects are pretty good. You are going to be discussing a number of other recommendations to the Legislature later today.”

Commissioner O’Neal asked if the PSRC has formulated a position on the Regional Transportation Commission’s proposal. Mr. Olson responded, “At the last Executive Board meeting that was referred to the Transportation Policy Board, and at the last policy board meeting the report, which is pretty bulky, was assigned to a special committee that is to make a recommendation on the position the PSRC might take. There are recommendations in the things you are going to consider today that relate to the subject generally, but don’t deal with the specifics of the recommendations. There isn’t a bill yet but we worked with the Commission to develop draft legislation that would at least respect and preserve a fundamental role of the PSRC, which is to assure that the federal funds that can come to the region and come to the region now, will come to the region in the future. In reviewing drafts we’re very pleased that this legislation represents the PSRC’s role really well and adheres to the federal law so that we can keep that federal funding flowing regardless of what the Legislature does.”

Councilmember Patterson asked when the subcommittee would come back with their recommendations regarding the PSRC position on the recommendations from the Commission. Charlie Howard reported they would be meeting on February 8 and would “look at the bill itself as opposed to the report, because that is what will be operative.” Councilmember Patterson asked if “our process here will allow us enough time to respond to the bill if we need to go down and testify?” Mr. Olson said he expects that when the Commission reports on the 31st, “there will be a bill dropped and those meetings will, in fact, be hearings. My view is that we have an adequate amount of direction from you after today to at least speak to those subjects. It seems clear that while the Senate will start with the recommendations and a bill that reflects them, they are going to pick and choose what they like and what they can move through the Senate this year. There is expected to be at least one minority report related to the RTC recommendations, perhaps two.”

Councilmember Patterson commented. “I don’t know if my concern is warranted, but I am concerned that if they drop a bill that reflects the recommendations that it will create a dialogue, a regional and statewide discussion that could have implications for our ability to be successful in November. I don’t know what to do about it—I know that the Governor is equally concerned. I wonder who we could talk to about how they might manage that discussion so it doesn’t become a big free-for-all for criticizing everything that is going on up here, which will discourage the public.”

Councilmember Lonergan said those were also his concerns. “I think if you summarize the report in two sentences, there aren’t enough resources to meet a need, which we can all agree with, and the other is that the current structures are broken and I think that is where there would be great fear. Why would we vote for something put forward by a broken system, or incompetent or inadequate effort of governance? I feel we are behind the curve in not responding to the report that’s been out there for some time, and say ‘we absolutely concur about the resource reality and the need for solutions in that area, but we’re here and we’re not broken.’ The same would go for the efforts of RTID and Sound Transit—people can agree or disagree about different parts of what’s coming forward, but Mr. Bunney’s efforts, Mr. Ladenburg’s efforts, they’re not broken either. What I’m getting from the public in Tacoma—those who have this on their radar screen and other electeds, is ‘good heavens, don’t create another layer of government that is more distant from the cities. That is not a solution, that’s adding to the problem.’ So we’ve got to get out in front of that part of it or I think you’re right, there is a linkage to the November election.”

Councilmember Putter said he thought it “fair to say that the concerns just expressed by Mike and Julia are top of mind for at least House legislators on transportation. They are very well aware of the potential for those issues and the word I am getting is that their primary priority is not to endanger the November vote, so they are aware of it. I’m not sure what we could do as an organization. I certainly don’t want to get into the debate here on the proposals that are emerging from the Transportation Commission, but I’m confident, having spoken to some House transportation legislators, that they are very well aware of that concern and plays into the reason why they are not so excited about dealing with the recommendations before November.”

Executive Ladenburg said that, “at Sound Transit, we have elected not to formally respond to the Commission’s report because it opened a resounding silence throughout the region. You couldn’t get any press—why draw attention to it since it didn’t seem to have any legs in the community or in the media. My attitude right now is let’s see. I think we have to pay a lot of attention to see if it starts to move or if there are any legs under it. Not only does it have all these effects on transportation, this body and the EDD spent four years getting consolidated and starting the Prosperity Partnership and this bill, and this recommendation, tears that apart. It takes transportation and land use planning and leaves the EDD all by itself again. It would separate economic policy from land use and transportation, something we spent at least four years trying to get our act together on. In that sense for economic development and the Prosperity Partnership it is absolutely terrible idea and not well thought out or understood. We are dependent upon having the people in this room who do transportation and land use planning policy, the same people discussing economic policy.”

Mavor Cooke said there was “enough information out there, including in the draft report from the RTC, to be very damaging for the vote in November. However, our best approach, I would think, is to really capitalize on the successes that those of us sitting around here today know exist when it comes to coordinated planning and being able to translate that into some common results, because so many in the public aren’t going to want to take the time to understand some of the concepts that were put into Puget Sound Regional Council existence. But they want to know what the results are. Irrespective of what happens in Olympia, if we were to simply apply beginning before the session is out, before this Legislature adjourns, that we begin simply compiling that kind of information because we are going to need it anyway.”

Executive Ladenburg said “part of the RTC report is also built around this ‘conventional wisdom’ that the public thinks things are broken.” He added that the results of a recent Sound Transit survey indicate that “that’s not the case—the public does not feel that way. The public does not feel that things are broken; the public feels that things aren’t getting built fast enough.”

Councilmember Patterson said this had been “a very good dialogue. My concern is simply that the public can change their mind about whether or not they think things are broken or not, fairly quickly if they are constantly told that things are broken by the state Legislature. It’s amazing to see the effect that the press coming out of Olympia can have on public opinion.” She asked if there was “some way to have a discussion with the Senate leadership to help them understand how the rhetoric itself, even in a committee hearing, could be very damaging to us up here, or somewhat damaging.”

Mr. Olson responded, “Bob and I met with Senate leadership earlier this week and expressed those concerns, and we have continually expressed those same concerns to leadership of the Regional Transportation Commission and the Governor’s office. We think that the Commission turned a bit of a corner between the release of its draft report, which included terminology like ‘broken,’ and the final

report. Unfortunately, drafts still exist. But, my sense is that people are very mindful of the primary goal, which is to succeed in 2007, and that, I think, is true so far in all four corners, but I think people are also hoping that upcoming decisions related to key projects and decisions that the RTID and Sound Transit make will also be productive toward the goal of succeeding in November. So, they are waiting.”

Mr. Drewel added that “we’re watching this on a daily, if not hourly, basis.”

He then informed members that the General Assembly meeting would be held on April 5, and that Senator Patty Murray will be the guest of honor.

Consent Agenda

It was moved and seconded to: (a) approve the minutes of the meeting held November 30, 2006; approve vouchers dated 11/30/06 through 1/19/07 in the amount of \$2,033,161.67; approved a contract and budget adjustment for the Household Activity Survey; (d) approved a Commute Trip Reduction contract and budget amendment; (e) approved the Prosperity Partnership’s contract with the Westin Hotel for the fall luncheon; certified comprehensive plan updates for Arlington, Buckley and Pacific and comprehensive plan amendments for King County; approved a change in project status for three projects in Destination 2030; and (h) adopted a routine amendment to the 2005-2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The motion carried unanimously.

New Business

- a. *Destination 2030*
 - 1) Adoption of 2007 *Destination 2030* Update
 - 2) Approval of 2007 Action Strategy
- b. Coordinated Transit-Human Services Planning
 - 1) Adoption of PSRC Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
 - 2) Approval of Regional Prioritized List of Rural and Special Needs Transportation Projects for the 2007-2008 WSDOT State and Federal Consolidated Grant Program
- c. Adoption of PSRC Transportation Recommendations to the 2007 Legislature

Charlie Howard explained that “we have several fairly important actions that are before you today on items 8a, b and c.” He distributed a memorandum for agenda item 8c that had been left out of the mailed version of the agenda.

“When the new Surface Transportation Act passed in 2005, Congress had created several new planning requirements. They put a July 1, 2007 deadline in the legislation for Metropolitan Planning Organizations across the country to meet these new requirements. Right now, over the next few months, your fellow MTP boards will be taking similar types of actions. When we saw these requirements we decided to dive right in and to structure a focused update to the plan so we could meet those requirements to *Destination 2030*. What you have before you are those required updates. The Transportation Policy Board created a working group, chaired by Councilmember Pam Carter. Several members here were participants in that working group. They spent a lot of time going over the requirements.”