



**Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization**

*Serving Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties*

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**Palouse RTPO Transportation Policy Board (TPB) Meeting Minutes**

Meeting was held via zoom

**Tuesday, September 10, 2024**

**10:00 AM – 11:30 AM**

**1. Welcome/Call to Order/Introductions.**

Those present included:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Brian Shinn	Asotin County
Jenny George	Asotin County PTBA Transit
Laura Aukerman	City of Dayton
Ryan Paulson	City of Dayton
Carla de Lira	City of Pullman
Sean Wells	City of Pullman
Barbara Stout	COAST Transportation
Grant Morgan	Columbia County
David Ocampo	Columbia County Public Transportation
Jeff Ruchert	Garfield County Public Transportation
Kevin Poole	Garfield County
Chris Rasmussen	Port of Clarkston
Jennie Dickinson	Port of Columbia
Kristine Meyer	Port of Whitman
Robert Ward	Town of Rosalia
Jeff Walters	University of Washington, Tacoma Researcher
Chris Boyan	Washington State University
Cody Wilson	Washington State University
Tom Handy	Whitman County
Charlene Kay	WSDOT Eastern Region
Jim Mahugh	WSDOT Lower Snake River Dam Transportation Study Lead
Greg Figg	WSDOT Eastern Region
Teri Chang	WSDOT – TRIP
Rebecca Couch	Palouse RTPO Director

**2. Public Comments.** None.

**3. Approval of Minutes from September 10, 2024.** Brian Shinn motioned to approve. Jenny George seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- 4. Lower Snake River Dam Study Update.** Jim Mahugh, project lead for the Lower Snake River Dams Transportation Study, provides an update on current progress and timeline. Mahugh explains that the study, directed by state legislature, explores the possible impacts on the transportation system if the dams were to be removed, such as shifting barge traffic to other modes of transportation. Mahugh emphasizes that WSDOT is neutral in its position on whether the dams should be removed or not.

The LSRD Transportation Study is taking a four-phase approach which spans between Spring 2024 to Spring 2026. The study is currently in phase 1 which includes the consultant onboarding, Jacobs Engineering, in May, and understanding the transportation system as it is today. Phase 2 is around impacts on transportation utility and a safety analysis. Phase 3 is focused on forming potential solutions and competitive impacts of modal diversion. Phase 4 is the development of a final report of the study.

Mahugh discussed more details around Phase 1, which includes a comprehensive community engagement plan, grain elevator inventory mapping, total logistics cost model development, rail capacity analysis, and seasonal factor analysis. Grant Morgan raised a question around the grain elevator inventory mapping on whether Garfield County grain elevators will eventually make it to the inventory mapping. Jennie Dickinson expressed similar sentiment on Columbia and Garfield County's grain elevators being reflected in the inventory mapping. Mahugh will investigate the grain elevator inventory in Columbia and Garfield County.

Mahugh goes into comprehensive detail around the community and government engagement component of the study. He spoke on the technical advisory committee, community advisory committee, and JTC committee (overlooked by Washington State University). There is a virtual open house to be held in November. There is currently a monthly newsletter and website for the study. Mahugh can be contacted at [jim.mahugh@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:jim.mahugh@wsdot.wa.gov).

Board members engaged in discussions with Mahugh about the study. Jennie Dickinson asked how the study project will incorporate all in the service area. Mahugh says that the hope is that the community advisory committee will address this and encourage people to raise awareness of any other entities should be included in discussions. Carla De Lira asked how elected officials get involved in the community advisory committee and when does this component start. Mahugh says that the committee has already met once on September 5<sup>th</sup> and Brian Shinn is a member of the committee. He encourages elected officials to join the committee and says to reach out to him. The committee currently sits around 20 members but can possibly go up to 40-50 members. Tom Handy asked if anyone is studying the recreational aspects. Mahugh says that there are three studies currently underway on irrigation, transportation, and recreation from various official entities. Brian Shinn asked if there is any study around calculating the cost of redoing two valley-wide sewer systems. Mahugh says he is not aware of a study that addresses sewer system impacts and costs. Robert Ward asks if WSDOT can make recommendations based on study findings on whether action should be taken. Mahugh says that he cannot speak on whether the dams should stay or not based on the study and is instructed to be neutral.

- 5. Understanding the Interconnected Challenges Impacting Rural Transportation Services in Washington State (Dr. Jeff Walters, UW Tacoma).** Jeff Walters, Ph.D., researcher from UW Tacoma, presents a study that has five years of funding to support rural transportation by the U.S. Department of Transportation's University Center Program. The purpose of the study presented by Walters is to help inform transportation research for the next 5-10 years that could help organizations, such as WSDOT and RTPOs, by looking at the interconnectedness of different economic, social, and other types of challenges that impact rural transportation. The study uses each entity's transportation challenges in their specific context, like a city or county, to formulate an overall conceptual picture of challenges that a region, like the Palouse, faces in

transportation. Walters explains that, by having transportation experts and public officials participate in this study, the Palouse RTPO can receive a 2–4-page report which outlines potential policy priorities that are relevant to addressing the region’s transportation challenges. The study takes a 3-phase approach with three short surveys. Walters offers to schedule a follow-up meeting with the Palouse RTPO upon delivery of the report around February 2025. Carla De Lira voiced support for the study and encouraged the engagement of other policy board members to participate in Walter’s study. Jennie Dickinson asks if there is consensus that the policy board wants to participate in the study. Policy board members are on board. Rebecca to keep the study going forward within Palouse RTPO. Walters can be reached at [jpwalt@uw.edu](mailto:jpwalt@uw.edu).

6. **Palouse RTPO Voucher Approval Policy.** As a result of the state audit report, the executive board was informed that the PRTPO had not been approving vouchers. To follow state audit requirements, Rebecca presented a policy to be approved by the policy board around approving vouchers quarterly after they have been paid by the RTPO. Brian Shinn motioned to approve policy as presented. Jenny George seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
7. **Agreement for Services between Palouse RTPO and LCVMP.** Rebecca presented the agreement between the RTPO and LCVMP for the RTPO to administer services for the LCVMP. The agreement had been approved by the MPO policy board during their August meeting. The agreement starts October 1, 2024. Brian Shinn motioned to approve the agreement between the RTPO and LCVMP. Jenny George seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
8. **First Amendment to the Agreement for Services between Palouse RTPO and LCVMP.** Rebecca presents a first amendment to the agreement for services between Palouse RTPO and LCVMP around borrowing of equipment. The amendment states that if the RTPO borrows from the LCVMP, RTPO is responsible for the replacement of equipment should it be lost, damaged, stolen, or broken. Further, if the LCVMP borrows from the RTPO, the LCVMP is responsible for replacement of equipment should it be lost, damaged, stolen, or broken. Laura Aukerman motions to approve the amendment to the agreement for services between Palouse RTPO and LCVMP. Robert Ward seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Amendment to be sent to LCVMP for approval by their policy board.
9. **Financials Review/Approval.**
  - a. **Approval of vouchers:** Rebecca presented the following vouchers for approval which totals \$21,888.28.

Voucher Type	Voucher Numbers	Total Amount
Payroll Vouchers	P01-P15	\$17,354.98
Payables Vouchers	A01-A08	\$4,326.77
Reimbursement Vouchers	R01-R03	\$206.53
	<b>TOTAL VOUCHERS</b> 07/01/24 to 08/31/2024	<b>\$21,888.28</b>

Laura Aukerman motioned to approve the vouchers. Carla De Lira seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- b. **SFY2025 Budget: Quarter 1 to-date:** Rebecca presented budget and expenses for Quarter 1 and to-date. She made changes to the format of the budget to include a monthly breakdown. Revenue funds from the MPO administration to the RTPO will be listed under the “Other Misc. Revenue (MPO admin) line of the budget. Current budgeted revenue of \$59,985 for the MPO reflects the start time of the MPO/RTPO

agreement for October 1 which is during the middle of the fiscal year. The amount will be 80,000 in future full fiscal years. Other changes include the admin salary and benefit amounts discussed by the executive board.

**10. 2407 Amended Palouse RTPO 2024-2029 Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP) Approval.** Rebecca described that amendments to the Palouse RTPO RTIP are brought before the Palouse RTPO TAC and Policy Board throughout the year to maintain updates and consistency with the STIP. The 2407 amended RTIP includes amendments for May through July 2024. All additions/edits are consistent with approved amendments to the STIP. The TAC reviewed and recommended approval of the 2407 Amended RTIP on August 27, 2024. The 2407 Amended RTIP includes the following new/updated projects:

- a. Garfield County:
  - o update to WA-03664 Kirby Mayview Road MP 25.2 to 30.4
  - o update to WA-08805 Kirby-Mayview MP 21.3 to 25.2
- b. Columbia County:
  - o update to WA-03333 Starbuck Bridge Replacement
- c. City of Dayton:
  - o addition of WA-04532 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street Overlay

Brian Shinn motioned to approve as presented. Lauren Auckerman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**11. Amendment to the SFY2024-2025 Palouse RTPO Unified Program Work Plan.** Rebecca presents amendments to the work plan (originally adopted June 2023) that includes wording around the new RTPO/LCVMPO service agreement, an updated list of executive board members, an updated list of transportation policy board members and technical advisory committee members, new wording around freight alternatives study for Pullman/Whitman County, and changes to public transportation section to clarify presence of transit agencies in RTPO. Jenny George proposed the addition of Asotin and Lewiston under the public transportation section around intercity transportation. Carla De Lira proposed the addition of low-income workers as beneficiaries for an intercity transportation system. Brian Shinn motioned to approve RTPO UP work plan. Robert Ward seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**12. Request for Qualifications for Freight Alternatives Study.** Rebecca presents draft RFQ for seeking out a consultant for the Freight Alternatives Study which will seek to analyze freight movement from different location in efforts to provide potential insights on ways to mitigate traffic going through Main Street in Downtown Pullman. Rebecca explains that WSDOT still needs to determine if the study project needs a disadvantage business enterprises goal to be stated. The project is set to be completed by June 10, 2025. The TAC recommended approval of the freight alternative study RFQ as presented on August 27, 2024. Laura Auckerman motions to approve RFQ for Freight Alternatives Study for publishing. Carla De Lira seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**13. RTPO Director Updates.**

- a. **Fiscal Agent Change Update.** Rebecca updates on the progress of the fiscal agent change from Town of Rosalia to Port of Whitman. Port of Whitman provided the template for the voucher approval policy process.
- b. **Meeting Minutes Announcement.** Rebecca updates policy board on Carla De Lira taking on meeting minutes responsibility.

**14. Columbia County Spotlight.** Jennie Dickinson explains the 4<sup>th</sup> Street overlay need and impact to policy board. The area around 4th Street had issues with rusted waterlines which were replaced eventually; however, the replacement caused bumpy road conditions. Jennie expresses excitement over the 4<sup>th</sup> Street overlay as a fix to this problem and gratitude to Grant Morgan for

collaboration. Grant Morgan discusses that the 4<sup>th</sup> street overlay is fully funded. Laura Auckerman expresses appreciation to Grant Morgan and Jennie Dickinson for work done in Columbia County. Jennie Dickinson talks about the Port of Columbia project around constructing a craft malt facility and interest in creating an access point onto Highway 12 for this facility.

**15. Board Member Comments/Open Discussion. None.**

**Next Policy Board Meeting:**

**December 10, 2024**

**Spotlight: Whitman County**

**Title VI Notice to Public**

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