October 18, 2024

PRTPO Members

Clallam County
Jefferson County
Kitsap County
Mason County
Bainbridge Island
Bremerton
Forks
Port Angeles
Port Orchard
Port Townsend
Poulsbo
Sequim
Shelton
Clallam Transit
Jefferson Transit
Kitsap Transit
Mason Transit
Port of Allyn
Port of Bremerton
Port of Port Angeles
Port of Shelton
WSDOT Olympic Region
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Makah Nation
Skokomish Tribe
Squaxin Island Tribe

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To our transportation partners and allies,

We write to let you know that Peninsula RTPO joins Regional Transportation Planning Organizations across the state in requesting the Legislature to increase base funding appropriated for regional transportation planning activities laid out in RCW 47.80 to a more reasonable level. Base funding is inadequate for the work we do on behalf of the hundreds of cities, counties, tribes, transit agencies, ports, WSDOT regions, and other stakeholders working together around our 17 RTPO tables in support of coordinated transportation decision-making and investments.

PRTPO supports statewide efforts to increase base RTPO funding to $11.7 million per biennium, adjusted periodically for inflation. This level of funding will ensure every RTPO receives a minimum of $400,000 per biennium, some receiving much more due to their complexity and size. This will enable all 17 of the state's RTPOs to fulfill our core duties and support important regional transportation opportunities for cooperation and collaboration across Washington.

All RTPOs are severely underfunded, but rural regions like PRTPO do not receive federal metropolitan planning funds to backfill our RTPO work programs like large urban regions do. This leaves rural regions and our local and tribal members particularly disadvantaged when it comes to regional collaboration and participation in statewide activities.

That means PRTPO's input is absent from many relevant transportation planning processes led by WSDOT and local agencies. We are limited in our ability to provide coordinated regional input state agencies request for policy guidance, statewide planning recommendations, and funding priorities. More of our limited resources go to compliance requirements and inflation every year, leaving little of our $136,500 annual budget for actual planning and regional collaboration. PRTPO receives more RTPO funding than most regions, too. Other voices are missing from the processes.

This modest programmatic increase in state funds that RTPOs request will benefit nearly every community in the state that owns or operates some part of Washington's transportation system. RTPOs facilitate agency coordination with WSDOT. We have forged strong regional alliances reflecting the unique character of each region. Regional alliances support resilient regions. And it will take resilient regions in every corner of the state to meet demands of the 21st century.

On behalf of the 27 members of PRTPO's Executive Board, I ask you to lend your support for this RTPO funding ask as you can within your organization. With reasonable base funding, PRTPO can be a more effective transportation partner for you and better advocate on behalf of concerns for the Peninsula Region in local, tribal, and statewide planning processes.

I welcome the chance to discuss this RTPO funding effort with you and explore opportunities for closer collaboration and cooperation with PRTPO going forward. Thank you in advance for your support.

Respectfully,



Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin, Chair
Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization

PENINSULA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

RESOLUTION 03-2024

Supporting an Increase in Statewide Funding for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations

Recitals

WHEREAS, the Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) is the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the Peninsula region and is in good standing with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in its agreements and certifications; and

WHEREAS, PRTPO receives state funds appropriated by the Legislature from the Motor Vehicle Account and distributed by WSDOT to carry out state-mandated activities described in RCW 47.80, and is unable to accept or use federal funds if offered; and

WHEREAS, the $4.9 million currently appropriated by the Legislature for RTPO funding statewide is little changed since 2004 and is inadequate for carrying out the basic activities of RCW 47.80; and

WHEREAS, RTPOs cannot fulfill their state responsibilities with what is appropriated for this purpose, much less prepare for the emerging challenges and uncertainties we face in the 21st century, hence eroding the capacity for regional collaboration when it is needed most; and

WHEREAS, core RTPO responsibilities entail at least the equivalent of one full-time staff for basic functions, or a minimum of $400,000 per biennium for staffing and necessary operational expenses; and

WHEREAS, rural RTPOs like PRTPO do not receive additional planning funds from FHWA and FTA like large urban regions do, which helps backfill deficits in planning funds in urban regions but not in rural regions, exacerbating the impact of RTPO funding deficits for rural regions; and

WHEREAS, RTPOs are a valuable forum for the hundreds of cities, counties, tribes, transit agencies, ports, WSDOT regions, and other stakeholders that work together around regional tables in every corner of the state to coordinate transportation planning in an on-going and cooperative way as envisioned by the Legislature, thus meriting an adequate level of base funding support.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE PENINSULA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION:

THAT state funds appropriated by the Legislature for regional transportation planning should be increased to $11.7 million per biennium and adjusted periodically for inflation, to support core RTPO work program requirements as laid out in RCW 47.80.

APPROVED, this 18th day of October 2024.

ATTEST:

Lindsey Schromen-Wawrin, Chair

ATTEST:

Ben Thomas, Vice-Chair