

SR 530 Landslide Commission Meeting

Tuesday, December 2, 2014; 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
The Everett Community Center, Port Gardner Rooms A&B
3900 Broadway, Everett, WA 98201
Phone: (425) 385- 4019

Meeting Summary

ATTENDANCE

See Attachment 1

Welcome and Meeting Overview

Discussion:

General announcements:

Kathy Lombardo, Executive Director, welcomed attendees and reviewed the purpose of the meeting. Just prior to the meeting, the research groups met to fine tune and finalize recommendations, success examples and the responsibility matrix for the report. Tonight's Commission meeting was designed so each research group can review changes with the whole Commission and discuss and decide whether to approve those changes and the report.

Research Group Recommendations – Geologic Hazards & Land Use

Group Leaders: Wendy Gerstel and Bill Trimm

Group Members: Paul Chiles, Diane Sugimura (absent), Dave Montgomery

Report out from research group meeting

The research group (the group) reported that they were not able to complete their review of the recommendations. The group asked whether it would be best to review the work they completed or wait until they are able to complete the language. Michael Gaffney, Ruckelshaus Center facilitator, gave a brief overview of the group's progress.

Commission discussion

The Commission discussed who should be the lead responsible entity to implement Recommendation # 17- Establish Geologic Hazards Resilience Institute. It was stated that the Governor would be the appropriate entity and that funding could be sought from private and philanthropic sources. One possibility would be that the Institute could be housed at one of the state's research universities. It was noted that the state's universities have huge funding challenges and without additional funding would have difficulty creating a new institute. Possible private sector funding options include organizations or individuals interested in

sustainability, environmental issues or education. The federal government may also have options for possible funding.

A suggestion was made to combine Recommendations #19, #20, and #21 into one recommendation.

In order to complete the report on time the group needs to complete their review by the end of the week. The Commission decided to end the meeting early so that the Geologic Hazards and Land Use research group could meet.

Research Group Recommendations – Emergency Management

Group Leader: John Erickson

Group Members: Joann Boggs, Renee Radcliff Sinclair, Lee Shipman, Chief Steve Strachan

Report out from research group meeting

The Emergency Management research group reported that they reviewed all of the recommendations and that there were some language changes and consolidation of some of the recommendations. They also completed success examples and discussion on the responsible entity matrix. Amanda Murphy, Ruckelshaus Center facilitator, gave a brief summary of the changes.

Commission discussion

Discussion focused on the need for an additional Commission meeting in order to complete the report and consider final approval. The Commission decided to schedule an additional meeting on December 9 from 5:00p.m. - 8:00p.m. at a location to be determined.

Event/Response Timeline Discussion

Commission Discussion

Due to the decision to end the Commission meeting early, the discussion about the timeline was brief. Commissioners agreed to provide any comments to Kathy by the end of the week. It was recommended that the timeline include a few earlier dates.

Public Comment

Cindy Barker – Summary of comments:

As a Seattle resident she volunteers with a neighborhood group that does emergency preparedness and response planning. Recommendation #14 references “Map Your Neighborhood”. The volunteer group is organized to respond to an incident before government

is able to assist. When volunteers are involved in proactive training as well as in response they are vulnerable to liability issues since they are not registered emergency response personnel or health workers. Ms. Baker recommends that Recommendation #14 includes language that issues of liability be considered and resolved for volunteers so that they can train, practice and respond to incidents without concern for liability.

Gordon Ness – Summary of comments:

Mr. Ness attended all of the Commission meetings except for one. He attended this meeting to say thank you to the Commissioners. The Commission’s work involved a lot more time than they probably expected. The Commission’s comments were well considered and they did a really good job.

Kevin Ashe - Summary of comments:

Mr. Ashe stated that it is hard to believe that the Commission’s work is ending. There are many people to thank including the Governor, County Executive and all of the panelists that participated. Thank you to the Commissioners for their time and dedication. He was always impressed with their thoughtfulness and professionalism. He also wanted to thank Kathy Lombardo for taking the lead. He emphasized that four men - Mayor Dan Rankin, Lynnwood Assistant Fire Chief Gregg Sieloff, Tom Cooper and Quinn Nations who led the loggers - made decisions and took actions on the third day of the incident that enabled all “victims” to be found and the story surrounding those decisions and actions is amazing. Thanks to the Ruckelshaus Center Team and each and every one of you. From the bottom of his heart.

Final Working Draft Timeline & Wrap-up, Adjourn

The November 4th Commission Meeting Notes were accepted. The Commissioners thanked the public for their participation in the Commission’s work.

Upcoming SR 530 Commission Meeting Dates	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none">December 9, 5-8 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Robert J. Drewel Building Public Meeting Room, 3000 Rockefeller Ave. Everett, WA 98021

Attachment 1
Meeting Attendees

Name	Title and Affiliation
Kathy Lombardo	Executive Director
JoAnn Boggs	Pend Oreille County Emergency Management Director, current Chair Washington state Emergency Management Association
Hon. Jill Boudreau	Mayor, Mount Vernon
Paul Chiles	Owner/ President, Chiles & Co Real Estate
John Erickson	Former Director of Emergency Preparedness, Department of Health
Wendy Gerstel	Principle, Qwg Applied Geology
David Montgomery	Director, UW Geomorphological Research Group
Renee Radcliff-Sinclair	Former Representative, Current Strategic Initiatives for Western United States for Apple Inc.
Lee Shipman	Emergency Management Director, Shoalwater Bay Tribe
Steve Strachan	Chief, Bremerton Police Department
Bill Trimm	Owner/ Bill Trimm, FAICP -Town Planning and Economic Development
Mike Gaffney	Ruckelshaus Center
Amanda Murphy	Ruckelshaus Center
Phyllis Shulman	Ruckelshaus Center
Raquel Espinosa	Ruckelshaus Center

SR 530 LANDSLIDE COMMISSION MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Meeting Date & Time: December 2, 2014, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Location: The Everett Community Center, 3900 Broadway, Everett, WA 98201

Name	Title	Affiliation	Phone	E-Mail
Michael Ken	Director	Rocketstars CN.	on file	on file
Cassy Stevens	Planner	Stillaguamish Tribe	360 425-7362 x221	cstevens@stillaguamish.com
Pat Stevenson	Environ. Manager	Stillaguamish Tribe	360 631 0946	pstevenson@stillaguamish.com
Cindi Barker	Seattle Env. Comm. Director Plubs Volunteer		206-933 6965	cindibarker@clearview.net
Brad Gooding	Asst. Chief SNO 00801	WV-VAI	425-551-1200	bradg@wvva.com
Sally Hantz		Sen. Caldwell	425-422- 8748	on file
Gordon Ness			425-743- 9071	gkness@comcast.net
Bruce McMahon	Asst. Fire Chief	Mukilteo Fire	425 508 9630	bmcmahan@ci.mukilteo.wa.w
Jason Biermann	Deputy Director	Snohomish DEM	425 388-5060	jason.biermann@sno.co.org
Kerri Love	Mitigation Specialist	Skagit DEM	360.428.3250	klove@co.skagit.wa.us
Krista Salinas	Coord.	Skagit DEM	360-428-3250	KristaS@co.skagit.wa.us
Mary Jane Powell	Division Manager	Snohomish Co. Financing	425-388-7116	maryjane.powell@sno.co.org

**SR 530 LANDSLIDE COMMISSION MEETING
MEDIA SIGN-IN SHEET**

Meeting Date & Time: December 2, 2014, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Location: The Everett Community Center, 3900 Broadway, Everett, WA 98201

Welcome to the SR 530 Landslide Commission Meeting. If you are a member of the media please sign in.

Name	Representing:	Phone/email
John Ryan	KUOW	jryan@kuow.org
Thomas Lin	KOMO-TV	tplin@skjtv.com

SR 530 LANDSLIDE COMMISSION MEETING PUBLIC COMMENT SIGN-IN SHEET

Meeting Date & Time: December 2, 2014, 7:00pm – 9:00pm

Location: The Everett Community Center, 3900 Broadway, Everett, WA 98201

Welcome to the SR 530 Landslide Commission Meeting. Public comment is encouraged and appreciated. If you wish to speak, please sign-in and provide the agenda item topic you wish to speak about to the Commission.

A total of 15 minutes will be provided for public comment. Please limit comments to 3 minutes per person. No speaker may convey or donate his or her time to another speaker. In an effort to be respectful of everyone's time, Commission members will not be able to engage in a dialogue with individual members of the audience and no immediate action will be taken on any public comment issue.

Name	Address/Phone/Email (Optional)	Representing Self/Business	Agenda Item/Topic	Wish to Provide Written Comment?
Cindi Barker	cindi.barker@clearwire.net 206-933-6968	Seattle Emergency Communications Hubs	Big Recommendations Emergency magnet	
GORDAN NESS	gknness@comcast.net	SELF	THANKS	
KEVIN ARTE	D. IGA @ Flourish on	SELF/COMMUNITY		

Statement for the record of the Joint SR 530 Landslide Commission, Meeting of November 4, 2014

By John Niles, Founder
Public Interest Transportation Forum
4005 20th Ave West, Suite 111
Seattle, WA 98199
206-781-4475
jniles@alum.mit.edu

I commend and appreciate the efforts of the Commission to follow up on the Oso tragedy.

I understand your mission to include developing recommendations that bear on preventing other loss of life and property in landslides in the vicinity of Oso.

So in the public interest I offer you the following information that I have developed through independent, unpaid research about another landslide-prone environment in Washington State in the same wet climate and unstable landscape as Oso, a corridor that is 30 to 50 miles away.

Fourteen daily passenger trains are at risk of being hit by a severe landslide on any rain-soaked day along the Puget Sound shoreline just north of Seattle. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail corridor of single and double track has high, unstable bluffs along one side of the track and the water of Puget Sound on the other side. Both the Oso landslide location and the landslide prone track corridor are marked on an attached map.

There have been hundreds of landslides on these shoreline tracks over decades of past history. Here is a viral YouTube video of a freight train being hit in December 2012:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UeT0m-hpD_4

As a former aviation safety professional, transportation analyst, and concerned citizen of the region, I have taken a position that these passenger trains are too dangerous for any passenger to ride in the fall-winter-spring rains along the coast of Washington. Here is *Transportation Issues Daily* coverage of my position that includes my justification:

<http://www.transportationissuesdaily.com/analyst-its-too-dangerous-to-ride-amtrak-in-seattle-in-winter/>

And here is the Washington State DOT "Landslide Mitigation Action Plan Final Report" prepared mostly prior to the Oso event <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/85894B65-81D7-4DC7-A8DF-521D22BA011A/0/LandslideMitigationFinalDocument.pdf> that documents the landslide prone tracks with detailed maps, but underplays the hazard. Civil engineering work is underway on some parts of the route to attempt stabilization, but I understand it is limited in its coverage of the hazardous sections, and may not prevent slides reliably even where built.

BNSF is mostly freight, but is paid by Amtrak, Washington State DOT, and Sound Transit to accept passenger trains, under Congressional and Executive Federal pressure. BNSF makes most of its money with freight, not passengers. However, the railroad is well compensated by government and Amtrak to intermix the seven round-trip passenger trains, which are shorter and run on published daily schedules, unlike the much longer freight trains that roll at various changing hours of the day and night.

The current hazard mitigation process is to detect landslides with trip wires 24 hours per day connected to a BNSF train control center in Fort Worth, Texas, and then halt all subsequent

passenger trains for 48 hours following a slide, called by BNSF a moratorium for safety. If a passenger train is hit by a landslide, the passengers call 9-1-1.

Most of the landslides are small, and are called mudslides locally. But there have been some big ones. There was one a year ago that derailed a passenger train in a minor way without injuries, described in this front page from *The Seattle Times*:

<http://www.bettertransport.info/pitf/Everett,WA-Landslidefrontpage,April7,2013.pdf> The bloodless analysis of declining ridership on this particular train in the previously referenced WSDOT Mitigation Report is striking: “While this decline in ridership and revenues was observed in most of Amtrak’s national network during April 2013, customers may have chosen not to ride the trains due to concerns for their safety after Amtrak’s long-distance Empire Builder train was partially derailed by a landslide near Everett, specifically on April 7, 2013.”

In recent memory, landslides have put freight trains into Puget Sound, as in January 1997, the Woodway slide: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/climatechange/images/landslide_woodway.jpg

There have also been large landslides on similar nearby waterfront bluffs that didn't happen to have tracks at the base, such as <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/1-home-destroyed-washington-state-landslide-0>

The fourteen weekday passenger trains are considered important status symbols for the region, but their function is replaced easily with substitute buses on nearby Interstate 5 during the intermittent 48 hour landslide moratoriums. Commuter train customers are sometimes directed to simply use regularly scheduled buses.

I have more information, including names and titles of government officials responsible for authorizing the operations of the trains. I have emails from many of them, pre-Oso, with assurances that they care, but with no acknowledgment of the life-safety hazard that rail customers are exposed to in the wet season. I've no evidence post-Oso that the official government attitude has changed toward passenger trains running below unstable bluffs.

I urge the Commission to take strong action toward resolving the shoreline railroad landslide issue I have described here, as part of its follow up to absorb lessons learned and take appropriate follow up action after Oso.

One possibility for Commission action is simply to identify and publicize the names and titles of the local, regional, state and federal government officials who could be charged with criminal negligence if a train is knocked in the water by a landslide similar to the one that killed people in Oso.

Respectfully submitted,



John Niles



Find Road Map

United States Washington

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