



CTAG

citizens' transportation advisory group

It matters how we get there

Meeting Summary
January 17, 2018

Attendees:

Bob Hendricks	Bellingham / WTA Gold Card holder
Bruce Prior	Blaine Public Works Advisory Committee
Chris Comeau	City of Bellingham Public Works
Hugh Conroy	WCOG
Izaac Post	Happye Valley Neighborhood (Bellingham)
Jaymes McClain	WCOG
Jillian Trinkaus	WWU / Columbia Neighborhood (Bellingham)
Mathew Santos	Bellingham Technical College
Stoney Bird	York Neighborhood (Bellingham)
Terry Terry	Lummi Island
Kathy Berg	Birch Bay
Terri Hansen	The Arc of Whatcom County
Carol Berry	Western Washington University (WWU)
John McGarrity	Cornwall Park Neighborhood
Mike Bozzo	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
Rick Nicholson	WTA
Maureen McCarthy	WTA
Michelle Grandy	WCOG

Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group

Member Updates

Michelle Grandy introduced herself as the newest employee at the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]. She is working with the Whatcom Smart Trips program as the Outreach Coordinator.

Vern Yadon informed the group that a bicyclist was just hit by a car in the Kendall area, where efforts have been underway to construct a bicycle-pedestrian trail to parallel SR 547. The bicyclist was not badly injured.



Maureen McCarthy reported that Mary Anderson, formerly the WCOG technical advisor to CTAG, is now employed by Whatcom Transportation Authority [WTA] at their Transit Planner.

Terry Terry shared a story of a local 17-year-old with Asperger's Syndrome who has been taking the bus for the past year and now feels confident in supporting himself without the need for his parents to stay locally. She forwarded his critique about bus routes through Western Washington University, where he says students sometimes do not give up seats for disabled individuals.

There was discussion over education about priority seating for the elderly and physically disabled on the bus. Maureen McCarthy reminded the group that WTA has new how-to videos about riding the bus which touch on priority seating.

Selection of CTAG officers for 2018 (Chair, Vice Chair)

Kathy Berg announced that she will be stepping down as CTAG Chair for 2018. Ms. Berg has been Chair for a little over 9 years, having been voted-in in September of 2008.

Hugh Conroy opened the floor for nominations for Chair. Terry Terry of Lummi Island was nominated by Vern Yadon, with a second by Izaak Post. No other nominations were suggested. Terry Terry was unanimously approved by CTAG voting members.

Terri Hansen of Bellingham was nominated as Vice Chair by Bruce Prior. No other nominations were suggested. Terri Hansen was unanimously approved by CTAG voting members.

Policy Board update

Hugh Conroy said that he recently emailed local jurisdictions about open seats at CTAG and the opportunity to fill them. The City of Ferndale has appointed Mel Hansen and the City of Lynden has appointed Nathan Zylstra. There is still one more seat open for the City of Bellingham. Due to conflicts in his schedule, Arthur Reber is leaving his Pt. Roberts seat. Mark Robbins of Pt. Roberts has requested an appointment to CTAG through the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board.

Chris Comeau reported that the Ellis St bridge over Whatcom Creek in Bellingham is being improved. The City has received bridge replacement funding. They hope to go to construction in 2019.

Adoption of safety performance measures and targets

Hugh Conroy reported that WCOG's federally required adoption of safety performance measure and target would be acted on by the policy board. WCOG staff are recommending – as has been decided at the state-wide MPO coordinating committee – to align with the state's Highway Safety Improvement Program, adoption of the federal Target Zero policy. This would entail WCOG agreeing to plan and program projects in a way that supports the state's Target Zero goal.



Hugh Conroy also explained that WCOG is developing a more visual way to present crash data on specific transportation corridors for analysis. This is an element of the Whatcom Mobility 2040 regional transportation plan. WCOG staff hope to use this as a tool to better identify where investments are needed on the network or, depending on crash causes, what other strategies may be effective.

WCOG upcoming transportation data collection projects

Regional Household Travel Survey

Hugh Conroy explained that WCOG is beginning the process of conducting a regional household travel survey for Whatcom County. The last household travel survey for the county was conducted in 2008. Data from the survey will inform the WCOG travel demand model.

Survey participants will fill out trip diaries detailing their travel schedule during a specific time period. The reported trip-ends will be used to create origin-destination pairs, useful for determining what routes travelers in the county take to get to and from work and other activities.

Outreach methods have evolved since the last survey in 2008 (for example, land-line phones are used much less today). Mr. Conroy explained that they will work with a consultant on developing outreach/recruiting methods and data capture methods. A Request for Qualifications [RFQ] is currently out for survey consultants.

Possible supplemental questionnaire on transportation behaviors & choices

Hugh Conroy informed that group that WCOG is considering adding a supplemental travel behavior questionnaire to the household travel survey. The questionnaire could be an ongoing, longitudinal survey given out every 2 years to observe changes in travel behavior in Whatcom County. They will discuss this notion with the household travel survey consultant. Mr. Conroy suggested that a beta version of the questionnaire can be given to CTAG members to gather their feedback.

Counts of external trips – trips on our regional roads that are to, from, or between points outside Whatcom County

Hugh Conroy updated the group on another project to help update the WCOG travel demand model. WCOG will contract out the collection of traffic counts at Whatcom County external stations – where roads cross the county border. They hope to track license plates (by camera, for example) and link them together (if they cross fully through Whatcom County) to better understand how many vehicles are entering, staying, and leaving the county.

Reviewing sources of probe data

Hugh Conroy said they are also looking at potentially using cellphone and GPS probe data to supplement the external station counts and to use for travel time/congestion monitoring. INRIX is a company that



provides probe data on major roadways to the federal government, which WCOG has access to. WCOG staff are interested in probe data for all roadways (or as many as possible).

Whatcom Transportation Authority Community Advisory Panel

WTA Updates

Bellingham Station expansion

Mike Bozzo presented a PowerPoint showing the preliminary design of an expansion of the downtown Bellingham station. The design includes a new bus concourse that would expand the station to the west, requiring the removal of a row of parking on Railroad Ave. The design also includes improving the open space west of the station building for use as a public space for recreation and events.

There was discussion on the public space in the design – police presence, who would use the space, drawing people in for events, etc. Mike Bozzo said they are taking notes from the Commercial Street Night Market for how to maximize the use of their space (such as potentially using the extra concourse at night for events).

Electric bus pilot

Proterra is a company that makes electric buses with a range of about 250 miles. Rick Nicholson said that WTA is hoping to conduct an electric bus pilot soon. Test routes will include the Alabama Street hill and the Highland Drive hill behind Western Washington University [WWU].

Transit Ridership Trends – WTA and USA

Rick Nicholson showed the recent trends in boardings and revenue hours for WTA as well as national averages. Ridership on WTA buses had been increasing from about 2012 to the end of 2015, after which it has steadily declined. WTA service has been increasing regardless. Nationwide, ridership has been steadily declining since 2012 with services also slowly increasing since about 2014. Mr. Nicholson reported that ridership on the WWU night shuttle has dropped, which is likely due to access to on-demand ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft.

Carrol Berry said that WWU is developing real-time shuttle arrival information for students on an app. Rick Nicholson noted that this technology will also be coming to all WTA users in the next year and a half or so.

Potential changes to service in June 2018

Rick Nicholson explained that WTA is making adjustments to three routes to help them stay on schedule:



190 Lincoln (part of the Blue Line)

25% of trips run 5+ minutes behind schedule in the afternoon when WWU is in session.

232 Cordata (Green Line) and 331 Cordata (Gold Line)

Often running behind schedule during the lunch hour (11:00am - 1:00pm).

75 Blaine

Two afternoon trips struggling to stay on schedule

Special meeting in 2018

Maureen McCarthy reminded the group that there was a desire for an additional, special CTAG/CAP meeting in 2018. She said this could be a possible joint meeting with Skagit Transit's Citizens Advisory Committee.

Items for next agenda

Maureen McCarthy asked for ideas for future meeting agenda items.

Terry Terry suggested inviting the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee to present updates on efforts to purchase a new ferry and the status of the Gooseberry dock being moved to make room for a new marina.

Izaak Post suggested a discussion on private shuttles and how they affect public transportation options.

Street Play

Bruce Prior explained the concept of Street Play. In the UK, municipalities will close down certain streets for one day a week for kids to come out and play. He suggested this could be potentially implemented in Blaine.