



It matters how we get there

Meeting Summary
March 8, 2016

Attendees:

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| Mary Anderson | Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] |
| Vern Yadon | KCVCPA / Kendall Chapel |
| Terry Terry | Lummi Island |
| Arthur Reber | Point Roberts |
| Dave Pros | South County |
| John Pope | WA Bikes / Cascade USBRS |
| Carol Berry | Western Washington University [WWU] |
| Hugh Conroy | WCOG |
| Maureen McCarthy | Whatcom Transportation Authority [WTA] |
| Ethan Wise | WWU |
| Chris Comeau | City of Bellingham Public Works |
| Bob Wilson | WCOG |
| Jaymes McClain | WCOG |
| Bob Hendricks | Bellingham / WTA Citizens Advisory Panel [CAP] |
| Isaac Post | Happy Valley, Bellingham |
| Kathy Berg | Birch Bay |
| Mathew Santos | Whatcom Community College / CAP |
| Stoney Bird | CAP |
| Rick Nicholson | WTA |
| Staci Haber | Hopelink / King County |
| Aly Horry | Northwest Regional Council [NWRC] |
| François Larrivier | Hopelink / King and Snohomish County |

I-5 Medical Shuttle – Aly Horry

Aly Horry Manager of the Medicaid transportation brokerage at Northwest Regional Council [NWRC]. Individuals on Medicaid are eligible for transportation to their medical appointments. The idea, in cooperation with Hopelink, is to coordinate the efforts to transport people on Medicaid throughout Puget Sound to their medical destinations.

François Larrivier Director of the Medicaid brokerage program in King County. Hopelink’s efforts in King and Snohomish counties parallel NWRC’s efforts in the northern counties. Hopelink is a private nonprofit human services agency, and one element of the organization is an extensive transportation program. They are responsible for 5,000 Medicaid-transportation trips per day in King and Snohomish counties. There are many Seattle area medical facilities that get used by people all over the state and especially in the Puget Sound corridor, so there is an opportunity to better facilitate

transporting people to these services.

A few years ago they worked with a University of Washington student who did a feasibility-study for a medical shuttle servicing people along the I-5 corridor – answering questions like would there be enough volume of people for the shuttle to be self-funded and connect to multiple destinations between Bellingham and King County. The study found that the shuttle could work and may be cheaper than how they are currently transporting people.

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| Staci Harbor | <p>Hopelink is pursuing an inclusive planning impact grant. The planning process would involve users of the shuttle system as well as stakeholders. They are now looking to gather feedback on the shuttle system with regards to frequency of runs, locations of stops, coordinating with existing transportation providers, and other topics.</p> <p>The shuttle would be open to anyone, not just Medicaid users. There have been talks of coordinating with Veterans Affairs [VA].</p> |
| Maureen McCarthey | <p>How would the shuttle be self-funded?</p> <p>François Larrivier: It would be a combination of private pay and what Medicaid can reimburse for the trips.</p> <p>Staci Harbor: Funding for a similar shuttle in Grant County has come from healthcare providers and hospitals, so that is possibly another avenue of funds.</p> |
| François Larrivier | <p>They are looking at 17-passenger vehicles. During the feasibility study, the costs of using private transportation vendors were looked at. When studying who is trying to get to the big medical facilities from around the region, a large portion was found to be private payers. With some marketing, there's a good chance the proposed medical shuttles would be filled.</p> <p>The shuttle would offer limited stops to the main regional medical facilities and would not be door-to-door. Coordination with local transit agencies could help in connecting people to other medical destinations along the corridor.</p> <p>Hugh Conroy: In terms of getting people to the shuttle, Medicaid could still possibly contract with private vendors so that instead of paying for a taxi ride all the way down to Seattle from Whatcom County, the taxi ride would be to a regional Park-and-Ride where the shuttle could stop.</p> |
| Hugh Conroy | <p>Are there certain service requirements in terms of accessibility for people with disabilities?</p> <p>François Larrivier: That will be one of the main focuses of a transit service like this.</p> |
| Ethan Wise | <p>Any idea what the out of pocket costs would be?</p> <p>Staci Harbor: There is a range depending on how frequently the service runs and how many stops there are. It could be \$60-\$80 purely out of pocket.</p> |
| Mary Anderson | <p>Are there privacy concerns, where using the shuttle could make it known that a certain individual has an illness?</p> <p>François Larrivier: There are measures to avoid private information from getting out.</p> |
| Staci Harbor | <p>The planning grant application is due Friday, March 18th. They are looking for documented support, especially from stakeholder agencies, to help in the process.</p> |

At the suggestion of Kathy Berg, Isaac Post motioned that CTAG author a letter of support to Hopelink with regards to the proposed medical shuttle services. Vern Yadon seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously. Bob Wilson offered to author the letter of support of behalf of CTAG.

US Bike Route – *John Pope*

John Pope Retired 3 years ago and has been working with Washington Bikes since. The first routes of the US Bicycle Route System [USBRS] started in 1982 in the eastern US. There was a 25-year lull, then in the last 7 years 43 states sought new route designations. Washington was first state on the west coast to designate a bicycle route through the USBRS.

The Adventure Cycling Association [ACA] is a key stakeholder. Also, the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] Highways and Local Programs have been very helpful through this process.

The vision of the USBRS is a coordinated bicycle system across the US. The mission in Washington is to determine route selections. The strategy is to use state route [SR] 20 (the USBR 10 corridor) as a connection point for other routes that will go through the state.

There are many benefits to increased bicycle touring, including economic, transportation, health, and environmental. Bicyclists spend on average \$75 a day on food, shelter, gear, and other purchases.

WSDOT's approval of routes requires jurisdictions (whose roads the routes use) to sign on. There also needs to be adjacent state approval (in Washington's case: Alaska, Idaho, and Oregon). For example, route 97 in Alaska connects to Washington via ferry, so in Washington they have to connect to and continue that route. After these steps the routes go to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials [AASHTO] for approval.

The bike route designations on SR 20 are completed, and much was learned through that process. The SR 20 route is part of USBR 10, which connects into Idaho. USBR 10 was the first route established in Washington. The next routes to be designated in this region are USBR 87, 95, and 97, all of which come out of Canada and will connect to USBR 10. They need buy-in from WCOG and jurisdictions whose roads and trails may be used as sections of a route.

The USBRS numbering system is closely based on the old US highway numbering system. For example, bike route 99 would follow old highway 99. Routes can "wander" in their respective corridors (which are 50 miles in diameter), but they have specific anchor points (destinations where the route must pass through).

USBRS designated routes have specific signage. In Washington, the standard "acorn" USBRS logo has been slightly modified and colored green to differentiate it

from Washington state highway signage.

During the route designation process, shareholders give input, and then a technical group (planners and engineers) is consulted.

The factors that determine where the routes should be designated include traffic volume, speeds, shoulder width, surface type, and scenic value.

Existing bicycle routes can be used for USBRS designation. They are looking at the Coast Millennial trail, the Interurban trail, ACA route trails in Whatcom County, among others.

WA Bikes is gathering feedback on which roads and trails would be preferred for USBR 87, 95, and 97, and whether current route drafts are missing any opportunities.

CTAG members can send suggestions to John Pope or Mary Anderson.

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| Vern Yadon | The Columbia Valley area is working on funding a bicycle-pedestrian trail that will parallel SR 547 at Kendall Rd. |
| Arthur Reber | Pt Roberts has many cyclists, and it has a scenic route. Have there been thoughts to a connection through Canada to Pt Roberts? John Pope: There are parties in White Rock and other Lower Mainland British Columbia jurisdictions that are interested in USBRS designate routes. |
| Kathy Berg | If CTAG members are interested in ongoing conversations about the USBRS, WCOG can follow up and keep members informed of progress. |

Policy Board Update – *Hugh Conroy*

Hugh Conroy The board will be amending the transportation improvement program [TIP]. They will also be approving the regional transportation planning organization's [RTPO] process for certifying regional transportation plan elements. WCOG will brief the board on the possibility of having regional discussions under the umbrella of CTAG on topics such as alternative regional financing mechanisms. WCOG will be updating the unified planning work program [UPWP], where WCOG looks ahead at its functions and programs in the next state fiscal year. The board will also be briefed on the national border-planning peer exchange occurring in Bellingham in June, of which IMTC will be a main focus.

Bob Wilson The Kendall trail preliminary engineering funding so far looks good. Washington State Senator Kevin Ranker is working it from the senate side. He can be called (360-786-7678) or emailed for if people would like to voice their support for the Kendall trail. The more people he hears from, the more inclined he will be to push for the trail's funding.

WTA – Citizens Advisory Panel [CAP]

Bob Traffic on Barkley Blvd is fast and frequent. A crosswalk on Barkley Blvd at St

Hendricks Paul St would help foot traffic in the area. The population in Barkley Village will be expanding greatly in the next decade.
Chris Comeau: The city has talked about this kind of connection before due to the vicinity of the railroad trail.

Strategic Plan Discussion

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| Maureen McCarthy | Handed out “What’s the Big Idea?” sheet of themes WTA is looking at for their strategic plan update. |
| Rick Nicholson | Last meeting the group discussed the top 10 strategic plan update components that WTA is looking at. The steering and technical committees ranked the components they wanted to see implemented in the short term. Top ranked components included: maintaining productive routes, starting routes earlier on Saturdays, and expanding the 80X service to Mt Vernon. |
| Maureen McCarthy | WTA conducted a “Dream Big” exercise at a previous steering committee meeting where committee members could discuss hypothetical, not-fiscally-constrained ideas regarding future service strategies. The 10 components discussed are realistic funding targets, but all 10 cannot be funded due to fiscal constraints, so prioritization is needed. |
| Rick Nicholson | WTA is putting together scenarios based on the results of the 10-component prioritization. They are also looking at a "visionary/what if" scenario if WTA revenue increased by 25 percent or more (a list of possible service improvements was shown). WTA is open to further suggestions. Bob Hendricks: Routes 3, 4, and 24 service people going to health-related appointments. Coordinating those schedules with the schedules of professional services would be beneficiary. Also, the Cordata neighborhood in growing, so an increase in the frequency of route 24 could be useful. Mary Anderson: Suggestion of more frequent service to public schools. Carol Berry: Suggestion for later service to WWU campus for events (as a way to transport event-goers home). |
| Rick Nicholson | One section of the “What’s the Big Idea” handout covers non-service related improvements. An electric bus is being showcased to WTA. Electric buses are now a reality and are much more useful than they used to be. An electric WTA bus would run on a battery. |
| Mary Anderson | Can WTA run a bicycle share program? Maureen McCarthy: WTA isn't a transit authority, so there is a possibly, but would have to check on that. Isaac Post: In Seattle last year they started a bike share program, but there were lots of issues. Chris Comeau: Bike share was been listed as strategy in the City of Bellingham’s comprehensive plan transportation element, but the Seattle program has set a bad example. The planning commission wants any such program to be privately funded. |
| John Pope | Having information more readily available about bicycle transportation options on buses (such as WTA buses being able having bicycle racks) at airports and ferry |

terminals would be very beneficial to bicycles using those ports.

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| Rick Nicholson | WTA has organized a service components "menu." Because not all of the main components can be funded, some combination of components must be chosen while keeping in mind the balance of rural and urban service. The strongly supported components (maintain productive routes and earlier Saturday service) add up to about \$350k. That leaves \$650k for a combination of other components, assuming a \$1MM increase in WTA budget. |
| Matthew Santos | Later bus service in the county would be beneficial economically. Not everyone has a 9-to-5 job, and there are gaps in service for getting people back home from later-in-the-day employment opportunities. |
| Mary Anderson | Residents living rurally have to connect to nearby towns for critical services, so better rural-to-rural service would be beneficiary. |
| Carol Berry | There are issues with people coming from WWU needing to connect to another service to get where they need to go. |
| Rick Nicholson | If all goes to schedule, public meetings will occur in May and approval of the new service components by the board will occur in September. They would be shooting for a February 2017 implementation of the components as a best case scenario. |
| Dave Pros | Are there different options for fares? Rick Nicholson: Distance-based fares have been an idea, but it would be costly to implement because rider-generated revenue is such a small portion of WTA's overall revenue. Raising fares in general could create problems for the disadvantaged, and there could be some political fallout. However, it has been over 7 years since the last time WTA fares were raised, so that could be an outcome of this process. |

Meeting adjourned 5:40PM