



It matters how we get there

Meeting Summary
May 10, 2016

Attendees:

Mary Anderson	Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]
Vern Yadon	KCVCPA / Kendall Chapel
Hugh Conroy	WCOG
Maureen McCarthy	Whatcom Transportation Authority [WTA]
Ethan Wise	WWU
Chris Comeau	City of Bellingham Public Works
Jaymes McClain	WCOG
Bob Hendricks	Bellingham / WTA Gold Card
Izaac Post	Happy Valley, Bellingham
Kathy Berg	Birch Bay
Stoney Bird	CAP
Rick Nicholson	WTA
Sue Webber	Alderwood Neighborhood
Zacchoreli Frescobaldi-Grimaldi	Brigadoon Service Dogs
Bruce Prior	Blaine
Carole MacDonald	Mt Baker Chamber of Commerce
Cleo Callen	Ferndale
Melissa Morin	Whatcom County Health Department
Myron Wlaznak	Silver Beach

Member Updates

Bob Hendricks	In February, Mary Anderson was contacted by the Bellingham Harold. They were interested in seniors that ride the bus or bike. A writer with the Herald profiled Mr. Hendricks and his use of the Gold Card. He was interviewed as part of a group that do not use cars.
Stoney Bird	Mr. Bird came across an interesting book called Straphanger, whose author went around the world and studied public transit.
Carole MacDonald	Ms. MacDonald is part of the effort to build a visitor center and park and ride on Mt. Baker Highway. Chris Comeau pointed them to a group of pro-bono planners and engineers, and the visitor center group applied for their consultation. The visitor center project has been in motion since 2006. They have property, and water and septic is installed.
Vern Yadon	The Kendall-Columbia Valley Citizen's Planning Association [KCVCPA] applied for funding through the state supplemental budget for a trail in Kendall that would parallel Kendall Rd/SR 547. They were awarded \$77k for scoping and alternative

analysis. The Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] is no longer the project manager. It is now the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]. Their next step is to get a consultant and draw up plans for the trail.

Bruce Prior There is a proposal for a Blaine High School advanced placement science course for water quality testing, which would be entirely student-driven. Mr. Prior is interested in cycling, especially safe cycling infrastructure.

Mary Anderson Bike to work and school day is Friday, May 20th. There will be a Gold Card event held at the senior center in response to Bob Hendricks' Bellingham Herald article, which will occur May 31st.

Bob Hendricks: Those 75 years or older qualify for the Gold Card. The card gives riders complimentary rides on the bus at no cost. The senior center event will show how friendly and comfortable travel by bus is in Whatcom County.

Maureen McCarthy: Rides are also free for those 8 years or younger. There are discounted fares for those under 18 and students.

Chris Comeau Mr. Comeau is attending a transportation commission meeting after CTAG, where he'll talk about Bellingham's bicycle master plan and their 6-year transportation improvement program [TIP], which the council will approve in June. They are also in the middle of their comprehensive plan update.

The Horton Rd extension project is moving forward, which will extend the dead-end street in Cordata neighborhood to Aldrich St, making it a full arterial connection. They received \$2.9MM in federal funding for the project (which is slated for 2018 construction), and they are also receiving funding from developers in the area for environmental mitigation through the State Environment Policy Act [SEPA] process. The extension will help connect the area with Cordata Park and Cordata Elementary School. Whatcom County will continue to build out Horton Rd from Aldrich Rd to Northwest Dr following the completion of the city's extension. The Slater Rd interchange was awarded \$20MM in funding, and currently they are working on an interchange justification report [IJR].

Alderwood Neighborhood Transportation Issues

Sue Webber Ms. Webber lives in the Alderwood neighborhood. The neighborhood is in a Bellingham urban growth area [UGA] and thus isn't within city limits. She works with a parent-teacher association [PTA] at Alderwood Elementary School and is part of other programs at the school and in the area. The school has the highest percentage of reduced lunch eligible students in the Bellingham school district, more than half of the students are Latino, and the majority of teachers are bilingual. The area is high in crime and gang activity, and there are little to no places for community members to meet and organize outside of the school. The PTA is the ad hoc meetup for the area. The nearest grocery store, Albertson's on Northwest Ave, is closing, creating even more of a food desert for the area.

There is not much of a singular voice that can speak for the area. English is often not the primary language spoken, there are no neighborhood meetings, and most residents are renters. To be annexed into the city of Bellingham, 75 percent of property owners (not renters) must agree to the annexation.

Ms. Webber said that safety is one of the main goals for the area. This would include safe infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially for students

going to school, as well as improved lighting. She hopes a grocery store can be opened in or near the area and an urban center develops in the future. She is open to suggests for improving the area in any way.

Chris Comeau	The Alderwood area is outside of city limits, so unfortunately it is not part of the city's bicycle master plan.
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Carole MacDonald	Ms. MacDonald suggested going to the county representative whose district includes the Alderwood area and discussing these issues with them.
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Policy Board Update – *Hugh Conroy*

Hugh Conroy The Whatcom Transportation Policy Board [WTPB] is meeting tomorrow, and they will be looking at project updates to the WCOG TIP. Projects include a Cordata neighborhood safe-routes-to-school project, a Whatcom Transportation Agency [WTA] operations building, sewer replacement on I-5 in Custer, and a Kickerville Rd improvement near Blaine. The funding arrangement for the Kendall trail project will also be discussed.

The board will also consider the adoption of the unified planning work program [UPWP], which outline's WCOG's core functions and funding breakout for the next fiscal year. There was a UPWP review meeting yesterday, which saw attendance from Representative Vincent Buys and staffers from the offices of Representative Luanne Van Werven and Congresswoman Suzan DelBene.

The proposed rulemaking for performance measures were recently unveiled by Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] as part of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act [MAP-21]. Measures will involve probe data from cellphones to calculate congestion on the national highway system.

From June 8-9, Bellingham is hosting a peer exchange on border master planning through the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG]. The WCOG-administered International Mobility and Trade Corridor program [IMTC] will be a main focus at the peer exchange. Mr. Conroy said they hope to continue pushing the case for sustained, programmatic funding for the IMTC.

WTA – Citizens Advisory Panel [CAP]

Strategic Plan Discussion

Stoney Bird At a future meeting, Mr. Bird would like to discuss the creation of the meeting agenda and the possibility of having the committee set the agenda rather than the staff.

Maureen McCarthy	One major outcome from the April Board of Directors workshop was that the board was comfortable with increasing the WTA budget by \$1.5MM, up \$500k from the anticipated amount. They also made a request for a better definition of "equity."
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Rick Nicholson Mr. Nicholson presented some the of the service components that will be seen in the first year of the new budget. He asked that CAP members think about what should be included in the six year plan in addition to what is being rolled out in year one.

Carole MacDonald In Missoula, they cut out transit fares for specific routes, resulting a large uptake in ridership.

Rick Nicholson: The philosophy of the board is that fares give riders a sense of ownership of the service. Without fares, there would be a loss in revenue, and the increase in ridership couldn't be addressed because of the revenue loss.

Cleo Callen There could be discounted passes for those who financially qualify, but there should be fares for those who have the means to pay them.

Izaak Post Are there thoughts to increase service for routes 14 and 15?

Rick Nicholson: Those routes are on WTA's radar.

Ethan Wise: Mr. Wise agrees on focusing on routes 14 and 15.

Izaak Post Similar to the Gold Card, those that are under 16 and cannot legally work could ride fare-free.

Bob Hendricks There used to be free ride zones in downtown Bellingham. That could be something for consideration again for increasing ridership.

Stoney Bird We have an "app" culture today, so consideration should be given to paperless service information.

Mary Anderson There could be more focus on service to high schools, middle schools, and medical facilities, especially for the elderly.

Maureen McCarthy led a group exercise of identifying where group members prioritize two components of "equity" on a spectrum. One spectrum was bounded on each end by the descriptors "Same level of service everywhere" and "Service where most productive." The other spectrum had the endpoints "Service for people who need it most" and "Attract 'choice' riders." Group members plotted where they felt prioritization should be given relative to the equity spectrums.

Maureen McCarthy In addition to the exercise, are there other thoughts about service and equity?

Stoney Bird It could be a good idea to break out equity by age groups.

Mary Anderson A look at origins and destinations of trips could help.

Cleo Callen There should be consideration for financial equity, specifically how to most efficiently use funding and cut down on costs.

Also, buses are not as fuel efficient as passenger vehicles. Is there actually an ecological advantage to using the bus?

Rick Nicholson: WTA is the 2nd most productive transit service in the state. The service averages about 7 or 8 people per bus, and each bus holds about 40 people. Mr. Callen's point is valid in that buses are not necessarily the most ecological choice unless many people use it.

Meeting adjourned 5:30PM