



CTAG

citizens' transportation advisory group

It matters how we get there

Meeting Summary

May 8, 2018

Attendees:

Bob Hendricks	Bellingham / WTA Gold Card holder
Bruce Prior	Blaine Public Works Advisory Committee
Chris Comeau	City of Bellingham Public Works staff
Hugh Conroy	WCOG staff
Jaymes McClain	WCOG staff
Jillian Trinkaus	WWU / Columbia Neighborhood (Bellingham)
Terry Terry	Lummi Island
Kathy Berg	Birch Bay
Terri Hansen	The Arc of Whatcom County
Rick Nicholson	WTA staff
Maureen McCarthy	WTA staff
Mark Robbins	Pt. Roberts
Myron Wlaznak	Silver Beach
Jim Boyle	Bellingham
John McGarrity	Cornwall Park Neighborhood (Bellingham)

Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG)

Member updates

Jim Boyle introduced himself as the new CTAG member representing Bellingham.

Maureen McCarthy announced that Friday, May 18th is Bike to Work and School Day. Starting in the morning there will be Celebration Stations throughout Bellingham. A website organized by Whatcom Smart Trips details [Bike to Work and School Day](#) and shows where the [Celebration Stations](#) will be located, when they will be open, and what walkers and bikers can expect at each station. From 4pm to 7pm there will be a Bike Party on Bay St. There will be a beer garden, food trucks, and party activities.

Chris Comeau announced that the City of Bellingham recently published their [Transportation Report on Annual Mobility \(TRAM\)](#), an annually updated progress report for the goals and policies detailed in the [Multimodal Transportation Chapter of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan](#).



Jaymes McClain announced that he will forward the agenda and meeting packets of the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board to CTAG before each meeting as requested by Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) Executive Director Bob Wilson.

Hugh Conroy detailed his trip last month to Minneapolis, MN for the annual Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) meeting. TBWG is a U.S.-Canadian binationally coordinated border planning forum similar to the more regionally-oriented International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC), which Mr. Conroy manages. Meeting topics included continuing dialogue on reviving federal programmatic funding sources for regional border planning efforts like the IMTC, discussion of preclearance for border crossing modes like rail (Amtrak) and ferries (BC Ferries), and burgeoning face-recognition technology for U.S. and Canada customs agencies.

Bruce Prior noted that bicyclists favor road drainage grates that are at right angles. Chris Comeau explained that the City of Bellingham typically uses a herringbone pattern for drainage grates and suggested interested parties can contact the City's Public Works Operations department for more information.

Human Services Transportation Plan Update – 2018 update underway

Hugh Conroy explained that Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) in Washington State are required to update their Human Services Transportation Plans (HSTP) every 4 years. WCOG's HSTP looks at the needs of people in Whatcom County who do not drive due to age, income, or disability. A stakeholder group made up of a broad range of human services agencies and organizations in the County, both public and private, helps develop the plan with WCOG staff. The stakeholder group also prioritizes human services project proposals that, when aligned with the goals and strategies in the plan, are eligible for state and federal public transportation grant funding.

The HSTP plan update is due in December.

Policy Board Update

Hugh Conroy explained that the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board will vote to approve an amendment to the WCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The amendment would remove the City of Bellingham's Mahogany Ave Arterial project, add the City of Bellingham's West Horton Road Phase 1 (construction) project, and add Lummi Nation's Lummi Shore Drive Sidewalk project to the TIP.

Bids for the City of Everson's Lincoln St 1 & 2 projects came in much higher than anticipated and the City does not have enough resources to finance the additional funds needed to go to construction. Whatcom County has offered to provide the needed funding to Everson from the County's federal funds that were awarded to them for their Birch Bay Berm project. The Berm project is currently delayed. Whatcom County offers these funds under the condition that they will be reimbursed in the next call for



projects. The Policy Board will vote on this action and, if approved, the funding transfer will take effect in the May TIP amendment.

(Update: The May TIP amendment was approved by the Policy Board.)

Hugh Conroy will also give a Planning Director's Report to the Policy Board. He will discuss the recent review meeting regarding WCOG's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which is now being updated every two years instead of annually.

Whatcom Transportation Authority Community Advisory Panel (WTA CAP)

Update on WCOG official paratransit drop-off

Maureen McCarthy said she addressed WTA paratransit drivers about the appropriate drop-off location for riders going to WCOG's office at the corner of N Forest St and Champion St. The safest drop-off location is in the side alley west of the building.

2017 Performance Report – Presentation and discussion

Rick Nicholson reviewed WTA's 2017 Service Performance Report with the group. The report makes performance measure comparisons to the previous year (2016) as well as ten years ago (2007).

Fixed route boardings in 2017 were down 2 percent compared to last year but overall were up 30 percent from 10 years ago. This growth over the decade is largely due to Western Washington University's (WWU) universal bus pass being implemented in 2007.

The most productive fixed routes in 2017 were to WWU and Cordata/Whatcom Community College (WCC). The least productive fixed routes were to the hospital, Bakerview Spur, Yew St, and the new Route 65 that connects the northern Whatcom County from Nooksack to Ferndale.

Regarding on-time performance, WTA exceeded their fixed route service standard goal in the A.M. and P.M. peak periods but were a little behind in the mid-day. Mr. Nicholson said that last month WTA's board approved improvements that they hope will shore up mid-day on-time performance.

Regarding the different types of fare-revenue, student pass revenue grew by 36 percent from 2016 to 2017. This is mostly due to WCC beginning its universal bus pass program.

Paratransit continues to grow – a trend Mr. Nicholson suspects is due to the baby-boomer generation retiring. Vanpool use, however, continues to drop – boarding are down 31 percent since 2007.



Initial Ideas for June 2019 New Service – Presentation and discussion

Rick Nicholson presented a draft of some of the service changes that WTA staff are looking at for implementation in June 2019.

Terri Hansen explained that for events occurring at Bloedel Donovan Park, depending on the length of the event participants that take the bus to get there on Route 525 are unsure if they will be able to return on the bus due to the route's last scheduled trip ending mid-evening.

There was discussion on the demographics of riders in Whatcom County. Rick Nicholson said he has observed that seniors on fixed-routes make up a lesser percentage all WTA riders than they make up as an age group in all Whatcom County.

Rick Nicholson said that for WTA's new Route 65, they set a goal of a minimum of 3 boardings per hour after implementation and 5 boardings per hour after 2 years. Currently the route experiences below 2 boardings per hour. WTA is looking at changing the route's schedule in September to reduce layover and increase frequency.

Options for Serving North Whatcom County – Presentation and discussion

Rick Nicholson explained that consolidated grant applications are due later this year. The project that was last funded through this grant, Route 65 connecting communities in northern Whatcom County, is currently performing below standards. There are two concepts WTA is looking at to place Route 65.

- Implement a route from Maple Falls to Everson or Lynden that operates in express mode with limited stops and no flex service
- Implement zone service between Lynden and Maple Falls where there is no schedule and buses operate on a call-ahead service

Kathy Berg commented that the performance of Route 65 could be due to there not having been enough time for northern county residents to get used to transit service in their area. Keeping a fixed route in the area would allow residents more time to become accustomed to the service.

Community Meeting and Tour in August, 2018

Maureen McCarthy recommended Tuesday, August 14th as the date for CAP's special meeting. The meeting would occur at WTA's headquarters and would include a tour of the facilities, as previously discussed. Ms. McCarthy will send out an email to gather feedback on topics for the meeting as well as logistics.