



Meeting Summary

Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Group [TTAG]

Thursday, October 26, 2017 10:00 – 12:00

Whatcom Council of Governments
314 E Champion St, Bellingham, WA

Attendees:

Rollin Harper	Everson, Nooksack, Sumas
Jaymes McClain	WCOG
Lethal Coe	WCOG
Chris Comeau	City of Bellingham Public Works
John Shambaugh	Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]
Rick Nicholson	Whatcom Transportation Authority [WTA]
Jim Karcher	Whatcom County Public Works
Andrew Tischleder	Whatcom County Public Works
Matt Aamot	Whatcom County Planning
Ravyn Whitewolf	City of Blaine

Member Updates

John Shambaugh reported that the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] will be conducting workshops in November and December for the I-5 Exit 274 project design. WSDOT is also conducting an origin-destination study on the I-5 corridor through Mt. Vernon and Bellingham, where they will also do an operations demand assessment. They will be work with both the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] and the Skagit Council of Governments [SCOG].

Rick Nicholson reported that the Whatcom Transportation Authority [WTA] recently met with the City of Bellingham and Western Washington University [WWU] and agreed upon a design option for the Lincoln Creek Park & Ride. Mr. Nicholson also reported that ridership on WTA buses is down, even with the service expansion in March. Ridership across the country is down 14 percent since 2011, Mr. Nicholson said.

Chris Comeau of the City of Bellingham reported that part of W Maplewood Ave is currently closed for stormwater improvements. The detour at Woodstock Way-James St will change, with James St being closed and traffic detoured to Woodstock Way. Bicycle lanes are being installed on Orleans St, Woburn St, Mill Ave, St. Paul St, and Undine St. There will be buffered bike lane restriping on State St, and other improvements on Forest St, Lakeway Dr, and Alabama St.

Matt Aamot informed the group that Whatcom County is updating the Bellingham Urban Fringe Subarea Plan. The new northern subarea boundary will coincide with Bellingham's Urban Growth Area [UGA] boundary. Mr. Aamot also explained that with the Washington State legislature passing a new law regarding buildable lands, Whatcom County will be subject to new requirements regarding land supply. The County also has a committee looking at density credits to try to increase density in urban areas.

Ravyn Whitewolf reported that phase 1 of the City of Blaine's Hughes Ave project received its funding this week, and they are looking to do striping immediately. Phase 2 of the project is 90 percent planned, and they are looking to go to construction in 2018. They are also finishing up a request for proposals [RFP] for the Boblett St project.

Rollin Harper reported that the Nooksack City Council adopted a transportation impact fee of \$3,000 per dwelling unit in one area of town. WSDOT put in a stop sign on S Pass Rd at Hwy 9 near the railroad crossing on the south end of Nooksack. On a section of road coming into Nooksack there are numerous of speed changes in a short span, Mr. Harper said, so Everson and Nooksack will request WSDOT to homogenize the speed through the area. The City of Everson is acquiring property for the Lincoln St project, and the SR 544 sidewalk project is in early design.

Jim Karcher reported that the Whatcom County's Potter Rd project is now complete. The Slater Rd bridge at Jordan Creek will open mid-November following the County's completion of the fish passageway project. In Birch Bay, 95 percent of the necessary property has been acquired for the Berm project. Construction will begin once the right-of-way is signed off by WSDOT and the permits approved by the Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]. The Marine Dr and E Smith Rd-Hannegan Rd intersection projects are currently in design. The County will also be doing some bridge work coming up on bridge 249 on Roberts Rd and bridge 236 on Hannegan Rd. The County Council passed the Annual Construction Program for 2018, Mr. Karcher said.

STBG and TA projects status and estimation for 2018 obligations

Lethal Coe reviewed with the group the current list of Surface Transportation Program [STP] (now Surface Transportation Block Grant [STBG]) and Transportation Alternatives [TA] funded projects for the region. The obligation target for the WCOG region is about \$4.31MM by August 1st, 2018. There is currently almost \$8MM in total programmed funding for projects anticipated to be obligated by 2022.

Survey updates

External survey with SCOG - spring 2018

Lethal Coe explained that due to different interests in the type of data to be collected, WCOG may not partner with SCOG on the external traffic survey. WCOG is interested in origins and destinations of vehicles moving across the Whatcom County boundary, whereas SCOG is interested in a more involved origin-destination study around I-5 interchanges. Discussions will continue with WSDOT about shared interests in the project.

Household travel survey

Lethal Coe explained that he will meet with the City of Bellingham and WTA to discuss a draft RFP for an upcoming household travel survey. WCOG's travel demand model currently uses travel survey information from 2008.

Land-use update for travel demand model

TAZ refinement (one on one's and TTAG)

Lethal Coe told the group that he is looking to meet with jurisdictions individually this fall and winter to discuss refinements to WCOG's transportation analysis zones [TAZ] that are used in the travel demand model.

2017 base year update - spring 2018

With the new household travel survey data potentially coming in 2018, Mr. Coe said he is looking to update the base year of the model to 2017 next spring.

MAP-21 Safety Targets

Lethal Coe reviewed some of the proposed safety targets for the MAP-21 performance measures. WSDOT recently released a tool for metropolitan planning organizations [MPO] to use in order to assess whether they will officially adopt the state targets they have set. The safety targets are based on a "Target Zero approach", where near term targets for measures such as fatalities and serious injury rates are set by using the current 5-year average of such measures and projecting a zero value in 2030. WCOG has 180 days to either approve these measures or come up with its own set of measures.