



Meeting Summary
January 19, 2021

Attendees:

Terry Terry (Chairperson)	Lummi Island
Kirsten Wert	Bellingham
Ted Morris	Whatcom County Unincorporated
Myron Wlaznak	Silver Beach / Bellingham
Jillian Trinkaus	Western Washington University (WWU) / Bellingham
Jewell Hamilton	Bellingham
Gary Meader	Nooksack/Everson

Technical Advisement:

Chris Comeau	Bellingham Public Works (City of)
Hugh Conroy	Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)
Jaymes McClain	WCOG
Bob Wilson	WCOG
Maureen McCarthy	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
Tim Wilder	WTA
Mary Anderson	WTA
Shonda Shipman	WTA
Aaron Gooze	WTA consultant, Fehr & Peers

WTA Lynden Bus-on-Demand Update

Mary Anderson: In March 2020 the Whatcom Transportation Authority was awarded grant funding through the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) for a pilot on-demand bus service in the City of Lynden. There will be 2 vans in service, which will be tall enough for standing and have wheelchair accessibility. Users call request service though a mobile app. There was a survey conducted in December for name of project, which will be Lynden Hop. The service is limited to Lynden and its immediate outlying areas.

To start, service will be weekdays 7AM to 730PM (2 vans) and weekend days 8AM-5PM (1 van). The price will the same as fixed route service - \$1 per ride.



Updates to Structure of CTAG

Hugh Conroy: The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is looking at modifying the structure of the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG). While participation from members who reside in Bellingham has been steady, an ongoing issue is that membership does not necessarily reflect the various communities in Whatcom County outside of Bellingham. This could partially be due to in-person meetings having been held at WCOG's office in Bellingham as well as the requirement in the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board bylaws that CTAG voting members must be assigned by jurisdictions or other specific entities, like WTA or schools.

Staff at WCOG would like to broaden the group to include more voices from around Whatcom County and align the group more with WCOG's Public Participation Plan in general. The initial revision sought to be discussed with the Policy Board is the removal of CTAG from its bylaws and subsequently removing jurisdictional appointment of CTAG members. Current CTAG participation would not change and meeting frequency would still stand at about 4 meetings per year, however meetings would shift to a more web-based platform (as has occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic) to make meetings more accessible for those that do not live in Bellingham. A voluntary sign-up structure could also be implemented.

Terry Terry: In more rural areas of the county, internet connections could make it difficult to participate in online meetings. But libraries, community centers, and schools could fix that. Not needing to travel to Bellingham would nevertheless help potential participants. There could also be an increase in participation from high school students and younger community members.

Maureen McCarthy: WTA likes this idea because it can broaden the demographic range of participation. It is not always easy or attractive to travel to WCOG's office in Bellingham for a 2-hour meeting.

This subject will be brought the Policy Board's attention at their January 20th meeting. Board action, if any, would not occur until the March 10th meeting at the earliest.

MetroQuest Public Participation Tool

Hugh Conroy: June 2022 is the deadline for WCOG's Regional Transportation Plan update. In preparing the update, one component staff is looking at is conducting a public outreach effort in the entire Whatcom County region to gather input on regional transportation goals and strategies – an effort that has not occurred in some time.

Staff is developing a survey tool through MetroQuest that would include an interactive map element that community members can use to answer questions about their transportation destinations and barriers they may be facing. At the end of the survey, there is an optional section for participants to fill in demographic information about themselves, which would help staff gauge the range of participation.

WCOG staff is looking to avail the survey in late March.



WTA Service Change Proposal

Mary Anderson: Route 26 is increasing its frequency of fixed route service from every 90 minutes to every 60 minutes.

Route 29 is a proposed new route that would transit the new Horton Rd connection between Cordata Pkwy and Aldrich Rd and would loop through the Cordata neighborhood.

Route 15, which has been rerouted to Commercial St during the Grand Ave street closure to accommodate outdoor seating for restaurants, is being proposed to permanently use the reroute through Commercial St.

Discussion of WTA 2040 Plan

Aaron Gooze: Fehr & Peers is helping consultant WTA on their 2040 Plan.

Fall 2020 and Winter 2020/2021 saw the development and evaluation of long-range transit network scenarios. In Winter, Fehr & Peers and WTA began establishing project goals. From public outreach, there was a lot of feedback suggesting that WTA match their service to the needs (and demand) of the community.

There are several scenarios they are looking at, including: bus rapid transit, on-demand service expansion, and passenger amenities. With each scenario, they are analyzing different investment levels and evaluating scenarios by equity, efficiency, environmental impact, and rider experience.

By the end of January, they plan to finalize their scenario evaluation and outreach materials, publish a survey, and conduct an online open house. In February they will form a transit advisory group and conduct a Board workshop to review survey results.