

Whatcom Transportation Policy Board Minutes January 17, 2024

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Kim Lund, Edwin “Skip” Williams; **Everson:** John Perry;
Ferndale: Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chair); **Lummi Nation:** Jim Washington; **Lynden:**
Scott Korthuis (Chair); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **Whatcom**
County: Satpal Sidhu, Kaylee Galloway. **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio, Justin Resnick;

Staff Lethal Coe, Hugh Conroy (Secretary), Ron Cubellis, Melissa Fanucci

Others **Lummi Nation:** Kirk Vinish; **McBride Public Affairs:** Tom McBride, Intisar Benges;
Whatcom Transportation Authority, Les Reardanz; **WSDOT:** John Schambaugh

A. **Call to Order**

Hugh Conroy determined that there was a quorum, and Chair Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

B. **Public Comment**

None

C. **Agenda Additions**

None

D. **Approval of Minutes of** October 11, 2023

Motion: Mr. May moved, second by Mr. Sidhu, to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 11, 2023, as presented. **Motion passed.** Ms. Lund abstained.

E. **Old Business**

None

F. **Public Hearing: Amendment #1 (24-01) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program.**

Mr. Coe presented the requested amendments to the TIP.

Mr. Korthuis opened the public hearing at 3:47. No members of the public being present, the public hearing was closed at 3:47.

Pertaining to the TIP amendment requested for the project, “Elevate Slater Road,” Mr. Sidhu asked to pose a question to Mr. Vinish. Mr. Sidhu noted that Whatcom County has long been concerned that the elevation of Slater Road should not be independently evaluated/designed within the larger, hydrologically connected area and the roadways (e.g. Marine Drive) and public infrastructure (e.g. future jail) within that area. Mr. Sidhu asked for a meeting between Lummi Nation, Whatcom County, and City of Ferndale to discuss the needs and strategy for a holistic evaluation.

Mr. Vinish responded that he agreed completely with the value of this kind of meeting. Also, the need for a bridge replacement and the shared concerns about Marine Drive further support the need for this broader discussion. Mr. Vinish noted that legal counsel for Lummi Nation and Whatcom County have already been working on an agreement (or MoU?) to facilitate this. Kirk noted that he would share Mr. Sidhu’s concerns with the Lummi Nation Chair.

Mr. Sidhu concluded by noting the availability of federal funds for many of these related needs and how requesting these funds in partnership between the county, Ferndale, and Lummi Nation could be good for everyone.

Motion: Mr. Hansen seconded by Mr. Sidhu. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G. **New Business**

1. Consideration of adopting state-wide roadway safety targets.

Mr. Conroy presented the background of the requirement to annually affirm alignment with the state's adopted roadway safety performance targets. Several questions and suggestions were discussed including an interest in seeing regional fatal crashes broken out by cause(s) (Ms. Lund), interest in better understanding what's been causing worrisome increases in fatal crashes over the last several years (Mr. Sidhu), and ideas about conferring with Canadian transportation agencies to understand why other countries' trends have not been similar (Mr. Scanlon). Mr. Damitio explained WSDOT and others' implementation of a safe-systems approach (in line with USDOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy).

Motion: Mr. Hansen seconded by Mr. Bosch motioned to approve the resolution aligning with the state's 2024 safety targets and committing to planning and programming of projects so that they contribute to the accomplishment of the targets. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

2. Consideration of amending WCOG's 2024 UPWP

Mr. Conroy presented a brief background on WCOG's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), what circumstances require its amendment, and the recent funding provided to WCOG by WSDOT to conduct work to improve measurement, forecasting, and target setting for vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Mr. Conroy then reviewed the new section proposed for addition to the current UPWP to be considered by the board as an amendment.

Motion: Mr. Hansen seconded by Mr. Sidhu motioned to approve the amendment to the UPWP as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

I. **Obligation Status Update**

Mr. Coe presented the current federal funds obligation status for programmed projects.

J. **Director's Report**

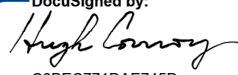
Mr. Conroy noted that, as discussed over the last several months, WCOG is hiring an entry level planner. Fifteen applications were received and strong candidates are in the mix. Staff is proceeding with five interviews over the next week.

K. **Correspondence**

None

L. **Board Open Forum**

None

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Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved January 17, 2023