

**Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
Minutes
October 9, 2024**

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Kim Lund, Skip Williams; **Blaine:** Richard May; **Everson:** John Perry; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chair); **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chair); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **Whatcom County:** Kaylee Galloway, Jon Scanlon, Satpal Sidhu; **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio, Justin Resnick; **Whatcom Transportation Authority:** Michael Lilliquist (1st Vice Chair).

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

Others **Whatcom PUD :** Atul Deshmane, Todd Lagestee; **McBride Public Affairs:** Tom McBride; **WSDOT:** Kristen Beale, Ryan Clemens, John Shambaugh; **Bellingham Chamber of Commerce:** Guy Occhiogrosso.

A. **Call to Order**

Hugh Conroy determined that there was a quorum, and Chair Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m.

B. **Public Comment**

None

C. **Agenda Additions**

None

D. **Approval of the minutes – meeting of July 10, 2024.**

Motion: Mr. Hester moved, second by Mr. Lilliquist, to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 10, 2024, as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes. Mr. Williams abstained (was not present at the July 10 meeting).

E. **Old Business**

None

F. **2025-2030 WCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

1. Public hearing: Mr. Korthuis opened the public hearing at 3:52. No members of the public were present. The public hearing was closed at 3:53.

Mr. Coe reviewed the associated memo and materials in the proposed TIP.

Motion: Mr. Hansen moved to approve the 2025-2030 TIP as presented, seconded by Mr. Williams. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G. **New Business**

1. **Interstate 5** conditions, alternative analyses, current I-5 planning work, and current WSDOT investment policies and strategies:

Mr. Resnick presented on I-5 through Whatcom County. (*The slides used for the presentation are available from WCOG upon request.*). Sources of existing WSDOT policies and priorities were discussed including the adopted regional transportation plan, WA state and federal legislated transportation goals and planning factors, and recent work on the WSDOT Highway System Plan (HSP) including state-wide investment scenarios given current-law revenues.

Mr. Lilliquist asked about levels of public participation in the HSP development

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Mr. Resnick also discussed findings of recent I-5 studies in (A Phase I study from Hwy 11 – Grandview), as well as last year’s formation of a new I-5 Corridor office which is both overseeing an I-5 master planning effort and WA state’s work on high-speed rail plans between Portland, OR and Vancouver, BC. There is a [WSDOT I-5 study webpage](#).

Mr. Resnick mentioned that the previous Phase I study in Whatcom County (which focused on operations strategies to address crashes and congestion) was intended to cue up a Phase II but there has not been available funding for that. A Phase II could evaluate additional alternatives. Mr. Lagestee asked if Whatcom or Skagit County I-5 work has included seismic evaluations. Mr. Resnick responded that most of the resiliency work north of central Puget Sound has focused on flooding risk.

Mr. Scanlon asked for a recommendation on how best to engage in order to ensure a high-speed rail stop is considered for Whatcom County. Discussion noted that current planning is still higher-level than routing and stop scenarios.

Mr. Korthuis asked Mr. Resnick if he could give this kind of presentation to the Whatcom Business and Commerce Committee. Mr. Resnick agreed that he’d be happy to do that.

Mr. Lilliquist emphasized the importance of describing the problems that next-phase evaluation would address.

Mr. Hansen noted that the WCOG [Council] board could ask for funding to conduct a Phase II study of I-5 in Whatcom County.

Mr. Resnick noted the importance of integrating regional I-5 studies with the state-wide master-planning efforts.

Mr. Deshmane asked how a Phase II study would consider climate impacts – specifically the expected change in GHG emissions on a per-capita basis. Mr. Resnick noted that the study of the Lincoln-Lakeway interchange/subarea study, for example, evaluated impact of active transportation – trip making changes that have implications for GHG emissions.

H. Obligation Status Update

Mr. Coe reviewed obligation status. Mr. Coe also reviewed the last four years of WCOG’s member jurisdiction’s consistent success obligating its federal transportation funds on schedule and the cumulative, additional funding that our region has qualified for as a result (as well as avoiding state sanctions for missing targets).

J. Director’s Report

Mr. Conroy reviewed the status of various planning and program activities:

- Development of the USDOT funded regional safety action plan
- The upcoming, October 23 Assembly Meeting the International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) Program.
- The status of requests for some additional funding for next year’s IMTC Personal Vehicle Survey so that Pt. Roberts port-of-entry can also be included.
- The recent WSDOT regional workshop on transitioning to multimodal level of service for state routes, regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs), and local comprehensive plans.

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K. **Correspondence**

Mr. Conroy noted that he had written letters of support for two regional applications to the U.S. FHWA Reconnecting Communities grant program – one for Whatcom County Parks for trail connections adjacent to Marine Dr. and one for the City of Ferndale to address access and connectivity for Portal Way.

L. **Board Open Forum**

None

M. **Adjourn**

4:39

Signed by:

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Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved January 15, 2025