

Whatcom Transportation Policy Board Minutes January 15, 2025

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

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

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

Others **City of Bellingham:** Dylan Casper, Joel Pfundt, Seth Vidaña; **Kittleson:** Wende Wilbur, Abbey Morgan; **Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer District:** Jeff Knakal; **McBride Public Affairs:** Intisar Bengé; **Whatcom County Council:** Kaylee Galloway; **Whatcom County:** Lauren Clemens; **Whatcom Transportation Authority,** Les Reardanz; **WSDOT:** Ryan Clemens, Justin Resnick,

A. **Call to Order**

Hugh Conroy determined that there was a quorum, and Chair Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

B. **Public Comment**

None

C. **Agenda Additions**

None

D. **Approval of the minutes – meeting of October 9, 2024.**

Motion: Mr. Hester moved, second by Mr. Williams, to approve the minutes of the meeting of October 9, 2024, as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

E. **Old Business**

None

F. **Public Hearing: Amendment #1 (25-01) – of the WCOG 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

Public hearing: Mr. Korthuis opened the public hearing at 3:34. No members of the public were present. The public hearing was closed at 3:34.

Mr. Coe reviewed the associated memo and materials related to the TIP amendment.

Mr. Scanlon had questions about the location(s) for WSDOT concrete work. Mr. Damitio responded that it was part of a regional preservation program, not so much location specific. Mr. Scanlon asked about channelization plans at Wharf Street & Cornwall Ave. Dylan Casper clarified some details of that project. Mr. Lilliquist asked if City of Bellingham staff could provide a schematic of that project to the board.

Motion: Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Lilliquist, moved to approve Amendment #1 (25-01) to the WCOG 2025 TIP. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

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. Overview of Whatcom County's Electric Vehicle Plan. Lauren Clemens, Whatcom County Climate Action Manager, introduced the topic and then introduces the county's consultants for the plan, Wende Wilber and Abbey Morgan of Kittleson & Associates. Ms. Wilber and Ms. Morgan presented on the plan. Themes included regional vehicle demographics, business cases for public investment and public-private partnerships for the installation of charging infrastructure, equity issues and strategies, and logical roles for government. Mr. Lilliquist asked if this or a similar presentation could be made to the Bellingham City Council. Other questions and discussion focused on residential neighborhood curb-side charging scenarios, updates to multi-family housing building requirements, and concepts of public charging hubs. Mr. Scanlon raised the importance of ensuring we're aware of and coordinated with parallel state and federal strategies to install EV infrastructure along major highways like I-5. Other questions probed the current status of where our regional electricity comes from – carbon based electricity production (coal fired generators) or non-emitting production. Seth Vidaña of the City of Bellingham noted that recent analysis concludes that our local electricity sources are currently 27% hydro, 16% wind, 1% solar – with the remaining coming from emissions-producing generation.

2. Consideration for approval of WCOG's 2025 federal funding proposal form for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program funds. Lethal Coe introduced the memo and draft project proposal form in the packet. Questions sought clarification about the source of these funds and the federal fiscal years that the funds would be associated with.

Motion: Mr. Hester, seconded by Mr. Lilliquist, moved to approve the 2025 STBG project proposal form as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

3. Consideration for adoption of state-wide safety targets. Mr. Conroy introduced the item and materials in the packet.

Motion: Mr. Lilliquist, seconded by Mr. Williams, moved to approve the resolution adopting WSDOT's 2025 safety targets. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

4. Consideration for adoption of state-wide safety targets. Mr. Conroy introduced the item and materials in the packet.

Mr. Scanlon noted that, alongside the state-wide targets, we could consider holding our region to a higher standard. Mr. Scanlon noted that the United States is distinct, compared with other countries, in our experience of increasing roadway fatalities.

Motion: Mr. Lilliquist, seconded by Mr. Williams, moved to approve the resolution adopting WSDOT's 2025 safety targets. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

5. Consideration of approving 2025 Whatcom region funding proposals for WSDOT's Consolidated. Ms. Fanucci introduced the item and memo showing this year's proposed projects and rankings suggested by the regional review committee.

Motion: Mr. Hester, seconded by Mr. Williams, moved to approve the rankings as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

H. Obligation Status Update


Mr. Coe reviewed the regional, federally funded projects that are expected to obligate this year. At this point, things look to be in good shape for meeting the annual obligation target.

I. Director's Report

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

- The Dec. 2024 announcement that WSDOT was awarded a \$6.7 SMART grant from the USDOT to conduct Phase 2 (implementation) of a regional, binational Advanced Border Information System (ABIS). This project was developed and advanced out of the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC).
- WCOG's request for proposals (RFP) for conducting a regional household travel survey is out on the street.
- The Smart Trips program is already preparing with WTA for the 7th grade bus/travel training program.
- WCOG has asked for an extension to complete its Safety Action Plan under the USDOT grant from the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. Mr. Conroy noted that staff has completed drafting a High Injury Network (HIN) complete with GIS mapping and individual maps of 10 year crash history for 21 HIN Corridors. Public engagement was extended to conduct 35 key informant interviews (KIIs) which are now being synthesized. KIIs focused on community members who's demographics align with WCOG social vulnerability index. Mr. Conroy noted that strategies will likely focus on addressing human behaviors –specifically distraction, impairment, and speeding. Referring back to Mr. Scanlon's interest in holding ourselves to a higher standard, Mr. Conroy noted that, while the Safety Action Plan will not necessarily set more ambitious targets than the state-wide targets adopted earlier in the meeting, it will likely advocate for strategies that move beyond historical focus on engineered solutions to roadways. Mr. May commented that we need to maintain a balance between promoting safety providing functional arterials so people don't need to speed in order to get where they're going on time. Mr. Conroy noted that staff will soon be sharing draft HIN maps and other materials with the Action Plan Committee and that the Policy Board will also be included on that distribution.

J. Adjourn: Chair Korthuis adjourned the meeting at 4:57.

Signed by:

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Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved May 14, 2025