

Whatcom Transportation Policy Board Minutes June 11, 2025

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

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

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

Others **City of Bellingham:** Joel Pfundt; Dylan Casper; **Lummi Nation:** Kirk Vinish, **McBride & Bengé Public Affairs:** Intisar Bengé

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. **Approval of the minutes – meeting of March 15, 2025.**

Motion: Mr. Sidhu moved, second by Mr. Hester, to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 15.

D. **Old Business**

None

E. **Considering request to add Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds and move Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.**

Mr. Coe reviewed Everson's request to move STBG funds from out-year projects and TA funds from current-year suballocations in order for Everson to obligate previously awarded STBG funds, complete its sidewalk projects, and keep the WCOG region on track for meeting its annual federal-funding obligation target. Mr. Coe explained that the Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) had endorsed these funding changes. Proceeding with these changes will also enable WCOG to inform WSDOT that we are on track to meet our annual obligation target by the earlier *June* deadline which WSDOT requires if a local government wants to apply for redistributed STBG funding. WCOG and partners have identified about \$1.6 million of project costs that are ready to obligate should FHWA again avail redistributed funding. FHWA should be letting WSDOT know in the very near future.

Motion: Mr. May, seconded by Ms. Lund, moved to approve the award of TA funds and the transfer of STBG funds for the City of Everson as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes and one abstention by Mr. Scanlon.

Public Hearing: Amendment #3 (250-05) of the WCOG 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Referring to the memo in the packet, Mr. Coe reviewed the project-funding changes that need to be reflected in an amended TIP.

Public Hearing: Mr. Korthuis opened the public hearing at 3:44. No members of the public were present. Mr. Korthuis closed the public hearing at 3:44.

WTPB Minutes

June 11, 2025

Page 2

Motion: Mr. Hester, seconded by Mr. Sidhu, moved to approve Amendment #3 (25-05) to the WCOG 2025 TIP. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G. **New Business Continued**

1. Consideration for adoption: WCOG's SFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Coe introduced the subject memo and highlighted changes from the 2025 UPWP.

Motion: Mr. Sidhu, seconded by Mr. Hester, moved to adopt the SFY 2026 UPWP as presented.

Motion passed with no opposing votes.

2. Consideration for adoption: The Whatcom Region Safety Action Plan (SAP)

Mr. Conroy referred to the memo in the packet and noted that most contents of the final draft SAP had been reviewed with the Transportation Policy Board at its last meeting. Mr. Conroy gave a summary of the crash data and information that the SAP provides that is new for our region as well as the public engagement and feedback that was completed and compiled. With an identified and prioritized High Injury Network (21 priority corridors) and a list of corridor-specific and regional strategies, completion of the SAP enables the Whatcom region's local governments to apply for implementation funds from USDOT's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program.

Additional information was added to SAP since March. Bellingham requested that, in addition to being ranked by the 10-year total number of fatal and serious-injury (F&SI) crashes, that a rate be developed to portray the 21 corridors by the number of crashes as a function of traffic volume. Using WCOG's regional travel demand model and underlying traffic count data, WCOG staff consulted with Bellingham staff and developed a rate calculation using 10-year F&SI crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

A question was asked if the VMT crash rate calculations were used to change the HIN Corridor prioritization. Mr. Conroy explained that it was not but will be useful for individual governments or WSDOT to use in their internal prioritization.

Mr. Scanlon asked if public comments and interviews with community members were used to change the draft plan. Mr. Conroy answered that the comments [from the phase 2 key-informant interviews] were incorporated into the plan and will be most helpful when and if implementation funds are obtained to conduct education and encouragement efforts around crash factors related to human behavior (speeding, distraction, impairment).

Mr. May commented that crash reduction could also be achieved by investing in transportation system efficiency so that drivers don't have to speed in order to get where they're going on time, can accomplish more of their errands, etc.

Motion: Mr. Sidhu, seconded by Mr. Hester, moved to adopt the Whatcom Region Safety Action Plan. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

H. **Obligation Status Update**

Chair, members, and staff agreed that an obligation status update had been fully covered under the STBG and TA funding discussion earlier in the agenda.

I. **Director's Report**

Mr. Conroy asked Ms. Bengé if she would like to give any updates on the WA state legislative session. Ms. Bengé reviewed the conclusion of the legislative session and a summary of outcomes relating to transportation and transportation funding.

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

- WCOG's process to allocate STBG & TA funding for federal fiscal years (FFYs) 2030-31.

WTPB Minutes

June 11, 2025

Page 3

- Revamped WCOG website.
- New signups for WCOG's Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG)
- Possibly pertinent to earlier discussions of the Safety Action Plan and access to federal safety funding, the new state budget includes a "Safety Mega Project" – a WSDOT program for funding individual safety projects. Not much is known yet.
- Review of April meeting of the International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) Program in Surrey, BC.
- Upcoming cross-border passenger vehicle survey
- Review of regional cross-border travel decline – year over year monthly volumes are still way down – April 2025 was down 35% overall and 47% when only looking at vehicles with British Columbia license plates.
- Review of the June 4-5 Canada-U.S. Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) meeting in Niagara, Ontario.

J. Adjourn: Chair Korthuis adjourned the meeting at 4:25

Signed by:

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Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved July 9, 2025