

Whatcom Transportation Policy Board Minutes July 9, 2025

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Skip Williams; **Everson:** John Perry; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen; **Lummi Nation:** Jim Washington; **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chair); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **Whatcom County:** Satpal Sidhu, Jon Scanlon; **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio.

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

Others **City of Bellingham:** Dylan Casper; **Lummi Nation:** Kirk Vinish, **McBride & Bengé Public Affairs:** Intisar Bengé; **Whatcom Transportation Authority:** Les Reardanz; **WSDOT:** John Shambaugh

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 June 11, 2025.**

Motion: Mr. Hester moved, second by Mr. Sidhu, to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 11.

Motion passed with no opposing votes.

D. **Old Business**

None

E. **New Business:** Allocation of FFY 2030-31 regional Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds and Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds.

Mr. Coe reviewed the project funding proposals and the scoring process conducted by the Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) leading up to the recommended awarding of funds to eight projects (detailed in the memo in the board's packet).

Mr. Sidhu asked for additional explanation of why Whatcom County's Everson-Goshen Rd. project did not score higher. Mr. Coe explained that it scored well but the other submittals, including Whatcom County's Marine Drive project scored higher. Mr. Coe added that the TTAG was in strong support of maintaining attention on the Everson-Goshen project as good project to advance as a contingency project in the next year or two if our region needs to move funds from delayed projects to meet annual federal-funding obligation targets.

Mr. Scanlon thanked Mr. Coe for the additional explanation.

Motion: Mr. Hanson, seconded by Mr. Hester, moved to approve allocation of FFY 2030-31 STBG and TA program funds of \$7.195 million as recommended by the Whatcom TTAG. . **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

F. **Obligation Status Update**

Mr. Coe reviewed the status of federal funding obligation. WCOG is on track to meet its target. WCOG also was able confirm obligations in time to qualify for redistributed funding (funds that WSDOT receives from FHWA that comes from states that couldn't spend theirs in time). Eligible projects have been proposed to WSDOT for about \$1.6 million of redistributed funds. Final funding decisions are pending.

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G. **Director's Report**

Mr. Conroy asked Ms. Bengé if she would like to give any updates on the state legislature. Ms. Bengé some of the upcoming races of interest.

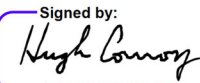
Mr. Conroy reviewed the status of various planning and programming activities:

- New Smart Trips website will soon go live.
- WCOG has its state audit exit conference tomorrow at 11:00. All board members invited to attend.
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A):
 - With WCOG's Safety Action Plan complete, the City of Bellingham Police Department has applied for SS4A implementation funds.
 - One more round of SS4A funding is authorized under current legislation. Additional SS4A funds beyond that will need to be reauthorized by Congress.
 - Mr. Conroy will be attending the WSDOT & Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) Safety Summit conference in Spokane next week.
- IMTC / Border
 - The IMTC Passenger Vehicle Survey is in its second week and going well. Over the next two weeks, student surveyors will be interviewing drivers at Peace Arch-Douglas and Pacific Highway border crossings.
 - The number of BC license plate vehicles crossing the border compared to this time last year continues to be down significantly. After a 51% decline for the month of April, BC-plated vehicles are down 41% comparing June 2025 to June 2024.
- USDOT funding agreements: Mr. Conroy noted that WCOG and others are watching federal court cases related to new USDOT requirements that funding recipients add an Immigration Enforcement Condition (IEC) to funding agreements. 20 states have joined a lawsuit (CA v. USDOT) contesting the legality of the IEC. A federal judge has granted a preliminary injunction, but it is not clear if USDOT has yet signed off any subject agreements without including the IEC. One such pending agreement is for the USDOT SMART Program funding (\$6.7 million) for the Advanced Border Information System (ABIS).
- Mr. Conroy noted that WSDOT completed its Passenger Only Ferry Study in June. The study examines service scenarios on four possible routes. One route is Bellingham-Friday Harbor. Mr. Conroy shared the route-profile summary sheet but will read the full report in detail and evaluate if there are issues for the Policy Board to discuss at a future meeting.

H. Correspondence: Mr. Conroy reported that he signed a letter of support for WTA's request for FTA funding for bus replacements. Mr. Conroy noted that he had not sought additional clarification from the board since the scheduled bus replacements were already in WCOG's regional transportation plan – but did ask if there were any concerns with that rationale. Chair Korthuis agreed that support based on the investment's listing in the current plan was an appropriate basis for a support-letter.

I. Board Open Forum: Mr. Scanlon noted that the County Council will soon be having a work session on the draft transportation element of the county's comprehensive plan.

J. Adjourn: Chair Korthuis adjourned the meeting at 4:04.

Signed by:

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 Hugh Conroy
 Secretary

Approved October 8, 2025