

Whatcom Transportation Policy Board Minutes October 8, 2025

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Blaine:** Richard May; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen; **Lummi Nation:** Anthony Hillaire; **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chair); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **Whatcom County:** Satpal Sidhu, Jon Scanlon; **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio. **Whatcom Transportation Authority:** Michael Lillquist (1st Vice Chair). *Ex-officio -- Whatcom Public Utilities District No. 1:* Eddy Ury.

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

Others **Whatcom County:** Kaylee Galloway; **McBride & Benge Public Affairs:** Intisar Benge, Riley Benge.

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:** Chair Korthuis asked if there were any requests for additions to the agenda.

Mr. Ury asked, if time allowed, discussion could be added regarding Whatcom Transportation Authority's (WTA) recent decision to pause procurement of hybrid and electric buses. Chair Korthuis agreed that the board could discuss that topic as an addition to the end of the agenda. Mr. Lillquist also noted that, as WTA's representative to the Transportation Policy Board, he would be happy to discuss the recent bus-procurement actions.

C. **Approval of the minutes**

Motion: Mr. Scanlon moved, second by Mr. Hester, to approve the minutes of the meetings of May 14 and of July 9, 2025. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

D. **Old Business**

Nones

E. **Public hearing: Amendment #4 (25-10) of WCOG's 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Coe reviewed the requested amendments. Chair Korthuis opened the public hearing at 3:36. No members of the public being present, Chair Korthuis closed the public hearing at 3:37.

Motion: Mr. Scanlon moved, second by Mr. Hansen, to approve Amendment #4 (25-10). **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

F. **Public Hearing: Consideration for approval the WCOG 2026 TIP**

Mr. Coe introduced and reviewed the draft 2026 TIP.

Chair Korthuis opened the public hearing at 3:39. No members of the public being present, Chair Korthuis closed the public hearing at 3:39.

Motion: Mr. Hester moved, second by Mr. Scanlon, to approve the WCOG 2026 Transportation Improvement Program. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G. Consideration of Resolution 25-10-2: Aligning with WSDOT's 2026 state-wide road safety targets

Mr. Conroy reviewed the information in the memo and referenced the WSDOT safety targets folio included in the packet.

Motion: Mr. Hester, seconded by Mr. Scanlon, moved to approve Resolution 25-10-2 and align with WSDOT's 2026 HSIP safety targets.

Ms. Galloway asked if the WCOG was advancing projects that helped advance progress towards the safety targets. Mr. Conroy and Mr. Coe discussed the existence of safety-improvement projects in the TIP as well as the selection process for WCOG's distribution of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program funds in which the safety scoring criteria is the most heavily weighted.

Mr. May noted that, with respect to safety investments, it is important to acknowledge that system modifications that slow traffic down increase people's need to drive faster and take less safe routes to get things done.

Motion passed with no opposing votes.

H. Obligation Status

Mr. Coe shared a current project tracking spreadsheet and explained that WCOG again met its federal funding obligation target and thus was awarded additional, redistributed funds (unused by other states) which FHWA made available to WSDOT in September. Additionally, by meeting the target, WCOG is eligible for possible additional STBG funding withdrawn (sanctioned) from Washington State MPOs and non-MPO counties that did not meet their targets two years in a row.

I. Director's Report

Mr. Conroy noted that he and the McBride & Benge Public Affairs team had begun meeting with our regional state legislative delegation. Mr. Conroy asked Ms. Benge if she would like to give any updates on recent and upcoming legislative goings on. Ms. Benge recounted the meetings earlier this week, noted some seats that are up for reelection, and noted the "protect what we have" posture that legislators are emphasizing against the backdrop of decreasing revenues, uncertain federal funding, etc.

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

- WCOG's Household Travel Survey
- September 17 IMTC Assembly meeting and specific cross-border issues
 - Summer wave of the IMTC Passenger Vehicle Survey
 - Cross-border vehicle volumes continue to be much lower than a year ago. In September, trips by Canadians into Whatcom County were 40% lower than for September 2024.
- One more round of USDOT Safe Streets and Roads for ALL (SS4A) will be opened for applications this spring. After that, additional SS4A funding opportunities will depend on new funds being authorized.
- Mr. Conroy & Ms. Fanucci will be attending the Cascadia Innovation Corridor conference in Seattle on October 28-29. A special session is dedicated to high-speed rail planning.

J. Added Agenda Item: WTA bus purchasing plans

Mr. Ury thanked the rest of the board for adding the topic to the agenda acknowledging that there was some overlap between this board and the WTA board. Mr. Ury outlined some of his questions and concerns about the WTA decision to pause purchasing of new hybrid and fully electric buses.

Mr. Lillquist explained WTA's process of acknowledging limited financial resources and

reassessing their fleet replacement plans as part of this. Recently completed analyses show that the net carbon-emissions reduction obtained through the purchase and operation of hybrid and

all-electric buses is very small because WTA's existing fleet of diesel buses has, for years already, switched from regular diesel fuel to plant-based biodiesel (R99). With the current price of all electric buses being almost double that of diesel buses, even with the somewhat higher price of plant-based diesel, the net carbon reduction benefits of continuing to buy hybrid and all-electric.

Mr. Ury was appreciative of the discussion but is still interested in learning more. Mr. Lillquist and Mr. Korthuis, who are both also on the WTA board, will send Mr. Ury the most recent presentation documents from WTA's consultant who conducted the analysis.

K. Board Open Forum

Mr. Hillaire wanted to thank fellow members for the good work that is done. He noted his plans to be more directly engaged with the WCOG going forward. Some specific items he wanted to mention was to thank the community in Lynden for its support of the Lummi Nation police officer who was shot and seriously injured in the line of duty. Mr. Hillaire is also interested in discussing, with WCOG staff, the TIP development process. Lastly, Mr. Hillaire wants to encourage more regional dialogue about preparations for next June/July's FIFA World Cup activities along the corridor between the venue cities of Seattle and Vancouver.

Meeting adjourned 4:16 PM.

Signed by:

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Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved January 21, 2026