

DRAFT Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
Minutes
January 21, 2026

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Jace Cotton; **Blaine:** Richard May; **Everson:** John Perry; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chair); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **Whatcom County:** Jessica Rienstra, Satpal Sidhu; **WSDOT:** Melissa Ambler; **Whatcom Transportation Authority:** Michael Lillquist (1st Vice Chair).
Ex-officio -- **Whatcom Public Utilities District No. 1:** Atul Deshmane.

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

Others Whatcom Transportation Authority: Les Reardanz; McBride & Benge Public Affairs: Intisar Benge, Riley Benge; City of Bellingham: Tim Homan; WSDOT: Justin Resnick; Eukia.

A. Call to Order

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

B. Public Comment

None

C. Approval of the minutes

Motion: Mr. Hester moved, second by Mr. Hansen, to approve the minutes of the meetings of October 8, 2025. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

D. Old Business

Nones

E. Public hearing: Amendment #1 (26-01) of WCOG's 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Coe reviewed the requested amendments. Vice Chair Lillquist opened the public hearing at 3:35. No members of the public being present, Mr. Lillquist closed the public hearing at 3:35.

Motion: Mr. Hansen moved, second by Mr. Hester, to approve Amendment #1 (26-01). **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G. Obligation Status Update

Mr. Coe reviewed the status of our region's obligation of awarded federal funding. As this point, WCOG is on track to be about \$500,000 short of its target of \$4.3 million.

Mr. Coe also presented a summary of WCOG's obligation performance over the last decade.

Because of repeated successes in meeting its target early in most years, WCOG has qualified for (and successfully applied for) extra funds made available when other states don't obligate their federal transportation funds on time and must return them.

I. Director's Report

Mr. Conroy asked Ms. Benge and Mr. Benge to share any updates from Olympia. Mr. Benge reviewed some of the recent legislative activity early into the short session. Mr. Benge also noted that the Governor's proposed budget does include restoration of funding for WSDOT's Regional Mobility Grant Program and that they will be working with legislators to support that recommendation.

Mr. Conroy asked Mr. Coe to give a brief update on the Household Travel Survey which he did. Mr. Lillquist asked about the resulting data dashboard and who would be able to access that. Mr. Coe responded that the dashboard will be public-facing on WCOG's website.

Mr. Conroy gave updates on the cross-border Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey and the Advanced Border Information System projects.

Mr. Conroy gave a more detailed overview of WCOG's schedule for the upcoming 5-yr update of the Regional/Metropolitan Transportation Plan (R/MTP) and proposed ways staff could work with the Policy Board to consider any issues or regional objectives that should be discussed more or differently as compared to the current R/MTP.

Board members suggested reviewing the current plan's prioritized regional transportation goals and the strategies identified to advance those goals. Mr. Conroy reviewed both and answered clarifying questions.

There was discussion about public engagement strategies. Mr. Lillquist suggested that instead of /along with requesting feedback on the plan overall that feedback on a few key issues could be emphasized. Mr. Deshmane proposed that I-5 operations and future improvements could be one such issue simply due to the persistent community discussion.

J. Mr. Lillquist adjourned the meeting at 4:28.

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Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Scheduled for approval on March 11, 2026