



## Meeting of the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board

Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 3:30 p.m.

Gordon W. Rogers Conference Room

314 East Champion Street, Bellingham, Washington

Join using Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88486071582>

Or phone: (253) 215-8782

### Agenda

#### Pages

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Public Comment**  
Citizens may speak informally to the Board on matters pertinent to its statutory responsibilities and which are not the subject of a public hearing. *Each speaker is allowed a maximum of three minutes.*
- C. Additions to the Agenda** (if any)
- 2-4 **D. Approval of Minutes** -- Meeting of October 8, 2025\*
- 5-6 **E. Business**
  - 1. **Public Hearing: Amendment #1 (26-01)** of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
    - i) Staff Presentation – Lethal Coe
    - ii) Open Public Hearing – Members of the public may address the Board about the subject of the hearing for a maximum of three minutes each.
    - iii) Close Public Hearing\*
    - iv) Board Discussion
    - v) Vote on Proposed TIP amendment\*
- F. Obligation Status Update** – Lethal Coe
- G. Director’s Report** – Hugh Conroy
  - 1. Schedule for next Regional/Metropolitan Transportation Plan (R/MTP) update (Planned adoption in May 2027)
  - 2. Early review of regional interests to include and/or emphasize in WCOG’s 2027 R/MTP (E.g.: I-5 planning, high speed rail, passenger ferry, regional transit service, flood resilience, autonomous vehicles, ZEV corridor, financial strategies, etc.)
  - 3. Comp Plan Certification for Transportation Elements.
- H. Correspondence** (if any)
- I. Board Open Forum**

\* Action item

**DRAFT 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 Lilliquist (1<sup>st</sup> 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. Lilliquist 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 & Bengé Public Affairs team had begun meeting with our regional state legislative delegation. Mr. Conroy asked Ms. Bengé if she would like to give any updates on recent and upcoming legislative goings on. Ms. Bengé 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. Lilliquist 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. Lilliquist 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.

---

Hugh Conroy  
Secretary

Scheduled for approval on January 21, 2026



## Memorandum

**To:** Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)  
**Date:** January 12, 2026  
**From:** Lethal Coe, Principal Planner  
**Subject:** Review and consideration to approve WCOG 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment

---

Formal TIP Amendments require review and resolution from the Policy Board to amend the current TIP and make federal funding accessible. **Amendment #1 (26-01)** of the WCOG 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following:

1. Add new Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project – *I-5, SR 9, SR 539 & SR 543 Cascade Gateway Advanced Border Information Systems* – to provide traveler information and support traffic management services at four points of entry. The total project cost of \$6,965,388 is funded through Federal Discretionary and State Motor Vehicle Account. Preliminary engineering is scheduled to begin in 2026 and construction in 2027.
2. Add Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) project *Operating Assistance for services in Whatcom PTBA – 2024* to utilize Federal 5307 funds to support transit operating services.
3. Add WTA project *Operating Assistance for services in Whatcom PTBA – 2025* to utilize Federal 5307 funds to support transit operating services.
4. Add WTA project *Replace Fixed Route Buses - 2027 & 2028* to replace fixed route buses with approximately 14 hybrid buses. The bus replacement program is funded through Federal 5339 funds and will cost an estimated \$20,500,000.
5. Add Whatcom County project *Bay to Baker Trail – Kendall to Glacier* that received state Sandy Williams Connecting Communities Program funding award for preliminary engineering to construct a non-motorized multimodal trail connecting communities in eastern Whatcom County. Funding of \$515,060 for preliminary engineering is scheduled to begin in 2026.

### Suggested Policy Board Action

“Approve Amendment #1 of the Whatcom Council of Governments 2025 Transportation Improvement Program.”

**WCOG TIP Amendment #1 (26-01) Table**

#	Agency	Project Title	TIP Action	Added Funds	Total Cost	Source(s)
1	WSDOT	<i>I-5, SR 9, SR 539 &amp; SR 543 Cascade Gateway Advanced Border Information Systems</i>	Add new project.	\$6,965,388	\$6,965,388	Disc., MVA
2	WTA	<i>Operating Assistance for services in Whatcom PTBA - 2024</i>	Add new project.	23,301,298	23,301,298	5307
3	WTA	<i>Operating Assistance for services in Whatcom PTBA - 2025</i>	Add new project.	20,278,830	20,278,830	5307
4	WTA	<i>Replace Fixed Route Buses - 2027 &amp; 2028</i>	Add new project.	20,500,000	20,500,000	5339
5	Whatcom	<i>Bay to Baker Trail – Kendall to Glacier</i>	Add new project.	515,060	17,515,060	CCP

**Recent or Upcoming Administrative Modifications** - Administrative modifications are less substantial project changes and are administered by WCOG staff. No Policy Board Actions are required.

Agency	Project	Modification Administered	Total Costs	Source
Whatcom	<i>Goshen Rd/Anderson Creek Bridge No 248 Replacement</i>	Adjust CN funding	\$5,110,000	BR