



SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE
WHATCOM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Wednesday, November 4, 2020, 3:00 p.m.
Call-in: (253) 215-8782
Webinar ID: 951 2768 0895

AGENDA

PAGES

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| | A. | CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL – Chairman Korthuis |
| | B. | AGENDA APPROVAL* |
| 3-4 | C. | APPROVAL OF MINUTES* Meeting of October 14, 2020 |
| 5-14 | D. | OLD BUSINESS 1. 2021 List of Regional Transportation Funding Requests – Bob Wilson* 2. Other old business (if any) |
| | E. | NEW BUSINESS (if any) |
| | F. | ADJOURN |

* Action item



Notice to the Public Regarding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

WCOG hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the agency to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which WCOG receives federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with WCOG. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the WCOG Title VI Coordinator within one-hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Title VI Discrimination Complaint Forms may be obtained from the WCOG at no cost and are available on WCOG's website.

Aviso al Público Sobre Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964

Por medio de la presente, el WCOG notifica de manera pública que la política del organismo es garantizar el pleno cumplimiento del Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, la Ley de Recuperación de Derechos Civiles de 1987, el Decreto Presidencial 12898 sobre Justicia Ambiental, el Decreto Presidencial 13166 sobre Dominio Limitado del Idioma Inglés, así como los estatutos y reglamentos relacionados en todos los programas y actividades. De acuerdo con lo estipulado en el Título VI, ningún individuo de los Estados Unidos de América deberá, con fundamento en su raza, color, sexo o nacionalidad, ser excluido de participar en, que se le nieguen los beneficios de, o ser víctima de discriminación en virtud de cualquier programa o actividad por el cual el WCOG reciba fondos federales.

Toda persona que se considere agraviada por una práctica discriminatoria e ilícita en virtud del Título VI tiene derecho a presentar una denuncia formal ante el WCOG. Cualquier denuncia de este tipo debe presentarse por escrito ante el coordinador del Título VI del WCOG en un periodo de 180 días naturales a partir de la fecha de la presunta discriminación. El WCOG pone a disposición del público los formularios de denuncia del Título VI de manera gratuita en su página web.

WHATCOM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD MINUTES – DRAFT
OCTOBER 14, 2020

IN ATTENDANCE (VIA GOTOMEETING):

MEMBERS VOTING: Bellingham: Seth Fleetwood (Secretary-Treasurer), Pinky Vargas, Hollie Huthman; Ferndale: Greg Hansen; Lynden: Scott Korthuis (Chairman); Nooksack: Tom Jones; Whatcom County: Satpal Sidhu, Carol Frazey; EX-OFFICIO: WTA: Pete Stark

GUESTS Ken Bell, Port of Bellingham; Michael Lilliquist, WTA; Tom McBride, McBride Public Affairs

STAFF Bob Wilson, Ron Cubellis, Hugh Conroy

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. with a quorum present, and he asked Mr. Wilson to perform a roll call.

B. AGENDA APPROVAL

MOTION: Ms. Frazey moved, Mr. Jones seconded, to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION PASSED

C. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Mr. Hansen moved, Mr. Sidhu seconded, to approve the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the meeting of May 13, 2020, and the list of claims from July 1 through September 30, 2020, inclusive, in the amount of \$424,029.44, which was e-mailed to the representatives on October 8, 2020, and which was audited and certified by the Executive Director, acting as the Auditing Officer as required by RCW 42.24.090.

MOTION PASSED

D. BUDGET REPORT

Mr. Cubellis presented the budget report as of September 30, 2020.

E. OLD BUSINESS

None

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Amending WCOG's Personnel Manual

Mr. Wilson explained the proposed amendments to the Personnel Manual and answered questions from the Board.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved, Mr. Sidhu seconded, to amend the WCOG Personnel Manual, as presented.

MOTION PASSED

2. Presentation of Draft 2021 WCOG Budget

Messrs. Wilson and Cubellis presented the first draft of the 2021 Budget and answered questions from the Board.

3. 2021 List of Regional Transportation Funding Requests

There was consensus to table this item and schedule a special meeting of the Council Board on November 4, 2020, to approve the list of funding requests.

4. Certificates of Appreciation

Chairman Korthuis presented certificates of appreciation to Tom Parker, WCOG's recently-retired lobbyist; Susan Horst, WCOG's recently-retired Director of Mobility Programs, and; Mr. Cubellis, in recognition of his 25 years of service at WCOG.

G. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Scott Korthuis
Chairman

Robert H. Wilson, AICP
Executive Director

Approved October 14, 2020



MEMORANDUM

To: The Council Board
From: Bob Wilson, Executive Director
Date: October 28, 2020
Subject: **2021 List of Regional Transportation Funding Requests**

The transportation funding requests received to date from WCOG's member jurisdictions are attached and are listed in the order in which I received them. As you go through them, please determine which of the projects listed should be given the highest priority. I suggest presenting the final list to our legislative delegation broken down as follows:

1. Regional Transit Priorities, which WTA has already ranked
2. 40th District Priorities – Rank the first, second and third highest priorities
3. 42nd District Priorities – Ditto

Of course, it is entirely up to the Board to determine how the list should be structured, and you will make that determination at the meeting.

SUGGESTED MOTION: Move to approve the list of 2021 Transportation Funding Requests for Whatcom County, as established at the meeting of November 4, 2020.

LYNDEN'S REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

West Front Street Arterial Improvement (Duffner Drive to Tromp Road)

This economic development project will replace the existing 1,900 feet of sub-standard West Front Street with a City standard all-weather arterial street and storm drainage. This street provides direct access to about 100 acres of Lynden's growing commercial services regional (CSR) and industrial (IBZ) zoned land and ultimately access to another 140 acres of the City's western Urban Growth Area (UGA).



The project builds a 44-foot-wide all-weather surface with two 11-foot travel lanes, a 12-foot center turn lane and five-foot striped urban shoulders and sidewalks. It will provide a robust multimodal all-weather street in the growing west Lynden industrial area to serve: a proposed 124,000 square foot incubator business park (Front Street Station), Lynden Door, Oxbo International, Preferred Freezer, Scholten Equipment, and the US Postal Service north county sorting facility. **Request: \$1.72M** (excludes City Utility Fund match)

Birch Bay Lynden Road Arterial Preservation

Birch Bay-Lynden Road (Fed Route 8152), is a primary all-weather western access route into Lynden from (I-5) and connects to Guide Meridian Road (SR-539). Guide Meridian Road is a primary freight connection to the Lynden/Aldergrove international border crossing and the Sumas/Huntington crossing via SR-546 (Badger Road).

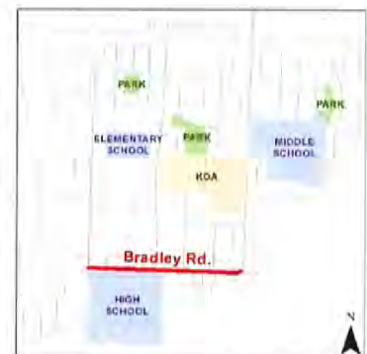


Most West Lynden Commercial and Industrial businesses currently use Birch Bay-Lynden Road as their primary all-weather route to I-5, including the growing Lynden Door manufacturing campus, Scholten Equipment, Preferred Freezer and Oxbo International.

The City has diligently maintained the street with crack sealing, chip sealing and asphalt patching to extend the life, but the heavily used wearing course is nearing the end of its useful life and requires a structural grind and overlay to restore integrity. **Request: \$750,000**

Bradley Road Safe Routes Pedestrian Improvements

This section of the City arterial road system fronts the Lynden High School is 24 feet wide with a widened shoulder on the south side, offering limited protection for bikes and pedestrians. The City has completed pedestrian improvements on Line Road to the east, but this important arterial remains sub-standard. The City has completed 50% design level plans. This corridor carries most of Lynden's last ten years of residential growth. It is a Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) route, and thousands of recreational vehicles use this route to visit the nationally acclaimed Lynden KOA campground.



The project would construct the final 0.75 miles of bike lane and ADA-compliant sidewalks/pathway to enhance walkability and safely convey school children to and from the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The project will also incorporate necessary stormwater treatment facilities to protect water quality in Kamm Creek in the Nooksack Basin (WRIA 1). **Request: \$430,000**

Jim Kaemingk Sr. Trail Alternative Transportation (Lynden)

This project will connect the recently completed Fisher School Safe Route to School Trail section with the pending new section of trail which ends at 8th Street. This connection will be made by constructing about 0.75 miles of widened (eight to ten-foot) sidewalk and trail monumentation from B.C. Avenue east on Glenning Street to North 8th Street and then north to Drayton Street. This will connect the recently acquired five-acre Glenning Street Park and use the existing North 8th Street pedestrian bridge over Fishtrap Creek.



The Jim Kaemingk Sr. Trail system is an east-west multi-modal transportation system in Lynden. The trail began in 1996 with the City receiving an Enhancement Grant for the section from Depot Road east to Bender Road. Since then the City has continued to expand the trail network and in 2019 a section around Fisher School from 17th Street to 14th Street was completed with Federal Safe Route to School funds. **Request: \$650,000.**

REGIONAL TRANSIT PRIORITIES (listed in order of priority)

- 1. Support for Transit Electrification (WTA)** – The cost of an electric bus and charging facilities is more than double that of a standard diesel fleet. With a fleet of 61 diesel buses costing up to \$35 million – the unfunded marginal cost to WTA of full electrification would be up to \$45 million over 10 years. There is significant pressure on Washington’s transit systems from the State to move to an electric bus fleet. This should be accompanied by a commitment from the Legislature to assume the costs associated with this important environmental initiative. Request: **Capital support in an amount to be determined by the Legislature**
- 2. Operating Support for Regional Transit Service (Whatcom Transportation Authority)** – Based on a model developed by the North Sound Transportation Alliance, the three northwest Washington transit systems – the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), Skagit Transit and Island Transit – operate a coordinated set of services linking the five northwestern counties of Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan and Snohomish. This includes express service provided by WTA linking Bellingham Station to Skagit Station in Mt. Vernon, with continuing service provided by Skagit Transit to Everett Station. Similarly, service operated by Island Transit and Skagit Transit allow residents of Island, Skagit and San Juan counties to access services in Bellingham through the connection at Skagit Station, which is served by Amtrak Cascades rail as well as bus transit.

To provide these linkages, all three systems operate outside the boundaries of their individual service areas. The current funding source is a mix of local funds and competitive grants. This funding model is unreliable and unsustainable, and it threatens the viability of these critical regional transportation services, which advance the State’s interests by relieving congestion, supporting economic development and improving mobility, especially for Washington’s transportation-disadvantaged population. A dedicated and reliable source of operating funding to sustain and enhance extra-regional services like the WTA/Skagit/Island County Connector service is requested. Request: **Ongoing operating support in an amount to be determined by the Legislature**

- 3. Bellingham Station Expansion (WTA)** –

WTA has developed design concepts to expand its station in downtown Bellingham, which was built in 1980 with ten bus gates. Bellingham Station is at capacity and must be expanded to build out the High-Frequency Transit Network (WTA’s GO Line services) and to support transit service to the rapidly developing Waterfront District. The station would be expanded by adding a passenger concourse and four bus gates in the Railroad Avenue right-of-way to the southwest of the existing station. The new gates would accommodate articulated coaches and provide charging for electric buses. This project is anticipated to be supported by WTA’s upcoming long-range transit plan. The agency is in the midst of a planning process that will result in a framework for future service and a list of strategies, including service expansion opportunities and capital requirements.



Request: **\$5-million**

Whatcom County Funding Requests

Pavement Rehabilitations (Whatcom County) – This project replaces aged road surfaces on sections of four main arterials used heavily by commercial and commuter traffic. The four roads are Birch Bay-Lynden, Birch Bay Drive, Lake Louise Boulevard and Northwest Avenue. Work will include upgrading bicycle routes, multi-use lanes, and ADA facilities. Pavement rehabilitation projects require no land acquisition, environmental mitigation or engineering design. Examples of similar work are found at <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/3401/East-Smith-Road-Paving-Project> Request: **\$6.5-million.**



A pavement rehabilitation project completed in 2020 on Northwest Drive.

Marine Drive Improvements (Whatcom County) – Marine Drive is an important commuter and recreation corridor for residents of Bellingham. The roadway parallels the bluff north from the City out to the Nooksack River delta, Lummi peninsula, and Ferndale. The corridor is a popular cycling and pedestrian route with expansive views of Bellingham Bay and the delta. This project between Locust Avenue and Alderwood Drive is the second of a three phase project to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety from the City limits across the Burlington Northern railway. (Additional information can be found by clicking [here.](#)) Request: **\$2.5-million**



Marine Drive is a popular cycling and pedestrian route that is also an important vehicle commute route. This two lane road does not consistently have wide shoulders, sidewalks, or bicycle lanes.

Birch Bay-Lynden Road/Blaine Road Roundabout (Whatcom County) – This project calls for the construction of a roundabout to ensure that this intersection, which is projected to experience a significant increase in traffic volume, will operate at an acceptable level of service in the future. The design incorporates safe-pedestrian paths that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, provide bike lanes, upgrade the lighting, and improve site drainage as required by the Department of Ecology. Up to date information is found at <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/3343/Birch-Bay-Lynden-Rd-and-Blaine-Rd-Inters> . Request: **\$3.5-million**

Northwest Drive/Smith Road Roundabout (Whatcom County) – This project calls for the construction of a roundabout to ensure that this intersection, which is projected to experience a significant increase in traffic volume, will operate at an acceptable level of service in the future. The design will incorporate safe-pedestrian paths that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, provide bike lanes, upgrade the lighting, and improve site drainage as required by the Department of Ecology. Additional information is located at <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/3342/W-Smith-Rd-and-Northwest-Dr-Intersection> . Request: **\$3.5-million**

Mosquito Lake Road/ Hutchinson Creek Tributary Fish Passage (Whatcom County) – The existing 30-inch diameter concrete culvert at this location was damaged in early 2018, with a temporary repair made later that year. This culvert is a high-priority fish passage improvement. Request: **\$800,000**



Above left: Photo shows scale of fish barrier at the outlet of the culvert. Above right: Photo shows prior damage when the downstream end of the culvert failed and temporary repairs were made to prevent loss of the roadway.

Lummi Island Ferry System Modernization and Preservation (Whatcom County) – The 1962 M/V Whatcom Chief and its terminal facilities have long exceeded their design life. The system faces major system replacements, growing maintenance costs, and unplanned service disruptions. Foremost is a complete and unavoidable repower by 2028 to comply with EPA Tier 3 emissions regulations for marine diesel engines. This repower requires substantial and costly reconfigurations below-decks and put at question the vessel’s “grandfathered” status. The Whatcom Chief does not meet present-day safety, ADA, and service standards. Timely vessel replacement will avoid this cost and the associated months-

long service disruption. The Whatcom County Council conducted a systematic, publicly-informed design process for a hybrid diesel-electric replacement that meets all current standards and will satisfy the needs of residents, emergency services, taxpayers, crew, and the environment for the foreseeable future. The two years it will take to build a replacement vessel followed by two years of terminal upgrades demands that the County advance this project now. A robust proposal to secure a federal BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant for ferry modernization was recently denied. The design process and related information is available at <http://www.whatcomcounty.us/3432/New-Ferry-Vessel>.
Request: **\$30-million**

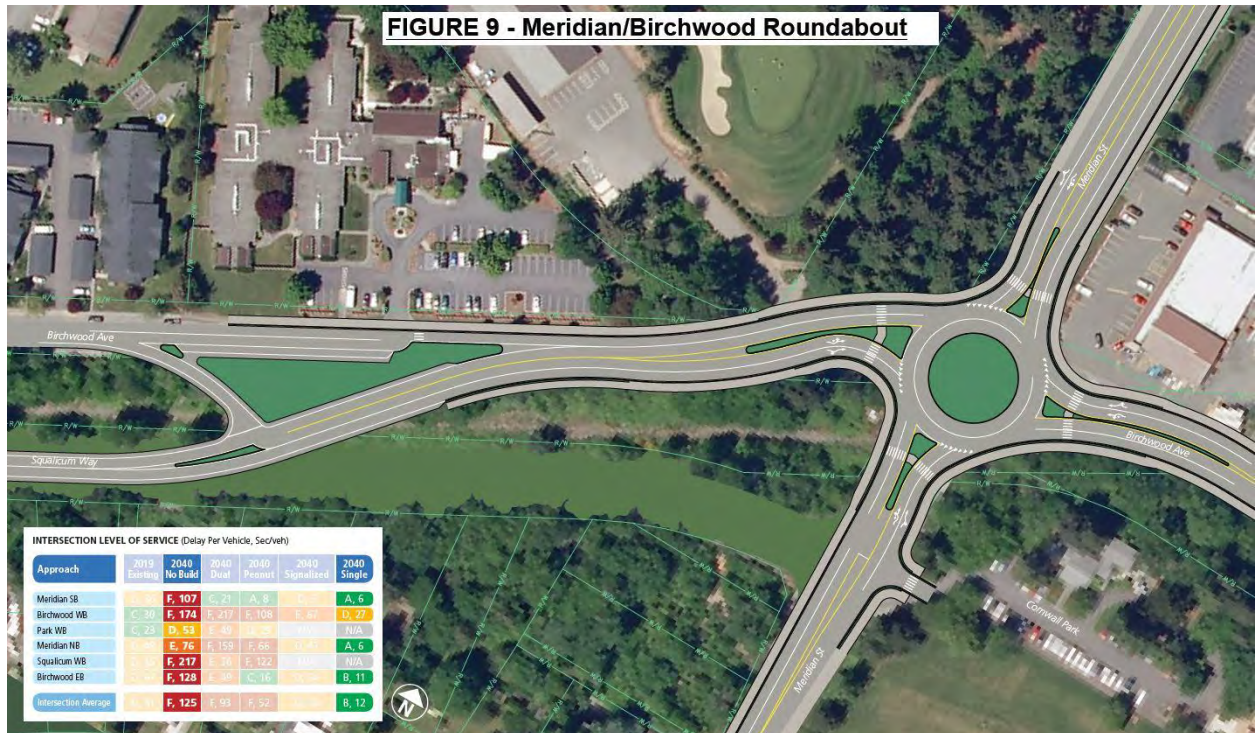
City of Bellingham Projects for WCOG Regional Priority List

Meridian/Birchwood Roundabout - \$12 million

The signalized intersections at Meridian/Birchwood and Meridian/Squalicum serve a critical freight route and multimodal transportation link between the industrial Bellingham Waterfront and U.S.-Canadian border crossings connected by Interstate 5 and Guide-Meridian (SR 539). When the Orchard-Birchwood extension is completed in 2021, vehicle traffic volume, as well as pedestrian and bicycle demand, will increase and these closely spaced intersections will become increasingly congested. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans call for sidewalks and bicycle facilities and Park & Recreation plans call for a multiuse trail on the former railroad bed. WTA has indicated that Meridian Street-SR 539 is a candidate for future high-frequency GO Line transit service.

Phased Construction

This critical project must be completed in two distinct, but interrelated, phases. Phase 1 would merge the Squalicum Parkway freight truck route with Birchwood Avenue on the west side of Meridian Street and decommissioning the Meridian/Squalicum traffic signal. Phase 2 would reconstruct the Meridian/Birchwood intersection as a multimodal roundabout.



More information is available on the [Meridian Street Roundabouts Feasibility Study](#) web page

James Street Multimodal Safety Improvements - \$14.5 million

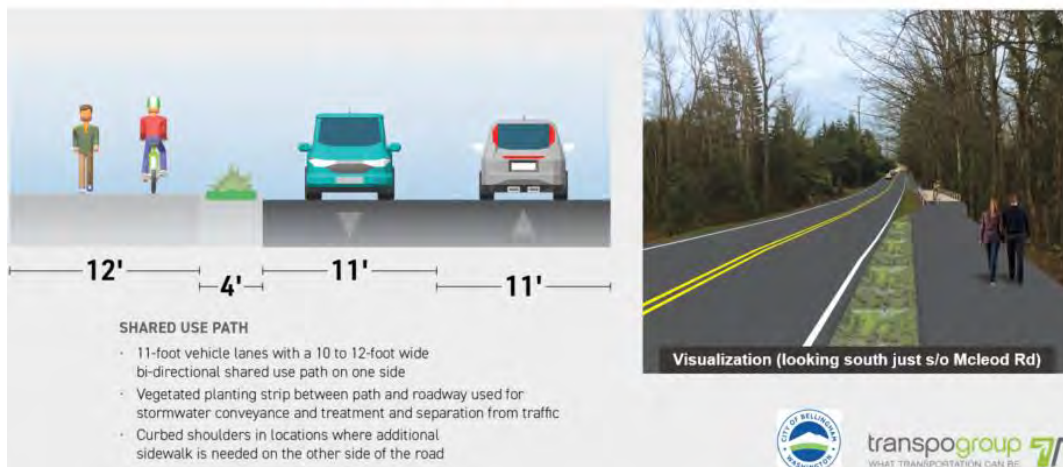
James Street is the only north-south transportation corridor serving the King Mountain Neighborhood, which is zoned for 3,000 or more housing units. James Street provides access to Squalicum Creek Trail and Sunset Pond Park between Sunset Square Shopping Center, Telegraph Rd, and East Bakerview Rd. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans call for sidewalks and bike lanes and WTA high-frequency Gold GO Line Route 331 service requires sidewalks and crossings to bus stops. Significant costs include, removal of a vertical curve sight distance issue on the hill between Orchard and McLeod and reconstruction of culverts beneath James Street between Orchard Dr and Telegraph Rd and Bakerview Rd and Kellogg Rd will require reconstruction for fish passage improvements.

Phased Construction

The total cost to construct both non-motorized and fish passage improvements on the corridor is \$14.5 million, but construction by segment is more likely, as follows: 1.) Orchard-McLeod \$4.1 million; 2.) McLeod-Telegraph \$5.8 million; 3.) Telegraph-Bakerview \$1.0 million; 4.) Bakerview-Kellogg \$3.1 million.



West Side Shared Use Path



More information is available on the [James Street Multimodal Feasibility Study](#) web page

Ferndale's Funding Request

East Main Pavement Preservation and Pedestrian Improvements – This project, extending approximately 4,000 feet from the southern leg of Barrett Avenue east to the Ferndale City limits, would repair and replace pavement and provide



sidewalk connectivity along Main Street, the primary east-west connector between the Guide Meridian and Interstate Five within Ferndale city limits. The work would also include repairs and improvements to a partially-blocked culvert on a potential fish-bearing water body (10-Mile Creek), as well as improvements to

mitigate seasonal flooding that has the potential to impair vehicular traffic. No land acquisition is anticipated. Request: \$3.5 million.

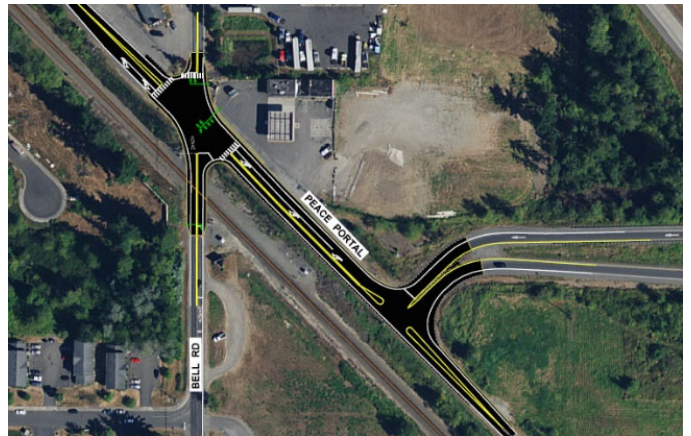
City of Blaine Request

Bell Road /Peace Portal Drive Intersection

Bell Road (SR 548) connects the communities of Birch Bay and Semiahmoo to downtown Blaine and Interstate-5. There are serious local traffic delays on this roadway caused by the Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS) operated by Homeland Security to scan inbound rail freight.

Previously the City had secured funding to pursue a grade separation on Bell Road. However, further evaluation has uncovered significant engineering challenges, local access issues and unexpectedly high construction costs. Based on this, the City is seeking funding for an at-grade, signalized intersection with channelization improvements (bypass lanes) to improve traffic flow and reduce delays caused by the cargo trains.

The project includes installing additional turn-lanes will allow for vehicles directly impacted by the train to safely queue up and allow drivers who are not directly impacted by the train to continue to utilize the intersection, improves emergency response and school buses bringing students to and from Birch Bay, Semiahmoo and North County to the Blaine School campus, and includes a train pre-emption system to alert motorists of the train delay and provide the option to take an alternative route when feasible.



The City of Blaine requests that the Legislature authorize a total of \$2,293,400 for the project, including a project scope change to utilize the existing \$1,100,000 currently allocated to the grade separation project, and an additional \$1,193,400. The City applied to the Transportation Improvement Board Grant Program for the remaining funds but was unsuccessful.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Slater Road Elevation Project

Project Need: Slater Road is one of two primary access roads to the Lummi Indian Reservation and Lummi Island and is the main transportation corridor to two of the industries in the Cherry Point Heavy Impact Industrial Zone located to the north of the Reservation (i.e., ConocoPhillips refinery, Alcoa-Intalco Works aluminum plant). Marine Drive, the second primary access road, also provides access to the Reservation and the Lummi Island ferry but Marine Drive is closed even more frequently than Slater Road by Nooksack River floods and is always closed due to flooding whenever Slater Road is flooded. When both roads are closed, access to the Reservation, the Lummi Island ferry, and the Cherry Point industries is through, or to the north of, the City of Ferndale, approximately 2 miles north of Slater Road. This detour can more than double travel times to and from Bellingham and result in severe congestion in the City of Ferndale. These road closures have substantial impacts on the economic, public health, and safety of the affected areas.

Project Partnerships: The Lummi Nation is working in conjunction with Whatcom County and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to implement the Slater Road Elevation Project. Three local fire districts, the City of Ferndale, ConocoPhillips, Alcoa, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wrote letters supporting the Slater Road Elevation Project grant application.

Project Description: An approximately 2,220-foot length of a frequently flooded portion of Slater Road in the Nooksack River floodplain will be elevated an average of 8 feet and two existing culverts will be replaced with a 387-foot long bridge (total project length of approximately 2,600 feet). A hydraulic model has shown that this retrofit will raise this section of Slater Road above the 100-year flood elevation and allow the 100-year flood event to pass under the bridge without causing upstream water levels to flood additional properties. Work will be completed largely within the existing right-of-way and alignment of Slater Road.

As shown in Figure 1, the project area is located in Whatcom County, Washington (Township 38N, Range 2E, Section 4 and Section 5) and is approximately 0.75 miles east of the northeast corner of the Lummi Indian Reservation.

Project Funding: In March 2005, the Lummi Nation and Whatcom County entered into an interlocal agreement – Lummi would contribute a \$3 million FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program grant and the County would contribute \$1 million to the total estimated project cost. Following the \$3 million PDM Program grant award to Lummi (the maximum available grant amount), the County revisited the design and construction costs and estimated that the new total project cost would be \$6.77 million rather than \$4 million. In April 2006, the Lummi Nation/Whatcom County interlocal agreement was revised accordingly to increase the county contribution to the project from \$1 million to \$3.77 million. The 100% project submittal from the project design engineer was completed in late September 2007 and the construction costs alone are now estimated to be approximately \$7.4 million. With contingencies, engineering oversight costs, and other estimated costs, the total project cost is now estimated to be approximately \$9.5 million, or about \$3 million more than what is provided for through the interlocal agreement. This \$3 million funding gap must be filled for the project to move forward.



Location of the Slater Road Elevation Project on a USGS 1:24,000 Quadrangle map

