



Meeting Summary

Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Group [TTAG]

Thursday, January 23, 2020 10:00 – 12:00

Whatcom Council of Governments
314 E Champion St, Bellingham, WA

Attendees:

Chris Comeau	Bellingham Public Works (City of)
Steve Haugen	Bellingham Public Works (City of)
Ravyn Whitewolf	Blaine (City of)
Rollin Harper	Everson, Nooksack, Sumas (Cities of)
Cheryl Johnson	Lummi Transit
John Schambaugh	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Mike Koidal	WSDOT Traffic
Chris Thomas	WSDOT Traffic
Sayuri Koyamatsu	WSDOT Traffic
Jim Carothers	WSDOT Traffic
Melissa Fanucci	Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)
Hugh Conroy	WCOG
Lethal Coe	WCOG
Jim Karcher	Whatcom County Public Works
Jason Ardt	Whatcom County Public Works
Tim Wilder	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
Josh Nylander	WTA

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) architecture kick-off – Melissa Fanucci, WCOG

ITS regional architecture is a federal requirement for a detailed description of what ITS applications are in place and planned in the region as well as a description of opportunities for collaboration on future projects. Last updated in 2017, this update will incorporate recent requirements to align with the current National ITS Architecture.

This meeting introduces the new National ITS Architecture, outlines the update process, and provides an opportunity for participants to contribute to the document and process. Follow up efforts will include distribution of an informational primer to help answer questions and follow-up interviews with key stakeholders.

[Click here](#) to download the WCOG ITS slide deck shown at this meeting.

For more information please contact WCOG Principal Planner Melissa Fanucci, AICP at melissa@wco.org.

Member updates

Jim Karcher: The Birch Bay berm construction started about a month ago, with work happening at night. Crews will be doing mitigation at Terrel Creek, eventually putting in logs.

The County is working on implementing a rail-crossing quiet zone on Cliffside Dr.

Several paving projects are slated for this year: Slater Rd from Pacific Hwy to Northwest Dr, Northwest Dr from Bellingham city limits to W Axton Rd, and Smith Rd from Mt. Baker Hwy to Hannegan Rd. The Everson Goshen Rd-Smith Rd roundabout is also being refreshed. County staff will be conducting outreach to stakeholders.

The Slater Rd-Northwest Dr intersection improvements is now a Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Connecting Washington project.

The County will be working on several fish passage culverts, including one near Cornwall Church on Northwest Dr and one near Everson Goshen Rd and Mt. Baker Hwy.

Ravyn Whitewolf: The City of Blaine is hiring for a PE-licensed Engineer.

The City of Blaine's Boblett St channelization project is in the final phases of design.

Chris Comeau: The City of Bellingham will be resurfacing Bill McDonald Pkwy in the summer. This will sync up with the planned rechannelization of the Samish Way-Maple St-Ellis St corridor from I-5 to Lakeway Dr.

The City is involved in a Lakeway Dr subarea study with WSDOT, Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), and WCOG to improve the corridor, especially now with the planned move of the Bellingham YMCA and the Arne Hanna Aquatic Center into a new combined facility at the site of the current Arne Hanna Aquatic Center.

Following passage of Washington State Initiative 976 (I-976) WSDOT is suspending its call for projects for Safe Routes to Schools grants and Pedestrian Safety grants –more will be known about these funding sources after the legislative session.

John Schambaugh: WSDOT has suspended most projects not already in construction as the agency looks to reprioritize funding after the passage of I-976.

Hugh Conroy: Mr. Conroy emailed out the notice for funding opportunities for the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program to eligible agencies. The City of Bellingham is interested in applying for funding for improving Meridian St from Squalicum way to I-5, assuming the project would be eligible.

Chris Comeau: The preferred alternative for the project is to merge Squaticum Way and Birchwood Ave at Meridian St and put in a roundabout.

Hugh Conroy: WCOG is starting to refresh its Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) stakeholder group in preparation for the expected call for applications for the WSDOT Consolidated Grant program this summer.

At the last International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) meeting, the Canada Border Services Agency gave a presentation introducing their preliminary design plans for redeveloping their Pacific Highway border crossing. The project will break ground in the next couple of years, which will cause inspection capacity constraints during construction.

Transport Canada has funded a preliminary modeling effort through WCOG for developing a generic commercial port-of-entry simulation model for the region and for testing scenarios related to adding a Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) device pre-inspection in approach lanes leading to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) commercial facility at Pacific Highway.

John Schambaugh: Tom Stacey will be retiring this year. There are no plans to fill his position.

Tim Wilder: WTA will be taking delivery of electric buses this year. The Midway Ln lot next to WTA's headquarters is being equipped with electric charging stations.

SmartBus technology is now installed in the whole fleet, including paratransit.

There will be minor transit service changes for June. The agency will account for the closing of Horton Rd and will add service to June Rd.

WTA is about to finalize its engagement with a consultant to develop a Long Range Transit plan. There will be a stakeholder group for the plan.

Josh Nylander: Along with the SmartBus technologies, WTA is also compiling an inventory of bus stops which includes ADA attributes for use in a bus finder app.

Cheryl Johnson: Lummi Transit piloted tracking devices for its buses. They received grant funding from the Federal Transit Administration for the purchase of two new non-CDL buses that will be delivered in the Spring. Lummi Transit also received grant funding for high-visibility clothing for riders and pedestrians walking along the road. There are plans to host an event on the Lummi Reservation to promote bus ridership.

Project Statuses

Lethal Coe: The City of Bellingham will be de-obligating funds from its Mahogany project for 2020. They are working with WSDOT on the exact amount. There could be around \$500k that will be returned and re-availed for projects.

With the expectation of de-obligation, projections for 2020 for the WCOG region are currently short of the obligation target. WCOG staff will be working with the Policy Board to find currently active projects that could quickly obligate funds.

The WCOG region also received \$55k over the next two years after Washington State received reallocated funds from other states.

There was discussion of possible projects where funding could be added this year and future projects that could potentially be moved up to begin in 2020 to meet the obligation target.