



Meeting of the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board

Wednesday, July 10, 2024, 3:30 p.m.

WCOG boardroom & on-line

314 East Champion Street, Bellingham, Washington

Join using Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84288177305>

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)**
- 2-3 D. **Approval of the minutes -- Meeting of May 8, 2024***
- E. **Old business (if any)**
- 4-5 F. **Public hearing: Amendment #4 (24-07) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
 - 1. Staff presentation – Lethal Coe
 - 2. Open public hearing – Members of the public may address the Board about the subject of the hearing for a maximum of three minutes each.
 - 3. Close public hearing*
 - 4. Board discussion
 - 5. Vote on proposed TIP amendment*
- 6-12 G. **Consideration for adoption: Updated Development and Evaluation Process for Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements* - Lethal Coe**
- H. **New Business (if any other)**
- I. **Obligation Status Update - Lethal Coe**
- J. **Director’s Report - Hugh Conroy**
- K. **Correspondence (if any)**
- L. **Board Open Forum** * Action item
- M. **Adjourn**

Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
Minutes (DRAFT)
May 8, 2024

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Edwin “Skip” Williams; **Blaine:** Richard May **Everson:** John Perry
Ferndale: Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chair); **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chair); **Nooksack:**
Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **Whatcom County:** Kaylee Galloway. **WSDOT:**
Chris Damitio, Justin Resnick; **Whatcom Transportation Authority:** Michael Lilliquist
(1st Vice Chair)

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

Others **McBride Public Affairs:** Tom McBride, Intisar Benghe; **Bellingham Regional Chamber
of Commerce:** Guy Occhiogrosso.

A. **Call to Order**

Hugh Conroy determined that there was a quorum, and Chair Korthuis called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

B. **Public Comment**

None

C. **Agenda Additions**

None

D. **Approval of Minutes** of March 13 meeting.

Motion: Mr. Hester moved, second by Mr. Sidhu, to approve the minutes of the meeting of March 13, 2024, as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

E. **Old Business**

None

F. **Consideration for adoption – WCOG’s 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Conroy reviewed the memo explaining the small changes in next (state fiscal) year’s UPWP. There were some questions about the formatting to indicate compliance with new federal requirements to use at least 2.5 percent of federal planning funds to advance safe and accessible transportation improvements. There were no additional questions.

Motion: Mr. Lilliquist moved, seconded by Mr. Hester, to adopt the 2025 UPWP as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G. **Consideration of allocating Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for WCOG to conduct a regional household travel survey**

Mr. Coe reviewed the memo that introduced both the current need to program more of WCOG’s current federal funding obligation authority (OA) in order to avoid sanctions and remain eligible to receive redistributed OA during the summer AND how WCOG’s current need to conduct a household travel survey is an opportunity to conduct important work and help ensure WCOG that funding targets are met and eligibility for additional regional funding remains intact.

There were some questions about why the funds couldn’t be used on infrastructure. Mr. Coe (as well as other policy board members) discussed the reasons (timing, federal funds v. state/local, etc.) and all concerns were sufficiently answered.

Motion: Mr. Sidhu moved, seconded by Mr. Williams, to approve allocation of \$350,000 of regional STBG funds for WCOG to conduct a countywide household travel survey.

H. **Public Hearing: Amendment #3 (24-05) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Mr. Coe presented the requested amendments to the TIP.

Mr. Korthuis opened the public hearing. No members of the public being present, the public hearing was closed.

Motion: Mr. Sidhu moved, seconded by Mr. Williams to approve amendment #3 to WCOG's 2024 TIP. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

I. **Obligation Status Update**

(Mr. Coe covered obligation status as a pertinent introduction to item G)

J. **Director's Report**

Mr. Conroy asked Tom McBride and Intisar Benghe to report on state legislative news. Mr. McBride and Ms. Benghe reviewed the notably high amount of turnover that will occur in the state legislature resulting from both retirements and recent redistricting decisions. McBride and Benghe also noted the unresolved issues of initiatives that will be on the ballot in November.

Mr. Conroy reviewed several items:

- Ongoing planning work with member governments' staff on GMA comprehensive plan updates
- Progress on the border wait-time system replacement planning project
- Recent SmartTrips activities
- Newly awarded FHWA funding for a cross-border personal-vehicle survey
- The possibility that WCOG's regional plan project list will need to be amended to add federally funded (not yet confirmed) rail connection improvements at Port of Bellingham terminals.

K. **Correspondence**

None

L. **Board Open Forum**

None

M. **Adjourn**

4:56

Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved July 10, 2024



Memo

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner
Date: July 10, 2024
Subject: WCOG 2024 TIP Amendment

Amendment #4 (24-07) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following:

1. Remove City of Bellingham project *Meridian-Birchwood Roundabout Phase 2* that is now combining with the phase 1 to create a single project to move forward with.
2. Amend City of Bellingham project *Meridian-Birchwood Roundabout Phase 1* to increase cost estimations and include the scope of work from phase 2. The preliminary engineering, right-of-way and construction cost increased by \$8.2 million and the total project cost is \$15.2 million. The project is funded through regional surface transportation block grant, transportation alternatives, and carbon reduction program.
3. Add Whatcom Council of Governments International Trade and Mobility Corridor (IMTC) project *IMTC Passenger Vehicle Survey 2024-2025* to survey ports of entry over two-week periods during the summer and winter. The project is funded through federal Discretionary and the total cost is \$220,000.
4. Amend Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project *I-5/Baker Creek & Spring Creek – Fish Passage* to update construction cost, total cost and expenditure schedule. The right-of-way and construction costs increased by \$14,476,421 and the total project cost is \$48,921,274. The project is funded through federal National Highway Performance Program and our state’s Moving Ahead Washington and Motor Vehicle Account.
5. Amend WSDOT project *SR 539/Baker Creek - Fish Passage* to update construction cost, total cost and expenditure schedule. The right-of-way and construction costs increased by \$19,551,440 and the total project cost is \$39,386,069. The project is funded through federal National Highway Performance Program and our state’s Moving Ahead Washington and Motor Vehicle Account.

Formal TIP Amendments require review and resolution from the Policy Board to amend the current TIP and make federal funding accessible.

Suggested Policy Board Action

Approve Amendment #4 of the Whatcom Council of Governments 2024 Transportation Improvement Program.

WCOG TIP Amendment #3 (24-07) Table

#	Agency	Project Title	Amended TIP Action	Added Funds	Total Cost	Source
	Bellingham	<i>Meridian-Birchwood Roundabout Phase 2</i>	Remove project	-\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	STBG, TA
	Bellingham	<i>Meridian-Birchwood Roundabout Phase 1</i>	Increase costs and update scope to include phase 2	8,200,000	15,200,000	STBG, TA, CRP
	WCOG - IMTC	International Trade and Mobility Corridor	Add new project	220,000	220,000	Disc.
	WSDOT	<i>I-5/Baker Creek & Spring Creek – Fish Passage</i>	Update program phase costs	14,476,421	48,921,274	NHPP, MVA, MAW
	WSDOT	<i>SR 539/Baker Creek - Fish Passage</i>	Update program phase costs	19,551,440	39,386,069	NHPP, MVA, MAW

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



MEMO

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner
Date: July 3, 2024
Subject: Consider adoption of the Development and Evaluation Process for Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements

Background

As the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the Whatcom County region, the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) Policy Board is required by state law ([RCW 47.80.023](#) Sec. 3) to certify that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties and cities in the region conform with state Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements and are consistent with the RTPO's regional transportation plan.

As part of this requirement, state law ([RCW 47.80.026](#)) requires this document to be developed “with cooperation from component cities, towns, and counties,” to “establish guidelines and principles... that provide specific direction for the development and evaluation of the transportation elements of comprehensive plans.”

Process to develop

WCOG developed the draft's conformity and consistency elements to directly reflect current RCW guidance. A review was provided with the Transportation Technical Advisory Group on May 23rd. The most impactful change since 2016 is the inclusion of HB 1181 climate response bill to emphasize multimodal transportation systems in Growth Management Act planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Notable changes and additions from 2016 include:

- Multimodal Level of Service (MLOS) standards now account for several modes of travel for monitoring performance and impacts of land-use decisions, and replaces the previous vehicular-based Level of Service (LOS) standards
- “Active transportation” replaces “pedestrian and bicycle.”
- Requirement to evaluate regarding Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (i.e. ADA Plan). Many, if not all, jurisdictions have begun or completed.

Suggested Policy Board Action:

Approve the Development and Evaluation Process for Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements



Whatcom Council of Governments
Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)

Development and Evaluation Process for Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements

Introduction

As the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the Whatcom County region, the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) Policy Board is required by state law ([RCW 47.80.023](#) Sec. 3) to certify that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties and cities in the region conform with state Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements and are consistent with the RTPO's regional transportation plan.

As part of this requirement, state law ([RCW 47.80.026](#)) requires this document to be developed “with cooperation from component cities, towns, and counties,” to “establish guidelines and principles... that provide specific direction for the development and evaluation of the transportation elements of comprehensive plans.”

In fulfillment of these duties, this *Development and Evaluation Process for Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements* was adopted by the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board on **[pending Policy Board meeting July 10th]**

Development of comprehensive plan transportation elements

Whatcom County and its cities planning under GMA will update transportation elements of their comprehensive plans in accordance with [RCW 36.70A.070](#) (Comprehensive plans – Mandatory elements) Section 6 (Transportation element). As such, plans should be consistent with the adopted RTPO plan and include assessments of consistency with the transportation systems and strategies of adjacent governments and jurisdictions per geography (e.g. Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe, Skagit County, and the province of British Columbia).

Evaluation of comprehensive plan transportation elements

This section introduces the process and checklist that WCOG uses to evaluate and certify that comprehensive plan transportation elements conform with state requirements and are consistent with the currently adopted regional transportation plan.

Process & timeline

WCOG will complete its certification review in the following sequence.

Review and certification steps
<p>1) Staff review: WCOG requests that jurisdictions provide a draft of updated comprehensive plans (at least the transportation element, the land-use element, and associated appendices such as project lists and financial data) 60 days prior to the anticipated adoption date or sooner. Using the transportation element checklist (following section), WCOG staff will complete a preliminary review of each jurisdiction’s transportation element. Any issues will be noted on the checklist form and be reported back to individual jurisdictions for clarification and possible changes.</p>
<p>2) Staff report and TTAG review: Following any changes to preliminary reviews or to transportation elements, WCOG staff will compile a summary report, noting any continuing needs for coordinated attention. This preliminary report will be submitted to the Whatcom Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) for its review, possible modification, and approval. With a finalized report, TTAG will make a recommendation to the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB) regarding certification of regional transportation elements.</p>
<p>3) Jurisdictions adopt updated comprehensive plans: If, during the process of adoption, any jurisdictions make substantive changes to the previously reviewed versions, WCOG staff will update the summary report and re-finalize the document with the TTAG. This would likely push out the date of plan certifications by the policy board.</p>
<p>4) Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB) review and action on certification: Following adoption of comprehensive plans by jurisdictions and having received the report and recommendation from TTAG & WCOG staff, the WTPB will consider and decide whether or not to certify the individual transportation elements .</p>
<p>5) Certification letters: Following action by the WTPB, a confirmation letter will be sent to each jurisdiction.</p>

Findings of nonconformity or inconsistency

If the WTBP finds that a jurisdiction’s transportation element is nonconforming with state requirements or inconsistent with the regional transportation plan, the WTPB will, at the jurisdiction’s written request, undertake discussions amongst itself or an appointed WTPB subcommittee to resolve the subject issues in a manner that will allow the transportation element to be certified.

Certification of amendments

Transportation elements will require re-certification if they are substantively amended and when they are next updated.

Certification checklist

The checklists below will be used to conduct and document the certification of the two, overarching objectives of certification: conformity with the GMA transportation element content requirements and consistency with the adopted regional transportation plan. All checklist items are followed by a notes section for recording things like page citations and short explanations of conclusions.

Jurisdiction: [name]

Conformity items

1. The comprehensive plan's transportation element is consistent with the land use element.

Item 1 notes:

2. Land use assumptions used in estimating travel.

Item 2 notes:

3. The transportation element estimates multimodal level of service impacts to state-owned facilities resulting from land use assumptions to assist in monitoring performance of state facilities, to plan improvements for the facilities, and to assess the impact of land-use decisions on state-owned transportation facilities.

Item 3 notes:

4. The transportation element identifies facilities and service needs.
 - a. Includes an inventory of existing capital facilities and travel levels as a basis for planning including:
 - i. Air (including general aviation airport facilities)
 - ii. Marine
 - iii. Ground transportation (including transit)
 - iv. State-owned transportation facilities within the subject jurisdictional boundaries.

Item 4a notes:

- b. Includes multimodal level of service standards for all locally owned arterials, locally and regionally operated transit routes that serve urban growth areas, and active transportation facilities to serve as a gauge to judge performance of the system and advancing the goals of the chapter consistent with environmental justice. These standards should be regionally coordinated.

Item 4b notes:

- c. Include multimodal level of service standards for state highways, as prescribed in RCW chapters 47.06 and 47.80, to gauge the performance of the system. The purposes of reflecting the multimodal level of service standards for state highways in the local comprehensive plan are to monitor the performance of the system, to evaluate improvement strategies, and facilitate coordination between the county's and cities' six-year street, road, active transportation or transit program and the office of financial management's ten-year investment program

Item 4c notes:

- d. Includes actions and requirements for bringing into compliance transportation facilities or services that are below an established multimodal level of service standard.

Item 4d notes:

- e. Includes forecasts of multimodal transportation demand needs within and outside of cities and urban growth areas, for at least ten years, that balances transportation system safety and convenience to accommodate all users as well as safely, reliably, and efficiently provide access and mobility to people and goods. Priority should be given to the inclusion of transportation facilities and services providing greatest multimodal safety benefit to each category of roadway user for the context and speed of the facility.

Item 4e notes:

- f. Identifies state and local system needs to equitably meet current and future demand. Describes how identified needs on state owned facilities are consistent with the statewide multimodal transportation plan. Local system needs should reflect the regional transportation system and local goals, and strive to equitably implement the multimodal network.

Item 4f notes:

- g. A transition plan to evaluate facilities relative to the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (i.e. ADA Plan)
 - i. Identify obstacles that limit the accessibility of facilities to individuals with disabilities;
 - ii. Describe the methods to be used to make the facilities accessible;
 - iii. Provide a schedule for making the access modifications
 - iv. Identify the public officials responsible for implementation of the transition plan.

Item 4g notes:

5. Finance

- a. Includes an analysis of the capability to fund identified needs.
- b. Includes a multiyear financing plan based on the needs identified in the comprehensive plan and is coordinated with the ten-year investment program developed by the office of financial management.
 - i. (If expected funding is less than the estimated cost of needed investments) A discussion of how revenue will be raised or land use assumptions will be reassessed to ensure that level-of-service standards are met.

Item 5 notes:

6. (Intergovernmental coordination) Includes an assessment of how the transportation plan and land use assumptions impact transportation systems of adjacent jurisdictions.

Item 6 notes:

7. Includes a discussion of demand management strategies.

Item 7 notes:

8. An active transportation component that describes collaborative efforts to plan improvements for active transportation facilities and corridors enhance community access and promote healthy lifestyles.

Item 8 notes:

Consistency items

This checklist will be used to assess consistency between each jurisdiction's transportation element and the adopted regional (RTPO) transportation plan.

1. Consistent land use assumptions

Notes:

2. Consistent portrayal of transportation system components (facilities, modes, and services that are part of the identified regional system/network)

Notes:

3. Consistent multimodal level-of-service measures for both local arterials and state-owned facilities.

Notes:

4. Consistent travel demand forecasts for jurisdiction's portion of the regionally significant system.

Notes:

5. Consistency with regional travel demand management strategies.

Notes:

6. Consistent portrayal of funding capabilities for regionally significant projects.

Notes:

7. Consistent identification of future projects.

Notes: