



# CTAG

citizens' transportation advisory group

It matters how we get there

Meeting Summary  
March 13, 2018

## Attendees:

Bob Hendricks	Bellingham / WTA Gold Card holder
Bruce Prior	Blaine Public Works Advisory Committee
Chris Comeau	City of Bellingham Public Works staff
Hugh Conroy	WCOG staff
Izaak Post	Happy Valley Neighborhood (Bellingham)
Jaymes McClain	WCOG staff
Jillian Trinkaus	WWU / Columbia Neighborhood (Bellingham)
Mathew Santos	Bellingham Technical College
Stoney Bird	York Neighborhood (Bellingham)
Terry Terry	Lummi Island
Kathy Berg	Birch Bay
Terri Hansen	The Arc of Whatcom County
Carol Berry	Western Washington University (WWU)
Rick Nicholson	WTA staff
Maureen McCarthy	WTA staff
Mel Hansen	Ferndale
Mark Robbins	Pt. Roberts
Nancy Ging	Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC)
Roland Middleton	Whatcom County staff
Bob Wilson	WCOG staff
Myron Wlaznak	Silver Beach
Carole MacDonald	Bellingham

## Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group

### **Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC) – plan update: *Nancy Ging, LIFAC***

Nancy Ging reviewed the recent work of the Lummi Island Ferry Advisory Committee (LIFAC). LIFAC started in 2012 and they provide review and recommendations to the Whatcom County Council regarding the Lummi Island ferry. They are currently trying to develop a level-of-service (LOS) for the Lummi



Island ferry, look at options to replace the Whatcom Chief ferry vessel, and look at options to improve the Gooseberry Point ferry dock.

In November of 2017 LIFAC had their first community-wide meeting where they handed out a questionnaire and discussed priorities regarding the ferry. The committee has met with a consultant to discuss design specifications for the Gooseberry Point ferry dock. They released a second questionnaire regarding demographics, and over 200 people responded. Tomorrow will be the first public meeting that the consultants will run, where they will review their draft design. Cost will be discussed at a later meeting, after which the necessary recommendations will be made to the Whatcom County Council.

Roland Middleton explained that if the County passes a resolution changing the Lummi Ferry LOS, the Whatcom County comprehensive plan will have to be amended. They are looking to change the LOS from number of trips divided by population to an LOS based on wait-time for the ferry. They have observed as many as 140 vehicles using the ferry in a 3-hour peak period. Mr. Middleton explained that they are trying to get this done by July, before the next budget is developed.

Nancy Ging reported that ferry traffic is increasing outside of just the month of August. The Willows restaurant attracts travelers throughout the year. It is hard for island residents to walk across the ferry and take the bus, especially for grocery shopping or appointments. There is no enclosed waiting area on the Gosseberry Point side. Frequent riders can get a punch card that gives them a reduced cost to use the ferry.

## Policy Board Update

Hugh Conroy said that the Surface Transportation Block Grant program [STBG] project funding statuses will be presented. This year the WCOG region is exceeding its obligation target. Several projects will be added to Transportation Improvement Plan [TIP]: rail crossing projects in Fairhaven, an International Mobility and Trade Corridor program [IMTC] border survey this summer, paratransit buses for the Whatcom Transportation Authority [WTA], and a bridge overlay over Squalicum Creek.

Bob Wilson announced that the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board will be recognizing Kathy Berg for her 10 years of service as Chair of CTAG.

## Additional Items

Hugh Conroy reported that a TTAG sub-group interviewed two consultant candidates, RSG and Westat, to complete the 2018 Whatcom County Household Travel Survey. The group selected RSG, which has completed similar projects recently in the Puget Sound area. RSG uses a smart-phone-based trip tracking app as their main data collection tool. Hugh Conroy explained that they will try to avail the app to board members and TTAG and CTAG members for them to get a sense of the survey methodology.



Terri Hansen suggested a better solution for individuals with mobility devices to access meetings in buildings such as the Champion Building, where WCOG is located. The paratransit bus will drop her off in the alley or across the street, where space permits. Ms. Hansen explained that it would be beneficial to have designated areas for specialized transit to drop off riders, which may increase involvement from individuals with disabilities.

## Whatcom Transportation Authority Community Advisory Panel

### **Presentation and discussion on the Housing Coalition:** *Rose Lathrop of Sustainable Connections*

Rose Lathrop of Sustainable Connections recounted her housing story. She started in housing development before moving on to Sustainable Connections. Sustainable Connections is about 16 years old. In 2008, they formed a coalition for Smart Growth initiatives. They launched a successful Whatcom Housing Week last year, which highlights innovative housing options in Whatcom County.

Ms. Lathrop recommended the [Bellingham Housing Statistics](#) story map for data on housing in the city.

Sustainable Connects uses the City of Bellingham's [Infill Housing Toolkit](#) to help develop multifamily housing within the city. They are limited to specific areas because most of Bellingham is zoned for single-family housing. Their first project using the infill toolkit was the Peabody Street Townhomes. Each townhome includes an accessory dwelling unit [ADU] and a garage.

Maureen McCarthy suggested at a future meeting there could be more discussion on infill housing, other housing issues, and how they relate to transit.

Bob Henderson commented that there is a group called Bellingham At Home, a part of the Whatcom Council on Aging. They advocate for older adults remaining active in the community and self-reliantly residing in their own homes.

### **Special Meeting in 2018**

Maureen McCarthy opened up for discussion content for a special meeting in 2018. Previous ideas offered include touring the WTA headquarters and having a joint meeting with Skagit Transit's Community Advisory Committee. There could be an electric bus at the WTA headquarters in August if members are interested in touring it, Ms. McCarthy said.

Carol Berry expressed concerns about staff time for any meetings in addition to the special meeting. There was consensus agreement that one special meeting in 2018 is enough.



After discussion, the group agreed that a meeting on a weekday afternoon in August would work best. Rick Nicholson noted that bus service to the WTA headquarters is very infrequent, however passenger vans may be available to shuttle people to the meeting.

## Update on the 7th Grade Bus Program

Maureen McCarthy reviewed the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Bus Program that is managed by Whatcom Smart Trips. WTA will be giving 92-day bus passes to 1,700 7<sup>th</sup> graders (with parent approval) in Whatcom County and Smart Trips staff will provide education to the 7<sup>th</sup> graders over the course of a 9-day campaign. For each participating middle school, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students will have a half hour class session with Smart Trips staff, who will go over how to use the bus in Whatcom County. Students also get to tour a WTA bus at the school and receive insight from a bus driver. The school that records the most bus trips from its 7<sup>th</sup> graders will get a banner of their success on the side of a WTA bus.

## WTA Updates

Rick Nicholson reviewed some of WTA's upcoming service changes. WTA is moving towards a more formal planning cycle where every 2 years they complete a major service change and in the between years they will do minor tweaking to existing services.

Routes 232 and 331 (which are Green and Gold GO routes, respectively) connect both the downtown and Cordata stations and are heavily utilized. WTA is proposing to expand the frequency of these routes on Saturdays, making them GO lines on Saturday during peak travel times. This would be the first time they are expanding GO lines to a weekend day outside of routes through Western Washington University [WWU].

On April 19<sup>th</sup> Mr. Nicholson said they will hold a public board meeting where changes will be discussed. The next large service change will be in June of 2019, and the planning for that is starting now. There should be revenue enough for more service.

WTA is also expecting to reapply for a grant for the pilot Route 65, which connects the northern cities in the county without stopping in Bellingham. They may change the route to be more efficient because the current route and schedule is experiencing less boardings than expected.

## Additional Items

Izaak Post announced that there will be a Walk Bike Bus Bellingham meeting on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm at ReSources Library. The group meets monthly, typically Thursday at the end of the month.