



Meeting Summary
October 8, 2019

Attendees:

Stoney Bird	Bellingham
Jewell Hamilton	Bellingham
Bob Hendricks	Bellingham / WTA Gold Card holder
Kathy Berg	Birch Bay
Bruce Prior	Blaine Public Works Advisory Committee
Terry Terry	Lummi Island
Mark Robbins	Pt. Roberts
Myron Wlaznak	Silver Beach
Doug Dahl	Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC)
Jillian Trinkaus	Western Washington University (WWU) / Bellingham

Technical Advisement:

Chris Comeau	Bellingham (City of) Public Works
Hugh Conroy	Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)
Jaymes McClain	WCOG
Bob Wilson	WCOG
Maureen McCarthy	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
Shonda Shipman	WTA
Tim Wilder	WTA

Draft WCOG Combined Title VI & Limited English Proficiency Plan

Bob Wilson: The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is required to have a Title VI plan as a way to certify that WCOG does not discriminate based on race, color, sex, or national origin. The plan has not been updated in several years. The Council Board approved an update to the 2013 Title VI plan in May with the assumption that a new plan will be brought to them in December. The new Title VI plan also includes a Limited English Proficiency plan (LEP) and will be put out to the public before it goes to the board. This plan will be updated every 3 years as mandated by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), but it can be updated more frequently if need be.



Bob Hendricks: It would be helpful if the announcements on the bus were slower to help riders whose primary language is not English.

Tim Wilder: The announcements are part of WTA's Smart Bus system, which is not yet fully rolled out. The systems are still being tested and feedback is welcome during this period.

Jewell Hamilton: Ms. Hamilton recently noticed the Smart Bus technology and appreciates the reader board.

Tim Wilder: WTA can give a Smart Bus presentation at the next CTAG/CAP meeting to update the group on the upcoming changes.

July Ultra High Speed Ground Transportation business case (quick overview)

Hugh Conroy: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) recently gave a presentation to the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) regarding a pre-analysis report of their Ultra High Speed Ground Transportation (UHS GT) project. The WSDOT business case was completed in July. The project would connect the Vancouver-Seattle-Portland "Cascadia Megaregion". WSDOT used output from travel demand models in the region and conducted a preliminary survey in developing the business case.

Bruce Prior: How would border inspection formalities work?

Hugh Conroy: A pre-clearance agreement has been approved by the U.S. and Canada, and by the time this project would come into fruition it would be anticipated that the UHS GT would not stop at the border.

Julian Trinkaus: How does housing equity factor into the plan?

Hugh Conroy: Throughout the plan, WSDOT emphasizes the connection to affordable housing and employment at major city centers.

Hugh Conroy: In a best case scenario the project would be completed in 16 years, though it would likely take much longer. There are different scenarios for where stops would be located, with the main stops being Vancouver, Seattle/Bellevue, and Portland. Scenarios describe the corridor having a main "Transportation Spine," with other modes connecting cities and populations to the main UHS GT transportation corridor.

Washington Traffic Safety Commission impaired driving study – Doug Dahl

Mr. Dahl, Target Zero Manager for the Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC), gave a Target Zero presentation on Washington State's traffic safety culture as it relates to cannabis and alcohol use.

Highlighted data from the presentation:



- Alcohol and drug impaired driving is the leading contributing factor for fatal crashes in Washington
- In a quarter of crashes in the state, poly-drug use is a factor
- Cannabis use by adults (age 18+) in Washington has increased by 85 percent from 2008 to 2017
- Weekend, nighttime drivers testing positive for THC increased by 50 percent from 2007 to 2014
- [870-participant statewide survey](#) conducted by the Montana State University Center for Health and Safety Culture shows attitudes towards alcohol and cannabis use and driving

WTA draft 2020 budget

Shonda Shipman: Revenues for 2019 are currently on target. Expenses are under budget and capital projects are on target, including the Smart Bus project and the Midway Ln lot project. The lot will have 12 charging stations for electric buses.

WTA is budgeting for 2020 as if I-976 will be passed. [I-976](#), if passed, would “repeal authorization for certain regional transit authorities, such as Sound Transit, to impose motor vehicle excise taxes.”

The draft budget reflects the expectation that wages and benefits will increase for employees and insurance costs will increase. Fuel expenses are projected to decrease. Currently 13 buses run on propane, with 9 more expected to be added in 2020.

There are no significant service changes planned for 2020.

Recommended changes to WTA fares

Tim Wilder: The last major fare adjustment was in 2009 when the basic fare went up from \$0.75 to \$1. The current fixed route fare recovery ratio is 11.6 percent, which is down from 17.2 percent in 2012. WTA’s average fare per boarding, \$0.56, is the lowest among bus operators in nearby regions. Other regional these operators average \$0.86 per boarding.

Phase I of a Fare Study is to be completed by December 2019. WTA will review cash fares and the proposed policy of providing free boardings to youths 18 and younger. Phase II will set policy goals and start a 2020 project.

There will be a community meeting on October 16 and public hearings on November 21 and December 4. WTA is currently doing stakeholder outreach and the public comment period is open.

WTA long range plan

Tim Wilder: WTA is putting out a request for proposals (RFP) and plans to select a consultant by December for a WTA Long Range Plan. Historically, WTA planning has been more strategically-based and short-term.



Agenda Items for next meeting

Stoney Bird: Mr. Bird suggested an overview of transit ridership for next meeting.

Bob Hendricks: Mr. Hendricks suggested discussing a Gold Card advocacy survey or campaign for next meeting.

Tim Wilder: WTA's Smart Bus project and Long Range Plan will be discussed at the next CTAG meeting.