



Meeting Summary

Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Group [TTAG]

Thursday, September 20, 2018 10:00 – 12:00

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

Attendees:

Chris Comeau	City of Bellingham Public Works
Ravyn Whitewolf	City of Blaine
Tom Stacey	Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]
Mike Hogan	Port of Bellingham
Hugh Conroy	Whatcom Council of Governments
Ron Cubellis	Whatcom Council of Governments
Joe Rutan	Whatcom County Public Works
Bob Wilson	Whatcom Council of Governments
John Shambaugh	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Jim Karcher	Whatcom County Public Works
Rollin Harper	Cities of: Everson, Nooksack, & Sumas

Member Updates

Port of Bellingham: Mike Hogan noted the Washington Joint Transportation Committee (WA legislative committee) is visiting Whatcom County on October 11 and visiting some Port and City of Bellingham facility and project locations.

Everson, Nooksack, Sumas: Rollin Harper reviewed several projects. Lincoln St II is ready for paving. Lincoln St. I is a little behind – paving in early November. Obligation for funds added in last cycle has been submitted. Other projects are in design.

Blaine: Ravyn Whitewolf noted that Blaine is seeking feedback from FHWA in DC regarding viability of a partial interchange design at exit 274. They are also starting conversations with the federal delegation about possible funding opportunities for that project since the need is largely a result of Homeland Security VACIS operations on the rail line.

Other project updates from Ravyn included Hughes Avenue – construction pushed to March; Boblett Street – design has started.

Bellingham: Chris Comeau reviewed numerous projects. Safe Routes to School at Aldrich is obligating right now. F St. railroad crossing prospectus and local-agency agreement is under review at WSDOT. Orchard St. is obligating for right-of-way and is anticipated for ad in early 2019. State St & Ellis bridge replacement is at 60 percent design and anticipated for a Q1 2019 start. West Horton Rd. is in design. And a few others...

Chris added that Mahogany Ave. is about complete – maybe by third week of October. This project was one affected by the regional crane workers’ strike.

Whatcom County: Joe Rutan reviewed several projects. The Whatcom Ferry has had a lot of steel and bolt replacements. Hannegan & 10 Mile bridge is having girders set today (ahead of schedule). High Creek has been dredged and armored. Swift Creek is also being dredged (tricky because of naturally occurring asbestos which remains on location). Roberts Rd. Bridge is experiencing a contractor delay.

Jim Karcher also reviewed several county projects. Birch Bay Pedestrian berm is nearing completed permitting and expecting a 2019 construction start. E. Smith & Hannegan is narrowing alternatives (roundabout and signal options) with a final selection going before Council. Marine Drive is in design. The county-wide guard-rail HSIP project is at 60 percent design (25 sites). And a few others...

WCOG: Bob Wilson also mentioned the upcoming JTC visit and WCOG and Bellingham’s role in some of that program. Bob also gave an update on the Kendall Pedestrian and Bike Safety Trail project which received funding for 30 percent design.

WSDOT: Tom Stacey reminded the group of the transportation peer exchange in Anacortes next week.

Obligation status update

Hugh Conroy showed WCOG’s current spreadsheet summary of project funding obligation status. Lethal Coe at WCOG has been working with jurisdictions to keep up-to-date and move projects into the most optimal year for needed funding availability.

Related to obligation status was the question of whether the next call for STBG & TA project funding should be a 2-year call for FFYs 23-24 (as is typical) or a three-year call for FFYs 23-25. Because our region is ahead project obligation this year, the total funding available would be around \$3.6 million (STBG) rather than around \$5 million. A 3-year call would avail around \$6.1 million.

The group discussed various pros and cons. There was not a strong preference. Additional feedback from the Cities of Ferndale and Lynden was desired. Consensus was that we should keep discussing a bit more, seek the additional input, and all things equal, the default is a 2-year call in June.

WSDOT – I-5 Operations and Demand Management Study

Tom Stacey gave an overview of this study that is getting underway with outreach to stakeholders including TTAG. Tom reviewed the motivation for the work, the envisioned scope and timeline, intended emphasis on operations-based responses, and a variety of traffic-volume, safety/crash, and trip O-D

route data (StreetLight data). Tom showed visualization of these data and analyses. The slides were shared after the meeting for those who would like a copy.

After remaining stakeholder meetings, a multi-modal stakeholder meeting will be convened in December to initiate phase I of the project. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of June, 2019.

Household Travel Survey update

Hugh Conroy showed and reviewed a summary of the schedule for the Household travel survey. Mailed invitations have been going out this week. Hugh urged the group to participate if invited and encourage friends and colleagues to do the same.

Other WCOG updates

Hugh gave updates on the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP), recent regional applications to WSDOT's Consolidated Grant Program, the IMTC Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey, and some facility expansion planning being undertaken by U.S. Customs and Border Protection with likely future impacts for the Pacific Highway border crossing and the City of Sumas.