



Meeting Summary

Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Group [TTAG]

Thursday, January 31, 2019 10:00 - 12:00

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

Attendees:

Chris Comeau	Bellingham Public Works (City of)
Ravyn Whitewolf	Blaine (City of)
Rollin Harper	Everson, Nooksack, & Sumas (Cities of)
Cheryl Johnson	Lummi Transit
John Shambaugh	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Hugh Conroy	Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)
Jaymes McClain	Whatcom Council of Governments
Lethal Coe	Whatcom Council of Governments
Bob Wilson	Whatcom Council of Governments
Dave Hower	Whatcom County Public Works
Joe Rutan	Whatcom County Public Works
Mike Donahue	Whatcom County Public Works
Becky Kelly	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)

Member Updates

Bob Wilson: Mr. Wilson has discussed with Whatcom County Executive Jack Louws and Whatcom County Public Works Engineer Joe Rutan developing a more proactive and analytical approach to regional funding requests, with WCOG taking a leading role. A white paper will be drafted to outline the approach. This would support WSDOT’s M3 (multi-agency, multidisciplinary, multimodal) exercise.

Joe Rutan: Cities along the I-5 corridor are struggling with growth issues. The case is being made that WSDOT should consider that the local street network (non-state owned) needs to be improved around I-5 because I-5 is used often times as a local route.

Joe Rutan: The late December wind storm damaged infrastructure in Birch Bay, including pavement damage on Birch Bay Dr. County crews are repairing the existing Birch Bay berm. The hope is to reopen Birch Bay Dr in April to both directions of traffic until the construction of the new berm, scheduled for the fall.

Becky Kelly: The WTA Board has approved operational changes for 2019, including 5,000 revenue hours to be added in June.

Chris Comeau: Right of way acquisition for the Orchard Dr extension project is nearly finished and the City of Bellingham is going to bid in October.

The N State St-Ellis St bridge reconstruction will be delayed due to permitting and the federal government shutdown.

The City did not receive a Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant last year for the Telegraph Rd project, so the City is figuring out how to fund the project with local money.

The City is designing bicycle-pedestrian improvements for this year.

The City is also conducting feasibility studies, looking at traffic light and roundabout options on James St from Orchard Dr to E Kellogg Rd and a roundabout on Meridian St near Cornwall park.

Ravyn Whitewolf: The City of Blaine's Hughes Ave project will be starting in March.

Semiahmoo Pkwy was underwater during the late December wind storm – the City has done emergency repair on the roadway. The City is trying to get FEMA funding to help repair damaged infrastructure from the storm.

Cheryl Johnson: Crews have run into issues with titles while working on the Kwina Rd and Lummi Shore sidewalk improvement projects in Lummi Nation.

A new clinic is being planned on Kwina Rd – development would include a new grocery store and housing.

Lummi Transit is trying out bus tracking that can be synced with an app that customers and staff can use. The software would provide data on where and when people are using the bus and help Lummi Transit better plan routes and stop times.

Rollin Harper: Road paving for the City of Everson's Lincoln St phase 1 and 2 projects was completed last year and Lincoln St is now open.

The City of Everson is annexing 100 acres of land on the west side of the city. A section of state highway would come into city limits.

There is freeze-thaw damage on Sumas and Everson roadways for which FEMA funding will go towards. Newly developed FEMA maps show the City of Sumas in a floodway, which would halt development in the city if not corrected.

Lethal Coe: The Whatcom County Policy Board will have a discussion on culverts and fish passage – high priority fish passages are on the local system and outside of WSDOT's network. Discussion will focus on coordinating all city and county passages of importance, address their condition and need for improvement/repair, and consolidate the planning.

The 2018 Whatcom County Household Travel Survey results are being availed this month. The data will be used in part to update the WCOG travel demand model.

Jaymes McClain: The winter phase of the 2018-19 IMTC Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey will begin in February. Student research assistants from Western Washington University will intercept passenger vehicles at the Whatcom County-British Columbia border and conduct questionnaires, gathering data on cross-border trips through the Cascade Gateway.

Obligation Status for 2019

Lethal Coe: In 2018 the region obligated \$2M over the obligation target. For 2019, the current obligation target of \$1.25M is nearly met by already planned obligations for the year. Those projects are the City of Bellingham’s Orchard Dr Extension and the City of Everson’s Lincoln St Improvements phases 1 and 2.

STBG and TA 2019 call for projects

Lethal Coe: The preliminary schedule for the 2019 Call for Projects is set:

Action	Date
Call for Projects	March 14
Applications Due to WCOG	May 9
TTAG Meeting: Presentations	May 23
Preliminary Scores Due to WCOG	June 20
TTAG Meeting: Final Project Scoring	June 27
Policy Board Meeting to Finalize Selection	July 10

Ravyn Whitewolf: In 2018, the City of Blaine’s population rose above the threshold for small cities and will now be competing with Bellingham and Whatcom County for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds. Can the population threshold be adjusted for the upcoming call for projects?

Bob Wilson: Blaine Councilmember Bonnie Onyon could bring up the issue in the next Whatcom Transportation Policy Board meeting.

Updates to Whatcom regional/metropolitan long-range transportation plan

Hugh Conroy: WCOG staff recommend that planners in the region review the Whatcom Mobility 2040 regional transportation plan project list and see if there are any needed adjustments to existing projects or additions to the list.

Lethal Coe: The projects that go on the regional transportation plan project list do not necessarily need to be fiscally constrained.

Update on I-5 Operations and Demand Management Study

John Shambaugh: Washington State has initiated a transportation study on I-5 through Bellingham (Samish Way through Bakerview Rd) as part of the Corridor Sketch Initiative. Multi-agency, multidisciplinary, and multimodal (M3) team meetings are being organized with stakeholder participants from around the region. The State is looking for multimodal planning solutions from this region's participating agencies, which include Bellingham, Ferndale, WTA, Port of Bellingham, Lummi Nation, Whatcom County, WCOG, and FHWA.

There were 25 people at the last meeting. The next meetings will occur March 1 and May 3.

2019 Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) reporting for WSDOT

Lethal Coe: WCOG is Looking to contract traffic counters for this spring to gather freight traffic data for the 2019 WSDOT Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) update. WCOG will look to collect data on city roads – state highways traffic counts are collected through WSDOT and County routes are collected through the Washington State County Road Administration Board (CRAB).

Peace Arch-Douglas – Pacific Highway cross border traffic study

Jaymes McClain: WCOG staff began work on a project titled Dynamic Border Management for the International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) in 2014. One element of the project is the development of a border environment simulation model. The model is fed by traffic and operational data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), and border loop detector data provided by WSDOT and the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BC MoTI). Using this model, staff can run different border operational, traffic, or policy-oriented scenarios.

In 2018, WCOG developed simulated scenarios for planned improvements to the Pacific Highway border crossing environment. The scenarios are the expansion of primary inspection booths at CBP's facility and a decrease in primary inspection booths at CBSA's facility due to port construction. Staff analyzed model outputs that show the estimated effects on border wait-times and traffic throughput. The report is being finalized for CBP and CBSA approval.