



Meeting Summary

Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Group [TTAG]

Thursday, February 28, 2019 10:00 – 12:00

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

Attendees:

Chad Schulhauser	Bellingham Public Works (City of)
Ravyn Whitewolf	Blaine (City of)
Rollin Harper	Everson, Nooksack, & Sumas (Cities of)
Kevin Renz	Ferndale (City of)
Cheryl Johnson	Lummi Transit
Mark Sandal	Lynden (City of)
John Schambaugh	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
Joe Rutan	Whatcom County Public Works
Rick Nicholson	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
Tim Wilder	Whatcom Transportation Authority

Member Updates

Mark Sandal: Riverview Rd in Lynden is paved and waiting for striping. The City of Lynden also finished the Jim Kaemingk Sr trail project.

John Schambaugh: The M3 meeting tomorrow is canceled and will be rescheduled.

Rick Nicholson: The City of Bellingham, Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), and Western Washington University (WWU) had coordinated their efforts on a grant for the Lincoln Creek park and ride, however the application was unsuccessful. WWU is still pushing the project forward looking for other funding sources and plan to go to construction no later than 2020.

Mr. Nicholson is retiring. Tim Wilder will be the new WTA Director of Service Development.

WTA owns property south of its maintenance lot. Over the next year WTA will be designing the property for electric bus charging and storage using their recently awarded electric bus grant.

The WTA Board approved service changes, which will occur in June. One of the main changes is adjusting routes to help better address food deserts in the county.

Chad Schulhauser: The City of Bellingham's Orchard Dr extension project is in the middle of right-of-way acquisition. The City plans to obligate the project by late summer or early fall. The City will go to bid in 2020 for the N State St-Ellis St bridge project.

Tim Wilder: Mr. Wilder introduced himself as the new WTA Director of Service Development. He has 6 years of experience in transit industry.

Kevin Rentz: The City of Ferndale finished up its Washington St project. Staff are going through property acquisition for a Horton Rd project, after which the project will go to bid. Construction is not anticipated to start for a couple of years.

Cheryl Johnson: Lummi Nation applied for a grant for bus tracking devices. The application was unsuccessful, so Lummi Nation is looking for other funding options. Staff have tested the devices in a pilot and they worked well in tracking movements of buses and monitoring on-time performance. Lummi Nation are also using Federal Transit Authority (FTA) funds for a new bus and ADA van.

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

Jaymes McClain: The International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program's (IMTC) Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey is currently underway. Student research assistants from Western Washington University (WWU) are interviewing cross-border motorists roadside at Whatcom County-British Columbia ports of entry, gathering data on cross-border travel characteristics through the Cascade Gateway. Data collection will wrap up in early March, after which a database will be organized and eventually availed to interested agencies.

Hugh Conroy: WCOG has received funding from Transport Canada for the IMTC passenger vehicle survey.

Hugh Conroy: The Whatcom Transportation Policy Board has approved WCOG's aligning of its performance measures with the State's measures in accordance with MAP-21 guidelines. WCOG is still following State's Target Zero strategy for safety. Staff will still look at the State's crash history and package 5 years of accident history in geographic areas surrounding proposed projects for the STBG/TA application process.

The IMTC has developed a communications protocol for border incident management, and IMTC member agencies are planning a tabletop exercise on March 21 at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Peace Arch facility.

Bob Wilson: There is an opportunity for local jurisdictions to submit requests for the spending package that would accompany a transportation revenue package being debated currently in the capital. There are no forms to fill out, as there would be for member requests for the transportation budget every few years. The project name, its cost, and a brief description are what is required to be put on this unconstrained list.

STBG 2019 call for projects

Lethal Coe: Funding for this round of Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Transportation Alternatives (TA) totals about \$6MM.

Funds	Urban	Rural	Anywhere	Total
STBG	\$3,700,000*	770,000*	1,000,000	5,470,000
TA	255,000	90,000	255,000	600,000

STBG and TA applications

Rollin Harper: Mr. Harper suggested a quick turnaround for applications to be sent back to TTAG members so that they can have questions ready in time for the project presentations.

Cheryl Johnson: How are the project criteria ranked and prioritized?

Hugh Conroy: Each criterion is based on the goals taken from each jurisdiction's comprehensive plan transportation element. The more recurrent the goal is in all plans, the greater the weight to the associated criterion.

Rollin Harper: In the "Evaluation" section for the Transportation Alternatives application, Mr. Harper suggested to add that projects be scored "...based on conformance with federal TA program guidance."

Timeline

Key Dates	
Call for Projects	March 14
Applications due to WCOG	May 9
TTAG Presentations	May 23
Preliminary scores due to WCOG	June 20
TTAG Scoring for Policy Board	June 27
Policy Board Final Decision	July 10

Additional Highway Infrastructure funds to Washington MPOs from last year's federal omnibus bill.

Hugh Conroy: There are funds leftover from last year's omnibus bill that is being availed to the region: \$450k total, which is split up into \$380k for urban and \$70k for rural. The idea is to put the \$380k of urban towards Whatcom County's Birch Bay berm project, which last go around had funds transferred from it to a project in Everson.

Lethal Coe: The deadline to obligate is September 2021. The funds can only be used for roads and bridges. This will not count towards the region's obligation target.

The TTAG group agreed with allocating the \$380k towards the Birch Bay berm project. The rural portion of funding will be prioritized as part of the call for projects.

Status update: Current draft list of proposed changes and additions to the Whatcom regional/metropolitan long range transportation plan project list. (A final list of proposed updates is envisioned for Policy Board consideration in May)

Lethal Coe: The idea is to add new projects to the long-range project list and adjust the projects (for example descriptions of scopes, dates, cost) that are already on there. The final list will be brought to Policy Board for consideration in May.

Joe Rutan: There are projects on there that the County needs to review.

Update and discussion: Initial work on supporting regional coordination on fish passageway projects.

Lethal Coe: On March 5 there is a culvert coordinating meeting for Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 1, which is the Nooksack River basin. The group will list culverts that are in development or were recently completed. The City of Bellingham has developed an online mapping guide for culvert project locations.

Household Travel Survey nearly complete

Remaining Schedule	
Draft Dataset and Documentation	Delivered (2/18)
Draft Report and Appendices	Today
Feedback Deadline	March 18
RSG Final Deliverables	March 29
On-Call Support	March 29 – April 30

Lethal Coe: The data was split into two main subregions: Bellingham and the rest of Whatcom County.

Rick Nicholson: Can Western students be parsed out in the data, especially as it relates to transit?

Lethal Coe: Yes, college students and mode of travel are identified in the data.

Tim Wilder: Are secondary trips outlined?

Lethal Coe: Most of the analysis looks at the primary trips that are made, but WCOG will look through the data.

Travel demand model update

Lethal Coe: WCOG is looking to update the regional travel demand model by the end of 2019. Elements that need updating include transportation analysis zone (TAZ) geography, demographics, transit and road networks, external activities, and traffic count validation. The household travel survey will help inform model calibration.

Rick Nicholson: Would “transit improvements” be developing an estimated future bus route network?

Lethal Coe: WCOG will calibrate transit to the current road network. For forecasting, WCOG staff will need to discuss with WTA what transit options might look like in the future, though it is understood that this would be simply be a guess.