



# Meeting Summary

## Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Group [TTAG]

Thursday, April 25, 2019 10:00 – 12:00

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

### Attendees:

Chris Comeau	Bellingham Public Works (City of)
Rollin Harper	Everson, Nooksack, & Sumas (Cities of)
Kirk Vinish	Lummi Nation
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
Joe Rutan	Whatcom County Public Works
Mike Donahue	Whatcom County Public Works
Tim Wilder	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)

### Member Updates

**Bob Wilson:** Mr. Wilson was in Olympia yesterday and met with the six members of the delegation. Senator Steve Hobbs’ transportation package may not go through, but there could be another package in the next long session in 2021. Senator Hobbs has not accepted any member requests for project funding.

**Lethal Coe:** WCOG contracted for traffic counts for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS) update. The counts should be coming in this week or next. WCOG staff will compute tonnage figures based on the count data and will avail all of the counts to local jurisdictions.

**Chris Comeau:** The City of Bellingham’s Roeder Ave project is nearing completion. There will be an Open House next week at Baker Creek Bible Church for the James St corridor improvements. In the near future there will also be an Open House as part of a Meridian Streets Roundabouts Feasibility Study. The City will soon have a draft of their 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) online.

**Tim Wilder:** The Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is currently testing the Smart Bus program. A full roll out of the program is anticipated for the fall. The program will allow people to see the predicted

time of arrival for specific buses and will add automated stop announcements on buses, bus stop LED displays, and high-tech command modules for drivers. The next big project will be the Touch Pass, which allows riders to pay for transit using an app.

WTA just started construction on Monday on their Midway Ln lot south of the WTA headquarters. The lot will allow expansion capabilities for WTA and will house the WTA electric fleet and charging stations.

Staff at WTA are starting to discuss the initiation of a planning effort that goes beyond six years and outlines long-range goals of the agency.

**Kirk Vinish:** Lummi Nation is currently doing small sidewalk projects currently. West of the Sliver Reef Casino (on the other side of Haxton Way), Lummi Nation is planning to build a large ballfield complex. They will be looking to work with Whatcom County on reconfiguring Haxton Way along that stretch to accommodate the development. Lummi Nation has conducted traffic counts and are doing an environmental review.

From July 24 to 28 Lummi Nation is hosting the Paddle to Lummi event. They anticipate less people will attend than there were in 2006, but there will be an impact on transportation network.

**Hugh Conroy:** On Tuesday WCOG hosted its annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) in-house coordinating meeting. At the meeting, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) was interested in gathering feedback regarding the strategies Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) are going to take to implement performance measures.

The International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) had its core group meeting in last week in Surrey, British Columbia. Among the speakers were Canadian Consul General Brandon Lee (Seattle), U.S. Consul General Kathy Dhanani (Vancouver), WA State Representative Rick Larson, and the new U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Director of Field Operations (DFO) Adele Fasano. The CBP DFO is now headquartered in Blaine (previously Seattle).

Mr. Conroy attended WSDOT's Practical Solutions Roundtable yesterday at the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). WA State Secretary of Transportation Robert Millar and other assistant secretaries were present.

**Mike Donahue:** Whatcom County is in negotiations for an American Disability Act (ADA) transition plan.

**John Shambaugh:** Mr. Shambaugh recently met with Fehr and Peers Transportation Consultants and discussed moving forward with practical solutions for the WSDOT I-5 study.

**Joe Rutan:** Whatcom County will be doing improvements to the Roberts Rd and Badger Rd bridges and will be chip-sealing roads in Pt. Roberts. Beam guard-rail is being installed county-wide. Small-area paving is also occurring around the County, firstly in Birch Bay where storms damaged the roadway over the winter.

The shoreline hearing for the Birch Bay berm project went well and the project is expected to go to bid in July with construction in October. There will be a year of construction with crews trying to get bulk of the work done before summer.

**Lethal Coe:** Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Transportation Alternatives (TA) project applications are due May 9<sup>th</sup>. The presentations will be held at WCOG. Jurisdictions will have until June 20<sup>th</sup> to submit their scores for each project. The scores will be finalized at the June 27<sup>th</sup> TTAG meeting, after which WCOG staff will prepare the TTAG score recommendations to the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board. The Policy Board will meet July 10<sup>th</sup>.

**John Shambaugh:** If any STBG/TA projects involve State Routes, have them reviewed by WSDOT first before presenting to avoid design issues.

## Refresh projects list and performance measures language for Whatcom Mobility 2040

**Lethal Coe:** The Whatcom Mobility 2040 long range project list is fiscally unconstrained. The project list will be amended to update project descriptions, timelines, costs, and any new projects jurisdictions see on the horizon.

**Hugh Conroy:** The Policy Board adopted the same language as the State for performance measures. That language has been put into the regional transportation plan’s planning strategies text.

## Household Travel Study results

**Lethal Coe:** Around 50,000 households in Whatcom County were sent an invitation to be a part of the Whatcom Regional Transportation Study. Household travel surveys were completed using both a smart phone app called rMove and an online/call-in survey called rSurvey. The original goal was to accumulate 1,000 complete household surveys. The end result was 1,451 completed households and 3,000 individuals participating.

Several block groups in Whatcom County that house lower income, ethnic and tribal residents (where lower rates of participation were anticipated) were sampled at a higher rate.

Participants using the rMove app were observed to record more daily trips (trip rates) than those using rSurvey.

### *Resulting Overall Trip Rates by Survey Method*

Data Source	Unweighted	Weighted	Adjusted
rMove	4.64	4.75	4.75
rSurvey	3.10	2.76	4.82

**Chris Comeau:** With rMove, how are trips broken up?

**Lethal Coe:** The same trip that participants take and record online through rSurvey may be broken up more if recorded through rMove, which tracks a person’s phone location, speed, and amount of time remaining idle to automatically records trips.

**Lethal Coe:** The rMove app recorded trip locations more precisely and did it in real-time, lessening the chance for a participant to forget to record a trip they took.

The group reviewed analysis provided by RSG, the household travel survey consultant. After WCOG staff review the project documentation provided by RSG, an Analysis Report and Methodology Report will be officially released.

**Chris Comeau:** An FAQ page for the survey on the WCOG website would be helpful.

**Lethal Coe:** WCOG is looking to comment on the survey's success and provide some preliminary analysis through the local media.

## Travel Demand Model update

**Lethal Coe:** WCOG staff are working with Caliper, their travel demand model consultant, to help calibrate and validate the model for a 2018 base year. Model transportation analysis zones (TAZ) were adjusted and several added, the household and employment demographics were updated, the transit and road networks were updated, and new external volumes, truck rates, and through trips were added.

Data from the household travel survey has been sent to Caliper for processing and calibration of the model.

## 2018 base year development

### TAZ Development and Demographics Update

Year	Households	Employment	# of TAZs
2008	70,355	88,054	688
2010	80,329	81,135	966
2013	82,875	82,881	966
<b>2018</b>	<b>95,244</b>	<b>103,257</b>	<b>993</b>

## Calibration time-line

**Lethal Coe:** WCOG will be receiving new traffic counts in the coming week that will be used to validate the model. With Caliper's help in the calibration of the model, Mr. Coe is expecting the model to be completely updated by December 2019.