



# Meeting Summary

## Regional Transportation Technical Advisory Group [TTAG]

Thursday, August 22, 2019 10:00 – 12:00

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

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### Attendees:

Chris Comeau	Bellingham Public Works (City of)
Rollin Harper	Everson, Nooksack, Sumas (Cities of)
John Shambaugh	Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Doug Dahl	Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC)
Hugh Conroy	Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG)
Jaymes McClain	Whatcom Council of Governments
Lethal Coe	Whatcom Council of Governments
Mike Donahue	Whatcom County
Tim Wilder	Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)

### Member updates

**John Shambaugh:** Mr. Shambaugh handed out a list of the fish passage projects that WSDOT will be doing in Whatcom County over the next couple of years. A map handout shows mostly projects going to ad in 2020. The link at bottom of the table handout details all the passages and fish barriers. Chris Damitio will be primary engineer (PE) on projects until one is officially assigned.

**Chris Comeau:** The Granary and Laurel street projects on the City of Bellingham’s waterfront development are complete. The City is hoping to finish Mahogany in September. The W Horton Rd Phase 1 project is supposed to go to ad in September with construction in Spring of 2020. Crews are trying to have the new Orchard Dr connection open by the end of next year. There are transportation benefit district (TBD) projects happening throughout Bellingham through Fall.

**Tim Wilder:** The Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) added a couple of bus routes to food desert areas, primarily serving Fred Meyer on W Bakerview Rd in Bellingham. A route was also added to serve Bellingham International Airport, though there is no data yet on how that connection is being used. There were also recent reconfigurations of routes around Western Washington University (WWU), as well as the elimination of Route 65 (northern county connector) due to very low use the end of a grant cycle.

Testing for Smart Bus technology will start in the Fall – over the next several months Transit Control Heads (TCH) will be installed on buses. WTA is hoping for a rollout of Smart Bus beginning next year. The touchpass payment system is fully operational.

Construction is occurring on the Midway Ln lot (adjacent to the WTA headquarters) for additional WTA parking. Electric buses ordered from GILLIG through a grant will not be in the main fleet until 2021. WTA also applied for a grant through the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox Project – the pilot project, where trips would be requested on an app, would be tested with Paratransit in Lynden and would go into effect in 2020 if the grant is awarded.

WTA is also gearing up for developing their Transit Master Plan, which would help plan out WTA goals and operations for the long-term rather than the 2-year service changes that have been occurring.

**Mike Donahue:** Whatcom County crews have been working on the ballfield at Haxton Way and Slater Rd. They are finishing up guardrail installation around the county and the County’s ADA transition plan.

**Hugh Conroy:** Mr. Conroy recently attended the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)-sponsored Transportation Performance Management (TPM) peer exchange in Denver, CO.

The next meeting of the Bellingham I-5 Operations Corridor Study will be next month. A draft agenda will be sent out soon to incorporate feedback on meeting topics.

## **Review of Washington Traffic Safety Commission Montana State University study on impaired driving behaviors – 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 factor for fatal crashes in Washington
- In a quarter of crashes in the state, poly-drug use is a driving factor
- Past year cannabis use by adults (age 18+) in Washington has increased by 85% from 2008 to 2017
- Weekend, nighttime drivers testing positive for THC increased by 50% 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

**Doug Dahl:** The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims occurs in November. Mr. Dahl discussed the idea of conducting a multi-speaker event centered on specific, in-depth transportation topics in the community.

## **Discussion: MPO requirements for system performance reporting – connection to MAP-21 performance measurement requirements and WCOG regional transportation plan**

**Hugh Conroy:** For the upcoming update to the regional transportation plan, WCOG will be developing performance monitoring and safety strategies parallel to the state. The FHWA National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) will help in reporting on the region’s transportation system performance by offering speed and travel time data for the National Highway System and other roadways. In calculating freight congestion for the region, the Data Set includes US-Canada border crossings in the transportation system, and due to the nature of border crossing congestion this brings down the overall regional performance – this is not yet an issue for performance reporting, but worth monitoring.

## **Looking ahead – With performance measures and targets tied to federal (planning factors), state (legislative policy objectives), and regional goals, are there any plans by regional jurisdictions to conduct a public-involvement/visioning process as a part of upcoming comprehensive plan update (2024)?**

**Hugh Conroy:** WCOG staff combed through comprehensive plan transportation elements of local jurisdictions and Whatcom County to construct regional goals in the last regional transportation plan update. The next plan update will occur before the next round of local comprehensive plan developments. Does any jurisdiction have plans to conduct a public participation/visioning process to update underlying jurisdiction goals in lead-up to their plan update process?

**Rollin Harper:** Mr. Harper participates in the county-wide planners forum. There have been discussions about updating the county-wide planning policies. Discussion acknowledged that this would be an important process to be aware of if it moves forward.