

WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD
MINUTES
APRIL 7, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE (VIA ZOOM):

MEMBERS **VOTING:** Blaine: Bonnie Onyon; Ferndale: Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chairman); Lynden: Scott Korthuis (Chairman); Nooksack: Tom Jones; Nooksack Tribe: Ross Cline, Sr.; Port of Bellingham: Ken Bell; Sumas: Kyle Christensen; Whatcom County: Satpal Sidhu, Carol Frazey; WSDOT: Todd Carlson; WTA: Michael Lilliquist **EX-OFFICIO:** CTAG: Terry Terry; PUD: Atul Deshmane

GUESTS Chad Schulhauser, City of Bellingham; Intisar Surur, McBride Public Affairs; Lisa McShane, Nooksack Tribe; Les Reardanz, WTA

STAFF Bob Wilson (Secretary), Ron Cubellis, Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Lethal Coe

A. CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Wilson determined that a quorum was present, and Chairman Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

B. AGENDA APPROVAL

APPROVED BY ACCLAMATION

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2021

APPROVED BY ACCLAMATION

D. OLD BUSINESS

1. Restructuring the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group

Following up on the discussion of this matter that took place at the January 2021 Policy Board meeting, Mr. Conroy summarized the changes staff is proposing to CTAG's organizational structure, and then he answered questions posed by the members.

MOTION: Mr. Lilliquist moved, Mr. Hansen seconded, to authorize staff to prepare a draft amendment to the *Bylaws and Procedures of the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Planning Process* for the Policy Board's consideration at an upcoming meeting, as well as corresponding revisions to WCOG's *Public Participation Plan* to affect the changes to the organization of the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group, as presented.

MOTION PASSED

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2024-25 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Application

Mr. Coe explained the need to amend the application form the Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) uses to rank STBG funding requests so it will align with the recently amended regional goals. He then went through the proposed methodology and answered questions posed by the members. A great deal of discussion took place concerning the proposed “regional weighting” factor to be applied to points awarded for each criterion. Also, there was a recommendation to change the heading of evaluation criterion No.2 to read, “The project mitigates climate change and/or improves environmental quality.”

MOTION: Mr. Lilliquist moved, Mr. Bell seconded, to approve the application form for WCOG’s 2021 STBG project selection process, as presented, but with the aforementioned change to the heading of criterion No. 2, and with a simplified ranking rubric, whereby the maximum points available for each criterion are multiplied by the proposed weighting factor, with the products of those calculations becoming the new maximum for each respective criterion, and then eliminating the weighting factors from the process.

MOTION PASSED

2. Proposed Amendments to SFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Conroy explained that the current UPWP must be amended to add tasks that were not anticipated when the UPWP was adopted in May 2020, and he described the three specific projects.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved, Mr. Sidhu seconded, to approve the amendments to the SFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program, as presented.

MOTION PASSED

3. Recommended STBG Awards to Meet Obligation Target

Mr. Coe explained the need to award STBG funding to regional projects to address a potential shortfall of \$2.6-million in meeting the region’s FFY 2021 obligation target, which is the result of certain project delays and the “de-obligation” of STBG funds awarded for the *West Horton Road, Phase 2* project. He then presented TTAG’s funding recommendations and answered questions posed by the members.

MOTION: Mr. Sidhu moved, Ms. Frazey seconded, to 1) reallocate the \$1-million of STBG from the upcoming de-obligation of Bellingham’s *West Horton Road, Phase 2* project to Whatcom County’s *Marine Drive Reconstruction* project; 2) award \$607,571 of STBG funding to the *West Horton Road, Phase 1* project to complete the construction phase; 3) award \$1.4-million of STBG funding to Whatcom County’s *Birch*

Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility project, with \$1.1-million to obligate immediately and the remaining \$300,000 to obligate by September 15, 2021 if needed to meet the obligation delivery deadline; 4) reallocate \$250,000 from the upcoming de-obligation of *Regional Transportation Data Activity* funding to the UPWP for continued data analysis staffing, expanded regional traffic counts and acquisition of third-party systems data, and; 5) swap \$71,921 of Highway Improvement Program (HIP) rural funds for STBG rural funds between the *East Smith and Hannegan Road Intersection Improvements* and *Blair Drive Improvements* projects to ensure obligation of HIP funds by the September 15th deadline.

MOTION PASSED

4. Other New Business

Mr. Wilson provided a brief legislative update.

F. PUBLIC HEARING

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) No. 21-04

Mr. Coe described the proposed amendments to the 2021 TIP:

1. Add Blaine project *Peace Portal Community Trail, Phase 3* construction. This project, which is funded through the regionally facilitated Transportation Alternatives program, obligated preliminary engineering in 2020 and is preparing to obligate for construction in 2022.
2. Add \$1,556,500 of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds to Bellingham's *F Street Crossing* project to improve signaling, channelization and multimodal safety on all quadrants of the rail crossing.
3. Add new WSDOT *NWR Breakaway Cable Terminal Replacement 21-23* project to remove and replace guardrails not meeting current standards. This project funded through the HSIP and replacements will begin in 2022.
4. Remove joint City of Bellingham/Whatcom County project *West Horton Road, Phase 2*. The City and County have decided not to seek construction funding for the project.
5. Add \$607,571 awarded for the construction phase of Bellingham's *West Horton Road, Phase 1* project back into the State Transportation Improvement Program.
6. Add \$1.4-million awarded for the construction phase of Whatcom County's *Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility* project, with \$1.1-million to be obligated immediately and the remaining \$300,000 to be obligated if needed. In the event that redistributed or reallocated federal funds become available,

application will be made for funding from those sources to replace STBG funds used beyond the initial \$1.1-million.

7. Add \$125,000 of STBG funds each to WCOG's UPWP – SFY 2022 and UPWP – SFY 2023.

Because of the current public health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor ordered all meetings of governmental bodies to be conducted online. For this reason, the public was informed in the Notice of Public Hearing published in *The Bellingham Herald* on March 21, 2021, that comments pertaining to TIP Amendment No. 21-04 must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Policy Board prior to the meeting. Mr. Wilson informed the Board that no public comment had been received.

MOTION: Mr. Bell moved, Mr. Sidhu seconded, to approve Amendment No. 21-04 to the 2021 WCOG Transportation Improvement Program.

MOTION PASSED

G. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

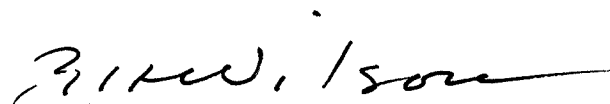
Mr. Conroy briefed the Board on recent transportation planning activities.

H. CORRESPONDENCE

In addition to the letter included in the meeting packet, Mr. Wilson informed the Board that he had also recently sent a letter to the Federal Transit Administration in support of WTA's request for funding for new electric buses and charging stations.

I. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.



Robert H. Wilson, AICP
Secretary

Approved May 12, 2021