



It matters how we get there

Meeting Summary
April 28, 2010
Whatcom Council of Governments

CTAG Members

- Kathy Berg, Chair
Dave Pros, Vice Chair
Glen Hallman
Chris Hatch
Carole Macdonald
Patrick Pollock
Larry Wickkiser

Start: 4:30
Stop: 6:30

- A.J. Garcia
Carol Berry

In Attendance:

Table with 3 columns: Members (Larry Wickkiser, Carol Berry), Administrative (Gordon Rogers, Mary Anderson, Andres Gomez), and Technical Advisory (Chris Comeau, Maureen McCarthy)

Technical Advisors

- Ellen Barton
Gary Davis
John Hergesheimer
Jessica Lee
Maureen McCarthy
Chris Comeau

Not in Attendance:

Table with 3 columns: Members (A.J. Garcia, Glen Hallman, Patrick Pollock, Chris Hatch, Carole Macdonald, Dave Pros, Kathy Berg), Administrative (Glen Hallman, Patrick Pollock, Chris Hatch, Carole Macdonald, Dave Pros, Kathy Berg), and Technical Advisory (John Hergesheimer, Jessica Lee, Ellen Barton, Gary Davis)

Administrative Support

- Mary Anderson
Gordon Rogers

II. Trans Plan Web Site - Melissa Miller

M. Miller: We are updating our regional plan; we will have a version online. People will be able to find subject areas of the plan that they are interested in. The idea was to come up with a website that has all the components of the plan, in a more accessible manner.

Three components: trip purpose, location and mode. You choose one of each of the components and relevant information will come up. Goals and policies are tagged to be relevant to components chosen. You can always see the whole plan, if wanted. Each page will have pictures and relevant maps, etc. On the left will be each jurisdiction, with links to their websites and plans. Some of the smaller cities don't have their plans online, so I don't know what I'll do for them. We have a glossary at the end of the plan, on the website if you hover over the word the definition will pop up. This will be the official version; we still have to do a print version by law. All these paragraphs will be put up on Andy's blog as he writes them.

G. Rogers: One of the reasons we're doing this is because not very many people read the plan, it could be really great and it's audience is pretty limited. We want to offer people a way to get into the plan in an entirely different way. We think people will be interested, individuals can look at as much or little of the plan as they want to.

M. Miller: We have a lot of data and appendices, those will all be accessible on the website. We are working with web developers to see how this will work, still need to design it. Want to get the framework up in the next few months and start filling it in.

A. Gomez: I want to start blogging next week, it will be interactive.

M. Miller: We have a marketing campaign; will have a couple bus banners and fliers directing people to transportation town. We have a small amount of money to advertise now and when we release the draft plan. Our goal is to make it very interactive. If someone asks a question that we can't answer, we will direct them to the correct person in the correct jurisdiction.

G. Rogers: We hope that our partners will help spread the word about this too.

III. Whatcom Transp. Plan Regional Activity Centers - Andy Gomez

A. Gomez: I have the first draft map of Whatcom County regional activity centers; I selected Traffic Analysis Zones, TAZ that are households. I will route the shortest routes between households and activity centers.

A TAZ is naturally bound by rivers, railroads, etc, it is where we store info on households, and the kind of geography that the Travel Demand Model, TDM stores. This is the first cut on how to define a regionally significant system. I will include projects in this system, no projects outside system. After I develop routes, I'll show it to you and TTAC, fine tune it and then be done with it.

Regional activity centers - are centers that attract regional trips, like St Joseph Hospital, Bellis Fair, the downtown transit center and business parks. They must attract visitors from outside the area. If you have other ideas of what should be regionally significant that isn't on the map, let me know. Must be regional in nature, where trips occur most days of the week, most weeks of the year. Event center only attracts on the weekends, probably won't add those. I have 14; Ferndale will send me three areas, Grandview, Main and Slater Road. We are looking at not only what's on the ground today, but future projects, like the future waterfront area.

I will add Irongate, WCC, and the Cordota Station.

C. Berry: People will go to Bellis Fair for some things, but not lumber or appliances. Should you add those places?

C. Comeau: We are looking for route that people will take, don't need specifics of shopping areas.

C. Berry: Are you thinking about other modes? You could go a distance on a bike, but may not carry lumber.

A. Gomez: We want to focus on regional system, but don't want to have small local roads that cyclists will take. I have a bike network [in the model] that I could show you. Sometimes bike routes are not on major roads.

C. Berry: If the difference in time is not great, they may stay off major roads.

C. Comeau: Depends on cyclist, a commuter will go from point A to point B.

A Gomez: Trying to identify regional system, anything local in nature will be in local plan. I do have bus routes, I can say which routes are multi-modal and which are not. Can look at existing transit and bike routes and see if they are aligned with these routes. I will be talking with WTA about there long range plan.

M. McCarthy: Last time we had a six year plan.

C. Comeau: Will WTA do a new one.

M. McCarthy: Yes, we finished the plan and need to start on a new one.

A. Gomez: Are there any other locations you think I should add?

L. Wickkiser: Lincoln Creak Park and Ride.

A. Gomez: East of I-5, was going to be a huge development, it fell through.

C. Comeau: Something off Mt. Baker Hwy, ski area.

A. Gomez: East of Columbia Valley, there is nothing right now.

L. Wickkiser: More people visit Mt Baker in the summer than winter.

M. McCarthy: It should be titled Mt. Baker Wilderness Area.

A. Gomez: For Blaine I have the Marina.

C. Comeau: Semiahmoo in Birch Bay. Should the border crossings be listed? We all use them.

G. Rogers: We haven't talked about how to handle it. Don't want to over-populate the map.

A. Gomez: I'll just smooth it out, takes a lot of work to add more. Lynden, I added West Main St, there is a business park, and it might be developed in the future.

L. Wickkiser: I think truck crossing is more important than Semiahmoo.

C. Comeau: Not sure how regional Semiahmoo is.

L. Wickkiser: People go there and stay there, not as many local trips.

C. Comeau: Is it serving the purpose of what you're doing?

A. Gomez: I will delete Semiahmoo. I will follow up with TTAC in May I'll show you all the paths we're taking.

C. Berry: Does it suit the purpose to look at the trail network.

A. Gomez: I have the shape file for trails.

C. Comeau: Because of an accident and law suit on a trail, the Parks Dept is leery of calling trail transportation facility, if not built to certain standards.

C. Comeau: The City lost its recreational immunity; trail needs to be built to standards if shown on map for transportation, built to ASHTO standards.

IV. Whatcom Olympics Experience

L. Wickkiser: We took 18 vehicles, 36 drivers and 1 supervisor. We spent two hours south of border, we ended up in Squamish, on a cruise ship for accommodations. Started out with a lot of confusion, I was put into a room with a woman from another company. Took couple days to sort out. We got three hot meals a day, had sheets changed, it was not what we expected. They took us to a depot, where they had 300 buses; a fenced 10 acre yard with gas, tent for washing and another area for security. The most impressive thing was security. Our buses were assigned to athletes, they wanted us there 3am till 3pm, took ten days of working with them explaining rules of how long we could work.

They had a flow chart of when an athlete wanted something and what we had to do. Security, we had to check in with tag and card, metal detectors, could walk into depot, had AVL on buses, got to see police T.V., they could see all of Vancouver and where everyone was. I got off route and went into Wal-Mart, the got a call because I went off security. Every time bus went in, had three

guys looking at buses, mirrors and cameras. They also had tethered balloons with infra-red cameras at the events. Army was around all events. Routine was to pick up athletes, take them to center, and shuttle back and forth. We would send a bus with a relief driver. Several of us were reassigned to carry media back and forth. Meeting all the people was a lot of fun. I met a kid from Slovenia, he remembered my name. The drivers we had were excited, the enthusiasm was contagious. We carried people from all over the world. Some media could just say hello, others spoke English. We had passes to get right where athletes were.

All our buses were minis. There were 600 US buses, maybe 1000 Canadian operators. About half of our drivers stayed for the Para Olympics, it was a completely different feel. All the security left, they were having fun, more of a party area.

G. Rogers: In Canada, did you have to comply with their rules?

L. Wickkiser: Yes. Computer operators were dispatching buses, not transportation workers; they didn't know what they were doing.

G. Rogers: I have a chart of representation of cross border trips, showing the Olympics and normal summer. Pretty similar, ten booths open, not many delays except on Feb 20th.

C. Comeau: Streets were not congested with cars. They did a good job letting people know there would be complications if they drove.

L. Wickkiser: There was a road block on our route, mostly only buses. Were there bus options or just sky train?

M. McCarthy: Not sure.

C. Comeau: Train got more crowded as we got closer to city. First park and ride was packed, had to move to next one, ended up parking in Home Depot lot. We need to find a way to get border crossing to work that way all the time.

G. Rogers: We did a study years ago on the Sumas Abbotsford crossing, hired consultant, their recommendations for long mid and short term solutions were to move the road, incorporate ITS, and just open another booth, repectivley. It started a lot of discussions about border efficiency.

C. Comeau: When you went to SLC, there was a big hoopla on how it'll affect Whatcom County. Will you do anything to show people what the Olympics did affect Whatcom County?

G. Rogers: H. Conroy did a report at the last IMTC meeting; we didn't really think there would be a lot of interest. We could try to get a local Olympics report out. We'll explore that.

V. Complete Streets Conference

Moved to next meeting

G. Rogers: It wasn't clear to me who established the mailing list; it seemed that Bellingham was the only local city invited. They were very clear on what Complete Streets was.

C. Comeau: What they don't realize in that we don't have as far to go as others. It was already in the plan. I think we will take the next step and call it Complete Streets.

VI. Meeting with Policy Board

G. Rogers: Next meeting May 12,

C. Berry and M. McCarthy will be out of state.

M. McCarthy: We will have a public hearing on 14th, just heard that ballot probably didn't pass, will have service cut in September. If nothing changes will have another 15-20% cut by end of 2012.

G. Rogers: Will you want a joint meeting with CTAG?

M. McCarthy: Yes.