

It matters how we get there

Meeting Summary  
May 26, 2010  
Whatcom Council of Governments

**CTAG Members**

Kathy Berg, Chair  
Dave Pros, Vice Chair  
Glen Hallman  
Chris Hatch  
Carole Macdonald  
Patrick Pollock  
Larry Wickkiser  
A.J. Garcia  
Carol Berry

**Start:** 4:30

**Stop:** 6:30

In Attendance:

*Members:*

Larry Wickkiser  
Carol Berry  
Kathy Berg  
T. Terry  
Dave Pros  
A.J. Garcia  
Carole Macdonald

*Administrative:*

Gordon Rogers  
Mary Anderson  
Andres Gomez

*Technical Advisory:*

Chris Comeau  
Maureen McCarthy  
Ellen Barton  
Gary Davis

**Technical Advisors**

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

**Administrative Support**

Mary Anderson  
Gordon Rogers

Not in Attendance:

*Members:*

Glen Hallman  
Patrick Pollock  
Chris Hatch

*Administrative:*

*Technical Advisory:*

John Hergesheimer  
Jessica Lee

**I Member Sharing**

K. Berg: I attended the Policy Board meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup>; we may work with them more later on. Part of the Whatcom Transportation Plan work we are doing is for them.

C. Comeau: Our six year TIP will go to the Bellingham Council Monday night. We hope to have it adopted in June. Our Planning Director resigned.

T. Terry: I live on Lummi Island, the County has a ferry committee, the Tribe also has a committee. Last year we had a community meeting where the Lummi Nation presented. It was a listening forum format, questions are submitted beforehand and were answered at the meeting, the next meeting - we had the two (County and Tribe) together, everything is ongoing.

L. Wickkiser: Nothing to report.

A. J. Garcia: I will be leaving in June to attend graduate school at Florida State University, studying transportation planning. Emily Kraft will be replacing me.

D. Pros: Nothing to report.

C. MacDonald: Nothing to report.

M. McCarthy: I'd like to say thank-you to AJ for the great work he did for WTA and WWU. The WTA tax measure failed, we'd like to have a joint WTA CAP - CTAG meeting next month. WTA has two plans for service cuts; one has already been presented to our board which eliminates Sunday service and the other one we are working on, it would keep Sunday service.

C. Comeau: How does Sunday ridership compare to other days?

M. McCarthy: Overall it is small, however productivity is huge. It has the highest numbers of riders per hour. Most people who think of themselves as regular riders don't usually ride on Sundays. It is important for WWU, elderly and disabled people.

E. Barton: Has CTAG heard Wernor Brog's research results for our latest Individualized Marketing (IndiMark)? It was presented to the Bellingham City Council in April. I can get you the info if you want, it's very specialized for each participant. The 2009 follow up survey showed us that for bicycling we doubled the mode share, walking had a huge increase too. The difference in Smart Trips members vs. non-members, we were able to show that the Smart Trips members had an increase of bike trips by 35%. I am working with Susan to find funding for this program, the funding we have now is not sustained for a long time. The process is very personalized and it's only for people who are interested. Whatcom County is the only place in US to do this.

D. Pros: Is this for people in Whatcom County?

E. Barton: This one was in the City limits.

D. Pros: What is the percentage of people that are using alternative transportation?

E. Barton: I'd have to see the charts; I think that before IndiMark 85% drove alone and after IndiMark 55% drove alone.

K. Berg: Maybe you can present the results at a future meeting.

G. Davis: The Whatcom Planning director left, that calls into question our Comp Plan update. We had planned to update it; however the legislators gave us 3 more years to complete it, so we might wait.

C. Comeau: Bellingham is asking the same question, due to budget constraints.

D. Pros: How much pressure is on the planning director?

G. Davis. Depends on how you define pressure, it's a hard job.

A. Gomez: Nothing to report.

M. Anderson: Bike to Work and School Day was very successful. Throughout Whatcom County we counted over 8,300 bicyclists and walkers. 30 schools in Whatcom County participated.

C. Berry: I took a cross county train trip; I brought pictures tonight to show the group. In Washington, DC I saw ads on the buses for bike to work day, they were asking people to register and gave a t-shirt to the first 8,500 registrants. WWU is anticipating service changes with WTA; we will market those changes to the students. We are still working towards integrating the bus pass with the WWU card. The technology is being worked on.

## **II. Whatcom Transportation Plan Regionally Significant Transportation System - Andy Gomez**

A. Gomez: At the last CTAG meeting we discussed Regional Activity Centers (RAC), connecting households to RAC. We haven't done this since the '90's. I am looking for regional roads that are used for regional travel. When there is a call for projects, if it is federal money, one of the criteria is that the road must be in the regional system. Also, the road must have functional classification to receive federal money; however it doesn't need to have FC to be on my map. I am working with limited resources; I want to make sure it's a true regional system. The last time this was done roads were labeled as primary and secondary; I've eliminated that this time.

K. Berg: Lincoln Road was approved for safety improvements; it takes commute traffic off traffic from Birch Bay Drive, where there is a huge bike/ped use. The Pedestrian project on the berm is in the Whatcom County TIP. I would like to see you change that road.

G. Davis: The purpose is to say they are regionally significant or they can't get funds. If we change Lincoln, we'd need to know how that affects the berm project.

C. Comeau: The berm project would have to use enhancement funds. Should future phases be on there?

A. Gomez: Future projects can be on the map, they won't have FC.

G. Davis: Should you add a dotted line for a future regional significant route to connect Lincoln to Blaine.

A. Gomez: Not regional now, should I eliminate Lincoln now in anticipation of changes in the next 20 years?

G. Rogers: Federal functional classification is used for qualifying roads for federal funding. This map is for our MPO plan, it doesn't matter if the road is FC, it can still go on the map. This is the system we are planning for in our MPO plan. It is not a huge chore to functionally classify a road, but there are limitations.

K. Berg: From the 2000 census 51% of the homes in Birch Bay were seasonally owned homes, 31% are owned by Canadians. 548 is an important link for the Canadians to get to their homes.

A. Gomez: Eliminate Lincoln from Birch Bay - Lynden to Grandview.

D. Pros: What is the criterion to get funding?

C. Comeau: The criteria are voted on by TTAC, the projects score points.

G. Rogers: That's just for STP, no relationship to other funding.

G. Davis: It makes sense to me to change the Lincoln road designation, but are we snickering ourselves out of potential funding?

E. Barton: It's not likely that the berm will be funded with that source.

K. Berg: The berm is so many things; safety, hydro-geological, environmental.

G. Rogers: We are looking at refining the regional system, it's not just about funding, we are looking for gaps in the system. Locally we decided to use this as qualifying baseline for funding.

T. Terry: There was a study done by Lummi Nation on Haxton Road, helped get funding for the pedestrian path.

L. Wickkiser: I've heard talk of a shopping center being built at the South West side of I5 & Slater Road.

G. Davis: Which road is more regional, Barrett or LaBounty?

L. Wickkiser: Barrett.

A. Gomez: I added Yew Street South to Samish at I5.

E. Barton: When a road is on the system does that spur development and sprawl?

G. Davis: Land use determines that, not street width.

A. Gomez: It just means that money can go to the road.

C. Comeau: The South part of Yew Street is in the UGA, there is a multi-million dollar school on the road, and the street should be improved.

E. Barton: Doesn't a trail qualify as a regionally significant route?

A. Gomez: When you build a project you should incorporate multi-modal uses, add shoulders, sidewalks and bike lanes, if the project has no bike/ped accommodations it will rank low.

A. J. Garcia: How closely do you want to connect the RAC?

A. Gomez: I reread the definition, at first I got rid of access roads, but then I put them back in, in accordance to the definition.

C. Comeau: There is not much at the waterfront. Cornwall, James St to Kellogg and Alabama are not designated, but should be.

A. Gomez: I will add Indian from Holly, Lincoln, Cordota, Kellogg to James and the Bellis Fair loop. I will send you the final map; you can then comment on it and send me questions.

G. Rogers: The pressure to complete the map is internal; the cycle we are in right now with STP-R funding is about \$2 million per year. TTAC has changed some of the criteria, which was passed by the Policy Board. SAFETEA-LU has expired; the new act will probably have many changes and new rules.

### III. Cross Country Train Trip - Carol Berry

*C. Berry shared pictures from her cross country train trip.*

C. Berry: We went from Everett to Chicago and then to Washington DC. The cost of meals is included in the roomette fee. It took about 3.5 days. Each car has an attendant. The prices ranged from \$400-\$1,400, depending on how far in advance you book your ticket.

### IV. Grant Opportunity

G. Rogers: Late last year there was an agreement between US-DOT, EPA & HUD to collaborate on issues that overlap. People are taking it seriously; we might see new things in reauthorization. The term 'livability', has not been defined yet. Different people define it different. There are three directions that the group will head; livability, economic vitality, and preservation. I got a call from COB, Tara Sandeen, she said she would like me to involved in the process.

There were people from the NW Econ Council, Chamber of Commerce, Port of Bellingham, COB, Sustainable Connections, and others. There will be \$85 million available nationally. Generally more towards large urban areas. People thought we could qualify, with our proximity to the boarder and more aspects, I'm not sure when RFP will be out. The application process is very

daunting. Someone thought I could do it. I agreed to pursue it, and will possibly take the lead. I called in to tell them we'd submit a grant. It takes a lot of crafting for this grant. There might be aspects you'd be interested in participating in. It will probably be quite a bit of money, we could develop a master plan for the region. Other groups need to be brought in. At this point, it is a raw undeveloped idea.

C. MacDonald: Is the Legacy Group still around?

G. Rogers: It is somewhat related. What we want for the future of Whatcom County. Legacy Project does not exist anymore. Started with 22 people, with in two years, there were only five left. Some people had problems with the long-long range of it, and didn't think it would amount to anything. There was a vested interest around the table. It fell apart at the end. The survey is being used, so is the biodiversity map.

When we know more, if CTAG is interested, perhaps you could be the advisory group for the grant. We could enhance this group with more members.

C. MacDonald: Is geared towards getting Whatcom County off the grid? I went to a Technical Advisory Group presentation; he has a master plan for Whatcom County to get us off the grid. Would this money qualify for that?

G. Rogers: I'm not sure, I will find out more later when they release more info.

## **V. Complete Streets**

G. Rogers: We've talked about it here, and agreed to become a member. I've talked about the presentation I attended in Mt. Vernon. There were several regions there. Trying to figure out how to integrate it locally. A bill was before the legislators this session, the idea is to get everybody on board with the concept. I'll copy some of the handouts and send to you. COB has implemented a lot of the ideas; it's just not called Complete Streets. Many in County could benefit. CTAG could advise the Policy Board to implement County Wide.

K. Berg: I'd like to see Complete Street concept built into UGA planning in County. It's a good way to plan, have them develop right. I think it's in the Birch Bay plan.

G. Rogers: Recommendations from this group could help define what applies in the small cities. You can't just take it off the shelf and apply it to all cities.

G. Davis: The County is not in the business of Urban planning.

C. Comeau: The name is misleading, you have a spectrum. Some things are not appropriate in rural county areas, some areas clearly makes sense. Every street has unique needs.

G. Davis: I'd be interested in finding out what might apply in rural settings.

D. Pros: Can impact fees, pay for it? What the status of road impact fees?

K. Berg: Will talk about that at another meeting.