

WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION  
POLICY BOARD  
MINUTES  
January 5, 2009

ATTENDANCE

BOARD MEMBERS: Bob Bromley, Jack Louws,  
Tom Jones, Sam Crawford,  
Barry Buchanan, Gary  
Jensen, Seth Fleetwood,  
Pete Kremen, Dan Pike,  
Bonnie Onyon, Henry Cagey,  
Scott Walker, Doug Ericksen

GUESTS: Frank Abart, Greg Young, Myra Ramos,  
Susan Kilgore, Nancy Ging, Elizabeth  
Kilanowski, Louise Bjornson, Linnea  
Smith, Kirk Vinnish

STAFF: Jim Miller, Gordon Rogers, Ron  
Cubellis, Leslye O'Shaughnessy

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00  
am. Louws reviewed the agenda.

Miller stated that we have not received  
further information from the Governor's  
office regarding the formula for job  
creation. Staff will put in the cover  
letter a request for the opportunity to  
reprioritize, once we learn the Governor's  
methodology.

Staff used what we do know that the  
Governor's office will use to rank  
projects - that is the internalization  
prioritization of the projects, how they  
rank locally, and ad date.

What we still don't know is the size of the package, one figure we have heard is \$775 billion, but the expanded package won't be directed at infrastructure. Based on a population basis for distribution of funds and using the most conservative number, \$50 million could come to Whatcom County. However, we still don't know how the Governor will distribute the money.

Cubellis reported that on the third column on the Population page with the conservative amount of \$50 million, we did a 60/40 split. 60% would be allocated to high priority projects, and 40% would be put into a pool for regionally significant projects.

The first tier is the highest priorities from the jurisdictions and the second tier is the regionally significant list and needs to be prioritized. The third tier is everything else. Cubellis reviewed the changes that were made to the original list. There is a group that is titled "Non-Road Projects", the marina at Gooseberry Point, improvements to the shoreline, WTA, these projects don't qualify under Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding, so were taken off the list.

Louws asked for and received general consensus from the group to continue discussing the projects that have remained on the list.

Crawford stated that the parking transfer facility on the Lummi project would be a valid project to remain on the list. Staff stated that the project was presented as an "on the water only" project.

Crawford asked if the parking portion of the project could have a dollar amount tied to it.

Miller stated that the Lummi Ferry project came up with specificity in conversations with WSDOT. If you separate out the in water work you could possibly look at doing some of the on land work.

Louws asked for and received consensus from the group that the revised scope of the list is acceptable.

The projects removed were: Port of Bellingham Marine Trades Center; Port storm water facilities, shoreline infrastructure, shipping terminal; Gooseberry marine and multimodal facility; Whatcom County Ferry; and WTA buses.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Nancy Ging, spokesperson for several Lummi Island residents, stated she would like to thank the Board for taking the Lummi Island Ferry off the list. It was hard to see how that was even on the stimulus list to begin with since it will raise operating costs. Funding was available from the State earlier and the County Council voted it down after considerable public and expert input. They were surprised to see it on the list and happy to see it removed. In case it should come up again, they want WCOG to know that it was voted down by County Council 5-2, and most Lummi Islanders were happy about that.

Elizabeth Kilanowski, she and her husband own property on Lummi Island, but do not currently live there, but will in the future. However the process by which this was resurrected disturbs her greatly, it was done undemocratically as far as she was concerned. She doesn't know if it came from the Executive's office or public works, but it was voted down by County Council. It shouldn't be on the list since it was voted down.

Miller reviewed the process of how the ferry got resurrected. WSDOT provided a list to us with many projects on it, WSDOT was very clear in saying this is just a list of projects that you may want to look at; they did not come with any recommendations.

Linnea Smith is from the Gooseberry Point Beach Community Association, distributed copies of a map of properties in the area and a newspaper article regarding the Lummi Marina. They were concerned about where this project

would be; it looked like it was going to be right in front of their association's property. The association owns the property in the pink on the map outright. They have spent quite a bit of time over the last few years cleaning up the beach.

They wanted the Board to be aware that they were not notified about the marina project, they wrote letters to the County Council and the Tribe asking to be included in the planning and have not received word from any of them. They asked a Tribal representative when they planned on talking to people in the community and he said after they receive money and after they made plans. She also has a concern regarding the Red River Bridge on Haxton Way, that is a bridge on a County Road, and the Tribe has asked for \$250,000 to replace that bridge. She is concerned that the jurisdiction of that bridge belongs in the County's hands. She wants to be sure that it is built to County standards and that the County has authority on it in the end.

Crawford asked Frank Abart to comment on the Red River Road project. Abart stated that the project is on the list by the Lummi Nation and the County has not been included in the process.

Cagey stated that safety is a big issue for the Tribe; we need to widen the road and make it a safe place to drive. He has no problems with the jurisdiction issue. The Tribe just wants the bridge fixed. It's a safety factor.

Abart reiterated that the County has not been involved. He thinks it's a good project but questions the money part of it and the ad date.

C. OLD BUSINESS

C.1 Federal Infrastructure Economic Stimulus List

Louws reiterated that the tier 1 projects are the jurisdiction's priority projects and include funds for

all jurisdictions by population. Tier 2 projects are regionally significant projects and still need to be prioritized.

The Tier 2 projects need to be listed in order of significance. Louws stated that the projects are sorted by Public Works Department first, then by ad month.

Crawford has problem with the Haxton Way/Red River Bridge project because of the timing. He stated that the bridge projects he worked on in the past were huge when it came to the environmental review that has to take place. There is usually a timeframe of 1-2 years at a minimum to get something proposed. For discussion he thinks that it should be removed from the list.

Louws reminded the board that the projects will be watched closely to make sure the projects start when the jurisdiction stated it would. The funds could be removed if the projects don't start on time and there is no guarantee that the funds would be given back to Whatcom County.

Kremen asked who's making a determination on what's a regional project. Cubellis stated that the projects are listed in the order of priority that was submitted to WCOG, they can be reordered.

What are the limiting factors of weather it gets onto tier 1, 2 or 3? Cubellis stated that it's how much is allocated to each agency based on population.

Kremen asked if we are going to ignore importance or value and use as the determining factor a certain dollar amount. Pike stated that he thinks we are doing both. Each jurisdiction has a different perspective on what's most important. We decided that we need to pay attention to the regional issues so we set aside 40% of the total dollars for the projects that are significant beyond one jurisdiction's borders. It was a way to make sure that everyone had a say for a project that was important to them.

Kremen stated that one of the factors that we are ignoring is that the County has almost 1,000 miles of road. It's a major component of what they do as a government. That is not taken into consideration as we go about prioritizing these projects.

What is the 180 day number? Is that from the State or the Feds? Louws stated that it's coming from the federal government, and Obama's camp, they want the projects on the ground and started as soon as possible.

Crawford asked Ron what the definition was that he used for regional. Cubellis stated that in the Regional Transportation Plan there is a definition for regionally significant. We needed a higher standard than that.

He stated that a regional project should serve multi-jurisdictions, the Lummi Bridge serves both Lummi Reservation and Ferndale and should be listed as regional, not local. Lake Louise should be local, because it does not serve more than one jurisdiction.

The State is going to get a list from one to thirty, prioritized, but it won't identify tier one, two or three.

The smaller jurisdictions, Blaine, Ferndale, Sumas, were asked if they are satisfied with where their projects are on the list. The representatives from those jurisdictions are satisfied with their projects.

The question was asked who ranked the Whatcom County projects in order of priority. It was stated that Slater Road Bridge was rated as the highest priority because it is fully permitted and ready to go.

Vinnish stated that Haxton/Red River Bridge is a pedestrian bridge. Board members had no problem with leaving it on the list.

Linnea Smith asked if the project is on County right-of-way and if the County would be culpable if someone got

hurt there. It was stated that there may be some culpability.

Pike suggested that the two Lincoln Street Transportation Center projects should be classified as FTA projects and removed from the list; they do not qualify for FHWA funds.

Consensus was received from the Board to remove the Lincoln Street projects and place them into the FTA portion.

Shaded projects on the list are not on the federal functional classification list and need to be. Jurisdictions need to take care of this.

Pike asked to take \$5 million off the railroad relocation project and add it to the Warf/State/Forest Street Roundabout, the pedestrian safety crossing projects and overlay projects.

Suggestion to leave the non-FHWA projects on list as un-prioritized projects. These projects were included in the TIP amendment.

Linnea Smith asked why the projects are already approved if the community hasn't been informed. Asked why she even came to comment if the projects were already approved.

Pike stated that the projects weren't approved last week and still aren't approved now. There are a lot of layers to a project moving forward to being built, one step is that they have to be on the TIP list. Putting something on that list just says that we want to do the project. What we did last week was move the projects forward in the process to potentially be funded and approved. The public is still able to comment.

**MOTION:** Pike moved, Bromley seconded, to approve the Federal Infrastructure Economic Stimulus List as restructured.

Comments:

Kremen stated that the way the money is being allocated is not proportional to the population. The County is giving up a lot to make it work for everyone.

Louws stated that this is a prime opportunity to get a lot of the Port waterfront area taken care of. The Port, City of Bellingham and Whatcom Council of Governments and most all of the jurisdictions said they support the Port waterfront project; that it will be good for all of us.

Ericksen stated that he takes this as a prioritized list of projects that are ready to go in the next 180 days; not a prioritized list of projects for the County. As the guidelines change, the list should be flexible and there may be changes.

Walker stated he appreciates Kremen's concern, and thinks these projects should lead to economic development. The waterfront redevelopment will lead to the most economic development in the future.

Pike pointed out that the City of Bellingham's number one project is the railroad project and is a benefit to the entire region.

**MOTION PASSED**

Miller stated that staff will update the group when WCOG learns of developments from the Governors office or the Federal Government.

D. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:41 am.

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Jack Louws  
Chair

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Jim Miller  
Executive Director

