

WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION
POLICY BOARD
MINUTES
July 8, 2009

ATTENDANCE

BOARD MEMBERS: Jack Louws, Scott Walker,
Bob Bromley, Todd Carlson,
Tom Jones, Andy Rowison,
Sam Crawford, Gary Jensen,
Dan Pike, Louise Bjornson

STAFF: Gordon Rogers, Jim Miller, Mary
Anderson

A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:35
pm.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

None received.

C. MINUTES

MOTION: Crawford moved, Bromley
seconded, to approve the minutes from May
13, 2009.

MOTION PASSED

D. PUBLIC HEARING

D.1 2009 Transportation Improvement
Program Amendment

This amendment will add the following
projects to the 2009 TIP; Lynden East

Grover Reconstruction Project, WTA Bus Replacements,
WSDOT I-5/Vicinity Lakeway Drive Sign Bridge Replacement
and WSDOT Region-wide Crack Sealing.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 3:40 PM

No comments received.

MOTION: Bromley moved, Jensen seconded, to close the
Public Hearing.

MOTION PASSED

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 3:41 PM

MOTION: Jensen moved, Rowlson seconded, to approve the
TIP Amendment.

MOTION PASSED

Crawford asked what the status was of the ARRA money
taken away from projects that came in under bid.

Miller sent a letter to the Governor about the Lynden
funding being reduced and asking for a meeting. He also
written Congressman Larsen and discussed this issue with
Larsen's staff when he was in Washington D.C. He has not
heard from either Governor Gregoire or Congressman
Larson. The list of Tier II projects has changed, all
projects are WSDOT projects and none are local projects.
According to the ARRA bill, the division should be 30%
local and 70% state. We were led to believe that the
Tier II projects would be local projects.

Crawford said that after talking with Kathleen Davis he
got the impression that in WSDOT's opinion they did not
need to give MPOs money to begin with. That we should be
grateful for what we have and that the concern over the
extra money is misplaced.

Louws stated that he is unhappy with the process, with
the amount of time staff spent on the project to then
have money taken away, feels like a strong slap in the
face.

E. NEW BUSINESS

E.1 Bellingham Waterfront District TIGER Discretionary Grant

Rosenberg is before the Board to seek a letter of support for the joint grant application between the City of Bellingham and the Port of Bellingham, for the waterfront district project. The project is located at the old GP site, the lagoon and the marine trades area. There are 7 different projects listed together on the application, for a total request of \$60 million. The waterfront district project will provide both long term and short term economic benefits to the entire region.

Three of the projects must be done in sequence; relocating the railroad, the Warf/State/Forrest intersection improvement and the Cornwall Ave bridge. The City has the design completed for the Warf/Forest/State roundabout and has had success with the railroad.

Louws asked how much the City has committed to design funds and matching funds.

Rosenberg stated that the City has \$6 million match for the bridge, \$5 million match for the railroad and \$1 million for design, thus far. The completion deadline for the TIGER grant is 2012, if needed the City will finance more money up front.

Pike stated that they are working with the finance director to see what an overall bond would do, to frontload the project.

Crawford asked what development will be built by 2012 that these projects will serve.

Pike stated that if they get the TIGER grant then development can start in the waterfront area. The big street infrastructure will happen in the next 20 years, as development grows.

MOTION: Crawford moved, Bjornson seconded, to approve a letter from the WTPB showing support for the Bellingham Waterfront District TIGER Discretionary Grant application.

MOTION PASSED

E.3 Public Participation Plan

Rogers stated that the current WCOG Public Participation Plan was written in 1993 and needs to be updated per State law. Staff is looking at ways to involve the public, especially those that have been underrepresented in the past.

Crawford stated that the public is not aware of what the Whatcom Council of Governments is and that WCOG should be a place the public can go to, to express ideas and concerns.

Rogers stated that that is the intent of this plan; they want people to have access to the plan and need sufficient outreach to take place. Two members have been added to the Community Transportation Advisory Board, one with strong ties to the Girl Scout community and another with strong ties to the disabled community.

Rowlson asked if this was a policy or a plan. He stated that he struggled when reading it; policy should be short concise statement.

Rogers said that the document is in a very rough draft stage and that it is policy that will be voted on in October and adopted.

E.4 Regional Transportation Priorities/New Opportunities

Rogers stated that when TTAC agreed to recommend support for the waterfront project a question was asked if we expect to see more waves of stimulus money. While we haven't, it stimulated the idea that we should develop a list of significant top projects in the area, should some sort of extraordinary funding comes along.

Miller stated that one other opportunity that may present itself and has to do with reauthorization at the federal level. Reauthorization will be a minimum of 1 year late and closer to 2 years. What happens when this occurs is there's a continuing resolution. The act is up the end of September 2009. They are talking about an 18 month continuing resolution. What that means to us is there's a possibility that the border formula funds that come to this state (somewhere between \$12-15 million per year) and should come to Whatcom County because on a formula Whatcom County generates about 70 percent of the revenue that comes to the state with our 5 border crossings. We will be working the legislative session with border projects. Miller believes this is a more likely funding source than a second wave of stimulus funds.

Carlson said that he has met with WCOG staff and discussed. He has a conference call with WSDOT headquarters staff to discuss the border congestion relief program funding ideas. The idea is that you can borrow if you have a revenue source. They don't have a revenue source but may be able to create one in a couple of different project aside from this border fund. He will also be meeting with WSDOT staff on Aug 3rd to make work on this and not wait for the legislature to begin the process.

Carlson stated that he just received an email from Kathleen Davis sent him an email that said the panel is going forward with the Tier II list that included the \$1.6 million for Bakerview/Woburn/Hannegan project and that the all state project list for Tier II is a rumor.

Miller reported that in his recent trip to DC he discussed projects with Murray's and Larsen's office. They liked both the IMTC and SmartTrips projects but did not get much response on the Grover Street project issue from Larsen's office.

Walsh stated that the delay in getting SAFETEALU reauthorized for all that have applied for funding in the reauthorization pushes the high-priority projects to a

less likely outcome until the final version is adopted. Miller agreed and stated that these projects would become part of the bill.

E.2 Bus Rapid Transit Video

Crawford stated that these videos are made by Street Films and that he found them interesting; he thought they may merit some discussion about long term transit planning in Whatcom County. The video was shown to the Board. It will also be added to the WCOG library.

F. OLD BUSINESS

None reported.

G. REPORTS

No reports.

H. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 pm.

Jack Louws
Chair

Jim Miller
Executive Director