

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
Whatcom Council of Governments

Meeting Summary
January 22, 2009

Start time: 1:30 PM

Attendees:

Ellen Barton, WCOG	Keri Shepherd, Lummi Nation
Gordon Rogers, WCOG	Chris Comeau, Bellingham Public Works
Mary Anderson, WCOG	Joe Rutan, Whatcom County Public Works
Becky Kelly, WTA	Rory Routhe, Bellingham Public Works
Ed Conyers, WSDOT	Dave Bren, Blaine Public Works
Mark Sandal, Lynden Public Works	Bill Henry, Ferndale Public Works
Rollin Harper, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas	Elizabeth Sjostrom, WSDOT

I. Member Project Updates

M. Sandal: The 14th and 17th Street bridges should open in March. The company who is doing the paving is shut down the entire month of February.

J. Rutan: Busy with flood stuff, Hannegan/Pole intersection construction started.

D. Bren: Still working on Boblett St and Semiahmoo Parkway. Our future hopes (economic stimulus projects) 4th, 9th, B St. and Mozt Hill Pkwy which will open up access to East Blaine. There is a commercial development in the works which will add 400 units in East Blaine.

B. Henry: Ferndale is looking at stimulus funding, Main Street is funded and will go to construction this year; Church Road has no funding for 2009, but will hopefully go to construction in 2010.

R. Harper: The GMCC (Growth Management Coordinating Committee) was formed in late 2008. It consists of representatives from the County, the Cities and other jurisdictions within Whatcom County. We discuss where growth will go, UGA's density and infill and look at those topics from the small city perspective. We are looking at the land capacity analysis, how many people fit in an area, what are the employment opportunities, and the growth that could happen. The report needs to be done by June 2009, from the GM hearing ruling. We are looking at the next 20 years, it's important to get it right.

The growth in the county last year was 4% compared to the city at 2%, the land is more affordable in the county. The market will go where it will.

C. Comeau: The cities need to have balance and provide enough supply for the demand.

R. Harper: The small cities want to maintain their sense of community.

C. Comeau: Will we get to see the model and the preliminary results from the traffic counts?

G. Rogers: We have an existing model that is adjusted to a 2005 base year, we need land use input to run the model. This model will be used for the report due in June 2009.

Andy is building a model that will be ready next summer for the regional transportation plan due in 2012; the household transportation survey will go into the model. It will be done in about 1 year.

R. Harper: The extra money provided from the reallocation of funds helped us finish up Mission Rd phase 2, now we can't see the rain gardens and people are happy.

E. Barton: I was riding by bike around observing the flood damages and saw a couple areas that could possibly be bike/ped trails where streets were closed. One area is old hwy 9, the road stops and there is a field, it looks like it could be a nice trail. It may be something to keep in mind when you are closing a road, that perhaps it could remain open for bike/ped use.

E. Sjostrom: I-5 from Bakerview Rd to the Nooksack River Bridge will be repaved this summer. We will also be paving 17 miles on Mt. Baker Hwy from Britton Rd to Cole Creek this summer.

B. Kelly: The Cordota Station will open on February 1st, 2009. In 2008 the number of boarding's increased by 32%, which is equivalent to over 1 million more boarding's than in 2007.

C. Comeau: The new multi-modal concurrency system is in place.

R. Routh: We are moving forward to working with WSDOT on the stimulus projects, Sunset is moving forward, the Northwest round-a-bout construction and Meador/Whatcom Creek Trail projects should start this year.

K. Shepherd: Lummi is working on FEMA relief due to all the flooding; there are a lot of houses and roads that were damaged. We had an increase of 30% for our small transit system. We are waiting for the stimulus money to work on a transit related project.

Ed Conyers: I'm here from WSDOT since you will be talking about the economic stimulus.

II, III, IV: Economic Stimulus – National, State and Local

G. Rogers: The House Bill was approved; we haven't heard anything from the Senate yet. We don't know what they are going to do. We hope to hear something by mid February. Tom Parker and Dick Little are both in Olympia following the events.

Something just came today (Jan 22) that indicates the stimulus may be much less money than previously thought. We don't know how much money will go to transportation projects. I have a few handouts for the group, they are good sources, but they differ.

E. Conyers: We have no idea how much the stimulus actually will be, we are expecting \$515 Million for Washington State, 55% would go into WSDOT projects, 45% would be sub-allocated as STP money and distributed as usual. 62% distribution by area and 32% as STP flex funds. That might be how the money will be distributed.

55% of the WSDOT projects have to be under construction with in 90 days. Of the 45% STP projects, 50% have to be under construction with in 90 days. If you can't do it, the money will go to other states. You will have until August 2010 to spend the remaining

money in the pot. The priority will go to the people who can get their projects started soon.

G. Rogers: Your projects are listed in the unfunded or planned section of the TIP; WCOG got the approval from the board to move the projects into the funded section of the TIP and submit them to the state.

R. Routh: Since we had such a short amount of time to put these projects together I'd recommend that everyone look at their projects to make sure they are accurate.

E. Conyers: The language says "under contract", we are not sure what that means, but know that the House wants to see projects started very soon. Will probably be 90 days from the date the law is signed.

G. Rogers: There may be more than one tier or cycle of funding. There is likely to be another call for projects. Functional classification may be required depending on the rules that are attached with the money. Your projects need to be functionally classified, talk to me so we can get that started (if it isn't already). I am waiting to hear back from Sid at Federal Highways to see if projects that wouldn't usually be classified need to be classified now.

E. Conyers: Expect all normal rules to apply, except for match funds.

E. Sjostrom: If your project crosses a state route you'll need to work with us (WSDOT), start talking to us soon.

G. Rogers: WSDOT planning headquarters should have gotten word from them, required _____, in regional plan.

R. Harper: If the NEPA has not been done will those projects get booted?

G. Rogers: Probably have time, but if you haven't started the environmental process then the project may not be ready.

E. Conyers: If you are just doing overlays starting on NEPA shouldn't be a problem, it may just take a couple weeks to get approval.