

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
Whatcom Council of Governments

Meeting Summary

January 28, 2010

Start time: 10:00

Attendees:

Ron Cubellis, WCOG	Janis Marlega, City of Ferndale
Gordon Rogers, WCOG	Rod Fadden, City of Sumas
Mary Anderson, WCOG	Rory Routh, City of Bellingham
Andres Gomez, WCOG	Elisabeth Sjoström, WSDOT
Ellen Barton, WCOG	Bill Bullock, Blaine Public Works
Mark Sandal, Lynden Public Works	Becky Kelly, WTA
Rollin Harper, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas	Chris Comeau, Bellingham Public Works
Kirk Vinish, Lummi Nation	Dale Purcell, City of Lynden
Steve Banham, City of Blaine	Ed Conyers, WSDOT
Jim Karcher, WC Public Works	

I. Regional/Metro Transportation Plan – Andy Gomez

A. Gomez: Want to make sure my schedule is aligned with your schedule, some of the effort will happen away from this meeting. I will go to all communities, discuss what I've compiled, and identify deficiencies in system; and identify what performance measures we will use to identify deficiencies and develop a list of investments that is fiscally constrained, that is possible prioritized. We could add unfunded project lists too, funding sources may be identified. I presented last night to CTAG, they will actively participate. I will also use blogs to get community comments. I will have newsletters for those that don't have internet. The blog already started, will advertise starting end of Feb, maybe.

R. Routh: New transportation commission at COB should be aware of this.

C. Comeau: There may be various levels of involvement on their part.

II. Jobs for Main Street project review

G. Rogers: Distributed a project list, we should have a discussion about projects, the Policy Board meets on Feb 10. We need to make a decision before then. It will then be submitted to WSDOT by March 1. There are still a lot of unanswered questions, dialog going on in Senate. May get less than \$4.4 million, don't know. Clock starts when president signs bill, 90 days to award, it's possible that might be extend to 120 days.

K. Vinish: We don't have guidance for project selection. Should we establish local criteria to rank projects?

G. Rogers: The criteria are vague. J. Alexander, WSDOT, held a conference call to talk about state projects; locations in Whatcom County look meager. K. Davis said she doesn't know yet who will make the final decision on projects. A Statewide "Local

Panel” will be used, as was the case with ARRA program. She indicated ready to go is the number one criteria.

K. Vinish: Haxton Way Ped Trail; went before board previously, this is a separated trail from Haxton Way, from Slater Rd down to Kwina, have traffic study of deaths and injuries, project is nearly fully funded, deficiency of about \$687,000. Certified by State, went to bid, bids came back over funding available. This is a pathway to store and casino; there are no ped facilities now. We are ready to go tomorrow. Engineer had to reduce some costs that would occur, their estimate was too low, bids came back too high.

M. Sandal: Can the project be scaled back? Shorten it?

K. Vinish: Thought about that, maybe take out lighting. Already took out asphalt and 12ft wide.

J. Karcher: Goal to provide complete pathway to store and casino, if you shorten it, it would put people back in the roadway or ditch.

K. Vinish: Had discussion with State on how to treat cyclists at pinch locations. The State told us to use sidewalks. Some things went up, insurance, materials. For the boardwalk estimates we looked at Bellingham’s recent project. ARRA money is still there from last year. Open bids end of Feb, hoping to get lower bids.

G. Rogers: Help me understand how the timing will work. If on the 10th we have a final project list, this is on list, but bid comes in low, how would we proceed?

K. Vinish: Comes in less, money should stay in this area, if State allows.

G. Rogers: The project rules are the same as last time, if your bid is lower than awarded, the money leaves this area.

R. Routh: Last time project had to be unfunded, couldn’t supplant.

G. Rogers: Haven’t heard that this time.

J. Marlega: Main St improvements, 3rd to Washington. \$750,000 funding request. Scaled back scope, little ROW and environmental impact. Started in 2004, intersection improvements in 2007. Five-foot stripis all the ROW that is needed, property owners have agreed to donate. Project in the works for 2 years, could wrap up and go out to ad soon. We have \$1.5 in TIB, plus STP money. We will be bringing that section of roadway to City standards with curb, gutter, sidewalk, storm water. Need storm water conveyance, could build a small pond, or we have another area we could use.

K. Vinish: Do you have crash data?

J. Marlega: No, more of Main St revitalization, it is a heavily used road.

R. Fadden: For the City of Sumas this is a large project. Reconstruct Railroad Ave for heavy haul weight standards, no ROW required, 400 feet. I have applied to Port of Bellingham for engineering. If we don't get federal funding, we won't be able to do it. Money just includes project, not engineering.

J. Karcher: More about the scope, no storm water, ROW, or permits?

R. Fadden: One catch basin needed. This wasn't part of port of entry exit system originally. After 9/11 Dept of Homeland Security rerouted traffic to this road. We have tried to get funding from feds before, no luck. They haven't mitigated for their impacts of adding VACIS commercial vehicle x ray system.

J. Karcher: Hard to justify under \$300K for taking federal funds.

R. Fadden: We got \$120,000 last year, it was a lot of paperwork, but it worked out good. Have used same engineer for other roads, design should be simple. 2010 road budget is \$120,000 for City of Sumas. We wouldn't be able to fix road without stimulus money.

M. Sandal: Is there a small city set aside?

G. Rogers: That hasn't come out yet.

M. Sandal: Benson Rd, structural overlay of Benson (1 mile), no widening, two driveway culverts replaced, a street crossing culvert replaced, have permits and plans for that. HPA in hand, ECS no effect is working its way through. However long it would take to get fed approval is how long it would take to go out to bid. No ROW needed.

E. Sjostrom: Any coordination on State Highway needed from us?

M. Sandal: We'll tie into Badger at the turn back line. No ped facilities, no accident numbers on it. It is within City limits.

S. Banham: H St, under design for some time. Reconstruct road, add a center turn lane, 12 foot travel lanes, paved shoulder, extend sidewalk. Many pedestrians use it, truck route as well. Design 95% done, environmental work done. Do not have ECS. Have stormwater facilities built.

C. Comeau: Central Ave, included in TIGER funding package, but haven't heard anything. This is main access to waterfront. Central Ave needs to be done first, it will be only access to waterfront area for 3 years. Cornwall can not be reconstructed with out this in place.

M. Sandal: Would you need to do the signal at this time?

C. Comeau: It is a heavily used corridor; signal is needed to control traffic. The railroad has given us a letter of support.

R. Routhe: Design and environmental is done.

E. Conyers: TIGER will be announced by Feb 17th. \$50 billion in applications for \$1.5 billion in awarded funding.

J. Karcher: Structural rehab project, 8 miles in County on different roads. Large volume roadways, these roads are a regional provider for freights and goods. It is easy to get project together. We have no permits issues, no ROW needed, no stormwater issues. We will grind and repave. Project has regional benefit for everyone. One of the benefits, if it would work, we would look to work with smaller municipalities for help on projects to keep teams busy, help with inspection reports, etc.

S. Banham: Have you looked at hot in place recycle?

J. Karcher: Looked at it, it might work, works best on straight-a-ways.

M. Sandal: Can this be scaled back?

J. Karcher: Yes, listed roughly as priority.

G. Rogers: State asked us for Tier I and Tier II projects. Bellingham awarded some money for their Tier II project.

R. Routhe: That project goes out to bid around Feb 10th, Hannegan and Bakerview, we were awarded \$1.3 million, might get \$1.6 million.

G. Rogers: K. Davis said to expect same amount as last time, \$4.388 million, need project list for that amount. Tier II list should be a small project that is ready to go.

E. Conyers: Ready to go is the main thing the panel is looking for. Don't know if money taken away from projects will stay in region. Money comes in little trickles. It takes money from all over state to fund projects. I'd guess it will end up the same as ARRA.

G. Rogers: K. Davis wants to be ready to go this time around, very open about not wanting a panel, she was overruled. Scale-ability is an issue; a scalable project will have a lot of merit. Also needs to be on the TIP.

E. Conyers: Projects can be added into STIP. K. Davis suggested to MPOs to fully fund projects.

G. Rogers: How should we proceed with recommendation to Policy Board?

R. Cubellis: Are all roads Functionally Classified?

E. Conyers: All projects okay.

R. Routhe: Should we spread out money or fund in full?

R. Harper: I think going with prioritized list fully funded would be best.

R. Fadden: Sumas can go onto the Tier II list.

R. Harper: I disagree; Sumas project should be fully funded. How much is engineering request for Sumas?

R. Fadden: \$33,000 for engineering, Sumas wouldn't be able to cover even half of that most likely.

S. Banham: Could fund a scalable project in Tier I and rest on Tier II.

R. Routhe: We could pull out \$400K for traffic signal; that is the only part that is scalable.

J. Karcher: County could shift \$1 million to Tier II, but we feel that the County is deserving of funds, and project is needed.

M. Sandal: Hard for me to see Haxton project on list if it's out to bid already.

E. Conyers: We don't know all the rules yet, but if this has the same rules as ARRA, you can not add money to projects that already have construction authorization. You are already authorized for construction.

K. Vinish: Based on past bids we are short on funding, hopeful bids will come in lower. But we don't know.

E. Conyers: If project was out to bid, it was assumed that you didn't need money, for ARRA.

R. Harper: My suggested priority is: Sumas, Lynden, Ferndale, Bellingham and Whatcom County. Set aside Blaine b/c magnitude of that cost. That would equal \$4.1 million, Blaine next on list.

B. Bullock: We have \$500,000 in TIB money that we need to spend this construction season.

J. Marlega: I'd be willing to drop to \$500,000 to move forward.

R. Cubellis: We can meet again end of February, at the regular TTAC meeting on Feb 25th.

G. Rogers: We need to finalize this prior to Policy Board meeting.

III. Enhancement Project

G. Rogers: I suggest the Foothills Chamber of Commerce project, design complete, earlier NEPA completed, project ready to go. DOT is supportive of project. Project cost is \$280,000; there is \$14 million total for the state, not every MPO will be awarded.

IV. STP Regional Funding Process Review

G. Rogers: We may review our process and criteria for selecting projects.

V. House Bill 2911: Complete Streets

G. Rogers: Two GMA amending bills in committee, to develop program for complete streets, more smart communities, would offer funding if you adopt ordinances for complete streets.

C. Comeau: Limited to cities of 20,000 +, it is an account with no funding.

E. Sjostrom: We've been working on State Plans with some bike ped projects proposed, and we've had scenic byways routes projects proposed too. There was something done about complete streets that the state did through UW. They were looking at State Routes that go through cities that function as main streets; I made sure they had SR 11 on there. This is different that what C. Comeau was talking about. If your comp plan says that complete streets are what you want, we would have to comply.

VI. Other No further discussion

VII. Adjourn