

**Transportation Technical Advisory Committee**  
Whatcom Council of Governments

**Meeting Summary**

October 1, 2009

Start time: 10:00

**Attendees:**

John Hergesheimer, Port of Bellingham  
Gordon Rogers, WCOG  
Mary Anderson, WCOG  
Becky Kelly, WTA  
Gary Davis, Whatcom County  
Dale Purcell, Lynden Public Works  
Rollin Harper, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas

Wendy Fisher, City of Ferndale  
Chris Comeau, Bellingham Public Works  
Joe Rutan, Whatcom County Public Works  
Tom Stacy, WSDOT  
Bill Bullock, Blaine Public Works  
Bill Henry, Ferndale Public Works  
Kerri Wohler, WSDOT

**I. Member Project Updates**

J. Hergesheimer: We continue to work with the City on GP site, Waterfront District. Site clean up, feasibility study, will take about 1 year to complete. We are looking at the different components of contaminations, and how to clean them up. We are working with the City on the Master Plan development for that site, also working with WWU to relocate part of the campus. After clean up (1 year), in water clean up, out for permits in spring, 4 year clean up process.

The Marine Trades Area is open, joint use WWU and BTC; the Port built it with a 1 million grant to convert a portion of the old GP tissue warehouse.

Other projects include, Airport parking (for planes), taxi way delta is underway, should be done in next two weeks.

G. Davis: Finishing up rural element update and UGA, both will be going to Council soon, also looking at individual comp plan chapters.

B. Bullock: Boblett extension is two weeks off from completing. Interchange roundabouts off 276, WSDOT project (Nov). East Blaine Infrastructure Plan going for review to planning commission, plan anticipates needs for further development. We have TIB funds for H Street, Ludwig to just beyond Allen St. Should go to construction March or April 2010. The Council is looking at suspending traffic impact fees. They haven't been updated in 15 years. Suspend pending reevaluation and review.

J. Rutan: Working on Scott Ditch, should be done at the end of October.

C. Comeau: ARRA project, enhanced ped crossings in 5 locations, complete except there are no poles (on back order), 5 months from now the new poles will arrive. Sunset is complete, Fraser St is under construction, Ohio - King, will be underway shortly. Northwest from I-5 to Bakerview, bid awarded next week; phase I includes adding bike lanes and sidewalk, phase II adds a roundabout at McCloud. The City won an APA

award for transportation planning 2009, for our concurrency project. Submitted TIGER grant application for waterfront project.

K. Woehler: Work on Guide humming along, operational complete in November. I-5 drainage and water quality improvement, storm water quality project, piles of compost, now it may look half done, but is finished.

T. Stacey: Took aerial photos of Whatcom and Skagit, design visualization projects (presentations). Photos are of as built, existing conditions and problems. Photo's available for jurisdictions. All 539, 543, I-5, 548 near BP, Samish Urban Village, Lincoln park and ride, Ohio – James, roundabouts, 2200 photos. WSDOT has 30 and 60 day servers, will put photos on there and send Gordon the link.

R. Harper: Sumas did paving on Bob Mitchell Way. In Nooksack, WSDOT is working on new parking on 544, Everson completed downtown decorative sidewalks.

K. Woehler: Progress on sign to direct commercial traffic in Sumas to Bob Mitchell Way, NW regional headquarters review process is underway.

D. Purcell: East Grover less than half way done, 14<sup>th</sup> ST out to bid, BC Ave to Main St, sidewalks, Koch Road in design phase, need ROW, want to upgrade that road.

B. Kelly: Minor service change, today is fare increase, now \$1 a ride, lowered the free ride age from 80 to 75. Budget review coming up, tax revenue down, we may need to cut service, looking at possibly 10-15% cut. WTA still can ask for sales tax increase, many factors to look at. New buses on the road, all are low floor buses. WTA was successful in getting earmarks and ARRA funds.

M. Anderson: October is Walk to School Month internationally. Whatcom County will participate on October 14<sup>th</sup>; people may contact me to participate.

G. Rogers: I was sent an article that said some schools in Florida are banning walking and biking to school, told unlawful to ride to school, Mom and son still biking.

W. Fisher: 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave work is underway.

## **II. Washington Transportation Plan**

G. Rogers: Not a lot has occurred; Washington Transportation Plan is managed by Washington Transportation Commission, broad spectrum of folks, Burke and Assoc. is working on it.

K. Woehler: Working on the Highway Systems Plan, that plan becomes a project list. It will be published next July. We need all analysis by March, getting started now reviewing deficiencies, focusing on areas we wan to analyze. Want to keep thing equal among agencies. In depth traffic analysis of all projects, and benefit cost analysis. Trying to pull out low cost options. Tier I, II, and III. Tier III, big projects, such as a

high cost intersection replacements. Tier I is low cost, operationally important, Tier II is in between. Our direction to not give any Tier III projects to headquarters. We can't afford all high cost projects right now.

T. Stacey: Map of deficient areas, defined by modeled forecasted travel. Blue sections met criteria in 2007-2008, Red is what now qualifies. Forecasted volumes are lower. This is a very initial crude analysis. Next step is to work with WCOG staff with the model, in January. Revisit growth rates and assumptions.

D. Purcell: 546 seems to have quite a bit more traffic, not shown on map.

T. Stacey: Map may not have sensitivity of growing areas.

C. Comeau: Will you include corridor streets that will take traffic off I-5?

K. Woehler: We don't know yet, but should keep it in the toolbox.

T. Stacey: Want to engage this group to see how to make the list (tiers).

### **III. STP R Funding Process Review**

G. Rogers: The background is that there may be a short term funding bill. Good possibility that there will be an 18 month resolution. Last night, continuing resolution was passed, 30 day.

#### Handouts

*List of all IS-TEA, T-21, SAFETEA-LU, Enhancement and STP projects built over the years in Whatcom County.*

*Matrix and weighted criteria; that we used for our last selection process.*

Would like this on your radar screen, to start dialog and ask if these criteria should change for project selection. We should know within next few months if 18 month continuation will take place. We will have an October 22 meeting, mid November meeting, no meeting in December.

R. Harper: What is the earliest time for a call for projects?

G. Rogers: January, and finalized by February. Will be \$3 million (about), TTAC will talk about projects in October, finalize in November.

### **IV. Climate Change Considerations**

G. Rogers: Other criteria to look at, transportation a buzz with climate change. EPA announced greenhouse gas emissions plan, not a transportation plan.

K. Woehler: We hear about it, but not in a lot of detail. A lot of efforts underway, how will we measure emissions and VMT reductions. Ecology is taking lead, WSDOT

helping. In the works, we are reviewing documents when they come out. Expect things to come out soon.

## **V. Bike and Pedestrian Projects**

G. Rogers: E. Sjoström and I. Macek were here last month, talked about updating list of projects.

K. Woehler: First page is state wide list, No Net Loss, want it validated and updated. We want to know, did multimodal transportation system lose connectivity because of a state project?

Remaining pages are local projects with a state interest. Most have connections to state highways. 1. Are locations accurate? 2. Is the scope right? 3. Is the cost reasonable? We want to know if this the right set of projects. Take a look at it and email me or Elizabeth to make update.

R. Harper: Way it was described last month was a little confusing. It made me think about frontage roads, I ride by the South bound on ramp near REI, parallel to I-5, is that a project that could be on this list?

C. Comeau: That is a City Street, but not an arterial, so not a very good chance that bike lanes would be added.

B. Bullock: Is this a list of projects that may be adversely affecting bike/ped connectivity?

K. Woehler: Intent is that WSDOT projects don't degrade multi-modal system, for non motorized trips. Local list was put together last year with E. Barton and K. Brown. Next step, all look at it, add or take away based on comp plans. Projects right, cost right? Let us know if there are problems. Are there projects that are state interest on your comp plan that should be added? Let us know within this month, we can follow up on October 22.

G. Rogers: I learned that the cost to develop full ADA trails \$400,000 - \$750,000 / mile.

J. Rutan: Not on Haxton Way, that cost is \$3 million / mile, that might be with no wetlands and no ROW needed.

## **VI. Other**

November 19<sup>th</sup>, Thursday before Thanksgiving. Cancel December meeting.