

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

**Meeting Summary**  
March 25, 2010

Start time: 10:00

**Attendees:**

Gordon Rogers, WCOG	Janis Marlega, City of Ferndale
Mary Anderson, WCOG	Jim Karcher, WC Public Works
Andres Gomez, WCOG	Bill Bullock, Blaine Public Works
Mark Sandal, Lynden Public Works	Elisabeth Sjoström, WSDOT
Rollin Harper, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas	Becky Kelly, WTA
Chris Comeau, Bellingham Public Works	John Hergesheimer, Port of Bellingham

**I. Member updates**

*Handout: Updated version of the H.I.R.E jobs bill project array.*

G. Rogers: typos were corrected and some dates were changed to fit the TIP format.

J. Karcher: Mid to late June or July is a feasible time for the County to start their project.

R. Harper: Nothing to report for Everson, Nooksack and Sumas.

B. Kelly: WTA applied for livability bus grant to get 4 hybrid buses. The hybrid buses cost \$250,000 more than regular buses; price is \$650,000 - \$700,000. Regular buses are usually about 80% federally funded. There is a ballot measure on April 27 for a sales tax increase of 2/10 of 1%, no new news to update on that.

G. Rogers: I read an email that outlined statewide congressional earmark requests; there were many hybrid buses on there.

E. Sjoström: There is controversy in Blaine; the roundabout project has disgruntled a few business owners who filed a lawsuit. We are advertising for on/off ramp reconstruction on I-5, Northbound Samish Way, South-bound Lakeway Drive, Iowa St and Sunset Drive. These will be going to ad April 20; we are working with neighbors on noise wall issues. Church Mountain Road realignment on 542, Nooksack River kept washing highway away. Ended up with a bridge, some scenic byway issues came up. Construction March 17 – April 22.

G. Rogers: Scenic byways issues?

E. Sjoström: It is Forest Service land; we have an easement agreement with them that we will consider aesthetic values on all projects. The Glacier Creek bridge replacement, there were hotels relocated b/c of drainage issues, project will begin Spring to early Summer. Some relocation work has been done already.

I will send a link to opt in to project email updates from our office.

The Everson-Goshen safety project put on hold until 2011. The Terrell Creek fish passage project on 548 is short \$4 million.

C. Comeau: Nothing to report.

J. Marlega: Waiting to pave on 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave will start roundabout on Monday.

J. Karcher: Brought maps for project updates, both maintenance and capital. W. Illinois Timpson coordinating with COB, will start end of March. Haxton Way trail, coordinating with Lummi, will start end of March.

G. Rogers: We have an agenda item to hash out a combined capital project maps, did anyone else bring maps?

*No one else brought maps*

Do you want to do that?

J. Marlega: I think it would be helpful.

E. Sjostrom: What format would you like the maps in?

J. Karcher: Ours is in Auto-Cad. Would one map with all our projects on it be too busy?

G. Rogers: We can simplify it. We will take what you have. If you don't have one, GIS would be better than auto-cad for us.

J. Hergesheimer: Runway project, the Port opened bids; low bid was \$26 million. Contractor is working out haul routes. The project will use 170,000 tons of asphalt and 80,000 tons of rock. The rock will be coming out of Whatcom County. Construction will start in April, with final runway paving in September. The airport will be closed for 3 weeks in September. This project does impact haul routes in County. Bid tabulation is online at [myplancenter.com](http://myplancenter.com). The work must be to FAA standards, so materials have different specifications. There are 250 bid items.

R. Harper: This will have affects on roads in the small cities if rocks are coming from local pits. Trucks tear up streets, and the small cities are left with no funding to repave roads.

M. Sandal: East Grover ARRA starting back up first week in April should be done in May. The 14<sup>th</sup> Street STP-R project will see paving in April, and we are finalizing bridge and street designs on Kok road.

B. Bullock: The final lift of paving on Boblett St connector was completed Tuesday, open for traffic tomorrow. Ribbon cutting on Monday. There are some redevelopment plans. The city owns the airport, and plans to sell to commercial – industrial interests. There is a new storm water facility in that area. Blaine's IJR was approved for expanding I-5 exit 274 interchange. Also have a project on the IMTC list, design and engineering at

30%, will then hook up with Odell Rd. in the future. The roundabouts project is not ours, but preliminary construction is slated to begin April 5, with full closure of D Street. Marine Dr. will remain open. On ramps closed. Project will take 30-35 days with incentive; but may take up to 50 days. GSA is redoing boarder crossing booths. All project parts are slated to be completed by December 2010. Residential streets projects are going to ad in two weeks, 2<sup>nd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> B and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets, and the sewage treatment plant is scheduled to come on line June 1.

G. Rogers: I don't have much of an update on the Jobs Bill; it may not have any money. When it passed, the second House Bill, under 'HIRE' name, there was no transportation money included. It was mostly a tax relief bill. Should have been followed by an additional, transportation oriented, ore House Bill, but that has been swept aside. We don't know what will happen.

C. Comeau: We heard the bill was on life support. Probably won't see anything for a couple months.

A. Gomez: Model draft document and draft model will be complete next week. I've asked all jurisdictions to provide comments. If you would like me to come to you and work through your comments I can do that. What I plan to do is receive your comments and try to handle it; I will do the best I can. I hope to have final product by mid April. Looks pretty good right now, just a couple trouble spots.

For the planning effort: I am hoping we can start the planning process by end of April. I have a process set up we will go through. The County is doing some counts for me around the BP plant. Their employment fluctuates so much; we need an accurate count of their access points. Blaine will also be doing counts this week and next.

To complete the Whatcom Transportation Plan by June 30, 2012, at some point we have to come up with a 20 year forecast project list. It should include projects that we think we can fund in the future.

My questions for you are:

*When do you plan to finish your Comp Plans?*

*When will you have a 20 year project list for your plan?*

C. Comeau: How do you come up with a 20 year project list without a forecast land use plan?

A. Gomez: We have forecasted land use; we can help you with that. We can run model for you and show 2032 no-build congestion scenario. Network for 2008 is also done. We can run model at May meeting.

G. Rogers: The Comp Plan adoption target is up to your jurisdictions based on decision of the Governors three year extension.

R. Harper: I have heard that Whatcom County, Lynden, Bellingham, and Ferndale will proceed. Others will probably wait if there is an extension.

C. Comeau: May need to just use what the jurisdictions have right now. It will take about a year for the public process review. Plans almost never get adopted by deadline.

G. Rogers: We can use model to see what projects are needed. We do need to move forward with our plan.

E. Sjostrom: The Legislature sets WSDOT's priorities on a biennial basis; we don't know what will happen.

A. Gomez: It sounds like we can wait to answer these questions until we run the model. Projects should be on regionally significant roads, we will determine the regionally significant roads and centers at April TTAC. Then at the May meeting I'll tell you the answer from that, and show you the 2032 no-build congestion areas.

I'll be blogging updates on things in the plan. We will also have newsletters for those without internet. We will be advertising on WTA buses in June.

C. Comeau: With blogging, when you get feedback or comments will you be directing people to jurisdictions for more specific information?

A. Gomez: No, I won't be responding to comments.

C. Comeau: We've been working with Andy on the model, and found some places that needed work. I suggest meeting with him to make sure the model is accurately reflecting your area is very helpful.

A. Gomez: It's a model so there may be errors. There are some things we can't predict, some counts are not reliable. If we can get a good calibration we can move forward. We have the Household Travel Survey data, with localized information.

G. Rogers: An update on the State Transportation Plan; I am on the advisory committee for the State Planning Commission. The Legislators said the commission should prepare policy plan. They have been working on plan for 1 year. WA Transportation Plan is due to be presented at the end of 2010. Other two State plans are the Intermodal Plan and the Highway System Plan; all three are on different time lines.

At the same time, there are some line items that affect us in State budget. One requires the commission to work with RTPO to develop list of projects. The commission's consultant has been working with RTPO's to develop the list; they have found that it is hard to make that list. I don't know how that will work out. I don't think the Governor has signed much of that yet, so we don't know if it will be vetoed or not.

## **II. State Legislated Transportation Goals**

G. Rogers: *Handout – State Transportation Goals*

Economic Vitality was added this session, not signed into law yet, but is likely to happen. It was taken out a few years ago and replaced with stewardship. We have to address these goals in our work plans. We also have to think about the agreement that took place last year between USDOT, HUD, and EPA to take into account economics and livability in all transportation planning and funding projects.

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

G. Rogers: We have a policy board meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup>, if we want to make changes in the way we select STP projects we need to do it now.

Two handouts – *STP-R Project Selection Criteria and scoring sheet*  
*STP-R and STP-E project lists from 1993-2008.*

We have historically been allocated a bit under \$2 million a year under the STP-R program. I would like to create a prioritized list of projects for the next two years. It will be a \$4 million dollar list. We are already on our way to being through first year; the Federal Fiscal Year starts October 1. SAFETEA-LU has been extended thru December 2010. We need to get this wrapped up by next meeting. We currently have three qualifying criteria and separate ranking criteria. 2009 was the last year we identified projects for this program. Item 10 was a bonus that was added during the last go around, which maybe should be taken off.

C. Comeau: Can you provide us with the last list and cut off point.

R. Harper: From last go around we will know which projects are eligible to receive bonus points. TIB is thinking about adding a sustainability criteria, for consistency should we add that criteria?

C. Comeau: There was a menu of sustainable measures to choose from.

M. Sandal: A lot are going to ‘readiness to proceed’; if jurisdiction has already started and is looking for additional funds. If you have a large design component in there, you could be a few years out.

G. Rogers: We did address that a little bit, the project needs to be ‘ready to go’ in some regard, it needs to be completed with in three year period. Some MPOs have five year project lists; although I think it’s risky to do that.

C. Comeau: Most of the projects on our TIP don’t have much design done.

J. Karcher: Can we have the criteria link to the model, takes subjectivity out.

G. Rogers: The model is set up to do that, however, that process takes politics out. If the model recommends a project and your Council doesn’t want to do that project, it won’t

happen. Our Policy Board has been really good; they approved the list you created for Jobs Bill.

C. Comeau: Is the goal to make sure this is the criteria we want to use at the next TTAC meeting?

G. Rogers: Yes, then we will do a call for projects, we may be looking at next season for implementing any projects

C. Comeau: STP-R and STP-E, different criteria for each?

G. Rogers: Yes, but haven't heard anything on STP-E.

E. Sjostrom: I keep hearing that there will be a lot of funding for bike ped projects. This year there was not an open call for bike ped safety projects. I have been hearing about new policies but don't know where funding is coming from.

C. Comeau: We got a letter inviting us to submit bike ped safety grants applications for Samish Way and Indian St.

G. Rogers: I'm asking for you to bring suggestions to the next meeting. I'll prepare a list of criteria you can look at as a starting point.

J. Hergesheimer: Should State goals be taken into account for project criteria?

G. Rogers: That may be a good idea.

#### **IV. Capital Map Review – moved to April meeting**

#### **V. Other**

#### **VI. Adjourn**