

**Transportation Technical Advisory Committee**  
Whatcom Council of Governments  
**Meeting Summary**  
March 4, 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 Routhe, City of Bellingham
Andres Gomez, WCOG	Jim Karcher, WC Public Works
Sam Shipp, City of Bellingham	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	Ed Conyers, WSDOT
Joe Rutan, WC Public Works	John Hergesheimer, Port of Bellingham

**I. Member updates**

J. Marlega: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave project was funded with economic stimulus money, contractor is grading, poured sidewalks, waiting to pave.

K. Vinish: We received a small grant for solar powered lighting on Haxton Way. CTIPS program awarded us a grant to produce another game, for transportation planning for tribal governments; this one will focus on transportation planning dealing with MPOs, we will probably develop a board game and online version, definition phase right now. I might contact you for input; if you are brand new what should you know before going to an MPO meeting.

G. Rogers: A consultant was hired at the federal level to do a similar survey of MPO members; another went out surveying MPO staff. Presumably it will result in report. Will send Kirk info.

B. Kelly: On April 27<sup>th</sup> the public will vote for a sales tax increase of 2/10 of 1%. WTA is currently drawing down reserves; if ballot measure fails there will be an immediate 14% service cut and more cuts later too. We did a phone survey to residents of County, around 48% said they'd vote no, it will be pretty close.

R. Harper: There are no project currently in Everson and Nooksack.

R. Routhe: We just awarded W. Illinois project, there will be a new main entrance to BTC, as a follow up we will be looking at traffic calming in that area. We are on the streets for our tier II Bakerview Hannegan overlay project. Northwest Drive started construction again; we are adding a roundabout at I-5 off ramp. At the Federal level the COB APA concurrency

guideline got acknowledgment in the State Transportation Planning publication.

We got a high speed rail grant of \$200,000 for the waterfront bridge replacement, still short \$14 million, but that will get us to final design. We will know at the end of project if there is money left over, may be about \$800,000 in STP funds. Construction should finish this year.

J. Rutan: Yew St is going out to bid next week, Kingsmill to Tacoma, both sides widened and adding sidewalk, 1,500 feet at a cost of \$3 million. Mosquito Lake Bridge has been closed for 8 months, we hope to finish it soon. Clearbrook Creek on Johnson Road is out to bid. We are putting together a big map of all our major construction and maintenance projects. We will have a meeting with larger entities, indentifying timing and access issues with all construction projects in Whatcom County.

G. Rogers: We can look at maps at the next TTAC meeting.

M Sandal: When will your chip seal letter for small cities come out?

J. Rutan: I will ask.

B. Bullock: For Boblett St we are waiting for paving. Will be a secondary link to 543. Working on the coordination of roundabout projects, which is slated to go, Interwest Construction won bid, at \$2.7 million. Engineers estimate was \$4.4, will start on the 15<sup>th</sup>, for initial staging, 4/5 construction window of 55 days. Will close D Street, if they are done in 30-35 days the contractor will get an incentive. Marine Dr Project is mostly pedestrian oriented. BNSF did a railroad crossing improvement, we are doing a shared bike ped path connect to Marine Dr. In 4 weeks, we will go to bid for residential streets project, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, B and part of 9<sup>th</sup> Streets; road and sidewalk improvements. Revenue stream for bond, property levy I think. IJR approved for Exit 274, proposal with IMTC for funding for design, \$300,000 for design, \$2-3 million for everything else. Our water treatment plant brand new and will be fully operational in June.

R. Fadden: Sumas received \$18,000 for engineering for our stimulus project.

M. Sandal: 14<sup>th</sup> St project, will finish paving soon. East Grover, curb gutter sidewalk on small portion, finishing up design on Kok Road,

R. Fadden: Since all bids have been coming in under, will engineers start to adjust estimates?

J. Rutan: We need to look at the whole history, not just last year. Estimates were made in 2007 for projects being constructed in 2010. We risk loosing funds if under bid. Some contractors are not making money on these projects.

R. Routh: We are spending a lot on inspection. In the end we will probably come close to engineers estimate.

J. Hergesheimer: Airport runway taxiway project is out to bid, \$21 million, we will close the runway for 3 weeks. It is 95% funded from an FAA grant. We had the biggest pre-bid meeting I've ever seen, 65 contractors present. Project will use 180,000 tons of asphalt, and 80,000 tons of base rock, 260,000 tons of rock total.

R. Harper: Are you willing to share bid tab with us, it may put scarcity of resources in area.

J. Hergesheimer: May use out of County rocks. This is FAA work, so different specs. Bid opening is Mar 11, 2pm. Whatcom Waterway cleanup in design phase, permits through ecology, takes a lot of time to get through design and permits, hope to start in 2012, \$80 million project. The Georgia Pac upland site is going through analysis of cleanup options. That area will go from heavy industrial to mixed use, 220 acres. The Marine Trades area is the site of the former ASB treatment basin which will be a new marina.

G. Rogers: Handout – *WSDOT flowchart Strategic Planning Division*.

## **II. Model update – Andy Gomez**

A. Gomez: We have been working on this for the last year and are now ready to show results of model. I will call you next week to set up a time to meet with you and we will run plots of time of day and 24 hour direction, AM peak PM peak and mid day. See flow and model results, counts. If you are not satisfied, you can give suggestions, so far it's looking pretty good.

I will meet with you, sit down one on one, look various plots, we can fix if you don't like results, otherwise we will use it for plan and other projects. I'll go to you or you come to me. I'll point out some areas where we can work together.

C. Comeau: At what point will we see forecasting?

A. Gomez: Once Calibration is done, forecast should be easy. Will have the network in 1 year. Will have demographic info for 2020 and 2032, just need to run scenario. Once we are comfortable with base year, should not take long to forecast. Base, 2008, household from County, land use is forecast, zoning is current.

K. Vinish: Zoning on Res if different than County.

C. Comeau: When will we have documentation on model, we need to explain to people how it works, with the methodology in layman's terms.

A. Gomez: On the land use side, documentation is done, on the transportation side will be done end of April, can't finalize until things done.

G. Rogers: Shorter simpler version, not technical.

A. Gomez: Once tech document complete, we can adjust for public.

### **III. Jobs For Main Street project review**

G. Rogers: Are there changes to your projects? We received a support letter for the Bellingham project from the Port of Bellingham. The House Bill passed, Senate passed a different version called 'Higher'. They are trying to produce new bill that will provide funding for this bill. We might receive much less funding than we initially thought.

J. Hergesheimer: The Port supports the Bellingham project; we are not submitting a project. This is a critical project for waterfront. If Central is relocated will that make the existing Central obsolete? Depends on status of granary building, it is not marketable to sell; the Central St Pier is not to code for H 20 truckloading. This is the historic entrance for whole GP site.

M. Sandal: Are you bidding airport project with this as a haul route even though doesn't meet standards?

J. Hergesheimer: We have options, one is a question of FAA funding for off site project, this is only the alternative site for offloading. It is load restricted, but still usable. Other alternatives as well.

M. Sandal: If the goal is to get the pier drivable for construction, why are there pedestrian facilities?

C. Comeau: This will be the only access to the waterfront; it needs to be able to handle trucks.

J. Hergesheimer: Central point is the only at grade access to site.

J. Rutan: People will be there and will want to walk places.

C. Comeau: Tying Old Town and waterfront together.

J. Hergesheimer: We are looking at a long time frame. Trying to get central core and develop on either side. It will have a 20 year life span.

M. Sandal: I see this as a truck access, there is nowhere for pedestrians to go.

R. Routh: Will be the detour when we close down Cornwall, will also need pedestrian access.

J. Hergesheimer: Could have heavy use industrial in there at any time.

R. Harper: This is pared down to bare minimum, just a stripe on pavement.

J. Karcher: 20 year life, H-20 mentioned. Trucks are much heavier than we've seen before.

J. Rutan: Would need to rip out and rebuild whole bridge to meet those standards.

C. Comeau: Took out traffic signal, \$2 million down to \$1.6 million, at some point there will be a need for a traffic signal. Basic access to waterfront, this could lead to many jobs in this region in the future.

M. Sandal: Benson Road is ready to go, will send CA request to J. Rutan. Benson Road and Kok road are the only two roads we can speed federal money on.

R. Fadden: Partial funding for engineering, city will fund rest of we get stimulus money. Last few weeks we had 5 lanes open at boarder, now back down to 1.

B. Bullock: H Street moving along, the ROW being certified, Environmental review will be done by March. ROW: \$13,500 needed, slope easements. Environmental qualifies for CE.

E. Conyers: We received ECS, Sec 106 pending, no issues.

J. Rutan: County project structural overlay, Minimum project \$2 million. No ROW or permitting, great value. Need to fix Smith Road. If \$1 million, we would probably do Hannegan and Everson-Goshen. It does make some sense to make the rest of that a Tier II project.

County would like to propose that a project gets put on the tier II list. The Slater Road Bridge project, at \$8 million. When you exit off I-5 and head west, the road drops down after you cross the railroad tracks. We have to close it often because of floods. The detour goes through Ferndale. This is an important project for the County.

K. Vinish: County Exec and Lummi Nation Chairman are in DC putting in requests to Senators; we need to show that we are working with local MPO and have tried other funding mechanisms. We may try to get Federal lands Discretionary funding.

Goal is that through some other federal mechanism we will get funding. Meeting with Sen. Cantwell, we need to show that we are working with MPO and other partners to make it possible.

E. Conyers: If you are given \$1 million?

J. Rutan: See if there is a phase we can do. There may be money from other sources.

E. Conyers: Have you done anything on NEPA?

J. Rutan: Have some FEMA funds, designed at Fed standards.

M. Sandal: Does \$8 million include detour?

J. Rutan: We will keep Slater Road open during construction. The other alternate routes are long and through other municipalities. Huge trucks will be coming in. We also have to take into consideration emergency response time.

R. Fadden: Have you looked at fixing the problem that causes the flooding?

J. Rutan: Not as easy. There would be minimal change by fixing the dike.

There are impacts for closing Slater, FEMA granted us about \$4.5 million to head problem off. We have to put up physical barriers so people can not get through. The roads gets up to 12 feet deep, it's very deceiving.

R. Cubellis: Your goal to get on list. What we've heard from K. Davis, is these projects should be ready to go, and scale-able. This project doesn't fit that bill initially.

R. Routh: Have some paving projects that we could add to tier II list.

K. Vinish: Modified our request to be just the lighting portion. We have \$160,000 from CTIP, we need \$150,000 to continue lighting. We will use some solar power if no power available. Total length is about 9,000 feet. We have talked to funding agency; they want us to light to standards.

J. Rutan: The County is supportive of this project.

M. Sandal: This will be a rebid?

K. Vinish: This is a separate contract, will have to rebid. Technology is advancing. Solar lighting will be good alternative for other projects in the region.

B. Bullock: Blaine has several LED and inductions sampled. They are 34 watts instead of 250.

J. Marlega: Main St improvement project, we have our ROW certification, and are ready to go. We scaled back the scope and decreased our grant request from \$750,000 to \$500,000.

J. Karcher: Any TIB constraints with timing.

J. Marlega: No, could put towards other phase.

R. Harper: I think Bellingham should be number 1, two very small projects as 2 and 3, and County as 4 (at \$1 million).

M. Sandal: Sumas is not shovel ready. For the Bellingham project, I understand importance of it, but confused as it being multi-modal, it has a false description.

C. Comeau: No ped demand now, we are not leaning on multi modal. This is an Investment for the whole region.

M. Sandal: Where will pedestrians go?

C. Comeau: A lot of activity going on, Marine Trades Area, it will be busy.

J. Hergesheimer: Upgrading pier, not widening.

K. Vinish: I would have been concerned if there was no ped access on project.

J. Hergesheimer: Roeder pedestrian area on bridge, if you go down there and you will see peds and bikes in that area. The bridge is not being widened, just a stripe.

G. Rogers: That level of detail will not be before the Policy Board. The goal is jobs, as the number one driver. No criteria set for project selection.

M. Sandal: I don't support R. Harpers list. I am concerned about Sumas' ready to go status. Why do we need a priority list if we don't know if there is funding.

R. Harper: Sumas got design done for ARRA project quickly. Not an issue.

G. Rogers: President could sign bill soon, you will then have 90 days to award.

B. Bullock: Blaine project is scale-able, could fund part of it with our road fund.

B. Bullock: When we know the final amount can we create a finalized list.

E. Conyers: When this passes congress that starts the clock, no time to go through boards to change list.

B. Bullock: Put \$450,000 for Blaine.

E. Conyers: Panel will look at Tier II being scalable, suitable size.

M. Sandal: The order I suggest is Bellingham, Whatcom County, Lynden, Ferndale, Lummi, and Sumas.

G. Rogers: There may be some rationale for having smaller projects up higher.

J. Rutan: If jobs the priority, larger projects spend more money on jobs, not as much on management.

K. Vinish: I make a motion to vote on each prioritized list separately.

R. Routh: Second.

*R. Harpers list: yes: 7, M. Sandal list: yes: 3*

*R. Harper version passes.*

M. Sandal: Lynden and Ferndale should be #1 and #2 on Tier II.

R. Cubellis: If there is not enough funding for Tier I, will the remainder of projects be on Tier II?

C. Comeau: If we did that, and received \$100,000 for Tier II, would that help Lynden or Ferndale?

E. Conyers: They are looking at projects that are the right size for the money they have. They will ask if you can do it with funds available.

G. Rogers: We don't know if Tier II line moves from Tier I drop off point.

E. Conyers: Panel didn't look at Tier II list as hard and fast priority, they chose the project. They might look for other types of projects to fund, if all Tier I are paving across the state.

G. Rogers: With ARRA we saw a list published, Bellingham was on and off.

R. Cubellis: Tier II projects separate in County,

J. Rutan: Our project is scalable; we could add money to Tier I project.

E. Conyers: Can't do that, might be 4 or 5 months later. You will have to rebid a new project.

G. Rogers: When we find out money awarded to us, if it won't fund all Tier I projects, does the group want those to drop down to priority Tier II?

Yes, the group supports that.

**IV. STP Regional Funding Process Review**

Postponed until next meeting

**V. Other**

**VI. Adjourn**