

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
Whatcom Council of Governments
Meeting Summary
June 24, 2010

Start time: 8:30am

Attendees:

Gordon Rogers, WCOG	Janis Marlega, City of Ferndale
Mary Anderson, WCOG	Rod Fadden, City of Sumas
Joe Rutan, WC Public Works	Jim Karcher, WC Public Works
Kerri Woehler, WSDOT	Bill Bullock, Blaine Public Works
Ted Carlson, City of Bellingham	Brent Baldwin, Bellingham Public Works
Mark Sandal, Lynden Public Works	John Hergesheimer, Port of Bellingham
Rollin Harper, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas	Kirk Vinish, Lummi Nation

I. STP Regional Project Presentations

G. Rogers: You will present your STP-R projects today and vote on July 8th. We have \$2.2 million per year for two years (2010, 2011). We can plan out more than two years, however, there is a risk associated with that. You could build the project and not get reimbursed. If we have reauthorization we can revisit the list. WSDOT is tough on getting projects done. Once funds are allocated, they want it done. Right now our region has \$3.3 million allocated, with projects not done. Yew St, County and Ferndale.

In the past we've had a rural set aside, for cities under 5,000 or in rural unincorporated. About \$600,000 set aside for the two years.

J. Rutan: The County project is on Birch Bay Lynden Road, by the outlet mall. 14,000 cars per day. There is a four way stop right now. Previous work has gone into this; those partners are not all listed on application. The guardrail is hit once a year at least. There are no sidewalks and the pavement condition is bad. It is a Freight Route, much development occurring in the area. There is a connector route that a developer will be building. The next project will be the next intersection down. We are investing in the corridor. At this time we will not be putting in a left turn lane or widening crossing. That would be a complete signal rebuild.

J. Karcher: There will be a minor crossing widening, but to do that for the whole project would be too expensive. We will do all underground work needed. ROW from railroad, environmental done.

J. Rutan: Will be putting in dry conduit. There are pedestrians and bikes right now, with nowhere to walk/bike.

J. Karcher: Continued growth has helped us get this going. Development is continuing.

J. Rutan: We are putting together puzzle pieces; we want this to be shovel-ready, will construct Lincoln Street in 2011 and this one in 2012. We have \$750,000 in Rural Arterial Program (RAP) funds. The intersection scored well on that program.

J. Hergesheimer: Did the [Custer] Mall do SEPA mitigation?

J. Rutan: Originally when mall went in, they had to do the signal. It didn't meet warrants when it went in. So we had to give money back. Since then, we've looked at any possibility for SEPA mitigation or frontage. We had the signal work done, and have met several times with developer to see what he can do. The best option would be for him to give us money for right-of-way.

J. Hergesheimer: Signals off I5, has there been an analysis on how this will impact the Interstate?

J. Rutan: One reason why this is such an issue, when it backs up it affects I5 off ramp. Just outside limited access. This is hand in hand with DOT. Maintenance would probably be with City of Bellingham.

R. Harper: The extent of the project is signalization, how far back from the intersection?

J. Rutan: Pedestrian, bike, signal, and pavement improvement.

J. Karcher: WTA has 5 runs out there, and a park and ride.

J. Rutan: Making sure turning radius accommodates buses.

R. Harper: Where do the sidewalks lead to?

J. Rutan: Mall, gas station, grocery store, coffee shop, more development is happening north of that.

B. Bullock: Is there a crosswalk where the handicap access is?

J. Karcher: Those are two crosswalks right now.

J. Rutan: Maybe in phase two.

J. Karcher: Limits are 1,000 feet north of intersection. Leg towards I5 is 600-700 feet.

J. Hergesheimer: Is the 6' a sidewalk or a shoulder?

J. Rutan: I thought it was a sidewalk, but it's shown as a shoulder.

R. Harper: This is a small project, but very important for Sumas. When border traffic comes through Canada, the trucks and cars are separated. Commercial trucks go through x-ray building, and are then dumped out onto Railroad Street. After 9/11 all truck traffic goes onto this little city street. Sumas feels that the Federal Government should pay for rebuilding the street. It is 400 feet long, 30 feet wide, one way. This street has gotten torn up pretty bad. The Sumas street fund is down towards rock bottom.

Not expanding impervious surface, will add curb and gutter, built to all weather heavy haul standards. Importance not only for vehicles going onto Highway 9, can also turn to Bob Mitchell Ave, which city just improved with ARRA funds. Commercial district is close; we added a crosswalk for people coming from neighborhood to market. The Port of Bellingham and Sumas are providing money for engineering. Required match of 13.5% will be found, the council is willing to step up and find the money.

R. Fadden: After leaving the x-ray building, trucks will stop to be looked over. First 75 feet, 10.5" of concrete, trucks go through and slam on brakes. That is where most of the pot holes are. We have contacted Rick Larsen, Homeland Security, and others to help pay for it without results.

J. Karcher: How will drainage be handled? Turn radius?

R. Fadden: Will use existing drainage. Not adding any impervious surface.

R. Harper: One way, so only turning south.

J. Hergesheimer: Do they anticipate trucks to stack up?

R. Fadden: Gives them queuing on west side of street. Sometimes they do an additional check after x-ray machine. They will add in a stop signal to help avoid the sudden braking on now-verbal notification.

M. Sandal: Lynden project is Kok road; it is one of the primary access roads into town from Meridian. It's in bad condition. We can't chip seal it anymore. This an important project to city, at 60-70% on plans, got concurrence from State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). ROW is all acquired. Design includes 32' wide street curb to curb, sidewalks and striped bike route (widened shoulder). Majority of drainage is infiltration, some under sidewalk. West end of the project is Guide Meridian, strip mall. City is participating at 23.5%. Have paid for all ROW and PE from city funds. Existing condition is 20 foot Side Street on nothing but skimming of gravel. The project will go to start early in 2011 with construction that summer. We will need to anticipate NW Washington Fair traffic.

J. Karcher: Do you need a drainage pond for detention?

M. Sandal: Won't need to detain, will use infiltration. Will have a widened urban shoulder for bikes, will be curbed. East end is 17th Street which heads up to Front St. West end is Guide Meridian.

R. Harper: Who is generally using this?

M. Sandal: Right now not much commercial, 8.5' travel lane, after done may be used for truck traffic. 6 school buses use it, the WTA Park and Ride is west of Kok road. We won't be touching structure across Fishtrap Creek.

J. Hergesheimer: Anticipate bridge work at later date?

M. Sandal: Yes.

J. Marlega: Ferndale has been working on Main Street improvements since the 90's. We are working on it in phases; it is the major corridor into Ferndale. It serves a large number of commercial and residential traffic. We split Phase II into two stages. 3rd to Washington phase will be out to add in two weeks. We have ROW and environmental, and need to make commitment to follow through by 2012. The road has narrow lanes and no shoulders. ADT is 13,000 cars per day. The project will reconstruct the roadway; add curb, gutter, bike lanes and sidewalk.

Also, WTA needs a bus pull out here, they currently have to stop in the street. The area is starting to be developed more, police station and library will relocate here. We will build two 11' travel lane, 5' bike lane and sidewalk on both sides. City match, 50% project cost. We will have some TIB money from phase I. Asking for \$750,000, 18%, this is a critical funding source. Construction in May or June of 2012. We will be getting our CA. Will have to deal with stormwater, and may use pervious sidewalks.

J. Rutan: Lights?

J. Marlega: Will include lights. We have environmental approvals for both stages. This section is part of a larger project.

B. Bullock: The Blaine project is called H Street downtown revitalization. From Peace Portal to SR543 truck route. The City ran out of money and so they only worked on the area in front of school. Only put half the overlay. Last 20 years it has survived on crack sealing. Part of project is to get structural integrity back; this is the main connector East – West. Post office is on this road, we have 5,000 post office boxes and only 4,000 people in city. The road goes by City Hall, the

police dept and the library. Only have half the lighting. It needs to be upgraded to match the theme of downtown.

It is a 50' wide street, with parallel parking on each side, and no bulb outs. Converting one side to angled parking will increase parking by 40%, and 7' long bulb outs will increase safety for pedestrians. Down 3rd street is a bike/pedestrian path that leads to Marine Park and new bike lanes/sidewalks from the border and the new roundabouts. This is the primary stop for WTA in Blaine. The bus stops in the middle of the road right now. Stormwater drainage will not change, treatment facility is in place.

M. Sandal: Construction management at \$130,000?

B. Bullock: That's design and construction management.

J. Rutan: What's the status of your PE?

B. Bullock: No PE right now, pretty confident in estimate.

J. Rutan: What permitting issues do you foresee?

B. Bullock: None, already have ROW, won't increase impervious surface.

R. Harper: Narrowing lane, angled parking?

B. Bullock: No bike lane, angled parking instead. Narrows down at bridge. Primary route bikes take is Peace Portal, and there is a bike/pedestrian path by the library.

R. Harper: Lighting and power rolled into this?

B. Bullock: Part of what lighting dept will pay for.

K. Vinish: Accident history?

B. Bullock: Accidents are not huge on that road; it's a downtown road, with 25 mph.

R. Harper: Police patrol it regularly.

B. Baldwin: Bellingham project is James street multimodal improvement; it's a secondary arterial with over 11,000 vehicles today. We expect up to 17,000 in the future. Two bridge replacements are needed. Last year COB annexed a large chunk of UGA, 868 acres with existing residential homes, and more going forward. The Parks Dept. will improve Sunset Pond. This street serves the Sunset shopping center, Meridian Street and the Irongate Industrial Park.

Phase I goes to Orchard St, Phase II, to Telegraph. Currently this is a rural standard road. Lots of pedestrians use it; we will add curb, gutter, sidewalks and bike lanes. Entire corridor is slated for tremendous growth in the future. Our comp. plan tries to incorporate alternative transportation modes. We are asking for substantially less than last go around. We've put in \$1.45 million in local funds, 23% match.

K. Vinish: Request is for how much?

B. Baldwin: \$1.2 million. We have \$2.5 in Bridge funds. Crash totals are in packet. Main safety concern is pedestrians without facilities. Want to make Woodstock a safer design, have some issues. Anticipate construction in 2012. TIB money has been requested.

M. Sandal: If TIB goes south what will you do?

B. Baldwin: Move stuff around. The bridge culvert under I5 has fish passage issues, will work with project to alleviate that issue for fish passage. Will put in a Birchwood connector in the future.

B. Baldwin: Stormwater management will be next to park area.

R. Harper: Any concerns about FEMA?

B. Baldwin: Dealing with it now. No ROW is needed.

G. Rogers: The next meeting on July 8th and will be a special meeting. I will send out scoring sheets. We will do this on the fly; Ron will be here to enter scores on the screen. Don't have to send it in early. Previous projects may have enough to meet rural requirements. We will also be doing STP-E presentations and scoring that same day. The time pressure is because of the Policy Board meeting on July 14th.

J. Hergesheimer: Is there a way that the STP-E money can be used for these projects?

G. Rogers: That could be a possibility. We would need to come up with methodology.

J. Rutan: The size project I proposed was chosen because of the amount of money available. I wouldn't have proposed this project if money pot was bigger.

R. Harper: Interesting way to get to that point. Haven't seen any projects yet, don't want to say they are already second tier. Maybe people can look at projects to see if they can get by with a little less.

G. Rogers: \$5,461,550 total STP-R requests, \$4.4 million available. We have an allocation letter for \$2.2 million right now.

II. State Transportation Commission Priority List

G. Rogers: I talked about this at the last meeting. Developing the list will take some time, won't be fun, we are doing it because the legislators told the Transportation Commission to do this. It is an unfunded budget proviso. I have a handout of letter we will receive, it is a draft. There are two templates for project lists. A maximum of 20 projects per RTPO has been set and this seems to be firm. The list that comes from us will stand; it won't be modified by Transportation Commission. In theory some of the projects should come off our plan. These are 20 year projects. There is the potential to spend State money on local roads, I have heard that before, but it hasn't happened. The list is to be in no particular order, and needs to be submitted to and approved by the Policy Board in October.

B. Bullock: Projects are high level regional? Associated with state route?

G. Rogers: I'd stop a little short of that. Look at your comp plan, 20 years out. Look at projects that are high profile. Projects do not have to connect to or feed to State Route.

K. Vinish: Keep thinking about larger transportation projects. Mosquito fleets, improved rail service, big projects over course of 20 years good to aspire too, but is not on anyone's plans. Are those worth looking at? Do we just want projects we can take off the shelf?

G. Rogers: I'd say the latter, they are looking at needs.

J. Marlega: Any info you need from us now?

G. Rogers: See this as a sort of call for projects; think about your comp plan and the regional plan. What is hard to get funded? Bring some project ideas; we will work on the list in Aug and Sept.

III. Adjourn