

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee
Whatcom Council of Governments
Meeting Summary
June 25, 2009

Start time: 10:00 AM

Attendees:

Gordon Rogers, WCOG

Rollin Harper, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas

Bill Henry, Ferndale Public Works

Stephen Banham, City of Blaine

Chris Comeau, City of Bellingham

Kerri Woehler, WSDOT

Joe Rutan, Whatcom County Public Works

Tom Rosenberg, City of Bellingham

Kirk Vinish, Lummi Nation

I. Member Project Updates

B. Henry: Getting 2nd Ave out the door, just a couple more hurdles, going to ad on the 8th. Money is obligated, the panel told us we could have two more weeks to go to ad (after July 1). Started as a \$2.6 million project, now over \$5 million.

C. Comeau: Adopted 6 year TIP June 1st, extremely pared back list due to the economy and budget cuts. Down to 13 projects, 100% of them are bicycle and pedestrian facilities. We are moving forward on this years construction projects.

J. Rutan: Pole Hannegan is done, Mormon Ditch Bridge is underway, Scott Ditch is out to ad, Mosquito Lake Bridge is out to ad.

S. Banham: Our ARRA project is in review, Boblett connector. We are putting out the ad July 1st. We are moving forward with preliminary design work on Marine Drive, had a nice dedication ceremony for the Semiahmoo Parkway project (pedestrian gap elimination). We put a sidewalk section in. TIB rep pointed out that they are losing about \$1 million a month in gas tax revenue.

We have talked about using an area west of the railroad tracks for a project which would include roadway improvements and relocating the existing rail station to the waterfront to use as a multi functional facility. City has not committed financially to doing that, but is willing to lend support.

K. Woehler: Guide had some closers this week, but their continuing. The border project going well, bridge is scheduled to open in September. We have a couple stimulus projects starting up, cable median barriers with a short section in Whatcom County and rumble strips on numerous highways.

R. Harper: Sumas is out to bid on ARRA project, nothing new in Everson.

G. Rogers: Would like to congratulate everyone on the work you've done for the ARRA projects.

II. U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's Blueprint for Investment and Reform – Surface Transportation Authorization

Handout - Executive summary of the Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009

G. Rogers: This is the executive summary of the 90 page document.

III. Whatcom Transportation Plan – Public Participation

G. Rogers: We would really appreciate your comments on the Whatcom Transportation Plan that Andy sent to you.

IV. ARRA Projects

G. Rogers: As you know Lynden lost about \$300,000. The 10% rule is not in the stimulus bill, it is something that Federal Highways is pushing. Mayor Louws is upset and has written a letter to Congressman Larson and asked J. Miller to write a letter to Governor Gregoire, asking for a meeting. The money did not stay in Whatcom County as we were initially told it would, it went to another county.

V. TIGER application(s)

G. Rogers: This is the national competitive call for stimulus grant funding. Staff from the City of Bellingham will give a presentation on the project they are submitting.

*Handouts – Building Bellingham's Waterfront
COB six year TIP*

T. Rosenberg: This is a combined effort between City, Port, WWU and the Waterfront Advisory Group, that has been in process for the past couple years. There are 7 projects; they are focused on delivering access and development to the waterfront area. The most challenging project will be the railroad relocation. The location worked great for an industrial site, but is not so great for developing the waterfront area. We would like the track to go around the area, instead of through it. We do have an agreement with BNSF and are working on final engineering. Wharf, Cornwall and Central Streets are the three main access points to the waterfront area right now. The combination of the three can handle up to 2 million gross square feet of residential and commercial development.

We would like to optimize these existing opportunities. To move the railroad we have to build a new bridge on Cornwall Street, we will have to build the bridge first, and then relocate the railroad. However, to rebuild the Cornwall Bridge we will first have to rebuild Central Avenue, so that waterfront access is not cut off to businesses.

Eventually Warf Street will be grade separated, for now we are building a roundabout at Warf/State/Forrest Streets, which will make the intersection more bike/ped friendly.

The Marine Trades Area is another project we are working on, the Port wants to build a new marina at the ASB site, which is 30 acres. There is a 6 acre warehouse in that area that will be converted to marine service support use. Bulkhead re-construction and rip rap placement will also be required.

WWU has a real interest in being down at the waterfront. There is a long term economic impact for this project. If we got funding for all this we could be done by third quarter 2013.

Motion made for TTAC to support the Waterfront Project and recommend it to the Policy Board.

Passed unanimously.

G. Rogers: I will write a memo to the Policy Board stating your support, it may be nice to have a TTAC representative at the July 8th Policy Board meeting as well.

T. Rosenberg agreed to attend.

S. Banham asked if there are any other area wide programs that we should be thinking about for future funding.

G. Rogers: We have for the last 12 years prepared a regional transportation list, which might be a good place to start. We can talk about that at the next meeting.

It was stated that perhaps in the future we should send regional representation to our congressional reps showing that we support the same project(s) county wide.

K. Vinish: You may want to see if the Lummi fishermen would like to sign on as a supporting partner in the waterfront project. The improvements will benefit them.

VI. Other No items

VII. Adjourn