

# IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIES

Implementing the strategies of this plan requires coordination with regional partners, neighboring jurisdictions, and the Skagit County MPO to ensure actions benefit the region as a whole. Therefore WCOG will continue to pursue the programs and projects listed here in collaboration with member agencies, and provide outreach to the public in all aspects of the planning process.

WCOG will continue to operate the programs and projects that implement the strategies identified in this plan. Efforts are coordinated with regional partners, neighboring jurisdictions, and Skagit County's MPO to ensure actions benefit the region as a whole.

## Coordination

WCOG member agencies have established relationships with federal, state, and local agencies to address environmental, resource



conservation, and other issues related to transportation network improvements. WCOG will continue to work with these agencies in coordinating these efforts as they relate to this plan.

Within the larger region, WCOG also participates with several broader coordinating groups including:

**North Sound Connecting Communities** – as described earlier, the “Farmhouse Gang” focuses on developing better ways to move people through the five-county region using all available modes with a focus on alternatives to single-occupancy automobiles.

**International Mobility & Trade Corridor Project** – as described earlier, this binational planning forum coordinates improvements to mobility and security for the Cascade Gateway border crossings. Over fifty different public and private organizations participate in the forum.

**MPO/RTPO/WSDOT Coordinating Committee** – this committee meets quarterly to discuss transportation issues of regional, state and national significance.

**West Coast Corridor Coalition** – This coalition was formed in 2001 by policy leaders in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and California to address the challenge of goods movement along the west coast. Objectives include encouraging system-wide approaches rather than limiting efforts to a project-level focus; sharing best practices for optimizing capacity and performance of the corridor; developing a common voice on the national role played by West Coast states in moving exports and imports; and advocating for financing options to fund transportation system improvements that serve the interests of the coalition.



For this plan, WCOG collected input through surveys (the Public Participation Survey and Household Travel Survey)<sup>1</sup>, websites (the award-winning [www.TransportationTown.com](http://www.TransportationTown.com)), and through workshops, including one with a specific focus on complete streets. CTAG has also been actively involved in all of WCOG's regional transportation planning and has contributed to the development of this plan.

WCOG also remains involved in numerous regional advisory groups and boards, providing access to a broad range of community interests. The Bellingham-Whatcom Chamber of Commerce, Northwest Washington Economic Region, are examples of these. WCOG's formalized methods for interacting with the public are defined in detail in the 2009 *Public Participation Plan*<sup>2</sup>.

## Natural resource agency consultation

WCOG works with regional environmental resource agencies to review capital project improvements, such as new or re-aligned roads, new bridges, and major capacity-adding projects for potential environmental impacts.

Resource agencies were given an opportunity to review the entire plan. The results of their review were incorporated into *Appendix L: Resource agency review*.

## Outreach to the public

All aspects of WCOG's planning activities include opportunities for public participation. Beginning with plan development and ending with public hearings associated with the adoption of plans and Transportation Improvement Programs, WCOG attempts to gather input and ideas from members of the community.



<sup>1</sup> *North Sound Travel Survey Final Report*, Whatcom Council of Governments & Skagit Council of Governments, 2008: [http://resources.wcog.org/projects/travelsurvey\\_finalreport.pdf](http://resources.wcog.org/projects/travelsurvey_finalreport.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Public Participation Plan*, Whatcom Council of Governments, 2009: <http://resources.wcog.org/wcog/participationplan.pdf>

## Amending strategies as needs emerge

After the plan is adopted, changes in the region may occur that necessitate unscheduled updates. Examples of such events include substantial changes in land use regulations, large scale development (such as a bulk cargo-handling facility), continued rapid growth in airport operations, or a new marine facility. Any of these developments may substantially modify traffic flows enough to require revisiting plan strategies, programs, and projects.



## A focus on the outcomes

The overarching strategies that define this plan provide a framework to address the critical needs of the region in a way that serves the interests of all community members while meeting federal and State planning requirements. Through targeted programs and specific capital and other projects, WCOG hopes to see a cohesive, multi-modal transportation system evolve to meet the growing needs of Whatcom County. Even in a time of uncertainty about the future scope of federal funding, the strategies that drive this plan forward remain steadfast, and the collective efforts of all participating agencies will see this region meet the challenges of 2032 in a financially, environmentally, and publicly sustainable manner.

### Photography Credits:

Peter James Photography Studio, Pages 54 and 61; Bellingham/Whatcom Visitors & Convention Bureau, Pages 56 and 62; Whatcom Council of Governments, all other photographs.