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## **Whatcom Region Elected Executives Endorse Action Plan to Reduce Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes**

*Whatcom County, WA* – Elected executives of Whatcom County, cities, tribes, and the port district have built on their previous prioritization of improving the safety of our transportation system by signing a resolution (attached) to endorse completion of a regional safety action plan – an effort recently funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Safe Streets and Roads for All program (SS4A). Work will be done by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG). After completing the regionally coordinated action plan, local governments and tribes can apply for SS4A implementation funds.

“Over the past couple of decades, we have all experienced increasing traffic and aging infrastructure in our cities and counties. We need to try new strategies and precautions to significantly reduce fatal and serious injury crashes” Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu said.

Lynden mayor and WCOG chair Scott Korthuis added, “This plan will look at our infrastructure but, as importantly, look at the whole system – including ourselves, the road users.”

Development of the safety plan, expected to take about 20 months, will be based on the USDOT’s Safe System Approach; principles including the encouragement of safe road users, acknowledgement of human vulnerabilities and mistakes, the importance of proactive system changes, and safe speeds. Many stakeholders have a role to play as less traditional improvement strategies and innovative approaches are identified.

Bellingham mayor Seth Fleetwood said, “Fatal and serious injury crashes are not inevitable. They are preventable and we owe it to ourselves and our community to try new strategies to significantly reduce their occurrence.”

In addition to guidance by a regional, multidisciplinary Action Plan Committee, the plan will be informed by robust and broad public engagement and efforts to ensure that the needs of our most vulnerable road users are given priority.

Emphasizing this theme, Port of Bellingham commission president Michael Shepard noted, “The increasing rate of pedestrians and cyclists dying on our roads is especially alarming. We want to choose future investments based on an expectation that all users, including more-vulnerable walkers, rollers, and bike riders, will be safer.”

Even before the more structured public-engagement phase begins, all in the community are encouraged to visit [WCOG’s SS4A webpage](#) and give feedback or provide an email or phone number so they can be directly notified of upcoming engagement opportunities.

Later phases of the action plan development will include a review of state and local policies that guide and influence road safety actions, investments, and outcomes. The final component of the plan will be a list of projects and other crash-reduction strategies, agreed to by participating local and tribal governments. Implementation funds can be requested in July 2025.

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The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is a regional planning conference composed of elected officials appointed by the region's local and tribal governments. Members of the Council also serve as the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and state designated regional transportation planning organization (RTPO). More information about WCOG is available at [www.wcog.org](http://www.wcog.org).