



Meeting of the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board

Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 4:15 p.m.

Gordon W. Rogers Conference Room

314 East Champion Street, Bellingham, Washington

Join using Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85331178714>

Or phone: (253) 215-8782

Start time changed
for regional GMA
meeting.

Agenda

Pages

- A. **Call to order**
- B. **Public comment**
Citizens may speak informally to the Board on matters pertinent to its statutory responsibilities and which are not the subject of a public hearing. *Each speaker is allowed a maximum of three minutes.*
- C. **Additions to the agenda (if any)**
- 2-3 D. **Approval of the minutes -- Meeting of March 13, 2024***
- E. **Old business (if any)**
- 4-33 F. **Consideration for adoption - WCOG's 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).***
- 34 G. **Consideration of allocating Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds for WCOG to conduct a regional household travel survey in 2025.***
- 35-36 H. **Public hearing: Amendment #3 (24-05) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
 - 1. Staff presentation - Lethal Coe
 - 2. Open public hearing - Members of the public may address the Board about the subject of the hearing for a maximum of three minutes each.
 - 3. Close public hearing*
 - 4. Board discussion
 - 5. Vote on proposed TIP amendment*
- I. **New Business (if any other)**
- J. **Obligation Status Update - Lethal Coe**
- K. **Director's Report - Hugh Conroy**
- L. **Correspondence (if any)**
- M. **Board Open Forum**
- N. **Adjourn**

* Action item

DRAFT Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
Minutes
March 13, 2024

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Kim Lund, Edwin “Skip” Williams, Michael Lilliquist; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chair); **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chair); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **Whatcom County:** Satpal Sidhu, Kaylee Galloway.
WSDOT: Chris Damitio

Staff Lethal Coe, Hugh Conroy (Secretary), Ron Cubellis, Melissa Fanucci

Others **Lummi Nation:** Kirk Vinish; **McBride Public Affairs:** Tom McBride, Intisar Benges;

A. **Call to Order**

Hugh Conroy determined that there was a quorum, and Chair Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

B. **Public Comment**

None

C. **Agenda Additions**

None

D. **Approval of Minutes** of January 17 meeting.

Motion: Mr. Williams moved, second by Mr. Hansen, to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 17, 2024, as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

E. **Old Business**

None

F. **Public Hearing: Amendment #2 (24-03) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program.**

Mr. Coe presented the requested amendments to the TIP.

Mr. Korthuis opened the public hearing at 3:07. No members of the public being present, the public hearing was closed at 3:08.

Motion: Mr. Lilliquist seconded by Mr. Williams. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G. **New Business**

None

I. **Obligation Status Update**

Mr. Coe presented the current federal funds obligation status for programmed projects.

J. **Director’s Report**

Mr. Conroy asked Tom McBride and Intisar Benges to report on outcomes from the legislative session. Mr. Mc Bride and Ms. Benges covered the legislative actions on the five initiative measures – passing three of them (banning income tax, parents rights, vehicular pursuits) and leaving two for the ballot in November (Climate Commitment Act, capital gains tax).

It was noted that 29 of 45 legislative positions are up for reelection in November so, a good amount of turnover is possible.

The supplemental transportation budget (supplemental budget) spends a total of \$14.6 billion, an increase of \$1 billion from the enacted biennial budget.

K. **Correspondence**
None

L. **Board Open Forum**
None

M. **Adjourn**
3:29

Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved May 8, 2023



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Memo

To: Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)
Date: May 8, 2024
From: Hugh Conroy, Director *HC*
Subject: Review and consideration for adoption – WCOG’s SFY 2025 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Purpose of the UPWP

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and state designated regional transportation planning organization (RTPO), WCOG is required, each year, to prepare, adopt, and submit a UPWP to the state and federal governments (FHWA, FTA, and WSDOT). The UPWP presents WCOG’s framework for conducting the next year’s required and regionally prioritized planning activities, the sources and amounts of resources this will require, and the expected outcomes of the work. If WCOG is to be reimbursed by the federal or state government for its work, that work must be included in the WCOG-adopted and federally-and-state approved UPWP.

WCOG’s UPWP for state fiscal year (SFY) 2025

The draft 2025 UPWP (included as an attachment with this memo) features some changes from 2024. These include:

- Added discussion of how WCOG is indicating compliance with the new federal requirement to direct at least 2.5 percent of federal planning funds towards advancing safe and accessible transportation.
- Expectation that more staff time will be spent on certification of local comprehensive plan transportation elements as WCOG member governments update their plans for 2025.
- Confirmation of work on a cross-border, personal vehicle intercept survey – funded in large part by a recent award of \$100,000 from FHWA (which is expected to be matched by funds from Canadian agencies).

State and federal review

A draft SFY 2025 UPWP was submitted to WSDOT in early April and reviewed with WSDOT, FHWA, and FTA WCOG’s annual UPWP review meeting on April 11. Minor clarifications were requested and those changes and other suggested edits have been made.

The updated draft SFY 2025 UPWP is attached for your review and consideration for adoption.

Suggested motion

“Approve the State Fiscal Year 2025 Unified Planning Work Program for the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area as presented.”



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DRAFT Unified Planning Work Program
for the
Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area
Whatcom County, Washington

State Fiscal Year 2025

Scheduled for Consideration for Adoption by the WCOG Policy
Board on May 8, 2024

Title VI & Americans with Disabilities Act

The Whatcom Council of Governments ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the American Disabilities Act of 1990 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disabilities in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities.

For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Compliant Form, call Hugh Conroy, at (360) 685-8384.

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Introduction: The UPWP and the Whatcom Council of Governments

A Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is required periodically (annually or biennially) of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is the federally recognized MPO for the Bellingham Urbanized Area and the state designated RTPO for the entirety of Whatcom County, Washington. While WCOG assumed those responsibilities in 1983 and 1990, respectively, it came into existence in 1966 as a regional conference of governments enabled by an act of the Washington State Legislature (RCW [36.64.080](#)).

This UPWP lists and describes anticipated uses of federal and state funding for MPO and RTPO activities over the upcoming state fiscal year (SFY) 2025.

The federal funds WCOG uses to conduct metropolitan transportation planning come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Those funds pass through the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) along with WCOG's allocation of state funds for its RTPO activities. As part of their administrative responsibilities, WSDOT, FHWA, and FTA are responsible for verifying that UPWPs are complete and contain sufficient detail to support its subsequent reporting of MPO expenditures to the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

Purposes of this UPWP

The UPWP serves multiple purposes:

- It confirms for WSDOT, FHWA, and FTA that an appropriate *cooperative, comprehensive and continuing* (3C) planning process is in place;
- It includes sufficient detail for WSDOT's Tribal and Regional Integrated Planning (TRIP) office to determine the eligibility of funding.
- It meets WCOG's federal and state requirements as an MPO and RTPO, respectively, to prepare and submit a UPWP annually;
- It provides useful information for the public, the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB), member jurisdictions, and partner agencies about how WCOG activities are funded and how they complement each other to achieve progress toward adopted regional objectives; and
- It supports program management and reporting.

Organization of WCOG’s UPWP

WCOG’s UPWP is organized to provide a description of all work activities planned for Washington State fiscal year (SFY) 2025 and facilitate the TRIP’s review and evaluation of functions and expenditures related to federal and state planning funds. The individual work **activities** in WCOG’s work plan are organized under the following **six categories**.

1. Program administration
2. Transportation planning & Programs
3. RTPPO planning,
4. Regional mobility programs,
5. Programming
6. Unfunded priority programs and projects.

WCOG’s UPWP will provide detail on anticipated activities within each of the above categories. While many of WCOG’s planned activities are funded by the PL and FTA funds that the WSDOT offices administer, others are funded from other FHWA programs, state funds, local funds, and Canadian funds (for certain U.S.-Canada border related projects). While all anticipated SFY 2025 activities are grouped under the six categories, each activity section header also includes a notation of funding source types.

Explanations of SFY 2025 activities are formatted as follows:

Category (listed above)

Activity (varying number under each category)

- **Performance** (i.e., who will perform the work)
- **Products**
- **Schedule**
- **Funding** (sources to be used)

Financial table

WSDOT UPWP guidelines include a financial table template for providing a summary of MPO/RTPPO activities funded by PL, FTA 5303 and/or RTPPO funds along with the sources of proposed match and other funds as required by 23 CFR 450.308. This table is included as Appendix A.

Safe and Accessible Transportation Set-aside

For SFY 2025, FHWA has asked MPOs to detail how they are using the 2.5 percent set-aside for *Safe and Accessible Transportation* (Section 11206 of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act -- **IIJA**). The IIJA states that activities that increase safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes for people of all ages and abilities may include:

- 1) *Adoption of Complete Streets standards or policies;*
- 2) *Development of a Complete Streets prioritization plan that identifies a specific list of Complete Streets projects to improve the safety, mobility, or accessibility of a street;*
- 3) *Development of transportation plans—*
 - a) *to create a network of active transportation facilities, including sidewalks, bikeways, or pedestrian and bicycle trails, to connect neighborhoods with destinations such as*

-
- workplaces, schools, residences, businesses, recreation areas, healthcare and child care services, or other community activity centers;*
- b) to integrate active transportation facilities with public transportation service or improve access to public transportation;*
 - c) to create multiuse active transportation infrastructure facilities, including bikeways or pedestrian and bicycle trails, that make connections within or between communities;*
 - d) to increase public transportation ridership; and*
 - e) to improve the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians;*
- 4) regional and megaregional planning to address travel demand and capacity constraints through alternatives to new highway capacity, including through intercity passenger rail; and*
- (5) development of transportation plans and policies that support transit-oriented development.*

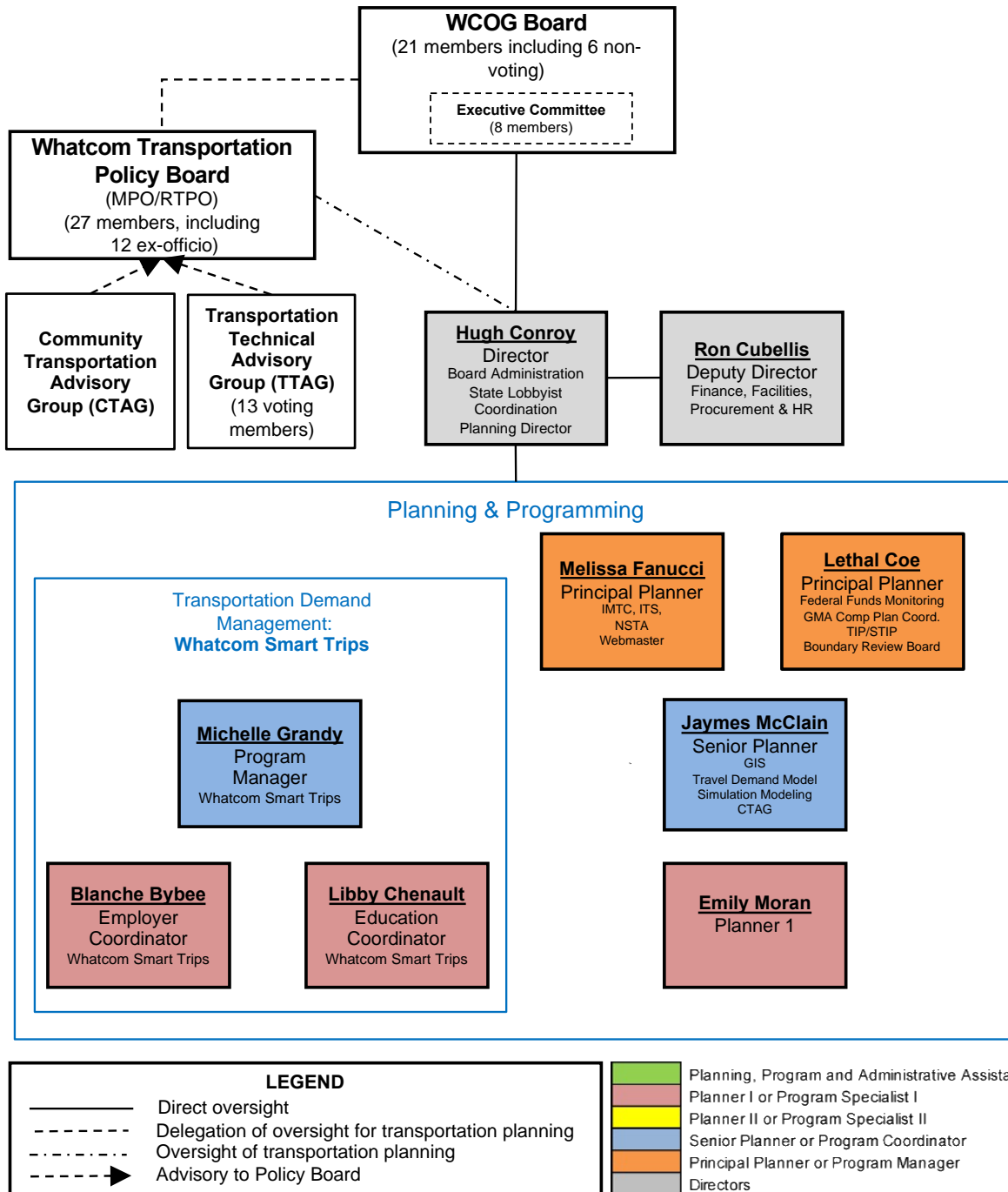
The advancement of all types of transportation through an integrated network that is equally accessible by all people is an underlying goal of all the planning that WCOG does with its local jurisdictions for the Whatcom region. In addition, WCOG’s regional transportation goals (listed and described below), explicitly include and prioritize safety, a multimodal system (all types of transportation), and accessibility and equity. These objectives are applied to evaluation of investments funded by federal programs that WCOG administers such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and the Carbon Reduction program.

While WCOG’s involvement with planning for the advancement of safer and more accessible transportation system undoubtedly far exceeds 2.5 percent of its planning efforts, the most obvious activities that align with the Safe and Accessible set-aside (and are funded with FHWA PL funds) are **highlighted in green.**

The Whatcom Council of Governments

This section reviews how WCOG is organized, the membership of the Council Board and the Policy Board, the geographic coverage related to WCOG’s responsibilities and work plan, and the current planning priorities.

Organization



Membership

The table below lists the region’s governments, districts, agencies, and institutions that participate on WCOG Council Board, its MPO-RTPO Policy Board, or both along with the individuals currently¹ serving.

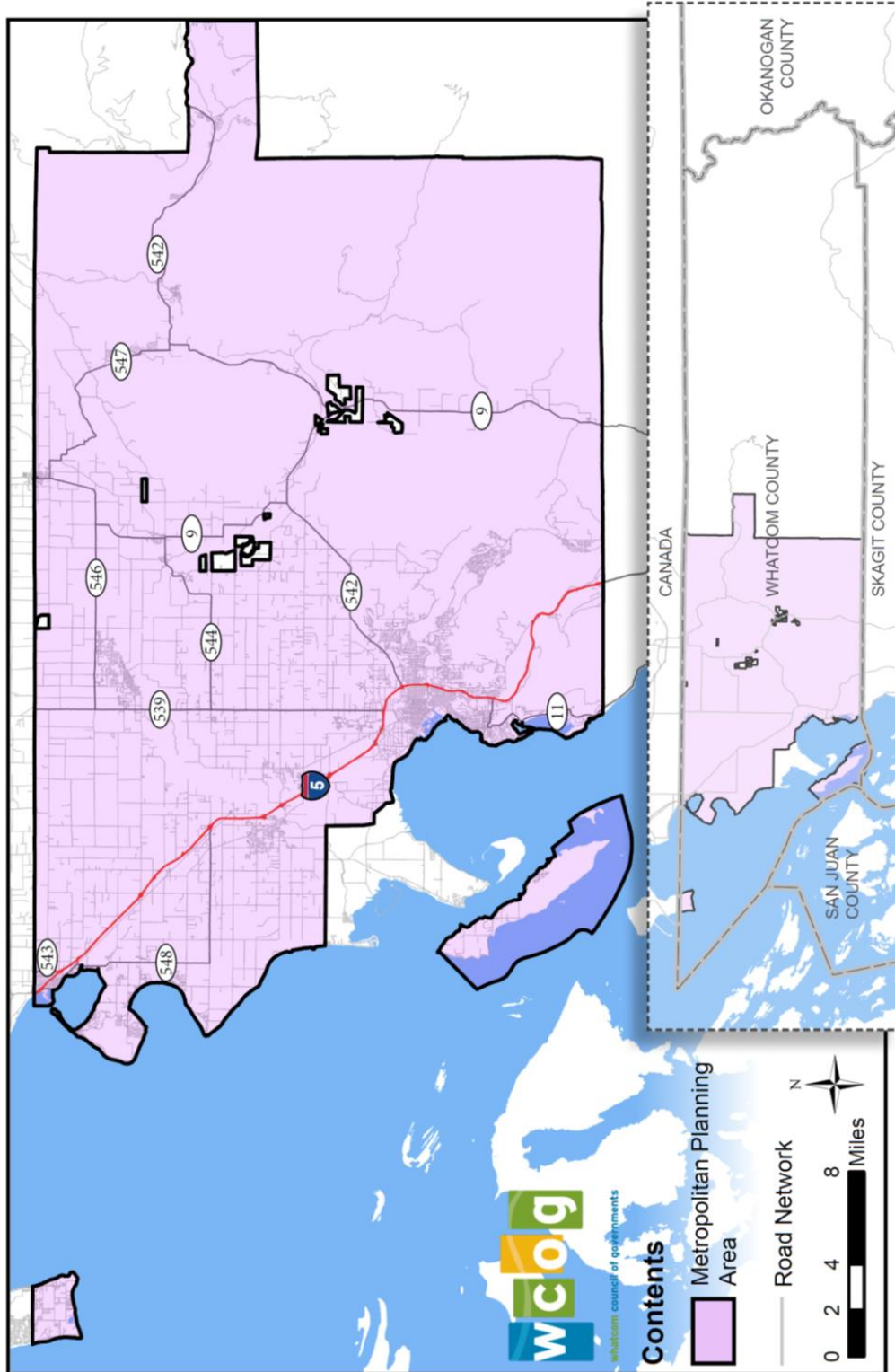
Entity	Position	2024 Representatives	Council Board	MPO - RTPO Policy Board
Whatcom County	Executive	Satpal Sidhu	●	●
	Councilmember	Kaylee Galloway	●	●
	Councilmember	Jon Scanlon	●	
City of Bellingham	Mayor	Kim Lund	●	●
	Councilmember	Edwin H. "Skip" Williams	●	●
	Councilmember	Michael Lilliquist	●	
City of Blaine	Mayor Pro Tem	Richard May	●	●
City of Everson	Mayor	John Perry	●	●
City of Ferndale	Mayor	Greg Hansen	●	●
City of Lynden	Mayor	Scott Korthuis	●	●
City of Nooksack	Councilmember	Kevin Hester	●	●
City of Sumas	Mayor	Bruce Bosch	●	●
Port of Bellingham	Commisioner	Bobby Briscoe	●	●
Lummi Indian Business Council	Chair	Anthony Hillaire	●	●
Nooksack Tribal Council	Tribal Council Chair	RoseMary La Clair		●
Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer District	Commisioner	Jeff Knakal	●	
Whatcom Transportation Authority	General Manager	Les Reardanz	○	
	Board member	Michael Lilliquist		●
The Opportunity Council	Executive Director	Greg Winter	○	
WA State Dept. of Transportation	Mt. Baker Area - Asst. Reg. Admin.	Chris Damitio		●
Western Washington University	VP for University Relations	Chris Roselli	○	○
Sudden Valley Association	Board member	Jo Anne Jensen	○	
Whatcom Council of Governments	WTPB Secretary	Hugh Conroy		○
Transportation Technical Advisory Group	representative	TBD		○
WA State House of Representatives	Representative, 42nd District	Joe Timmons		○
WA State House of Representatives	Representative, 40th District	Debra Lekanoff		○
WA State House of Representatives	Representative, 42nd District	Alicia Rule		○
WA State House of Representatives	Representative, 40th District	Alex Ramel		○
WA State Senate	Senator, 42nd District	Sharon Shewmake		○
WA State Senate	Senator, 40th District	Liz Lovelett		○
Whatcom Community College	representative	Kathy Hiyane-Brown		○
Whatcom County Public Utility Dist. No. 1	representative	Christine Grant	○	○
Bellingham Technical College	representative	vacant		○

○: non voting

¹ This list is based on current, appointed representatives at the time of this UPWP’s adoption. Individual representatives could change over the course of SFY 2025.

Metropolitan Planning Area

The WCOG MPA boundary includes all areas of the county west of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest lands. The Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe have chosen not to include their lands as part of the planning area.



Planning Priorities

Regional Transportation System Goals

The planning priorities for WCOG’s Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), described in WCOG’s regional /metropolitan long-range transportation plan *Way to Go, Whatcom* (adopted in June 2022), were modified and adopted in 2021.

These seven goals – which overlap with the longer list of planning factors that federal and state law require MPOs and RTPOs to address (shown in the table below) – will take precedence in prioritizing project funding requests and developing performance measures and targets.

- 1. Safety:** The safety of all users of the region’s transportation system – pedestrians, bicyclists, automobile drivers and passengers, and truckers – must be maximized to the greatest degree practicable in the establishment of regional transportation policies and investment decisions.
- 2. Provide all types of transportation (multimodal):** To serve the growing number of trips and goods movement effectively and efficiently, our transportation network must provide and promote attractive and well-connected options for all types of trip-making: walking, rolling, biking, cars, buses, trucks, etc. Operating a multi-modal transportation system means that we are striving to serve *trips* (people, goods, and services) as well as managing road capacity for *vehicles*.
- 3. Climate (greenhouse gas reduction) & environmental quality:** Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and more broadly advancing environmental mitigation and restoration (e.g., energy conservation, habitat preservation, and air and water quality) are outcomes of paramount importance in the region.
- 4. Maintain existing infrastructure in good, operating condition (preservation):** This goal indicates the Whatcom region’s intent to ensure that existing transportation systems are kept in a state of good repair before pursuing system expansions. This goal includes the principle of sustainability – choosing investments in facilities and programs that our region has the ability and willingness to pay for, operate, and maintain into the future.
- 5. System Efficiency & Reliability (Mobility):** High quality travel and goods movement as indicated by various measures such as travel time, travel-time predictability, reliability, and comfort. The goal of mobility and our region’s strategies to optimize it pertain to all types (modes) of transportation. Mobility depends on adequate transportation system capacity. To track progress on this goal (and other goals), WCOG emphasizes planning for the whole system’s operational capacity for serving forecast increases in *trips* rather than a narrower focus on our roads’ capacity for *vehicles*.
- 6. Access, Equity, & Economic Opportunity:** The region’s transportation system should work for all people; should acknowledge and reduce barriers related to age (seniors and youth), income, and physical ability; and should connect people to resources and opportunities critical to economic success (especially education and employment).
- 7. Freight and Economic Vitality:** In addition to providing for the movement of people, our regional transportation system must provide for effective and efficient movement of goods and services and do so in a way that is consistent with our other goals listed above.

A transportation network that enables transactions and the associated movement of products and services is essential to economic vitality.

Federal and State Planning Factors and Policy Goals

The following table illustrates how the Whatcom region’s adopted transportation system goals align with state policy goals and with federally legislated planning factors.

Whatcom Region		Washington	United States	
Prioritized regional transportation goals informed by the region’s comprehensive plans, 2021 WCOG Regional Public Engagement Questionnaire, and approved by the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board.		Statewide transportation policy goals (RCW 47.04.280)	Planning factors 23 U.S. Code § 134(h)(1)	National goals 23 U.S. Code § 150(a)(b)
1	Safety	“Safety: To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.”	“(2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.”	“(1) Safety : To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.
2	Provide All Types of Transportation (Multimodal)		“(6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes , for people and freight.”	
3	Climate (Greenhouse Gas Reduction) & Environmental Quality	“ Environment : To enhance Washington’s quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.”	“(5) Protect and enhance the environment , promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.” <i>Also, see (9) below regarding storm water impacts.</i>	(6) Environmental sustainability : To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
4	Maintain Existing Infrastructure in Good, Operating Condition (Preservation)	“ Preservation : To maintain, preserve and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.”	“(8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.” <i>Also, see (9) below regarding reliability.</i>	(2) Infrastructure condition : To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
5	System Efficiency & Reliability (Mobility)	“ Stewardship : To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation system.”	(9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate storm water impacts of surface transportation.	
		“ Mobility (congestion relief): To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state, including congestion relief and improved freight mobility.”	“(7) Promote efficient system management and operation.”	(3) Congestion reduction : To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System. (4) System reliability : To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system.
6	Access, Equity, & Economic Opportunity	<i>Economic opportunity is part of the WA legislative policy goal of Economic Vitality.</i>	“(4) Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.”	
	Freight & Economic Vitality	<i>Freight included as part of Mobility and Economic Vitality policy goals.</i> Economic vitality : To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.	<i>Freight included with FAST Act planning factors 4 and 6.</i> (1) Support economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.	(5) Freight movement and economic vitality : To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
			(3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. (10) Enhance travel and tourism	(7) Reduced project delivery delays : To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies’ work practices.

Current Federal Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs)

In December 2021, FHWA and FTA jointly published [updated PEAs](#). These PEAs complement the above goals and planning-factor requirements and WCOG will seek opportunities to support

outcomes that the PEAs identify. The 2021 PEAs are as follows (full descriptions at the above link).

1. Tackling the Climate Crisis – Transition to a Clean Energy, Resilient Future
2. Equity and Justice in Transportation Planning
3. Complete Streets
4. Public Involvement
5. Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET)/U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Coordination
6. Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) Coordination
7. Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)
8. Data in Transportation Planning

Verification of compliance

This UPWP is WCOG’s documented plan to accomplish all tasks required of MPOs and RTPOs by federal and state laws and supporting the advancement of federal and state transportation policy goals.

Restriction on lobbying

It is anticipated that WCOG staff will meet with state and federal elected officials and administrative officials at various times during state fiscal year (SFY) 2025. Local funds not associated with federal or state funding will be used for that purpose. Interaction between WCOG staff and state and/or federal elected officials may occur during the following planned events in SFY 2025:

- The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) conference.
- Sessions of the state legislature in Olympia.
- Federal and state legislators, and/or members of their staffs, periodically visit WCOG or attend meetings at which WCOG staff members are present.

Tribal involvement

The Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe are voting members of the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board. Each tribe is also represented on the Transportation Technical Advisory Group. Both tribes have chosen not to have their tribal lands included within WCOG’s metropolitan planning area (MPA).

Federal public lands

During SFY 2025, representatives of federal land management agencies will be consulted as necessary when federal lands are likely to be impacted by elements contained in or proposed for inclusion in WCOG’s regional and metropolitan long-range transportation plan or the TIP.

UPWP amendment process

Interim amendments to this UPWP will be requested from FHWA and FTA via WSDOT if

- An unforeseen need requires a new work activity.
- There is significant change to a currently planned activity.
- There is a significant change to the amount of funding available.

If the above or other changed conditions prompt a UPWP amendment, WCOG will inform the WSDOT Tribal and Regional Integrated Planning Office, develop a draft amendment with regional partners (including WTA and WSDOT), and propose a draft amended UPWP to the WCOG Policy Board for approval and subsequent submission to WSDOT, FHWA and FTA.

SFY 2024 accomplishments

Reviewing SFY 2024, this section highlights some notable completed work items.

Professional development and staff training

- APA- NW meetings
- AMPO Spring Fly-In
- AMPO Annual Conference
- Eagleview Connect Explorer and GIS training.
- USF Center for Urban Transportation Research Commuter Choice Certificate

Transportation planning and projects

- Eight North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA) meetings, including a three 1-3 hour panel series webinars focused on specific topics related to regional travel without a car.
- Completion of WSDOT Data Request for 2023 Freight and Goods Transportation System update, which included contracting the collection of regional traffic counts.
- Data collection and analysis
- Updated WCOG's public-facing GIS webapps with better integrated navigation, tools, and layer finding.
- Coordinated with Whatcom County Planners Group to develop Countywide Planning Policy, comprehensive plan scope of work and select consultant to develop the county's comprehensive plan
- Human Services Transportation Plan
- Work has begun on an update to WCOG's Title VI Plan

TIP

- 2023 Annual cycle completed that provided final report project amendments and modifications, and federal and public requirements for access and participation. Highlights include:
 - Awarded nine projects with Carbon Reduction Program funds
 - 14 TIP amendments
 - 12 administrative modifications
- 2024 TIP drafted, approved, and submitted for inclusion into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

-
- Report includes performance measures that link prioritized regional projects to regional goals and to the federal performance measures.
 - Provided annual WCOG 2022 Obligations Listing for the Whatcom region.
 - \$36,969,587 federal funding obligations
 - \$1,161,471 federal funding de-obligations
 - Monitored federal funding obligations and continued coordination with project managers.
 - Final 2022 obligations delivery was \$2.5 million above target.
 - Received \$3.85 million towards three projects in additional OA funding opportunity
 - Received \$132k share of sanction funds from other regions and counties

Model

- Adjusted 2045 model year development scenario to include proposed Pepin Parkway Subarea buildout.
- Assessed Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for current and forecast year scenarios and in review of previous forecasts to illustrate impact of land use.
- Updated to TransCAD 9.0
- Drafted and posted model documentation: *Model Forecast Development Process and Projects List for Way to Go, Whatcom*

Whatcom Smart Trips

WCOG's Whatcom Smart Trips (WST) Program continued to build its engagement of area residents and businesses and expand its delivery of measurable positive impacts on the regional transportation system. The benefits include:

- 658 community members began participating in Smart Trips diaries, adding to the total of 23,871 since the program began in 2006
- Participants have logged a total of 79,410,665 miles since the start of the program.
- 32,272 tons of greenhouse gas emissions have been prevented.
- Over \$13.51 million dollars have been added to the local economy through fuel savings.

A 2023-2027 mobility management grant continues to allow Whatcom Smart Trips staff in partnership with Whatcom Transportation Authority to teach seniors and youth in Whatcom County how to ride fixed route transit. 15 guided senior bus trips will be completed by the fiscal year's end. Our 7th grade bus education program was presented to 1,480 7th grade students at 8 regional middle schools.

Whatcom Transportation Authority secured a regional mobility grant 2023-2027 to support the work of the Smart Trips program allowing for the addition of a third full-time staff member. This grant and additional staffing allows for increased outreach to schools, employers and the general public with the goal of growing the number of program participants and reducing SOV trips..

International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program

Based on participant feedback and the pros and cons of in-person meetings versus virtual meetings, a new meeting schedule was developed for the International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) in 2023. In-person meetings were held every other month, with shorter virtual meetings held in between, for a total of eight meetings (four virtual, four in-person). The last meeting of the year was designated a Core Group meeting, meaning that participants included a broader range of border stakeholders.

Specifically, the following achievements occurred in SFY 2023:

-
- Received a U.S. Department of Transportation SMART Program grant for the Cascade Gateway Advanced Border Information System (ABIS) Design Project (Stage 1), and began work on the project in the fall.
 - Results from the 2022 IMTC Cascade Gateway Commercial Vehicle Operations Study were integrated in a dynamic online dashboard for stakeholder use.
 - Collected trade and travel data for sharing, analysis, and collaborative efforts with partner agencies to address regional cross-border transportation challenges.
 - Continued to monitor and update the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse archive with real-time data.
 - Followed current border-related issues from participating agencies and other interests. Topics included near-term applications of the cross-border truck study; scope and funding for a 2024/2025 Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey; timelines for Cascade Gateway highway infrastructure projects and port facility redevelopments; ultra high-speed ground transportation progress and border scenario planning; the I-5 corridor study; project updates from the ABIS border wait time system replacement project; and regional freight and supply chain initiatives.

North Sound Transportation Alliance

In 2023, the North Sound Transportation Alliance held one general meeting and three Steering Committee meetings. WCOG applied for and was awarded a WSDOT Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) grant to fund its meeting activities in 2024 and 2025. Topics of discussion included:

- Ridership trends and scenarios post-COVID-19
- The return of Amtrak Cascades service to Vancouver BC and continued planning for high-speed rail
- Service, workforce development, and new vessel and capital projects for WA State ferries
- Coordination with other regional transportation coordination initiatives through the SWISS Regional Partnership
- Consideration of coordination, collaboration, and the sharing of information of the 20+ regional transit, rail, ferry, and active transportation studies underway or planned in the NSTA region
- Initial ideas for the NSTA Outreach Series

SFY 2025 Work Categories

The identified four work categories are based on the duties of MPOs and RTPOs as defined in law and funded with federal (FHWA PL and FTA 5303) and state RTPO planning funds. As stated previously, certain other activities undertaken by WCOG – while aligned with and complementary to its required MPO/RTPO functions – are supported by different funding sources.

Program Administration

The following administrative activities directly support PL and 5303 funded activities.

Professional Development & Staff Training

To stay current with standard practice, acquiring new expertise and skills, and responding to new planning requirements and community needs, WCOG staff periodically attend training courses, peer exchanges, and study topics through a variety of sources.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

- New software capabilities (e.g. traffic modeling, contact management)
- Planning practices (ITS architecture, performance measures)
- Ongoing staff development.

Schedule: Ongoing / as needed

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Coordination and communication with federal and state legislators

These activities include dialog with the region’s state legislators when they inquire about transportation investment priorities as well as dialog with federal legislators when they inquire about policy and program needs and our region’s needs from federal agencies that influence regional transportation system planning, investment, systems management, and operations.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

- Written briefings or meetings in response to requests for information or data analysis.
- Review of existing planning products, project lists, etc.
- Preparation for participation of state and federal legislators and their staff at WCOG and MPO board meetings.

Schedule: Ongoing, when requested.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

WCOG will update and submit its UPWP for state fiscal year 2026. And, if needed, WCOG will submit amendment requests for this SFY 2025 UPWP.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Completed UPWP and amendments if needed.

Schedule: Expected approval by WCOG MPO Policy Board in May 2025.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

UPWP Annual Performance and Expenditure Report

As required for the state to comply with 23 CFR 420.117, WCOG will submit a report of progress made on tasks identified in WCOG’s UPWP covering SFY 2024.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Complete annual report.

Schedule: Due on September 30, 2025.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Title VI reporting and plan update

WCOG's board adopted its 2024 Title VI Plan & Public Participation Plan in January 2024 and it was approved by WA State Department of Transportation. WCOG's Title VI web page was updated with new materials, including new translations of the Title VI complaint form into Russian. WCOG's annual Title VI Report was submitted and approved in July 2023.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Annual Title VI Report in July 2024 with recommended additions.

Schedule: July 2024.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Self-certification document

As part of annually submitting a regional transportation improvement program (TIP) to WSDOT, WCOG also submits a self-certification document. WCOG will work on items identified in the annual self-certification review.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Completed review and documentation.

Schedule: The goal is to have identified items resolved by October 31, 2024.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Transportation planning & programs

This core function includes ongoing regional communication and coordination, understanding and documenting system needs; collecting, organizing, and analyzing data; and supporting implementation of selected strategies.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan update and strategy

WCOG's regional and metropolitan long-range (20 year) transportation plan was updated and adopted in June of 2022.

Products: Continuous planning activities in furtherance of the plan and in preparation for interim amendments and/or the next five-year update include Products of SFYs 2025 MTP activities will include:

- Application of updated plan elements to continuous regional planning activities.
 - Rather than letting opportunities for discretionary federal funding go by because existing planned projects don't meet project-cost minimums, work with regional jurisdictions to develop a list of high-cost projects (or system-wide projects) that would most likely only be funded with awards from federal discretionary programs.
- Continued maintenance and improvement of the website dedicated to the regional/metropolitan transportation plan – especially visualization resources like maps and data filtering.
- Continued collaboration with WSDOT to make best use of data reporting products developed for state-wide and regional monitoring of safety and system performance measures and targets.
- Continued development and application of regional, inter-jurisdictional corridor planning strategy.
- Increased attention to the region's non-motorized network (bike & ped facilities, trails) including connections to transit and recreational facilities.
- Continued improvement and updates of analytical products (e.g. model configurations, mapping outputs, metrics selection)
- Work with the CTAG, tribal representatives, and with other stakeholders to implement appropriate elements of WCOG's public participation plan.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Schedule: The next MTP update is due in 2027.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Safety Action Plan (SS4A)

In 2022, WCOG applied for and received a planning grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Safe Streets and Roads for All Program (SS4A). The grant is supporting completion of a Safety Action Plan which will enable the Whatcom region and

WCOG member local jurisdictions to apply for SS4A implementation funds in the remaining years of the program under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

- Formation and facilitation of a regional Safety Action Plan advisory committee – emphasizing involvement of non-traditional partners.
- Safety data
 - Compilation and analysis of existing data.
 - Research and acquisition of reliable demographic data.
- Public outreach and engagement.
- Safety policies inventory and analysis.
- Strategy and alternatives development.
- Development of a project evaluation methodology.
- Preparation of a complete Safety Action Plan inclusive of a prioritized project list.

Schedule: Completion of the Safety Action Plan is estimated for February/March, 2025.

Funding: USDOT, state RTPO funds

Regional & statewide activities with WSDOT & other MPO members

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

- Coordinating committee meets quarterly to discuss process improvements and needed focus on current issues among the state’s MPO, RTPO, and WSDOT representatives
- Monthly Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) meetings
- Periodic development of Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)-approved selection criteria, project evaluation, and WTPB selection of projects to fund with the STBG funding availed to MPOs.
- Participation in periodic meetings of regional planners.
- Participation and collaboration with various studies, research, and data collection with state and regional partners. Known efforts likely to extend into SFY 2025 include:
 - Continued engagement with WTA as appropriate, especially on efforts related to their planning for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).
- Participation in state planning activities:
 - Highway System Plan update
 - WSDOT’s Multimodal Investment Strategy
 - State Transportation Demand Management Plan
 - State and local Commute Trip Reduction plans

Schedule: Quarterly meetings, (WSDOT/MPO). Monthly meetings (TTAG). Regional traffic and corridor studies. Statewide plans expected to be in development during SFY 2025.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Monitoring of federal and state funding programs

WCOG maintains sufficient awareness and understanding of various federal funding programs to alert member jurisdictions of funding opportunities to advance projects in the regional plan as well as to offer assistance to jurisdictions in assembling data and analysis to make competitive applications for federal and state assistance.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

- Review of new federal formula programs including Carbon Reduction, Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, and PROTECT.
- Review of new and continuing federal discretionary funding programs (Infra, RAISE).
- Review of new state programs for transit and active transportation.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Performance reporting

In support of and as a component of the regional/metropolitan transportation plan, WCOG produces a regional system performance report. This is a compilation of 1) regional measures using the federally required methods and targets adopted by both MPOs and WSDOT (safety, highway system performance) and 2) **multi-modal performance measures and indicators** developed by WCOG to assess changes in mobility along the region’s inter-jurisdictional corridors.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Schedule: Updated report published every two years. Collection of data and maintenance of web-based dashboard is ongoing.

Products: Products include a report document and a web-based dashboard that supports data filtering and visualization.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Public and stakeholder participation and outreach

WCOG encourages open information sharing and public and stakeholder organizations’ input in all its work. MPOs are required by federal law (Title 23 §450.316) to “**develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.**”

In addition to an ongoing objective of encouraging regional community involvement, several products result from this activity.

Performance: WCOG staff, citizen volunteers.

Products:

- **The Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG)** is WCOG’s structured forum for ongoing citizen participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process. CTAG is collaboratively organized with the Whatcom Transportation Authority and other member jurisdictions as pertinent regional issues emerge.
- **Websites** – WCOG maintains high quality websites (www.wcog.org) in order to provide broader and more convenient access to information, meeting schedules, staff contacts, and more. This is an important way of supporting and improving public involvement and openness of regional planning and decision making.
- Participation in other regional transportation planning forums
 - North Sound Transportation Alliance.
- Outreach to and involvement of private sector stakeholders (industry associations, companies, etc.) for special projects or modal planning efforts.

Schedule: Ongoing.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan / Architecture

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

- Periodic updates to Regional ITS Architecture

- Systems engineering training and integration of principles into related planning, operations, and performance measurement initiatives.

Schedule: Ongoing.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Cross-border planning & coordination – The IMTC Program

WCOG is lead agency of the International Mobility and Trade Corridor (IMTC) Program.

IMTC is a regional, cross-border planning coalition focused on the transportation connections between Western Washington State and Lower Mainland British Columbia. Focused on the four U.S.-Canada land border ports-of-entry that comprise the Cascade Gateway and serve the Seattle, WA – Vancouver, BC corridor, the IMTC coalition includes state, provincial, and federal transportation agencies; federal inspection agencies, other federal agencies of both countries, at-border jurisdictions, trade and travel related industry associations, and non-governmental organizations. More information about IMTC is available at theIMTC.com

Performance: WCOG staff

Products:

- IMTC working group meetings -- preparation, participation, and facilitation.
- Data collection and reporting
 - Project list
 - Website
 - Annual resource manual
- Participation in the U.S.-Canada Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG)
- Ongoing stakeholder outreach to federal inspection agencies, state/provincial transportation agencies, local agencies, other government departments, and private sector stakeholders.

Schedule: Ongoing.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, & FHWA CBI funds.

IMTC 2025 Cross-border Personal Vehicle Survey (PVS)

IMTC agency partners will be advancing a next-in-series PVS. As in prior PVS efforts (performed approximately every five years), WCOG will manage the project on behalf of IMTC and conduct the project in partnership with WWU’s Border Policy Research Institute (BRPI).

Funding for the project has already been committed by US FHWA (matched by WCOG using local funds) and by Transport Canada. Additional funds will be sought from other partners as noted in the Unfunded Needs section. Facilitation and logistics support will be provided by U.S. Customs & Border Protection and Canada Border Services Agency.

Performance: WCOG staff, BPRI, hired data collectors (WWU students)

Products:

- Updated sample-survey based database of several cross-border travel characteristics including origin & destination, trip purpose, travel frequency, residence location, travel documents, trusted-traveler program status, use of traveler information, vehicle demographics, and more.

Schedule: April 2025 – March 2026.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA, Transport Canada (expected funds from BC Ministry of Transportation, and local match for US fed. funds).

Transportation Demand Management – Smart Trips

Smart Trips is the Whatcom region’s strategy for **transportation demand management (TDM)** – multiple, coordinated activities at the community level that help people understand all their

transportation options and make the most of existing investments in transportation infrastructure and services.

In partnership with the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), regional business, local governments,



TDM graphic from City of Monterey, CA – monterey.org

and public agencies, Smart Trips engages with our region’s residents and encourages them to make more of their trips by walking, biking, riding the bus, and sharing rides.

Administered by WCOG and jointly implemented with WTA, the Smart Trips program employs programmatic strategies and resources that help people use transportation modes that make the most of our system investments and advance regional goals.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products:

- Community outreach
- Website & online trip diary: www.whatcomsmarttrips.org.
- Incentives: A program of discount cards, gift certificates, cash prizes and recognition to motivate community members to try new forms of transportation.
- Employer programs: Support to businesses and organizations that want to promote sustainable transportation to their employees. This activity also encompasses WCOG’s administration of regional compliance with the state’s commute trip reduction (CTR) law.
- Mobility Management / Travel training: County-wide bus travel training for 7th graders and seniors in partnership with WTA, school districts, and area senior centers.
- School programs: Bicycle skills courses at elementary schools; Summer camps for 12- to 14-year-olds that teach independent travel skills
- Administration

Schedule: Ongoing.

Funding source: These activities are funded by the Whatcom Transportation Authority, FTA (via WSDOT’s Consolidated Grants Program), and the City of Bellingham, WA.

Advanced Border Information System (ABIS) Design

Funded by a U.S. DOT Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant, this project is leveraging the IMTC Program coalition to undertake a cross-border, interagency planning effort to identify the optimal set of technologies and integrated operations to replace the aging and increasingly dysfunctional border wait-time measurement systems that have served the Cascade Gateway border crossings for over 20 years.

Performance: Consultants, WCOG staff.

Schedule: Project will continue through December 2024.

Products:

- Concept exploration advisory team meeting
- Concept Exploration and Recommendations Report
- Operational Scenarios User Workshop
- Concept of Operations and System Requirements Development
- Advisory Team meeting
- High-Level Design & Implementation Plan

Planning technical support for member jurisdictions

WCOG staff often work with member jurisdictions’ staff and WSDOT staff, giving technical and other support on planning and project work related to our core functions and shared objectives.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Schedule: Ongoing, when needed or requested.

Products: Products include but are not limited to

- Collaborative review and evaluation of federal and state funding opportunities including support with preparing applications.
- Evaluation and possible development at WCOG of a regional resource for production of benefit-cost analyses (BCAs) as required in applications for federal discretionary funding programs (Infra, Mega, and Rural)
- Research
- Data extraction and analysis
- Technical writing
- Mapping / GIS
- Graphics
- Sample surveys

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Review of transportation planning requirements.

With the 2021 passage of a new federal transportation authorization act (the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law – BIL), some new planning and programming elements have been added to existing requirements for MPOs. While some of the newer requirements (regarding climate action and housing for example) pertain directly to larger-population planning-areas, WCOG sees value in acknowledging these important themes and adopting related planning activities at an appropriate scale. Along with evaluation of new and forthcoming guidance on new and updated programs, we will engage partners to consider options for our region.

Activities in Washington State at both the legislative and agency level are evaluating new regional and RTPO planning requirements connected to climate action, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) targets, and land use. WCOG has and will continue to participate in these discussions.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products: Updated methods and work planning.

Schedule: Ongoing as appropriate.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

North Sound Transportation Alliance

The North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA), is a coalition of concerned citizens, elected officials, and professional staff of transportation agencies from Washington’s five northwestern-most counties: Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan and northern Snohomish. The NSTA strives to develop better ways for people to move through the region by using all available modes in an effective network that does not rely solely on automobiles. More information about the NSTA is available at <https://wcog.org/programs/nsta/>

WCOG is also the current administrator/facilitator of the NSTA and will continue this function.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products & Schedule: During SFY 2025, WCOG will continue its participation with the NSTA to coordinate support for inter-county transit between Whatcom, Skagit, Island, and Snohomish counties; advance strategies to improve cross-county transportation related to health care; support regionally connected trail planning and development; coordinate support for improving passenger rail; and improving multimodal connectivity with ferry terminals in the North Sound.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Maintenance of the regional transportation demand model

WCOG will continue to maintain, update and operate a regional travel demand model to analyze current and forecast year impacts to regionally significant roadways. The model is also used to evaluate vehicle miles traveled, level of service, transportation projects, and planned and forecasted changes in land use. As part of its metropolitan and regional transportation planning process, WCOG provides current and forecast model year data for member jurisdictions.

The WCOG model was updated in 2023 with household and employment information, transportation analysis zone refinements, road and transit network changes, and traffic counts validation. Additional updates include household travel survey data, demographics, road and transit networks, external activities, and recent traffic counts for model validation.

Performance: WCOG staff and consultant.

Products:

- Develop, in coordination with Whatcom County and Cities and consultant, forecast model scenarios (2045) that incorporates geographical allocations of households and employment for the county and cities' comprehensive plan updates and Environmental Review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)
- Develop a final forecast model scenario (2045) under the SEPA that will apply to the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Replace the current forecast model scenario in WCOG Way to Go, Whatcom plan with the updated forecast.

Schedule: Model 2045 forecast scenarios for comprehensive plan support. Evaluate vehicle miles travelled and volume over capacity for performance and level of service.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Development and maintenance of geographic information systems (GIS)

WCOG uses geographic information systems (GIS) to convert data to performance measures, map-based transportation system metrics, and visualization. Continued development of GIS and web-based, interactive mapping will be an important part of WCOG's strategy for enriching the visual display of information in the regional/metropolitan transportation plan – helping provide more information to more of our community, jurisdictions, and agency partners.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products: Map making, data assembly and storage, update regional significant system geodatabase, online interactive map maintenance, and other regional products.

Schedule: Ongoing.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Evaluation and Acquisition of new data (counters, LBS, connected vehicle, etc.)

As various planning activities, by WCOG and our partners, require acquisition of new data and extraction of information, WCOG will evaluate emerging sources for possible acquisition. Examples include data to better estimate vehicle miles traveled (VMT), external counts for modeling, trip origin-destination, and mode-split.

Performance: WCOG staff and/or consultants as appropriate

Products (as needed):

-
- Traffic count services, video capture & analysis, sensors/detectors.
 - Data sets.
 - Analysis, visualizations, data dashboards, GIS integration.

Schedule: Ongoing

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Federal functional classification system updates

WCOG will continue to maintain regional functional classifications and make revisions with partners as needed.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products: Standardized and update functionally classified regional road network with the 2020 Census adjusted urban and rural area geographies.

Schedule: Ongoing

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Border Data Warehouse 3.0 operation and maintenance

This activity will continue WCOG's role in monitoring and managing periodic system maintenance of CascadeGatewayData.com.

Performance: WCOG staff and consultant.

Products: Updated cloud storage systems. Updated web-based user interface.

Schedule: Ongoing maintenance as needed.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL) and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

RTPO planning

WCOG's duties as an RTPO are defined under Washington state law, RCW 47.80.023. These duties are listed below along with how they relate to WCOG's SFY 2025 work plan.

The following RTPO duties are covered elsewhere in this work plan or do not need to be addressed in SFY 2025.

- 1. Periodic preparation of a regional transportation strategy.** As both the regional MPO and the RTPO, this duty is covered under the previously covered Metropolitan Transportation Plan work activities.
- 2. Regional transportation plan (RTP).** As both the RTPO and MPO, WCOG combines the RTP and MTP as described in the previously described work activity.
- 3. Development of six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).** This activity, which is also an MPO requirement, is treated as a separate, UPWP work category.

WCOG expects to undertake the following RTPO activities during SFY 2025.

Certify consistency between RTP and local comprehensive plan transportation elements

*Certify that the **transportation elements** of comprehensive plans adopted by counties, cities, and towns within the region reflect the guidelines and principles developed pursuant to RCW 47.80.026, are consistent with the adopted regional transportation plan, and, where appropriate, conform with the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070.*

Where appropriate, certify consistency between the adopted regional transportation plan and county-wide planning policies adopted under RCW 36.70A.210.

This work was last completed for local jurisdictions' 2016 plan updates in 2017. If any local jurisdictions update their comprehensive plan transportation or land-use elements ahead of the standard update schedule, WCOG will evaluate the significance of the amendment and decide whether or not to perform a corresponding certification review. The next due date for regularly scheduled comprehensive plan updates for Whatcom County jurisdictions is December 2025.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products: Documentation of review of individual jurisdiction's draft comprehensive plan transportation elements and letters of certification and or observed inconsistencies delivered to each jurisdiction.

Schedule: Review and feedback

Funding source: This activity is funded by state RTPO funds.

Human services transportation planning

WCOG completed an update of the regional Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) in 2022 (SFY 2023). In SFY 2025 WCOG will continue the HSTP planning process by:

Products:

- Community outreach to maintain continuity of the HST Steering Committee.
- Review progress towards stated HSTP goals.
- Review of implementation of HS projects funded by WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program.
- Ongoing engagement with HST Steering Committee and facilitated dialogue with other, related outreach efforts such as WCOG's CTAG.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Schedule: Ongoing.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Level of Service (LOS) coordination and standards development

In fulfillment of its RTPO responsibilities to 1) encourage coordination among the region's jurisdictions about LOS standards and 2) work with WSDOT to define and adopt an LOS standard for the region's non-HSS state routes.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Possible identification of new, regionally aligned definitions and measures of levels of transportation system operations (LOS) and possible changes to regional LOS standards for non-HSS state routes.

Schedule: Ongoing with respect to regional comprehensive plan.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Improving VMT Measurement, Forecasting, and Target Setting

In alignment with WA State policies for higher-population counties to measure reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), set targets for VMT reduction, and forecast the impact of alternative VMT reduction strategies, WCOG has received additional funding from WSDOT.

Products:

- Develop a data-acquisition strategy with Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) and others.
- With WSDOT and Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG), pursue a pooled-fund acquisition of vehicle detection equipment at the Whatcom-Skagit boundary.
- Acquire third-party data (E.g., LBS data) to complement current VMT estimates and refine WCOG's TDM model 2023 base year.
- Identify strategies to improve VMT sensitivity by refining model structure and/or through post-processing TDF model outputs.
- Documentation of the above activities and assessment of performance and lessons learned.

Performance: WCOG staff.
Schedule: July 1, 2024 – June 2025.
Funding source: This activity is funded by WSDOT.

Programming

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Development & Amendments

WCOG will coordinate with Whatcom County, its seven cities, Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, Whatcom Transportation Authority, The Port of Bellingham, and the Washington State Department of Transportation to develop the Metropolitan/Regional TIP. The Whatcom Transportation Policy Board will review all projects submitted by member jurisdictions and those using federal funds or having regional significance will be added to the Metropolitan/Regional TIP, as appropriate. When necessary, WCOG staff will coordinate with the jurisdictions to get clarification or additional information. Beyond initial compilation and approval, WCOG staff will document and submit TIP amendments as needed.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products: Annually completed and approved Metropolitan & Regional TIP. Certifications as needed. Appropriate project amendments and modifications as needed throughout the year.

Schedule: WCOG will begin the TIP process in June with completion scheduled for October. Updates and amendments will be undertaken as needed.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, and state RTPO funds.

Obligation status monitoring and reporting

Federal funding available to projects through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Transportation Alternatives, and Carbon Reduction Program are required to be used in a timely manner and monitored along a schedule of award, obligation, and expenditure. WCOG will continue to work with WSDOT and regional jurisdictions to track delivery and help with amendments and document-changes as needed.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products:

- Compilation of ongoing project status from member jurisdictions.
- Periodic reports to WSDOT
- Status reports to member jurisdictions and the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board to encourage timely obligation.
- Annual list of project obligations report

Schedule: Ongoing

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program – Regional Funding Project Selection Process

WCOG receives a suballocation of STBG funds (inclusive of TA funds) every year of about \$3.8 million to be distributed to eligible projects and activities in the region. To better align the administrative level-of-effort involved with the amount of available funding, WCOG conducts a

project-selection process every two or three years – awarding the corresponding, cumulative allocation.

WCOG does not anticipate administering an STBG project selection process in SFY 2025.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products: Tasks related to ongoing preparations and refinements to ensure that STBG allocation practices align with regional and state policy goals include:

- Discussion with TTAG and WTPB about how to incorporate new multimodal level of service (MLOS) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction targets into STBG project-selection criteria.
- Annual list of projects and obligation status reports

Schedule: Ongoing evaluation as newly legislated policies are discussed and state guidance is developed and published.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPD funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Unfunded priority programs and projects

2025 Household Travel Survey (HTS)

As part of maintaining the regional travel demand model, WCOG has typically commissioned a robust household travel survey every ten years. The last Whatcom Region HTS was completed in 2018. Multiple issues are compelling WCOG to pursue funding and partnerships to complete an HTS as soon as possible instead of waiting until 2028.

- Travel patterns and behaviors have changed significantly since COVID-19. WCOG’s 2018 HST is a very good point sample of pre-COVID behaviors. A near term HST would provide much needed information on the types and scale of changes (work from home, increased home-delivery, use of transit, active transportation, etc.)
- A 2025 HTS will provide a needed and robust measure of current, regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as well as support a shift towards more frequent (but smaller sample size) HSTs to enable meaningful tracking (every two years?) of VMT reduction.
- WCOG will seek opportunities to incorporate more comprehensive demographic data into future HTSs to address historically underserved and underrepresented communities.

Funding need: \$350,000

IMTC Cross-border Personal Vehicle Survey (PVS)

The IMTC Program has historically conducted cross-border personal vehicle surveys every five years. Efforts to assemble a pooled fund to deploy a survey in spring of 2024 fell short. Efforts are underway again to fund and conduct a regional cross-border PVS in spring of 2025. US FHWA has recently awarded \$100,000 for this project. WCOG will working with cross-border partners, especially Canadian agencies, to secure funding the entire scope of work. Funding need: \$141,000.

North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA) coordination

WCOG has served as the coordinating agency for NSTA for several years. It used to use approximately \$25,000 year of funds remaining from a federal grant to fund this work. WCOG has since continued to perform this function as part of its work plan though at a bare-bones level.

Funding like that available before would cover better planning documentation for NSTA including project proposals for potential project funding sources (including grant applications).

Passenger-only ferry business plan

In 2021, the Puget Sound Regional Council concluded a multi-regional passenger only ferry feasibility study that was commissioned by the WA State Legislature. Of the many routes analyzed, a Bellingham-Friday Harbor route was identified as being in the top tier of potential routes. While many important feasibility factors are covered in the report and the findings are very encouraging, any next steps towards operations are up to other entities.

This project would use the feasibility study as a point of departure for convening possible operators in both Whatcom and San Juan counties to determine the level of interest, potential operators, financing and governance options, etc. The results range from a finding of insufficient interest to formation of a preliminary business plan with likely operator(s), routes, financial plan, etc. Phase 1: \$50,000. Phase 2: \$50,000.

Regional Crossing Guard Program Evaluation

Various regional TDM and SRTS partners have expressed interest in establishing/re-establishing adult crossing guards for higher-risk intersections near elementary schools. This currently unfunded endeavor would entail a literature review of best practices, consultations with stakeholders (school districts, law enforcement, state SRTS program representatives, etc.) and development of alternatives for funding and supporting an effective crossing-guard implementation at a scale(s) appropriate for the Whatcom region. \$25,000

Smart Trips Website Phase II

WCOG is completing Phase I of a long-awaited update to the Smart Trips website. Phase II, which is still unfunded, will include options for more dynamic trip logging, gamification, integration with ride-share apps and the ability to consider other additional features.

Need: \$40,000

Appendices

Appendix A – Budget and financial detail

		SFY 2025 Funding Sources								Total	
Activity Code	Work categories	Federal				State		Local			
		FHWA PL		FTA 5303	FHWA STBG UM	Other Federal	RTPO	Other State	WTA		Other
		2025	CO	2025	UPWP 2025				Match for FTA		
Funding-source total →		\$355,131	\$200,000	\$99,729	\$291,391	\$601,000	\$88,760	\$436,000	\$15,565	\$171,740	\$2,259,316
A	Program administration	\$17,757	\$10,000	\$4,986	\$14,570		\$2,663		\$777	\$6,606	\$57,358
A.1	Professional development and staff training	\$6,215	\$3,500	\$1,745	\$5,099		\$932		\$272	\$2,312	\$20,075
A.2	Coordination/communication with federal and state legislators	\$2,131	\$1,200	\$598	\$1,748		\$320		\$93	\$793	\$6,883
A.3	Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	\$3,906	\$2,200	\$1,097	\$3,205		\$586		\$171	\$1,453	\$12,619
A.4	UPWP annual performance & expenditure report	\$1,776	\$1,000	\$499	\$1,457		\$266		\$78	\$661	\$5,737
A.5	Title VI reporting	\$2,486	\$1,400	\$698	\$2,040		\$373		\$109	\$925	\$8,031
A.6	Self-Certification Document	\$1,243	\$700	\$349	\$1,020		\$186		\$54	\$462	\$4,014
P	Transportation planning & programs	\$301,861	\$170,000	\$84,770	\$247,682	\$601,000	\$39,942	\$298,000	\$13,229	\$151,923	\$1,908,408
P.1	Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan update & strategy	\$24,149	\$13,600	\$6,782	\$19,815		\$3,994		\$1,058	\$8,984	\$78,381
P.2	Safe Streets & Routes for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan					\$100,000					\$100,000
P.3	Regional & statewide activities with WSDOT & other MPO members	\$30,186	\$17,000	\$8,477	\$24,768		\$3,994		\$1,323	\$11,230	\$96,979
P.4	Evaluation & integration of new federal and state funding programs	\$7,547	\$4,250	\$2,119	\$6,192		\$1,198		\$331	\$2,807	\$24,444
P.5	Performance reporting	\$27,168	\$15,300	\$7,629	\$22,291		\$3,994		\$1,191	\$10,107	\$87,680
P.6	Public and stakeholder participation and outreach	\$24,149	\$13,600	\$6,782	\$19,815		\$3,994		\$1,058	\$8,984	\$78,381
P.7	Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan	\$4,528	\$2,550	\$1,272	\$3,715		\$0		\$198	\$1,684	\$13,947
P.8	Cross-border planning coordination - The IMTC Program	\$43,770	\$24,650	\$12,292	\$35,914	\$90,000	\$1,997		\$1,918	\$16,283	\$226,824
P.9	IMTC 2025 X-border Personal Vehicle Survey					\$60,000					
P.10	Transportation Demand Management - Smart Trips	\$10,565	\$5,950	\$2,967	\$8,669	\$136,000	\$3,994	\$298,000	\$463	\$78,930	\$545,538
P.11	SMART Grant - Advanced Border Information System - planning					\$200,000					\$200,000
P.12	Planning technical support for member jurisdictions	\$22,640	\$12,750	\$6,358	\$18,576		\$3,994		\$992	\$8,422	\$73,732
P.13	Review of transportation planning requirements	\$6,037	\$3,400	\$1,695	\$4,954		\$1,997		\$265	\$2,246	\$20,594
P.14	North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA)	\$6,037	\$3,400	\$1,695	\$4,954	\$15,000	\$2,397		\$265	\$2,246	\$35,994
P.15	Maintenance of the regional transportation demand model	\$36,223	\$20,400	\$10,172	\$29,722		\$1,997		\$1,588	\$13,476	\$113,579
P.16	Development and maintenance of GIS resources	\$33,205	\$18,700	\$9,325	\$27,245		\$2,397		\$1,455	\$12,353	\$104,679
P.17	Eval. & acquisition of new data	\$19,621	\$11,050	\$5,510	\$16,099		\$1,997		\$860	\$7,299	\$62,436
P.18	Federal functional classification system updates and monitoring	\$3,019	\$1,700	\$848	\$2,477		\$1,997		\$132	\$1,123	\$11,295
P.19	Border Data Warehouse operations and maintenance	\$3,019	\$1,700	\$848	\$2,477				\$132	\$1,123	\$9,298
R	RTPO planning						\$39,942	\$138,000			\$177,942
R.1	Certify consistency: RTP & local comp. plans						\$17,974				\$17,974
R.2	Human Services Transportation planning (HSTP)						\$1,997				\$1,997
R.3	Level of Service - coordination & standard adoption						\$9,986				\$9,986
R.4	VMT Measures, Forecasts, & Targets						\$9,986	\$138,000			\$147,986
T	Programming	\$35,513	\$20,000	\$9,973	\$29,139		\$6,213		\$1,556	\$13,211	\$115,605
T.1	TIP development & amendments	\$17,757	\$10,000	\$4,986	\$14,570		\$3,107		\$778	\$6,606	\$57,803
T.2	Obligation status monitoring and reporting	\$7,103	\$4,000	\$1,995	\$5,828		\$1,243		\$311	\$2,642	\$23,121
T.3	STBG project-selection process	\$10,654	\$6,000	\$2,992	\$8,742		\$1,864		\$467	\$3,963	\$34,682
Unfunded priority programs & projects		\$631,000	Unfunded priority programs & projects (list cont.)								
2025 Household Travel Survey (HTS)		\$300,000	Regional Crossing Guard Program Evaluation		\$25,000						
IMTC Personal Vehicle Survey (PVS)		\$141,000	Smart Trips Website Phase II		\$40,000						
NSTA Coordination		\$25,000									
Passenger Only Ferry Study Business Plan		\$100,000									

Appendices

Appendix B – Expected consultant contracts

Expected Consultant Engagements	Est. cost
Travel demand model support	\$5,000
Contracted traffic counts	\$30,000
Graphic Design	\$5,000
Border Data Warehouse: site maintenance, development	\$22,000
Translation Services	\$1,000
Border Planning, technology evaluation	\$350,000



Memo

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner
Date: April 30, 2024
Subject: Consideration to fund regional household travel survey

Importance of a regional household travel survey

Our last county-wide household travel survey was conducted in 2018. Since then we have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in changes to travel behaviors. These full-scale surveys are commonly produced about once per decade and are a key source of local-based travel information for community planning and our region's travel demand model. Furthermore, recent legislative initiatives to track vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions have increased the importance of the model.

Conducting a regional household travel survey in the Fall Season of 2025 sets WCOG up for the next regional transportation plan update schedule. Also, following up after the next full-scale survey, WCOG is considering conducting more frequent, smaller scale surveys to improve the tracking of travel behavior, continue public engagement, and maintain a more current travel demand model. These biennial surveys may begin as early as 2027.

Fund survey as contingency to help ensure obligations delivery

WCOG is currently projected to fall short of our region's obligations target by about \$300k, pending a couple of projects. Funding the household travel survey through Surface Transportation Block Grant funds will improve the odds we continue to meet our delivery target and qualify for additional funding.

The Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) convened on Thursday, April 25th and discussed the need for the household travel survey. TTAG was in consensus to fund the household travel survey using regional surface transportation block grant funds.

Suggested Policy Board Motion

Approve the TTAG consensus to award \$350,000 of regional surface transportation block grant funds for the countywide household travel survey.
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Memo

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner
Date: April 30, 2024
Subject: WCOG 2024 TIP Amendment

Amendment #3 (24-05) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following:

1. Amend WSDOT project *SR542/Unnamed to Mitchell & High Creeks - Fish Passage* to revise project title and update funding amounts for preliminary engineering and construction. This project is funded through Surface Transportation Block Grant and National Highway Performance Program. Construction is scheduled to begin later in 2024.
2. Add new WSDOT project *I-5/Northbound N Lake Samish to Nooksack River - Concrete Pavement Rehab* to rehabilitate concrete pavement on Interstate 5. This project is funded through the National Highway Performance Program. Preliminary engineering is planned to begin in 2024 and the total estimated cost is \$22 million.
3. Add new WSDOT project *SR 20/Tributary to Thornton Creek - Culvert Replacement* to replace current culvert with larger culvert to water stream flow. This project is funded through Surface Transportation Block Grant, Western Federal Lands and state Motor Vehicle Account. This project is estimated to cost \$1 million and construction is scheduled to begin in 2027.
4. Add Whatcom County project *Lummi Island Ferry Operating Costs* that is funded through the Ferry Boat Program. The total estimated cost is \$1.6 million.
5. Amend WCOG's *UPWP - SFY 2025* to increase Surface Transportation Block Grant funds equal to \$74,153 due to increased regional allocation.
6. *[pending previous WTPB item]* Add WCOG's *Household Travel Survey* for \$350,000 of STBG funds for a total project cost of \$404,624. The survey is currently scheduled for Fall 2025.

Formal TIP Amendments require review and resolution from the Policy Board to amend the current TIP and make federal funding accessible.

Suggested Policy Board Action

Approve Amendment #3 of the Whatcom Council of Governments 2024 Transportation Improvement Program.

WCOG TIP Amendment #3 (24-05) Table

#	Agency	Project Title	Amended TIP Action	Added Funds	Total Cost	Source
1	WSDOT	<i>SR 542/Unnamed Tributaries to High & Mitchell Creeks - Fish Passage</i>	Amend phase estimates and title	-689,361	19,983,540	STBG, NHPP
2	WSDOT	<i>I-5/Northbound N Lake Samish to Nooksack River - Concrete Pavement Rehab</i>	Add new project	1,624,086	22,008,966	NHPP
3	WSDOT	<i>SR 20/Tributary to Thornton Creek - Culvert Replacement</i>	Add new project	1,022,950	1,022,950	STBG, WFL, MVA
4	Whatcom	<i>Lummi Island Ferry Operating Costs</i>	Add new project	1,675,200	1,675,200	FBP
5	WCOG	<i>UPWP - SFY 2025</i>	Amend to increase funding	85,762	336,868	STBG
6	WCOG	<i>Household Travel Survey</i>	Add new project	350,000	404,624	STBG

Recent or Upcoming Administrative Modifications - Administrative modifications are less substantial project changes and are administered by WCOG staff. [No Policy Board Actions are required.](#)

Agency	Project	Modification Administered	Total Costs	Source
WSDOT	<i>SR 542/Bagley Creek Bridge Scour</i>	Update termini and costs	917,000	WFL, MVA