



## Meeting of the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board

**Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 3:30 p.m.**

314 East Champion Street, Bellingham, Washington

Join using **Zoom** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82870859925>

Or phone: (253) 215-8782

### 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)
- 2-4 **D. Approval of the Minutes** -- Meeting of March 14, 2025\*
- E. Old Business** (if any)
- 5 **F. New Business**
  - 1. Request to add Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds and move Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding – Lethal Coe\*
- 6-7 **G. Public Hearing: Amendment #3 (25-05)** of the WCOG 2025 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\*
- H. New Business Continued**
- 8-39
  - 1. Consideration for Adoption: WCOG's SFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Lethal Coe\*
- 40
  - 2. Consideration for Adoption: The [Whatcom Region Safety Action Plan](#) – Hugh Conroy\*
- I. Obligation Status Update** – Lethal Coe
- J. Director's Report** – Hugh Conroy
- K. Correspondence** (if any)
- L. Board Open Forum**

\* Action item

**Whatcom Transportation Policy Board**  
**DRAFT Minutes**  
**March 12, 2025**

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members      *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Kim Lund, Skip Williams; **Everson:** John Perry; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair); **Nooksack Tribe,** Rosemary Laclair; **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Port of Bellingham:** Bobby Briscoe; **Whatcom County:** Jon Scanlon; **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio, Justin Resnick; **Whatcom Transportation Authority:** Michael Lilliquist (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair).

Staff              Lethal Coe, Hugh Conroy (Secretary), Melissa Fanucci, Michelle Grandy, Emily Moran.

Others            **City of Bellingham:** Joel Pfundt; **Whatcom Transportation Authority,** Les Reardanz;

A.      **Call to Order**

Hugh Conroy determined that there was a quorum, and Vice Chair Lilliquist called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

B.      **Public Comment**

None

C.      **Agenda Additions**

A second public hearing, for the board's action on considering the Commute Trip Reduction Plan update, was added to the agenda

D.      **Approval of the minutes – meeting of January 15, 2025.**

**Motion:** Mr. Williams moved, second by Mr. Briscoe, to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 15, 2025, as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

E.      **Old Business**

None

F.      **Amendment #2 (25-03) – of the WCOG 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**  
Mr. Coe introduced the TIP amendment and memo.

Public hearing: Mr. Lilliquist opened the public hearing at 3:34. No members of the public were present. The public hearing was closed at 3:34.

There was no further discussion.

**Motion:** Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Briscoe, moved to approve Amendment #2 (25-03) to the WCOG 2025 TIP. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

G.      **New Business**

1. Consideration for adoption: WCOG 2025-29 Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Plan

Ms. Moran introduced the subject memo and recapped the state's CTR law and WCOG's role in updating a regional CTR plan and coordinating with other local governments that the CTR law applies to. Ms. Moran pointed out some elements of the updated plan that are different from the current plan.

Public hearing: Mr. Lilliquist opened the public hearing at 3:38. No members of the public were present. The public hearing was closed at 3:38.

**Motion:** Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Briscoe, moved to adopt the 2025 update of WCOG's CTR Plan as presented. **Motion passed** with no opposing votes.

H. **Obligation Status Update**

Mr. Coe reviewed the regional, federally funded projects that are expected to obligate this year. Mr. Coe also presented some scenario planning discussions with Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) that explored reallocation of Surface Transportation BI funds if previous regional allocations of federal Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funding is redirected. While there is some speculation that is likely to happen, there haven't been any official statements one way or the other about the CRP specifically.

I. **Director's Report**

Mr. Conroy reviewed the status of various planning and program activities:

- The Executive Committee's previous action to approve engagement with RSG to conduct the Household Travel Survey.
- Significant staff time on phone calls and meetings attempting to understand the implications of the many federal policy moves related to executive orders. E.g., new requirements for TIP approvals and UPWP updates were announced which may have delayed project funds and created contradictions with federal MPO requirements and state RTPO requirements. The policy was then changed back to how it was before the announcement.
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan (SAP): Mr. Conroy gave a quick overview of the draft SAP that had been sent to the board a few weeks prior. A final draft will be on the agenda for adoption on May 14.
- Border issues:
  - Mr. Conroy noted that Transport Canada's funding for the IMTC Personal Vehicle Survey was still in place. BC Ministry of Transportation & Transit is still on track to contribute its funding share to the project.
  - Cross-border travel in the region is way down. This goes along with widespread media coverage citing Canadian residents' disappointment with the U.S. Administration's recent policy announcements and other statements about Canada. Year-to-year comparisons show regional February 2025 cross-border traffic is an estimated 31 percent down from February 2024. The reduction is composed of a 6 percent drop in WA state license plates and a 25 percent drop in BC license plates.
  - On March 5, the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Region 10 office in Auburn, WA was essentially shut down – the GSA employees there, were all terminated. This includes the project managers for the projects to replace the border inspection stations in Sumas and Lynden (and booth additions at the Pacific Highway border station). Management of these projects has been switched to Region 8 (Denver). It is not yet known what impact this will have on the project schedule.

**J. Adjourn:** Vice Chair Lilliquist adjourned the meeting at 4:15.

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Hugh Conroy  
Secretary

Approved June 11, 2025





## MEMO

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board  
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner  
Date: June 3, 2025  
Subject: Request to add TA funds and move regional STBG funding for Everson

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### Increased construction cost estimations for Everson's projects

The City of Everson recently received updated construction estimations for two projects preparing to obligate WCOG-awarded federal funding: *SR 544 S. Everson Sidewalk Improvements* and *Blair Drive Improvements*. The estimated cost increases (~\$2 million) have left Everson unable to pay for projects with local funds and, consequently, leave our region short of fulfilling this year's obligation delivery target (which is required to be eligible to receive additional funding and avoid sanction. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, WCOG facilitated a meeting with the City of Everson, the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to discuss the escalated costs and strategies to help Everson determine a best path forward. Everson established that their number one priority is to advance the sidewalks project that has been years in development and important for pedestrian (notably school children) travel along and across the state route.

### Strategy identified for Everson to ensure priority project deliveries

The meeting resulted in the consideration of several sources of funding to focus efforts to fulfill the sidewalks project. Additionally, the identified strategy also maintains the Blair Drive project's position to advance additional federal funding when available. The TIB has agreed to contribute an additional \$150,000 along with the following two considerations for the WCOG Policy Board to enable Everson to move forward and obligate the sidewalks project by our September delivery deadline.

### Resulting TTAG recommendation for City of Everson's request

The WCOG Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) convened on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, discussed the Everson circumstances and resulting strategy, and supports the request for the WCOG Policy Board to approve two actions for the City of Everson:

1. Award \$300,000 of regional Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds resulting from updated allocation estimations provided on May 13th for WCOG's TA program through 2031.
2. Transfer \$880,000 of regional Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds from *Blair Drive Improvements* to *SR 544 S. Everson Sidewalk Improvement*.

The resulting actions would increase the federal funding for Everson's sidewalk project from \$3,002,642 to **\$4,182,642**. The Everson Blair Dr project will reduce federal funding from \$1,641,921 to **\$761,921**.

#### Suggested Policy Board Action:

Approve the award of TA funds and the transfer of STBG funds for the City of Everson as stated.



## Memo

**To:** Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)  
**Date:** June 4, 2025  
**From:** Lethal Coe, Principal Planner  
**Subject:** Review and consideration for approval - WCOG 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments

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Formal TIP Amendments require review and resolution from the Policy Board to amend the current TIP and make federal funding accessible. **Amendment #3 (25-06)** of the WCOG 2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following:

1. Add WSDOT project *SR 542/Glacier Creek Bridge CED - Replace Bridge* to replace existing bridge over Glacier Creek with longer structure and provide fish passable stream. The project's preliminary engineering phase is scheduled to begin in 2025 and is funded through Surface Transportation Block Grant and state Motor Vehicle Account programs. The total estimated cost of the project is over \$36 million.
2. **[pending previous agenda item action]** Amend City of Everson's *SR 544 S. Everson Sidewalk Improvements* project to add regional Transportation Alternatives (TA) funds of \$300k and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds of \$880k to the construction phase and increase the overall construction phase cost estimate to \$4,506,427.
3. **[pending previous agenda item action]** Amend City of Everson's Blair Drive Improvements project to reduce STBG funds by \$880k (swapped with local funds) and increase the overall construction phase cost estimate to \$2,825,939.

### Suggested Policy Board Action

"Approve Amendment #3 of the Whatcom Council of Governments 2025 Transportation Improvement Program."
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### WCOG TIP Amendment #3 (25-06) Table

#	Agency	Project Title	TIP Action	Added Funds	Total Cost	Source(s)
1	WSDOT	<i>SR 542/Glacier Creek Bridge CED - Replace Bridge</i>	Add new project	\$11,371,504	\$36,834,956	STBG and MVA
	Everson	<i>SR 544 S. Everson Sidewalk Improvements</i>	Amend to add federal funds and increase CN	955,539	6,318,510	TA, CRP, STBG, SRTS and TIB
	Everson	<i>Blair Drive Improvements</i>	Amend to decrease federal funds and increase construction	-880,000 STBG (swap local) and +802,799 overall CN increase	3,226,646	STBG

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**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
WCOG	<i>UPWP – SFY 2026</i>	Increase STBG funds	326,830	STBG(UM)

## Memo

**To:** Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)  
**Date:** May 6, 2025  
**From:** Lethal Coe, Principal Planner  
**Subject:** Review and consideration for adoption – WCOG's SFY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

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### Purpose of the UPWP

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and state designated regional transportation planning organization (RTPO), WCOG is required to prepare, adopt, and submit an annual 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 necessary, and the expected outcomes of the work. If WCOG is to be reimbursed by the federal or state government for its work, then that work must be included in the federal and state approved WCOG-adopted UPWP.

### WCOG's UPWP for state fiscal year (SFY) 2026

The draft 2026 UPWP (included as an attachment with this memo) features some changes from 2025. These include:

- FHWA Planning Funds (PL) and FTA 5303 funds are now merged into the single funded FHWA & FTA Consolidated Grant Program (CPB).
- Timeline of UPWP activities to illustrate staff emphasis in annual work categories – Appendix C.
- Removal of the Federal Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs) that were published in 2021 in response to recent executive actions.
- Expectation of more staff time for: X-border personal vehicle surveys (summer and winter), household travel survey to be conducted this Fall, and certification of local comprehensive plan transportation elements as WCOG member governments update their plans for 2025.

### State and federal review

A draft SFY 2026 UPWP was submitted to WSDOT in March and reviewed with WSDOT, FHWA, and FTA WCOG's annual UPWP review meeting on April 15th. Minor clarifications were requested, and those changes and other suggested edits have been made. The updated draft SFY 2026 UPWP is attached for your review and consideration for adoption.

### Suggested motion

"Approve the State Fiscal Year 2026 Unified Planning Work Program for the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area as presented."



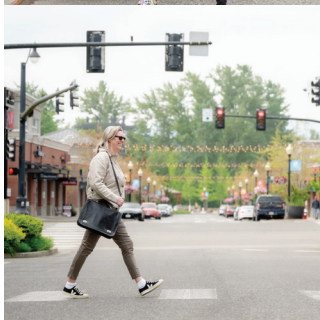
whatcom council of governments

## 2026 State Fiscal Year

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

*Scheduled for Adoption by the  
WCOG Policy Board on  
June 11, 2025*

DRAFT May 30, 2025





*Prepared by the Whatcom Council of Governments using funds contributed by member jurisdictions and grants from the Washington State Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.*

Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) complies with **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** that assures no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any Federal Aid Highway program or other activity for which WCOG receives Federal financial assistance. WCOG also provides services to people with **Limited English Proficiency**. For further information regarding Title VI or language assistance, please contact Melissa Fanucci, Title VI Coordinator by phone (360) 685-8385 or email to [TitleVI@wcog.org](mailto:TitleVI@wcog.org).

For questions, concerns or comments please contact the Whatcom Council of Governments:

314 East Champion Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Phone: (360) 676-6974  
Email: [wcog@wcog.org](mailto:wcog@wcog.org)

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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) 2026.

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.



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## 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) 2026 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 **five categories**.

1. Program administration
2. Transportation planning & Programs
3. RTPPO planning,
4. Programming
5. 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 FHWA & FTA Consolidated Planning Grant (CPG) 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 2026 activities are grouped under the six categories, each activity section header also includes a notation of funding source types.

Explanations of SFY 2026 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 CPG 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 2026, 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.*

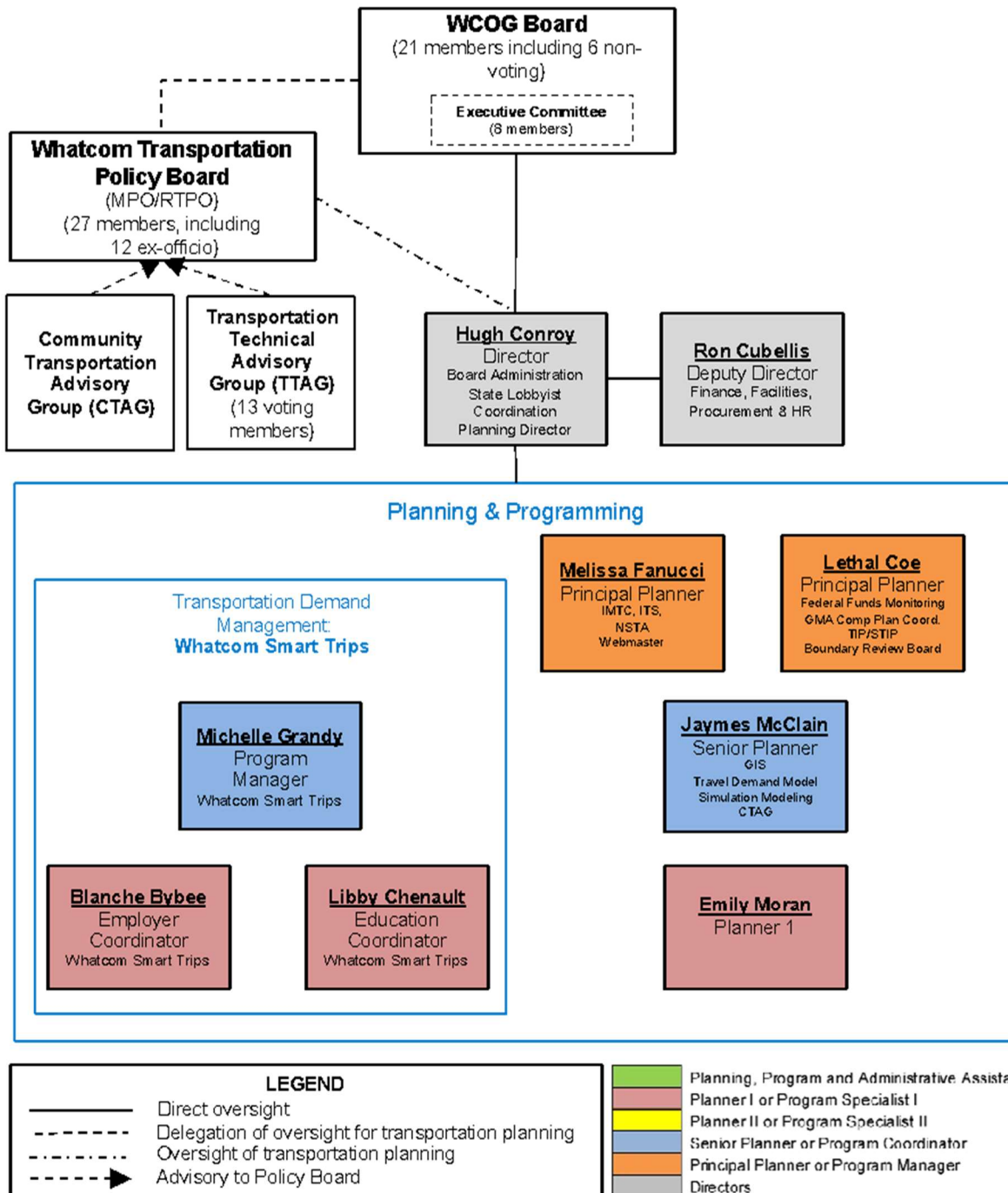
The advancement of all types of transportation through an integrated network that is equally accessible by all people is an underlying goal of all the planning that WCOG does with its local jurisdictions for the Whatcom region. In addition, WCOG's regional transportation goals (listed and described below), 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 Program (STBG).

While WCOG's involvement with planning for the advancement of safer and more accessible transportation systems 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 & FTA CPG funds) includes an asterisk (\*).

# 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

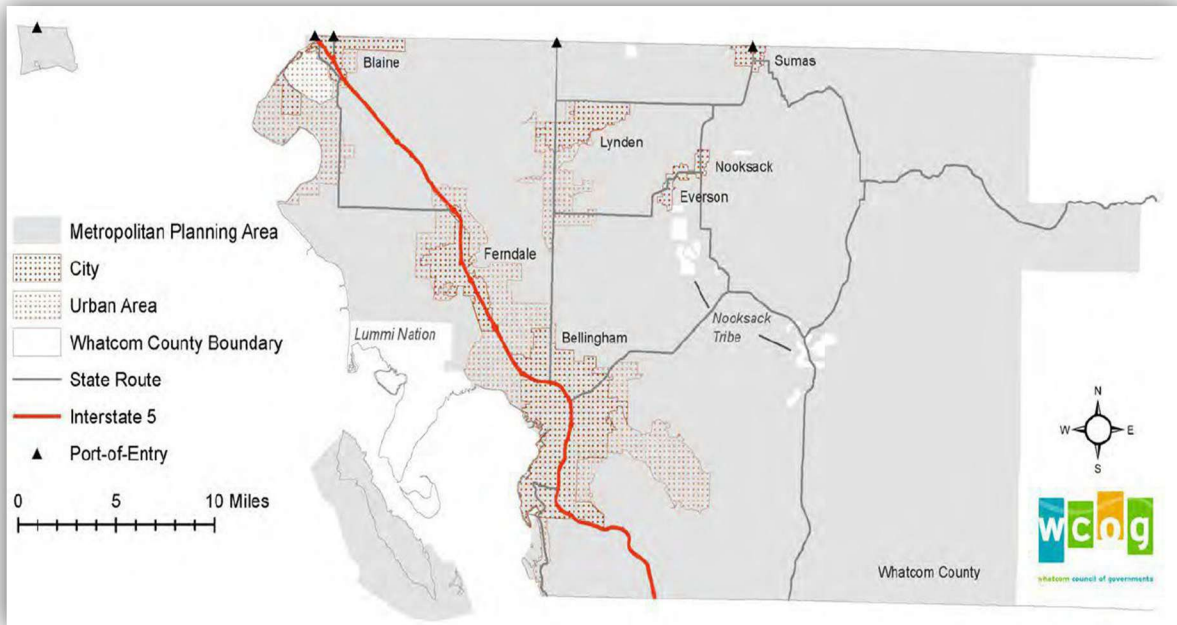
The table below lists the region's governments, districts, agencies, and institutions that participate on WCOG Council Board, its MPO-RTPO Policy Board, or both along with the individuals currently<sup>1</sup> serving.

Entity	Position	2025 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	Mayor	Kevin Hester	●	●
City of Sumas	Mayor	Bruce Bosch	●	●
Port of Bellingham	Commissioner	Bobby Briscoe	●	●
Lummi Indian Business Council	Chair	Anthony Hillaire	●	●
Nooksack Tribal Council	Tribal Council Chair	RoseMary La Clair		●
Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer District	Commissioner	Jeff Knakal	●	
Whatcom Transportation Authority	General Manager	Les Reardanz	○	
	Board member	Michael Lilliquist		●
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	Justin Guillory		○
Whatcom County Public Utility Dist. No. 1	representative	Eddy Ury	○	○
Bellingham Technical College	representative	James Lemerond		○
				○: non voting

<sup>1</sup> 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 2026.

## Metropolitan Planning Area

The WCOG Metropolitan Planning Area (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.



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# 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*, were adopted in June 2022.

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." Also, see (9) below regarding storm water impacts.	(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." Also, see (9) below regarding reliability.	(2) Infrastructure condition: To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
		"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.	
5	System Efficiency & Reliability (Mobility)	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	Economic opportunity is part of the WA legislative policy goal of Economic Vitality.	"(4) Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight."	
7	Freight & Economic Vitality	Freight included as part of Mobility and Economic Vitality policy goals. Economic vitality: To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.	Freight included with FAST Act planning factors 4 and 6. (1) Support economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency. (3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. (10) Enhance travel and tourism	(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. (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.

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## **Current State Emphasis Areas**

The planning priorities from WSDOT emphasize RTPPO planning efforts and continue the collaboration between WSDOT, MPOs and RTPPOs. WCOG's planning and program activities as an MPO/RTPPO align with areas identified by WSDOT that include: equitable distribution of resources and benefits, planning and programming accessibility, collaboration with local agency comprehensive plan updates, active transportation planning, human services planning and commute reduction plans, and activities in support of upcoming state rail and freight plan updates.

## **Verification of compliance**

This UPWP is WCOG's documented plan to accomplish all tasks required of MPOs and RTPPOs 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) 2026. 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 2026:

- 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 2026, 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



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- 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 2025 Accomplishments

Reviewing SFY 2025, this section highlights some notable completed work items.

### Professional development and staff training

- APA- NW meetings
- AMPO Spring Fly-In
- AMPO Annual Conference
- WA APA Annual Conference
- ITS California

### Transportation planning and programs

- Completion of the regionwide *Safety Action Plan* with awarded Safe Streets for All grant funding. The plan assesses fatal and significant injury crashes by way of identified major corridors with the highest number of incidents and provides various performance and prioritization metrics. The plan used enhanced outreach and interviewing to provide in-depth and localized feedback.
- Assisted Whatcom County to complete countywide EV plan.
- Updated WCOG's public-facing GIS webapps with better integrated navigation, tools, and layer finding.
- Continued coordination with Whatcom County Planners Group to develop county and cities comprehensive plan updates
- Consolidated Grant Regional Review Committee for proposals submitted to WSDOT, evaluated based on the Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan
- WCOG's Title VI Report for 2024
- Travel demand model: established a 2023 base year and prepared 2045 forecast scenarios for countywide comprehensive plan update

### Transportation Improvement Program

- 2024 Annual cycle completed that provided final report project amendments and modifications, and federal and public requirements for access and participation. Highlights include:
  - 14 TIP amendments
  - 5 administrative modifications
- 2025 TIP drafted, approved, and submitted for inclusion into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

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- Report includes performance measures that link prioritized regional projects to regional goals and to the federal performance measures.
  - Provided annual WCOG 2024 Obligations Listing for the Whatcom region.
  - \$30,329,928 federal funding obligations
  - \$2,342,835 federal funding de-obligations
  - Monitored federal funding obligations and continued coordination with project managers.
  - Final 2024 obligations delivery was spot-on the \$2.9 million target.
  - Received \$1.9 million in redistributed OA funding

## **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:

- 820 community members began participating in Smart Trips diaries, adding to the total of 24,691 since the program began in 2006
- Participants have logged a total of 81,619,920 miles since the start of the program.
- 34,406 tons of greenhouse gas emissions have been prevented.
- Over \$13.86 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. 13 guided senior bus trips will be completed by the fiscal year's end. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade bus education program was presented to 1,300 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**

IMTC continued to meet both virtually and in person in 2024, with 4 in-person meetings and 4 online sessions for regional updates. The last meeting of the year was for the IMTC Assembly, a larger group of regional border stakeholders that includes users of the system.

Specifically, the following achievements occurred in SFY 2024:

- Work was completed on the U.S. Department of Transportation SMART Program grant for the Cascade Gateway Advanced Border Information System (ABIS) Design Project (Stage 1).
- The submitted proposal for SMART Program Stage II funding was submitted and was awarded in December.
- 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 the 2024/2025 Cross-border Personal Vehicle Survey; FIFA 2026 data and planning; updates from Amtrak Cascades and rail coordination; an update of the IMTC Purpose, Goals, and Strategies document; updates on post-pandemic air passenger and cargo travel in the Cascade

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Gateway; border facility improvements; and the new U.S. - Canada Border Infrastructure Investment Plan (BIIP)

- Implement Advanced Border Information System (ABIS) design planning funded by the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant. The interagency planning effort led to identifying optimal technologies and operations systems to improve wait time systems that have been in place for over 20 years.

## **North Sound Transportation Alliance**

In 2024 NSTA met three times and focused on the regional transit study and transit system updates; the Community Action of Skagit County consolidated grant project; meeting topics of a general meeting; and the discontinuation of work under the Rural Transit Assistance Program.

# **SFY 2026 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 & FTA Consolidated Grant Program (CPG) funds, federal FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, and state Regional Transportation Planning Organization (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 CPG 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 CPG, STBG and RTPO 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.

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- 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 CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.

## **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

WCOG will update and submit its UPWP for state fiscal year 2027. And, if needed, WCOG will submit amendment requests for this SFY 2026 UPWP. Continuous WCOG coordination for implementing UPWP activities through regular staff meetings.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:** Completed UPWP and amendments if needed.

**Schedule:** Expected approval by WCOG MPO Policy Board in May 2026.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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 2025.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:** Complete annual report.

**Schedule:** Due on September 30, 2026.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.

## **Title VI reporting**

WCOG's board adopted its 2024 Title VI Plan & Public Participation Plan in January 2024. WCOG's annual Title VI Report was submitted and approved by WA State Department of Transportation

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:** Annual Title VI Report in July 2025 with recommended additions.

**Schedule:** July 2025.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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, 2025.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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 (MTP) update and strategy**

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

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**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:** Continuous planning activities in furtherance of the MTP and in preparation for interim amendments and/or the next five-year update 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.
- Integrate Safety Action Plan into MTP activities and seek implementation funds, if available

**Schedule:** The next MTP update is due in 2027.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and 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 2026 include:
  - Continued engagement with WTA as appropriate, especially on efforts related to their planning for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).\*
- Participation in state or inter-regional planning activities:
  - Highway System Plan update
  - WSDOT's Multimodal Investment Strategy\*
  - State Transportation Demand Management Plan\*
  - State and local Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) plans\*
  - I-5 Master Plan
  - Cascadia High-Speed Rail service development plan

**Schedule:** Quarterly meetings, (WSDOT/MPO). Monthly meetings (TTAG). Regional traffic and corridor studies. Statewide plans expected to be in development during SFY 2026.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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

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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.
- Review of new and continuing federal discretionary funding programs.
- Review of new state programs for transit and active transportation.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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 CPG, STBG and RTPO 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](http://www.wcog.org)) 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 CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.



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## 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 CPG, STBG and RTPO 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 five 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](http://theIMTC.com)

**Performance:** WCOG staff

**Products:**

- IMTC working group meetings -- preparation, participation, and facilitation.
- Data collection and reporting
  - Website
  - Meeting materials
  - Data Digest
- 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.
- Continue progress on Advanced Border Information System (ABIS) design and coordination

**Schedule:** Ongoing.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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, Transport Canada, and by the British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Transit. 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, BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit, CPG, RTPO and local match for US federal funds.

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## 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 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](http://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](http://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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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 activities such as the 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



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- Other general planning activities

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.

## **Review of transportation planning requirements.**

WCOG continues to evaluate current, and forthcoming guidance on new and updated programs. We see value in acknowledging important themes regarding planning activities and requirements pertaining to both smaller and larger scaled regions and will engage partners to consider options for our region.

Activities in Washington State at both the legislative and agency level are evaluating 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 CPG, STBG and RTPO 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:** WCOG intends to coordinate with key NSTA agency participants to convene 3-4 meetings in FY2025 with one being a larger assembly to review current work completed in the realm of ferries, transit, and rail.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.

## **Maintenance of 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 (VMT), 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 is undergoing a calibration update to establish a base year of 2025 that will incorporate household travel survey data, household and employment information, transportation analysis zone refinements, road and transit network changes, and traffic counts validation. The model update will also include enhancements to improve trip behavior representation, local roadway and VMT assessments.

**Performance:** WCOG staff and consultant.

**Products:**

- Develop a preferred alternative forecast model scenario (2045) under the SEPA that will apply to Whatcom County's comprehensive plan update.
- Replace the current forecast model scenario in WCOG's *Way to Go*, *Whatcom* plan with the updated preferred alternative forecast .

- Prepare 2025 model base year update: household and employment inputs, transit routing, calibration and validation that incorporates updated 2025 household travel survey trip data, updated traffic counts and other inputs
- Upgrade model features with modern approaches to trip generation, trip distribution, non-home based trip makings, local network assessment for VMT, and refine outputs for VMT reporting and sensitivity testing

**Schedule:** On going for 2026

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.

## Household Travel Study

WCOG last conducted a regional household travel study (HTS) in 2018. Historically, intervals between HTSs have been ten years but various circumstances, i.e. increased work-from-home and delivery services resulting from COVID-19, have compelled WCOG and its members to collect updated HTS data sooner.

**Performance:** WCOG staff and selected consultant

**Products:** Coordinate with member entities to conduct region-wide household travel questionnaire and survey to attain residential demographics information and daily travel behaviors.

**Schedule:** Through April 2026

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by STBG and RTPO 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, demographic updates, and other regional products.

**Schedule:** Ongoing.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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 CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.

## Federal functional classification system updates

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

**Performance:** WCOG staff

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**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 CPG, STBG and RTPO 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](http://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 CPG and 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 2026 work plan.

The following RTPO duties are covered elsewhere in this work plan or do not need to be addressed in SFY 2026.

**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 continue the following RTPO activities during SFY 2026.

## 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 RTPO funds.

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## Human services transportation planning

WCOG completed an update of the regional Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) in 2022 (SFY 2023). In SFY 2026 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.
- 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 RTPO and FTA 5310 funds.

## Multimodal Level of Service (MLOS) coordination and standards development

In fulfilment 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 RTPO funds.

## Improving Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) analyses 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:** Ongoing.

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

## 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

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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 CPG and RTPO funds.

## **Obligation status – monitoring, reporting and coordinating**

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:**

- Annual list of project obligations
- Compilation of ongoing project status from member jurisdictions.
- Periodic reports and coordination with WSDOT
- Status reports to member jurisdictions and the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board to encourage timely obligation
- Coordinate opportunities to obligate additional federal funding opportunities

**Schedule:** Ongoing

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO 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 is not scheduled to administer an STBG project selection process in SFY 2026.

**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 multimodal level of service (MLOS) and vehicle miles traveled reduction targets into STBG project-selection criteria\*

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

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by CPG, STBG and RTPO funds.

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## Unfunded priority programs and projects

### North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA) coordination

WCOG has served as the coordinating agency for NSTA for several years. It previously used 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: \$75,000. Phase 2: \$75,000.

### 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

Activity Code	Work categories	SFY 2026 Funding Sources										Total
		Federal				State		Local			Canada	
		FHWA / FTA CPG		FHWA STBG UM	Other Federal	RTPO	WSDOT Mobility Grant	WTA	WCOG	Other	BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit	
		2026	Carry Over	UPWP	STBG, Discretion, FTA 5310, FHWA Hwy Research & Development	Planning		Match for FTA	Match for CPG & STBG UM	COB, WTA & WCOG local match		
	<b>Funding-source total →</b>	<b>\$483,027</b>	<b>\$195,000</b>	<b>\$282,708</b>	<b>\$662,000</b>	<b>\$95,760</b>	<b>\$288,700</b>	<b>\$16,951</b>	<b>\$102,557</b>	<b>\$150,775</b>	<b>\$13,500</b>	<b>\$2,290,978</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Program administration</b>	<b>23,451</b>	<b>9,750</b>	<b>14,135</b>		<b>2,663</b>		<b>848</b>	<b>5,019</b>			<b>55,866</b>
A.1	Professional development and staff training	1,173	488	707		133		42	251			2,793
A.2	Coordination/communication with federal and state legislators	2,814	1,170	1,696		320		102	602			6,704
A.3	Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	11,022	4,583	6,644		1,252		398	2,359			26,257
A.4	UPWP annual performance & expenditure report	3,518	1,463	2,120		399		127	753			8,380
A.5	Title VI reporting	3,283	1,365	1,979		373		119	703			7,821
A.6	Self-Certification Document	1,642	683	989		186		59	351			3,911
<b>P</b>	<b>Transportation planning &amp; programs</b>	<b>412,673</b>	<b>165,750</b>	<b>240,302</b>	<b>652,000</b>	<b>46,942</b>	<b>288,700</b>	<b>14,408</b>	<b>87,501</b>	<b>136,000</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>2,057,776</b>
P.1	Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan update & strategy*	31,894	13,260	19,224		3,994		1,153	6,825			76,350
P.2	Regional & statewide activities with WSDOT & other MPO members*	39,867	16,575	24,030		3,994		1,441	8,532			94,439
P.3	Evaluation & integration of new federal and state funding programs	9,967	4,144	6,008		1,198		360	2,133			23,809
P.4	Performance reporting*	35,881	14,918	21,627		3,994		1,297	7,678			85,395
P.5	Public and stakeholder participation and outreach*	31,894	13,260	19,224		3,994		1,153	6,825			76,350
P.6	Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan	5,980	2,486	3,605		0		216	1,280			13,567
P.7	Cross-border planning coordination - The IMTC Program	57,808	24,034	34,844	100,000	1,997		2,089	12,371			233,142
P.8	IMTC 2025 X-border Personal Vehicle Survey	14,000			90,000	7,000			2,185	10,000	13,500	136,685
P.9	Transportation Demand Management - Smart Trips	13,954	5,801	8,411	132,000	3,994	288,700	504	2,986	75,000		531,350
P.10	Planning technical support for member jurisdictions	29,900	12,431	18,023		3,994		1,081	6,399			71,828
P.11	Review of transportation planning requirements	7,973	3,315	4,806		1,997		288	1,706			20,086
P.12	North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA)	7,973	3,315	4,806		2,397		288	1,706			20,486
P.13	Maintenance of the regional transportation demand model	47,841	19,890	28,836		1,997		1,729	10,238			110,531
P.14	Household Travel Survey (HTS)				330,000					51,000		381,000
P.15	Development and maintenance of GIS resources	43,854	18,233	26,433		2,397		1,585	9,385			101,886
P.16	Eval. & acquisition of new data	25,914	10,774	15,620		1,997		937	5,546			60,786
P.17	Federal functional classification system updates and monitoring	3,987	1,658	2,403		1,997		144	853			11,042
P.18	Border Data Warehouse operations and maintenance	3,987	1,658	2,403				144	853			9,044
<b>R</b>	<b>RTPO planning</b>				<b>10,000</b>	<b>39,942</b>						<b>49,942</b>
R.1	Certify consistency: RTP & local comp. plans					17,974						17,974
R.2	Human Services Transportation planning (HSTP)				10,000	1,997						11,997
R.3	Level of Service - coordination & standard adoption					9,986						9,986
R.4	VMT Measures, Forecasts, & Targets					9,986						9,986
<b>T</b>	<b>Programming</b>	<b>46,903</b>	<b>19,500</b>	<b>28,271</b>		<b>6,213</b>		<b>1,695</b>	<b>10,037</b>	<b>14,775</b>		<b>127,394</b>
T.1	TIP development & amendments	30,487	12,675	18,376		3,107		1,102	6,524	9,604		81,874
T.2	Obligation status monitoring and reporting	13,133	5,460	7,916		1,243		475	2,810	4,137		35,173
T.3	STBG project-selection process*	3,283	1,365	1,979		1,864		119	703	1,034		10,346

\* *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (also referred to as *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law*) requires MPOs to use at least 2.5% of CPG funds on specified planning activities to increase safe and accessible options for multiple travel modes for people of all ages and abilities. The MPO certifies this activity meets this requirement.

# Appendices

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## Appendix B – Expected consultant contracts in Appendix A

Expected Consultant Engagements	Cost Estimate
Travel demand model support	\$75,000
Graphic Design	\$5,000
Border Data Warehouse: site maintenance, development	\$22,000
Translation Services	\$1,000
Smart Trips Website Phase II (currently unfunded)	\$40,000
Total Cost	<b>\$143,000</b>



# Appendices

## Appendix C – Timelines of activities

Activity Code	Work categories	Anticipated Timeline of UPWP Activities											
		CY 2025 / SFY 2026						CY 2026 / SFY 2026					
		July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
<b>A</b>	<b>Program administration</b>												
A.1	Professional development and staff training												
A.2	Coordination/communication with federal and state legislators												
A.3	Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)												
A.4	UPWP annual performance & expenditure report												
A.5	Title VI reporting												
A.6	Self-Certification Document												
<b>P</b>	<b>Transportation planning &amp; programs</b>												
P.1	Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan update & strategy*												
P.2	Regional & statewide activities with WSDOT & other MPO members*												
P.3	Evaluation & integration of new federal and state funding programs												
P.4	Performance reporting*												
P.5	Public and stakeholder participation and outreach*												
P.6	Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan												
P.7	Cross-border planning coordination - The IMTC Program												
P.8	IMTC 2025 X-border Personal Vehicle Survey												
P.9	Transportation Demand Management - Smart Trips												
P.10	Planning technical support for member jurisdictions												
P.11	Review of transportation planning requirements												
P.12	North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA)												
P.13	Maintenance of the regional transportation demand model												
P.14	Household Travel Survey (HTS)												
P.15	Development and maintenance of GIS resources												
P.16	Eval. & acquisition of new data												
P.17	Federal functional classification system updates and monitoring												
P.18	Border Data Warehouse operations and maintenance												
<b>R</b>	<b>RTPO planning</b>												
R.1	Certify consistency: RTP & local comp. plans												
R.2	Human Services Transportation planning (HSTP)												
R.3	Level of Service - coordination & standard adoption												
R.4	VMT Measures, Forecasts, & Targets												
<b>T</b>	<b>Programming</b>												
T.1	TIP development & amendments												
T.2	Obligation status monitoring and reporting												
T.3	STBG project-selection process*												

Lower Activity
  Moderate Activity
  Higher Activity

# Appendices

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## Appendix D – Unfunded transportation planning activities

Unfunded priority programs & projects	Cost Estimate
NSTA Coordination	\$25,000
Passenger Only Ferry Study Business Plan	\$150,000
Regional Crossing Guard Program Evaluation	\$25,000
Smart Trips Website Phase II	\$40,000
Total Cost	<b>\$240,000</b>

# Appendices

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## Appendix E – Other transportation planning activities in Whatcom

Sponsor: Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)  
**Bus Passenger Ridership Survey to be conducted Fall 2025**  
Contact: WTA, Planning Department

Sponsor: City of Ferndale  
**Safe Streets and Roads for All: develop a Safety Action Plan**  
Contact: City of Ferndale, Public Works

Sponsor: Lummi Nation  
**Safe Streets and Roads for All – develop Safety Action Plan and demonstration project(s)**  
Contact: Lummi Nation, Planning Department

Sponsor: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)  
**NCHRP Pilot to implement Bellingham – SR 539 Complete Streets**  
Contact: WSDOT Northwest Region

Sponsor: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)  
**I-5 Master Plan – development of goals and objectives, and screening process for policies, strategies and projects**  
Contact: WSDOT Northwest Region

Sponsor: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)  
**Cascadia High-Speed Rail – service development plan (SPD)**  
Contact: WSDOT Northwest Region



whatcom council of governments

## Memo

**To:** Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)  
**Date:** May 6, 2025  
**From:** Hugh Conroy, Director *HC*  
**Subject:** Consideration for adoption – The Whatcom Region Safety Action Plan (SAP).

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### Background

With funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) [Safe Streets and Roads for All Program \(SS4A\)](#), WCOG has developed a regional safety action plan (SAP) to guide next-phase investments to significantly reduce fatal and serious-injury (F&SI) crashes on our roads. Guided by a multidisciplinary Action Plan Committee, WCOG and regional partners analyzed large amounts of crash data, engaged with our community, reviewed current policies and practices, and have recommended strategies to advance in the next few years.

### Recent SAP development actions

The final draft [SAP was posted on WCOG's website](#) on April 30. Announcement of its availability for public review and comment was emailed to over 2,700 community members (who had participated in WCOG's SAP survey last summer) and has been posted in the *Cascadia Daily News* for the last two weeks.

The Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB) discussed the status of the SAP at its last meeting (March 14). In response to that discussion, a rate of serious crashes per vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) on high-injury network (HIN) corridors was developed and added to the SAP. An earlier draft SAP was emailed to the WTPB (and many others) on February 12.

### Next steps

With adoption of the SAP Whatcom region local governments will be able to apply for SS4A implementation funds. A current funding round is currently open with a deadline of June 26.

### Suggested motion

"Approve the Whatcom Region Safety Action Plan as presented."
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**Note:** The draft SAP is not attached to this memo. It can be accessed [HERE](#).