



MEETING OF THE  
WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD  
**Wednesday, May 10, 2023, 3:30 p.m.**  
Gordon W. Rogers Conference Room  
314 East Champion Street, Bellingham, Washington

Join using [Zoom](#)  
Or by phone: (253) 215-8782

**AGENDA**

PAGES

- |            |    |   |
|------------|----|---|
|            | A. | CALL TO ORDER   |
|            | B. | PUBLIC COMMENT<br>Citizens may speak informally to the Board on matters pertinent to its statutory responsibilities and which are not the subject of a public hearing. <i>Each speaker is allowed a maximum of three minutes.</i>   |
|            | C. | ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA <i>(if any)</i>   |
| 1-2        | D. | APPROVAL OF MINUTES*<br>Meeting of March 8, 2023  |
|            | E. | OLD BUSINESS <i>(if any)</i>  |
| 3-33<br>34 | F. | NEW BUSINESS<br>1. Adoption of the SFY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program – Hugh Conroy*<br>2. Request to move regional STBG funding to ensure timely project deliveries – Lethal Coe*  |
| 35-36      | G. | PUBLIC HEARING<br>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment No. 2023-05<br>1. Staff Presentation – Lethal Coe<br>2. Open Public Hearing – Citizens may address the Board on the subject of the hearing <i>for a maximum of three minutes each</i><br>3. Close Public Hearing*<br>4. Board Discussion<br>5. Vote on Proposed TIP Amendment* |
|            | H. | OBLIGATION STATUS UPDATE – Lethal Coe   |
|            | I. | PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Hugh Conroy  |
|            | J. | CORRESPONDENCE <i>(if any)</i>  |
|            | K. | BOARD OPEN FORUM  |
|            | L. | ADJOURN   |

\* Action item

WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD  
MINUTES – **DRAFT**  
MARCH 8, 2023

IN ATTENDANCE (IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM):

MEMBERS VOTING: **Bellingham:** Edwin “Skip” Williams; **Blaine:** Richard May; **Everson:** John Perry; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman); **Lummi Nation:** Anthony Hillaire; **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chairman); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Port of Bellingham:** Bobby Briscoe; **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio; **Whatcom County:** Satpal Sidhu, Kaylee Galloway; **WTA:** Michael Lilliquist (1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman) *EX OFFICIO:* Chris Roselli, Western Washington University

GUESTS Todd Carlson, WSDOT; Guy Occhiogrosso, Bellingham Regional Chamber; Les Reardanz, WTA; Terry Terry, Lummi Island resident; Kirk Vinish, Lummi Nation Planning Department

STAFF Bob Wilson (Secretary), Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Lethal Coe

A. CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Wilson determined that there was a quorum, and Chairman Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

C. AGENDA ADDITIONS

None

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 18, 2023

**MOTION:** Mr. Hester moved, second by Mr. Briscoe, to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 18, 2023, as presented.

**MOTION PASSED**

E. OLD BUSINESS

None

F. NEW BUSINESS

None

G. PUBLIC HEARING

Amendment No. 23-01 to the 2023 WCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Coe described the proposed amendment to the 2023 TIP:

Amend WSDOT project *NWR Breakaway Cable Terminal (BCT) Replacement 21-23* to increase construction phase funding. The BCTs will be removed and replaced with guardrail terminals that meet current safety standards by reducing the risk of injury collisions at select locations. Federal funding for this project comes from the Highway Safety Improvement Program; state funding is from the Moving Washington Account.

**PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 4:34 P.M.**

No public comment was offered.

**PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 4:34 P.M. BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT**

**MOTION:** Mr. May moved, second by Mr. Briscoe, to approve Amendment No. 23-03 to the 2023 WCOG TIP, as presented.

**MOTION PASSED**

H. OBLIGATION STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Coe briefed the Board on the region's current progress toward meeting its Federal Fiscal Year 2023 obligation target.

I. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Conroy briefed the Board on recent transportation planning activities.

J. BOARD OPEN FORUM

Mr. May shared information about the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks. Mr. Carlson shared information on a RAISE grant for Blaine's Bell Road Grade Separation project. Mr. Korthuis expressed his concern over the schedule for improvements to SR 539.

K. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

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Robert H. Wilson, AICP  
Secretary

Approval scheduled for May 10, 2023



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## Memo

**To:** Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)  
**Date:** May 3, 2023  
**From:** Hugh Conroy, Director of Planning *HC*  
**Subject:** Review and consideration for adoption – WCOG’s SFY 2024 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, 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) 2024

The draft 2024 UPWP (included as an attachment with this memo) features some notable changes from 2023. These include:

- New and/or increased activities connected to awarded grant-funding proposals.
  - WA **Regional Mobility Grant** request (via Whatcom Transportation Authority) for increasing the reach and impact of the Smart Trips Program.
  - Safety Action Plan development funded by USDOT’s Safe Streets & Roads for All Program.
  - Border wait-time traveler information system – binational, multi-agency planning for a system to replace the existing system (now 20+ years old). Funded by USDOT SMART Program grant.
- Increasing activities in preparation for upcoming, local-government updates of comprehensive plans.
  - Population & employment forecasts and updates to the regional travel demand model.
  - Review of new state RTPO planning requirements and updating WCOG’s process for certifying local comprehensive plan transportation and land-use elements for conformity and consistency.

### State and federal review

A draft SFY 2024 UPWP was submitted to WSDOT in March and reviewed with WSDOT, FHWA, and FTA WCOG’s annual UPWP review meeting on April 13. Minor clarifications were requested and those changes and other suggested edits have been made.

The updated draft SFY 2024 UPWP is attached for your review and consideration for adoption.

### Suggested motion

“Approve the State Fiscal Year 2024 Unified Planning Work Program for the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area as presented.”
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**DRAFT** (v. 04/14/23)

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

**State Fiscal Year 2024**

**To be Considered for Adoption** by the WCOG Policy Board on  
May 10, 2023

**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 Bob Wilson, program coordinator at (360) 685-8389.

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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 1982 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 documents anticipated uses of federal and state funding for MPO and RTPO activities over the upcoming state fiscal year (SFY) 2024.

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 UPWP documents 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) 2024 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 seven **categories**.

1. Program administration
2. Transportation planning & Programs
3. RTPO planning,
4. Regional mobility programs,
5. Data collection & analysis,
6. Programming
7. 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 border related projects). While all anticipated SFY 2024 activities are grouped under the seven categories, each activity section header also includes a notation of funding source types.

Each of the activities to be undertaken by WCOG in SFY 2024 is explained using the following format:

**Category** (listed above)

**Activity** (varying number under each category)

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

## Budget and financial table

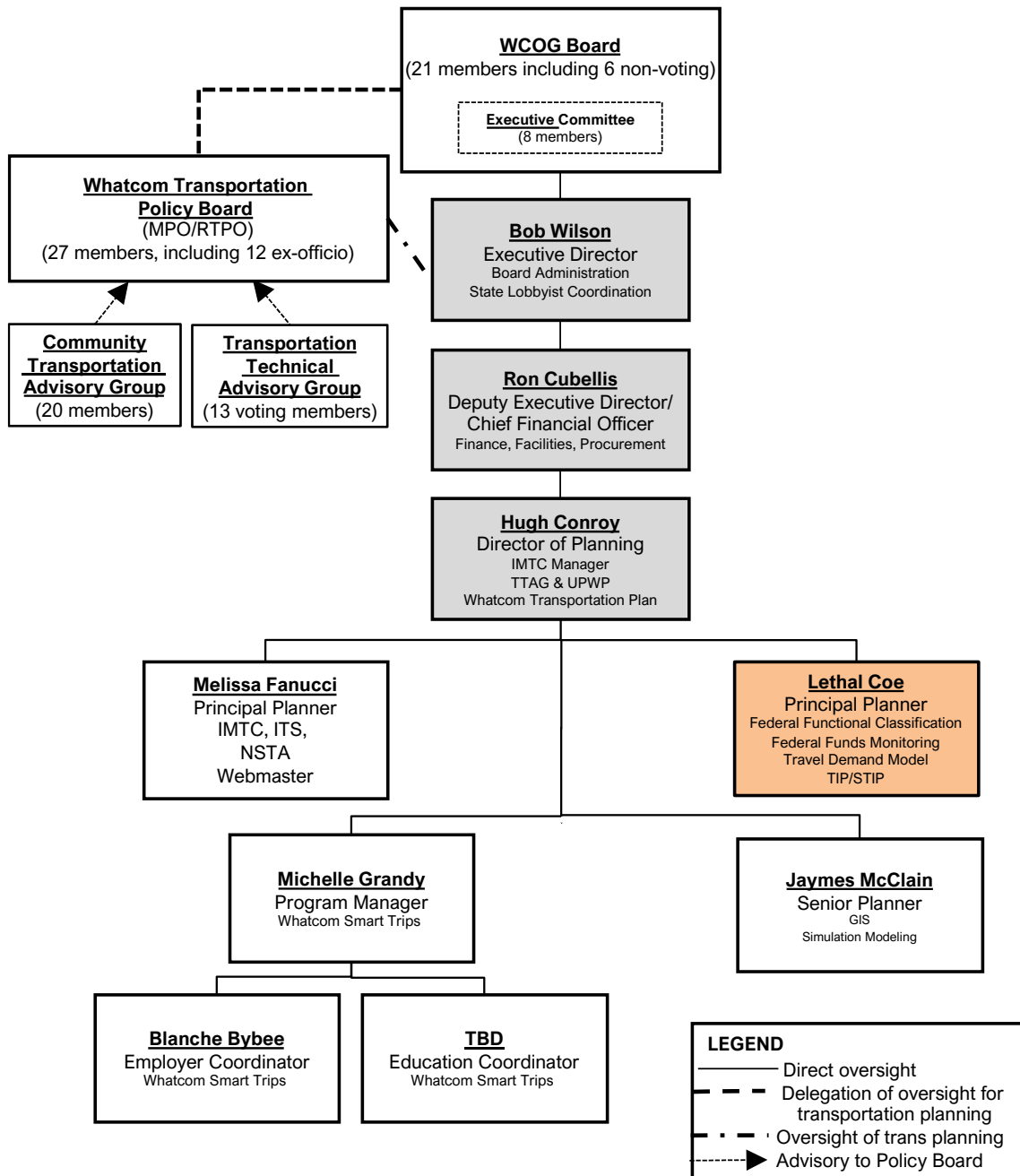
WSDOT UPWP guidelines include a budget/financial table template to be used to provide a summary of all MPO/RTPO activities funded by PL, FTA 5303 and/or RTPO funds along with the sources of proposed match and other funds as required by 23 CFR 450.308. This table is included as Appendix A.



# 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.

## Whatcom Council of Governments 2023 Organizational Structure



# 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.

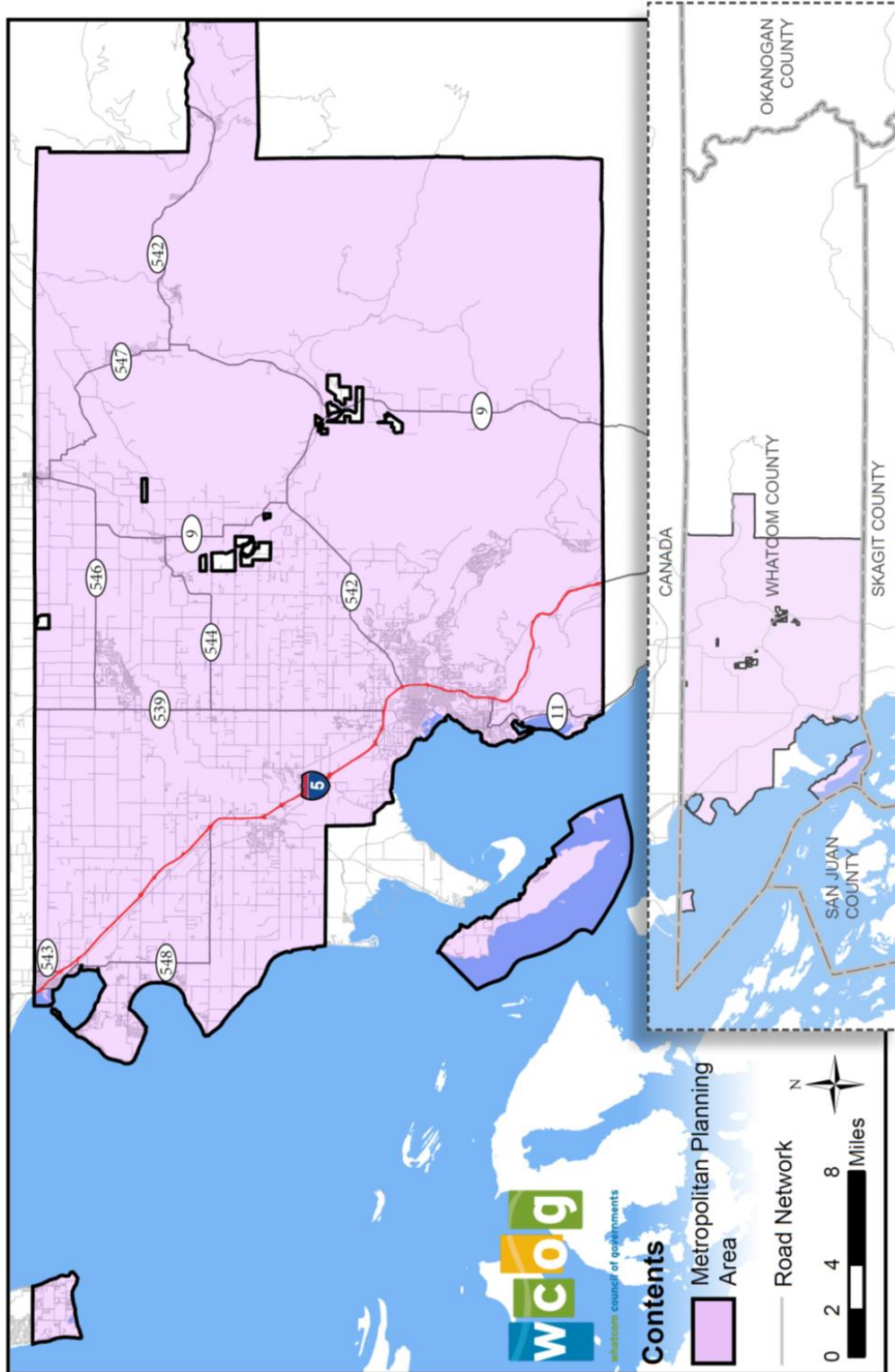
Entity	Position	2023 Representatives	Council Board	MPO - RTPO Policy Board
Whatcom County	Executive	Satpal Sidhu	●	●
	Councilmember	Kaylee Galloway	●	●
	Councilmember	Kathy Kershner	●	
City of Bellingham	Mayor	Seth Fleetwood	●	●
	Councilmember	Edwin H. "Skip" Williams	●	●
	Councilmember	Michael Lilliquist	●	
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	Dan Pike	○	
Whatcom Council of Governments	WTPB Secretary	Robert Wilson		○
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

<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 2024.

# Metropolitan Planning Area

In 2013, the WCOG MPA boundary was expanded beyond the county's Urbanized Area to include all areas of the county west of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest lands. The Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe chose not to include their lands.



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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* (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	“ <b>Safety</b> : To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.”	“(2) Increase the <b>safety</b> of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.”	“(1) <b>Safety</b> : 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, <b>across and between modes</b> , for people and freight.”	
3	Climate (Greenhouse Gas Reduction) & Environmental Quality	“ <b>Environment</b> : 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 <b>environment</b> , 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) <b>Environmental sustainability</b> : To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.
4	Maintain Existing Infrastructure in Good, Operating Condition (Preservation)	“ <b>Preservation</b> : To maintain, preserve and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.”	“(8) Emphasize the <b>preservation</b> of the existing transportation system.” <i>Also, see (9) below regarding reliability.</i>	(2) <b>Infrastructure condition</b> : To maintain the highway infrastructure asset system in a state of good repair.
5	System Efficiency & Reliability (Mobility)	“ <b>Stewardship</b> : To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation system.”	(9) Improve the <b>resiliency and reliability</b> of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate storm water impacts of surface transportation.	
		“ <b>Mobility</b> (congestion relief): To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington state, including congestion relief and improved freight mobility.”	“(7) Promote <b>efficient system</b> management and operation.”	(3) <b>Congestion reduction</b> : To achieve a significant reduction in congestion on the National Highway System. (4) <b>System reliability</b> : 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 <b>accessibility and mobility</b> of people and freight.”	
6	Freight & Economic Vitality	<i>Freight included as part of Mobility and Economic Vitality policy goals.</i>	<i>Freight included with FAST Act planning factors 4 and 6.</i>	(5) <b>Freight movement and economic vitality</b> : To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.
		<b>Economic vitality</b> : To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.	(1) Support <b>economic vitality</b> of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.	
			(3) Increase the <b>security</b> of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users. (10) Enhance travel and <b>tourism</b>	(7) <b>Reduced project delivery delays</b> : 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

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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 with appreciation for 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) 2023. 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 2023:

- 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 2023, 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.



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## 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 2023 accomplishments

Reviewing SFY 2023, this section highlights some notable completed work items.

### Professional development and staff training

- APA- NW meetings
- AMPO Training and Tools Symposium
- 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 and adoption of *Way to Go, Whatcom*, the Whatcom Region's regional and metropolitan transportation plan.
- Coordinated partnership between WCOG, WSDOT and City of Bellingham to pilot safety analytics that examined close-call crashes and traveler conflicts at selected locations within the Lincoln-Lakeway Multimodal Study subarea
- 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 Climate Impact Advisory Committee on drafting for transportation goals and strategies.
- Human Services Transportation Plan
- Work as begun on an update to WCOG's Title VI Plan

### TIP

- 2022 Annual cycle completed that provided final report project amendments and modifications, and federal and public requirements for access and participation. Highlights include:

- 
- 12 TIP amendments
  - 8 administrative modifications
  - 2023 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.
  - \$16,784,572 million total obligations
  - \$266,719 million total de-obligations
  - Monitored federal funding obligations and continued coordination with project managers.
  - Recommended contingency projects
  - Final 2022 obligations delivery was \$120 thousand above target.
  - Received \$2,101,900 additional OA funding opportunity
  - Received \$2,099 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:

- 990 community members began participating in Smart Trips diaries, adding to the total of 23,350 since the program began in 2006
- Participants have logged a total of 77,675,410 miles since the start of the program.
- 31,985 tons of greenhouse gas emissions have been prevented.
- Over \$13.3 million dollars have been added to the local economy through fuel savings.

A 2019-2023 mobility management grant which allows Whatcom Smart Trips staff in partnership with WTA to teach seniors and youth in Whatcom County how to ride fixed route transit was permitted to be used for bicycle education. A new offering of smaller covid-safe bike classes was developed. Staff worked with a total of 480 people in one on one or small groups.

After two years of lost access to regional schools to conduct 7<sup>th</sup> grade bus education, WST was able to return to the classrooms in spring of 2022 with an updated program for middle school students across the county.

## International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program

2022 did not see a return to in-person meetings until the end of the year. So for 2022, all but one of the five meetings held last year were virtual, as they have been since March 2020. But unlike the previous



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years, border traffic restrictions ceased in 2022 and cross-border travelers returned to the Cascade Gateway. Most of the work of the IMTC this year has focused on monitoring how 2022 travel and trade trends differed from pre-pandemic levels. Specifically, the following achievements occurred in 2022:

- Completed the 2022 IMTC Cascade Gateway Commercial Vehicle Operations Study in coordination with Western Washington University’s Border Policy Research Institute and funded through a collaboration of border stakeholder agencies including B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BCMOTI), Transport Canada, and the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. Efforts were fully supported by U.S. Customs & Border Protection and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).
- Collected trade and travel data for sharing, analysis, and collaborative efforts with partner agencies to address regional cross-border transportation challenges.
- Calibrated the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse archive with real-time data once border volumes increased
- Applied for federal funding through the SMART Program to develop a replacement cross-border wait time system with partner agencies BCMOTI and WA State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Established a binational Pacific Highway Commercial Traffic Management Subgroup to address safety and traffic flow concerns for commercial vehicles using the truck staging area southbound at the Pacific Highway Port-of-Entry.
- Followed current border-related issues from participating agencies and other interests. Topics included anti-idling zones approaching U.S. and Canadian ports-of-entry; U.S. Maritime Administration’s 2021 Marine Highway designation for the Coastal Connector Project; and infrastructure development plans and facility upgrades from both U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) and CBSA at multiple Cascade Gateway border crossings.

## SFY 2024 work categories

The identified seven 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.

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**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 RTPPO 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 RTPPO 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 2025. And, if needed, WCOG will submit amendment requests for this SFY 2024 UPWP.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

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

**Schedule:** Expected approval by WCOG MPO Policy Board in May 2024.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPPO 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 2023.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:** Complete annual report.

**Schedule:** Due on September 30, 2024.

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

## **Title VI reporting and plan update**

WCOG has initiated an update to its Title VI plan in 2023.

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WCOG's Title VI reporting cycle is July-June.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:**

- Annual Title VI report.
- Ongoing monitoring of changes that would require updating the Title VI plan. Such changes can include new federal programs, key staff, the state Title VI plan, FHWA or FTA requirements, etc.
- Update of the Title VI plan if needed (per above).

**Schedule:** Title VI report in July 2023.

**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, 2023.

**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, 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 2024 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 will support completion of a Safety Action Plan which will in turn 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:** Once project agreement forms are finalized with USDOT/FHWA Division Office, (May/June 2023?), Completion of the Safety Action Plan is estimated to be an 18-month project. WCOG expects to be working on it for the duration of SFY 2024.

## **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 2024 include:

- WSDOT has indicated an interest in furthering corridor-planning centered on I-5 between the Bakerview and Grandview interchanges (including adjacent jurisdictions and all modes. If this work advances in 2024, WCOG expects to be involved.
- Continued engagement with WTA as appropriate, especially on efforts related to their long-range plan.
- 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 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.

## Monitoring of federal and state funding programs

While many federal and state funding programs were introduced in 2022 and 2023, details and iterative guidance continue to emerge and some program components are still expected to be completely defined and announced (E.g., the federal PROTECT discretionary program). WCOG maintains sufficient awareness and understanding of these 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.

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## 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)) 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-



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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
  - 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 RTPD funds, FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, & FHWA CBI 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, 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.



TDM graphic from City of Monterey, CA – [monterey.org](http://monterey.org)

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

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- 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.



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## Advanced Border Information System (ABIS) Design

Funded by a U.S. DOT Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant (announced , this project will leverage 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:** One year from availability of funds (completion of project agreement with DOT/FHWA).

**Products:**

- Technologies evaluation
- Inventory of needed cross-border & inter-agency agreements
- Development of alternatives for data warehousing
- Systems integration plan
- Installation plan
- Consultant selection and project management
- IMTC / multi-agency project advisory committee facilitation

**Funding source:** USDOT SMART Program. No match required.

## 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 RTPPO 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.

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Activities in Washington State at both the legislative and agency level are evaluating new regional and RTPPO 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 RTPPO 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 2024, 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 RTPPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

## RTPPO planning

WCOG’s duties as an RTPPO are defined under Washington state law, RCW 47.80.023. These duties are listed below along with how they relate to WCOG’s SFY 2024 work plan.

The following RTPPO duties are covered elsewhere in this work plan or do not need to be addressed in SFY 2024.

**1. Periodic preparation of a regional transportation strategy.** As both the regional MPO and the RTPPO, this duty is covered under the previously covered Metropolitan Transportation Plan work activities.

**2. Regional transportation plan (RTP).** As both the RTPPO 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.

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

Whatcom County-wide planning policies have not changed since they were originally adopted under GMA. There have been recent discussions of proposing some changes to the county-wide planning policies. WCOG will continue to monitor this in SFY 2024 and conduct the required RTPPO review if necessary.

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WCOG expects to undertake the following RTPO activities during SFY 2024.

### **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.*

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 perform the same certification review as required. The next due-date for regularly scheduled comprehensive plan updates for Whatcom County jurisdictions is June 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 2024 WCOG will continue the HSTP planning process by:

**Products:**

- Periodic review of and community outreach to optimize the composition of the HST Steering Committee.
- Review progress towards stated HSTP goals.
- Review of implementation of related 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 standard setting**

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 possible regional-plan amendments and with respect to upcoming (2025) local comprehensive plan updates.

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**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.

## Data collection and analysis

Supporting the above transportation planning functions requires analytical tools based on up-to-date comprehensive data collection, information technology, and industry standard methods. The *data collection and analysis* core function includes support, maintenance, and application of a regional transportation demand model.

### Maintenance of the regional transportation demand model

WCOG will continue to maintain and operate a regional travel demand model to analyze current and forecast year impacts of transportation projects, changes in land use, and future growth and land-use decisions on the regional transportation system. As part of its metropolitan and regional transportation planning program, WCOG provides current and forecast model year data for member jurisdictions and other agencies.

The WCOG model was calibrated in 2019 to incorporate updated household travel survey data, demographics, road and transit networks, external activities, and updated traffic counts for model validation.

**Performance:** WCOG staff and consultant.

**Products:**

- Develop 2022 base year in preparation for Countywide comprehensive plan updates.
  - Incorporate update traffic counts data to assess model validation.
- Develop, in coordination with Whatcom County and Cities and consultant, forecast model scenarios (2045) that incorporates geographical allocations of households and employment for the 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:** The model updates for the Countywide comprehensive plan developments are currently scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2023 and extend through 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.

### 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.

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**Schedule:** Ongoing.

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPPO 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 RTPPO 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. The federal functional classifications are scheduled to update in accordance with the adjusted 2020 Census urban and rural area geographies that will finalize mid-2023.

**Performance:** WCOG staff

**Products:**

- Standardized and update functionally classified regional road network with the 2020 Census adjusted urban and rural area geographies.
- Work with TTAG and WSDOT to modify adjusted urban areas in response to 2020 Census and FHWA's subsequent adjustment of urban areas for functional classification.

**Schedule:** Ongoing

**Funding source:** This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 funds, state RTPPO 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](https://www.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.

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# 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 other year – awarding two to three years of projected funding allocation.

**Performance:** WCOG staff



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**Products:** WCOG staff will have just completed its work on the 2023 project review and selection process. Remaining tasks in SFY 2024 will likely include:

- Award letters following July approval of selections by the Policy Board.
- Annual list of project obligations report

**Schedule:** Typically, most work takes place in odd years from May up to the July Policy Board meeting. Some work occurs when/if projects run into issues using the awarded funds and TTAG and the PB need to be engaged to review and approve funds transfers between projects or other solutions to apply the funds to planned, eligible uses.

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

## Unfunded priority programs and projects

### 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 define the level of interest, potential operators, financing and governance, 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.

### Planner 1

WCOG could make excellent use of an entry-level planner. Current funding levels don't support this. (\$95,000)

### 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

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### **Smart Trips elementary school bike rodeos**

Continuation of elementary school bike rodeos – focused on teaching bike transportation safety and skills – is not currently funded. As COVID restrictions lift, interest in these programs as well as their relationship to Safe Routes to School investments is expected to increase. Estimated funding need for this work is \$40,000 per year. Opportunities for sponsorships from local businesses are likely as well.





# Appendices

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## Appendix B – Expected consultant contracts

<b>Expected Consultant Engagements</b>	<b>Est. cost</b>
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
Planning, technology evaluation	\$350,000



## MEMO

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board  
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner  
Date: May 1, 2023  
Subject: Request to move regional STBG funding to ensure timely project deliveries

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### **Deobligation for Bellingham’s *Orchard Drive Extension* completion**

The City of Bellingham received confirmation on March 31<sup>st</sup> that the resulting closure of their *Orchard Drive Extension* project will result in a deobligation of \$450,000 of regional Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) indicated the funds are now available for programming this federal fiscal year, meaning the funds will be accounted for towards our obligations delivery in 2023.

### **Environmental delay for Bellingham’s *James/Bakerview Intersection Reconstruction***

The City of Bellingham received notice in April that their existing project submission for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) permit is no longer valid due to updated regulatory requirements. Thus, the permitting process set-back may take up to two years to redo. This project was critical to meeting our regional STBG delivery target for 2023.

### **Resulting TTAG Recommendation for City of Bellingham’s Request**

The WCOG Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) convened on April 28<sup>th</sup> and provided a recommendation to the WCOG Policy Board to approve the following actions for the City of Bellingham:

1. Transfer \$450,000 of STBG funds from the *Orchard Drive Extension* deobligation to *Telegraph Rd Multimodal Safety Improvements*
2. Transfer \$1,000,000 of STBG funds from *James/Bakerview Intersection Reconstruction* to *Telegraph Rd Multimodal Safety Improvement*. This action will leave \$1,000,000 of STBG funds in *James/Bakerview Intersection Reconstruction* to use once NEPA is resolved.

The resulting actions will increase the regional STBG funding available for *Telegraph Rd Multimodal Safety Improvements* to **\$3,100,000** for immediate obligation to help ensure June 30<sup>th</sup> delivery target.

**Suggested Policy Board Action:**

Approve the allocation of regional STBG funds for the City of Bellingham as stated in this memo.



## MEMORANDUM

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board  
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner  
Date: May 1, 2023  
Subject: WCOG 2023 TIP Amendment

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**Amendment #3 (23-05)** of the WCOG 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following:

1. Add Whatcom County's project *Lummi Island Ferry System Modernization & Preservation* that was awarded by Moving Ahead Washington to replace the ferry vessel with a new hybrid diesel-electric vessel as well as modify terminal and improve operations. The total project cost is estimated at just over \$50 million. The preliminary engineering phase will begin in 2023.

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 2023 Transportation Improvement Program.

**WCOG TIP Amendment #3 (23-05) Table**

#	Agency	Project Title	Amended TIP Action	Added Funds	Total Cost	Source
1	WSDOT	<i>Lummi Island Ferry System Modernization &amp; Preservation</i>	Add new project	3,987,600	50,292,600	MAW

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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 Action Required for the following Administrative Modifications](#)

Agency	Project	Modification Administered	Total Costs	Source
Lynden	<i>Benson Rd Improvements, Sunrise Dr to Badger Rd</i>	Add right-of-way phase and adjust preliminary engineering and construction	3,769,000	STBG, CRP
Bellingham	<i>Telegraph Road Multimodal Safety Improvements</i>	[pending policy board action] modify phases to swap local funds with STBG funds	7,707,000	STBG, CRP, TIB
Bellingham	<i>James/Bakerview Intersection Reconstruction</i>	[pending policy board action] modify phases to swap STBG funds with local funds	4,070,000	