



Meeting of the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, 3:30 p.m.

Gordon W. Rogers Conference Room

314 East Champion Street, Bellingham, Washington

Join using Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84111173933>

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)**
- 2-3 **D. Approval of the Minutes -- Meeting of October 11, 2023***
- E. Old Business (if any)**
- 4-5 **F. Public Hearing: Amendment #1 (24-01) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
 - 1. Staff Presentation - Lethal Coe
 - 2. Open Public Hearing - Members of the public may address the Board about the subject of the hearing for a maximum of three minutes each.
 - 3. Close Public Hearing*
 - 4. Board Discussion
 - 5. Vote on Proposed TIP amendment*
- G. New Business**
 - 6-11 1. Consideration of Adopting state-wide roadway safety targets - Hugh Conroy*
 - 12-13 2. Consideration of Amending WCOG's 2024 UPWP - Hugh Conroy*
- H. Obligation Status Update - Lethal Coe**
- I. Director's Report - Hugh Conroy**
- J. Correspondence (if any)**
- K. Board Open Forum**

* Action item

DRAFT Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
Minutes
October 11, 2023

In Attendance (In-person or via Zoom)

Members *Voting:* **Bellingham:** Edwin “Skip” Williams; **Everson:** John Perry; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chair); **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chair); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Port of Bellingham:** Bobby Briscoe; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio; **Whatcom Transportation Authority:** Michael Lilliquist

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

Others **Lummi Nation:** Kirk Vinish; **McBride Public Affairs:** Tom McBride;
Whatcom Transportation Authority, Les Reardanz;

A. **Call to Order**

Hugh Conroy determined that there was a quorum, and Chair Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

B. **Public Comment**

None

C. **Agenda Additions**

None

D. **Approval of Minutes of** July 12, 2023

Motion: Mr. Williams, second by Mr. Briscoe, to approve the minutes of the meeting of July 12, 2023, as presented. **Motion Passed**

E. **Old Business**

None

F. **New Business**

1. Current WSDOT Outlook for Preservation of state highways

Mr. Damitio gave a presentation of the current WSDOT budget, the decisions that went into it, and the current funding and programming for preservation projects state-wide and specifically in Whatcom County.

Board members asked clarifying questions about total funding amounts and interpretation of graphs.

Mr. Briscoe asked for more information on how the total state gas-tax revenue is allocated with respect to actual road improvements. Mr. Conroy offered to locate that information (noting that the Washington Transportation Commission has prepared good graphics on this).

Mr. Korthuis noted that long-programmed improvement to SR 539 (Guide Meridian) in Lynden, which dates back to the Nickel package, has now been pushed off further to 2035.

A question was asked about a chart that showed the estimated amount of additional gas tax that would be needed for the state to meet its objectives for improved safety -- \$5.10. The question was: For how long this would be needed to generate the target revenue? Mr. Damitio will look into how the estimate was done.

G. **Public Hearing 1**

Amendment #5 (23-10) of the WCOG 2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Coe presented the requested TIP amendment.

The public hearing was opened at 4:02 p.m. No public present. Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. May, moved to close the public hearing. **Motion approved.** Public hearing closed at 4:03 p.m.

Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. May, moved to approve the TIP amendment as presented. **Motion approved.**

H. **Public Hearing 2**

WCOG 2024 TIP

Mr. Coe presented the final draft of the 2024 TIP.

The public hearing was opened at 4:06 p.m. No public present. The public hearing was closed at 4:07.

Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. May, moved to approve the 2024TIP as presented. **Motion approved.**

I. **Obligation Status Update**

Mr. Coe presented the current federal funds obligation status for programmed projects. WCOG is set to meet and exceed its current target.

J. **Director's Report**

Mr. Conroy reviewed the status of selected WCOG planning projects (Safe Streets & Roads for All action-plan development, upcoming IMTC meeting on October 25, etc.)

Mr. Conroy returned to the discussion at the last Policy Board meeting regarding a special session that would provide board members a review of RTPO and MPO duties. Board members indicated that one hour added to the beginning of the January Policy Board meeting would be a preferred option.

K. **Correspondence**

None

L. **Board Open Forum**

Mr. Briscoe reiterated his interest in information about the allocation of gas tax to transportation projects. Mr. Lilliquist agreed that it is important to have full awareness of where tax revenues are going and also shared his sense that Whatcom County had been doing pretty well with what it receives from fuel taxes.

Hugh Conroy
Secretary

Approved January 17, 2023



MEMORANDUM

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
From: Lethal Coe, Principal Planner
Date: January 10, 2024
Subject: WCOG 2024 TIP Amendment

Amendment #1 (24-01) of the WCOG 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following:

1. Add City of Bellingham project *Eldridge Avenue - Squalicum Creek Bridge Replacement* to replace the bridge over Squalicum Creek and Squalicum Way, and include bike lanes and sidewalks. The project was awarded \$24.953 million through the federal Bridge program and construction is planned to begin in 2026.
2. Add City of Bellingham project *Squalicum Creek Estuary Restoration* to replace fish passage barrier culverts at Roeder Ave and BNSF Railroad Spur, and to include bike/ped improvements on Roeder Ave. The project was awarded \$1.84 million of federal Discretionary funds for preliminary engineering that will begin in 2024.
3. Add Lummi Nation project *Elevate Slater Road* to address areas frequent flooding and access to the Lummi Nation Reservation. The project’s preliminary engineering planned to begin in 2024 is funded with federal Surface Transportation Block Grant funds (\$350k) and Moving Ahead Washington account funds (\$2 mil).
4. Add WSDOT project *SR 542/Unnamed Tributary to Toad Creek & North Fork Nooksack River - Fish Passage* to replace fish passage barriers with passable structures. This project is funded through federal National Highway Performance Program, and through state Motor Vehicle Account and Moving Ahead Washington. The total project cost is \$36.4 million and construction is planned for 2024.
5. Amend WSDOT project *SR 542/Unnamed Tributaries to High & Mitchell Creeks - Fish Passage* to add federal funds from National Highway Performance Program to the construction funding and adjust termini. This project will replace fish passage barriers with passable structures. The total project cost is \$19.1 million and construction is planned for 2024.

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 #1 of the Whatcom Council of Governments 2024 Transportation Improvement Program.

WCOG TIP Amendment #1 (24-01) Table

#	Agency	Project Title	Amended TIP Action	Added Funds	Total Cost	Source
1	Bellingham	<i>Eldridge Avenue – Squalicum Creek Bridge Replacement</i>	Add new project	\$24,953,000	\$24,953,000	BR
2	Bellingham	<i>Squalicum Creek Estuary Restoration</i>	Add new project	2,300,000	17,000,000	Dis
3	Lummi Nation	<i>Elevate Slater Rd</i>	Add new project	2,350,000	50,000,000	STBG, MAW
4	WSDOT	<i>SR 542/Unnamed Tributary to Toad Creek & North Fork Nooksack River - Fish Passage</i>	Add new project	36,694,752	36,733,298	NHPP, MAW, MVA
5	WSDOT	<i>SR 542/Unnamed Tributaries to High & Mitchell Creeks - Fish Passage</i>	Amend project to add federal funds (swap for state funds)	113,809	19,179,562	STBG, NHPP, MVA, MAW

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

Agency	Project	Modification Administered	Total Costs	Source
WSDOT	<i>SR 539/Baker Creek – Fish Passage</i>	Adjust CN funding and expenditure schedule	22,743,373	NHPP, MVA
WSDOT	<i>I-5 Baker Creek & Spring Creek – Fish Passage</i>	Adjust CN funding, source and expenditure schedule	38,038,311	NHPP, MVA
Whatcom	<i>Goshen Road/Anderson Creek Bridge No. 248 Replacement</i>	Adjust Bridge and local funds for CN	5,074,950	BR
WTA	<i>Replace Fixed Route Buses</i>	Adjust funding and add 5339	11,346,900	5307, 5339



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Memo

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)
Date: January 9, 2024
From: Hugh Conroy, Director *HC*
Subject: Resolution to adopt Washington State's 2022 HSIP safety performance targets

Introduction

Federal law requires states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) identify performance measures and targets for road safety.

Under these rules, states shall measure transportation safety performance using five USDOT-defined measures – permutations of crash statistics on all public roads reported by severity (fatal, serious injury) and expressed as five-year rolling averages of counts and rates-per-vehicle-miles-traveled. States and MPOs must then establish targets for improvement in terms of the five measures. **MPOs must establish targets either by 1) agreeing to plan and program projects so that they contribute toward the accomplishment of the state DOT target or 2) by developing and tracking their own target.**

Unlike other USDOT performance measures and targets, safety targets must be re-approved annually by states and MPOs – states by August 31 prior to the target year and MPOs by February 27 of the target year.

Preparation and coordination

Through the MPO-WSDOT Coordinating Committee, Washington State MPOs agreed to adopt Washington State's commitment to Target Zero in February 2016.

WSDOT also updates a document that details the state's target-setting and performance tracking process: Target Zero, crash data, reporting schedules, periodic revisions, and possible penalties to the state for underperformance. **This document, "Transportation Performance Management & Highway Safety,"** which also lists the updated targets for 2024, is attached.

Additional notes

WSDOT has developed statewide calculations of the five USDOT metrics and is also providing these metrics for each MPO's planning area (excerpt of Whatcom County's proportion of the state targets is attached). These data are provided to inform regional planning and programing, not as assigned sub-targets for MPOs. The only performance targets to be tracked by USDOT are the *statewide* targets. Related to the above point, Washington MPOs are not exposed to penalties under this approach.

Target Zero is a hard target to meet but has been adopted by the state to continuously promote reductions of serious crashes. Targets must be revisited annually and there are processes established to adjust them.

Suggested motion

"In accordance with USDOT's safety performance rules, the Whatcom Council of Governments Transportation Policy Board approves Resolution 23-01-1 (attached), adopting Washington's 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) targets and thus agrees to plan and program projects so that they contribute toward the accomplishment of the targets."



**Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
Resolution No. 24-01-1**

Adopting Statewide Safety Performance Targets

Whereas the 2012 federal transportation act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) established a performance management framework for state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations such as the Whatcom Council of Governments, and

Whereas in accordance with 23 CFR §490 and 23 CFR §924, the MAP-21 performance framework includes traffic safety objectives of significantly reducing fatal and serious-injury crashes on all public roads and reducing fatalities and serious injuries to people using non-motorized transportation modes such as walking and bicycling, and

Whereas states are required to annually set targets for each measure, and Washington State has set its 2023 Highway Safety Improvement Program safety performance targets as follows,

1. Number of fatalities on all public roads (rolling five-year average): 461.5
2. Fatality rate per million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) (rolling five-year average): 0.787
3. Serious injuries (rolling five-year average): 1,939.4
4. Serious injury rate per 100 million VMT: 3.309
5. Non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries: 465.6, and,

Whereas metropolitan planning organizations must agree to plan and program projects that contribute to their state's annually adopted targets, or commit to other quantifiable targets, and

Whereas Washington's metropolitan planning organizations have agreed to adopt the safety targets established by Washington State.

It is thus resolved that the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board agrees to plan and program projects in the Whatcom metropolitan planning area that will contribute to the attainment of Washington State's 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Program targets for each of the five measures.

Adopted this seventeenth day of January 2023, in the City of Bellingham, Washington, a quorum being present.

Hugh Conroy, Secretary

Transportation Performance Management & Highway Safety

WSDOT submits TPM Safety performance targets to FHWA

The U.S. Department of Transportation has issued two interrelated final rules governing traffic safety and safety-oriented performance management which became effective on April 14, 2016. These two rules are referred to in this folio as

- Rule #1 - Safety Performance Measures rule; (23 CFR §490)
- Rule #2 - Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) rule; (23 CFR §924)

Both final rules relate to highway safety, the primary objective being to significantly reduce fatal and serious-injury crashes on all public roads. The Safety Performance Measures rule (Rule #1) also includes the goal of reducing traffic fatalities of and serious injuries to people using non-motorized transportation modes, namely bicyclists and pedestrians.

Safety Performance Reporting

Rule #1 specifies the performance management measures for safety, and defines the target setting process for State DOTs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Per Rule #2, State DOTs will establish

and report their safety targets and progress toward these targets in an annual Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) report.

In general, MPOs establish targets by either agreeing to plan and program projects so that they contribute toward the accomplishment of the State DOT HSIP target, or by committing to a quantifiable target for their Metropolitan Planning Area. MPOs will report annually to their State DOT in a manner agreed upon and documented by both parties. MPOs would report safety performance in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, as provided in U.S. Code 23 Section 134(i)(2)(C).

In Washington state, the MPOs and WSDOT worked together to jointly develop a collaborative approach in support of data, process, and target-setting decision making. This Target Setting Framework Group has agreed WSDOT will take the lead in establishing safety targets, which MPOs will support.

Page 3 highlights the official statewide safety targets for 2024, a description of the target setting approach for the five required safety performance measures in Washington state, and how this approach to target setting relates to the stipulations of TPM rulemaking.

Summary of required performance measures

Rule #1 requires all State DOTs to report targets and performance with respect to the following safety performance measures:

- No. 1** - Number of fatalities on all public roads (due June 30)
- No. 2** - Number of fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on all public roads (due June 30)
- No. 3** - Number of serious injuries on all public roads (due June 30)
- No. 4** - Number of serious injuries per 100 million VMT on all public roads (due August 31)
- No. 5** - Number of non-motorist (e.g. bicyclists and pedestrians) fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads (due August 31)

Optional targets: States have the option to set additional targets for the performance measures for any number and combination of urbanized area boundaries, as well as for a single non-urbanized area. If optional targets are set, they will not be assessed when determining significant progress, and states will not incur penalties if they fail to show progress.

Overlapping measures/targets in the Highway Safety Plan: Targets for Measures No. 1-3 must also be reported to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration by July 1 of each year. They must be numerically identical targets to those reported for TPM compliance on August 31 as part of the HSIP. See the Timelines section inside for details.

TPM Special Rules: Numeric targets are not required, but states must report performance in these two categories, and show improvement compared to baseline.

- Fatality rate on High Risk Rural Roads (due Aug. 31)
- Number of fatalities and serious injuries of drivers and pedestrians age 65 and older on all public roads (due August 31)

WSDOT's target adoption

For the 2024 annual target setting process, WSDOT and its partners have once again adopted the Target Zero target setting approach for TPM where targets are set to achieve zero fatal and serious crashes by 2030 (see table below).

TPM Safety Target Setting

Five-year rolling averages; number of persons, or number of persons per 100 million VMT

	<u>2022 Baseline</u>	<u>2024 Official Targets</u>
		<u>Statewide TPM Target (Target Zero)</u>
No. 1 - Fatalities	615.0	461.3
No. 2 - Fatality rate	1.049	0.787
No. 3 - Serious injuries	2,585.8	1,939.4
No. 4 - Serious injury rate	4.412	3.309
No. 5 - Non-motorist fatalities & serious injuries	620.8	465.6

Data sources: Washington State Traffic Safety Commission - Fatality Analysis Reporting System; Washington State Department of Transportation - Transportation Data, GIS & Modeling Office.

FHWA's "Significant Progress" measurement

At the end of each reporting period, FHWA will determine whether a state has made overall "significant progress" toward achieving its safety targets. The penalties listed on the back page of this folio will apply to the State DOT if FHWA deems it has not made that progress.

To make significant progress overall, a state must achieve at least four out of the five targets above. For each measure, there are two ways this can be done. For example, the value of the 5-year rolling average from 2018 to 2022 had to be:

- At or below the target set in 2020 for the 2022 year, OR
- At or below the baseline level. The FHWA included this provision to avoid punishing aspirational target setting.

If either of these conditions is met, the state has made significant progress for that individual measure. It must do so in any four of the five measures to have made significant progress overall and avoid the penalty provisions.

WSDOT uses Target Zero to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries

Per TPM, states are required to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). Washington state's plan is called Target Zero, which is used as the foundation for the target setting process (<http://www.targetzero.com>).

WSDOT crashes decreased overall from 2004 to 2013 in all areas with the exception of crashes involving those who bike and walk, since then fatal and serious crashes have generally increased due to traffic and economic growth in the state. Because of this, WSDOT is not likely to achieve significant progress toward these targets. WSDOT and its partners concur that Target Zero should be consistently used to move Washington forward with fatality and serious injury reductions. WSDOT will continue to monitor investment levels, changes in total crashes and injuries, and select crash countermeasures that it believes will provide a high return on investment.

The general process for generating trend and target information as prescribed by Rule #1 proceeds as follows:

- Calculate the annual number of fatalities, serious injuries, and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).
- A 5-year rolling average is calculated for each performance measure. For example, in the graph for Measure No. 1, data from 2018-2022 creates the value of the rolling average in 2022—615.0 fatalities.
- The rolling 5-year average value for 2024 will be set as the baseline performance (annual average of 2018 through 2022).

States are then free to develop targets using methods determined by the state. In Target Zero and Washington state's particular approach to target setting, the method to establish targets continues:

- A straight line will be drawn from the baseline value to a zero value in 2030. (The line is redrawn with each new year of data.)
- The value of the Target Zero trendline in 2024 (in this case 461.3) becomes the target for the performance measure in 2024 as shown on the following page.

WSDOT submits State 2024 Highway Safety Improvement Program Report to FHWA

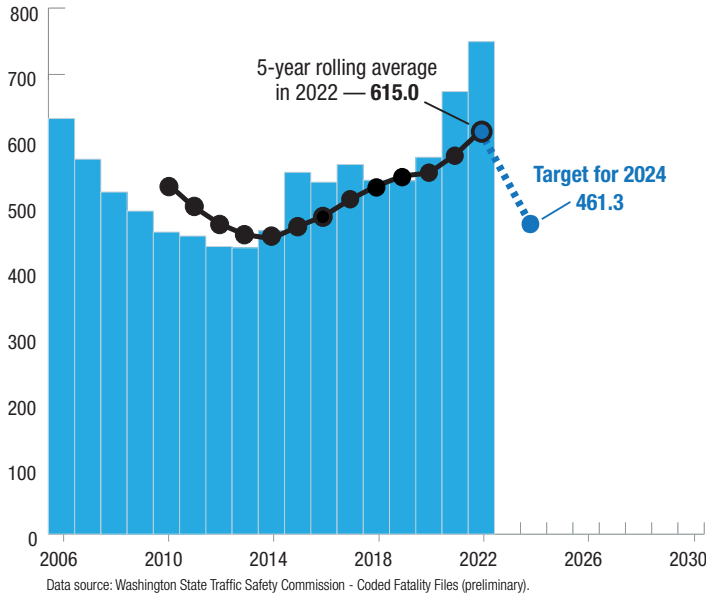
WSDOT and WTSC updated all five statewide targets for the upcoming year of 2024. These targets were submitted to FHWA as part of the 2023 Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) report which was approved by FHWA on September 30, 2023.

MPOs have until February 28, 2024 (180 days after the HSIP reporting deadline) to either agree to plan and program projects so they contribute toward the accomplishment of the State DOT HSIP targets, or commit to a quantifiable target for their Metropolitan Planning Area. In Washington state, MPOs have agreed to support the WSDOT targets.

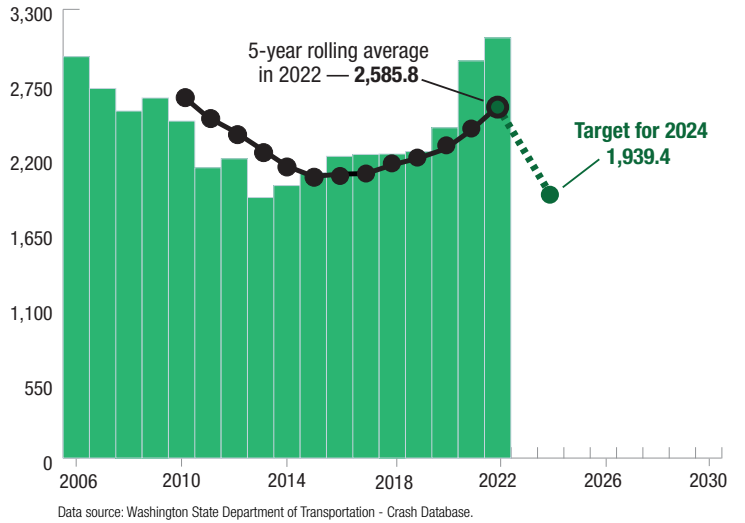
About these graphs

These graphs display the final 2024 targets for each of the five TPM safety performance measures, and show targets developed by WSDOT in coordination with Washington State Traffic Safety Commission.

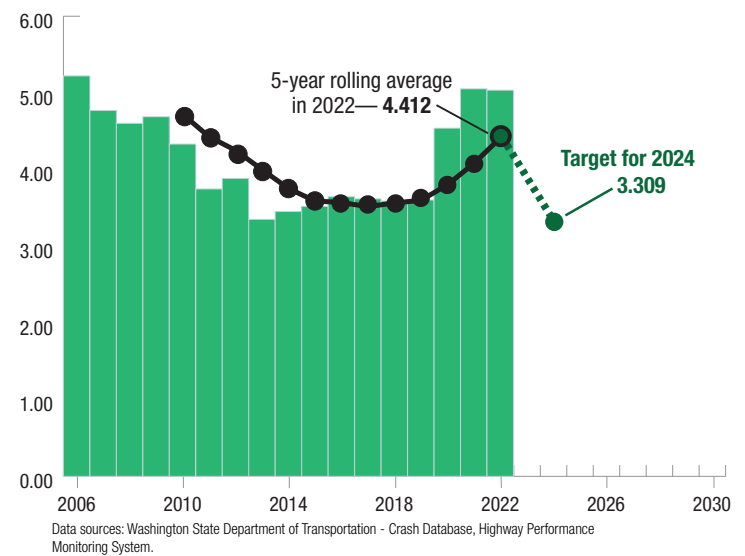
Measure No. 1 - Fatalities
2006 through 2030



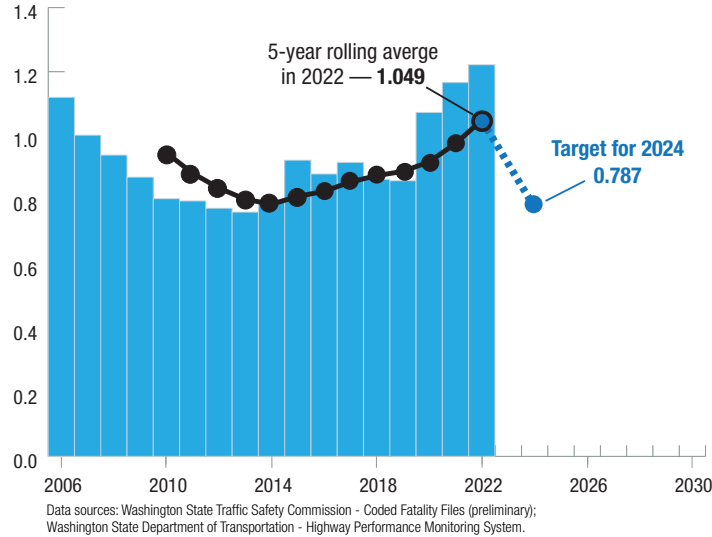
Measure No. 3 - Serious injuries
2006 through 2030



Measure No. 4 - Serious injury rate per 100 million VMT
2006 through 2030

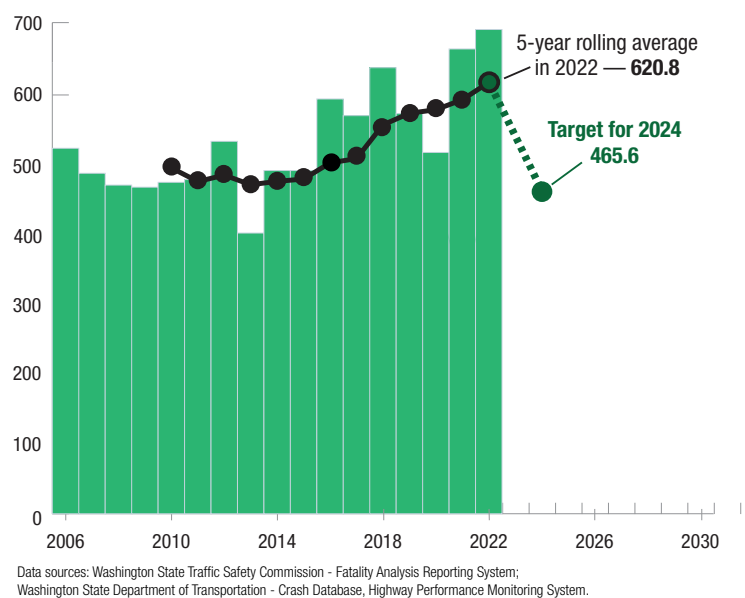


Measure No. 2 - Fatality rate per 100 million VMT
2006 through 2030



Notes: Fatality data for 2022 is finalized as of January 2024, serious injury count for 2022 is as of June 2023. All data for 2022 is preliminary as of June 2023. Under 23 U.S. Code § 148 and 23 U.S. Code § 407, safety data, reports, surveys, schedules, lists compiled or collected for the purpose of identifying, evaluating, or planning the safety enhancement of potential crash sites, hazardous roadway conditions, or railway-highway crossings are not subject to discovery or admitted into evidence in a federal or state court proceeding or considered for other purposes in any action for damages arising from any occurrence at a location mentioned or addressed in such reports, surveys, schedules, lists, or data.

Measure No. 5 - Non-motorist fatalities and serious injuries
2006 through 2030



Penalties

As described in U.S. Code 23 Section 148(i), for the Final Safety Performance Rule (Rule #1), if the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) Secretary will determine if a state has not met or made significant progress toward achieving its safety performance targets by the date that is two years after the establishment of its targets, the State DOT would:

- Dedicate its obligation authority equal to the apportionment for HSIP to the state for the prior year to highway safety improvement projects until the U.S. DOT Secretary determines that the state has made significant progress or met the targets; and
- Annually submit to U.S. DOT a safety implementation plan until the U.S. DOT Secretary determines that the state has made significant progress or met the targets.

See WSDOT's [TPM Funding and Performance Penalties](#) folio for full details, including special rule penalties.

Data used for target setting

- Number of traffic fatalities for all public roads
- Rate of traffic fatalities per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for all public roads¹
- Number of serious traffic injuries for all public roads
- Rate of serious traffic injuries per 100 million VMT for all public roads¹
- Bicyclist/Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries for all public roads²
- Fatality and serious injury data for drivers and pedestrians age 65 and older³
- Rate of traffic fatalities for all High Risk Rural Roads (HRRR)^{1,3}

Notes: Crash data is available for all Washington public roads and annual summaries are also available by county. WSDOT entered into a data sharing agreement with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to incorporate the fatality data necessary for target setting. **1** The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requires the use of Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data for any performance metric involving estimated vehicle miles travelled. **2** This data is required as part of the Fiscal Year 2015 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. **3** This data satisfies a MAP-21 special rule reported at the statewide level to FHWA, that may be of interest to MPOs.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the WSDOT Diversity/ADA Affairs team at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA (4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

Title VI Statement to Public: It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding our non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7082.

What is the current distribution of HSIP funds?

Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding provided to the state is split based upon fatal and serious injury crash data on state and local facilities. The HSIP funds are used to implement engineering countermeasures which reduce fatal and serious injury crashes.

For the Federal Fiscal Year 2023 reporting period it is anticipated that the State of Washington will receive approximately \$52.3 million for the HSIP program, which will be split 70/30 between local and state roadways. As a result, approximately \$36.6 million will be allocated to local roadways and \$15.7 million will go to state roadways. The state will receive an additional estimated amount of \$16.5 million in Section 164 (repeat offender) penalty. This is a required transfer of funds from other sources (National Highway Performance Program) that would be assigned to the state, but now must be spent on HSIP eligible activities. The HSIP is one component of WSDOT's total annual expenditure on safety projects.

Data collection

- TPM requires fatality data from the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission's (WTSC) Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) and serious injury data from WSDOT's system.
- State law enforcement officers record crash events in The Washington State Police Traffic Collision Report. This report is the sole source for all WSDOT serious injury data and most FARS data, with few exceptions.
- TPM requires Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) data from WSDOT's Highway Performance Monitoring System. Along with the number of fatalities or serious injuries, VMT is used to calculate the rate of fatalities or serious injuries per 100 million VMT.
- WSDOT's serious injury data and FARS fatality data for the previous calendar year is preliminarily available in about February and April of the following year, respectively. WSDOT's VMT data is available about June of the following calendar year.

For more information

TPM safety requirements information: John Milton, Director of Transportation Safety and Systems Analysis (360) 704-6363 or Milton.J@wsdot.wa.gov.

Traffic crash fatal and serious injury data: Yi Wang at (360) 570-2420, WangY@wsdot.wa.gov. Data is protected by U.S. Code 23 §148 and §409, but can be requested.



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Memo

To: Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)
Date: January 9, 2024
From: Hugh Conroy, Director *HC*
Subject: Proposed Amendment to WCOG's SFY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to include newly funded activities for improving measurement of vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Background

Activities undertaken by WCOG as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) must be listed in its annually updated and approved Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). If activities or associated funding change during the UPWP period, the UPWP must be amended and submitted to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

WA State Policies to Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

In 2021, the Washington State Legislature directed the WSDOT to:

- Develop a process for establishing local VMT reduction targets,
- Recommend a suite of options for local jurisdictions to achieve the targets,
- Recommend changes to laws and rules to support reduction in VMT, and
- Identify funding requirements for state and local jurisdictions to establish local VMT reduction targets.

The 2021 legislative proviso included population-density and growth rate criteria that applied the VMT target setting objectives to ten counties including Whatcom County. These ten counties are served by six RTPOs including WCOG.

Subsequent to the completion of the VMT Targets Final Report in June, 2023, WSDOT informed the six affected RTPOs that \$750,000 (SFYs '23-24) had been made available by the legislature to help support state and regional efforts to measure and track and forecast changes in VMT at the regional level. WSDOT elected to make all of this funding available to the RTPOs. Like the others, WCOG has accepted a share of this funding (\$138,000) via a Special Transportation Planning Agreement.

VMT Activities to be Added to WCOG's SFY 2024 UPWP

Based on the scope of work included in the new agreement with WSDOT, the amendment to the UPWP will consist of the following.

Improving VMT Measurement, Forecasting, and Target Setting

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

Products:

- Develop a data-acquisition strategy with Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) and others.

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

Performance: WCOG staff.

Schedule: February 2024 – June 2025.

Funding source: (\$138,000) This activity is funded by WSDOT.

Suggested Motion

“Approve the addition of the newly funded activity, *Improving VMT Measurement, Forecasting, and Target Setting* to WCOG’s 2024 UPWP as presented.”