



MEETING OF THE
WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 3:30 p.m.

Gordon W. Rogers Conference Room
314 East Champion Street
Bellingham, Washington

Click [here](#) to join using Zoom
Or join by phone: (253) 215-8782

AGENDA

PAGES

- A. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Korthuis
- 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
- D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES*
Meeting of April 13, 2022
- E. NEW BUSINESS
1. Adoption of the SFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program – Hugh Conroy*
2. Other new business (if any)
- F. PUBLIC HEARING
Amendment No. 22-05 to the 2022 WCOG Transportation Improvement Program
1. Staff Presentation – Mr. Coe
2. Open Public Hearing – Citizens may address the Board on the subject of the hearing *for a maximum of three minutes each*
3. Close Public Hearing*
4. Board Discussion and Vote*
- G. OLD BUSINESS (if any)
- H. OBLIGATION STATUS UPDATE – Lethal Coe
- I. PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Mr. Conroy
- J. BOARD OPEN FORUM
- K. ADJOURN

* Action item



Notice to the Public Regarding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

WCOG hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the agency to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which WCOG receives federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with WCOG. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the WCOG Title VI Coordinator within one-hundred eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Title VI Discrimination Complaint Forms may be obtained from the WCOG at no cost and are available on WCOG's website.

Aviso al Público Sobre Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964

Por medio de la presente, el WCOG notifica de manera pública que la política del organismo es garantizar el pleno cumplimiento del Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, la Ley de Recuperación de Derechos Civiles de 1987, el Decreto Presidencial 12898 sobre Justicia Ambiental, el Decreto Presidencial 13166 sobre Dominio Limitado del Idioma Inglés, así como los estatutos y reglamentos relacionados en todos los programas y actividades. De acuerdo con lo estipulado en el Título VI, ningún individuo de los Estados Unidos de América deberá, con fundamento en su raza, color, sexo o nacionalidad, ser excluido de participar en, que se le nieguen los beneficios de, o ser víctima de discriminación en virtud de cualquier programa o actividad por el cual el WCOG reciba fondos federales.

Toda persona que se considere agraviada por una práctica discriminatoria e ilícita en virtud del Título VI tiene derecho a presentar una denuncia formal ante el WCOG. Cualquier denuncia de este tipo debe presentarse por escrito ante el coordinador del Título VI del WCOG en un periodo de 180 días naturales a partir de la fecha de la presunta discriminación. El WCOG pone a disposición del público los formularios de denuncia del Título VI de manera gratuita en su página web.

WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD
MINUTES – DRAFT
APRIL 13, 2022

IN ATTENDANCE (IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM):

MEMBERS VOTING: **Bellingham:** Seth Fleetwood, Kristina Michele Martens; **Blaine:** Richard May; **Ferndale:** Greg Hansen (2nd Vice Chairman); **Lynden:** Scott Korthuis (Chairman); **Nooksack:** Kevin Hester; **Sumas:** Bruce Bosch; **WSDOT:** Chris Damitio; **Whatcom County:** Satpal Sidhu, Kaylee Galloway; **WTA:** Michael Lilliquist (1st Vice Chairman) *EX-OFFICIO:* Sen. Simon Sefzik, 42nd District

GUESTS Todd Carlson, Jeremy Jewkes and Ed Winkley, WSDOT; Jon Hutchings, Whatcom County; Les Reardanz, WTA; Clayton Roberts, Nooksack Tribe; Intisar Surur, McBride Public Affairs; Terry Terry, CTAG

STAFF Bob Wilson (Secretary), Ron Cubellis, Hugh Conroy, Lethal Coe

A. CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Wilson determined that there was a quorum, and Chairman Korthuis called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were in attendance, either in the conference room or online.

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2022

MOTION: Mr. Fleetwood moved, seconded by Mr. Hansen, to approve the minutes of March 9, 2022, as presented.

MOTION PASSED

E. NEW BUSINESS

Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program Allocations

Mr. Coe directed the members' attention to his memo contained in the meeting packet regarding the proposed STBG allocations that had been unanimously

recommended by the Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) at its last meeting, which follow:

- \$1.2-million to Whatcom County's *Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facilities* project
- \$1.2-million to the City of Ferndale's *Thornton Street, Vista Drive to Malloy Avenue* project
- Increase WCOG's allocation of STBG funding from five percent to eight percent annually to support program costs and data needs associated with carrying out the *Unified Planning Work Program*.

Mr. Coe then informed the Board that after the Policy Board meeting packet had been sent to the members, he had been informed by WSDOT that the region's final 2022 STBG allocation was \$160,000 higher than anticipated. Because of this, staff recommended increasing the allocations to the Birch Bay Drive and Thornton Street projects recommended by TTAG by \$50,000 – to \$1.25-million each – to minimize the possibility of missing the region's obligation authority target.

MOTION: Mr. May moved, seconded by Mr. Hansen, to award Surface Transportation Block Grant funds to the following projects and activity:

- \$1.25-million to Whatcom County's *Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facilities* project
- \$1.25-million to Ferndale's *Thornton Street, Vista Drive to Malloy Avenue* project
- Increase WCOG's annual allocation from five percent to eight percent, the immediate result of which would be an additional \$104,400 toward meeting the region's Federal Fiscal Year 2022 obligation target.

MOTION PASSED

F. PUBLIC HEARING

Amendment No. 22-04 to the 2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Coe described the proposed amendments to the 2022 TIP:

- Add WCOG project *International Mobility and Trade Corridor Cross-Border Truck Study*, which will collect a variety of data on truck movements and commodity flows at three ports of entry in June and July 2022. This project is funded with Federal Highway Administration discretionary funds in the amount of \$50,000; the total project cost of \$97,000.
- Amend Washington State Department of Transportation project *State Route 539/Duffner Ditch Fish Passage* to remove the preliminary phase that obligated in 2021 and reduce the construction phase funding to \$2,698,196. This project is funded with Connecting Washington Account and federal National Highway Performance Program funds.

- Add Whatcom County project *Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facilities*, which has resulted in the construction of a soft-shore roadway protection berm and drainage upgrades from Lora Lane to Cedar Avenue, as well as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant pedestrian path between Lora Lane and Cottonwood Drive. The construction phase is funded in part through a regional STBG allocation of \$1.25-million.
- Amend WCOG *Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)* to reflect the increase awarded by the Policy Board to the annual set-aside to support programs and data needs of the UPWP to eight percent of the total regional STBG allocation. The State Fiscal Year 2023 WCOG UPWP is programmed at \$423,830.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED AT 4:59 P.M.

No members of the public were present either in the conference room or online. A Notice of Public Hearing was published in *The Bellingham Herald* on March 27, 2022, as well as in the online edition of the *Cascadia Daily News*, which provided detailed instructions on how to submit comments or register to speak.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 4:59 P.M. BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

MOTION: Mr. Hansen moved, seconded by Mr. Hester, to approve Amendment No. 22-04 to the 2022 WCOG Transportation Improvement Program.

MOTION PASSED

G. OLD BUSINESS

None

H. BRIEFING ON STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM PLAN

Mr. Winkley provided a brief update.

I. BOARD OPEN FORUM

At the request of Whatcom County Executive Sidhu, Chairman Korthuis asked Mr. Damitio if WSDOT would provide a briefing at the May 11th Policy Board meeting on the status of the Slater Road roundabout project, to which the latter responded in the affirmative. (Note: Subsequent to the meeting, it was agreed by the parties that the briefing would be provided at the June 8, 2022 Policy Board meeting.)

J. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Robert H. Wilson, AICP
Secretary

Approved May 11, 2022

DRAFT



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Memo

To: Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)
Date: May 4, 2022
From: Hugh Conroy, Director of Planning *HC*
Subject: Review and consideration for adoption of WCOG's SFY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

Purpose of the UPWP

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and state designated regional transportation planning organization (RTPO), WCOG is required to prepare, approve, and submit an annually updated UPWP to the state and federal governments (FHWA, FTA, and WSDOT).

WCOG's UPWP for state fiscal year (SFY) 2023

The draft 2022 UPWP (included as an attachment with this memo) is a very similar program of core functions and activities as the current UPWP. Some emphasis areas for SFY 2022 include:

- Review of new federal funding programs (e.g. Electric Vehicles, Carbon Reduction, Resiliency)
 - Assessing interest in developing a list of large, regionally significant projects that would likely only advance if awarded significant funding from federal discretionary programs.
- Evaluation of multi-modal level of service (LOS) standards and integration with performance-based planning and programming, compete-streets initiatives, and federal system-performance and safety metrics and targets.
- A revised Programming section that acknowledges activities required to monitor and facilitate timely regional delivery of federally funded projects (obligation authority targets).
- Updated section of unfunded (*or not fully funded) programs and projects:
 - Whatcom Smart Trips*
 - North Sound Transportation Alliance
 - Passenger-only ferry business plan
 - Smart Trips bike rodeos
 - Regional crossing guard program evaluation
 - Planner 1 staff position

State and federal review

A draft SFY 2023 UPWP was submitted to WSDOT in April and reviewed with WSDOT, FHWA, and FTA WCOG's annual UPWP review meeting on April 13. Only minor clarifications were requested and those changes and other suggested edits have been made.

The updated draft SFY 2023 UPWP is attached for your review and consideration for adoption.

Suggested motion

“Approve the State Fiscal Year 2023 Unified Planning Work Program for the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area as presented.”



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

State Fiscal Year 2023

To be Adopted by the WCOG Policy Board on May 11, 2022

DRAFT

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.

Contents

- Contentsi
- Introduction: The UPWP and the Whatcom Council of Governments2
 - Purposes of this UPWP2
 - Organization of WCOG’s UPWP.....3
- The Whatcom Council of Governments4
 - Membership5
 - Metropolitan Planning Area6
 - Planning priorities7
- Verification of compliance.....9
 - Restriction on lobbying9
 - Tribal involvement9
 - Federal public lands9
 - UPWP amendment process10
- SFY 2022 accomplishments.....10
- SFY 2022 work categories12
 - Program administration.....12
 - Transportation planning & programs.....14
 - Cross-border panning & coordination - The IMTC Program17
 - RTPO planning.....19
 - Data collection and analysis21
 - Programming.....22
 - Unfunded priority programs and projects.....24
- Appendix A - Budget and financial detail.....26
- Appendix B - Expected consultant contracts27

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) 2023.

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.

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) 2023 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 2023 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 2023 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

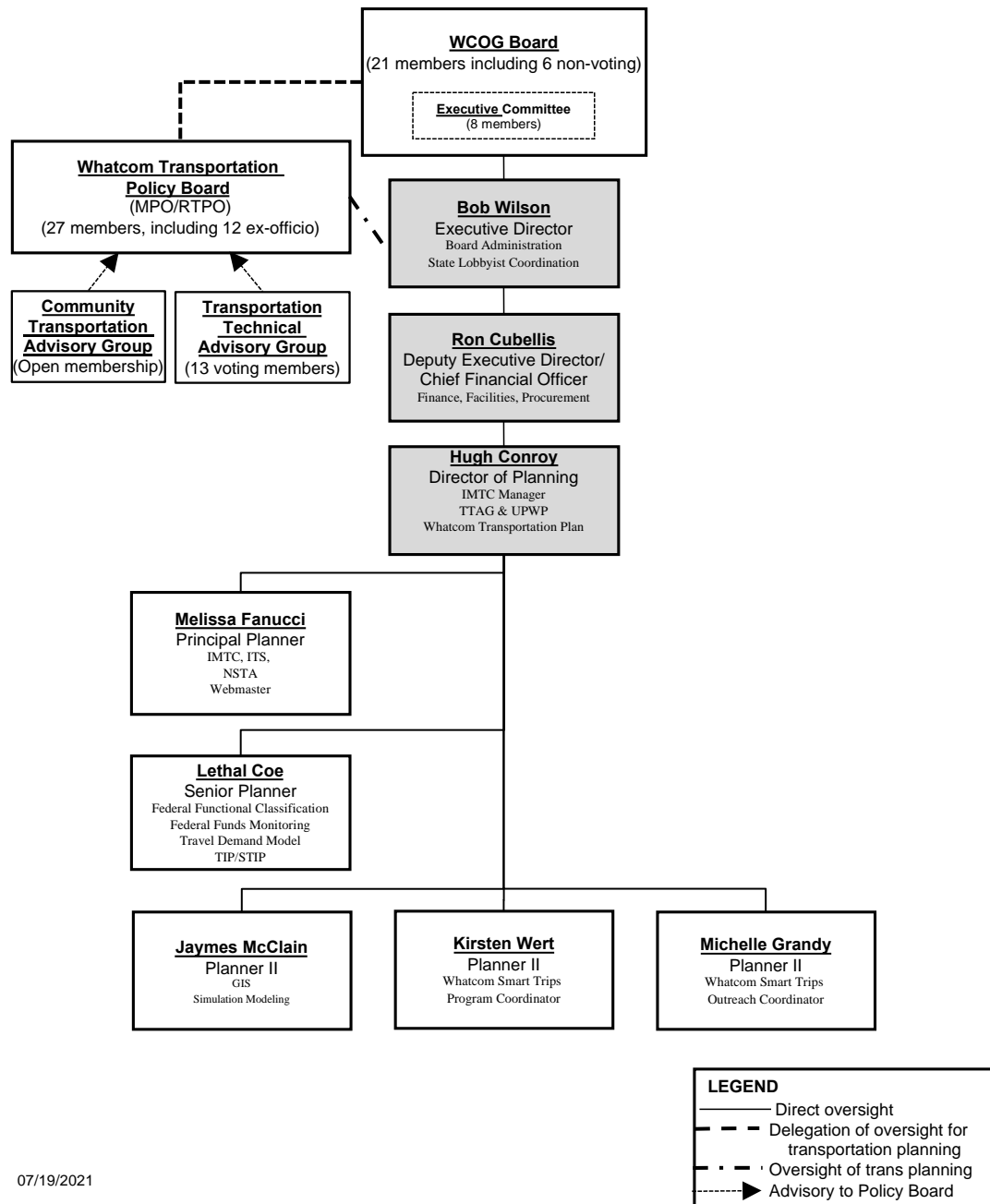
WSDOT UPWP guidelines include a budget/financial table template to be used to provide a summary of all MPO/RTPO activities funded by PL, FTA 5303 and/or RTPO funds along with the sources of proposed match and other funds as required by 23 CFR 450.308. This table is included as Appendix A.

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. Organization

Organization

Whatcom Council of Governments 2022 Organizational Structure



07/19/2021

Membership

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

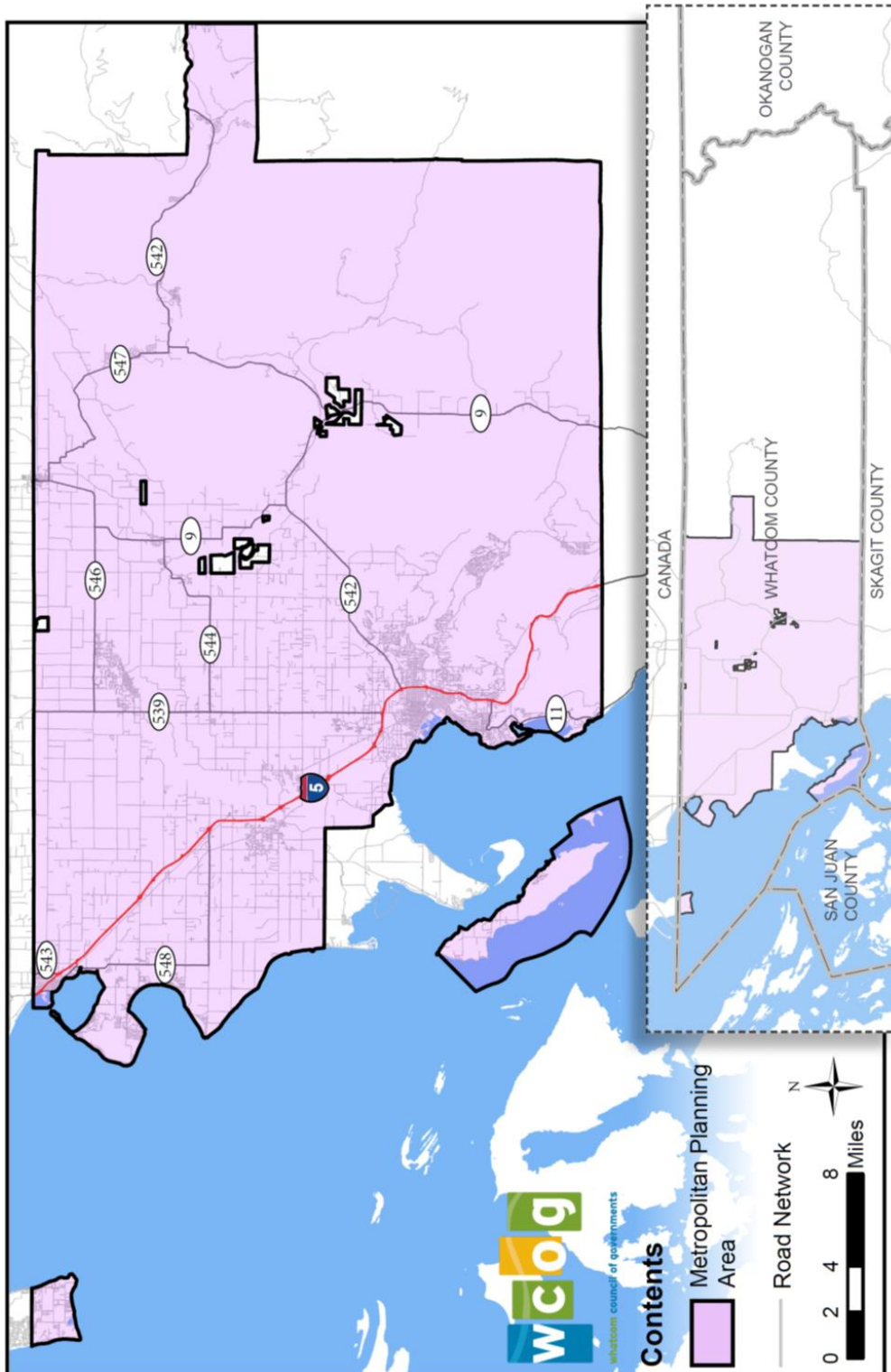
Entity	Position	2021 Representatives	Council Board	MPO - RTPO Policy Board
Whatcom County	Executive	Satpal Sidhu	●	●
	Councilmember	Kaylee Galloway	●	●
	Councilmember	Kathy Kershner	●	
City of Bellingham	Mayor	Seth Fleetwood	●	●
	Councilmember	Kristina Michele Martens	●	●
	Councilmember	Michael Lilliquist	●	
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 Korhuis	●	●
City of Nooksack	Councilmember	Kevin Hester	●	●
City of Sumas	Mayor	Bruce Bosch	●	●
Port of Bellingham	Commissioner	Bobby Briscoe	●	●
Lummi Indian Business Council	Chair	William Jones, Jr.	●	●
Nooksack Tribal Council	Tribal Council Chair	RoseMary La Clair		●
Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer District	Commissioner	Todd Criton	●	
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	Chris Comeau		○
WA State House of Representatives	Representative, 42nd District	Sharon Shewmake		○
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	Simon Defzik		○
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		○
Birch Bay Water and Sewer District	representative	Patrick Alesse	○	

○: non voting

¹ This list is based on current, appointed representatives at the time of this UPWP’s adoption. Individual representatives could change over the course of SFY 2023.

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.



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* (to be considered for adoption in June 2022), were modified and adopted in 2021.

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

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

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

Federal and State Planning Factors and Policy Goals

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

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

Current Federal Planning Emphasis Areas (PEAs)

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

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

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

Verification of compliance

This UPWP is WCOG’s documented plan to accomplish all tasks required of MPOs and RTPOs by federal and state laws 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.

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 2022 accomplishments

Reviewing SFY 2022, this section highlights some notable completed work items.

Professional development and staff training

- FHWA workshop: Integrating Emerging Mobility into Transportation Management.
- APA- NW meetings
- University of South Florida's commute trip reduction best practices workshops.

Transportation planning and projects

- Eight North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA) meetings, including a three 1-3 hour panel series webinars focused on specific topics related to regional travel without a car.
- Completion of a MetroQuest Public engagement survey that 2,010 residents completed.
- Update and adoption of regional transportation goals informed by the public engagement survey.
- Continued participation in City of Bellingham Lincoln-Lakeway Multimodal Transportation Study (also with WSDOT and WTA) – including partnership on a MetroQuest survey for the I-5 subarea.
- Data collection and analysis
- Coordinated with member agencies on the submittal of 2020 Census request to split the Whatcom County's Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA) from a single area into two statistical geographical unique areas.
- Coordinated with Whatcom County Climate Impact Advisory Committee on drafting for transportation goals and strategies.
- Planning intern GIS and report-writing skill guidance
- Restructuring and expansion of WCOG's Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) with the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA).
- Convened a Financial Working Group to explore and document financial strategies and expand the discussion in the financial section of the R/MTP.

TIP

- 2021 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
 - 10 administrative modifications
 - 2022 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 2021 Obligations Report for the Whatcom region
 - \$11.2 million total obligations
 - \$1.9 million total de-obligations
 - Monitored federal funding obligations and continued coordination with project managers.
 - Final 2021 obligations delivery was \$1.19 million above target.
 - Received \$354,778 share of federal redistribution funds from other states
 - Received \$588,714 share of sanction funds from other regions and counties

Model

- Successfully developed an updated base year 2019 model scenario that included full demographic profile using updated 2020 Census data and application of population synthesis tool, updated road network and transit network
- Model validation of the 2019 update calculated a root mean square error (RMSE) of 24.48 for all road classifications, impressively low by industry standard.
- Developed year 2045 build and no-build scenarios that included a full forecast demographics development, external stations growth assumptions, and road and transit networks.
- Analyzed and prepared 2019 and 2045 build and no-build model data summaries information for Way To Go, Whatcom plan.

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:

- 392 community members began participating in Smart Trips diaries, adding to the total of 22,360 since the program began in 2006
- Participants have logged a total of 75,688,591 miles since the start of the program
- 31,985 tons of greenhouse gas emissions have been prevented
- Over \$9.4 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 7th 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

While it was hoped that the COVID-19 global pandemic would conclude in 2020 and 2021 would allow a return to "normalcy," we all know that wasn't the case. Global activities continued to be impacted throughout most of 2021. As in 2020, IMTC participants could not meet face-to-face in 2021. All

meetings were held virtually. The lack of in-person meetings has affected the cooperative aspect of IMTC. That said, effective IMTC collaborative activities continued in 2021, including the following achievements:

Five Steering Committee meetings, all virtual.

- Publication of the 2021 IMTC Data Digest as an online data resource. This is the second year in a row where IMTC data analyses have been made into interactive visualizations available to the public at <https://theimtc.com/>.
- Continued work on two IMTC projects: Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse 3.0 maintenance and data checking; and completion of the COVID-19 Impacts on Cross-Border Freight through the Cascade Gateway study
- Continued partnership with U.S. - Canada Transportation Border Working Group
- With consensus on undertaking a cross-border truck data collection effort (typically done by IMTC every five years), a pooled fund was successfully assembled among BC MoTI, Transport Canada, and the U.S. FHWA. CBP and CBSA will again support the effort which will take place in June/July 2022.
- Continued data sharing, data analysis, and collaborative efforts with partner agencies to address regional cross-border transportation challenges related to both the pandemic and the November 2021 flooding.

SFY 2022 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.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

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

Schedule: Ongoing / as needed

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

Coordination and communication with federal and state legislators

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

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

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

Schedule: Ongoing, when requested.

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

Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

WCOG will update and submit its UPWP for state fiscal year 2024. And, if needed, WCOG will submit amendment requests for this SFY 2023 UPWP.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Completed UPWP and amendments if needed.

Schedule: Expected approval by WCOG MPO Policy Board in May 2022.

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

UPWP Annual Performance and Expenditure Report

As required for the state to comply with 23 CFR 420.117, WCOG will submit a report of progress made on tasks identified in WCOG's UPWP covering SFY 2022.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Complete annual report.

Schedule: Due on September 30, 2022.

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

Title VI reporting and plan update

WCOG updated its Title VI plan in 2019.

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 2022.

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.

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, 2022.

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.

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 just updated and adopted in June of 2022.

On the heels of the recent update, this activity 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 2022.

Products: Products of SFYs 2023 MTP activities will include:

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.

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 2023 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 2023, WCOG expects to be involved.
 - Continued engagement with WTA as appropriate, especially on efforts related to their recently adopted their long-range plan.
- Participation in state planning activities:
 - Highway System Plan update
 - WSDOT's Multimodal Investment Strategy

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

Evaluation and integration of new federal and state funding programs

With the 2021 and 2022 passage of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the state Move Ahead Washington transportation-funding legislation, several new programs were authorized. SFY 2023 will be a busy year for understanding how these programs will be administered and what opportunities exist for the Whatcom region.

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, Mega, and Rural).
- 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: This is a new product designed to better address performance-based planning and programming. Products include a report document as well as 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 RTPPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Public and stakeholder participation and outreach

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

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

Performance: WCOG staff, citizen volunteers.

Products:

- The **Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG)** is WCOG's structured forum for ongoing citizen participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process. CTAG is collaboratively organized with the Whatcom Transportation Authority and other member jurisdictions as pertinent regional issues emerge.
- **Websites** - WCOG maintains high quality websites (www.wcog.org) in order to provide broader and more convenient access to information, meeting schedules, staff contacts, and more. This is an important way of supporting and improving public involvement and openness of regional planning and decision making.
- **Continued analysis of Regional public engagement questionnaire.** Data from last year's questionnaire will be used to generate sub-regional reports for local-jurisdiction partners.
- 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 RTPPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Plan / Architecture

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Products include but are not limited to:

- Periodic updates to Regional ITS Architecture

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

Schedule: Ongoing.

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

Cross-border planning & coordination – The IMTC Program

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

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

Performance: WCOG staff

Products:

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

Schedule: Ongoing.

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

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

In partnership with 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

Administered and operated by WCOG with the support of the City of Bellingham, the Whatcom Transportation Authority, and the WSDOT Public Transportation Office, Smart Trips

employs programmatic strategies and resources that help people use transportation modes that make the most of our system investments and advance regional goals.

Note: Whatcom Smart Trips does not yet have full funding identified for all of SFY 2021. Thus, the program also appears in the *unfunded needs* section below.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products:

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

Schedule: Ongoing.

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

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

will see 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.

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 2023, WCOG will continue its participation with the NSTA to coordinated 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.

RTPO planning

WCOG's duties as an RTPO are defined under Washington state law, RCW 47.80.023. These duties are listed below along with how they relate to WCOG's SFY 2022 work plan.

The following RTPO duties are covered elsewhere in this work plan or do not need to be addressed in SFY 2022.

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

WCOG expects to undertake the following RTPO activities during SFY 2023.

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

As with the regional / metropolitan transportation plan, an update of WCOG's Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) is also due in December 2022. WCOG's goal is to better incorporate the human services elements into the overall regional plan resulting in more efficient development and use of data and visualizations that both plans use. This approach will be better enabled by WCOG's shift to web-based publication of the regional plan.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products:

- Outreach / expansion of HST Steering Committee.
- Convening of HST SC meetings and review of regional HST goals and gaps.
- Development of draft updated plan elements. Public engagement.
- Adoption of HSTP.
- Ongoing engagement with HST Steering Committee and facilitated dialogue with other, related outreach efforts such as WCOG's CTAG.

Schedule: HSTP adoption by December 31, 2022.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 & 5310 funds, state RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Level of Service (LOS) coordination and standard setting

In fulfillment of its RTPO responsibilities to 1) encourage coordination among the region's jurisdictions with regard to 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: Outreach / expansion of HST Steering Committee. Convening of HST SC meetings and review of regional HST goals and gaps. Development of draft updated plan elements. Public engagement. Adoption of HSTP.

Schedule: HSTP adoption by December 31, 2022.

Funding source: This activity is funded by FHWA Planning Funds (PL), FTA 5303 & 5310 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: Prepare 2021 or 2022 base year and updated 2045 forecast year for local jurisdictions comprehensive plan updates.

Schedule: The model update will inform upcoming planning products and projects, including local jurisdictions' plan-update EISs, and comprehensive plan's transportation chapters

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.

Enhanced traffic counts & other trip data as appropriate

These activities support efforts to improve performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) practices as well as improved collaboration with jurisdictions and WSDOT on corridor and sub-area studies.

Performance: WCOG staff and consultant.

Products:

- Expanded regional traffic counts (all modes).
- Contracting traffic and freight counts for the state's 2023 FGTS system update.
- Acquisition of third-party system data when deemed useful or in support of member planning analyses (e.g. INRIX, HERE, StreetLight, etc.)

Schedule: Ongoing.

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

Development and maintenance of geographic information systems (GIS)

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

helping provide more information to more of our community, jurisdictions, and agency partners.

Performance: WCOG staff

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

Schedule: Ongoing.

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

Federal functional classification system updates

WCOG will continue to maintain regional functional classifications based on the 2010 Census urban and rural classification areas and *2013 Guidelines for Amending Functional Classification in Washington State* and make revisions with partners as needed.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products:

- Standardized and updated functionally classified regional road network.
- Work with 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 RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Border Data Warehouse 3.0 operation and maintenance

Having recently completed an overhaul of the [CascadeGatewayData.com](https://www.cascadegatewaydata.com) border data archive and website, including addition of new reporting and visualization tools using Tableau, this activity will continue WCOG's role in monitoring and managing periodic system maintenance.

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.

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 availed to projects through the Surface Transportation Block Grant 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 fund (inclusive of TA funds) every year of about \$3 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 a little over \$6 million at a time.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products:

- Determination of STBG funding amounts available by category (urban, rural, any-area, TA).
- PB-approved proposal-form with selection criteria and scoring guidance.
- Completed process of project prioritization recommendations by TTAG
- Approved list of prioritized projects selected to receive available funding.
- 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 RTPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Unfunded priority programs and projects

Smart Trips

The Smart Trips program does not yet have full funding identified for SFY 2022. It is approximately \$86,000 short. WCOG is working with partner agencies and other state and federal agencies to develop future funding strategies to fund the \$300,000 annual program cost.

Smart Trips website update

The [Smart Trips website](#) – the essential hub for so much of WCOG’s TDM strategies such as trip-logging, incentive programs, employer-partner promotions, etc. – has not been updated in over a decade. Relative to contemporary websites that focus on trip-making and optimization of mode-shift initiatives, the current Smart Trips website is not able to support the features people now expect, e.g., trip mapping tools, individual visualized statistics, incentive tracking that includes gamification, etc. Multiple companies have emerged in recent years that both offer market-based transportation services (e.g. Scoop, RideAmigos, others) and offer modules of the underlying software (e.g. – a ride-matching tool, an automated trip-logging app, etc.). Based on initial research, it is estimated that a Smart Trips website update would cost between \$50,000 and \$75,000 with a likely service and maintenance arrangements costing \$3,000 annually.

International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC)

For the last three biennia, WCOG’s IMTC Program has been funded in part with a \$100,000/year contribution from WSDOT. While WCOG is hopeful this support will continue, it is never guaranteed and so is listed here as a funding gap for future activity. WSDOT’s funding decision is in part based on an expectation that Canadian agencies will also support the IMTC Program. This dynamic has continued with recent financial support for IMTC projects from Transport Canada and B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

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)

Smart Trips Integrated Digital Platform (IDP) Phase 2

WCOG recently received funding from the Port of Bellingham to replace the Smart Trips website which is functionally obsolete. The new website (and backend system) will enable Phase 2 activities such as the addition of hosted ride-sharing services, incentives gamification, mapping, automatic trip logging, etc. – all of which would work seamlessly across various types of devices (computers, tablets, phones). \$40,000.

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 a effective crossing-guard implementation at a scale(s) appropriate for the Whatcom region. \$25,000

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

Appendix B – Expected consultant contracts

Expected Consultant Engagements	Est. cost
Travel demand model support	\$5,000
Contracted traffic counts	\$30,000
Printing services	\$20,000
Border Data Warehouse site maintenance	\$4,000



MEMORANDUM

To: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board
From: Lethal Coe, Senior Planner
Date: May 3, 2022
Subject: WCOG 2022 TIP Amendment

Amendment #4 (22-05) of the WCOG 2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) includes the following:

1. Amend the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) project *I-5/Slater Road Interchange – Improvements* to add right-of-way (ROW) phase, increase construction (CN) phase, and adjust the total project cost and update the expenditure schedule. The project will implement improvements to the current interchange's northbound and southbound intersections - currently mini-roundabouts - along with the intersections of Northwest Ave, Pacific Highway and Rural Ave. The project is funded through the statewide Connecting Washington Account (CWA).
2. Amend WSDOT project *SR 548/Alderson Road Vicinity - Culvert Replacement* to add PE phase, increase CN phase, and adjust total project cost and update expenditure schedule. This project is funded through state surface transportation program funding and will replace the existing culvert with one that properly conveys water flow.

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 #4 of the Whatcom Council of Governments 2022 Transportation Improvement Program.

WCOG TIP Amendment #4 (22-05) Table

#	Agency	Project Title	Amended TIP Action	Added Funds	Total Cost	Source
1	WSDOT	<i>I-5/Slater Road Interchange – Improvements</i>	Add RW phase and change CN and total costs	11,555,794	32,516,853	CWA
2	WSDOT	<i>SR 548/Alderson Road Vicinity - Culvert Replacement</i>	Add PE phase and increase CN phase	1,571,016	2,000,719	STP

No Policy Board Action Required for the following Administrative Modifications

Recent or Upcoming Administrative Modifications - Administrative modifications are less substantial project changes and are administered by WCOG staff.

Agency	Project	Modification Administered	Total Costs	Federal Source