



WHATCOM TRANSPORTATION POLICY BOARD

**Wednesday, May 12, 2021, 3:30 p.m.**

Login: <https://zoom.us/j/97380341356>

Or join by phone: (253) 215-8782

**AGENDA**

PAGES

- A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL – Chairman Korthuis
- B. AGENDA APPROVAL\*
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES\*  
Meeting of April 7, 2021
- 3-6
- D. NEW BUSINESS  
1. Adoption of SFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program – Hugh Conroy\*  
2. Other new business (if any)
- 7-33
- E. PLANNING DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Mr. Conroy
- F. OBLIGATION STATUS UPDATE – Lethal Coe
- G. CORRESPONDENCE
- 34
- H. 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 7, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE (VIA ZOOM):

MEMBERS **VOTING:** Blaine: Bonnie Onyon; Ferndale: Greg Hansen (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman); Lynden: Scott Korthuis (Chairman); Nooksack: Tom Jones; Nooksack Tribe: Ross Cline, Sr.; Port of Bellingham: Ken Bell; Sumas: Kyle Christensen; Whatcom County: Satpal Sidhu, Carol Frazey; WSDOT: Todd Carlson; WTA: Michael Lilliquist **EX-OFFICIO:** CTAG: Terry Terry; PUD: Atul Deshmane

GUESTS Chad Schulhauser, City of Bellingham; Intisar Surur, McBride Public Affairs; Lisa McShane, Nooksack Tribe; Les Reardanz, WTA

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

A. CALL TO ORDER

Secretary Wilson determined that a quorum was present, and Chairman Korthuis called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

B. AGENDA APPROVAL

**APPROVED BY ACCLAMATION**

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2021

**APPROVED BY ACCLAMATION**

D. OLD BUSINESS

1. Restructuring the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group

Following up on the discussion of this matter that took place at the January 2021 Policy Board meeting, Mr. Conroy summarized the changes staff is proposing to CTAG's organizational structure, and then he answered questions posed by the members.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lilliquist moved, Mr. Hansen seconded, to authorize staff to prepare a draft amendment to the *Bylaws and Procedures of the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Planning Process* for the Policy Board's consideration at an upcoming meeting, as well as corresponding revisions to WCOG's *Public Participation Plan* to affect the changes to the organization of the Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group, as presented.

**MOTION PASSED**

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2024-25 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Application

Mr. Coe explained the need to amend the application form the Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) uses to rank STBG funding requests so it will align with the recently amended regional goals. He then went through the proposed methodology and answered questions posed by the members. A great deal of discussion took place concerning the proposed “regional weighting” factor to be applied to points awarded for each criterion. Also, there was a recommendation to change the heading of evaluation criterion No.2 to read, “The project mitigates climate change and/or improves environmental quality.”

**MOTION:** Mr. Lilliquist moved, Mr. Bell seconded, to approve the application form for WCOG’s 2021 STBG project selection process, as presented, but with the aforementioned change to the heading of criterion No. 2, and with a simplified ranking rubric, whereby the maximum points available for each criterion are multiplied by the proposed weighting factor, with the products of those calculations becoming the new maximum for each respective criterion, and then eliminating the weighting factors from the process.

**MOTION PASSED**

2. Proposed Amendments to SFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Conroy explained that the current UPWP must be amended to add tasks that were not anticipated when the UPWP was adopted in May 2020, and he described the three specific projects.

**MOTION:** Mr. Jones moved, Mr. Sidhu seconded, to approve the amendments to the SFY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program, as presented.

**MOTION PASSED**

3. Recommended STBG Awards to Meet Obligation Target

Mr. Coe explained the need to award STBG funding to regional projects to address a potential shortfall of \$2.6-million in meeting the region’s FFY 2021 obligation target, which is the result of certain project delays and the “de-obligation” of STBG funds awarded for the *West Horton Road, Phase 2* project. He then presented TTAG’s funding recommendations and answered questions posed by the members.

**MOTION:** Mr. Sidhu moved, Ms. Frazey seconded, to 1) reallocate the \$1-million of STBG from the upcoming de-obligation of Bellingham’s *West Horton Road, Phase 2* project to Whatcom County’s *Marine Drive Reconstruction* project; 2) award \$607,571 of STBG funding to the *West Horton Road, Phase 1* project to complete the construction phase; 3) award \$1.4-million of STBG funding to Whatcom County’s *Birch*

*Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility* project, with \$1.1-million to obligate immediately and the remaining \$300,000 to obligate by September 15, 2021 if needed to meet the obligation delivery deadline; 4) reallocate \$250,000 from the upcoming de-obligation of *Regional Transportation Data Activity* funding to the UPWP for continued data analysis staffing, expanded regional traffic counts and acquisition of third-party systems data, and; 5) swap \$71,921 of Highway Improvement Program (HIP) rural funds for STBG rural funds between the *East Smith and Hannegan Road Intersection Improvements* and *Blair Drive Improvements* projects to ensure obligation of HIP funds by the September 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

#### **MOTION PASSED**

#### 4. Other New Business

Mr. Wilson provided a brief legislative update.

#### F. PUBLIC HEARING

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) No. 21-04

Mr. Coe described the proposed amendments to the 2021 TIP:

1. Add Blaine project *Peace Portal Community Trail, Phase 3* construction. This project, which is funded through the regionally facilitated Transportation Alternatives program, obligated preliminary engineering in 2020 and is preparing to obligate for construction in 2022.
2. Add \$1,556,500 of Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds to Bellingham's *F Street Crossing* project to improve signaling, channelization and multimodal safety on all quadrants of the rail crossing.
3. Add new WSDOT NWR *Breakaway Cable Terminal Replacement 21-23* project to remove and replace guardrails not meeting current standards. This project funded through the HSIP and replacements will begin in 2022.
4. Remove joint City of Bellingham/Whatcom County project *West Horton Road, Phase 2*. The City and County have decided not to seek construction funding for the project.
5. Add \$607,571 awarded for the construction phase of Bellingham's *West Horton Road, Phase 1* project back into the State Transportation Improvement Program.
6. Add \$1.4-million awarded for the construction phase of Whatcom County's *Birch Bay Drive and Pedestrian Facility* project, with \$1.1-million to be obligated immediately and the remaining \$300,000 to be obligated if needed. In the event that redistributed or reallocated federal funds become available,

application will be made for funding from those sources to replace STBG funds used beyond the initial \$1.1-million.

7. Add \$125,000 of STBG funds each to WCOG's UPWP – SFY 2022 and UPWP – SFY 2023.

Because of the current public health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor ordered all meetings of governmental bodies to be conducted online. For this reason, the public was informed in the Notice of Public Hearing published in *The Bellingham Herald* on March 21, 2021, that comments pertaining to TIP Amendment No. 21-04 must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Policy Board prior to the meeting. Mr. Wilson informed the Board that no public comment had been received.

**MOTION:** Mr. Bell moved, Mr. Sidhu seconded, to approve Amendment No. 21-04 to the 2021 WCOG Transportation Improvement Program.

**MOTION PASSED**

G. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

H. CORRESPONDENCE

In addition to the letter included in the meeting packet, Mr. Wilson informed the Board that he had also recently sent a letter to the Federal Transit Administration in support of WTA's request for funding for new electric buses and charging stations.

I. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

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Robert H. Wilson, AICP  
Secretary



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## Memo

**To:** Whatcom MPO/RTPO Transportation Policy Board (WTPB)  
**Date:** May 4, 2021  
**From:** Hugh Conroy, Director of Planning *HC*  
**Subject:** Review and consideration for adoption of WCOG's SFY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

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### Purpose of the UPWP

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and state designated regional transportation planning organization (RTPO), WCOG is required to prepare, 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) 2022

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:

- More work on the five-year update to WCOG's regional & metropolitan transportation plan (R/MTP) since it's due by June 30, 2022.
- Likelihood of more activity around reviewing and working with new federal investment programs and transportation authorization legislation.
- Additional activity on the five-year update to WCOG's Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) since it is due by December 30, 2022.
- Updated UPWP section of unfunded (\*or not fully funded) programs and projects:
  - Whatcom Smart Trips\*
  - IMTC Cross-border freight study
  - North Sound Transportation Alliance
  - Smart Trips elementary school bike rodeos
  - Passenger-only ferry business plan

### State and federal review

A draft SFY 2022 UPWP was submitted to WSDOT on March 26. WCOG's annual UPWP on-site review meeting with state and federal partners was held on April 14. Only minor clarifications were requested and those changes and other suggested edits have been made.

The updated draft SFY 2022 UPWP is attached for your review and consideration for adoption.

### Suggested motion

"Approve the State Fiscal Year 2022 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 2022

**DRAFT**

To be considered for adoption  
by the WCOG Policy Board on May 12, 2021

Robert H. Wilson, Executive Director  
Hugh Conroy, Director of Planning

#### **Title VI & Americans with Disabilities Act**

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

For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Compliant Form, call Bob Wilson, program coordinator at (360) 685-8389.

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# Introduction: The UPWP and the Whatcom Council of Governments

A Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is required periodically (annually or biennially) of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is the federally recognized MPO for the Bellingham Urbanized Area and the state designated RTPO for the entirety of Whatcom County, Washington. While WCOG assumed those responsibilities in 1982 and 1990, respectively, it came into existence in 1966 as a regional conference of governments enabled by an act of the Washington State Legislature (RCW [36.64.080](#)).

This UPWP documents anticipated uses of federal and state funding for MPO and RTPO activities over the upcoming state fiscal year (SFY) 2022.

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

## Purposes of this UPWP

The UPWP serves multiple purposes:

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

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## Organization of WCOG's UPWP

WCOG's UPWP is organized to provide a description of all work activities planned for Washington State fiscal year (SFY) 2022 and facilitate the TRP'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. Transportation Improvement Program (TIP),
7. Unfunded priority programs and projects.

WCOG's UPWP will provide detail on anticipated activities within each of the 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 2022 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 2022 is explained using the following format:

**Category** (seven 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

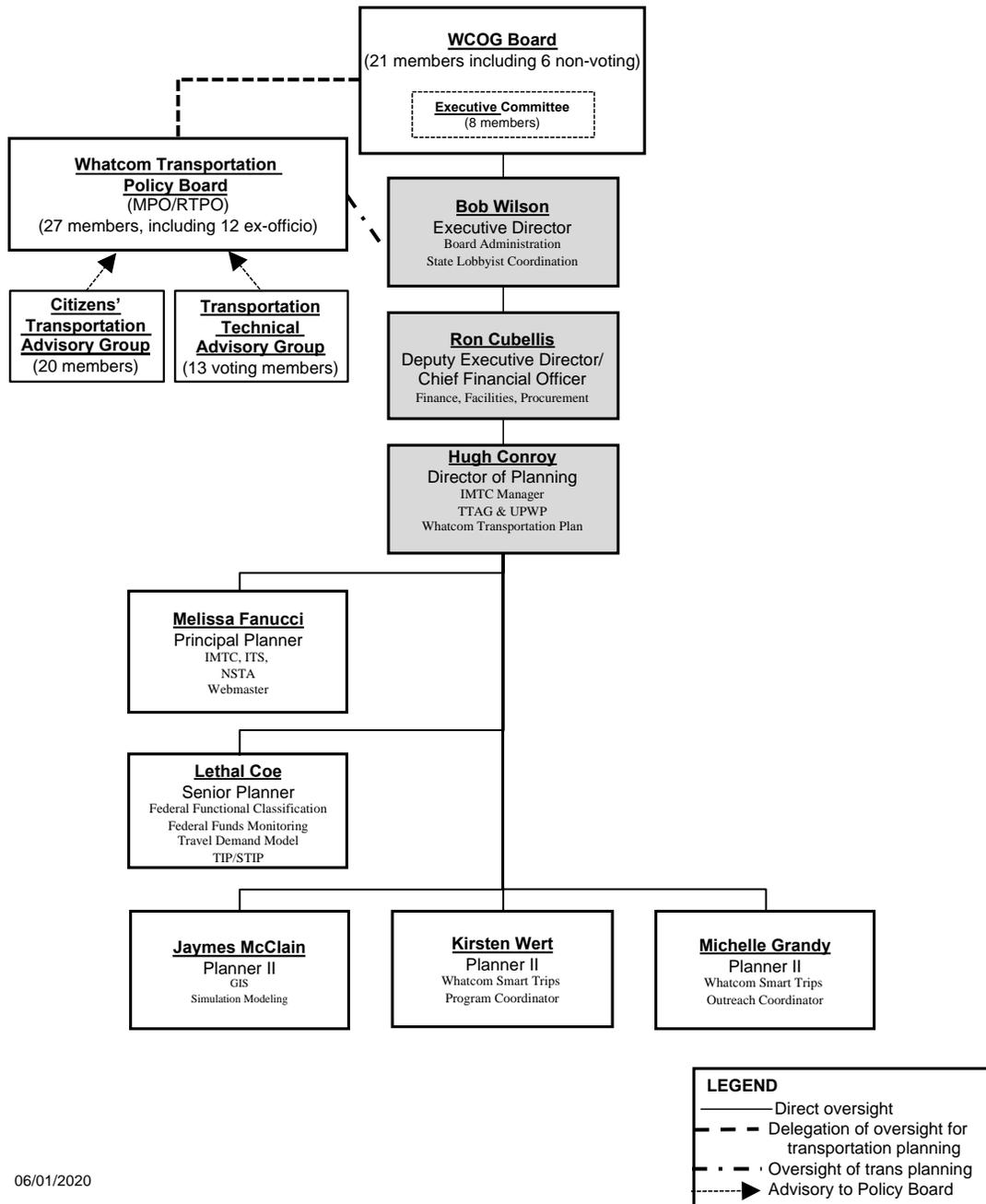
WSDOT UPWP guidelines include a budget/financial table template to be used to provide a summary of all MPO/RTPO activities funded by PL, FTA 5303 and/or RTPO funds along with the sources of proposed match and other funds as required by 23 CFR 450.308. This table is included as Appendix A.

# 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 2021 Organizational Structure



06/01/2020

# Membership

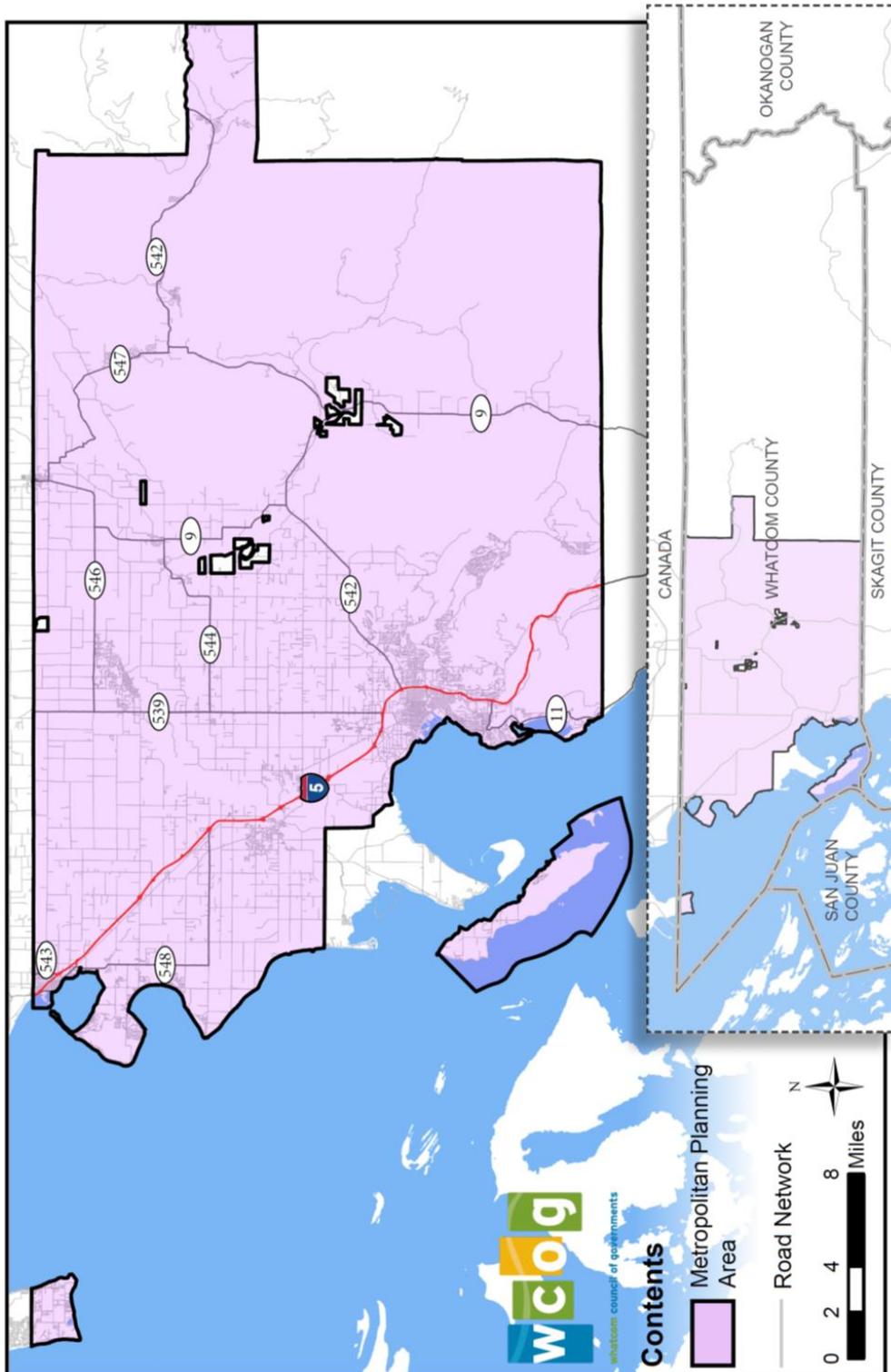
The table below lists the region's governments, districts, agencies, and institutions that participate on WCOG Council Board, its MPO-RTPO Policy Board, or both along with the individuals currently<sup>1</sup> serving.

Entity	Position	2021 Representatives	Council Board	MPO - RTPO Policy Board
Whatcom County	Executive	Satpal Sidhu	●	●
	Councilmember	Carol Frazey		●
	Councilmember	Tyler Byrd	●	
City of Bellingham	Mayor	Seth Fleetwood	●	●
	Councilmember	Pinky Vargas		●
	Councilmember	Michael Lilliquist	●	
City of Blaine	Mayor	Bonnie Onyon	●	●
City of Everson	Mayor	John Perry	●	●
City of Ferndale	Mayor	Greg Hansen	●	●
City of Lynden	Mayor	Scott Korhuis	●	●
City of Nooksack	Councilmember	Tom Jones	●	●
City of Sumas	Mayor	Kyle Christensen	●	●
Port of Bellingham	Commissioner	Ken Bell	●	●
Lummi Indian Business Council	Chair	Lawrence Solomon	●	●
Nooksack Tribal Council	Tribal Council Chair	Ross Cline, Sr.		●
Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District	Commissioner	John Carter	●	
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.	Jay Drye		●
Western Washington University	VP for University Relations	Donna Gibbs	○	○
Sudden Valley Association	Board member	Andrew Tischleder	○	
Whatcom Council of Governments	WTPB Secretary	Robert Wilson		○
Transportation Technical Advisory Group	representative	Chris Comeau		○
Community Transportation Advisory Group	representative	Terry Terry		○
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	Doug Ericksen		○
WA State Senate	Senator, 40th District	Liz Lovelett		○
Whatcom Community College	representative	Kathy Hiyane-Brown		○
Whatcom County Public Utility Dist. No. 1	representative	Atul Deshmane	○	○
Bellingham Technical College	representative	Kimberly Perry		○
Birch Bay Water and Sewer District	representative	Patrick Alesse	○	
			○: non voting	

<sup>1</sup> This list is based on current, appointed representatives at the time of this UPWP's adoption. Individual representatives could change over the course of SFY 2022.

# Metropolitan Planning Area

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



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## Planning priorities

The planning priorities for WCOG’s Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), described in WCOG’s regional / metropolitan long-range transportation plan *Whatcom Mobility 2040*, were slightly amended in 2021.

The current transportation goals were identified ahead of the 2017 plan update by reviewing member jurisdictions’ comprehensive plan transportation chapters. A review of all jurisdictions’ goals generated a list of regionally shared goals sorted by frequency of local-level adoption.

Last year, in recognition of a state-wide concern with growing needs for transportation system **preservation** as well as global imperatives of climate action (including Whatcom County and City of Bellingham adopted **climate-action** policies), the Policy Board chose to adjust the regional transportation goals to better reflect current regional policy priorities.

The amended regional goals and prioritization are shown in the following table.

Priority No.	Goal (and number of jurisdictions that established it as a goal in local comprehensive plans)
1	Safety (10)
2	Climate & environmental quality (8)
3	Preservation (6)
4	Mobility (all modes & emphasis on trip capacity) (8)
5	A multimodal transportation system (8)
6	Access (6)
	Freight transportation (6)

These seven goals are described in more detail below. The added detail reflects discussions in the region’s individual plans and allows the goals to be related to state and federal planning factors that MPO are expected to support.

### Safety

All ten of the Whatcom region’s jurisdictions included safety as one of their transportation goals. 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.

### Climate (greenhouse gas reduction) & environmental quality

Whatcom region local governments, tribal governments, and Washington State government have initiated actions to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for the effects of climate disruption. 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.

### Preservation

The high priority of the preservation goal indicates the Whatcom region’s intent to ensure that its existing transportation systems are kept in a state of good repair before pursuing system expansions. This goal includes the principle of sustainability: the importance of choosing investments in facilities and programs that our region has the fiscal capacity to pay for, operate, and maintain into the future.

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## **Mobility**

Mobility refers to the summation of qualitative measures of travel and goods movement including travel time, travel-time predictability and reliability, and comfort. The goal of mobility and our region's strategies to optimize it pertain to all modes (i.e. walking, transit, biking, driving, freight & service trucks, etc.). Mobility depends on adequate transportation system capacity. To advance this mobility goal (and its other goals), the Whatcom region measures capacity primarily as the number of trips that the transportation network can accommodate. Secondly, traditional, mode specific measures of road-capacity for vehicles are appropriate for certain analyses.

### **A multi-modal transportation system**

To efficiently and equitably serve the movement of people and goods that our region needs in the years ahead, our transportation network must provide multiple types (modes) of transportation (e.g. walking, buses, trucks, cars, bikes, paratransit, rail, etc.) and good connections between them. While the above goal, mobility, addresses the quality of transportation provided by all modes, this goal affirms a commitment to the continued development and integration of the options themselves.

### **Access**

The region's transportation system is intended to serve all people and acknowledge and reduce barriers related to age (seniors and youth), income, and disability.

### **Freight transportation**

Given Whatcom County's adjacency to the Canadian border, along with the presence of one of the nation's premier trade corridors within its boundaries (Interstate 5) and BNSF freight rail, goods movement has a significant impact on the region's transportation system.

## **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) 2022. 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 2022:

- The National Association of Regional Councils Conference.
- 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.

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## **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 2022, 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 2021 accomplishments**

Reviewing SFY 2021, this section highlights some notable completed work items.

### **Pandemic Response**

- Quickly transitioned staff to remote work in March 2020 with no loss of productivity
- Using online meeting platforms, all scheduled meetings of the Council Board, Policy Board and TTAG were held
- Guided planning intern tasks completely virtually through online trainings and meetings

### **Professional development and staff training**

- FHWA workshop: Integrating Emerging Mobility into Transportation Management.
- APA- NW meetings

### **Transportation planning and projects**

- Publication of a first, regional system performance report.
- Three North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA) meetings, including a webinar with a five-county regional focus on traditional transit alternatives and updates to ferry and regional rail updates

- 
- Amendments to WCOG's regional and metropolitan long-range transportation plan (Whatcom Mobility 2040)
    - Updates to the regional project list
    - Revision of regional transportation goals.
  - Continued participation in City of Bellingham Lincoln-Lakeway Multimodal Transportation Study (also with WSDOT and WTA)
  - Review and provide feedback for the statewide Obligation Authority policy change through the WSDOT and MPO Coordination group.
  - Data collection and analysis
  - Completed 2020 decennial census. Whatcom County finished at 73% self-response, an improvement of over 5% from 2010 and higher than the statewide total rate.
  - Coordinated with Whatcom County Climate Impact Advisory Committee on drafting for transportation goals and strategies.
  - Planning intern GIS and report-writing skill guidance
  - Development and phase I documentation of GIS multimodal transportation network with planning intern and network review with regional stakeholders
  - Development of monthly-updated interactive data dashboard for serious and fatal traffic crashes in the region

## **TIP**

- 2020 Annual cycle completed that provided final report project amendments and modifications, and federal and public requirements for access and participation. Highlights include:
  - 40 regional projects
  - 11 federal programs
  - Estimated \$70 million federal funds programmed
  - Estimated \$140 million total funds for projects
- 25 TIP amendments
- Six administrative modifications
- 2021 TIP drafted, approved and processed
- Report includes required performance measures that provides link of prioritized regional projects and goals to the federal performance measures.
- Provided annual WCOG 2020 Obligations Report for the Whatcom region
- \$7.6 million total obligations
- \$1 million total de-obligations
- Monitored federal funding obligations and continued coordination with project managers.
- 2020 final obligations delivery target was short by \$110,000.

## **Model**

- Completed contract with Caliper to update travel demand model that incorporated household travel survey results, transportation analysis zones (TAZ) and network updates from WCOG, and other inputs to update the four-step travel demand model procedures – Trip Generation, Trip Distribution, Mode Choice and Assignment.
  - Develop a base year model of 2018

- 
- Test scenarios to ensure quality model performance and validation
  - Final documentation report details full model update details
  - Includes a region wide bike classification that is attributed to the regional road network.
  - Incorporated updated demographics from the City of Bellingham and established a new base year of 2019 for the regional plan update. Update included an update to school enrollments from K-12 and colleges.
  - Began preparations for 2045 planning year horizon model demographics and networks.

## **Whatcom Smart Trips**

WCOG's Whatcom Smart Trips 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:

- Over 250 community members began participating in Smart Trips diaries, adding to the total of 21,848 since the program began in 2006
- Participants have logged a total of 73,898,330 miles since the start of the program
- 31,151 tons of greenhouse gas emissions have been prevented
- Over \$9 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 23 people in one on one or small groups.

## **International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program**

The closure of the U.S. - Canada border to all but essential travel on March 21, 2020; the shrinking of the economy and the subsequent impacts on cross-border trade; the inability for government agencies and private organizations to meet or to operate within offices; and the ongoing health concerns of their communities and staff led to a drastic change to how The International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) operated this year. That said, there are still IMTC highlights in SFY 2020 that include the following:

- Seven Steering Committee meetings, with only the first (February) in person, the rest virtual.
- Project to measure COVID-19 impacts on cross-border freight through the Cascade Gateway
- Start and near completion of the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse 3.0 (project completed February 2021), an upgrade of the online border wait time/volume archive at [borderdata.org](http://borderdata.org)
- Completion of a discrete event simulation model to analyze the effects of processing empty commercial vehicles through a non-intrusive inspection (NII) portal as a pre-primary strategy to improve commercial processing rates and increase security at Pacific Highway Port-of-Entry.
- Work continued on an assessment of the Lynden/Aldergrove crossing given recently completed improvements at that port-of-entry and surrounding approach roads.
- The IMTC Resource Manual, published annually since 2000 as a print document, was converted to an online, dynamic data resource tool called the 2020 Border Data Digest

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that allows users to interact with the visualizations and download specific data from the presentations.

- Continued partnership with U.S. - Canada Transportation Border Working Group

## 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.

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## Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

WCOG will update and submit its UPWP for state fiscal year 2023. And, if needed, WCOG will submit amendment requests for this SFY 2022 UPWP.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

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

**Schedule:** Expected approval by WCOG MPO Policy Board in May 2021.

**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 2021.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:** Complete annual report.

**Schedule:** Due on September 30, 2021.

**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.

**Schedule:** Title VI report in July, 2021.

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

## Self-certification document

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

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Products:** Completed review and documentation.

**Schedule:** The goal is to have identified items resolved by October 31, 2021.

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

## Transportation planning & programs

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

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## Metropolitan Transportation Plan update and strategy

WCOG's regional and metropolitan long-range (20 year) transportation plan is due for its five-year update in June of 2022. Public outreach, refreshing key data, soliciting input and review from regional stakeholders, and many other "update tasks" will be underway in SFY 2022.

In addition to updating the regional plan document, this activity includes monitoring changes to federal regulatory requirements that define this MPO responsibility.

Because the geography and governing board of the Whatcom MPO and RTPO overlap, the MTP and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP -- which RTPOs are responsible for) have been combined to serve both purposes.

**Performance:** WCOG staff.

**Schedule:** The next MTP update is due in 2022.

**Products:** Products of SFYs 2022 MTP activities will include:

- Updated MTP.
- 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 to promote community review and feedback on the M/RTP.

**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.

## 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 2021 include:
  - Continued I-5 Bellingham TDM & Operations Study – continued coordination with WSDOT, City of Bellingham, and WTA on various elements of this phased effort.

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- City of Bellingham’s Lincoln-Lakeway Multimodal Transportation Study. This study got underway in February 2020. Due to various conditions during COVID-19 related interruptions, the original one-year project timeline was extended to two years (December 2021). WCOG, WTA, and WSDOT collaborated on scope development and will continue to support the work and its relationship to needs and strategies along the I-5 Bellingham corridor. Specifically, WCOG will support the work with a funding contribution to purchase data and/or data collection work to evaluate strategies and estimate future performance (e.g. traffic counts, turning movements counts, O-D & route data). WCOG will also avail its transportation demand model and in-house analysis.
  - 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 2022, WCOG expects to be involved.
  - Continued engagement with WTA as appropriate on their long range plan development.
  - Participation in state planning activities:
    - Highway System Plan update
    - WSDOT’s Multimodal Investment Strategy
    - Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan
    - Statewide Public Transportation Plan
    - Statewide Cooperative Automated Transportation Plan

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

## 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 dashboards that support 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

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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 **Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG)** is WCOG's structured forum for ongoing citizen participation in the metropolitan transportation planning process. CTAG is collaboratively organized with the Whatcom Transportation Authority and other member jurisdictions as pertinent regional issues emerge.
- **Websites** – WCOG maintains high quality websites ([www.wcog.org](http://www.wcog.org)) in order to provide broader and more convenient access to information, meeting schedules, staff contacts, and more. This is an important way of supporting and improving public involvement and openness of regional planning and decision making.
- **Regional public engagement questionnaire – analysis and application.** Having recently completed a region-wide online questionnaire, WCOG will be summarizing this data for early review by the policy board to assist in identify or confirm emerging priorities of the region's public. In addition to updating discussions in the regional plan, data from the questionnaire will be used to generate sub-regional reports for local-jurisdiction partners.
- **Regional freight stakeholder questionnaire – analysis and application.** Having just finished a region-wide questionnaire with regional businesses and institutions regarding their satisfaction with the region's freight transportation systems, this work will inform plan discussions of regional freight challenges and future strategies.
- 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 RTPPO funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

## **Cross-border panning & 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

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transportation agencies; federal inspection agencies, other federal agencies of both countries, at-border jurisdictions, trade and travel related industry associations, and non-governmental organizations. More information about IMTC is available at [theIMTC.com](http://theIMTC.com)

**Performance:** WCOG staff

**Products:**

- IMTC working group meetings -- preparation, participation, and facilitation.
- Data collection and reporting
  - 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 RTPPO funds, FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds, & FHWA CBI funds.

## **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

- 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.

## **Analysis and review of federal transportation planning requirements.**

While current requirements of the U.S. Transportation Authorization Act (the FAST Act) are well understood at this point, WCOG (like all entities that work within these rules), will evaluate reauthorization proposals as they develop further and merit strategic thinking. Along with such evaluation we will engage partners about possible changes and how they would affect options for our region e.g. funding levels, planning factors, system monitoring, environmental impact requirements, etc.

**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.

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## 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 2022, 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 RTPO 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 2021.

### 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

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**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 June 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.

**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.

## 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](http://www.whatcomsmarttrips.org).

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

**Schedule:** Ongoing.

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

## 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:** Update the regional transportation demand model to a base year of 2019.

**Schedule:** The model update will inform upcoming planning products and projects, including WSDOT and Bellingham's I-5 studies, WTA's long-range planning efforts, the regional plan update, and local jurisdictions' plan-update EISs.

**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).
- Expanded collection of turning-movement counts.

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- Acquisition of third-party system data when deemed useful (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, 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 RTPPO 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.

**Schedule:** Ongoing

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

## **Border Data Warehouse 3.0 operation and maintenance**

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 the FHWA Technology & Innovation Deployment Implementation Assistance Program (TIDP) and local match.

## **2030 U.S. Census – prep work**

Having concluded a successful 2020 *Whatcom Complete Counts* Census campaign in the region, there is strong interest in documenting the strategies that were found to be most effective and drafting a work plan for 2030 preparations based on recent experience.

**Performance:** WCOG staff

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**Products:** Whatcom Census Complete Counts Committee and Working Group.

**Schedule:** July 2021 – December 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.

## Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

### 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.

## 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.

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## **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, etc.) 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.

## **IMTC Cross-border freight study**

The IMTC Project has, with its partners, completed a large field-work data collection and analysis of regional cross-border freight about every five years since 1999. The last one was done in 2016. It’s time to refresh this important planning and operations resource.

Estimated cost for this effort is \$130,000.

## **North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA) coordination**

WCOG has served as the coordinating agency for NSTA for several years. It used to use approximately \$25,000 year of funds remaining from a federal grant to fund this work. WCOG has since continued to perform this function as part of its work plan though at a bare-bones level. Funding similar to that used 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 result range from a finding of insufficient interest to formation of a preliminary business plan with likely operator(s), routes, financial plan, etc.

This work would likely be contingently phased. Phase 1: \$50,000. Phase 2: \$50,000.

## **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 A – Budget and financial detail

		SFY 2022 Funding Sources												
		Federal						State			Local		Total	
UPWP Page No.	Work categories	FHWA PL		FTA 5303		FHWA STBG U UPWP supplement		Other Federal	RTPO		CTR	WTA Fed Match		Various other
		2022	Carryover	2021	Carryover	2022	Carryover		Fed Match	Planning				
		Funding-source total →												
		\$289,643	\$0	\$82,500	\$78,745	\$271,104	\$0	\$250,000	\$78,760	\$10,000	\$75,000	\$25,165	\$75,000	\$1,235,917
12	<b>Program administration</b>	\$14,482		\$4,125	\$3,937	\$13,555			\$4,377			\$1,258		\$41,735
12	Professional development and staff training	\$5,069		\$1,444	\$1,378	\$4,744			\$1,532			\$440		\$14,607
12	Coordination/communication with federal and state legislators	\$1,738		\$495	\$472	\$1,627			\$525			\$151		\$5,008
13	Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	\$3,186		\$908	\$866	\$2,982			\$963			\$277		\$9,182
13	UPWP annual performance & expenditure report	\$1,448		\$413	\$394	\$1,356			\$438			\$126		\$4,174
13	Title VI reporting	\$2,028		\$578	\$551	\$1,898			\$613			\$176		\$5,843
13	Self-Certification Document	\$1,014		\$289	\$276	\$949			\$306			\$88		\$2,921
13	<b>Transportation planning &amp; programs</b>	\$118,754		\$33,825	\$32,285	\$111,153		\$100,000	\$35,883			\$10,318		\$442,218
14	Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan update & strategy	\$9,500		\$2,706	\$2,583	\$8,892			\$2,871			\$825		\$27,377
14	Regional & statewide activities with WSDOT & other MPO members	\$33,251		\$9,471	\$9,040	\$31,123			\$10,047			\$2,889		\$95,821
15	Performance reporting	\$8,313		\$2,368	\$2,260	\$7,781			\$2,512			\$722		\$23,955
15	Public and stakeholder participation and outreach	\$7,125		\$2,030	\$1,937	\$6,669			\$2,153			\$619		\$20,533
16	Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan	\$1,188		\$338	\$323	\$1,112			\$359			\$103		\$3,422
16	Cross-border planning coordination (The IMTC Program)	\$42,751		\$12,177	\$11,623	\$40,015	\$100,000		\$12,917			\$3,714		\$223,197
17	Planning technical support for member jurisdictions	\$9,500		\$2,706	\$2,583	\$8,892			\$2,871			\$825		\$27,377
17	Review of transportation planning & funding legislation	\$2,375		\$677	\$646	\$2,223			\$718			\$206		\$6,844
18	North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA)	\$4,750		\$1,353	\$1,291	\$4,446			\$1,435			\$413		\$13,689
18	<b>RTPO planning</b>							\$40,000		\$10,000				\$50,000
18	Certify consistency: RTP & local comp. plans													\$0
19	Human Services Transportation planning (HSTP)							\$40,000		\$10,000				\$50,000
19	<b>Smart Trips</b>							\$110,000			\$75,000		\$75,000	\$260,000
19	Smart Trips trip-logs, incentives, and employer programs									\$75,000		\$75,000		\$150,000
19	Mobility Management / Travel Training							\$110,000						\$110,000
20	<b>Data collection and analysis</b>	\$136,132		\$38,775	\$37,010	\$127,419			\$41,134			\$10,846		\$391,316
20	Maintenance of the regional transportation demand model	\$58,537		\$16,673	\$15,914	\$54,790			\$17,687			\$5,086		\$168,688
20	Enhanced Traffic counts (all modes) & other trip data as appropriate	\$20,420		\$5,816		\$19,113			\$6,170			\$908		\$52,427
21	Development and maintenance of GIS resources	\$44,924		\$12,796	\$12,213	\$42,048			\$13,574			\$3,903		\$129,458
21	Federal functional classification system updates and monitoring	\$6,807		\$1,939	\$1,851	\$6,371			\$2,057			\$591		\$19,615
21	Border Data Warehouse operations and maintenance	\$2,723		\$776		\$2,548			\$823			\$121		\$6,991
21	Census related (2020 & early planning for 2030)	\$2,723		\$776	\$740	\$2,548			\$823			\$237		\$7,847
22	<b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b>	\$20,275		\$5,775	\$5,512	\$18,977			\$6,126			\$1,761		\$58,426
22	TIP development & amendments	\$14,193		\$4,043	\$3,859	\$13,284			\$4,288			\$1,233		\$40,899
22	Obligation status monitoring and reporting	\$6,083		\$1,733	\$1,654	\$5,693			\$1,838			\$528		\$17,528
22	<b>Unfunded priority programs &amp; projects</b>	\$525,000												
22	Whatcom Smart Trips	\$150,000												
22	Smart Trips Website Update	\$75,000												
23	Passenger-only ferry business plan	\$100,000												
23	NSTA admin funding	\$25,000												
23	IMTC Border Freight Study	\$135,000												
23	Smart Trips Elementary School Bike Rodeos	\$40,000												

# Appendices

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## Appendix B – Expected consultant contracts

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



April 14, 2021

Mr. Lawrence Solomon, Chairman  
Lummi Indian Business Council  
2665 Kwina Road  
Bellingham, WA 98226

RE: **Lummi Nation Funding Request, Kwina Triangle Roundabout Project**

Dear Chairman Solomon:

I am writing to express the Whatcom Council of Governments' support for the Lummi Nation's request for funding through Rep. DelBene's office for the Kwina Triangle Roundabout project.

As you know, this important project is consistent with several goals of *Whatcom Mobility 2040* – the adopted metropolitan transportation plan for the Whatcom region – notably safety. Upon the award of federal and/or state funding, this project will be added to WCOG's Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

On behalf of the Whatcom Council of Governments I look forward to working with you, your staff and our other regional partners when the project is funded.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. H. Wilson".

Robert H. Wilson, AICP  
Executive Director

Copies: Whatcom Transportation Policy Board  
Hugh Conroy, Director of Planning