



whatcom council of governments

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

State Fiscal Year 2021

Adopted by the WCOG Policy Board on May 13, 2020

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Title VI & Americans with Disabilities Act

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

Contents

Contents	i
Introduction: The UPWP and the Whatcom Council of Governments	2
Purposes of this UPWP	2
Organization of WCOG’s UPWP	3
The Whatcom Council of Governments	4
Membership	5
Metropolitan Planning Area	6
Planning priorities	7
Verification of compliance	8
Restriction on lobbying	8
Tribal involvement	9
Federal public lands	9
UPWP amendment process	9
SFY 2020 accomplishments	9
SFY 2021 work categories	13
Program administration	13
Transportation planning & programs	14
Cross-border planning & coordination – The IMTC Program	17
RTPO planning	19
Regional mobility programs	20
Whatcom Smart Trips (WST)	20
Data collection and analysis	21
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	23
Unfunded priority programs and projects	23
Appendix A – Budget and financial detail	25
Appendix B – Expected consultant contracts	26

Introduction: The UPWP and the Whatcom Council of Governments

A Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is required annually 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) 2021.

The federal funds WCOG uses to conduct metropolitan transportation planning come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), known as FHWA “PL” and FTA “5303” funding, respectively. 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 its administrative responsibilities, WSDOT is 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 Coordination Office (TRCO) 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) 2021 and facilitate the TRCO'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 TRCO administers, others are funded from other FHWA programs, state funds, local funds, and Canadian funds (for certain border related projects). While all anticipated SFY 2021 activities are grouped under the seven categories, each activity section header also includes a notation of funding source types as follows:

Each of the activities to be undertaken by WCOG in SFY 2021 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

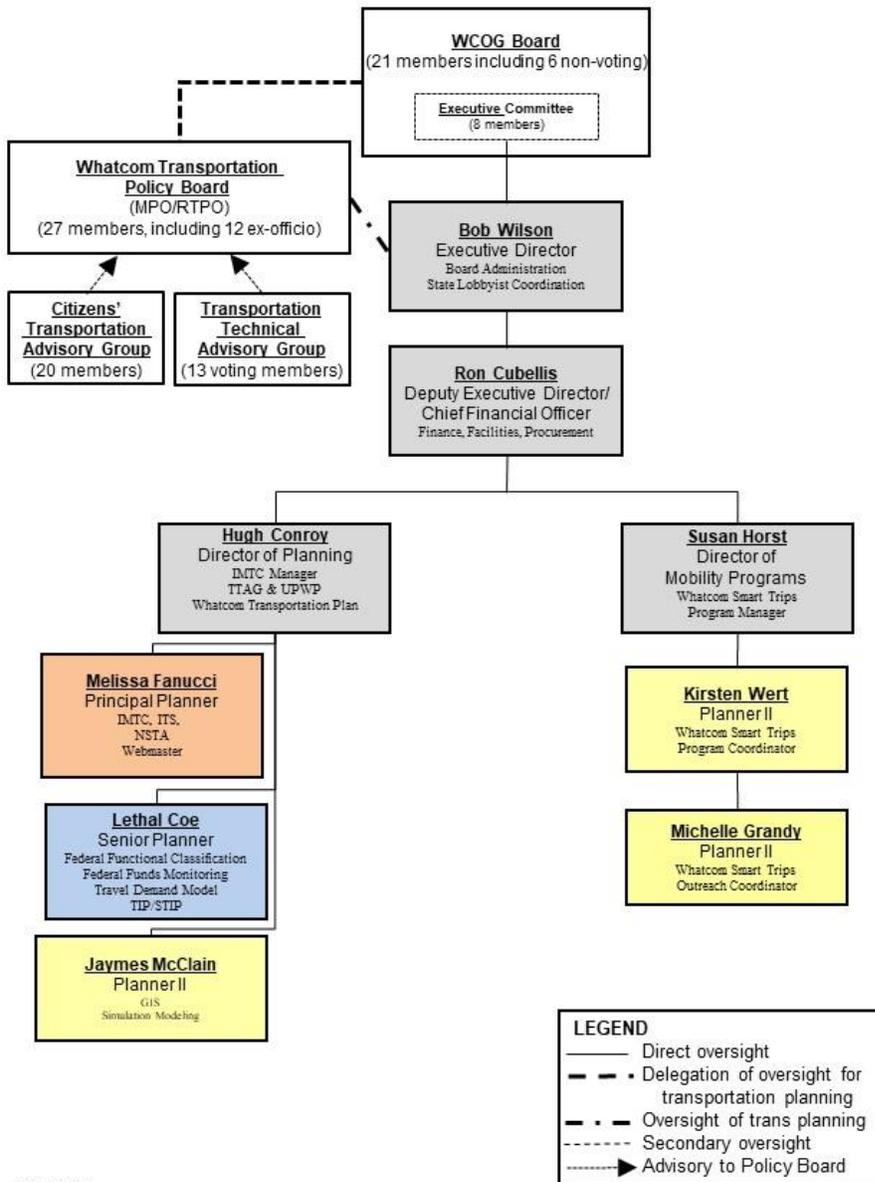
WSDOT UPWP guidelines include a budget/financial table template to be used to provide a summary of all MPO/RTPO activities funded by PL, FTA 5303 and/or RTPO funds along with the sources of proposed match and other funds as required by 23 CFR 450.308. This table is included as Appendix A.

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
2020 Organizational Structure**



01/01/2020

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 currently¹ serving.

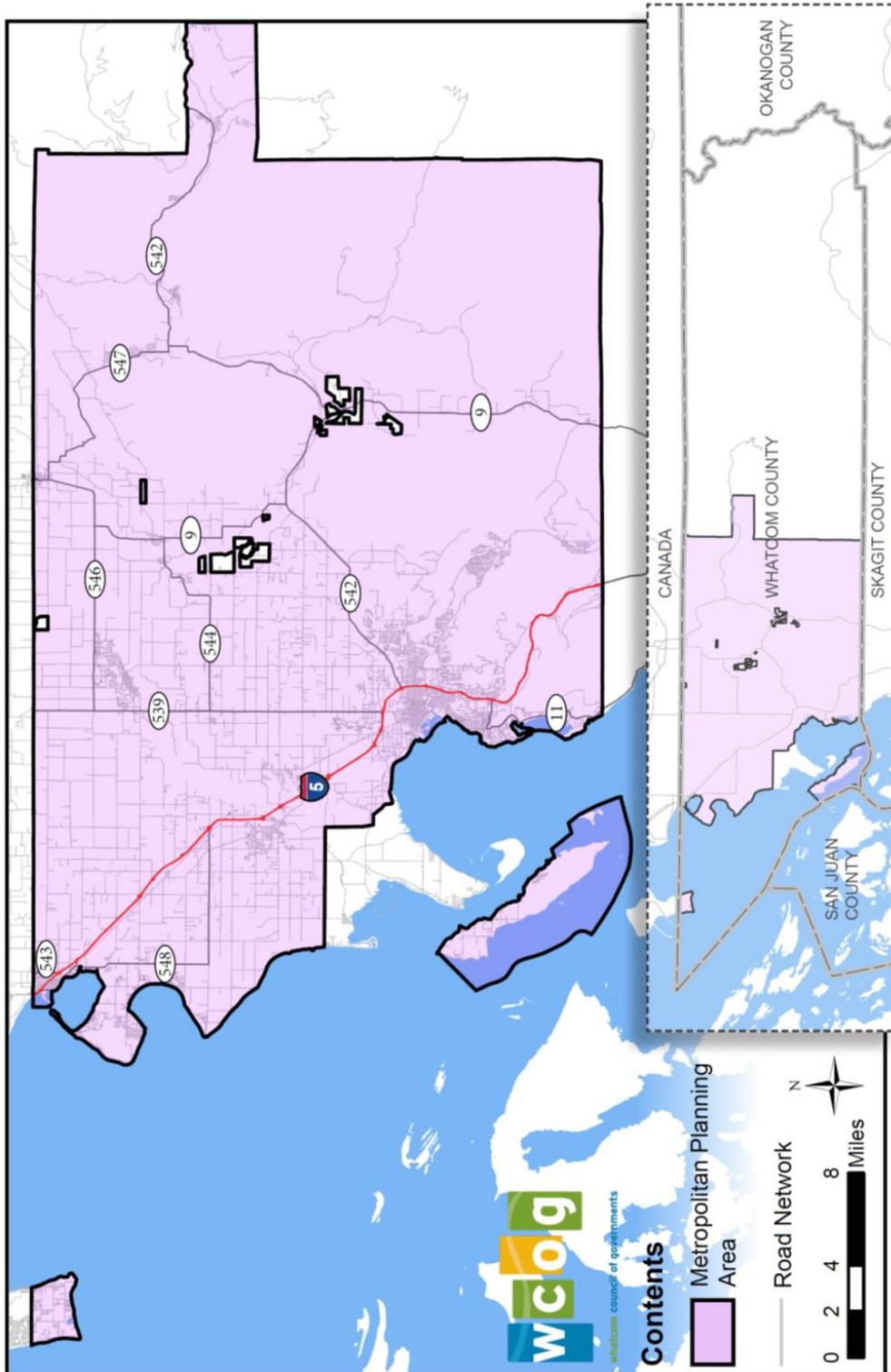
Entity	Position	2020 Representatives	Council Board	MPO - RTPO Policy Board
Whatcom County	Executive	Satpal Sidhu	●	●
	Councilmember	Carol Frazey	●	
	Councilmember	Kathy Kershner		●
City of Bellingham	Mayor	Seth Fleetwood	●	●
	Councilmember	Pinky Vargas		●
	Councilmember	Hollie Huthman	●	
City of Blaine	Mayor	Bonnie Onyon	●	●
City of Everson	Mayor	John Perry	●	●
City of Ferndale	Mayor	Greg Hansen	●	●
City of Lynden	Mayor	Scott Korthis	●	●
City of Nooksack	Councilmember	Tom Jones	●	●
City of Sumas	Mayor	Kyle Christensen	●	●
Port of Bellingham	Commissioner	Bobby Briscoe	●	●
Lummi Indian Business Council	Chair	Lawrence Solomon	●	●
Nooksack Tribal Council		<i>vacant</i>		●
Lake Whatcom Water and Sewer District	Commissioner	John Carter	●	
	General Manager	Pete Stark	○	
Whatcom Transportation Authority	Board member	Michael Lilliquist		●
	Executive Director	Greg Winter	○	
WA State Dept. of Transportation	Mt. Baker Area - Asst. Reg. Admin.	Jay Drye/Todd Carlson		●
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	Luanne Van Werven		○
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	Jeff McClure	○	
Bellingham Technical College	representative	Kimberly Perry		○
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 2021.

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

The planning priorities for WCOG’s Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) were updated in 2017 as part of adoption of *Whatcom Mobility 2040*, WCOG’s regional / metropolitan long-range transportation plan.

To identify the region’s transportation goals, WCOG relied on the transportation goals listed by the MPO and RTPO’s member jurisdictions in their current plans. Local jurisdictions all include an explicit list of goals in the transportation chapters of their comprehensive plans – the outcomes they are seeking through strategies and investments. A review of all jurisdictions’ goals generated a list of regionally shared goals sorted by frequency of adoption (table below).

There are many themes and approaches that individual jurisdictions discuss in the full text of their plans and this summary of regionally shared goals should not be taken to mean that individual jurisdictions currently ignore issues not listed here. But for the purpose of giving direction to *Whatcom Mobility 2040*, these are the goals that are most frequently adopted and documented by the region’s jurisdictions through locally based, continuous planning processes.

Whatcom Regional transportation goals selected from local transportation plans

No.	No. of jurisdictions that identified the goal	Goal
1	10	Safety
2	8	A multimodal transportation system
3	8	Efficiency, effectiveness, & system sustainability
4	8	Environmental quality
5	7	Access & convenience
6	6	Maintenance & preservation
7	6	Freight transportation

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 – Safety of everyone using the transportation system – motorized and non-motorized users. There is a primary interest in advancing strategies expected to reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

A multimodal transportation system – The corresponding state and national descriptions of this goal align very well with the region’s policy-based interests in supporting a multimodal system. All modes of transportation should be considered when choosing investments needed to meet demand for travel and goods movement. And, in support of the other goals (notably efficiency and sustainability), strategies should strive to provide optimal modal connections and systems integration.

Efficiency, effectiveness, and system sustainability – Efficiency and effectiveness speak to what is often referred to as *mobility* – the degree to which transportation system components provide people and goods, using all modes, reliable connections and predictable travel times. In addition to multimodal strategies, mobility also relies on operations strategies including information technology, incident response, and demand management. Sustainability points to the importance of keeping existing facilities in a

state of good repair (preservation) and selecting investments that can be operated and preserved with reasonably expected resources.

Environmental quality – State and national elements specifically note several aspects that complement and further inform this regional goal.

- Greenhouse gas emissions reduction.
- Energy conservation.
- Protection of the natural environment – including natural habitat and water quality.
- Enhancement of healthy communities.
- Promotion of consistency between transportation investments and planned land-use and economic development.

Access & Convenience – Also reflected in the corresponding federal planning factors, our region’s transportation system is intended to serve all people and acknowledge and reduce the barriers to mobility that exist for older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

Maintenance & preservation – This goal very much compliments the above goal of sustainability – the importance of first choosing investments in facilities and programs that our region is fiscally willing and able to operate into the future and then giving appropriate priority (reflected by this goal) to keeping our system in a state of good repair.

Freight transportation – Like the state and the nation, our region’s local plans reflect a common interest in ensuring that our transportation system provides mobility for freight (goods movement, large service vehicles, etc.). Specific attention to freight transportation also appears as part of previously listed goals that apply to travel, too – especially mobility (e.g. travel time reliability) and modal integration (optimized use of and connection between highway, rail, marine, air, etc.).

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) 2021. 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 2021:

- The National Association of Regional Councils Conference in Washington, DC.
- 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). As described later in this work plan, WCOG will continue to seek improvements to its tribal consultation process during SFY 2021.

Federal public lands

During SFY 2021, 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 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 2020 accomplishments

Reviewing SFY 2020, this section highlights some notable completed work items.

Professional development and staff training

- FHWA Planning & Environmental Linkages peer-exchange
- FHWA Transportation Performance Management peer-exchange
- Tableau visualization software training
- American Planning Association (APA)-WA annual conference
- APA- NW meetings
- National Highway Institute Transportation Planning course
- Public engagement / facilitation training
- Transportation Research Board tools
- AMPO annual conference
- ExtendSim simulation modeling – advanced training
- Planning and Environmental Linkages – FHWA peer exchange
- Tableau training Level 2
- APA national conference

Transportation planning and projects

- Drafting of a regional performance management report.
- Outreach for continued participation in Human Services Transportation stakeholder group.
- Amendments to WCOG's regional and metropolitan long-range transportation plan (Whatcom Mobility 2040)
 - Updates to the regional project list
 - Possible modification of regional transportation goals.
- Participating with City of Bellingham, WSDOT, WTA, Whatcom County, and others in the Interstate 5 Bellingham Transportation Demand Management & Operations Study.
- Participate in City of Bellingham Lincoln-Lakeway Multimodal Transportation Study
- Review and provide feedback for the statewide Obligation Authority policy change through the WSDOT and MPO Coordination group.

Data collection and analysis

- Formed Whatcom Census Complete Counts Committee and Workgroup through the WCOG Executive Committee to market and provide public information in support of the 2020 Census. This includes a contract awarded by the WA Office of Financial Management to conduct census activities, hire coordinators, and implement marketing strategies.
- Process traffic data counts for regional traffic count repository and for the travel demand model validation update. The traffic counts also includes the utilization of Tableau for location illustration and information.
- Contract traffic counts for intersection turning movements data and regional road volumes and classification in support of the COB Lincoln-Lakeway Multimodal Study
- Development of web based data access and visualization tools for regional crash data and traffic counts.
- Continued and expanded use of Tableau for web-based sharing and visualization of regional transportation data with stakeholders and the public.

Planning collaboration and technical support

- Assisted consultant hiring process, provide travel demand model and contracted traffic counts for the City of Bellingham's Lincoln-Lakeway Multimodal Transportation Study
- Provided regional travel demand model outputs and GIS mapping for various jurisdictions and Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA).

Coordination with WSDOT and MPO/RTPO members

- Continued participation in quarterly WSDOT/MPO Coordinating Committee meetings and related, interim activities (e.g. target setting coordinating, statewide planning alignment discussions, etc.)

TIP

- 2019 Annual cycle completed that provided final report project amendments and modifications, and federal and public requirements for access and participation. Highlights includes:

-
- 40 regional projects
 - 10 federal programs
 - \$39 million federal funds programmed
 - \$108 million total funds for projects
 - 23 TIP amendments and five administrative modifications processed.
 - Includes required performance measures that provides link of prioritized regional projects and goals to the federal performance measures.
 - Provided WCOG 2019 Obligations Report for the Whatcom region
 - Monitored federal funding obligations and continued coordination with project managers on ensuring project delivery.
 - Coordinated the reprogramming of \$750,000 to mitigate anticipated obligation delivery target shortfall to four STBG construction projects.
 - Facilitated statewide TIP Managers' User Group meeting.

Model

- Contracted with Caliper to incorporate 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.
 - Meet monthly to review model step results, advise and document development process
 - Develop a new base year model of 2018
- Continued travel model refinements and adjustments to demographics and network inputs that included the addition of bike classification
 - Developed 2040 year demographics and network with the updated TAZ

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:

- 829 community members began participating in Smart Trips diaries, adding to the total of 21,488 since the program began in 2006
- 4.7 million walking, bicycling, ridesharing and bus trips tracked on Smart Trips diaries, with a total of 71.7 million miles traveled since 2006
- 1,397 tons of greenhouse gas emissions prevented, part of the 29,100 tons prevented since the program began
- \$450,000 added to the local economy through fuel savings, part of the \$9.5 million since 2006
- 10 new employer partners, adding to the total of 194
- 122 people tried riding the bus for the first time as a result of promotion available to employer partners
- 4,837 elementary students were taught bicycles skills, part of 45,761 since 2006
- 1,761 7th grade students were taught to ride the bus and 485 made one or more bus trips

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- 105 people learned how to ride the bus on a guided bus ride
 - 1 person received intensive travel training to be able to use fixed route service in addition to paratransit

Mobility management and travel training

A 2019-2023 mobility management grant allows Whatcom Smart Trips staff in partnership with WTA to teach seniors and youth in Whatcom County how to ride fixed route transit. The program delivers two key programs:

- Guided bus trips introduce participants to specific bus routes and how they connect to the rest of the fixed route system. The program is delivered in partnership with local Senior Centers, agencies and community groups.
- 7th Grade Bus Program provides transit education and a free quarterly bus pass to 7th grade students in Whatcom County. The program is hosted by public and private schools and Lummi Nation School. In 2019:
 - 1,761 7th grade students were taught to ride the bus and 485 made one or more bus trips
 - 105 people learned how to ride the bus on a guided bus ride

1 person received intensive travel training to be able to use fixed route service in addition to paratransit

International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program

The International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) continued to work toward its objective of identifying and promoting improvements to mobility and security for the border crossings that make up the Cascade Gateway.

SFY 2020 highlights include

- Table top exercise leading to an update of the IMTC Incident Response Protocol.
- Updates and discussions with IMTC stakeholders and managers of WSDOT-led efforts to advance planning for ultra-high-speed ground transportation.
- Acquisition of FHWA funding for an update to the IMTC Border Data Warehouse.
- IMTC-sponsored workshop focused on Canada Border Services Agency's planning for a rebuild of the Pacific Highway port-of-entry.
- Continued (almost complete) planning and implementation of Peace Arch/Douglas and Pacific Highway cross-border pedestrian route and signage improvements.
- Studies: Aldergrove-Lynden traffic analysis; NEXUS growth potential; Metro Vancouver land-use forecast summary.
- Simulation modeling for proposed pre-primary empty truck scanning (funded by Transport Canada).
- Participation in two TBWG meetings: Niagara, ON & Burlington, VT.
- Regular schedule of Steering Committee meetings and Core Group meetings.
- Publication of annual Resource Manual and creation of corresponding, online data dashboards using Tableau.

SFY 2021 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 2022. And, if needed, WCOG will submit amendment requests for this SFY 2021 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 2020.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Complete annual report.

Schedule: Due on September 30, 2020.

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, 2020.

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, 2020.

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 strategic decisions.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan update and strategy

In addition to producing a metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) updated periodically, 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 2021 MTP activities will include:

- 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. This will include development of GIS data and improved integration with the regional travel demand model.
- 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 with WSDOT and regional members regarding integration of MAP-21 performance measures and regional metrics.m
- Participation and collaboration with various studies, research, and data collection with state and regional partners. Known efforts likely to extend into SFY 2021 include:
 - 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 has been 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.
 - WTA 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 expected to continue through January 2021. Statewide plans expected to be in development during SFY 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.

Performance reporting

In support of and as a component of the regional/metropolitan transportation plan, WCOG produces a 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 RTPO 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 Citizens' Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) is WCOG's formal mechanism for facilitating 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.
- Public Participation Plan Update: WCOG's public participation plan was last updated in 2014. It needs to be updated again and will be an activity in SFY 2021.
- 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 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

This activity also advances the federal emphasis area, *models of regional cooperation*.

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.

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 RTPo funds, and FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds.

Analysis and review of FAST Act requirements

Stemming from the previous U.S. Transportation Authorization Act, MAP-21, several federal transportation planning rules are being revised and will be released sometime in the future. WCOG will be reviewing these rules with partner agencies and adjusting work schedules, planning work plans, and methodologies as appropriate.

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 RTPo 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 2021, 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 2021 work plan.

The following RTPO duties are covered elsewhere in this work plan or do not need to be addressed in SFY 2021.

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

Products: Documentation of review of individual jurisdiction's draft comprehensive plan transportation elements and letters of certification and or observed inconsistencies delivered to each jurisdiction.

Schedule: Review and feedback

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

Human services transportation planning

WCOG completed an update of its Human Services Transportation (HST) Plan in October 2018. Related to this, WCOG will be working regional HST stakeholders to submit project proposals to WSDOT's Consolidated Grants Program (CGP) for the SFY '21-'23 funding cycle.

As updates are made to the WCOG website, including the site dedicated to Whatcom Mobility 2040, HST planning products will be integrated into the overall regional plan as part of the regional accessibility strategy.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Coordination, facilitation of community review for CBP applications, development of HST related plan elements.

Schedule: Ongoing as needed.

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

Regional mobility programs

Whatcom Smart Trips (WST)

Whatcom Smart Trips is a program that helps community members make more of their trips by walking, bicycling, sharing rides or riding the bus. The program is administered and operated by WCOG with the support of the City of Bellingham, the Whatcom Transportation Authority, and the WSDOT Public Transportation Office. Whatcom Smart Trips is a collection of programmatic strategies and tools that assist community members with using sustainable transportation modes.

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:

- Administration
- Community outreach
- 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.
- Incentives: A program of discount cards, gift certificates, cash prizes and recognition to motivate community members to try new forms of transportation.
- Website & online trip diary: www.whatcomsmarttrips.org.
- School programs: Bicycle skills courses at elementary schools; Summer camps for 12 to 14 years olds that teach independent travel skills

Schedule: Ongoing.

Funding source: This activity is funded by local funding from the City of Bellingham, the Whatcom Transportation Authority, and state funding from the WSDOT Public Transportation Office.

Mobility Management & Travel Training

WCOG has conducted this work for the last four years -- a senior travel training program and a 7th grade bus-pass program that teach seniors and youth in Whatcom County that transit is a viable transportation option. Content focuses on bus-trip planning and experience-based familiarization with bus riding.

Performance: WCOG staff.

Products: Senior travel training. Seventh grade bus pass program.

Schedule: Ongoing

Funding source: FTA via WSDOT's Consolidated Grant 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 will undergo complete process calibration 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 2018.

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 next regional plan update, and local jurisdictions' plan-update EISs.

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.

Enhanced regional data collection & analysis

In 2017, the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board allocated STBG funding to support improvement of data collection and analysis activities. These activities will 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:

- Improved data analysis (Increased use of GIS, visualization software, web based dashboards, etc.).
- Expanded regional traffic counts (all modes).
- Expanded collection of turning-movement counts.
- Acquisition of third-party system data (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 GIS resources

WCOG uses geographic information system (GIS) resources to better support the use of data in development of performance measures, analysis, online map-based access to 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.

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

This project will update the data storage system for WCOG's archive of binational border wait-time data (and associated traffic and vehicle data) generated by WSDOT, BC MoTI, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The project will also redesign and improve the data access tools at CascadeGatewayData.com including addition of new reporting and visualization tools using Tableau.

Performance: Consultant and WCOG staff.

Products: Updated cloud storage systems. Updated web-based user interface.

Schedule: Started January, 2020. Complete by January, 2021.

Funding source: This activity is funded by the FHWA Technology & Innovation Deployment Implementation Assistance Program (TIDP) and local match.

2020 U.S. Census

In preparation for and in support of the 2020 Census, WCOG has been and will continue to participate with the U.S. Census Bureau and local jurisdictions to ensure maximum accounting of people in Whatcom County. In addition to its primary purpose of apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Census data is an essential input for ongoing planning activities and financing for regional strategies.

Performance: WCOG staff

Products: Whatcom Census Complete Counts Committee and Working Group.

Schedule: February 2019 – December 2020

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 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

Whatcom Smart Trips (WST)

The Whatcom Smart Trips program does not yet have full funding identified for SFY 2021. 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.

Regional freight survey

In addition to conducting improved traffic counts inclusive of commercial vehicle classifications for optimized participation in the state's Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS)

route analysis data set, WCOG has in the past conducted a regional freight systems users survey to document how well the goods-movement needs of regional goods and service providers are being met by the transportation system. With additional funding – approximately \$30,000 – WCOG would like to conduct another survey ahead of the 2022 regional plan update.

Regional transportation priorities -- public engagement effort

Looking ahead to both R/MTP update (2022) and local jurisdictions' comprehensive plan updates (2025), there may be an opportunity to conduct coordinated public involvement towards refreshing the region's transportation system goals.

The current goals listed in the R/MTP are, as explained earlier, based on the Whatcom region's jurisdiction's comprehensive plan transportation elements. In large part, jurisdiction's goals were based on public engagement that took place over a decade ago.

Pending further discussion with the Policy Board and jurisdiction staff, the idea here is to conduct a coordinated public-engagement effort for the region, using the same methods across all jurisdictions so that the documented feedback could be used both regionally and by jurisdictions for their local plans.

In addition to traditional public outreach (e.g. evening workshops around the planning area), additional strategies would likely include attendance at existing community events, visible advertising (e.g. billboards), and web-based public engagement applications (e.g. MetroQuest).

This effort would likely involve consultants and be conducted over the course of about six months. Depending on scope and available funding, this effort could cost \$100,000 to \$200,000.

Appendices

Appendix A – Budget and financial detail

		SFY 2021 Funding Sources												
		Federal					State			Local		Total		
UPWP Page No.	Work categories	FHWA PL		FTA 5303	FHWA STBG U		Other Federal	RTPO		CTR	WTA		Other	
		2021	Carryover	2021	Planning supplement	Project specific		Fed Match	Planning		Fed Match			
		Funding-source total →		\$318,000	\$117,270	\$78,824	\$152,000	\$64,000	\$175,000	\$206,000	\$119,000	\$10,000	\$75,000	\$12,302
13	Program administration	\$15,900	\$5,864	\$3,941	\$7,600				\$4,583			\$615		\$38,503
14	Professional development and staff training	\$5,565	\$2,052	\$1,379	\$2,660				\$1,604			\$215		\$13,476
14	Coordination/communication with federal and state legislators	\$1,908	\$704	\$473	\$912				\$550			\$74		\$4,621
14	Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)	\$3,498	\$1,290	\$867	\$1,672				\$1,008			\$135		\$8,470
14	UPWP annual performance & expenditure report	\$1,590	\$586	\$394	\$760				\$458			\$62		\$3,850
15	Title VI reporting	\$2,226	\$821	\$552	\$1,064				\$642			\$86		\$5,391
15	Self-Certification Document	\$1,113	\$410	\$276	\$532				\$321			\$43		\$2,695
15	Transportation planning & programs	\$222,600	\$82,089	\$55,177	\$106,400			\$40,000	\$64,159			\$8,611		\$579,036
15	Metropolitan & Regional Transportation Plan update & strategy	\$17,808	\$6,567	\$4,414	\$8,512				\$5,133			\$689		\$43,123
16	Regional & statewide activities with WSDOT & other MPO members	\$62,328	\$22,985	\$15,450	\$29,792				\$17,964			\$2,411		\$150,929
16	Performance reporting	\$15,582	\$5,746	\$3,862	\$7,448				\$4,491			\$603		\$37,733
17	Public and stakeholder participation and outreach	\$13,356	\$4,925	\$3,311	\$6,384				\$3,850			\$517		\$32,343
17	Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan	\$2,226	\$821	\$552	\$1,064				\$642			\$86		\$5,391
18	Cross-border planning coordination (The IMTC Program)	\$80,136	\$29,552	\$19,864	\$38,304		\$40,000	\$23,097			\$3,100			\$234,053
18	Planning technical support for member jurisdictions	\$17,808	\$6,567	\$4,414	\$8,512				\$5,133			\$689		\$43,123
19	Analysis and review of FAST Act requirements & funding programs	\$4,452	\$1,642	\$1,104	\$2,128				\$1,283			\$172		\$10,780
19	North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA)	\$8,904	\$3,284	\$2,207	\$4,256				\$2,566			\$344		\$21,561
19	RTPO planning							\$6,000		\$10,000				\$16,000
19	Certify consistency: RTP & local comp. plans									\$10,000				\$10,000
20	Human Services Transportation planning (HSTP)							\$6,000						
20	Regional mobility programs					\$64,000		\$110,000			\$75,000		\$75,000	\$324,000
20	Whatcom Smart Trips Program					\$64,000					\$75,000		\$75,000	\$214,000
21	Mobility Management Training							\$110,000						\$110,000
21	Data collection and analysis	\$57,240	\$21,109	\$14,188	\$27,360		\$175,000	\$50,000	\$43,810			\$2,215		\$390,922
21	Maintenance of the regional transportation demand model	\$34,344	\$12,665	\$8,513	\$16,416				\$9,899			\$1,329		\$83,166
21	Enhanced regional data collection & analysis						\$175,000		\$27,312			\$0		\$202,312
22	Development and maintenance of GIS resources	\$18,889	\$6,966	\$4,682	\$9,029				\$5,444			\$731		\$45,741
22	Federal functional classification system updates and monitoring	\$2,862	\$1,055	\$709	\$1,368				\$825			\$111		\$6,931
22	Border Data Warehouse 3.0 - project							\$50,000					\$7,803	\$57,803
23	2020 US Census	\$1,145	\$422	\$284	\$547				\$330			\$44		\$2,772
23	Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	\$22,260	\$8,209	\$5,518	\$10,640				\$6,416			\$861		\$53,904
23	TIP development & amendments	\$15,582	\$5,746	\$3,862	\$7,448				\$4,491			\$603		\$37,733
23	Obligation status monitoring and reporting	\$6,678	\$2,463	\$1,655	\$3,192				\$1,925			\$258		\$16,171
24	Unfunded priority programs & projects	\$166,000												
24	Whatcom Smart Trips	\$86,000												
24	Regional Freight System Assessment	\$30,000												
24	Public Participation Initiative	\$50,000												

Appendices

Appendix B – Expected consultant contracts

Expected Consultant Engagements	Est. cost
Travel demand model support	\$5,000
Contracted traffic counts	\$30,000
Household travel survey route mapping data	\$15,000
Border Data Warehouse site maintenance	\$2,000
Border Data Warehouse 3.0 project	\$50,000