

Feedback received by email and phone messages.

Commentor	Comment	Staff Assessment
<p>Whatcom County, staff</p>	<p>Page 14, last paragraph - The 2025 comp plan updates will be nine years after the 2016 updates. The State legislature adopted E2SHB 1241 changing the next updates to 10 years (2035) with a 5-year mini-review (looks like the bill has not been signed yet, so you may want to check in a week to two). In any event, the deadlines change from time to time, so you might just want to say "... update comprehensive plans as outlined by ..."</p> <p>Page 15, first paragraph - The next comp plan update is due in 2025 (rather than 2024).</p> <p>Page 15, Table X - OFM updated the yearly population estimates in Nov. last year based upon 2020 Census results. Is the 2019 population figure from the most recent OFM estimate?</p> <p>Page 18, first paragraph under Fig. 1 - Currently reads "trips vehicular trips."</p> <p>Pages 19 and 20 - Could you insert countywide totals at the bottom of Fig. 3 and Fig. 4? This would also clarify how they relate to Fig 5.</p> <p>Page 27 - Although not included in this draft, I'm glad there will be further discussion of LOS (and maps) in the appendix of the next iteration.</p> <p>Matt Aamot Whatcom County Planning Department</p>	<p>Follow-up discussions and changes and additions made to draft plan.</p>
<p>WTA staff</p>	<p>Page 8</p> <p>2.1.3.9 Should this section mention park-and-ride lots, including state, WWU, WTA facilities rather than in 2.1.8?</p> <p>2.1.6 What about bus maintenance facilities? Isn't it similar to intermodal facilities? Identification as regionally significant could enable federal funding.</p> <p>2.1.6.20 c. Bolt Bus is defunct/absorbed by Greyhound, Flix bus is now in operation.</p> <p>Page 10</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety: This is a very important consideration for buses and bus passengers (whether riding or waiting at a stop, and for school age kids), so it should be added to the list. <p>Page 11</p> <p>6. Access...how about "connect people to resources, <u>services</u> and opportunities..."</p> <p>Page 11</p> <p>2nd to last line typo "panning"</p> <p>Page 20</p> <p>How much is the daily vehicle hours traveled affected by the compounding of additional vehicles on the road (congestion) from pop & employment growth? Is this a factor in the data?</p> <p>The story told by Figure 5 is the there's no appreciable difference in the no build and build scenarios.</p> <p>Page 21</p> <p>2nd paragraph, starting with "Although" "...many <u>urban</u> roads provide..." I don't see many sidewalks or bike lanes/shoulders in rural areas.</p>	

Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



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	<p>Last sentence: I don't think you need to say, "less impact", probably OK just to state simply, "less environmental degradation".</p> <p>Page 22</p> <p>The forecasted increase in bike & walk trips: is this assuming they stay at the current % of overall trips in 2045 (assuming this is what you mean by "applying today's travel behaviors")?</p> <p>Page 23</p> <p>More accurately, "...where on-demand service will <u>replace or enhance</u> fixed-route service..."</p> <p>Also, on-demand is a relatively small proportion of the enhanced transit system. You should also mention that the WTA 2040 plan will expand coverage and frequency for much of the WTA service area. This could be added to the sentence, and also modified to state, "...thereby expanding travel choice and access to jobs, medical, shopping and education."</p> <p>Page 26</p> <p>6.2.3 Performance Based Planning and Programming</p> <p>These are almost exclusively vehicle based targets - are we limited to this selection?</p> <p>Page 29</p> <p>Does the concept of monitoring/assisting with HS rail planning fit in this section? Note ultra high speed rail planning funding of \$150m in SB 5975 and related efforts.</p> <p>Page 33</p> <p>Housing - would be worth mentioning the "drive 'til you qualify" where many working families that move far from work to find affordable housing end up spending more of their savings on transportation (and where there is not good access to public transportation). Transportation costs tend to increase along with commuting distance, and the savings someone would have realized from moving away is absorbed by transportation expenditures. Also, WTA's plan is based on 2040 (not 2045 as mentioned here).</p> <p>Page 35</p> <p>My understanding is that Smart Trips has been significantly scaled back from previous years. Does this plan have a plan for increasing the efficacy of the program? E.g., staffing levels to support the robust implementation of TDM?</p> <p>Page 37</p> <p>Source of this list? It's missing some key WTA projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bellingham Station Expansion - 2025-2026 (\$5 million from Move Ahead Washington) - 6 Electric Buses - 2023 (Lo/No Grant) <p>Page 58</p> <p>8.8.4 - First bullet: "Expanded transit services and infrastructure (e.g. bus rapid transit, on demand services, transit street design improvements)"</p>	
<p>WTA staff</p>	<p>I am reaching out with a consideration for the RTP: Is there a way to account for the student housing facilities and population in the TAZs covering Western? I imagine the population and household estimates of 0 with a growth rate of 0% have a significant impact on the transportation demand models. I came across this issue with our Transit Demand Model, whereas our model significantly underestimated transit demand around Western due to</p>	<p>Follow-up discussion. This is a known issue related to how the model inputs are loaded (household based vs. other categories). WCOG staff will consider</p>

Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



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	<p>the null population and housing estimates (even when accounting for employment). Thanks. Michael Harpool Transit Planning Coordinator <i>Whatcom Transportation Authority</i></p>	<p>ways to make this clearer.</p>
Public, voicemail.	<p>I almost blocked the email I got from you because it looked fishy. It didn't identify. It gave his personal name instead of a business or, you know, government office and it looked like if I clicked on it I, it might be risky. You know, maybe it would compromise my e mail and all that. So I don't know if you could give people that maybe get an email or return address that looks more official locally. I clicked on it so I know it was ok and I can respond to that later. But maybe you are missing a lot of people that might otherwise open email? Thank you. Bye.</p>	<p>Email didn't seem to set off any actual spam filters. Commenter seemed concerned about WCOG staff email naming convention of <i>first-name@wcog.org</i> No action needed.</p>
Public, email.	<p>Dear Sirs, I live near downtown in the Lettered Streets and bicycle commute to work at SeaMar near Cordata Park. We need safe places for bicyclist to cross I-5. In addition, trying to access north Meridian or Lakeway from downtown on bicycle is terrifying! I am not sure what can be done about these issues, but my impression is that these corridors were designed for cars and not people. Thanks, [name redacted]</p>	<p>Focus on safety, bike-pedestrian, Complete Streets - all priorities discussed in the plan. No action needed.</p>
Public, email	<p>Upon reviewing the new plan, I'm saddened to observe how little effort was taken to prioritize its disabled citizens' well-being. I saw no plans to improve Paratransit's services, which often entails exorbitant wait-times regardless of distance. I see no plans to resolve the insufficient number of paratransit vehicles for the great number of patrons it serves. I also don't see any concrete plans to make bus lines outside of Bellingham proper run more frequently, expanded hours, nor more accessibly spaced stops. These changes would allow persons with disabilities the equity to live regular, independent lives where they could finally seek out employment options and engage their community without the constant reminder of all the things they could do if only they could drive. For a non-disabled person having a vehicle is a luxury they may someday strive to achieve, along with the freedom it allows. Given that most persons who are disabled live well below the poverty line, Uber is an outrageous luxury. Indeed, a major barrier that keeps most persons who are disabled in poverty is lack of viable transportation to pursue opportunities. A person with a disability typically only has the quality of their local public transportation system to rely upon permanently as their means to a better quality of life. I suspect this email will find its way to the bottom of a pile somewhere, but some part of me hopes that, given Whatcom claims to prioritize inclusivity and equity, perhaps some of this will matter to someone enough for something meaningful to come of it. Warmly, A local, legally blind, single mother</p>	<p>Comments align with plan goals and strategies and more specifically with WCOG Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). In response, staff will provide more information about HSTP and about WTA plans paratransit and route expansions. No action on current draft plan required.</p>

Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



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<p>Public, email</p>	<p>A few mechanical issues...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there are graphics/figures/tables missing from the web version and i'm hoping they are in the pdf version. • are there links to the individual subheadings on each page? the better to cite specifics in social media or email feedback. • while you mention sources, there aren't any population forecasts included. like how many people/households you expect by year. or what the growth rates are. <p>thanks. [name redacted]</p>	<p>First and third observations resolved.</p>
<p>Public, email</p>	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the regional plan. Below are my comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. European models of transit requirements for zero increase in carbon emissions came to the conclusion that the most benefits came from encouraging commuters to commute to the bus station via e-bike then take the bus. E-bikes cost from \$700-\$6000 USD, so they are a target of theft. To encourage the use of E-bikes in whatcom cty, it is suggested that more bike lockers be provided, especially at the bus depot in B'ham. Other counties provide this means of theft prevention. Only the college in Bham has these lockers at this time. 2. The bus 72X route should be modified to provide at least 2 trips per day to Maple falls, then to back to kendall/paradise via silver lake rd. 3. More bikes can be carried on the buses if a 5 bike carrier be added to the rear bumper and also a rear video camera be added so the driver can confirm actions taken at the rear. 4. Commuter car parking can be provided at zero cost if 5-10 parking spaces be dedicated to commuters at the county libraries that are within walking distance of a bus stop. <p>regards, [Name redacted]</p>	<p>Concerns and observations link well to plan priorities and strategies. Staff follow-up will note agencies/jurisdictions better placed to affect the commenter's specific project ideas. No action on current draft plan required.</p>
<p>Public, email</p>	<p>Sir, I would like to know how this plan dovetails, if it does, with city and county funded initiatives, specifically in the area of vehicle-generated water pollution. Recently there have been a number of articles in the <i>Bellingham Herald</i> and on-line about saving trees and protecting the watershed. I am concerned by the number of vehicles that are allowed to park in designated no parking areas such as unpaved road shoulders next to streams and on paved low volume streets/alleys whose run-off goes directly into drains marked as stream feeders. Who else might I address with these concerns? -[Name redacted]</p>	<p>Staff follow-up will answer commenter's question. No action on current draft plan required.</p>

Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



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Public, email	<p>I keep seeing the words maintain and preserve in regards to infrastructure. Why am I not seeing repair and improve? The majority of roads in Bellingham alone need repair if not outright improvement. That's not even getting into the sidewalks which are in dire need of repairs in many neighborhoods. Traffic calming solutions like roundabouts should be secondary to actually fixing or replacing the currently damaged roads. [Name redacted]</p>	<p>No action on current draft plan required.</p>
Public, email	<p>Herewith are my initial comments upon reviewing the transportation plan: a. Extending Grandview east to Meridian (and beyond) would be great. Anything that detours around B-ham is a marked improvement. b. Installation of broadband is long overdue. Unfortunately, the satellite comms I have at the house do not support anything high speed (zoom, podcasts, etc) c. Maritime access out of Cherry Point would be extremely helpful for north, west and south destinations in that reliance on fossil fuels are diminishing and consequently the need to plan for re-use of port facilities. d. Enhancing Slater Road to four lanes, and above flood stage, would definitely ease the burden of traffic having to go through Main Street in Ferndale.</p>	<p>Interest in capacity expansion is a lower relative priority in WCOG's plan. Other issues – decreased travel time, broadband – are more aligned with current draft. Staff follow-up will state that and also provide information on entities more directly involved in specific project ideas discussed. No action on current draft plan required.</p>
Public, email	<p>Hello, I would like to see the Centennial Trail (runs roughly parallel to Hwy 9 through Snohomish County) continued up through Whatcom county to meet up with the Bay to Baker trail. I think it would help to revitalize communities along Hwy 9 as well as provide excellent recreational opportunities for folks all over Whatcom county, as well and as connecting us with Skagit county who would hopefully get on board with building their section. I look forward to seeing more work done on the Bay to Baker trail and other non motorized trails throughout the county. Thanks</p>	<p>Staff response will note how these topics and ideas are discussed in the plan and provide information about the entities who would evaluate and potentially sponsor such projects. No action on current draft plan required.</p>
Public, email	<p>Hi, I live in Birch Bay where approximately 40% of the population is over 50 years of age. I am in in 70's and I have a partner with Dementia who no longer drives. This resort area continues to attract the retirement age population. Please explain how your Transportation Plan will benefit Birch Bay and the senior population as far as transportation goes. Thank You.</p>	<p>Staff follow-up will note regional emphasis on accessibility and HSTP. No action on current draft plan required.</p>

Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



whatcom council of governments

Public, email	<p>Not a lot of info on line, and the maps won't open due to "insecure" warning. However my comment: Public Transportation is needed in the Maple Falls / Glacier area. I know you all think this is only vacation homes, but it's not: We are residents many of whom have families, and quite a number of us are older and cannot, or will soon be unable to, drive. *We Need Bus Service To This Area* *We Pay For Public Transportation In Our Property Taxes* *But we have No Public Transportation* I figure the Highway is beyond your control as it's a state highway. But: we need bus service to Maple Falls and Glacier Thank you, [Name redacted]</p>	<p>Staff follow-up will note plan's emphasis on access and connectivity and provide information on WTA's long-range plan. No action on current draft plan required.</p>
Public, email	<p>A bike lane from Bellingham to Sudden Valley would be a worthwhile and heavily used addition to our transportation infrastructure. Thanks. [Name redacted]</p>	<p>Staff feedback will note alignment with all-types-of-transportation goals and related strategies and provide info on entities who would sponsor such projects. No action on current draft plan required.</p>
Public, mail	<p>Bellingham is a very green-thinking community. I hope you're taking that into consideration as you grow with the city.</p>	<p>No action on current draft plan required.</p>
Public, email	<p>Thanks for reaching out. I'm feeling like I don't have the time to wade through the whole plan, but I did see ROADS listed first and that raises alarm bells for me. Maybe this is outside the scope of what WCOG is able to do with this report (and if so, at what scope can the following be tackled? Who actually takes responsibility?), but it seems like we need something more like a paradigm shift - away from cars, and certainly fossil fuels, and focusing on other ways to move around. Ways of movement that more strongly acknowledge that our current system is quite unsustainable, and we need systems that acknowledge limits and the needs of non-human beings and systems. It probably also means CUTTING BACK on movement, although perhaps not if we can find ways of moving that exist within the bounds of what's really sustainable and healthy for the systems we live within. Without big changes and a real reckoning with limits, I have little confidence in the future of our transportation system. Apologies if this is all covered in the report already. And thank you for your time, [Name redacted]</p>	<p>Staff feedback will note alignment with plan goals and strategies.</p>
Open House #1. May 26.	<p>Two members of the public connected to the open house. Both listened to staff overviews for several minutes but did not have questions or comments.</p>	<p>None</p>

Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



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<p>Open House #2. May 27</p>	<p>Three members of the public attended the open house. All three had comments and questions which staff discussed with them and provided additional information and emailed links, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendee 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerned about traffic patterns at Mt. Baker Hwy & Sunset Dr. Wanted to know if any plans to improve that area? ○ Surprised by the amount of traffic in the King Mountain area. • Attendee 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lives on West Horton & Cordata. County road near his property is “an old oil and gravel road” and needs improvement. ○ Likes new sidewalks and roundabouts. • Attendee 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The plan felt linear. Overly based on historical time series data. Feels the plan should consider possibilities for bigger or faster changes than currently forecasted e.g., faster transition to non-fossil fuels, rapid migration, rapid population growth, new technologies, etc. ○ If we improve the regional transportation system, this will also cause people to move here because of the quality of the system (seemed neutral as to whether this was positive or negative). ○ Requested that the plan include a “wild-ass” speculative future scenario. ○ Complemented the plan’s discussion of the role of technology. ○ Felt that, for the general public, an introduction to the plan should include answers to questions like: How to use this document. What questions does this answer? E.g., If you’re starting a business, how would you use this plan to evaluate locations? 	<p>1: Provided contact information for City of Bellingham.</p> <p>2: Provided contact information for Whatcom County.</p> <p>3: Discussed observations. Explained that population and employment forecasting methods are synchronized with local jurisdictions under GMA. WCOG staff will consider useful introductory guidance for the <i>Way to Go, Whatcom</i> website.</p>
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Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



whatcom council of governments

<p>Public, email</p>	<p>Thanks for sending this. I have a few questions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On the "measures" page (https://waytogowhatcom.org/measures/), I see that there's no breakdown between "build" and "no build" 2045 models for daily walking and bicycle trips. It would be interesting to see what the 2045 models look like if we build all of the planned bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Is it possible to see those models? 2. It looks like there's not much difference in the "build" vs. "no build" 2045 projection for daily transit trips. Why is that? Is the thinking that in a "no build" scenario we'd see more people using the current lines? 3. I'd love to see us be more aggressive building out bike, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure in our region. As cities and the county consider the next ~20 years it would be interesting to see what we could do that would be ambitious. So, what would it take to double our current daily trips by bike, ped, and transit? And what would the cost calculations look like to do that? Maybe these calculations could help cities and the county plan for levies and raising other revenue over the next two decades. 4. On the "forecasts" page (https://waytogowhatcom.org/forecasts/), what would the density models look like if the cities changed their policies to allow for more density? For example, what would density look like if the state were to implement the "missing middle" bill that proposed to add density near transit? My understanding is that that bill would allow for increased density near WTA GO Lines. What would such policy changes do to the 2045 projections for walk, bike, and transit trips? <p>I'd suspect that changing policy regarding density around transit would lead to more walk, bike, and transit trips. Maybe a study like this can help make the case for changes in land use policy to help us reach our climate goals. Adding in some projections could help elected officials, city, and county staff to see the trade offs in land use/ density policy.</p> <p>Let's set big goals and be ambitious!</p> <p>Thanks for the work that you do.</p>	<p>Feedbacks indicates likely value of expanding the discussion of the "build" and "no-build" model output and how that can be interpreted at different scales (e.g., regional vs. individual road segments) and with regard to specific types of transportation (roads/ vehicles, transit, pedestrian, bike, etc.).</p> <p>Possibility of expanded discussion that would not change the documented model output in the current draft plan document.</p>
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Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



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<p>Public / Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee (PRCAC)</p>	<p>Dear Director Conroy, I am writing on behalf of the Point Roberts community to convey our utmost dismay and disappointment at the near-total omission of Point Roberts from the Whatcom Region’s 2045 Regional / Metropolitan Transportation Plan, Way to Go, Whatcom.</p> <p>As you are no doubt aware, Point Roberts is a unique part of Whatcom County, only accessible from the mainland United States over land by crossing 2 border checkpoints, or by tenuous sea and air links. As such, the Point Roberts community faces unique transportation challenges in the best of times, and even more so during times of crisis such as the recent and ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The transportation needs of the Point Roberts community fall into 3 broad categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Better land-based connectivity: For much of 2020-22, land transportation between Point Roberts and both (a) the mainland US, and (b) Canada was highly restricted due to pandemic-related border regulations, with consequent severe impacts to the local economy as well as to the daily lives and well-being of Point Roberts residents and property owners. While we understand the difficulties in tackling cross-border transportation issues, it is precisely these difficulties that make it imperative that the regional transportation plan find ways to address these challenges. The community is grateful for the special accommodations that now allow habitual Point Roberts residents to transit through Canada to/from the mainland US and also allow access to essential services in neighboring communities in Canada, and would like to make sure these accommodations remain available in the future. The community would also like to see the restoration of previous WTA offerings such as the “Community Van Program” and/or “Zone Service” that used to provide vital connectivity between Point Roberts with the rest of Whatcom County but have since been discontinued. Better marine and air connectivity: Point Roberts has a marina as well as an airfield, both under private ownership. An emergency passenger ferry between Bellingham and Point Roberts commissioned by the Port of Bellingham served as an important lifeline when land transit to the mainland was restricted during the pandemic but has since been discontinued upon the relaxation of border restrictions. The marina is facing economic hardship due to ongoing pandemic impacts and is in need of significant repairs. The grass airfield continued to operate during the pandemic, but service is limited to once-a-week by one air carrier, and subject to weather and ground conditions. Improvements to both marine and air connectivity, including the potential for significant infrastructure upgrades via public ownership through an agency such as the Port of Bellingham, could provide a substantial boost to the local economy and increase the resiliency of Point Roberts to future crises. The Point Roberts community would like these needs to be considered as part of the regional transportation plan. 	<p>Email response sent. Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB) members were copied on the original email. PARCAC urged to attend June 8 WTPB meeting for public comment.</p> <p>Staff sees potential for plan-documentation of a strategy to work with regional representatives of Canadian federal agencies and their U.S. counterparts to explore options for some cross-border travel protocols during emergency conditions (i.e. pandemic response) that could mitigate unintended or unnecessary tradeoffs with basic mobility needs.</p>
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Compilation of Public Feedback

(As of June 7, 2022)

Appendix to *Way to Go, Whatcom*



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<p>(PRCAC) <i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p>3. Local improvements: Winter-time flooding of roads and property is an increasingly frequent issue for Point Roberts, and improved maintenance of drainage along county (as well as private) roads to mitigate flooding is the subject of ongoing discussion between the community and Whatcom PWD and other departments, but lack of funding is a major obstacle to timely action. Provision of bike lanes and/or pedestrian shoulders along major roadways, as well establishment of a golf-cart zone are other priorities for the Point Roberts community.</p> <p>As you are also no doubt aware, Point Roberts contributes significantly to the Whatcom County Transportation Benefits District (TBD) via collection of the Border Area Fuel Tax. With the passage of state transportation legislation doubling this tax from 1 cent/gallon to 2 cents/gallon, this revenue can be expected to increase substantially going forward. It is therefore a bitter irony for the community that, despite our many critical transportation needs, mention of this TBD is the only reference to Point Roberts in the Way to Go, Whatcom plan. We seek your advice on how best to engage to incorporate the needs of the Point Roberts community into the Whatcom Region's long-range transportation plans and we trust it is not too late to do so.</p> <p>Sincerely, Prakash Sundaresan, Member-at-large, Point Roberts Community Advisory Committee (PRCAC)</p>	
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