

Chapter Six Transportation

~~"Transportation planners and cardiologists face similar problems. Both are concerned about uninterrupted flow from the smaller collectors and through the major arterials to the destination. When blockages occur, the cardiologist does by-pass surgery (building a new arterial) or angioplastic surgery (widening of existing arterials). The onset of arteriosclerosis is hastened by a diet rich in cholesterol. The cholesterol of our transportation system is the single occupant vehicle (SOV), the proliferation of which leads to "arterial SOVosis" (i.e. the clogging and blockage of arterials by our transportation diet predominant with the single occupant vehicle (SOV))."~~

~~Bob Hughes
GTAG~~

Reason for change: Omitted for brevity and because limiting SOV vehicular trips is only one aspect of the chapter

Introduction

Purpose

Whatcom County plans and maintains the County-owned portion of the region's transportation system. This chapter sets goals and priorities for Whatcom County's transportation facilities over the next 20 years. It inventories current facilities, projects future needs, and guides the planning and implementation of projects and programs to meet those needs. Its overall purpose is to ensure that Whatcom County's transportation system continues to allow for the movement of people and goods throughout the county in a way that is safe, efficient, environmentally responsible, accessible to all users, and cost effective.

~~The Growth Management Act provides for a systematic approach for estimating and planning for future transportation needs based on an analysis of existing conditions and a projection of future conditions. The purpose of this approach is to provide transportation facilities that meet the service standards desired and adequately serve the demand produced by the growth in land use in future years.~~

Process

~~This chapter was created in several steps. A consultant, JHK & Associates, was retained by the county to assist in preparation of the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan. The first step was an assessment of existing traffic conditions and transportation services. The next step was a transportation plan built on forecasts of future land use, traffic patterns, and funding. It describes the level of service Whatcom County intends to maintain. The preferred road network alternative described in the transportation plan supports the goals and policies included in this chapter.~~

1 ~~Public participation has been instrumental in identifying the priorities of county~~
2 ~~residents. To help develop the transportation plan, Whatcom County established a~~
3 ~~community-based planning effort including a Citizens' Transportation Advisory~~
4 ~~Committee (CTAC). The CTAC met regularly throughout the development of the~~
5 ~~plan and this chapter, and was active in formulating these documents' visions,~~
6 ~~improvement alternatives, goals and policies. The CTAC was instrumental in~~
7 ~~prioritizing the transportation needs in the county based on the cost-effectiveness~~
8 ~~and the projected benefits of the improvements. In the process, the CTAC drew on~~
9 ~~the expertise of the Technical Transportation Advisory Committee under the~~
10 ~~Whatcom County Council of Governments, a group of technical experts from~~
11 ~~throughout Whatcom County representing different agencies and jurisdictions.~~

12
13 Reason for change: Edited for brevity and to remove outdated material.

14
15 ~~**GMA Goals, County-Wide Planning Policies, and Visioning Community Value**~~
16 ~~**Statements**~~

17
18 ~~By being designed to accommodate an urban concentration land use model for~~
19 ~~Whatcom County, this chapter addresses the GMA goals of encouraging~~
20 ~~development in urban areas where adequate facilities are provided and of reducing~~
21 ~~sprawl. The GMA goal encouraging efficient multi-modal transportation systems~~
22 ~~that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city~~
23 ~~comprehensive plans is addressed through goals and policies in this chapter,~~
24 ~~through coordination with the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, and~~
25 ~~through urban growth area planning. (See Chapter 2: Land Use for other aspects~~
26 ~~of UGA planning.) Many other GMA goals are incidentally supported throughout this~~
27 ~~chapter.~~

28
29 This chapter supports County-Wide Planning Policies by encouraging alternative
30 modes of transportation through goals, policies, and actions. It includes policies on
31 demand management strategies and considers inter-county and international
32 transportation links.

33
34 ~~The Whatcom County: The Next Generations Visioning Community Value~~
35 ~~Statements are also supported by concentrating growth in urban areas and~~
36 ~~providing for an adequate system to support agriculture and economic~~
37 ~~development. The chapter recognizes the geographic differences among various~~
38 ~~parts of the county identified in Visioning features. This chapter emphasizes~~
39 ~~increasing the capacity of existing roads, encourages more public transit and bicycle~~
40 ~~facilities, prioritizes safety measures and makes provision for intermodal~~
41 ~~connections. Transportation improvement plans are within the county's financing~~
42 ~~capability.~~

43
44 **GMA Requirements**

45
46 The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires county comprehensive plans to
47 contain "a transportation element that implements, and is consistent with the land

1 use element.” This chapter, together with the Capital Facilities Plan in Appendix E,
2 provides that transportation element, incorporating the sub-elements also required
3 by GMA, including inventory of facilities; level of service standards for highways,
4 locally owned arterials and transit routes; estimated traffic impacts to state-owned
5 transportation facilities; land use assumptions; financing; intergovernmental
6 coordination efforts; demand-management strategies; and a pedestrian and bicycle
7 component. (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a))
8

9 The GMA also has a concurrency provision that requires counties to “adopt and
10 enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes
11 the level of service on a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the
12 standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless
13 transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of
14 development are made concurrent with the development.” (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(b))
15 Whatcom County’s concurrency management program is codified in Whatcom
16 County Code Chapter 20.78, based on levels of service established in below in
17 Policy 6A-1.
18

19 ~~The Growth Management Act requires jurisdictions to adopt a transportation~~
20 ~~element which includes land use assumptions, estimated traffic impacts to state-~~
21 ~~owned transportation facilities, a facilities and services inventory, level of service~~
22 ~~standards for arterials and transit routes, actions to bring services below level of~~
23 ~~service standards into compliance, forecasts of traffic for ten years consistent with~~
24 ~~the land use plan, identification of system expansion needs and a management~~
25 ~~system to meet the needs. It also requires a financing analysis of funding~~
26 ~~capability, a multi-year financing plan and alternatives in case funding falls short.~~
27 ~~Demand management strategies are to be created.~~
28

29 ~~This comprehensive plan addresses the above requirements through this chapter,~~
30 ~~the six-year transportation improvement program, the *Whatcom County*~~
31 ~~*Transportation Plan* (including the *Whatcom County Transportation Plan Existing*~~
32 ~~*Conditions Report*), incorporated herein by reference, and *Chapter 4: Capital*~~
33 ~~*Facilities*. Land use assumptions used for transportation planning, inventories, level~~
34 ~~of service standards, traffic projections and alternative system expansion needs are~~
35 ~~quantified in the *Whatcom County Transportation Plan*. Financing analysis and~~
36 ~~multi-year financing plans are in the six-year transportation improvement program.~~
37

38 ~~Goals, policies and actions, level of service standards, actions to take in case~~
39 ~~funding falls short, demand management strategies and specific recommended~~
40 ~~improvements are included in this chapter.~~
41

42 ~~GMA requires adequate transportation facilities to be provided concurrent with~~
43 ~~development. In the goals and policies of this chapter, Whatcom County~~
44 ~~establishes the acceptable levels of service (LOS) for county-owned transportation~~
45 ~~facilities. Per GMA, any development that would cause the level of service on a~~
46 ~~county facility to fall below the adopted LOS must be denied, unless improvements~~
47 ~~that accommodate the impacts of the development — or other strategies that~~

1 ~~accommodate the growth, such as increased transit service --- are made concurrent~~
2 ~~with the development.~~

3 Reason for change: Edited for brevity and to remove outdated material

4 5 **Inventory**¹

6
7 Map 6-1 shows the existing countywide transportation system. Whatcom County
8 owns and maintains 943 miles of public roads. The county uses the federal function
9 classification system to classify those roads; 3 percent of county roads are classified
10 as arterials, 18 percent are major collectors, 17 percent are minor collectors, while
11 62 percent are local access roads (see Table 6-1). About 23 miles of county roads
12 include bike lanes or are designated as bike routes. There are 217 miles of state
13 highways; 119 miles are highways of statewide significance and 98 miles are
14 highways of regional significance.

15
16 The Port of Bellingham owns and operates three seaport facilities within the city of
17 Bellingham, (Bellingham Shipping Terminal, Squalicum Harbor, and Bellingham
18 Cruise Terminal) and one in the city of Blaine (Blaine Harbor). The Bellingham
19 Cruise Terminal acts as the southern terminus of the Alaska state ferry system and
20 host to private cruise vendors. Adjacent to the Port's Bellingham Cruise Terminal is
21 the Port's Fairhaven Transportation Station, Whatcom County's only passenger rail
22 station and a terminal for the private Greyhound bus line. Whatcom County owns
23 and operates a vehicle and passenger ferry on the 0.9-mile run between
24 Gooseberry Point and Lummi Island, and the City of Blaine owns a passenger-only
25 ferry between Blaine Harbor and the Semiahmoo resort within the Blaine city limits.
26 There are no Washington State-owned ferry facilities in Whatcom County. Three
27 privately-owned shipping terminals serve major industries in the Cherry Point Major
28 Port Industrial UGA and small privately-owned recreational marinas exist in several
29 rural communities, including Point Roberts, Sandy Point, and Sudden Valley, as well
30 as Birch Bay Village, which is part of the Birch Bay UGA.

31
32 The Port of Bellingham owns and operates Bellingham International Airport in the
33 unincorporated UGA of Bellingham. The City of Lynden owns and operates the
34 Lynden Municipal Airport located inside the Lynden city limits. Privately owned and
35 operated airports exist in Point Roberts (Point Roberts Airpark) and on Lake
36 Whatcom (Floathaven SPB).

37
38 The Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway owns a north-south rail line that runs
39 through Bellingham, Ferndale, and Blaine, and a parallel line that runs through
40 Acme, Deming, Nooksack, and Sumas. Both lines are used to transport freight, and
41 have industrial spurs that serve industries in the Cherry Point Urban Growth Area,
42 and Lynden, respectively. The line through Bellingham also accommodates
43 passenger service, the Amtrak Cascades between Seattle and Vancouver, BC.

¹ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(A) Transportation element must include "An inventory of air, water, and ground transportation facilities and services..."

1 Whatcom Transit Authority operates the public transit system in Whatcom County,
2 including fixed-route and dial-a-ride service. The system serves all seven of
3 Whatcom County's incorporated cities, the County's non-city UGA's, Birch Bay and
4 Columbia Valley, and rural areas in between. The transit system includes transit
5 stations in Bellingham, Ferndale, and Lynden, three of which include park and ride
6 lots.

8 **Goals and Policies Background Summary**

9
10 ~~Traffic volume on roads in Whatcom County varies widely from less than a hundred~~
11 ~~vehicles per day to as many as 55,000 per day on I-5 (2000 Annual Traffic Report,~~
12 ~~Washington State Department of Transportation). Whatcom County facilities are~~
13 ~~less impacted by the issue of road congestion than they are by the issue of road~~
14 ~~condition. However, there are several county roads where congestion is also a~~
15 ~~problem. Congestion and inadequate road conditions both contribute to traffic~~
16 ~~accidents, which represent a significant (if mostly hidden) cost to the traveling~~
17 ~~public and potential tort liability to Whatcom County.~~

18
19 ~~Some of Whatcom County's traffic problems may be attributable to the increasing~~
20 ~~volume on roads which were designed and built for rural traffic. There are also~~
21 ~~several areas of development that have created unusual amounts and patterns of~~
22 ~~traffic. Some of these are the Casino on the Lummi Reservation, Bellis Fair Mall,~~
23 ~~and the Mount Baker Recreation Area. Canadian border auto crossings decreased,~~
24 ~~while truck border crossings increased significantly in the 1990's. **Map 14** indicates~~
25 ~~traffic volumes on county and state roads.~~

26
27 ~~For the most part, land use and associated traffic volumes dictate the type of~~
28 ~~roadway to be provided. That traffic includes a variety of users. Along with cars~~
29 ~~and trucks, Whatcom County roads serve transit vehicles, school buses, farm~~
30 ~~vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. While these users currently represent only~~
31 ~~about ten percent of the total, their numbers are increasing. For them to share the~~
32 ~~road safely with other traffic they need facilities like paved shoulders and bus~~
33 ~~turnouts.~~

34
35 ~~Roads are only part of the transportation network. Whatcom County provides ferry~~
36 ~~service between Lummi Island and Gooseberry Point--the only public transportation~~
37 ~~link between the island and the mainland. It carries about 400,000 passengers per~~
38 ~~year. The Port of Bellingham operates the Bellingham Cruise Terminal, which~~
39 ~~serves the Alaska Marine Highway System ferries and commercial cruise ship lines.~~
40 ~~Other non-road transportation facilities within Whatcom County include off-street~~
41 ~~bikeways, harbor facilities, three airports, and two north-south freight rail lines.~~
42 ~~Passenger rail service, that was discontinued in 1981, resumed operation in 1995.~~
43 ~~Beginning in 1999 two Amtrak trains per day began visiting Whatcom County. One~~
44 ~~stops in Bellingham, then continues to Vancouver, BC. The other stops in~~
45 ~~Bellingham but continues no farther due to freight rail congestion that is caused by~~
46 ~~Canadian rail lines in the Vancouver BC area. It is recognized that with greater~~
47 ~~service, ridership would increase significantly. The state's twenty-year goal is to~~

1 ~~increase Whatcom County/cross-border passenger rail service. The two rail tracks~~
2 ~~in Whatcom County are both owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway~~
3 ~~(BNSF). The BNSF main line is along the shoreline through Bellingham and~~
4 ~~proceeds up the I-5 corridor. The second line, referred to by BNSF as their~~
5 ~~secondary main line, is aligned generally along State Route 9 and crosses the~~
6 ~~Canadian Border at Sumas. The secondary main line is used infrequently, but does~~
7 ~~offer certain options and advantages. Transfer points, where people or goods~~
8 ~~transfer from one mode of transportation to another, are vital linkages in the~~
9 ~~transportation system. In Whatcom County transfer points include air, rail, bus,~~
10 ~~and ferry terminals, plus a freight terminal near the US-Canadian border at Sumas~~
11 ~~where cargo is transferred between truck and rail modes, and several shipping~~
12 ~~terminals where cargo is moved among rail cars, barges, and ships. **Map 15**~~
13 ~~indicates the location of intermodal sites in Whatcom County.~~

14
15 Reason for change: Edited for brevity and to provide a more complete inventory.

16
17 **Level of Service – Motor Vehicles**

18
19 GMA requires counties to adopt level of service (LOS) standards for arterials. For
20 purposes of concurrency management, Whatcom County adopts level of service
21 (LOS) standards for motor vehicle travel on county-owned arterials and major
22 collectors², per GMA requirements (see Policy 6A-1 and Map 6-2). Levels of service
23 for other facilities, which are used for planning purposes but not for concurrency
24 management, are established in subsequent policies. The Whatcom Council of
25 Governments sets LOS standards for state highways of regional significance (SR 11,
26 542, 544, 547, and 548). WSDOT, in consultation with local governments, sets LOS
27 standards for highways of statewide significance (I-5, SR 9, SR 20, SR 539, SR
28 543, and SR 546). Level of service standards for state-owned facilities are included
29 in this plan to help the state monitor the performance of the system, to evaluate
30 improvement strategies, and to facilitate coordination between the county's or city's
31 six-year street, road, or transit program and the department of transportation's
32 ten-year investment program.³ Whatcom County does not use LOS standards on
33 state-owned facilities for concurrency evaluation purposes.

34
35 For roadway segments (between but not including intersections) level of service is
36 expressed as letters A-F, which correspond to the ratio of volume to capacity for a
37 segment (see Table 6-1). That ratio is determined by dividing the projected
38 weekday afternoon peak hour traffic volume of a roadway segment by the
39 calculated per-hour capacity of that segment. Adopted LOS for all County and

² Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(B) Must include "Level of service standards for all locally owned arterials and transit routes..." Major collectors are also included because only 3% of County roads are classified as arterials per the federal functional classification system, and most roads classified as major collectors are important links, functioning like arterials.

³ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(C) Must include "Level of service standards for highways..."

1 State-owned facilities are shown on Map 6-3. Whatcom County's concurrency
2 management system is established in Whatcom County Code Chapter 20.78, and is
3 based on roadway segment volume to capacity ratios.

4
5 For intersections, the LOS is determined by the time delay (seconds per vehicle) of
6 the stopped approach vehicle, per the current Highway Capacity Manual (see Table
7 6.2). Congestion at intersections due to capacity and delay issues are identified and
8 mitigated through the SEPA process. Intersection LOS is not used for concurrency
9 evaluation purposes.

10
11 **Table 6-1 County Roadway Volume/Capacity Range by LOS Designation**

<u>LOS Designation</u>	<u>V/C Range</u>
<u>A</u>	<u>0-0.59</u>
<u>B</u>	<u>0.60-0.69</u>
<u>C</u>	<u>0.70-0.79</u>
<u>D</u>	<u>0.80-0.89</u>
<u>E</u>	<u>0.90-0.99</u>
<u>F</u>	<u>>1.00</u>

12
13
14 **Level of Service – Other Modes**

15
16 GMA also requires counties to include a level of service for transit routes in the
17 transportation element.⁴ Whatcom Transit Authority, the only public transit agency
18 in the County, establishes its levels of service in its Strategic Plan document; this
19 chapter references those adopted standards. For modes of transportation other
20 than motor vehicles and transit, Whatcom County does not establish levels of
21 service based on volumes, but instead focuses on the quality of service through
22 planning and design (see Goals 6D and 6E below).

23
24 Ferry service to Lummi Island does not comprise an arterial or transit route;
25 therefore it is not subject to concurrency under GMA. It is, however, the only point
26 of access for Lummi Island. For the purposes of future infrastructure planning, a
27 LOS standard based on an estimate of the available passenger trips per capita
28 Lummi Island population is established in Policy 6A-2. (See Lummi Island Ferry LOS
29 methodology in Appendix J).

30
31 **Issues, Goals, and Policies**

32
33 Whatcom County's transportation system is a network of structures--highways,
34 arterial streets, rural roads, rail, marine, airport, bikeways, ferries, and many other
35 facilities. At the same time, the transportation system is a link among land use
36 patterns, population growth, economic opportunities, energy consumption,
37 environmental stress, and other facets of Whatcom County growth. The Growth
38 Management Act requires the county to plan for the future of both network and

⁴ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(B)

1 ~~linkage aspects of the transportation system.~~

2
3 ~~To be sure of providing adequate facilities, Whatcom County must prepare to meet~~
4 ~~future demand. Population projections, land use plans, and traffic patterns suggest~~
5 ~~that the county will need to upgrade or expand some of its facilities, in addition to~~
6 ~~maintaining the current network. Since funding is limited, Whatcom County must~~
7 ~~prioritize the improvements it would like to make. The criteria for those choices~~
8 ~~include traffic congestion; safety; mobility; use by transit, bicycles, and~~
9 ~~pedestrians; and access to modes of transport such as airplanes, railways, and~~
10 ~~ferries. Additionally, the impact to endangered species, along with mitigation costs~~
11 ~~and delays associated with gaining approval for transportation projects that affect~~
12 ~~such species, must be considered.~~

13
14 ~~To manage transportation systems, including their economic, social and~~
15 ~~environmental impacts, Whatcom County must be aware of the ways transportation~~
16 ~~influences--and is influenced by--other aspects of growth. Identifying the~~
17 ~~relationships allows the county to dovetail its plans for the various aspects so all the~~
18 ~~plans work toward compatible goals.~~

19
20 **Overall County Transportation**

21
22 ~~Over the next two decades Whatcom County will be shaping its transportation~~
23 ~~network with several fundamental goals in mind. The system must be cost-~~
24 ~~effective; it must be compatible with subarea, county and regional plans; it must be~~
25 ~~properly maintained and upgraded; it must provide access for transit and non-~~
26 ~~motorized travel; and it must offer acceptable levels of service and safety.~~

27
28 ~~The LOS standards adopted for county-owned transportation facilities in Policy 6A-3~~
29 ~~are measures of traffic congestion on arterial and collector roadway segments,~~
30 ~~expressed as a ratio of estimated volume in weekday afternoon peak hours to~~
31 ~~roadway capacity. Levels of service range from completely unrestricted flow of~~
32 ~~traffic (LOS A) to stop-and-go traffic jams (LOS F). At LOS C or better the road~~
33 ~~segment is less than or equal to 80% full (or a volume-to-capacity ratio of less than~~
34 ~~or equal to 0.80). The flow of traffic is generally stable, though individual users are~~
35 ~~significantly affected by the presence of other vehicles. At LOS D the volume-to-~~
36 ~~capacity ratio is greater than 0.80 but less than or equal to 0.9. At LOS D small~~
37 ~~increases in flow may cause some delays and decreases in speed during the~~
38 ~~afternoon peak hour.~~

39
40 ~~The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has adopted levels~~
41 ~~of service for highways of statewide significance and the Regional Transportation~~
42 ~~Planning Organization, in consultation with WSDOT, has adopted levels of service~~
43 ~~for other state highways. For state highways in Whatcom County the standards are~~
44 ~~LOS D in urban areas and LOS C in rural areas. Similar to the LOS adopted on~~
45 ~~state highways, Whatcom County generally adopts for its roadways a LOS D in~~
46 ~~urban areas and LOS C in rural areas, though for some of the rural roads that~~
47 ~~function as primary routes connecting major activity centers (as designated in the~~

1 regional Whatcom Transportation Plan), the county adopts a LOS D to reflect higher
2 peak-hour volumes.
3

4 Reason for change: Edited for brevity and to remove outdated material.

5
6 **Goal 6A:** Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and
7 goods by establishing and maintaining standard levels of
8 service for motor vehicle traffic volumes compared to
9 roadway capacity.

10
11 ~~Policy 6A-1: Make safety and mobility the primary considerations in ranking~~
12 ~~transportation improvements.~~

13
14 ~~Policy 6A-2: Use the transportation planning process to identify~~
15 ~~transportation system needs throughout the county in order to~~
16 ~~provide adequate transportation facilities and services to meet~~
17 ~~current and future travel needs; identify and protect specific~~
18 ~~transportation corridors and alignments where transportation~~
19 ~~facilities including auto, commercial, bicycle, transit and rail are~~
20 ~~needed.~~

21
22 Policy 6A-31: Establish the following levels of service (LOS) for purposes of
23 maintaining transportation concurrency:

- 24
- 25 • ~~The Level of Service (LOS) standard for county arterials and~~
26 ~~major collectors located outside of urban growth areas A~~
27 ~~volume-to-capacity ratio less than 0.75 during weekday~~
28 ~~p.m.-peak hours is C or better, except for specified primary~~
29 ~~routes as shown on Map 6-2, which shall have a LOS of D or~~
30 ~~better for county arterials and collectors located outside of~~
31 ~~urban growth areas, except for specified primary routes as~~
32 ~~shown on Map 14A, which shall have a volume-to-capacity~~
33 ~~ratio less than or equal to 0.90 (LOS D).~~
 - 34
35 • ~~The LOS standard for county arterials and major collectors~~
36 ~~within urban growth areas not associated with cities during~~
37 ~~weekday p.m. peak hours is D or better. A volume-to-capacity~~
38 ~~ratio less than or equal to 0.90 (LOS D or better) during~~
39 ~~weekday p.m. peak hours for county arterials and collectors~~
40 ~~within urban growth areas not associated with cities, which~~
41 ~~may be reduced for concurrency evaluation purposes in~~
42 ~~accordance with Policy 6A-4.~~
 - 43
44 • ~~The LOS standard for county arterials and major collectors~~
45 ~~within city urban growth areas weekday during p.m. peak~~
46 ~~hours is D or better. A volume-to-capacity ratio less than or~~
47 ~~equal to 0.9 during weekday p.m. peak hours (equivalent to~~

1 ~~LOS-D) for county arterials and collectors within city urban~~
2 ~~growth areas~~, which may be reduced for concurrency
3 evaluation purposes in accordance with Policy 6A-4.

- 4
5 • Coordinate with Whatcom Transit Authority to ensure
6 adequate transit service, in accordance with the level of
7 service standards established in its current strategic plan in
8 urban areas.

9
10 Policy 6A-2: Establish the following levels of service for county facilities other
11 than arterials, major collectors, and transit routes (facilities not
12 subject to concurrency requirements):

- 13
14 • The Level of Service (LOS) standard for county collectors
15 located outside of urban growth areas during weekday p.m.
16 peak is C or better.
17
18 • The LOS for county collectors within urban growth areas not
19 associated with cities during weekday p.m. peak hours is D
20 or better.
21
22 • The LOS for county collectors within city urban growth areas
23 during weekday p.m. peak hours is D or better.
24
25 • The LOS for all county intersections is LOS D.
26
27 • 513 ferry passenger trips annually per capita Lummi Island
28 population.

29
30 Policy 6A-3: List the following level of service standards for state highways⁵,
31 as established by WSDOT and WCOG:

- 32
33 • The LOS for state highways in urban growth areas is D or
34 better.
35
36 • The LOS for state highways in rural areas is C or better.
37

38 Policy 6A-4: For proposed developments in ~~designated~~ urban growth areas,
39 increase the volume-to-capacity ratio standard for impacted
40 transportation facilities by 0.05 if at least one of the following
41 amenities ~~is~~ existing or is committed to being provided as part
42 of the development:

- 43
44 • Transit service and stop within one quarter mile walking
45 distance accessible from the development using non-

⁵ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(C)

1 motorized facilities that meet or are functionally equivalent
2 to Whatcom County Road Standards.

- 3
4 • Non-motorized facilities that meet or are functionally
5 equivalent to Whatcom County Road Standards along the
6 impacted facility.
7

8 Policy 6A-5: Encourage extension of city concurrency review authority and
9 LOS standards into their respective UGAs to provide for greater
10 consistency in concurrency review for urban areas.

11
12 Policy 6A-6: Identify and mitigate safety and other impacts to transportation
13 facilities caused by development during SEPA review, using
14 standards adopted for intersections and other minimum
15 standards established by WCC Development Standards.
16

17 ~~Policy 6A-7: Consider implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems~~
18 ~~(ITS) technology to increase safety, reduce traffic congestion,~~
19 ~~decrease delays, expedite commercial vehicle travel, and~~
20 ~~provide appropriate traveler information.~~
21

22 Reason for change: Edited for clarity and to more completely address GMA LOS
23 requirements - and to use A-F reference system for LOS.
24

25 Policy 6A-7 moved to Policy 6J-7.
26

27 **Current and Projected Levels of Service**

28
29 Map 6-4 shows the 2013 daily motor vehicle traffic volumes in Whatcom County.
30 Map 6-5 shows the 2013 volume-to-capacity data for County-owned arterials,
31 based on the traffic volumes in Map 6-4 (adjusted to represent afternoon peak hour
32 volume) and 2013 data on hourly roadway capacity for each road segment. When
33 compared with the level of service standards adopted in Policy 6A and shown on
34 Map 6-2, it is evident that there was only one road segment where roadway
35 capacities were deficient in 2013 (where current volume-to-capacity ratios exceed
36 the adopted level of service standards for those county-owned arterials): Lakeway
37 Drive between the Bellingham City limits and Lowe Avenue.
38

39 WCOG has developed a motorized travel demand model and has projected future
40 travel demands based on assumptions of planned development patterns established
41 in Chapter Two Land Use.⁶ Comparing the projected demand for peak hour trips
42 with the hourly vehicular carrying capacity of County roadways shows how well the
43 roadways are predicted to function (predicted level of service) in future years.

⁶ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(i) Must include "Land use assumptions used in estimating travel"

1 Map 6-6 shows projected daily traffic⁷ on County-owned arterials and state
2 highways⁸ in 2036, based on the WCOG model, and Map 6-7 shows projected
3 volume-to-capacity ratios for that year. For the roadways classified as arterials, the
4 GMA requires the County to prohibit development approval – or assure needed
5 improvements concurrent with development -- if the development causes the level
6 of service to fall below adopted standards.⁹
7

8 Map 6-7 highlights segments where the projected ratio exceeds the adopted levels
9 of service established under Policy 6A-1 above. The segments where County-owned
10 roadways classified as arterials fall below the adopted LOS standards in 2036 are
11 Hannegan Road between Van Wyck Road and Kelly Road (1.01 mile), and Lakeway
12 Drive between the Bellingham city limits and Terrace Avenue (0.63 mile).
13

15 Reason for change: Section added to address GMA's requirements to include
16 forecasts and LOS. Information on deficiencies were added after EIS model run.
17 These segments are included in the Capital Facilities Plan (Appendix E) to program
18 improvements to correct these deficiencies.

19 Planning and Design of Transportation Improvements

20 This chapter providesThe Capital Facilities Plan (Appendix E) includes a list of
21 improvement projects planned for implementation over the next 20 years—(see
22 Table 6-3 and Map 6-8). This list was developed in response to safety and capacity
23 needs identified by Public Works and through various citizen planning efforts such
24 as the Whatcom County Pedestrian Bicycle Plan and the Birch Bay Community Plan.
25 This list would also include any projects (on County-and state¹⁰-owned facilities)
26 needed to bring into compliance any facilities that are currently below the
27 established level of service standard, or are projected to fall below those standards
28 within the 20-year planning period.
29

30
31
32 Each year the County adopts a six-year Transportation Improvement Program,
33 which selects projects from the list of planned projects and assigns funding
34 amounts to them, programming their construction over the next six years. Due to
35 limited funding, not all the recommended projects can be programmed for
36 construction.
37

38 Accordingly, in deciding how best to use its finite resources, the County must
39 prioritize among many competing items, including new projects as well as
40 preservation, operation and maintenance of existing facilities. Improvements that

⁷ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iii)(E) "Forecasts of traffic for at least 10 years"

⁸ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(ii) "Estimated traffic impacts to state-owned transportation facilities"

⁹ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(b) Concurrency requirement

¹⁰ RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(i)(F) "Identification of state and local system needs to meet current and future demands."

1 are needed to reduce the risk of personal injury and property damage must be the
2 County's top consideration. The next priority is preservation of current facilities,
3 which not only supports the first priority of safety (preventing possible hazards
4 from developing over time), but also addresses the need to maintain and operate
5 the transportation system in a cost-effective manner, minimizing the need for costly
6 reconstruction projects in the future.

7
8 The next priorities for implementation -- after safety and roadway preservation --
9 are projects aimed at increasing capacity and keeping facilities operating at
10 acceptable levels of service. Projects that address deficiencies on County-owned
11 arterials should be the highest priority in this category.

12
13 Reason for change: Section added to clarify priorities, and to better differentiate
14 between the 20-year list of planned projects and the six year transportation
15 improvement program.

16 **Financing**

17
18
19 ~~The Growth Management Act is very specific in its requirement that transportation~~
20 ~~improvements must be based on financial capability. Furthermore the Act requires~~
21 ~~that improvements must occur concurrent with developments. It is therefore very~~
22 ~~important to coordinate funding and land-use-driven transportation improvements.~~

23
24 ~~The majority of county transportation dollars are spent on upkeep and maintenance~~
25 ~~of the existing road system with a much smaller amount available for major~~
26 ~~improvements and even less for actual capacity improvements. Potential additional~~
27 ~~revenue sources include a greater share of gas tax revenues and impact and/or~~
28 ~~mitigation fees. Gas tax revenues can only be imposed through a vote of the~~
29 ~~people. Impact and/or mitigation fees are enforced through a county ordinance~~
30 ~~and are intended to pay for improvements required as result of additional traffic~~
31 ~~generated by development.~~

32
33 ~~GMA authorizes counties to impose impact fees that fund a proportionate share of~~
34 ~~transportation system improvements made necessary by planned growth.~~
35 ~~Whatcom County has identified future system improvements eligible for impact fee~~
36 ~~funding and has enacted a transportation impact fee system to fund a portion of~~
37 ~~those projects that are reasonably related to and reasonably benefit the planned~~
38 ~~growth.~~

39
40 Reason for change: Finance section moved to later in the chapter to better follow
41 sequence of transportation facility planning from conceptual policy to
42 implementation.

43
44 **Goal 6B: Create a cost-effective transportation system that optimizes**
45 **public investment prioritizes safety, roadway preservation, and**
46 **concurrency.**

1 Policy 6B-1: ~~Funding—Programming~~ of transportation programs and
2 improvements should prioritize upgrading of unsafe and/or
3 structurally deficient facilities and preservation and maintenance
4 of the existing transportation system ~~and upgrading of unsafe~~
5 ~~and/or structurally deficient facilities~~ over new capital
6 improvements. Exception to this policy should be allowed when
7 a cost/benefit analysis indicates that the public interest is better
8 served by new capital expenditures over rehabilitation
9 preservation of existing infrastructure, or when capacity-
10 increasing improvements are necessary to correct level of
11 service deficiencies on County-owned roads to meet GMA
12 concurrency requirements.

14 Policy 6B-2: ~~Develop—Utilize~~ a fair and equitable formula to assess
15 development for transportation improvements, including but not
16 limited to transit, pedestrian facilities, bikeways and roadways
17 that are considered reasonably necessary as a direct result of
18 proposed developments in Whatcom County.

~~20 Policy 6B-3: Consider incorporating the impact of additional traffic on~~
~~21 existing substandard roads as part of defining level of service~~
~~22 for county roads, in order to better define and prioritize~~
~~23 transportation improvements and assess new development for~~
~~24 its share of impact on existing roads.~~

~~26 Policy 6B-4: Adopt a prioritized bicycle capital facilities improvement plan.~~

~~28 Policy 6B-5: Identify and pursue funding sources for the proposed projects~~
~~29 and improvements contained in the Whatcom County~~
~~30 Comprehensive Plan and the six-year transportation~~
~~31 improvement program.~~

~~33 Policy 6B-6 Utilize impact fees to fund a proportionate share of the costs of~~
~~34 transportation system improvements that benefit and are~~
~~35 reasonably related to new development.~~

37 Reason for change: Impact fee policy revised and moved to Policy 6K-3.

~~39 Policy 6B-7: Identify and pursue funding sources for activities and~~
~~40 improvements which encourage the use of transportation modes~~
~~41 other than the single-occupant vehicle.~~

43 Policy 6B-7 moved to Policy 6K-1.

~~45 Policy 6B-8: Use the financial resources available for transportation~~
~~46 improvements to support a program of capital facilities needed~~
~~47 for a multi-modal transportation system. The priority ranking~~

~~system should balance the overall system and individual improvement needs.~~

~~Policy 6B-9: Consider and address any major fluctuations between expected revenues and needed improvement costs during the annual review process of the comprehensive plan. Such resolution could result in a reassessment of land use allocation, level of service standards and/or revenue availability.~~

Policy 6B-9 moved to Policy 6K-2.

~~Policy 6B-10: Implement a methodology for public-private partnerships when it would result in a more efficient use of public resources.~~

~~Policy 6B-11: Explore the possibility of encouraging cooperative funding for bicycle trails.~~

Reason for change: Edited for brevity: omitted policies are moved, redundant or outdated.

~~Local~~ Arterial and Collector Improvements

~~The Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee and Technical Transportation Advisory Committee worked out a list of criteria for judging the effectiveness of a transportation network. The elements include uncongested traffic flow; sound engineering and construction; safety; mobility; facilities for public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians; access to air, rail, and other forms of transportation; and cost effectiveness. Whatcom County's program of local arterial improvements has to address all these aspects.~~

~~Whatcom County's program of arterial and collector improvements addresses the following elements: uncongested traffic flow; sound engineering and construction; safety; mobility; facilities for public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians; access to air, rail, and other forms of transportation; and cost effectiveness.~~

GOAL ~~6H6C~~-: Ensure an efficient regional system of arterials **and collectors** that is functional, safe, and consistent with regional priorities and city and county comprehensive plans.

Policy ~~6H-16C~~-1: For road classifications higher than local access roads, Develop access control plans which may include joint driveways, ~~for road classifications higher than local access roads~~ and require new developments to minimize the number of access points ~~to road classifications higher than neighborhood collector roads.~~

- 1 | Policy ~~6H-26C-2~~: Where new arterials or collectors are necessary, such routes
2 | should follow topographic or land use patterns which
3 | minimize disruption to residential neighborhoods and the
4 | environment.
5 |
- 6 | Policy ~~6H-56C-3~~: Identify a regional system of all-weather roads and develop
7 | emergency maintenance plans for adverse weather conditions.
8 |
- 9 | Policy ~~6H-66C-4~~: ~~Work towards making all~~ Maximize the amount of county-
10 | designated arterials and rural major collectors that are all-weather
11 | roads.
12 |
- 13 | Policy 6C-5: Provide for commercial vehicle access from I-5 to major
14 | commercial and industrial land uses via all-weather roads that
15 | have adequate turning radii and signage.
16 |
- 17 | Policy ~~6H-76C-6~~: Set ~~proper~~ appropriate speed limits based on collision data,
18 | speed studies, road geometry, and vehicle types.
19 |
- 20 | Policy ~~6H-86C-7~~: Minimize delay at intersections by timely provision of
21 | warranted traffic controls and other improvements.
22 |
- 23 | Policy 6C-7: Study ways to improve east-west connectivity for commercial
24 | and passenger vehicle traffic between Interstate 5 and areas to
25 | the east.
26 |

27 | Reason for change: Policy on east-west mobility revised and moved from Goal 6J.

28 | **Coordination with Land Use**

29 |

30 |

31 | The way land is developed affects the need for transportation facilities; conversely,
32 | the availability of transportation can influence development. This two-way
33 | relationship needs to be taken into account in both land-use and transportation
34 | planning. The Growth Management Act requires Whatcom County to link the two
35 | processes.
36 |

37 | **Goal 6D: Support land use planning efforts in Whatcom County**
38 | **which include land use types and densities that reduce**
39 | **reliance on single-occupant vehicles.**
40 |

41 | Policy 6D-1: Allow densities and mixed uses in ~~land-use planning~~ urban areas
42 | to reduce the number and length of vehicle trips, increase
43 | opportunity to use public transportation, and encourage
44 | pedestrian and bicycle trips.
45 |

- 1 Policy 6D-2: Discourage transportation improvements that would trigger
2 development that is premature or not consistent with applicable
3 comprehensive plans, policies, or zoning.
4
- 5 Policy 6D-3: Support continual education of the public regarding the
6 relationship between transportation and land use issues and
7 ways to reduce traffic congestion.
8
- 9 Policy 6D-4: Direct transportation planners to evaluate positive and negative
10 impacts to the productivity of resource based industries when
11 planning transportation corridors. Transportation improvements
12 in areas designated "Resource Lands" should be constructed to
13 facilitate the operations of those affected areas and industries.
14
- 15 Policy 6D-5: Ensure that new developments provide safe and efficient
16 infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists.
17
- 18 Policy 6D-6: Encourage new housing developments to be located in urban
19 growth areas to help provide a sense of community and safe,
20 non-motorized transportation to community facilities and public
21 transit nodes.
22

23 **Multimodal Approach**

24
25 Whatcom County's transportation facilities must accommodate a variety of
26 transportation modes including automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, buses,
27 emergency vehicles, commercial vehicles, and agricultural equipment. In the
28 planning, design, and construction of these facilities, the County must balance the
29 needs of all users in all modes, and make the improvements appropriate to the
30 context of the area.

31
32 **GOAL 6E Balance the needs of all users of all modes of**
33 **transportation when planning and designing**
34 **transportation facilities.**

35
36 Policy 6E-1: Adopt and use design standards that follow current best
37 practices for balancing the needs of all modes of transportation,
38 including motorized modes (automobile, commercial trucks,
39 agricultural equipment, emergency vehicles, buses, airplanes,
40 boats, trains, and ferries) and non-motorized modes (bicyclists
41 of all ages and skill levels, and pedestrians with or without
42 disabilities). While not all modes can be accommodated fully in
43 all areas, the County will work to achieve the best balance
44 possible, given the context of the area and budgetary
45 constraints.
46

1 Policy 6E-2: Use multimodal design in all new transportation facility
2 improvement projects as well as roadway preservation and
3 maintenance projects, unless physically or financially
4 impracticable. An example would be employing new striping
5 designs following resurfacing to better accommodate all modes.

6
7 Policy 6E-3: Multimodal design and implementation of that design shall
8 consider the appropriate context established by land uses in the
9 area. Urban pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks are
10 appropriate in portions of urban growth areas and areas of more
11 intensive rural development, but not in rural areas, where wide
12 shoulders can suffice.

13
14 Reason for change: New section added to emphasize multimodal approach,
15 combining existing policy principles with concepts from the WC Pedestrian-Bicycle
16 Plan.

17
18 **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

19
20 A system of facilities for non-motorized travel enhances community access and
21 promotes healthy lifestyles. These facilities can be adjacent to roadways or
22 separated from them.

23
24 Level of service for pedestrians and bicyclists involves different characteristics than
25 capacity and speed. Design should maximize the quality of the service rather than
26 quantifiable measures of usage. Walkways serve pedestrians well when they
27 provide a safe and convenient route. Bicyclists may be well served by a low speed
28 and traffic shared roadway lane in an urban location but may benefit from a wide
29 shoulder on a rural higher speed road.

30
31 Reason for change: New section added to incorporate concepts from the WC
32 Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan.

33
34 **GOAL 6F: Develop a system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities that**
35 **encourages enhanced community access and promotes**
36 **healthy lifestyles.¹¹**

37
38 Policy 6F-1: Planning and design shall emphasize connectivity to the greatest
39 extent possible, creating regional networks of bicycle and
40 pedestrian facilities. Regional networks include both an on-road
41 bicycle facility and walkway network and a regional multi-use
42 path network. These networks should be interconnected; for
43 example, walkways connect seamlessly with pedestrian paths
44 and bike lanes connect to shared-roadway bike routes. The

¹¹ Goal required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(vii); subsequent policies are based on policies from the Whatcom County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, approved by Resolution # 2011-003.

1 networks should also be coordinated with public transportation
2 hubs and activity centers to enable multi-modal trips of longer
3 distances.

4
5 Policy 6F-2: Provide safe pedestrian facilities in all new construction and
6 reconstruction transportation projects where there is the
7 potential for significant use, unless physically or financially
8 impracticable. An example of such a location would be in a
9 traffic corridor within one mile of a school or community center
10 that links residents to such facilities. Traditional
11 curb/gutter/sidewalk designs may not always be the ideal
12 approach for projects since they require large impervious
13 surfaces and may detract from the rural atmosphere. Other
14 separated walkway designs should be considered that provide a
15 physical barrier from motorized traffic.

16
17 Policy 6F-3: An effective bicycle and pedestrian system for Whatcom County
18 will require facilities for both regional connectivity and local
19 access. Regional connectivity can be defined as transportation
20 routes connecting major activity centers, towns, and cities
21 within the region. A good example of a regional facility would be
22 the proposed Nooksack Loop Trail or the existing bike route
23 along Hannegan Road.

24
25 Policy 6F-4: Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle projects based on the following
26 criteria:

- 27
- 28 • safety improvements are needed
- 29
- 30 • serves a residential or relatively high density rural or
- 31 urban population area
- 32
- 33 • serves a location frequently traveled by seniors, children,
- 34 or people with disabilities
- 35
- 36 • leads to a school or is part of a school route
- 37
- 38 • provides access to a recreational facility or park
- 39
- 40 • functions as a key network link for the regional non-
- 41 motorized network
- 42
- 43 • offers economic development potential for an under-
- 44 served area
- 45
- 46 • ease of implementation due to low cost, public ownership,
- 47 or other feature

1 Policy 6F-5: Give priority to construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
2 on streets within and between urban growth areas and rural
3 communities where practical, and give priority to walkways
4 along roadways within a one-mile radius of schools.

5
6 Policy 6F-6: For commercial and residential developments within urban
7 growth areas and rural communities, developers shall fund on-
8 street walkways, paths, and other pedestrian accommodations,
9 along with internal walkways or paths for on-site circulation that
10 are necessary to provide pedestrian access from public streets
11 to building entrances and within and between buildings.

12
13 Policy 6F-7: In cases where environmental factors would limit or prohibit the
14 construction of a uniform facility for the entire length of a
15 roadway segment, a modified facility may be provided for a
16 portion of the segment as an interim solution.

17 18 **Intergovernmental Coordination and Implementation**

19
20 Transportation planning is done in a regional context, involving many agencies and
21 jurisdictions at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. The Whatcom Council of
22 Governments (WCOG), the region's Regional Transportation Planning Organization,
23 publishes the Whatcom Transportation Plan. That plan is a combined Metropolitan
24 and Regional Plan required by federal and state law, and was most recently adopted
25 by the WCOG Whatcom Transportation Policy Board in 2012. It is a multimodal plan
26 setting general policies and establishing a regional Transportation Improvement
27 Program, while referencing the transportation plans of local jurisdictions. The seven
28 incorporated cities of Whatcom County, as well as the Lummi Nation, each have
29 transportation elements in their comprehensive plans. The Washington State
30 Department of Transportation (WSDOT) owns, plans, and maintains state highways.
31 The Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA) and Port of Bellingham are also public
32 entities that adopt plans influencing transportation in the region. Whatcom County
33 council members are part of the WCOG's Whatcom Transportation Policy Board and
34 the WTA Board of Directors. The Whatcom County Health Department is also a
35 participant in transportation planning, as transportation issues affect the health and
36 safety of the community.

37
38 ~~Responsibility for planning and providing transportation facilities in Whatcom~~
39 ~~County is spread among a variety of governments and agencies. Consider a few~~
40 ~~examples: the federal government is in charge of the facilities at the Canadian~~
41 ~~border; state highways are the responsibility of Washington State; the Port of~~
42 ~~Bellingham manages air, shipping and the Alaska ferry connection; and Whatcom~~
43 ~~County and its cities operate local roads, ferries, and bikeways. These and many~~
44 ~~other pieces have to be integrated. In addition, transportation facilities which cross~~
45 ~~Whatcom County's boundaries must mesh with the facilities of neighboring counties~~
46 ~~and Canada.~~

~~Cooperation among jurisdictions is necessary in transportation planning. The Growth Management Act reflects this need; it calls for a regional transportation plan, and all the local jurisdictions' plans must be consistent with it. Working collaboratively can also lead to more effective use of the available funding. "Collaboration" with users to reduce traffic congestion--by getting more people to use alternative modes of transportation--is a useful strategy as well.~~

Goal ~~6C-6G~~: ~~Coordinate with international, federal, state, regional (including Skagit and Okanogan Counties), and local transportation laws, policies, and plans that relate to the Whatcom County Transportation Plan-A Combined Metropolitan and Regional Plan, in order to be consistent and compatible with regional priorities~~other governmental agencies in planning the County's transportation system.

Policy ~~6C-16G-1~~: Support the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) to coordinate transportation planning that affects Whatcom County.

Policy ~~6C-66G-2~~: Participate in the Whatcom Council of Governments (W~~C~~COG) Transportation Technical Advisory ~~Committee-Group~~ as a mechanism to coordinate with the cities of Whatcom County, the Whatcom Transportation Authority, as well as other jurisdictions.

~~Policy 6C-7: Work with the Whatcom Council of Governments to develop effective, ongoing mechanisms for city and county public works engineers and planners to coordinate with transit and bicycle planning.~~

~~Policy 6C-8: Coordinate county efforts with state activities toward compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.~~

Policy ~~6C-96G-3~~: Consistent with county land use planning, coordinate identification of new arterial routes with adjacent city jurisdictions.

Policy ~~6C-16G-4~~: In cooperation with the Whatcom Council of Governments, identify a regional transportation network that includes state highways as well as County-owned routes.

Policy ~~6C-106G-5~~: Coordinate with WSDOT for access management on all state highways in the county, to minimize the number of access points and maximize public safety and highway capacity. ~~Develop a policy and agreement with the Washington State Department of Transportation to implement a locally~~

~~managed improvement program for state highways based on local impacts.~~

Policy 6G-6: Coordinate with the Whatcom County Health Department regarding transportation's role in promoting safe and healthy communities.

Policy 6G-7: Support state and federal agencies that regulate rail safety, in order to maximize safety of people and property along railroad corridors.

Policy 6G-8: Coordinate with the Port of Bellingham to facilitate convenient access to ports, airports, and other intermodal freight facilities.

Reason for change: Current Plan lacks policy on rail safety. Staff proposes this policy to support rail safety and clarify regulatory jurisdiction.

~~Policy 6C-11: Identify areas and mechanisms for potentially collaborative projects so that multiple jurisdictions can share costs and efficiencies.~~

Environment and Energy

~~The transportation network is a benefit to the community, but it can have unwanted side effects. Vehicles on the roads are noisy, and they contribute to air pollution and contaminated water run-off. They also use up irreplaceable fossil fuel. Road construction can damage fragile wildlife habitats or intrude on scenic views. These effects can be mitigated through careful siting and design. Even more fundamentally, the effects can be minimized by reducing the amount of travel on the roads. Such "demand management" can include expanded public transit, ride-sharing, bicycling, and telecommuting, to reduce the number of trips people make in single-occupant vehicles.~~

Reason for change: New section below combines environmental-related policies that are currently in separate places in the chapter – Goals 6E and 6T.

Environmental Practices

Transportation facilities can potentially create adverse environmental impacts. Effective design and construction practices can reduce or eliminate impacts on wildlife, water quality, and nearby residents.

~~**Goal 6E: Provide a transportation system that minimizes environmental and social impacts, reduces reliance on fossil fuels.**~~

- 1 | **Goal ~~6T~~6H:** ~~Construction and operation of t~~Transportation systems,
2 | ~~including roads,~~ should avoid adverse **environmental**
3 | ~~impacts, including impacts to habitat of threatened and~~
4 | ~~endangered fish and wildlife, water quality, and to~~
5 | ~~adjacent residential areas, species, and restore such~~
6 | ~~habitat when possible. For County transportation~~
7 | ~~projects, the County Council will determine when such~~
8 | ~~restoration is financially feasible through adoption of the~~
9 | ~~six-year transportation improvement program, the annual~~
10 | ~~road construction program and the County budget.~~
- 11 |
- 12 | **Policy ~~6T-16H-1:~~** Maintain and restore fish passage when constructing new
13 | transportation systems. Where existing transportation systems
14 | have fragmented habitat, such as where culverts prevent fish
15 | from migrating upstream, strive to restore fish passage at every
16 | opportunity. For County transportation projects, the County
17 | Council will determine when such restoration is financially
18 | feasible through adoption of the six-year transportation
19 | improvement program, the annual road construction program
20 | and the County budget.
- 21 |
- 22 | **Policy ~~6T-26H-2:~~** When constructing new transportation systems, ensure that
23 | stormwater generated by the transportation system is treated
24 | prior to discharge to waterways used by salmonid fish
25 | populations or which flow directly into such waterways. Provide
26 | for regular, systematic maintenance of transportation system
27 | related stormwater control and treatment facilities.
- 28 |
- 29 | **Policy ~~6T-36H-3:~~** Avoid or mitigate future wetland impacts from transportation
30 | system construction and maintenance.
- 31 |
- 32 | **Policy ~~6T-46H-4:~~** When constructing new or maintaining existing transportation
33 | systems, retain or restore native riparian vegetation along
34 | streams and rivers to the greatest extent possible.
- 35 |
- 36 | **Policy ~~6T-56H-5:~~** Avoid or mitigate future impacts to feeder bluffs, accretion
37 | shoreforms, driftways, eelgrass, kelp beds and other elements
38 | of marine shoreline habitat when constructing or maintaining
39 | transportation systems.
- 40 |
- 41 | **Policy ~~6T-66H-6:~~** Allow natural stream processes to continue by minimizing bank
42 | hardening and streambed disturbances to the greatest extent
43 | possible, while meeting transportation objectives.
- 44 |
- 45 | **Policy ~~6T-76H-7:~~** Implement best management practices for erosion control to
46 | prevent sedimentation during transportation system

1 construction or maintenance. Maintain such erosion control
2 devices until no longer necessary to protect water quality.

3
4 | Policy ~~6E-16H-8~~: Promote designs to preserve mature trees, unique wildlife
5 habitats, water quality and other elements of the natural
6 environment, including environmentally sensitive areas and
7 shorelines, during the design and construction of road
8 improvement projects.

9
10 | Policy ~~6E-26H-9~~: Support the use of natural noise reduction techniques and visual
11 screens between high-volume transportation routes and other
12 facilities adjacent to residential uses, wherever possible.

13
14 | Policy ~~6E-36H-10~~: Minimize the amount of impervious surface whenever
15 practicable by using natural engineering design methods such as
16 the use of open, shallow, grassed street swales instead of curbs
17 and gutters and, where feasible, encouraging alternate surfacing
18 options.

19
20 | Policy ~~6E-46H-11~~: Engineer, construct, and maintain road improvements to control
21 pollutants affecting water quality and reduce run-off entering
22 surface or groundwater consistent with water quality standards.

23
24 Reason for change: The following new section combines policies related to both
25 congestion and emissions reduction, because measures typically address both
26 topics simultaneously.

27
28 **Congestion and Emissions Reduction**

29
30 **Goal 6J: Reduce the need for costly capacity-increasing roadway**
31 **construction projects, and minimize emissions from**
32 **combustion of fossil fuels, through the use of motor**
33 **vehicle travel demand reduction programs, transit, and**
34 **intelligent transportation technology.**

35
36 ~~**Goal 6F: Promote energy conservation by implementing demand**~~
37 ~~**management policies and encouraging the reduction of**~~
38 ~~**single-occupant vehicles on county roads and highways.**~~

39
40 | Policy ~~6F-16J-1~~: Develop programs that reduce single-occupant vehicle use and
41 vehicle traveled, minimizing trip length and reducing
42 travel during peak periods, in order to minimize fuel
43 consumption and the emission of greenhouse gases. These
44 programs include, but are not limited to, trip reduction
45 programs in coordination with major employers and other
46 jurisdictions.

- 1 | Policy ~~6K-46J-2~~: Support a regional public transit system that connects with
2 | various modes of transportation including auto, bicycle, and
3 | pedestrian travel and with the intercity bus, rail, ferries and
4 | airline facilities.
5 |
- 6 | Policy ~~6N-56J-3~~: Coordinate with Whatcom Transportation Authority to establish
7 | rural transit service in unincorporated areas, including Rural
8 | Communities and Rural areas, consistent with county land use
9 | plans, based on cost effectiveness, location of major trip
10 | generators, distance between generators, and the needs of
11 | transit-dependent individuals.
12 |
- 13 | Policy ~~6N-86J-4~~: ~~In cooperation~~Coordinate with Whatcom Transportation
14 | Authority and Washington State Department of Transportation
15 | ~~to~~ provide park-and-ride lots along major corridors and provide
16 | necessary services to encourage their use.
17 |
- 18 | Policy ~~6K-36J-5~~: Support multi-modal use by encouraging, for example, provision
19 | of secure bicycle storage facilities at park-and-ride lots and
20 | other transit facilities, and allowing for the transporting of
21 | bicycles on public transit vehicles.
22 |
- 23 | Policy ~~6N-106J-6~~: Consider, where needed, bus pull-outs on street/road
24 | improvements.
25 |
- 26 | Policy ~~6A-76J-7~~: Consider implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems
27 | (ITS) technology to increase safety, reduce traffic congestion,
28 | decrease delays, expedite commercial vehicle travel, and
29 | provide appropriate traveler information.
30 |

31 | ~~Policy 6J-8: Explore enhanced bus service to Sudden Valley to reduce traffic~~
32 | ~~in the Lake Whatcom watershed.~~
33 |

34 | Reason for change: Policy about enhanced bus service to Sudden Valley was moved
35 | from Policy 2BB-19 in Chapter 2 Land Use.

Funding of Transportation Improvements

36 |
37 |
38 |
39 | GMA requires an analysis of funding capability¹² to judge needs against probable
40 | funding resources, and a multi-year financing plan¹³ based on the needs identified
41 | in the plan. The Capital Facilities Plan, Appendix E of this plan contains the funding
42 | analysis and the current 20-year list of transportation projects. The CFP also
43 | contains the six-year Transportation Improvement Program, which is updated
44 | annually, and programs funding for specific projects over the next six years.

¹² Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(A)

¹³ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(B)

1 In addition, GMA authorizes counties to impose impact fees that fund a
2 proportionate share of transportation system improvements made necessary by
3 planned growth. In the event that Whatcom County enacts a transportation impact
4 fee system, it would need to identify future system improvements eligible for
5 impact fee funding (projects that are reasonably related to and reasonably benefit
6 the planned growth).

7
8 **Goal 6K: Provide for adequate funding to keep Whatcom County's**
9 **transportation facilities in good condition and current in**
10 **terms of capacity.**

11
12 Policy ~~6B-76K-1~~: Identify and pursue funding sources for activities and
13 improvements which encourage the use of transportation modes
14 other than the single-occupant vehicle.

15
16 Policy ~~6B-96K-2~~: In the event expected revenues and available funding fall short
17 of the amount needed to meet identified needs¹⁴ the County
18 shall work to resolve the shortfall. ~~Consider and address any~~
19 ~~major fluctuations between expected revenues and needed~~
20 ~~improvement costs~~ during the annual review of the
21 comprehensive plan. Such resolution could result in a
22 reassessment and revision of land use plans and regulations
23 (including uses and densities) of land use allocation, level of
24 service standards ~~and/or revenue availability.~~ or revenue
25 sources (through revised impact or mitigation fees, or additional
26 grant funding).

27
28 Policy ~~6B-66K-3~~ Utilize ~~Consider establishing~~ impact fees to fund a proportionate
29 share of the costs of transportation system improvements that
30 benefit and are reasonably related to new development.

31
32 Reason for change: The following omitted policies are moved (as noted), redundant
33 or outdated.

34
35 **State Highway Improvements**

36
37 ~~A number of state highways cross Whatcom County, forming an important part of~~
38 ~~the transportation network for county residents. Although state highways are not~~
39 ~~Whatcom County's direct responsibility, the county can be a voice for its citizens'~~
40 ~~interests with regard to those highways, working cooperatively with the Whatcom~~
41 ~~Council of Governments and the Washington State Department of Transportation.~~

42
43 ~~**Goal 6G: Ensure an efficient regional system of state highways**~~
44 ~~**that is functional and safe, and is consistent with regional**~~
45 ~~**priorities and city and county comprehensive plans.**~~

¹⁴ Required by RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)(iv)(C)

1 ~~Policy 6G-1: In cooperation with the Whatcom Council of Governments,~~
2 ~~identify a regional transportation network.~~

3
4 ~~Policy 6G-2: Recommend access management classifications for all the state~~
5 ~~highways in the county in order to minimize the number of~~
6 ~~access points and maximize public safety and highway capacity.~~

7
8 ~~Policy 6G-3: In cooperation with the Washington State Department of~~
9 ~~Transportation and other jurisdictions, adopt access~~
10 ~~management classes and designations for state highways.~~

11
12 ~~Policy 6G-4: In cooperation with the Washington State Department of~~
13 ~~Transportation, investigate the feasibility of frontage roads~~
14 ~~along the Guide Meridian (SR 539) and other facilities, where~~
15 ~~appropriate, to consolidate and minimize necessary access~~
16 ~~points as development proposals are made.~~

17
18 Reason for change: Coordination with WCOG and state agencies is addressed under
19 Goal 6G. Policy 6G-1 moved to Policy G-4.

20
21 ~~Goal 6H: Ensure an efficient regional system of arterials that is~~
22 ~~functional, safe, and consistent with regional priorities~~
23 ~~and city and county comprehensive plans.~~

24
25 ~~Policy 6H-1: Develop access control plans, which may include joint~~
26 ~~driveways, for classifications higher than neighborhood collector~~
27 ~~roads; and require new developments to minimize the number~~
28 ~~of access points to road classifications higher than neighborhood~~
29 ~~collector roads.~~

30
31 Policy 6H-1 revised and moved to Policy 6C-1.

32
33 ~~Policy 6H-2: Where new arterials or collectors are necessary, such routes~~
34 ~~should follow topographic or land use patterns which minimize~~
35 ~~disruption to residential neighborhoods and the environment.~~

36
37 Policy 6H-2 moved to Policy 6C-2.

38
39 ~~Policy 6H-3: Support the use of shared access roads from commercial and~~
40 ~~residential developments to limit intersections with arterials.~~

41
42 ~~Policy 6H-4: Review design and maintenance standards for arterials for~~
43 ~~consistency between jurisdictions and develop continuity where~~
44 ~~appropriate.~~

1 ~~Policy 6H-5: Identify a regional system of all-weather roads and develop~~
2 ~~emergency maintenance plans for adverse weather conditions.~~

3
4 Moved to Policy 6C-3.

5
6 ~~Policy 6H-6: Work towards making all county-designated arterials all-weather~~
7 ~~roads.~~

8
9 Revised and moved to Policy 6C-4.

10
11 ~~Policy 6H-7: Set proper speed limits.~~

12
13 Revised and moved to Policy 6C-5.

14
15 ~~Policy 6H-8: Minimize delay at all intersections by timely provision of~~
16 ~~warranted traffic controls and other improvements.~~

17
18 Moved to Policy 6C-6.

19
20 **East/West Mobility**

21
22 ~~The rectangular shape of Whatcom County, the Nooksack River and Interstate-5~~
23 ~~create a problem with access between the eastern and western parts of the county.~~
24 ~~Suggestions for correcting this problem are expensive including such options as~~
25 ~~freeway interchanges and overpasses and major bridge crossings.~~

26
27 ~~Goal 6J: Improve mobility between the eastern and western~~
28 ~~regions of Whatcom County.~~

29
30 ~~Policy 6J-1: Prioritize for improvements the east/west routes that have been~~
31 ~~identified in the preferred alternative for improvements and~~
32 ~~weatherization.~~

33
34 ~~Policy 6J-2: Support the possibility of transit and/or other alternative modes~~
35 ~~for east/west mobility.~~

36
37 East-west mobility now addressed in Policy 6C-7.

38
39 **Non-Motorized and Public Transportation Improvements**

40
41 ~~Whatcom County's transportation network serves other users besides automobiles~~
42 ~~and trucks. Railways, public transit, carpools, bicycles, and pedestrians place lower~~
43 ~~demands on the transportation system, so encouraging these kinds of uses--~~
44 ~~"demand management"--can reduce the need for new or expanded facilities.~~
45 ~~Demand management can also help minimize transportation's negative side effects.~~

1 ~~The Growth Management Act requires Whatcom County to include demand~~
2 ~~management strategies in its comprehensive plan.~~

3
4 ~~**Goal 6K: Support the development and use of new technologies**~~
5 ~~**(e.g., fiber optics, other communication improvements)**~~
6 ~~**and approaches to planning in Whatcom County, so as to**~~
7 ~~**minimize the reliance on vehicular travel.**~~

8
9 ~~Policy 6K-1: Monitor new technologies and approaches and incorporate~~
10 ~~changes into transportation planning efforts.~~

11
12 ~~Policy 6K-2: Incorporate alternatives to conventional petroleum-based~~
13 ~~technology systems into transportation planning.~~

14
15 ~~Policy 6K-3: Support multi-modal use by encouraging, for example, provision~~
16 ~~of secure bicycle storage facilities at park-and-ride lots and~~
17 ~~other transit facilities, and allowing for the transporting of~~
18 ~~bicycles on public transit vehicles.~~

19
20 ~~Policy 6K-3 moved to Policy 6J-5.~~

21
22 ~~Policy 6K-4: Support a regional public transit system with various modes of~~
23 ~~transportation including auto, bicycle, and pedestrian travel and~~
24 ~~with the intercity bus, rail, ferries and airline facilities.~~

25
26 ~~Policy 6K-4 moved to Policy 6J-2.~~

27
28 ~~**Goal 6L: Support commuter use and employer promotion of**~~
29 ~~**alternative modes of transportation (i.e., carpools,**~~
30 ~~**vanpools, transit, bicycles and pedestrian travel) where**~~
31 ~~**feasible and discourage reliance on the single-occupant**~~
32 ~~**vehicle.**~~

33
34 ~~Policy 6L-1: Facilitate the implementation of the Commute Trip Reduction~~
35 ~~Program.~~

36
37 ~~Policy 6L-2: Assess the need and feasibility for preferential treatment for~~
38 ~~transit vehicles, vanpools, and carpools to improve competitive~~
39 ~~transit time with the single-occupant vehicle.~~

40
41 ~~Policy 6L-3: Support educational efforts that emphasize non-motorized~~
42 ~~transportation alternatives.~~

43
44 ~~Policy 6L-4: Support passenger rail service.~~
45

Reason for change: Congestion reduction now addressed under Goal 6J. CTR addressed in Policy 6J-1.

~~**Goal 6M: Promote bicycle and pedestrian travel by systematically providing safe and convenient routes and facilities where feasible.**~~

~~Policy 6M-1: Encourage safe and efficient bikeways that link populated areas of the county with travel destinations.~~

~~Policy 6M-2: Recognize public safety, education and law enforcement as integral to the development of bicycle transportation opportunities in Whatcom County.~~

~~Policy 6M-3: Where practical, identify site-specific on-street/road improvements needed for bicycle/pedestrian facilities along arterials and provide for regular shoulder sweeping and other maintenance as needed.~~

~~Policy 6M-4: Identify needed rights-of-way for bicycles.~~

~~Policy 6M-5: Include internal pedestrian circulation systems as well as links to external systems in development projects.~~

~~Policy 6M-6: Develop a system of off-road trail networks for non-motorized transportation to link population centers, employment centers and recreation areas.~~

~~Policy 6M-7: Implement a policy of providing safe pedestrian and bicycle access on county roads that have significant pedestrian and bicycle traffic as these roads are reconstructed, preferably by adding separated facilities or alternately by providing 4 foot minimum shoulders. Specifically, safe pedestrian facilities should be provided within a one mile radius of community places such as schools, markets and libraries if there is residential or other development that would generate significant foot traffic within the one mile radius.~~

~~Policy 6M-8: Implement as a priority the goals, policies and recommendations of the latest Whatcom County Bicycle Plan.~~

Reason for change: Revised pedestrian and bicycle policies now under Goal 6F.

~~**Goal 6N: Support Whatcom Transportation Authority in providing high-quality, safe, convenient, accessible public transportation, where cost effective, for the public as an attractive alternative to single-occupant vehicles.**~~

1 ~~Policy 6N-1: Support public transit system design that encourages frequent~~
2 ~~and convenient access points, and that integrates various~~
3 ~~transportation modes into the transit services, such as bus~~
4 ~~systems, park-and-ride lots for cars and bicycles, and bus,~~
5 ~~railroad and airline terminal facilities.~~

6
7 ~~Policy 6N-2: Assist Whatcom Transportation Authority in developing~~
8 ~~transportation plans that meet the specific operational and~~
9 ~~personnel needs of individual employers.~~

10
11 ~~Policy 6N-3: Incorporate adopted plans and policies for non-motorized and~~
12 ~~public transportation in the permitting process for all~~
13 ~~development or land use proposals, including provisions for~~
14 ~~efficient access and mobility, and convenient links between~~
15 ~~pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities.~~

16
17 ~~Policy 6N-4: Participate in investigating the potential for expanding express~~
18 ~~bus service and other forms of high-capacity transit.~~

19
20 ~~Policy 6N-5: Coordinate with Whatcom Transportation Authority to establish~~
21 ~~rural transit service in unincorporated areas, including Rural~~
22 ~~Communities, consistent with county land use plans, based on~~
23 ~~cost effectiveness, location of major trip generators, distance~~
24 ~~between generators, and the needs of transit-dependent~~
25 ~~individuals.~~

26
27 Transit now addressed under Goal 6J.
28 Policy 6N-5 moved to Policy 6J-3.

29
30 ~~Policy 6N-6: Encourage Whatcom Transportation Authority to work with~~
31 ~~major employers to coordinate bus service with shift changes.~~

32
33 ~~Policy 6N-7: Establish development regulations which offer incentives for~~
34 ~~projects which are transit compatible, considering density of~~
35 ~~development, location relative to transit stops, design of project,~~
36 ~~and circulation to accommodate transit.~~

37
38 ~~Policy 6N-8: In cooperation with Whatcom Transportation Authority and~~
39 ~~Washington State Department of Transportation, provide park-~~
40 ~~and-ride lots along major corridors and provide necessary~~
41 ~~services to encourage their use.~~

42
43 Policy 6N-8 moved to Policy 6J-4.

44
45 ~~Policy 6N-9: Encourage provision of transit from the Canadian border to retail~~
46 ~~facilities in Whatcom County.~~

1 ~~Policy 6N-10: Consider, where needed, bus pull-outs on street/road~~
2 ~~improvements.~~

3
4 Policy 6N-10 moved to Policy 6J-6.

5
6 **Commercial Transportation**

7
8 Reason for change: Commercial transportation (Goals 6P, 6Q, and 6R below) are
9 addressed in a more general way in Policy 6E-1, calling for use of current best
10 practices for balancing the needs of all modes, including commercial vehicles.

11
12 ~~In addition to the commercial traffic that serves Whatcom County industries and~~
13 ~~residents themselves the county's transportation system carries heavy cross-border~~
14 ~~truck traffic between the United States and Canada. Freight vehicles' access to~~
15 ~~industrial and commercial areas, safety on roads shared with private vehicles,~~
16 ~~efficient long-distance movement of goods, and coordination of commercial~~
17 ~~transportation with rural land uses are all issues for Whatcom County. Trucks make~~
18 ~~up the bulk of the commercial traffic, but rail, air, and ship transportation are~~
19 ~~involved as well.~~

20
21 ~~Goal 6P: Provide for safe, efficient movement of commercial~~
22 ~~vehicles in Whatcom County.~~

23
24 ~~Policy 6P-1: Support and participate in studies to evaluate freight movement~~
25 ~~which supports economic development.~~

26
27 ~~Policy 6P-2: Consider proposals for an east/west rail freight corridor.~~

28
29 Policy 6P-2 is redundant because it only requires the County to "consider proposals
30 for" an east-west freight corridor. Nothing prevents the County from considering
31 such a proposal.

32
33 ~~Policy 6P-3: Develop and implement a program of incentives such as fast-~~
34 ~~track permitting for truck/rail transfer facilities when they~~
35 ~~contribute to achievement of other transportation goals in this~~
36 ~~chapter and it can be shown that negative impacts from the~~
37 ~~facilities can be mitigated.~~

38
39 ~~Policy 6P-4: Support commercial and industrial development adjacent to~~
40 ~~major transportation corridors, including I-5 and rail and air~~
41 ~~facilities within urban growth areas, as long as such facilities do~~
42 ~~not reduce safe, efficient movement of vehicles in Whatcom~~
43 ~~County.~~

44
45 ~~Policy 6P-5: To better facilitate dispersal of commercial truck traffic, support~~
46 ~~the Lynden border crossing to open 24 hours a day.~~

~~Goal 6Q: Support intermodal connections (i.e., truck/rail facilities) that promote use of air, water, and/or rail freight where feasible.~~

~~Policy 6Q-1: Encourage the location and design of intermodal facilities for efficient freight transfer and access to the state and interstate highway, rail and ferry systems.~~

~~Policy 6Q-2: Support convenient access to ports, airports, other intermodal freight facilities, and international border crossings to enhance freight mobility.~~

~~Policy 6Q-3: Incorporate needs for access to ports and other intermodal freight facilities into capital facilities planning.~~

~~Goal 6R: Emphasize the importance of economically competitive and high-quality inland transportation services; foster the preservation, development and full implementation of freight rail; and plan intermodal linkage for long-distance movement of goods.~~

~~Policy 6R-1: Support efficient movement and access of freight vehicles within and through the county.~~

~~Policy 6R-2: Support efficient movement of goods and people with regard to land use regulation and environmental and community impacts.~~

~~Policy 6R-3: Identify a recognized route system for trucks giving access to major commercial and industrial land uses which will minimize disruption of existing/projected rural land use patterns.~~

~~Policy 6R-4: Facilitate the movement of trucks between industrial/commercial areas and I-5 and through the county by providing all-weather roads, adequate turning radii and signage.~~

Agricultural Vehicles

~~Agriculture is one of the largest industries in Whatcom County. Agricultural vehicles need to use county roads, but slow-moving equipment can become a safety problem when it shares the road with other vehicles.~~

~~Goal 6S: Allow for safe movement of farm equipment on county roads where necessary, and reduce conflicts with other vehicles.~~

~~Policy 6S-1: Provide signage, where appropriate, warning of slow-moving agricultural equipment.~~

1 ~~Policy 6S-2: Provide for marked access points, wider shoulders and/or slow~~
2 ~~vehicle turnouts on routes where warranted to allow passenger~~
3 ~~vehicles to safely pass wide agricultural vehicles.~~

4
5 Reason for change: Agricultural vehicles (Goal 6S) are addressed in Policy 6E-1.

6
7 ~~Goal 6T: Transportation systems, including roads, should avoid~~
8 ~~adverse impacts to habitat of threatened and endangered~~
9 ~~fish and wildlife species, and restore such habitat when~~
10 ~~possible. For County transportation projects, the County~~
11 ~~Council will determine when such restoration is~~
12 ~~financially feasible through adoption of the six-year~~
13 ~~transportation improvement program, the annual road~~
14 ~~construction program and the County budget.~~

15
16 ~~Policy 6T-1: Maintain and restore fish passage when constructing new~~
17 ~~transportation systems. Where existing transportation systems~~
18 ~~have fragmented habitat, such as where culverts prevent fish~~
19 ~~from migrating upstream, strive to restore fish passage at every~~
20 ~~opportunity. For County transportation projects, the County~~
21 ~~Council will determine when such restoration is financially~~
22 ~~feasible through adoption of the six-year transportation~~
23 ~~improvement program, the annual road construction program~~
24 ~~and the County budget.~~

25
26 ~~Policy 6T-2: When constructing new transportation systems, ensure that~~
27 ~~stormwater generated by the transportation system is treated~~
28 ~~prior to discharge to waterways utilized by salmonid fish~~
29 ~~populations or which flow directly into such waterways. Provide~~
30 ~~for regular, systematic maintenance of transportation system~~
31 ~~related stormwater control and treatment facilities.~~

32
33 ~~Policy 6T-3: Avoid or mitigate future wetland impacts from transportation~~
34 ~~system construction and maintenance.~~

35
36 ~~Policy 6T-4: When constructing new or maintaining existing transportation~~
37 ~~systems, retain or restore native riparian vegetation along~~
38 ~~streams and rivers to the greatest extent possible.~~

39
40 ~~Policy 6T-5: Avoid or mitigate future impacts to feeder bluffs, accretion~~
41 ~~shoreforms, driftways, eelgrass, kelp beds and other elements~~
42 ~~of marine shoreline habitat when constructing or maintaining~~
43 ~~transportation systems.~~

44
45 ~~Policy 6T-6: Allow natural stream processes to continue by minimizing bank~~
46 ~~hardening and streambed disturbances to the greatest extent~~
47 ~~possible, while meeting transportation objectives.~~

1 ~~Policy 6T-7: Implement best management practices for erosion control to~~
2 ~~prevent sedimentation during transportation system~~
3 ~~construction or maintenance. Maintain such erosion control~~
4 ~~devices until no longer necessary to protect water quality.~~
5

6 Reason for change: All policies on adverse impacts to habitat (Goal 6T) have been
7 moved to Goal 6H Environmental Practices.

8
9 Reason for change: Action Plan below is proposed for deletion because items are
10 either completed, outdated, or addressed in policies or project lists in Chapter 6, as
11 noted below:

12
13 ~~Transportation Action Plan~~
14 ~~Capital Facilities Planning, Funding, and Impact Fees~~
15

- 16 ~~1. Adopt a twenty-year capital improvement plan and six-year transportation~~
17 ~~improvement plan consistent with the recommendations and priorities in the~~
18 ~~Whatcom County Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Plan. Make safety~~
19 ~~and mobility the primary considerations in ranking transportation~~
20 ~~improvements~~
21

22 [Done – see project list, six-year TIP and Goal 6B]

- 23
24 ~~2. Develop an annual program of review for maintenance and upgrade of county~~
25 ~~facilities providing access to commercial and industrial areas.~~
26
27 ~~3. Include bicycle facilities in the six-year capital improvement program (for~~
28 ~~trails that will be utilized by bikes) or the six-year transportation~~
29 ~~improvement program (for shoulder widening projects that will accommodate~~
30 ~~bikes).~~
31

32 [Done – nonmotorized transportation projects or components of projects are
33 included in the TIP]

- 34
35 ~~4. Maintain a system for level of service measurements which allows the county~~
36 ~~to assess the impact of growth-related additional vehicle trips on existing~~
37 ~~roads. Use this measurement in identifying needed improvements in capital~~
38 ~~facilities planning, and in establishing impact and/or mitigation fees, or in~~
39 ~~determining the desirability of the area to be serviced for additional growth.~~
40

41 [Done – PW Engineering]

- 42
43 ~~5. Emphasize maintenance of the existing transportation system, upgrading~~
44 ~~unsafe and/or structurally deficient facilities, east/west connections,~~
45 ~~provision of all-weather roads, and support of a multi-modal transportation~~
46 ~~system.~~

- 1 [Covered through various policies]
- 2
- 3 ~~6. Review levels of service and concurrency management practices as needed.~~
- 4
- 5 ~~7. Within 12 months of adoption of the plan by the County Council, develop an~~
- 6 ~~impact and/or mitigation fee ordinance based on actual impacts.~~
- 7
- 8 [Impact fees considered in 2008-9, to be discussed again with 2016 update]
- 9
- 10 ~~8. As the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is updated, ensure affected~~
- 11 ~~elements, transportation policies, and programs are also updated.~~
- 12
- 13 [2016 Update process ongoing]
- 14
- 15 ~~9. Review subarea plans and this chapter to ensure consistency of policies and~~
- 16 ~~programs when implementing this plan.~~
- 17
- 18 [Done – newer SA plans checked, older SA plans being repealed]
- 19
- 20 ~~10. Identify and protect specific transportation corridors and alignments through~~
- 21 ~~purchase, developer contribution, and land use regulation.~~
- 22
- 23 [Ongoing – e.g. WCOG/WSDOT’s I-5 Bakerview-Grandview study]
- 24
- 25 ~~11. Update the map of the regional system of all-weather roads on an annual~~
- 26 ~~basis.~~
- 27
- 28 [PW does this]
- 29
- 30 ~~12. Complete the Guide Meridian Study to ensure appropriate land use and~~
- 31 ~~transportation improvements on Guide Meridian.~~
- 32
- 33 [Outdated - most of study area annexed]
- 34
- 35 ~~13. Review and update Washington State Access Management Plans consistent~~
- 36 ~~with the Land Use chapter and the Transportation chapter.~~
- 37
- 38 [PW adopts WSDOT access management standards in Design guidelines Chapter 5]
- 39
- 40 ~~14. Develop a Whatcom County "Access Management Plan."~~
- 41
- 42 [PW administers access management through the Design guidelines, chapter 5,
- 43 including adoption of WSDOT access standards]
- 44

1 ~~15. Amend existing regulations to support designs which address internal and~~
2 ~~external pedestrian circulation and transit access, and encourage the use of~~
3 ~~shared access roads~~

4
5 [WC Design Standards are kept up to date by PW Engineering]

6
7 **Incentives**

8
9 ~~16. Amend current regulations to offer incentives for projects which are transit~~
10 ~~compatible.~~

11
12 [See Policy 6A-4]

13
14 ~~17. Develop incentives in Whatcom County to provide designs that encourage~~
15 ~~usage of high-occupancy vehicles.~~

16
17 ~~18. Develop incentives in Whatcom County to encourage safe, non-motorized~~
18 ~~transportation, such as scenic and efficient, off-road transportation corridors~~

19
20 **Transit**

21
22 ~~19. Initiate a program in conjunction with Whatcom Transportation Authority to~~
23 ~~identify and satisfy rural transportation needs.~~

24
25 [WTA includes rural area in their service planning; County representatives will be
26 part of the 2015 WTA strategic plan process]

27
28 ~~20. Work with the Whatcom Transportation Authority to identify rights-of-way~~
29 ~~and property needed for park-and-ride lots and intersection improvements.~~

30
31 [P&R lots have mainly been located in cities. WTA coordinates with County on
32 ROW/intersection issues and opportunities in the County.]

33
34 **Education**

35
36 ~~21. Work with Whatcom Transportation Authority to increase public knowledge of~~
37 ~~public transit options.~~

38
39 [Covered by Policy 6D-3]

40
41 **Monitoring**

42
43 ~~22. Gather additional information on passenger and commodity transportation to~~
44 ~~and from Canada.~~

45
46 [Done by WCOG]

1 ~~23. Monitor fluctuations in Canadian commercial and passenger vehicle traffic~~
2 ~~and review recommendations in this plan based on changes in trends.~~

3
4 [Done by WCOG]

5
6 ~~Inter-Jurisdiction Coordination~~

7
8 ~~24. Formulate a recommendation to the Regional Transportation Planning~~
9 ~~Organization to explore new transportation funding sources and innovative~~
10 ~~solutions to transportation problems.~~

11
12 [WC participates in WCOG's TTAG; see Policy 2F-2]

13
14 ~~Recommended Transportation Improvements~~

15
16 [Outdated – new project list will be added into Chapter 6]

17
18 ~~In addition to the above recommended actions, a preferred road improvement~~
19 ~~network is recommended. **Map 16** identifies necessary major road improvements~~
20 ~~over the next twenty years to accommodate future desired growth patterns. The~~
21 ~~plan is based on future projections of revenues balanced with needs to maintain~~
22 ~~desired levels of service and correct existing deficiencies.~~

23 ~~Recommended transportation improvements are based on the premise that the City~~
24 ~~of Bellingham will complete its project improvements. Within six years, they are as~~
25 ~~follows:~~

26
27 ~~• **Yew Street Rd/Samish Connector:**~~

28 ~~Add a street connecting Yew Street (San Juan Boulevard) and Samish Way.~~

29
30 ~~• **Sunset Drive:**~~

31 ~~From Woburn St. to City limits, widen to five lanes.~~

32
33 ~~Major twenty-year County and State improvements described in the preferred~~
34 ~~alternative are the following:~~

35
36 ~~• **Guide Meridian:**~~

37 ~~From Bellingham City Limits to Pole Road, widen Guide Meridian to five lanes.~~

38 ~~From Pole Road to the Canadian Border, widen Guide Meridian to four lanes,~~
39 ~~two lanes in each direction.~~

40
41 ~~• **Mt. Baker Highway:**~~

42 ~~From Bellingham City Limits to the intersection with SR9 north, improve to~~
43 ~~two lanes in each direction.~~

44
45 ~~• **E. Badger Road:**~~

~~From Garrison Road to Guide Meridian, widen existing lanes, improve shoulders.~~

~~• **Hannegan Road:**~~

~~From Bellingham City limits to Smith Road, widen to four lanes. From Bellingham to Lynden, add turn lanes at intersections as needed.~~

~~• **SR9:**~~

~~From Siper Road to Mt. Baker Highway, improvement for safety purposes, recognizing the residential character.~~

~~• **SR9:**~~

~~From Canadian border to Badger, realign.~~

~~• **Slater Road:**~~

~~From Northwest to Hannegan, extend two lanes.~~

~~For long-range planning and future right-of-way use monitor the need for the following improvements:~~

~~• **Lincoln**~~

~~Widen and extend to Blaine Road.~~

~~• **Blaine Road:**~~

~~From Birch Bay Lynden road to I-5, widen to four lanes.~~

~~• **SR9:**~~

~~From badger to Nugent's Corner, improve alignment.~~

~~• **Slater:**~~

~~From Hannegan to Mt. Baker Highway, connect with two lanes.~~

~~• **Lake Louise Road:**~~

~~Improve in conjunction with installation of Water District #10 sewer line.~~

~~Other recommended 20-year improvements, including road reconstruction projects, are set forth in the Whatcom Transportation Plan – A Combined Metropolitan and Regional Plan (Whatcom County Council of Governments, Oct. 2001).~~

~~Revisions to the Growth Management Act, adopted under House Bill 1487 in 1998, indicate that the County's Comprehensive Plan must incorporate planning for state highways, consistent with state and regional transportation planning efforts.~~

~~The Washington State Highway System Plan 2003-2022 was adopted by the state in February of 2002. This plan includes improvement strategies for the state highway system over a 20-year planning period. Specific state highway improvement strategies in this plan include:~~

- ~~• Widening I-5 from the Skagit County line to Blaine, improving interchanges along I-5, and constructing park and ride lots along I-5.~~
- ~~• Widening State Route 9 from the Skagit County line to Sumas.~~
- ~~• Widening State Route 539 (Guide Meridian) from Horton road to the border.~~
- ~~• Widening State Route 542 (Mt. Baker Highway) from Britton Rd. to Kendall.~~
- ~~• Widening State Route 544 (Pole Rd./Everson-Goshen Rd.) from the Guide Meridian to Nooksack.~~
- ~~• Widening State Route 546 (Badger Rd.) from Guide Meridian to State Route 9.~~
- ~~• Widening State Route 548 (Grandview Rd./Blaine Rd.) from I-5 to Blaine.~~
- ~~• Improving stormwater runoff and eliminating fish barriers along state highways.~~

[Outdated –current project list will be added to Chapter 6]

~~Recommended Non-Motorized Transportation Facilities~~

~~Develop detailed project proposals for a safe system of bikeways and walkways in Whatcom County, including identification of available funding sources and implementation plans, emphasizing the projects below. Implement these projects as funding becomes available.~~

~~Map 17 displays a proposed system of bicycle routes and facilities in Whatcom County.~~

~~1. Install dedicated bicycle lanes in accordance with WSDOT standards on the following roadways:~~

- ~~• Hwy 542 from Bellingham City limits to Hwy 9 southbound.~~
- ~~• Bakerview Rd.~~
- ~~• Hannegan Rd.~~
- ~~• Birch Bay/Lynden Rd.~~
- ~~• Portal Way.~~

~~2. Pursue implementation of the following off-road transportation corridors:~~

- ~~• Coast Millennium Trail – Complete off road segments between Marine Drive and Ferndale, including a possible bicycle/pedestrian bridge connecting Pioneer Park and Hovander Park. In addition, pursue scenic, non-motorized segments along the bluffs between Ferndale~~

- 1 ~~and Birch Bay, through purchase or long-term agreements with land~~
2 ~~owners.~~
3
4 • ~~Hertz North Lake Whatcom Trail Extension — Between eastern terminus~~
5 ~~of existing trail and Blue Canyon Road. Also install a safe non-~~
6 ~~motorized route, including a separated path where physically and~~
7 ~~financially feasible, along North Shore road between Bellingham City~~
8 ~~limits and the North Shore trailhead.~~
9
10 • ~~Bay to Baker Trail — Between Bellingham City limits and Maple Falls.~~
11
12 • ~~Nooksack River Trail — between Ferndale and Glacier.~~
13
14 • ~~Galbraith Connectors — Between Yew Street and Lake Louise~~
15 ~~Boulevard.~~
16
17 • ~~Stewart Mt. Connectors — Between east end of Smith road and Van~~
18 ~~Zandt and between Y road, Northshore trailhead and the South Fork~~
19 ~~Nooksack Valley.~~