Skagit 2045

Regional Transportation Plan

SCOG
Skagit Council of Governments

SKAGIT 2045

Regional Transportation Plan

Prepared by:

Skagit Council of Governments

SCOG
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Adoption of the Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

The Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) is a regional agency, consisting of 15 member jurisdictions within Skagit County including the following local and tribal governments: the City of Anacortes; City of Burlington; City of Mount Vernon; City of Sedro-Woolley; Town of Concrete; Town of Hamilton; Town of La Conner; Town of Lyman; Port of Anacortes; Port of Skagit; Skagit Transit; Skagit Public Utility District #1; Samish Indian Nation; Swinomish Indian Tribal Community; and Skagit County. The geographic area that SCOG encompasses are all areas within the exterior boundaries of Skagit County.

SCOG is the federal-authorized metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in Skagit County. The metropolitan planning area for the MPO is Skagit County, which is also the federally designated metropolitan statistical area. The authority for creating an MPO in Skagit County followed the designation of an urbanized area of over 50,000 population for the first time – generally surrounding Mount Vernon, Burlington and Sedro-Woolley – following the 2000 decennial census. Having such an area, with over 50,000 individuals, is a prerequisite to the establishment of an MPO. MPOs carry out the continuous, cooperative, comprehensive metropolitan transportation planning process. All MPOs must develop and update a metropolitan transportation plan addressing a planning horizon of no less than 20 years.

SCOG is also the state-authorized regional transportation planning organization (RTPO) in Skagit County. The authority for RTPOs was included with Washington state's Growth Management Act of 1990. RTPOs coordinate transportation planning at all jurisdictional levels, including the state, to ensure an interconnected regional transportation system. The RTPO statue indicates that in urbanized areas, the RTPO is to be the same as the MPO. All RTPOs must develop and update a regional transportation plan.

SCOG is directed by the Transportation Policy Board (TPB), a governing body comprised of elected officials and other members representing business and transportation interests. State legislators from the 10th, 39th, and 40th legislative districts are ex-officio members of the TPB.

Beginning in September 2020, public input to inform the Plan update was obtained through a series of meetings, virtual public engagement tools, consultations, and other opportunities to provide input. SCOG's Technical Advisory Committee participated in the development of a draft Plan that was released to the public for further comment during a 15-day review period from January 22, 2021 – February 5, 2021. The final Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan was formally adopted by the TPB on March 17, 2021.

An update to the Plan is required no less than every five years to remain in federal compliance and maintain the Skagit region's eligibility to receive federal and state funding for transportation improvement projects. The final Plan includes a list of fiscally constrained transportation improvements for the region. These include improvements on the regional transportation system that will be implemented by jurisdictions within Skagit County from 2021–2045. An additional illustrative list of projects is included in the Plan as well, which are additional projects that would be included in the fiscally constrained list if additional resources become available outside of what are anticipated in the financial component of the Plan.

Included on the following page is a copy of the signed resolution acknowledging adoption of Skagit 2045, the metropolitan transportation plan and regional transportation plan for 2021–2045.

Skagit 2045 was amended on July 20, 2022, and again on July 17, 2024 by the TPB. The signed resolutions approving the amendments are included on the pages following the resolution adopting Skagit 2045 on March 17, 2021.

Resolution Placeholder

Resolution Placeholder

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Resolution

(To be added upon plan amendment)

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Section 1
Executive Summary

Section 1: **Executive Summary**

The **Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan** (Skagit 2045 or Plan) is a multimodal long-range plan that establishes the strategic framework for meeting the Skagit region's existing and future transportation needs. Developed through extensive coordination with affected jurisdictions and public input, Skagit 2045 provides a "tool box" to facilitate cooperation and maximize resources to jointly select transportation projects and programs for regional funding and implementation through 2045.

Serving as the link between local jurisdictions' transportation plans and the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), Skagit 2045 was developed to be consistent with applicable federal and Washington state requirements. This level of cross-cutting consistency from the federal all the way to the local level, ensures projects are eligible for funding through the widest range of programs available.

Skagit 2045 also provides regional context for emerging challenges facing the Skagit region, and other challenges that the Skagit region shares with other areas in Washington state. Not all of these challenges are related to immediate needs, as some out to the year 2030 and beyond, but there are regional examples of implications that are occurring today due to funding limitations for maintenance and preservation. Examples of challenges highlighted in the Plan include:

- A mismatch between funding necessary to maintain and preserve the regional transportation system in a condition acceptable to the traveling public;
- Funding challenges to improve fish passages and comply with a federal injunction to remove fish barriers by 2030, which applies to the Washington State Department of Transportation in the Skagit region and areas outside of the region; and
- Necessary and high-cost replacements to ferries serving the Anacortes Ferry Terminal, and replacement of the terminal itself.

These challenges are not unique to the Skagit region, and addressing them will require Washington state and federal funding decisions recognizing the continued limitations in local funding capacity to fund projects and programmatic needs at a massive scale. While these are regional challenges, solutions will need to come from outside the Skagit region to address them.

Along with these challenges, opportunities are presented to better utilize transportation assets, restore ecological function, reduce emissions and provides solutions to congestion challenges by making operational improvements to use roadway capacity wisely. Specific examples of opportunities include:

- While replacing ferries in Anacortes, operated by Washington State Ferries and Skagit County, ensure new vessels are either all electric or diesel-electric hybrid, reducing or eliminating emissions;
- Restoring Chinook salmon and steelhead runs in the Skagit region by removing culverts and replacing them with fish-passable structures;
- Providing a new maintenance, operations and administration for Skagit Transit that allows for expanded transit capacity in the Skagit region and neighboring regions, and better positions this transit agency to respond to emergency management incidents;
- Making roadways safer for all users by utilizing countermeasures – such as roundabouts, bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways – that reduce conflict points and lessen severity of collisions;

- Implementing solutions on Interstate 5 that provide technological advances to reduce congestion, without adding general purpose travel lanes; and
- Expanding access across the Skagit River by adding another bridge in Mount Vernon, with associated improvements in vehicular mobility, non-motorized access and emergency management.

Scope of Plan Update

Skagit 2045 is an update to the previous plan it replaces and supersedes, called the Skagit 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, which was adopted in March 2016 and amended in March 2017. The new Plan is narrow in scope, representing a decision early in the planning process to ensure that the Plan maintains its federal compliance to update the Plan by March 2021, while also continuing to abide by Washington state requirements.

Significantly, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) changed the focus of transportation planning at the national level, moving to a new performance-based approach. The approach provides for more consistency and accountability for how federal transportation funds are being spent across the U.S. Regulations implementing MAP-21 introduced many changes in what is required for a metropolitan transportation plan. Skagit 2045 is the first version of a metropolitan transportation plan in the Skagit region to encompass these new MAP-21 aspects into the Plan.

The scope of work for the Plan update was approved by the Transportation Policy Board of the Skagit Council of Governments in April 2020. Since that approval, the planning process commenced and has continued into early 2021, with a target Plan adoption date of March 17, 2021. Further information on the scope of the Plan update, along with Washington state and federal requirements applicable to Skagit 2045 are included in **Section 2**.

Agency Collaboration and Regional Priorities

Skagit 2045 was developed through a cooperative process that involved the public, the Washington State Department of Transportation and other state agencies, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, Skagit County, cities and towns, ports, transit agencies, private non-profits and a variety of other interested parties.

The priorities set for the regional transportation system are consistent with those established in the Washington Transportation Plan, the long-range statewide transportation plan in our state (See **Section 4** for definitions of each priority). These priorities are as follows, in no particular order:

- Economic Vitality;
- Preservation;
- Safety;
- Mobility;
- Environment; and
- Stewardship.

Skagit 2045 is intended to facilitate understanding between the public, member jurisdictions, WSDOT, and other interested parties about:

- The planning process used for the Plan;
- New approaches to public involvement in utilized;

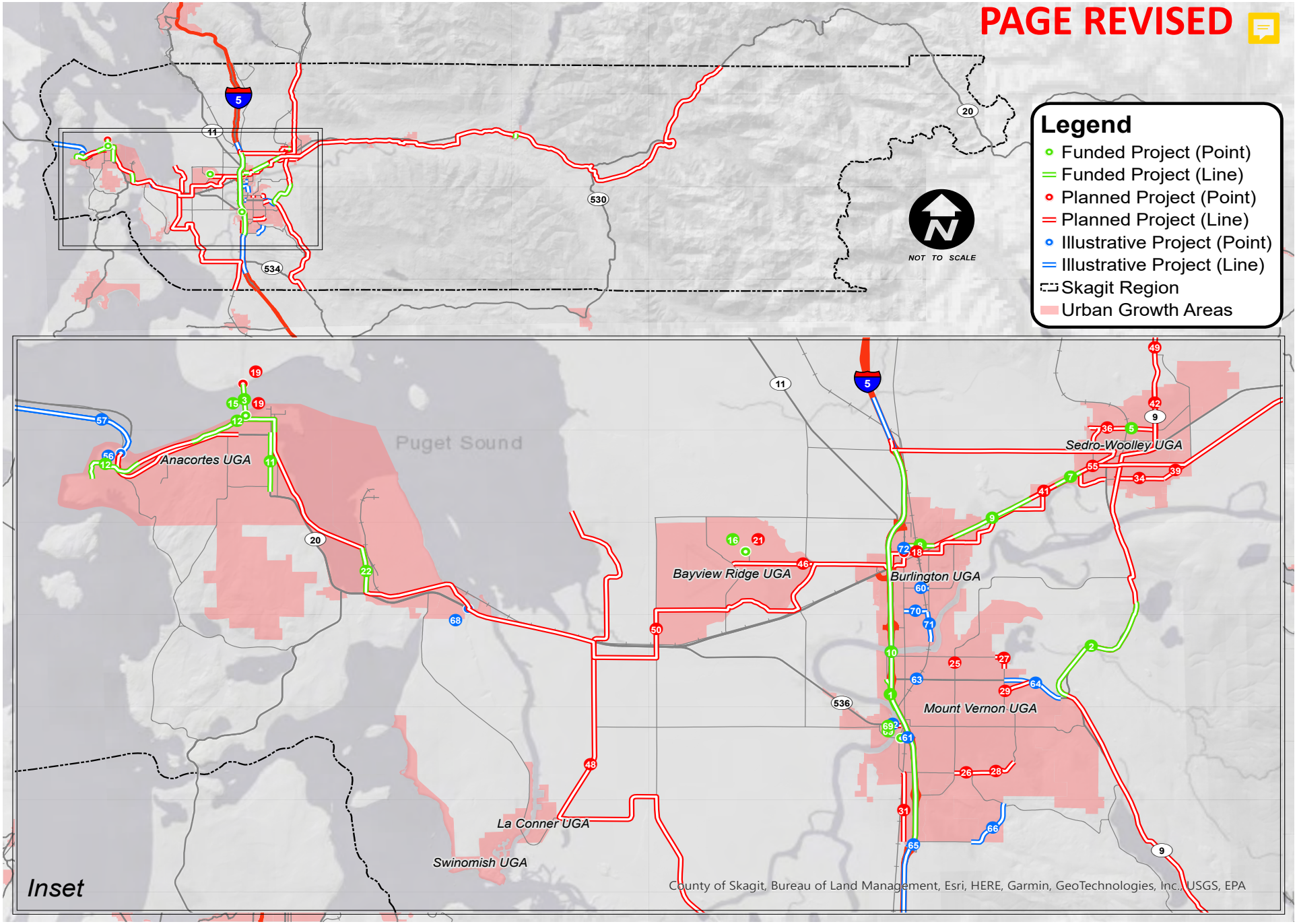


Exhibit 1-1 Regionally Significant Transportation Projects

- Relationships between the Plan and other plans and programs;
- Expected Environmental Justice impacts from Skagit 2045 projects;
- Regional system performance across five categories of federal performance measures;
- Prioritized transportation strategies and improvements;
- Opportunities for environmental protection and restoration;
- Tradeoffs associated with funding constraints; and
- Long-term transportation challenges and opportunities for the Skagit region.

Over the next 25 years, the Skagit region is expected to grow by over 46,000 people and 18,000 employees. This growth will present new challenges to the region's transportation system, notably significant traffic congestion forecast to occur on Interstate 5 through Mount Vernon and Burlington.

Skagit 2045 highlights the intricate relationship between land use activities and transportation, as well as the importance of coordinating planning efforts on all levels. It also presents land use issues at a local level, recognizing the unique differences and challenges between the Skagit region's many jurisdictions.

Estimates of future transportation revenues are projected to be short of funding needs of agency improvement projects and programs identified in Washington state, and local government transportation plans for the regional transportation system. Spending on maintenance of the current transportation system in the Skagit region is expected to require 80–90% of forecast revenues from 2018–2045.

The difference between the available funding and costs of identified improvement projects and programs requires a regional approach to setting priorities and strategies for addressing transportation needs. To guide the development and funding of the regional transportation system, Skagit 2045 establishes priorities, policies, goals and strategies.

The pyramid diagram on the next page depicts the relationships between local, regional and state plans and how the level of detail increases with local transportation planning efforts. Though this diagram provides a simplified graphic of what can be complex

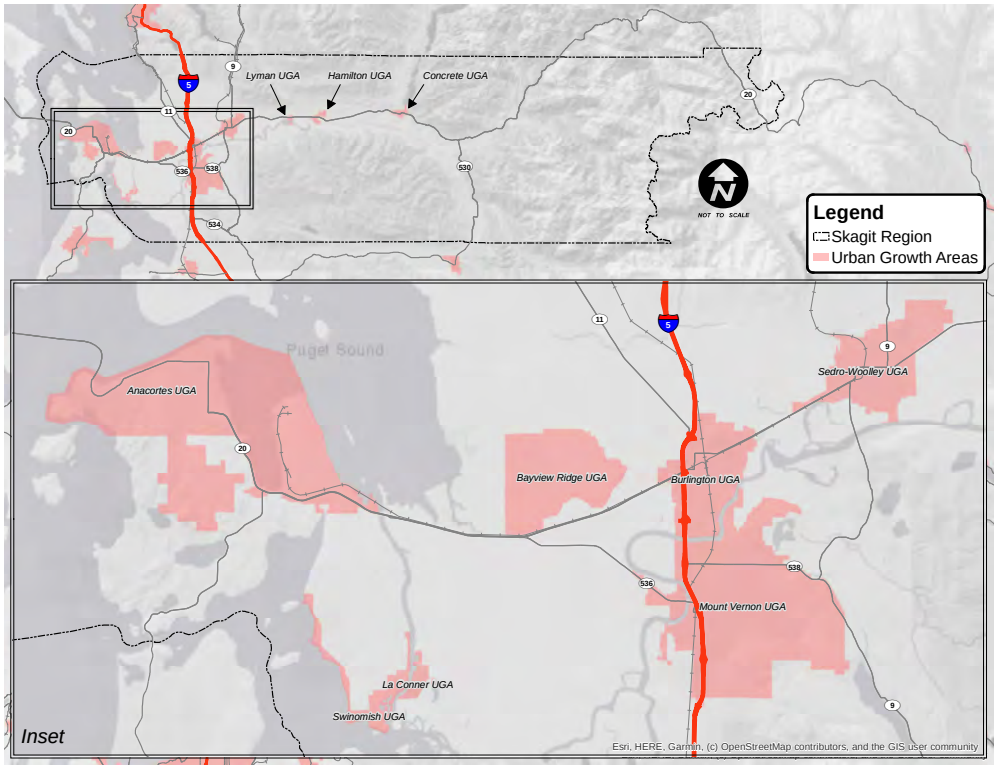
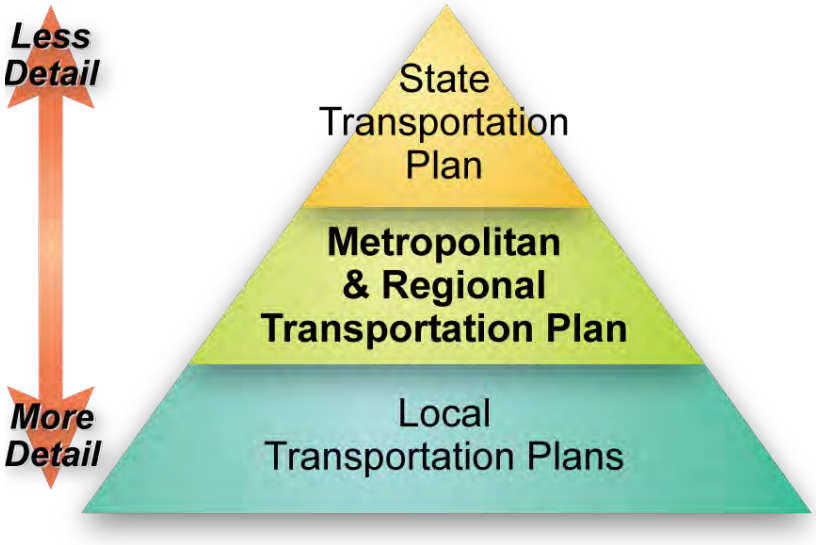


Exhibit 1-2 Skagit County Urban Growth Areas



relationships between different scales of plans, it is intended to convey that the information base and local attributes relevant to a local plan must be distilled somewhat at the regional level, and then again from the regional to state level. State plans best highlight and prioritize issues statewide that would relate to the Skagit region and other regions, while local plans provide locally defined visions of communities, often down to the parcel level. Skagit 2045 considers these local plans in a broader, regional context, and provides a bridge to large-scale statewide plans.

Transportation Projects and Programs

Skagit 2045 includes a regional list of state highway projects, state ferry projects, transit agency projects and local government projects. The lists were generated with input from the Technical Advisory Committee, and include a wide range of small- to large-scale projects. Types of programs and projects include interchange improvements, new road segments and road widening, ferry terminals and vessels, transit facilities and non-motorized separated pathways. **Section 5** includes a listing of each project with associated maps, planning-level cost estimates, project timeframes and relative priorities. All projects included in Skagit 2045 were proposed by owners of transportation facilities and/or member jurisdictions of SCOG. Information for each Planned and Illustrative project is included in **Appendix A**, along with a description of how regionally significant project determinations are made by SCOG.

State highways and ferries serve as the backbone of the regional transportation system, and as a result, many of the priority projects in Skagit 2045 also serve to strengthen and support the Washington state transportation system. Due in large part to funding constraints and better utilization of current transportation assets, in the future there will be continued emphasis on maintaining and improving the efficiency of existing systems, with fewer capacity expansion projects and new roads.

Environmental Constraints

Skagit 2045 identifies the potential for improvement projects to have significant environmental impacts. The analysis in **Section 6** focuses on state highway, transit and local government projects that significantly add to the footprint of roadways by adding capacity to the regional transportation system. The environmental constraints analysis for the Plan is not intended to identify specific environmental impacts of transportation projects included in Skagit 2045, nor is it used in determining environmental mitigation. Instead it is a planning-level initial review of projects that are often many years or decades into the future, and is by the Skagit region to understand potential issues that may affect implementation or costs of transportation projects. Analysis of specific direct and indirect impacts, and potential mitigation measures, occur as individual transportation projects and programs

are further defined and evaluated through federal, state and local review processes.

Financial Constraints

Federal regulations for metropolitan transportation plans, and state regulations for regional transportation plans, require a financial analysis to show how the transportation improvements and programs can be implemented with reasonably expected funds. In addition, these regulations provide for the identification of additional potential revenues that could be generated to fund more projects.

The financial analysis for Skagit 2045 is based on historical trends for revenues and expenditures in the Skagit region, and current rules and regulations controlling transportation funding programs. Estimates are used to establish a likely range of revenues for regional transportation projects, with all revenues and costs evaluated in terms of their "year of expenditure" using inflation rates. This accounts for the differences in the growth of project costs versus revenues over the 25-year time frame of the Plan. For example, the cost of roadway construction in a project in 2021 would be less than construction of the same project in 2030. Year-of-expenditure estimates account for the year a project is planned to be built, and adjusts anticipated costs to that future year.

State Highways and Ferries Funding

Approximately $60 million in desired state highway capacity improvement projects have been identified in the Skagit region through Skagit 2045, using 2020 constant dollars. All of the WSDOT projects identified in the Plan are high priority projects. A $50 million project to address forecast traffic congestion on Interstate 5 is a high priority, but is considered Illustrative in the Plan, as it is outside of what the region reasonably expects to be funded during Skagit 2045's timeframe.

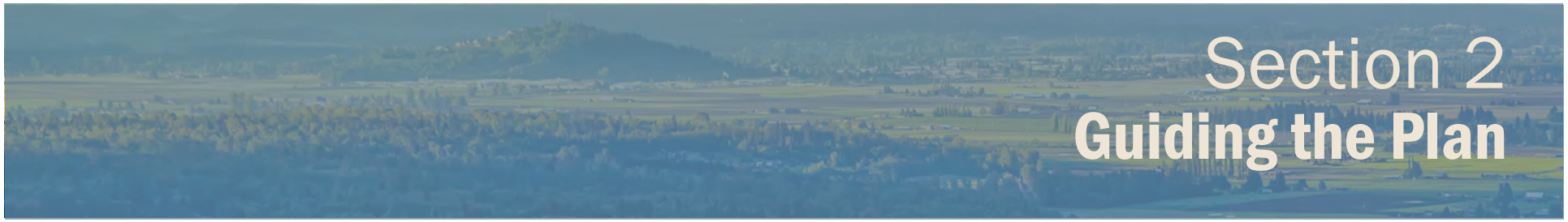
State highway funding is appropriated by the State legislature and approved by the Governor. Historical Washington state spending may not be correlated to future spending. The Connecting Washington Act, which was signed into law in 2015, provided funds for the Sharpe's Corner Intersection Improvements project on State Route 20 in Skagit County. This project was completed after the Skagit 2040 plan was adopted in 2016.

Washington state also plans to replace six ferries now serving the Anacortes – San Juan Islands route with new vessels during the timeframe of the Plan, along with a terminal replacement in Anacortes. Together, these projects are estimated to cost over $1 billion, using 2020 constant dollars.

Funding Implementation

The federal metropolitan transportation planning statute requires that the metropolitan transportation plan include a fiscally-constrained project list. The fiscal constraint requirement is intended to ensure that long-range transportation plans reflect realistic assumptions about future revenues, and provide reasonable expectations about how far those revenues will stretch in paying for transportation projects.

Roughly $2.8 billion is forecast for Skagit 2045, using 2020 constant dollars, for transportation revenues available to the Skagit region over the planning horizon. The identified expenditures in the Plan for the same timeframe are estimated to be $3.7 billion, representing a shortfall of approximately $900 million. To address this difference, several funding strategies are discussed in Section 7 that jurisdictions may utilize to generate additional funds for transportation improvements.



Section 2
Guiding the Plan

Section 2: **Guiding the Plan**

The Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan establishes the strategic framework for meeting the Skagit region's existing and future transportation needs. The Plan expresses regional priorities and serves as a link between local government comprehensive plans, tribal transportation plans, Skagit Transit plans and the Washington Transportation Plan.

Transportation facilities and services cross jurisdictional boundaries and the traveling public often perceives the transportation system as one set of continuous facilities that connect from point A to point B – not that the state may control one section, Skagit County another, and a local city or town yet another segment of their trip. It is a regional transportation system of connected facilities that is available for public use.

There are numerous federal and Washington state requirements related to Skagit 2045. Federal law requires preparation of a metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) for the Skagit region, while the Washington state Growth Management Act (GMA) sets forth the requirements for the regional transportation plan (RTP). Skagit 2045 addresses both federal and Washington state transportation planning requirements.

Rainbow Bridge over Swinomish Channel

Federal and Washington state requirements for Skagit 2045 require public participation in preparing the Plan. SCOG's Transportation Policy Board and its member agencies support public input – the success of any plan depends on the support of the community it serves.

The integrated Plan examines the Skagit region's transportation needs over the next 25 years. Skagit 2045 builds upon strategies identified by Washington state and local agencies to address short-, mid-, and long-term transportation needs for the Skagit region. The projects in the Plan are, however, constrained by available funding. Therefore, Skagit 2045 identifies the priorities, policies and strategic framework for defining and prioritizing improvements. The Plan is multimodal, with individual projects and strategies serving multiple travel modes and meeting a range of regional priorities. Strategies for expanding funding for regional transportation needs are also identified.

Transportation Planning Organizations

SCOG has a federally enabled and state enabled role in transportation planning in the Skagit region. SCOG is the authorized metropolitan planning organization in Skagit County. The metropolitan planning area for the MPO is Skagit County, which is also the federally designated metropolitan statistical area. The authority for creating an MPO in Skagit County followed the designation of an urbanized area of over 50,000 population for the first time – an area surrounding Mount Vernon, Burlington and Sedro-Woolley – following the 2000 decennial census. Having such an area of over 50,000 individuals, is a prerequisite to the establishment of an MPO. MPOs carry out the continuous, cooperative, comprehensive metropolitan transportation planning process. The MPO in Skagit County was established in 2003.

SCOG is also the authorized regional transportation planning organization in Skagit County. The authority for RTPOs was included in Washington state's Growth Management of 1990. Soon after, in

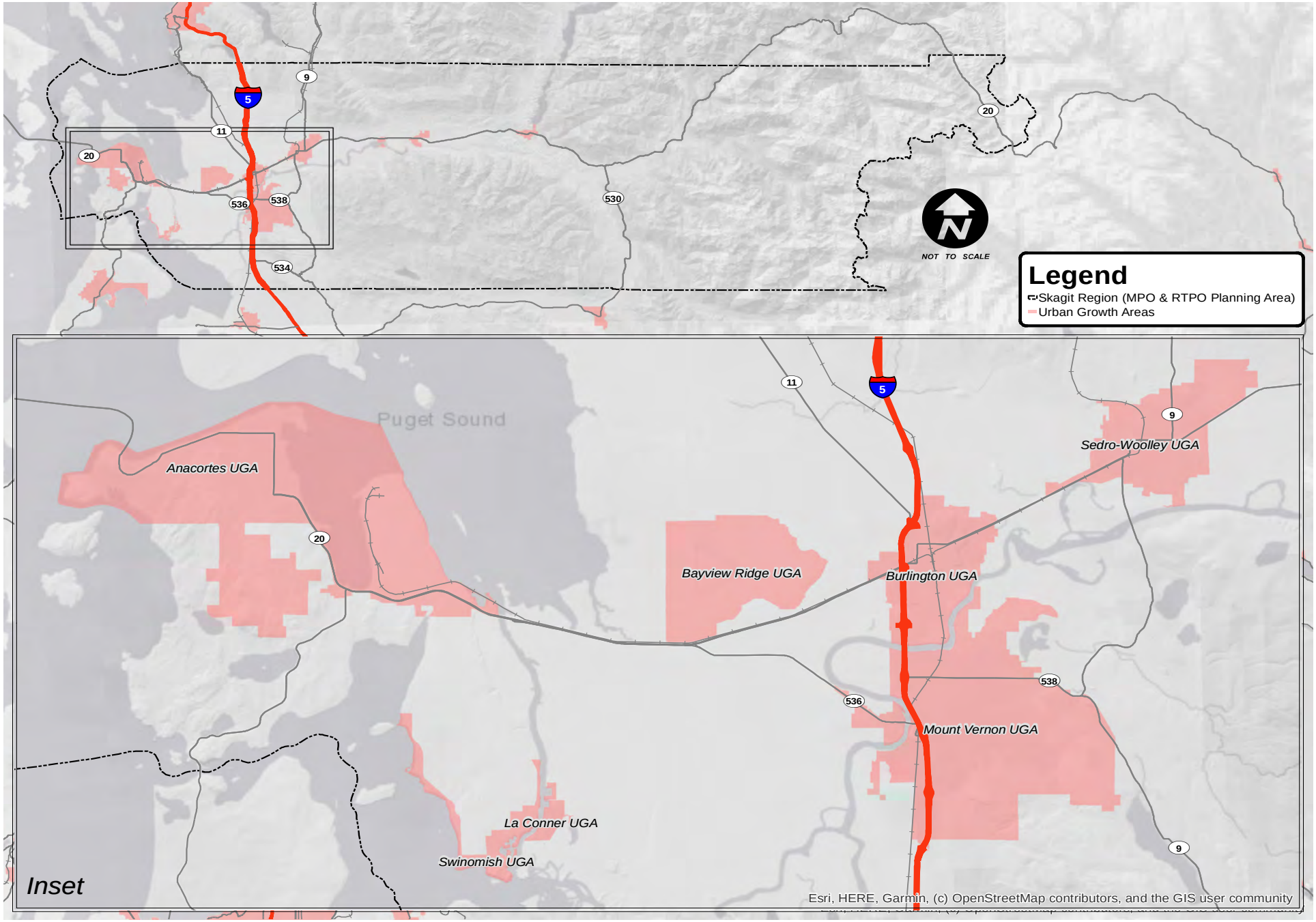


Exhibit 2-1 Metropolitan Planning Organization and Regional Transportation Planning Organization Boundaries

Under the FAST Act, the metropolitan planning process shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operations;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- Improve the reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism.

1991, Skagit County joined Island County to establish a two-county RTPO. RTPOs coordinate transportation planning at all jurisdiction levels, including the state, to ensure an interconnected regional transportation system. The RTPO statue indicates that in urbanized areas, the RTPO is to be the same as the MPO. SCOG became a single-county RTPO after the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization dissolved in 2015. The MPO and RTPO boundaries are now the same for SCOG. For the Plan, the term "Skagit region" is used for SCOG's planning area, which is the same as the metropolitan planning area under federal law and planning area under Washington state law. The boundaries of Skagit County and the Skagit region are the same. "Skagit County" is not used in Skagit 2045 to describe the planning area boundaries to avoid confusion with Skagit County government and its jurisdictional boundaries.

SCOG's Transportation Policy Board (TPB) is a governing body of SCOG, along with the Board of Directors, and is comprised of elected officials representing the following 15 member jurisdictions:

- City of Anacortes;
- City of Burlington;
- City of Mount Vernon;
- City of Sedro-Woolley;
- Port of Anacortes;
- Port of Skagit;
- Swinomish Indian Tribal Community;
- Samish Indian Nation;
- Skagit County;
- Skagit PUD #1;
- Skagit Transit;
- Town of Concrete;
- Town of Hamilton;
- Town of La Conner; and
- Town of Lyman.

Washington state legislators from the 10th, 39th, and 40th legislative districts are ex-officio members of the Transportation Policy Board. Representatives from WSDOT and a major employer representative

also sit on the TPB, though are not members of SCOG.

Development of the Plan is also supported by SCOG's Technical Advisory Committee, SCOG's Non-Motorized Advisory Committee and the Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (aka "Planners Committee"). The Technical Advisory Committee provides technical advice to the TPB and is comprised of staffs from member jurisdictions of SCOG, including: public works directors; transportation planners and engineers; and other staff. This committee provides input on plans, programs, projects, and priorities used to support the development of Skagit 2045. The Non-Motorized Advisory Committee is a committee of volunteers with interests in modes of non-motorized transportation that provide advise to the Technical Advisory Committee. The Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee is not a SCOG committee, but provided advice as the Plan was being prepared related to population and employment growth forecasts. This committee is composed of planning directors, planners and other staff from Skagit County, the four cities and four towns.

Federal and State Transportation Planning Requirements

Federal and Washington state requirements for the Plan guide much of the content in the Plan. Federal requirements relate to the Plan as a metropolitan transportation plan, and Washington state requirements as a regional transportation plan.

Federal Transportation Planning Requirements

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) replaced the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century as the basis for federal surface transportation planning and funding upon being signed into law in December 2015. The FAST Act builds upon and expands planning requirements established in MAP-21 and prior surface transportation legislation. The FAST Act was set to expire in 2020, but was been extended through September 2021 by the federal government.

According to federal law, metropolitan transportation plans, and the transportation improvement programs (TIP) that are based on these plans, must meet federal requirements in order for projects in the Skagit region to be eligible for expending federal transportation funds, primarily through the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

The FAST Act includes several modifications and new provisions that relate to MPOs. These are summarized as follows:

- Adds to the scope of the metropolitan transportation planning process for consideration of projects and strategies that will improve resiliency and reliability of the transportation system, and enhance travel and tourism;
- Allows public transportation representatives on MPO policy boards to also serve as a representative of a local municipality;
- Identifying intercity bus facilities in addition to

Roundabout in Skagit Valley

public transportation facilities in the MTP;

- Including capital and other investment strategies to reduce the vulnerability of the transportation system to natural disasters in the MTP;
- Considering the role of intercity buses and the beneficial role they may play in the regional transportation system in the MTP, as well as strategies and investments that may preserve and enhance these systems;
- Including public ports in participation activities;
- Expanding the definition of private providers of transportation to be included with participation activities; and
- Includes new optional requirements for the development of a congestion management plan in certain MPOs.

The FAST Act, similar to past federal surface transportation laws, requires the MTP to be based on a 20-year forecast period. Additional requirements for an MTP include relevant to Skagit 2045 include:

Bicyclists in Skagit County

- Must cover major roadways, transit, multimodal and intermodal facilities, with an emphasis on facilities that serve regional transportation functions;
- Should address capital projects, operational and management strategies to preserve and enhance the performance and safety of the region's transportation system;
- Needs to include a financial analysis to show how the facility improvements can be implemented; and
- Financial analysis can also identify strategies to increase funding to support implementation of other regional transportation projects or programs.

The FAST Act is the first long-term reauthorization since 2005, being signed into law in 2015. MAP-21 was signed into law in 2012, but was only a two-year law, and was followed by numerous short-term extensions following its expiration in 2014. With the FAST Act, federal surface transportation legislation is settled out to 2020. To pay for transportation programs authorized in the FAST Act, continued appropriations from Congress will be necessary through their regular budget process.

State Transportation Planning Requirements

Washington state's Growth Management Act sets forth state requirements for a regional transportation plan. As noted above, many of Washington's regional transportation planning requirements overlap with federal requirements.

Per RCW 47.80.030, Skagit 2045 shall be prepared in cooperation with WSDOT, ports, transit operators, and local governmental agencies in the region. Skagit 2045 is required to:

- Be based on a least-cost planning methodology that provides the most cost-effective transportation facilities, services, and programs;
- Identify existing and planned transportation facilities and programs that should function as an integrated regional

transportation system;

- Establish level-of-service standards for certain state highways and ferry routes, to be developed jointly with WSDOT;
- Include a financial plan showing how the regional transportation plan can be implemented;
- Assess regional development patterns, capital investment and other measures; and
- Set forth a proposed regional approach to guide the development of the integrated, multimodal regional transportation system.

Standards and guidelines are provided by WSDOT to assist regional transportation planning organizations with preparing the regional transportation plan. These standards and guidelines cover identification and application of data, identification of projects, financial evaluations and coordination activities.

Public Participation

The FAST Act, in accord with past federal surface transportation legislation, requires all MPOs to develop and use a documented participation plan. The participation plan must be in place prior to MPO adoption of transportation plans addressing FAST Act provisions. The FAST Act requires that the participation plan be developed in consultation with all interested parties, and that public information be made available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the internet.

In 2017, the Skagit Council of Governments developed an update to the Public Participation Plan. The adopted Public Participation Plan identifies various outreach and involvement strategies, seeking to:

- Create opportunities for appropriate broad based, early, continuous and meaningful public participation in all plans, programs and projects;
- Provide a forum for discussion of regional issues;
- Foster an open exchange of information and ideas; and
- Engage the public in decision-making processes through a constructive community dialogue.

As part of implementing the Public Participation Plan, SCOG prepared and adopted a Public Involvement Plan specific to the development of Skagit 2045. The Public Involvement Plan has guided outreach activities during the planning process and is included in **Appendix B**.

Identification of Interested Parties

An interested party is considered to be an individual or group potentially affected by Skagit 2045 including those who may not be aware they are affected. Consistent with federal law, these interested parties include:

- Individuals;
- Affected public agencies;
- Representatives of public transportation employees;
- Public ports;
- Freight shippers;
- Private providers of transportation (including intercity bus

The FAST Act defines "Interested Parties" as:

- Citizens;
- Affected public agencies;
- Representatives of public transportation employees;
- Freight shippers;
- Public ports;
- Private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs; such as a carpool program, vanpool program; transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program);
- Representatives of users of public transportation;
- Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities;
- Representatives of the mobility-impaired;
- Providers of freight transportation services; and
- Other interested parties.

operators) ;

• Representatives of users of public transportation;

• Representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities;

• Representatives of persons with disabilities;

• Providers of freight transportation services; and

• Other interested parties.

For Skagit 2045, interested parties were identified based on input from SCOG's Transportation Policy Board, advisory committees and past planning processes.

Outreach and Public Information

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, outreach for the Skagit 2045 Regional Transportation Plan update was primarily conducted through virtual public engagement activities in order to comply with Washington state's social distancing guidelines. Key components of outreach established in the Public Involvement Plan for Skagit 2045 include:

- Creation of a project-specific website;
- Remote consultation meetings;
- Remote notification strategies;
- Remote meetings of governing and advisory bodies; and
- A public comment period.

SCOG sought to provide equal access to outreach materials in Spanish for this plan update, with nearly all outreach materials and all virtual public input tools provided in Spanish. Spanish interpretation services were available upon request.

Virtual Public Engagement. A Skagit 2045 website (www.skagit2045.org) was created to act as a virtual landing platform and "information booth" for the Plan. This website was made fully available in English

and Spanish, and included:

- Context for the Plan update;
- Links to other relevant documents;
- An event calendar and project schedule;
- Contact information and comment opportunities;
- Virtual public engagement tools, including an interactive comment map and online survey; and
- A subscription service for regular e-notifications.

Other virtual materials were developed to communicate elements of the Plan to the public. These included ArcGIS Online web maps of the regional transportation system and project list, a Story Map of public outreach survey results, and maps depicting travel model results showing traffic in 2018 and projected traffic in 2045.

Notification. Notification took many forms during the planning process. Skagit 2045 materials were provided throughout the planning process via the Skagit 2045 website. Updates were provided through blog posts and relevant pages on the website. The draft Plan was posted to SCOG's website as well as the Skagit 2045 website, along with a notification of the public review and comment period.

The notice of public comment period was posted in the Skagit Valley Herald, on SCOG's website, and on the Skagit 2045 project website.

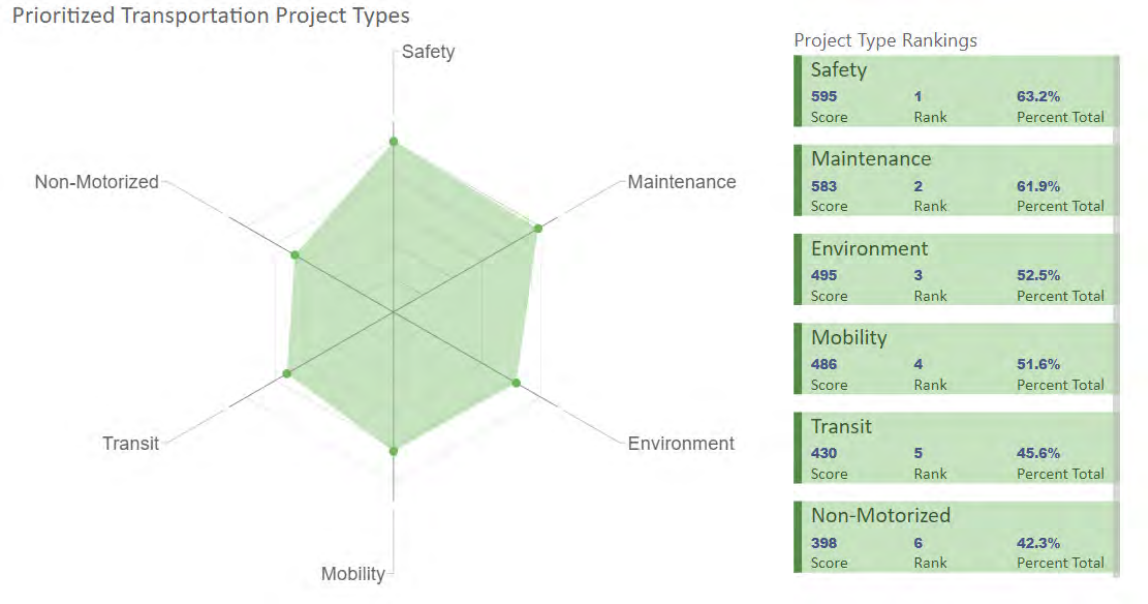
Consultations. Letters were sent out to federally recognized Indian tribes, federal agencies, state agencies, and regional air quality agency and watershed private non-profit notifying them of the Plan update, and inviting them to consultation meetings. From the outreach, three consultation meetings were conducted with representatives from one federal agency, five state agencies and one private non-profit. After these consultation meetings, a follow-up letter went out to the same consulted parties on January 20, 2021 to notify them that the draft Plan had been released for public review and comment, and inviting each party to a follow-up consultation meeting along with any additional input they may have on the Plan.

The Seven Sections of Skagit 2045

I. Executive Summary
II. Guiding the Plan
III. Relationship to Other Plans
IV. Transportation Priorities & Policies
V. Transportation Improvements & Programs
VI. Environmental Constraints
VII. Financial Constraints

Transportation Policy Board Meetings. SCOG's Transportation Policy Board is the decision-making body for matters relating to regional transportation planning and has the authority for Plan adoption and amendment. Information about the Plan was presented at six TPB meetings in 2020, prior to the release of the draft Plan in January 2021 for public review and comment. Public comment was not permitted at remote TPB meetings due to their virtual setting of meetings; however, public comment was received for one week prior to the meeting and read into

Exhibit 2-2 Public Prioritization Exercise for Project Types



the record at the meetings.

Technical Advisory Committee Meetings. SCOG's Technical Advisory Committee provides technical advice to the Transportation Policy Board on transportation matters. The TAC had eight meetings during the planning process where elements of the Plan were discussed, prior to release of the draft Plan in January 2021. The TAC is not permitted to take public comment, though the public is welcome to attend TAC meetings and TAC meeting materials are readily available to the public through SCOG's website and email distribution lists.

Other Advisory Committee Meetings. Two other advisory committees provided technical advice during the planning process on an as-needed basis. One is SCOG's Non-Motorized Advisory Committee, which provided advice related to non-motorized modes of transportation and facilities to support these modes in Skagit 2045. The other is not a SCOG committee, but is a staff advisory committee composed of local planning directors, planners and other government staff from Skagit County, and the eight cities and towns within the county. This committee is called the Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee, and they provided advice on the population and employment forecasts prepared for Skagit 2045.

Public Comment Period. A public review and comment period began shortly after the draft Plan was released by the Transportation Policy Board for review. The TPB released the Plan for review at their January 20, 2021 meeting. A 15-day comment period began on January 22, 2021 and ended on February 5, 2021. All comments received during the public comment period, along with staff responses to comments and suggested revisions to the draft Plan, are included in Appendix E.

Public Input

Opportunities for public input occurred throughout the planning process, including during Plan preparation and during the draft Plan public comment period. Input received during Plan development is summarized in **Appendix D**. An example of input received during public outreach is included in **Exhibit 2-3**, showing relative priority

for transportation project types. Input received during the draft Plan comment period is included in **Appendix E**.

Public Input. Input from the general public, and interested parties was obtained through all the opportunities for public involvement summarized above.

Comment Period. Upon issuance of the draft Plan, a comment period of 15 days was established prior to adoption of Skagit 2045 by the Transportation Policy Board, with the comment period occurring from January 22, 2021 through February 5, 2021.

Main Takeaways

Skagit 2045 is intended to facilitate understanding between the public, member jurisdictions, WSDOT, and other interested parties about:

- The planning process used for the Plan;
- New approaches to public involvement in utilized;
- Relationships between the Plan and other plans and programs;
- Expected Environmental Justice impacts from Skagit 2045 projects;
- Regional system performance across five categories of federal performance measures;
- Prioritized transportation strategies and improvements;
- Opportunities for environmental protection and restoration;
- Tradeoffs associated with funding constraints; and
- Long-term transportation challenges and opportunities for the Skagit region.

Plan Updates

Under federal law, metropolitan transportation plans are required to be updated every five years in air quality attainment areas. The Skagit region is in an attainment area and, therefore, must update the Plan no later than March 2026. SCOG's Transportation Policy Board can, however, amend the Plan as necessary prior to March 2026. A major update to the Plan is anticipated by March 2026, using data from the 2020 decennial census and other sources.

Under Washington state law, the Skagit region is required to periodically update the regional transportation strategy, which serves as a guide for updating the Plan. This strategy was approved in April 2020 as part of the planning process to update the Plan.

Section 3
Relationship to Other Plans

Section 3: **Relationship to Other Plans**

Skagit 2045 is a document that is built upon the priorities and objectives established in local plans and the Washington Transportation Plan. Regional transportation planning provides a unified blueprint to ensure that the efforts of all affected jurisdictions are coordinated, and that the individual parts of the regional transportation system function as a whole. This Plan is also built upon the efforts outlined in the Skagit 2040 plan, as it established regional transportation projects and strategies that have been completed, are underway or are no longer a priority.

Land use and transportation are forever interrelated, as decisions made in one realm affect the other, and vice versa. Thus, while history and current commitments provide the initial basis for Skagit 2045, the Plan also must consider future land uses and growth patterns. Skagit 2045 needs to match transportation resources to prioritize existing deficiencies, as well as serve forecast growth and support economic development in the Skagit region.

Understanding the broad regional travel characteristics also assists in developing the Plan. In 2008, the Whatcom Council of Governments and Skagit Council of Governments undertook a survey of travel characteristics of residents in Whatcom, Skagit and Island counties. The survey provides insights on socioeconomic factors that affect travel in the Skagit region and beyond. A summary of findings related to trip rates, travel patterns and use of alternative modes is summarized in this section.

Skagit 2045 also incorporates key strategies from the coordinated public transit – human services transportation plan (CPT-HSTP) for the Skagit region. The CPT-HSTP addresses transportation issues for special needs populations, including seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals.

Regional Land Use Growth

While the history of the Skagit region establishes the background for the Plan, forecast growth patterns also affect priorities, with forecast population and employment growth affecting transportation needs throughout the region and connections outside the region.

Local population dynamics are highly influenced by an area's employment climate. Generally, population growth is based primarily on immigration, driven by people moving into an area in search of, or taking, new jobs. In large part, population growth depends on how favorable an area's employment opportunities are in relation to other areas. Stated simply, people follow jobs and in turn create demand for local goods and services, such as housing. While natural increases and decreases in population growth have an effect, due to births and deaths, these trends tend to be steady influences on population dynamics, unlike the swings associated with people moving into and out of an area.

Historical Population Growth

Exhibit 3-1 shows historical population change in Skagit County and urban growth areas (UGAs) within the Skagit region. According to the Washington state Office of Financial Management (OFM), estimate population in Skagit County grew by nearly 28,000 people from 2000 to 2020, an increase of 27 percent at an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 1.4%.

The UGAs with the most growth between 2000 and 2020 were Mount Vernon, which grew by over 9,700 people at an AAGR of 1.7%. For the other cities' UGAs: Sedro-Woolley grew by over 2,800 people at an AAGR of 1.4%; Burlington grew by over 2,800 people at an AAGR of 1.7%; and Anacortes grew by over 3,200 people with an AAGR of 1.1%.

All other UGAs grew by less than 500 people, with Hamilton losing population during this timeframe.

71.4% of overall population growth in Skagit County has been located in urban growth areas over the 20-year period, with the remaining 28.6% outside of urban growth areas. **Exhibit 3-2** shows the historical change in the share of Skagit County population from 2000 to 2020. The distribution of population within the Skagit region has been shifting into UGAs over the last 20 years. However, the percentage share of growth outside of urban growth areas has been increasing since this analysis was last conducted in 2015.

A study done by the consulting firm BERK in 2014, using a different methodology than OFM uses for its population estimates, indicated that the population growth inside Skagit region UGAs from 2000–2010 was 79%, with 21% growth in non-UGA areas.

While methodological approaches and timeframes vary for estimating population growth, the two sources reviewed for Skagit 2045 were relatively close, with 71–79% of population growth going into UGAs within the last 10 to 20 years. This range of growth approaches the guidance in Countywide Planning Policy 1.2 for the Skagit region, which targets 80% of planned population growth to cities' and towns' incorporated areas, municipal unincorporated urban growth areas, and non-municipal urban growth areas (such as Bayview Ridge and Swinomish UGAs) over a 20-year period.

Skagit County UGAs are displayed in **Exhibit 3-3**. The exhibit shows the municipal urban growth areas of the four cities (Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley) and the four towns (Concrete, Hamilton, La Conner, Lyman), as well as the two non-municipal urban growth areas (Bayview Ridge, Swinomish).

Exhibit 3-1
Skagit County Population Inside and Outside Urban Growth Areas

	2000	2020	Average Annual Growth Rate
Total inside UGAs	68,417	88,021	1.4%
Total outside UGAs	34,562	42,429	1.1%
Total County	**102,979**	**130,450**	**1.3%**

Exhibit 3-2
Percent of Skagit County Population Inside and Outside Urban Growth Areas

	2000	2020	Change in County Share
Total inside UGAs	66.4%	67.5%	1.1%
Total outside UGAs	33.6%	32.5%	-0.9%

Source for Exhibit 3-1 and 3-2: Washington Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimate Program

Note: The population estimates are for all urban growth areas in Skagit County, including city limits and any unincorporated areas within the municipal UGAs, and non-municipal UGAs.

Public Art in La Conner

Section 3: **Relationship to Other Plans**

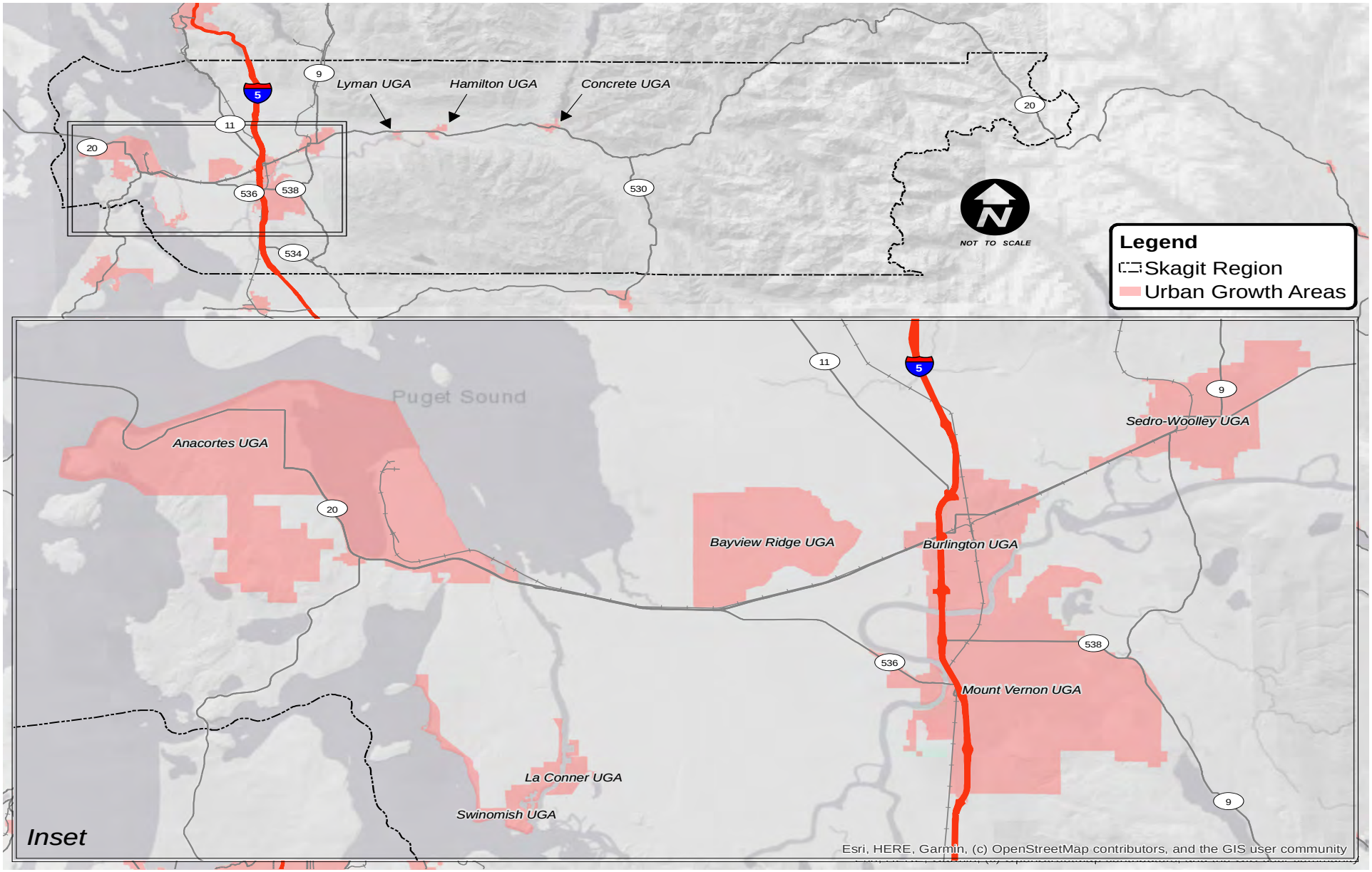


Exhibit 3-3 Skagit County Urban Growth Areas

Regional Population Growth by Urban Growth Area

The charts in **Exhibit 3-4** reflect forecast population growth organized by urban growth area. While these forecasts may exceed the growth that is expected in local jurisdictions' comprehensive plans, which plan for a horizon year of 2036, the overall trends are consistent with the expected growth rates across the Skagit region and have been coordinated with local comprehensive plan updates processes.

Population in the Skagit region is forecast to grow by over 46,000 by 2045. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.3%.

Regional Population Growth

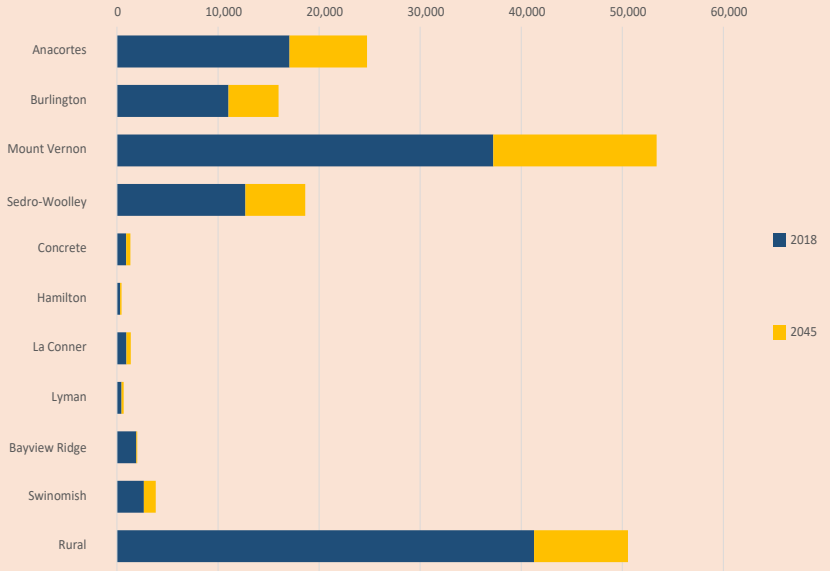
From 2018–2045, more than 46,000 people are expected to be added to the Skagit region.

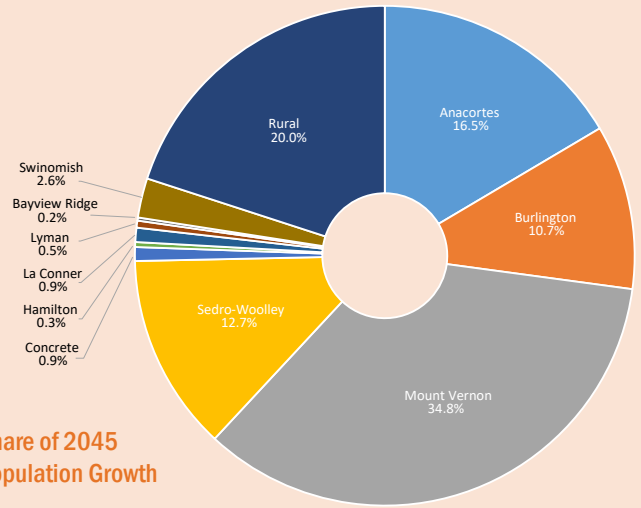
Overall, this represents an average annual growth rate of 1.3% for the Skagit region. 80% of this growth is forecast to occur within urban growth areas consistent with Countywide Planning Policies.

The increased population growth forecast for the Skagit region will add more travel to the regional arterials and state highways in and around the cities of Mount Vernon, Burlington and Sedro-Woolley. This will result in the need for adding capacity and upgrading existing roads to current urban standards, or utilizing efficiency strategies identified in Skagit 2045, such as, maximizing existing capacity through operational improvements, reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing mode share for automotive travel.

The population growth forecast used in Skagit 2045 is consistent with Countywide Planning Policy 1.2, which directs 80% of planned population growth to cities' and towns' incorporated areas, municipal unincorporated urban growth areas, and non-municipal urban growth areas (such as Bayview Ridge and Swinomish UGAs) over the next 20 years.

Exhibit 3-4
Regional Population Growth by Urban Growth Area, 2018–2045

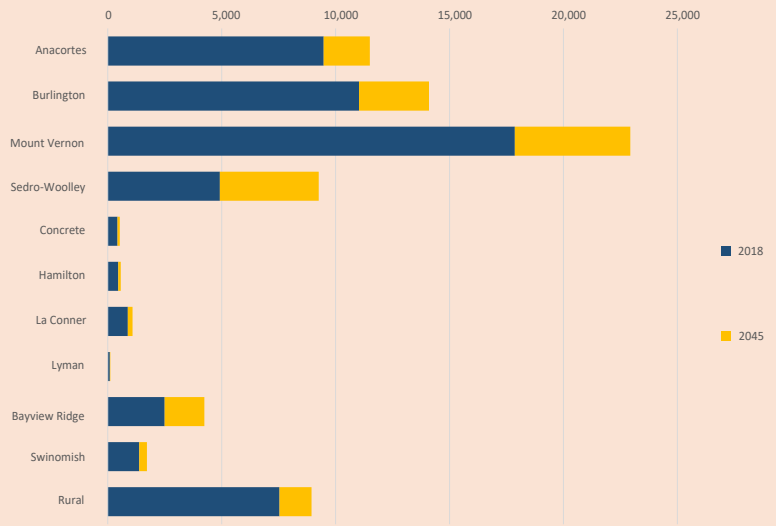


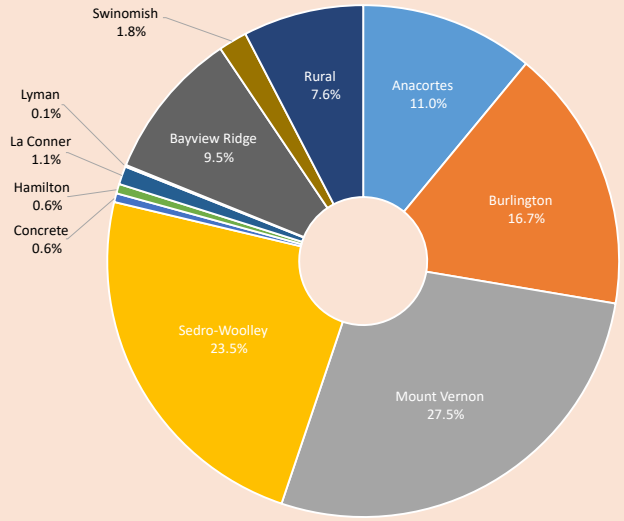


Share of 2045 Population Growth

Section 3: **Relationship to Other Plans**

Exhibit 3-5
Regional Employment Growth by Urban Growth Area (employees), 2018–2045





Share of 2045 Employment Growth

Regional Employment Growth by Urban Growth Area

The charts in **Exhibit 3-5** reflect forecast employment growth for the Skagit region and, like population, are also organized by urban growth area. Over 18,000 new employees are expected to be added to the Skagit region out to 2045. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.2%.

Employment growth is forecast to remain closely tied with population growth in the Skagit region. The ratio of jobs to population is expected to decrease slightly in the future from .45 in 2018 to .43 in 2045.

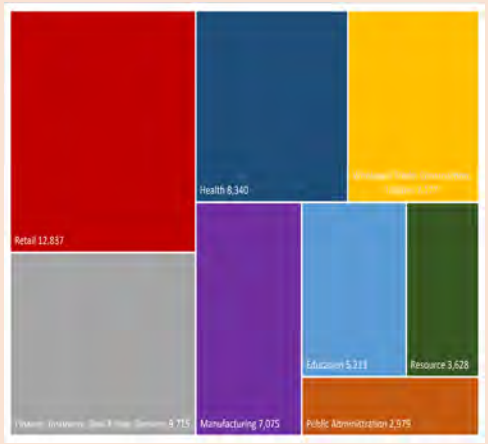
Regional Employment Growth

Over 18,000 new employees are expected to be added to the Skagit region out to 2045. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.2%.

The 1.2% forecast growth rate is slightly lower than the 1.5% annual growth rate forecast in Skagit 2040.

Exhibit 3-6 shows the employment growth by category from 2018–2045 and **Exhibit 3-7** shows the relative change in employment and population by UGA in the Skagit region.

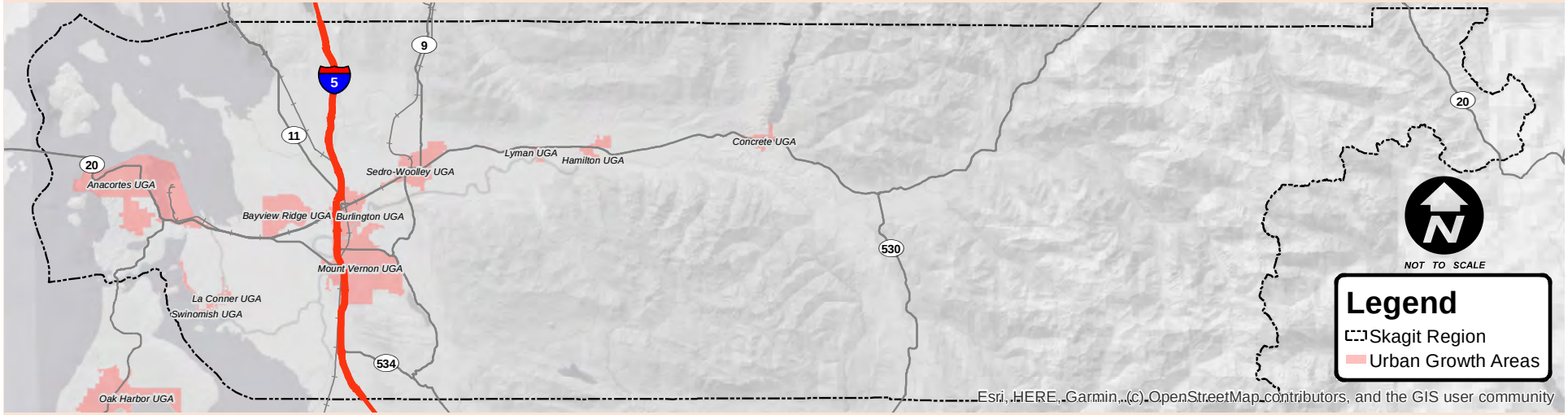
Exhibit 3-6 Regional Employment Growth by Category, 2018–2045



2018 Employment by Category

2018–2045 Employment Growth by Category

Exhibit 3-7 Regional Employment and Population Growth, 2018–2045



Urban Growth Areas	Employment			Population		
	2018	2045	% Change	2018	2045	% Change
Anacortes	9,477	11,501	21%	17,078	24,739	45%
Burlington	11,028	14,101	28%	11,042	15,991	45%
Mount Vernon	17,864	22,935	28%	37,230	53,390	43%
Sedro-Woolley	4,921	9,259	88%	12,709	18,629	47%
Concrete	427	530	24%	911	1,327	46%
Hamilton	*	571	24%	307	455	48%
La Conner	879	1,090	24%	940	1,368	45%
Lyman	*	111	23%	455	666	46%
Bayview Ridge	2,498	4,240	70%	1,923	2,017	5%
Swinomish	1,384	1,717	24%	2,660	3,845	45%
Rural	7,541	8,944	19%	41,265	50,558	23%
Total	**56,569**	**74,999**	**33%**	**126,520**	**172,984**	**37%**

Regional Travel Patterns

In 2008, NuStats conducted a comprehensive study of travel behavior in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island counties called the 2008 North Sound Travel Survey. The survey covered households throughout the three counties, including the urbanized area around Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Sedro-Woolley; cities and towns outside of the urbanized area; and unincorporated areas of Skagit County. The survey was conducted to assist with understanding the socioeconomic factors that affect travel, which in turn are applied in updating the regional travel demand forecasting model. The resulting survey data and model outputs provide a technical basis for defining transportation improvement needs.

The results of the survey provide information on regional travel patterns which affect the need for transportation improvements. Key survey results are summarized below.

Household Characteristics and Trip Rates

The number of people in a household affects the number and types of trips generated. A higher number of people in a household does not directly result in a higher number of trips generated per day. This is due to differences in income levels, the ages of household members, the number of vehicles, the number of licensed drivers and other factors. The following summarizes the household and trip characteristics for Skagit and Island counties, which were paired for the study:

- Vehicle trip rates averaged 7.0 trips per household. Vehicle trips are trips made by individuals in a household driving a vehicle, and a vehicle trip rate is the number of vehicle trips per household;
- Households reported an average of 2.3 persons per household and 2.3 vehicles per household;
- Certain demographic characteristics were positively associated with higher rates of travel. These were household income, number of vehicles, number of workers in household and number of students. Of these, the number of students had the greatest impact on trip rates;
- Households reported an average of 1.3 workers per household. Households with no workers reported making 5.0 trips per day, while those with three or more workers reported making 14.2 trips per day;
- Households reported an average of 0.4 students per household. Households with no students reported 6.4 trips per day, while those with three or more students reported 18.2 trips per day;
- On average, females made more trips than males. The female trip rate was 3.7, while males averaged 3.4 trips per day;
- Persons aged 45 to 54 years had the highest person trip rate (4.1 trips per day) among all age categories;
- Employed persons, either part-time or full-time, reported making an average of 4.0 trips per day, compared to 3.1 trips for unemployed persons 16 years or older. Students took 3.2 trips per day;
- Most households (63.5%) reported making between one and ten trips within a 24-hour period. Only 9.1% reported making zero trips, while 22.5% of surveyed households made between 11 and 20 trips, and 4.9% made more than 20 trips per day;
- For Skagit County, approximately one third of all trip purposes (32.5%) were recorded as “personal activities at home”. Work accounted for the next most frequent reason for travel (14.3%), followed by shopping (12.5%) and personal business (8.7%); and

- Overall Average Vehicle Occupancy for Skagit and Island counties was 1.6 persons per vehicle.

Exhibit 3-8 compares where the households and places of work are located for employed respondents of the Skagit region. The vast majority of workers do not cross county lines to get to their places of work. The exhibit also compares shopping trips., with greater than 95% of Skagit County resident shopping trips stayed within the county.

Travel Mode

As shown in Exhibit 3-9, based on the NuStats survey:

- Over two thirds (69%) of all trips were made by an automobile driver, and approximately 20% were made by an automobile passenger;
- Transit trips in Skagit County comprised under 1% of total trips;
- Ferry trips were under 1% in Skagit County of total trips; and
- Non-motorized trips accounted for over 6% of total trips in Skagit County. The rate of walking trips was approximately 10 times higher than bicycle trips.

Airplanes at Skagit Regional Airport

Exhibit 3-8 Cross-County Travel

County Lives In	Travels To			
	Whatcom	Skagit	Island	Out of Area
Travel for Work				
Skagit	3.3%	83.9%	2.3%	10.5%
Travel for Shopping				
Skagit	1.3%	95.5%	0.5%	2.7%

Exhibit 3-9 Travel Mode

Travel Mode	Skagit County
Walk	5.8%
Bicycle	0.6%
Drive Auto	69.1%
Passenger Auto	19.6%
Transit	0.3%
School Bus	3.5%
Taxi/Shuttle	0.2%
Motorcycle/Scooter	0.3%
Ferry	0.4%
Vanpool	0.1%
Other Mode	0.1%
Total	**100.0%**

Section 3: **Relationship to Other Plans**

Other Transportation Planning Efforts

Skagit 2045 builds upon and supports the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), statewide modal plans, and local government comprehensive plans. The following summarizes how the Plan relates to these plans and implementation programs.

Washington Transportation Plan

The Washington Transportation Plan 2040 and Beyond, which was completed in 2018, provides the umbrella for all metropolitan and regional transportation plans across Washington state. The WTP includes two phases. The first phase is the "policy plan" adopted by the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) and the second phase is the "implementation plan" completed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). WSTC prepares the policy plan as one of their duties under Washington state law (RCW 47.01.071), while WSDOT prepares the implementation plan to meet both requirements of a long-range statewide transportation plan under federal law (Title 23 USC 135) and a statewide multimodal transportation plan under Washington state law (RCW 47.06.040). Modal plans are also prepared by WSDOT in conjunction with this umbrella plan. These modal plan are detailed in Section 5, along with descriptions of each modal system and anticipated investments over the next 25 years.

"Washington's transportation system safely connects people and communities, fostering commerce, operating seamlessly across boundaries, and providing travel options to achieve an environmentally and financially sustainable system."

-WTP Vision

Consistent with statewide transportation system policy goals, the WTP sets forth the following six policy goals, in no particular order, for future investments in the transportation system:

1. Economic Vitality;
2. Preservation;
3. Safety;
4. Mobility;
5. Environmental; and
6. Stewardship.

The regional priorities in Skagit 2045 align with these transportation system policy goals. The process for establishing regional priorities and identifying improvement projects within the fiscally constrained Plan, support and are consistent with these WTP objectives.

Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Skagit 2045 supports the Washington state's Strategic Highway Safety Plan (Target Zero), in the goal of eliminating all roadway fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. The Skagit Council of Governments agrees to plan and program projects to help Washington state meet federal performance targets for roadway safety, which include statewide targets for the following performance measures:

1. Number of fatalities;
2. Fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled;
3. Number of serious injuries;
4. Serious injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled; and

5. Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries.

Appendix H, the Baseline System Performance Report, describes the performance of the Skagit regional transportation system for each of these performance measures.

Transportation Concurrency Requirements and Level-of-service Standards

Under Washington state law, required concurrency outcomes ensure transportation facilities and strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies within six years (RCW 36.70A.070). The purpose of concurrency is to assure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development are adequate to serve the development at the time it is available for occupancy and use, without decreasing service levels below locally established minimums. Concurrency ensures consistency in development approval and that development of adequate public facilities are completed in a timely manner – it also prevents development that is inconsistent with the public facilities necessary to support the development (WAC 365-196-840).

Local governments may adjust their transportation level-of-service standards for their local transportation system, which can have a direct impact on concurrency determinations. Consistent with Washington state law, level-of-service standards for the state highway and ferry systems are set by WSDOT for all Highways of Statewide Significance (RCW 47.06.140), and by Skagit 2045 for all other state routes (RCW 47.80.030). WSDOT establishes level-of-service standards for Highways of Statewide Significance in consultation with local governments, consistent with RCW 47.06.140. Concurrency requirements do not apply to the state highway and ferry system in the Skagit region.

Established levels of service for all state highway and ferry routes is included in **Appendix G**.

Local Government Transportation Plans

As required by the Washington state Growth Management Act, local governments prepare and update their comprehensive plans, including transportation elements. The transportation elements set community priorities and improvement strategies to address existing and future transportation needs. These elements primarily focus on arterials and collector streets within each local government's jurisdiction; however, needs in designated urban growth areas and connecting routes in other jurisdictions are also described in the elements.

Local transportation elements were reviewed to identify potential transportation projects for Skagit 2045. The planning process for Skagit 2045 combined projects from WSDOT, Skagit Transit and local jurisdictions with strategies to create the recommended framework for the Plan (see Section 4), based on the Skagit region's priorities and policies.

Skagit 2045's fiscally constrained project list incorporates all regionally significant projects that are proposed for the regional transportation system. The Plan provides a financial analysis showing how all these projects and strategies can be implemented. Only priority projects, based on

Washington State Ferry at Anacortes Ferry Terminal

the Skagit region's criteria and project-level evaluation, are included in the fiscally constrained project list. Skagit 2045 also identifies an illustrative list of projects for the regional transportation system, should additional funding become available outside of what is reasonably anticipated in the Plan.

Skagit 2045 also is consistent with land use plans and forecasts from the local comprehensive plans. This process provides consistency between the local land use plans and the regional transportation system needs. Population, household and employment forecasts utilized in Skagit 2045 were coordinated with local agencies' forecasts used for comprehensive plan update processes, with most being completed in 2016. The planning horizons for local comprehensive plans is 2036, which is 20 years from when they were supposed to be adopted in 2016. Skagit 2045 has a planning horizon of 2045, with this long-term distance between local comprehensive plans (2036) and Skagit 2045 (2045) accounting for higher levels of population and employment forecast than in local plans.

Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan

Federal law requires communities to prepare a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (CPT-HSTP) to be eligible for certain federal funding programs, especially through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). CPT-HSTPs serve as unified, comprehensive strategies that identify transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and low-income populations. The Washington State Department of Transportation is the designated recipient for many FTA funding programs aimed at achieving coordinated human services transportation in Washington state, and WSDOT is responsible for allocating federal funding through these programs. Consistent with Washington state and federal law, WSDOT requires that human services transportation projects/strategies be prioritized at a regional level and derived from a locally developed CPT-HSTP.

The CPT-HSTP for Skagit County was updated in 2018 through the coordination of the Skagit Council of Governments, Skagit Transit, private non-profits, Indian tribal governments and other stakeholders. CPT-HSTP recommendations were organized as coordination initiatives to better reflect the breadth and depth of strategies to achieve a fully coordinated system organized by policies, programs and projects. The CPT-HSTP identifies the following categories of strategies:

1. Sustain Existing Services;
2. Expand Existing Services;
3. Create New Services;
4. Enhance Services;
5. Facilitate Access to Services;
6. Coordinate Services, Support Functions, and Planning; and
7. Promote Environmental Sustainability.

Each of these categories has one or more prioritized activity associated with it to assist with achieving the strategy. In addition to strategies and activities, the CPT-HSTP identified several options for continuing coordination and implementation following the plan update in 2018. These three coordination and implementation options are:

1. Establish an ongoing coordination group with regular meetings;
2. Coordinate planning and public outreach activities among partners when applicable; and

3. Coordinate to leverage funding among a working group of stakeholders.

The CPT-HSTP reflects the needs of special needs populations and human services transportation delivery in the Skagit region. Skagit 2045 identifies how these services fit as part of the overall regional transportation system.

Other Related Planning Efforts

Skagit 2045 supports regional planning efforts which intersect with transportation related issues, including recovery plans for Chinook and steelhead. These plans guides recovery efforts in the Skagit River watershed and in Puget Sound.

Chinook salmon and steelhead recovery in Puget Sound is led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the West Coast Region of their National Marine Fisheries Service, in partnership with many other organizations. Tribal partners in the Skagit region include: Samish Indian Nation; Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe; Swinomish Indian Tribal Community; and Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. Many other federal, state, local and private partners are also partnering to restore health salmon runs.

Puget Sound Chinook Recovery: Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan

Chinook salmon are listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, a chapter of the Recovery Plan for Puget Sound Chinook Salmon, calls for Washington state and local road owners to ensure construction of future fish-passage structures that follow a set of performance measures to ensure high-quality habitat connectivity.

Where roadways cross waterways, culverts were historically installed to guide and control stream flows. These culverts inadvertently barred native fish and other wildlife species from a continuous path of travel up and down streams. These fish-passage barriers have been identified as a constraint to Chinook and other salmon species recovery.

The recovery plan calls upon government entities to remove fish-passage barriers and replace them with structures which meet performance measures. Performance measures include:

- Hydrology – allowance for a range of water flows;
- Sediment Transport and Deposition – allow sediment to be transported downstream, rather than accumulating upstream in watersheds;
- Woody Debris Transport and Storage – allow for the transport and storage of wood of the size appropriate for the watershed and location in question;
- Alluvial Fan Processes – roadway crossing structures must not disrupt natural alluvial fan processes such as sediment and large woody debris movement, channel creation, and more;
- Floodplain Processes – allow for hydrologic connections to off-channel and side channel habitats;
- Habitat Connectivity – provide the appropriate level of habitat connectivity at roadway crossings;
- Tidal Influence – allow for the full natural extent of tidal influence; and
- Fish Passage – provide for the passage of native fishes, particularly anadromous salmonids, at all life stages.

Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery

Steelhead are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Recovery Plan for Puget Sound Steelhead provides guidance for protection and recovery of Puget Sound steelhead. Primary pressures contributing to the decline and listing of Puget Sound steelhead are identified in the recovery plan as:

- Fish passage barriers at road crossings;
- Dams, including fish passage and flood control;
- Floodplain impairments, including agriculture;
- Residential, commercial, industrial development (including impervious runoff);
- Timber harvest management;
- Water withdrawals and altered flows;
- Ecological and genetic interactions between hatchery- and natural-origin fish;
- Harvest pressures (including selective harvest) on natural-origin fish; and
- Juvenile mortality in estuary and marine waters of Puget Sound.

Section 4
Transportation Priorities & Policies

Section 4: **Transportation Priorities & Policies**

Skagit 2045 guides investments in regional transportation system over the next 25 years. The Plan represents the efforts of governments serving the Skagit region to coordinate the planning of diverse transportation systems to support the region's anticipated growth, and meet regional priorities and goals. The Plan was developed through a cooperative process that involved the public, the Washington State Department of Transportation and other state agencies, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, Skagit County, cities and towns, ports, transit agencies, private non-profits and a variety of other interested parties.

A wide range of regional transportation projects and strategies are identified in Skagit 2045. These projects and strategies create a comprehensive, integrated, multimodal transportation system to serve the region over the next 25 years. The total costs of these projects and strategies will outstrip the likely available future funding necessary to implement them. Because not all projects and strategies can be funded over the next 25 years, the Skagit region established priorities for its transportation improvements. The priorities were used in the technical evaluation or projects and strategies to establish a prioritization framework for the Plan. The framework essentially identifies the core transportation needs which other regional improvements will tie into, and helps guide the preparation of the fiscally constrained Plan. See **Section 7** for more information on fiscal constraint, including forecast revenues and expenditures during the timeframe of Skagit 2045.

Roundabout in Anacortes

Regional Priorities

Through the planning process for Skagit 2045, regional priorities were prepared that focus on a systems approach to moving people, freight and goods. These regional priorities are cross-referenced with input received through virtual public engagement opportunities, to see how well aligned these priorities are with those who participated by providing input to the planning process. Through not intended to be representative of public opinion for the Skagit region, this input is valuable to see how well these regional priorities align with those who decided to express their views through the planning process. **Appendix D** includes an analysis of participants priorities that participated in public outreach opportunities for the Plan.

The priorities set for the regional transportation system are consistent with those established in the Washington Transportation Plan, the long-range statewide transportation plan in our state. The priorities for the Skagit region, in no particular order of priority, are **Economic Vitality**, **Preservation**, **Safety**, **Mobility**, **Environment** and **Stewardship**.

Economic Vitality: To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support and enhance the movement of people and goods, to ensure a prosperous regional economy.

The movement of freight and goods and supporting economic sectors that rely on the regional transportation system is a priority for the Skagit region. Freight movement plays an important role in the regional economy by transporting various raw materials and finished products to and from the region via rail, air, truck and ship. The efficient movement of freight is, therefore, important for the

regional transportation system. These elements are also necessary for providing access to business and well-paying jobs. Of equal importance is the improvement of multimodal transportation networks for serving retail, service and tourism in the Skagit region's diverse communities.

Preservation: To maintain, preserve and extend the life and utility of prior investments in regional transportation systems and services.

The Skagit region understands the importance of preserving the existing rail, bridge, pavement, transit, river, ferry and airport facilities – each is a critical economic asset. However, revenues to governments directed toward transportation maintenance are inadequate. Governments at all levels find it difficult to supply general revenues to maintenance when those funds are needed elsewhere for other important purposes. Consequently, long-term maintenance and preservation, such as pavement management, is being deferred with long-term implications on increasing costs and degrading quality of the regional transportation system.

Safety: To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the regional transportation system.

The safety and security of all individuals who use the regional transportation system are of high importance in the planning, design, construction and maintenance of regional facilities. Improvements made to the network that aim to reduce fatalities and serious injuries, can also ease traffic congestion. While efforts to improve safety should be taken across all modes of transportation, there is greater emphasis on improving roadway safety for vehicular drivers and passengers, bicyclists and pedestrians given the greater rates of fatalities and serious injuries in these modes.

Mobility: To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout the Skagit region, including congestion relief and improved freight mobility.

Improving regional connections to facilitate the movement of people and goods contributes to a strong regional economy, and a better quality of life for the public is crucial for continued growth. Attaining greater mobility involves balancing a multimodal network that integrates all modes and is able to contribute to an efficient network of services, meeting varied transportation needs. Included in this emphasis on mobility is maximizing the operational aspects of existing facilities.

Regional Priorities

Economic Vitality

Preservation

Safety

Mobility

Environment

Stewardship

Environment: To enhance regional quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities and protect the environment.

Improving environmental quality of our neighborhoods and communities will lead to a sustainable transportation system and economic vitality. This includes finding ways to reduce environmental impacts that could potentially result from a transportation project, as well as promoting environmentally efficient modes of transportation such as transit, vanpooling, car-sharing, bicycling and walking. In addition to reducing impacts, restoring environmental function can also be achieved through transportation projects that correct deficiencies caused by past practices, such as improving barriers to fish passage under roadways.

Stewardship: To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the regional transportation system.

As a regional priority, Stewardship captures the overall function of the regional transportation system in a general sense. One way to ensure Stewardship is implemented equally, is to consider Environmental Justice impacts of transportation projects and the benefits and disbenefits imposed on minority and low-income populations, which have historically borne a disproportionate adverse impact by transportation decision making. Seamless integration of land use and transportation policies is another way to advance Stewardship as a regional priority, as separate actions relating to land use and the transportation system affect each other.

In addition to these six regional priorities, Skagit 2045 also considers project costs and timing in the prioritization of regional transportation projects. These factors may greatly influence the priority of a project for the Skagit region.

The Skagit region will strive to ensure that proposed transportation projects and strategies provide the best value for the least cost, consistent with federal requirements for fiscally constrained planning and Washington state requirements for least-cost planning. The methodology utilized includes an accounting of expected costs and benefits for each project evaluated in Skagit 2045. Evaluation is both qualitative and quantitative, with each project evaluated based on the six regional priorities of the Plan and improvements in travel demand outputs in 2045 for roadway projects that can be modeled. Each project is assigned a priority in the plan, based on how well the project aligns with the regional priorities. Estimated project costs are provided by project sponsors, while potential environmental impacts are evaluated at a planning level. Finally, least-cost planning is used to support the decision of what projects are fiscally constrained in Skagit 2045 – including all Funded and Planned projects which the Skagit region expects will be funded from 2021–2045 with reasonable revenue estimates – and which projects are instead Illustrative, which would be fiscally constrained if additional resources become available. **Section 7** includes further information on the financial balancing included within the Plan and the determination of fiscal constraint.

Key Corridors

In addition to the baseline improvements and efficiency strategies, Skagit 2045 identifies the need for improvements to existing corridors to address future transportation demands of the Skagit region.

Regional Policies

Regional policies help guide the Skagit region in implementing the Plan and focus on the six regional priorities, as well as coordination and implementation of projects and programs. Policies includes a mix of strategies and goals, which are summarized in this section. Goals are desired future conditions related to the regional transportation system, and strategies are actions that can be taken to help realize these goals.

Policies

Policies, goals and strategies were reviewed and checked for consistency with the input collected from the public outreach collected during the Plan development process. As the project progressed and technical analyses was completed, these policies and goals were revised and consolidated to eliminate redundancy, address inconsistencies with technical findings and reflect the regional nature and purpose of the document. Policies, goals and strategies should continue to be reviewed and refined every few years to ensure that they reflect the current vision and anticipated direction of the Skagit region.

Policy 1: Identify, encourage, and implement strategies and projects that will maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the regional transportation system through a cooperative effort with the public, federal government, state

and local governments, tribal government, private sector, and other interested parties;

Goals and Strategies for Policy 1:

1.1 Select and build the most efficient mix of modes and facilities based on the need to balance accessibility and demand;

1.2 Ensure that modes are interconnected in a manner that best serves the users by identifying missing links and connections, and proposing projects that will provide needed linkages;

1.3 Consider strategies that recognize the future densification of urban areas as they grow and mature, while transitioning and connecting seamlessly with rural areas;

1.4 Support Skagit Transit and other transit agencies serving the Skagit region in acquiring funding from outside sources to help implement strategies identified in the Plan;

1.5 Provide level-of-service (LOS) standards across modes that meet the needs of the user while recognizing the uniqueness of each mode;

1.6 Provide for the safety and security of the users on all modes by participating in Washington state and federal programs to increase safety and security, and place an emphasis on projects that incorporate safety and security;

1.7 Provide accessibility to the regional transportation system, through user-friendly connections, by ensuring that intermodal facilities are not designed and constructed in isolation. In particular, ensure that urban areas have interconnected opportunities for safe and convenient non-motorized modes;

1.8 Ensure transportation concurrency requirements are met consistent with the Growth Management Act;

1.9 Provide accessibility to the transportation system through timely information by maintaining a regional Intelligent Transportation Systems architecture that includes traveler information as a major component;

1.10 Provide access to the regional transportation system in a manner that balances user convenience with safety and preservation of capacity. This includes developing and implementing access management plans where access issues are, or are likely to become, impediments to the safe and efficient operation of roadways for all vehicles and non-motorized users, within the context of a growing region; and

1.11 Coordinate road construction projects with Skagit Transit to ensure current and future public transportation infrastructure is considered in design and construction.

Policy 2: Provide a Plan that identifies significant transportation facilities and services that support local comprehensive plans and ensures ongoing evaluation necessary to remain current with local, regional, inter-regional, state, federal, and public needs and requirements, while recognizing the interrelationships within the contiguous urban area and areas immediately adjacent to them;

Roadway Maintenance on State Route 20

Goals and Strategies for Policy 2:

2.1 Ensure the Plan is up-to-date;

2.2 Develop a regional growth strategy that incorporates and expresses the growth management plans of the individual jurisdictions. Consider the regional growth strategy when identifying and selecting projects and programs for funding; and

2.3 Establish a Plan amendment process that will accommodate changes in local, regional, state, federal, private sector, and pubic needs between Plan updates.

Policy 3: Protect the integrity of the investment in the regional transportation system by encouraging and prioritizing timely maintenance of the system;

Goals and Strategies for Policy 3:

3.1 Monitor the condition of transportation facilities by working with SCOG member jurisdictions to identify critical facilities, develop metrics and establish a data collection program;

Boneshaker Bicycle Festival in La Conner

3.2 Time replacement and rehabilitation of facilities to minimize investment by working with SCOG member jurisdictions to develop a regional pavement management system. Encourage agencies to evaluate the timing of replacement and rehabilitation needs when proposing capacity improvement projects for the Regional Transportation Improvement Program; and

3.3 Ensure that the operation, appearance, and functionality of infrastructure meets users' needs by promoting these elements in project selection processes.

Policy 4: Facilitate cooperation, coordination and information exchange among SCOG member jurisdictions.

Goals and Strategies for Policy 4:

4.1 Provide a regional forum for interested parties to discuss and coordinate their transportation projects, programs and plans with each other. Consider strategies that recognize the future densification of urban areas as they grow and mature;

4.2 Identify sources of funding for transportation planning, programs and projects that will implement the Plan and assist in acquiring needed funds.

Policy 5: Maintain and implement a participation plan to ensure the early, meaningful, and continuous participation of the region's interested parties in the planning process.

Goals and Strategies for Policy 5:

5.1 Develop a public involvement plan prior to anticipated major Plan updates and implement throughout the planning process to ensure that all interested parties have the opportunity for meaningful involvement;

5.2 Ensure a two-way communication process in the Plan public participation process by presenting information in a number and variety of media, while incorporating an appropriate number and variety of feedback methods;

5.3 Time public participation interfaces to provide public input into decisions before they are made and provide decision makers with an accurate assessment of public input;

5.4 Make the public participation process meaningful by considering public comments prior to making decisions; and

5.5 Maintain an ongoing public participation process.

Policy 6: Consistent with Skagit County Countywide Planning Policies, encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.

Background: As noted in Section 3 of this document, Skagit County jurisdictions planning under the Growth Management Act are required to develop a set of Countywide Planning Policies. The policies are intended to help the jurisdictions within the county coordinate their GMA planning efforts. These policies provide an umbrella for all local government planning in Skagit County for jurisdictions planning under GMA requirements. The Countywide Planning Policies for transportation are:

6.1 Multi-purpose transportation routes and facilities shall be designed to accommodate present and future traffic volumes;

6.2 Primary arterial access points shall be designed to ensure maximum safety while minimizing traffic flow disruptions;

6.3 The development of new transportation routes and improvements to existing routes shall minimize adverse social, economic and environmental impacts and costs;

6.4 Transportation elements of the Comprehensive Plans shall be designed to; facilitate the flow of people, goods and services so as to strengthen the local and regional economy; conform with the Land Use Element; be based upon an inventory of the existing Skagit County transportation network and needs; and encourage the conservation of energy;

6.5 Provisions in Comprehensive Plans for the location and improvement of existing and future transportation networks and public transportation shall be made in a manner consistent with the goals, policies and land use map of the locally adopted comprehensive plan;

6.6 The development of a recreational transportation network shall be encouraged and coordinated between state and local governments and private enterprises;

6.7 Transportation services for seniors and individuals with disabilities shall be provided by public transportation operators to provide for those who, through age and/or disability, are unable to transport themselves;

6.8 Level of Service standards and safety standards shall be established that coordinate and link with the urban growth and urban areas to optimize land use and traffic compatibility over the long term. New development shall mitigate transportation impacts concurrently

Train Monument in Sedro-Woolley

with the development and occupancy of the project;

6.9 An all-weather arterial road system shall be coordinated with industrial and commercial areas;

6.10 Cost effectiveness shall be a consideration in transportation expenditure decisions and balanced for both safety and service improvements;

6.11 An integrated regional transportation system shall be designed to minimize air pollution by promoting the use of alternative transportation modes, reducing vehicular traffic, maintaining acceptable traffic flow, and siting of facilities; and

6.12 All new and expanded transportation facilities shall be sited, constructed, and maintained to minimize noise levels.

Consistency between the Countywide Planning Policies and Skagit 2045 is an important aspect of the Plan.

Section 5
Transportation Improvements & Programs

Section 5: **Transportation Improvements & Programs**

The regional transportation system consists of state highways and ferry services, county roads and ferry services, city streets, non-motorized transportation facilities, transit facilities, airports, marine ports and railroads. This section of Skagit 2045 summarizes the existing and proposed regional transportation system, and regionally significant transportation improvement projects.

Components of Existing and Proposed Regional Transportation System:

- State highways and ferry system;
- County ferry system;
- Principal arterials,other arterials, and collectors that serve a "regional" function (i.e. serves as a regional connection, serves a large employment center, serves an economic/trade center, etc);
- Regional transit facilities;
- Regional non-motorized facilities;
- Regional intermodal facilities including marine ports and airports;
- Railroads;
- Strategic Freight Corridors (Freight and Goods Transportation System: T-1 and T-2; R-1; and W1–W4); and
- National Highway System and Strategic Highway Network (i.e. military significance).

Regional Transportation Facilities

Washington state highways form the core of the regional transportation system and most city and county arterials provide some level of connection to the state highway system. State highways connect the region with other parts of Washington and facilitate travel between counties. Therefore, keeping these routes operating efficiently and safely is critical. The Washington State Department of Transportation and local agencies have identified a wide range of improvements to these highways to address preservation, safety, congestion, operations and other transportation-system needs. Following is a summary of the existing regional transportation facilities for all modes of transportation.

Regional Roadway System

Interstate 5

Interstate 5 (I-5) is the only interstate highway serving the Skagit region and is the backbone of the region's transportation system. To the north, I-5 connects the Skagit region to Whatcom County, and the border crossings to British Columbia. To the south, I-5 connects the Skagit region to Snohomish County and the central Puget Sound region. With a length of approximately 25 miles within Skagit County, I-5 provides access and connectivity to the population centers along the corridor. I-5 is classified as a Highway of Statewide Significance by Washington state and is part of the National Highway System.

Interstate 5 is a multi-lane divided freeway with full access control. Within the federally designated Urbanized Area – which includes Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and some surrounding areas – it includes six interchanges, including its interchange with State Route (SR) 20, another Highway of Statewide Significance. Outside of the Urbanized Area, six additional interchanges along I-5 provide access to smaller communities, agricultural lands and recreation areas.

This facility crosses the Skagit River with a four-lane bridge, providing a critical regional connection across the river.

Traffic Volumes

Within the Urbanized Area, I-5 carries approximately 77,000 vehicles per day (VPD). North of State Route 11, existing volumes decrease to approximately 54,000 vehicles per day. The 2045 travel forecasts for the region show an increase of about 6.5%, which represents an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.3%. The forecast growth in traffic on I-5 by 2045 will result in the freeway mainline operating at or near capacity during p.m. peak period demand hours, particularly in the northbound direction between the Hickox Road interchange and Bow Hill Road interchange. The effect of this will be daily periods of congestion that will likely affect the connecting local street systems, resulting in longer delays than in 2021. The increase

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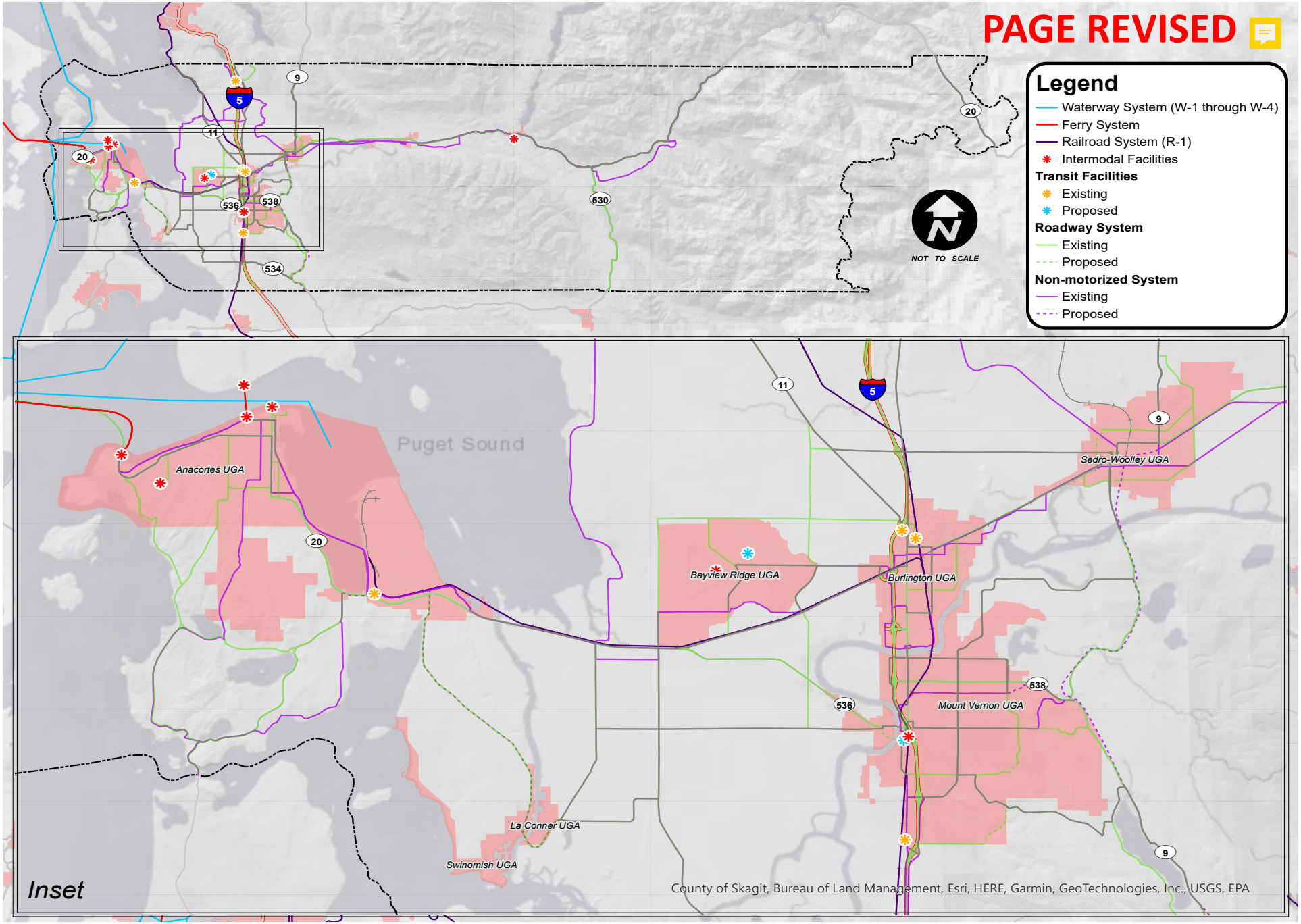


Exhibit 5-1 Skagit Regional Transportation System

in traffic to and from the interchanges could also result in additional safety and operations challenges to local street systems. Other than improvements to the Cook Road interchange, WSDOT has not identified any capacity expansion improvements to address the forecasted congestion. Rather, a strategy of reducing or spreading out traffic demand will be utilized through Intelligent Transportation Systems and operational improvements on Interstate 5.

Improvements on local street networks may compliment operational improvements on Interstate 5 by better integrating local and state transportation systems. And capitalizing on modes of travel, other than single-occupancy vehicles, may reduce vehicle travel demand on Interstate 5.

Freight Travel

Interstate 5 is designated a part of the National Highway Freight Network of the U.S. by the Federal Highway Administration. Interstates form the core of the National Highway Freight Network, which consists of critical highways across the U.S., along with border crossings into Canada and Mexico.

Maps of Existing Transportation Facilities

Regional transportation facilities are included in a series of maps in **Appendix G.**

Interstate 5 is classified as a T-1 truck freight corridor, which means it carries more than 10 million tons of truck freight per year. This reflects both through truck trips not beginning or ending in the Skagit region, and local trucking activities using I-5. All T-1 classified facilities are considered Strategic Freight Corridors and receive priority for funding through Washington state's Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board.

South of State Route 20, 9.4% of daily traffic is trucks. This equates to an average of about 6,900 trucks per day on I-5 through the Skagit region. North of SR 20, trucks account for 6.7% of the total daily volume, equal to about 3,300 trucks per day.

Other Modes

Interstate 5 presents a barrier to many modes of travel. At certain locations, Interstate 5 is a barrier for east-to-west non-motorized travel as locations to cross the interstate are limited. This can result in some out-of-direction non-motorized travel for crossing between the east and west sides of the interstate. The number of interchanges in the Urbanized Area provides crossing points, but these are impacted by relatively high volumes of traffic, which can impact safety for non-motorized travel. The City of Burlington completed the Tammi Wilson Memorial Trail along Gages Slough which allows bicyclists and pedestrians to cross under I-5 away from traffic. Future investments in non-motorized transportation should provide connections to this link to reduce bicyclists' and pedestrians' exposure to high traffic volumes near the interchanges and facilitate non-motorized travel across I-5.

Level of Service

Interstate 5 is a Highway of Statewide Significance with level-of-service (LOS) standards for this route set by WSDOT, in accord with Washington state law. The standards are LOS D in the Urbanized Area and LOS C for the rest of I-5 in the Skagit region.

State Route 20

State Route 20 connects the Skagit region to Interstate 5 and destinations east and west serving both rural and urban transportation needs. Traveling east from I-5, SR 20 covers nearly 70 miles serving the communities of Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, Lyman, Hamilton, Concrete, and Rockport, as well as providing access to North Cascades National Park, Mount-Baker Snoqualmie National Forest and Ross Lake National Recreation Area. SR 20 is the primary access to these

federal lands in east Skagit County and neighboring counties.

West of Interstate 5 towards Naval Air Station Whidbey Island in Island County, State Route 20 is part of the federal Strategic Highway Network, a designation for facilities which have strategic defense significance to the U.S.

A spur branches off State Route 20 from Sharpe's Corner to provide access to Anacortes and both the Washington state and Skagit County ferry systems. SR 20 is classified by Washington state as a Highway of Statewide Significance and State Scenic Byway for the entire alignment through the Skagit region.

This facility crosses the Swinomish Slough with two, two-lane bridges, providing a critical regional connection to Fidalgo Island. The northern bridge also includes a non-motorized connection across the Swinomish Slough.

Traffic Volumes

In the Skagit region, daily traffic volumes on State Route 20 range from 34,000 VPD near Sharpe's Corner to roughly 5,000 VPD near Concrete. Skagit 2045 forecasts show an increase in p.m. peak hour traffic volumes of approximately 23%, with an average annual growth rate of around 1.1% per year from 2018 to 2045.

Freight Travel

State Route 20 is classified as a T-2 truck freight corridor between Sedro-Woolley and Anacortes, carrying over 9 million tons of freight per year. South of Sharpe's Corner, SR 20 is also classified T-2, carrying 3.6 million tons of freight per year. East of Sedro-Woolley, SR 20 is classified as a T-3 truck freight corridor. The SR 20 spur in Anacortes is also classified T-3.

Between Concrete and the State Route 530 junction, approximately 9 % of the daily traffic on SR 20 is trucks. This equates to approximately 540 trucks per day. On SR 20 west of the SR 536 junction, trucks comprise about 6 % of the 33,000 VPD, or about 2,000 trucks per day.

Other Modes

State Route 20 provides access to a range of recreational activities. Bicycling occurs along sections of the highway, and several sections of SR 20 have been designated as United States Bicycle Route 10. East of Sedro-Woolley, the Cascade Trail provides a parallel alternate route for bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians to travel to Concrete. Most of the trail is currently unpaved. Skagit Transit operates several routes along SR 20, providing service to Anacortes, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, Lyman, Hamilton and Concrete.

Level of Service

State Route 20 is a Highway of Statewide Significance with level-of-service (LOS) standards for this route set by WSDOT, in accord with Washington state law. The standards are LOS D in the Urbanized Area and Anacortes Urban Area (including the SR 20 spur through Anacortes), and LOS C for the rest of SR 20 in the Skagit region.

State Route 9

State Route 9 is a north-south highway that provides a parallel corridor to Interstate 5, connecting Skagit County and Sedro-Woolley to Snohomish County to the south and to Whatcom County and the Canadian border to the north. From the Snohomish County border, SR 9 extends approximately two miles before

Roadway Resurfacing in Skagit County

it connects with SR 534 near Lake McMurray, and continues north another 10 miles to connect with SR 538 in Mount Vernon. From SR 538, SR 9 extends approximately six miles to SR 20 in Sedro-Woolley, continuing north another 10 miles to the Whatcom County border.

This facility crosses the Skagit River with a two-lane bridge, providing a critical regional connection across the river.

Traffic Volumes

Daily traffic volumes on State Route 9 range from 1,200 VPD at SR 534 to more than 11,000 VPD near SR 20 in Sedro-Woolley. Skagit 2045 forecasts show a decrease in p.m. peak hour traffic volumes of around 53%, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 2.6% from 2018 to 2045.

Freight Traffic

State Route 9 is classified as a T-3 truck freight corridor, carrying between 610,000 and 2.8 million tons of freight per year. South of SR 534, around 10.6% of the daily traffic on SR 9 is trucks. North of Sedro-Woolley, approximately 17.3% of the daily traffic is trucks, or 590 trucks per day.

Interstate 5 Bridge over Skagit

Other Modes

State Route 9 provides access to a range of recreational activities and is a popular bicycling route along some sections of the highway. Skagit County has long-term plans to extend the Centennial Trail from Snohomish County to Whatcom County. Former railroad right of way could be considered for portions of this trail, providing separation between high-speed vehicles and bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. Skagit Transit operates on SR 9 from SR 538 to Sedro-Woolley.

Level of Service

State Route 9 is not a Highway of Statewide Significance, so under the Washington state RTPO law, level-of-service standards for this route are set jointly by WSDOT and SCOG through Skagit 2045. The standards are LOS D in the Urbanized Area and LOS C for the rest of SR 9 in the Skagit region.

State Route 530

State Route 530 is a two-lane, north-south highway which connects SR 20 near Rockport south to Snohomish County.

This facility crosses the Skagit River with a two-lane bridge, providing a critical regional connection across the river.

Traffic Volumes

Daily traffic volumes on State Route 530 range from 1,600 VPD in the south near the Snohomish County border, to

approximately 1,300 VPD near SR 20. Skagit 2045 forecasts show an increase in p.m. peak traffic hour volumes of approximately 30%, with an annual average growth rate of approximately 1.5% from 2018 to 2045.

Freight Traffic

State Route 530 is classified as a T-3 truck freight corridor from SR 20 to the Snohomish County border. SR 530 carries approximately 0.9 million tons of freight per year. Approximately 12.7% of the daily traffic is trucks.

Other Modes

State Route 530 provides access to scenic bicycling activities. The route has narrow shoulders but the relatively low traffic volumes make this route a potential cycle touring route.

Level of Service

SR 530 is not a Highway of Statewide Significance in the Skagit region, so under the Washington state RTPO law, level-of-service standards for this route are set jointly by WSDOT and SCOG through Skagit 2045. The standard is LOS C for SR 530 in the Skagit region.

State Route 534

State Route 534 is a two-lane, east-west highway that connects SR 9 near Lake McMurray to I-5 near Conway. Although only five miles long, this facility provides an important link from I-5 to SR 9 south of Mount Vernon.

Traffic Volumes

Daily traffic volumes on State Route 534 range from 1,200 VPD at SR 9, to 8,000 VPD near I-5. Skagit 2045 forecasts show an increase in p.m. peak hour traffic volumes of approximately 28%, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 1.0% from 2018 to 2045.

Freight Traffic

State Route 534 is classified a T-3 truck freight corridor, carrying around 580,000 tons of freight per year.

Other Modes

State Route 534 provides access to a range of recreational activities. Some sections of the highway are a popular route for bicyclists.

Level of Service

State Route 534 is not a Highway of Statewide Significance, so under the state RTPO law, level-of-service standards for this route are set jointly by WSDOT and SCOG through Skagit 2045. The standard is LOS C for SR 534.

State Route 536

This east-west highway connects State Route 20 with Interstate 5 in Mount Vernon, and is approximately five miles long. This facility crosses the Skagit River with a two-lane bridge, providing a critical regional connection across the river.

Traffic Volumes

Daily traffic volumes on State Route 536 range from 8,100 VPD at SR 20, to 19,000 VPD near the Division Street Bridge in Mount Vernon. Skagit 2045 forecasts show an increase in p.m. peak hour traffic volumes of approximately 30%, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 1.5% from 2018 to 2045. The Division Street Bridge is one of the most congested roadway segments in the Plan's 2045 Baseline Scenario. Mount Vernon has identified the need for additional capacity across the Skagit River, but due to the complexity of rebuilding the existing bridge or adding an additional one, this project is included in the illustrative portion of the Plan.

Guemes Island Ferry

Freight Traffic

State Route 536 in west Mount Vernon is classified as a T-2 truck freight corridor, carrying approximately 4.1 million tons of freight per year. Approximately 5.5% of daily traffic is trucks. The remaining portions of SR 536 (west of the Skagit River and west of McLean Road) are classified as T-3, carrying between 1.3 million and 2.2 million tons of freight per year. Truck percentages on these segments range from 5–6%.

Other Modes

State Route 536 is used by the Skagit Transit 40x route. Also, SR 536 provides access to Skagit Station where travelers can board Skagit Transit, Island Transit, or Whatcom Transit Authority buses to connect to other regions through intercounty bus services. Skagit Station connects to passenger rail services provided by Amtrak and intercity bus services provided by Greyhound Lines. Amtrak and Greyhound services often work in conjunction with one another to provide complimentary services. BoltBus is an operating entity of Greyhound and also provides services to Skagit Station, providing travel opportunities along the Interstate 5 corridor.

The Division Street Bridge has a narrow sidewalk on the south side of the bridge. Additional non-motorized capacity or safety improvements would be beneficial to bicyclists and pedestrians crossing the Skagit River. West of the Skagit River, State Route 536 has relatively wide shoulders and is a popular bicycle connection to the flat and scenic agricultural areas of the Skagit Valley.

Level of Service

State Route 536 is not a Highway of Statewide Significance, so under the state RTPO law, level-of-service standards for this route are set jointly by WSDOT and SCOG through Skagit 2045. The standards are LOS D in the Urbanized Area and LOS C for the remainder of SR 536.

State Route 538 (aka College Way)

State Route 538 is an east-west highway connecting Interstate 5 with SR 9, and is approximately four miles long.

Traffic Volumes

Daily traffic volumes on State Route 538 range from 9,100 VPD at SR 9, to more than 28,000 VPD near Interstate 5. Skagit 2045 forecasts show an increase in p.m. peak hour traffic volumes of approximately 4%, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.2% from 2018 to 2045.

Freight Traffic

State Route 538 is classified as a T-3 truck freight route carrying between 1.8 million and 2.9 million tons of freight per year.

Other Modes

This urban route through Mount Vernon provides sidewalks for much of its length. Cyclists and pedestrians can avoid the high levels of vehicular traffic on College Way by using the Kulshan Trail, which runs parallel to State Route 538 between the Skagit Riverwalk in downtown Mount Vernon and Waugh Road. Skagit Transit provides bus service on State Route 538, including connections to Skagit Valley College, which is situated along this state route.

Level of Service

State Route 538 is not a Highway of Statewide Significance, so under the state RTPO law, level-of-service standards for this route are set jointly by WSDOT and SCOG through Skagit 2040. The standard is LOS D for SR 538.

State Route 11 (aka Chuckanut Drive)

State Route 11 is a two-lane, north-south highway which connects Interstate 5 near Burlington to Bellingham in Whatcom County. SR 11 is designated as a State Scenic Byway by Washington state.

Traffic Volumes

Daily traffic volumes on State Route 11 range from 2,400 VPD in the north near West Bow Hill Road, to approximately 4,900 VPD near Interstate 5. Skagit 2045 forecasts show an increase in p.m. peak hour traffic volumes of approximately 8%, with an average annual growth rate of approximately 0.3% from 2018 to 2045.

Freight Traffic

State Route 11 is classified as a T-3 truck freight corridor from Interstate 5 to the Whatcom County border. SR 11 carries between 380,000 and 1.1 million tons of freight per year, and approximately 4–6% of the daily traffic is trucks.

Other Modes

State Route 11 provides access to a range of recreational activities. Bicycling occurs along sections of this state route.

Level of Service

State Route 11 is not a Highway of Statewide Significance, so under the state RTPO law, level-of-service standards for this route are set jointly by WSDOT and SCOG through Skagit 2045. The standard is LOS C for SR 11 in the Skagit region.

Other Regional Roadways

In addition to Interstate 5 and state routes, there are many other roadways that serve regional transportation needs in the Skagit region. The needs on these facilities often vary substantially in rural and urban areas. For example, conflicts on rural roadways, where there are often higher vehicular speeds and sometimes bicyclists and farm equipment, can contrast with conflicts on urban roadways where speeds tend to be lower than rural areas, yet congestion higher with greater levels of pedestrian use. Assessing needs on any roadway will be unique to the situation on that roadway, along with the users of that roadway.

These other regional roadways supplement the state and national roadway system, reduce the reliance on travel along Interstate 5 and state routes, and provide for an integrated regional roadway system for moving people and goods.

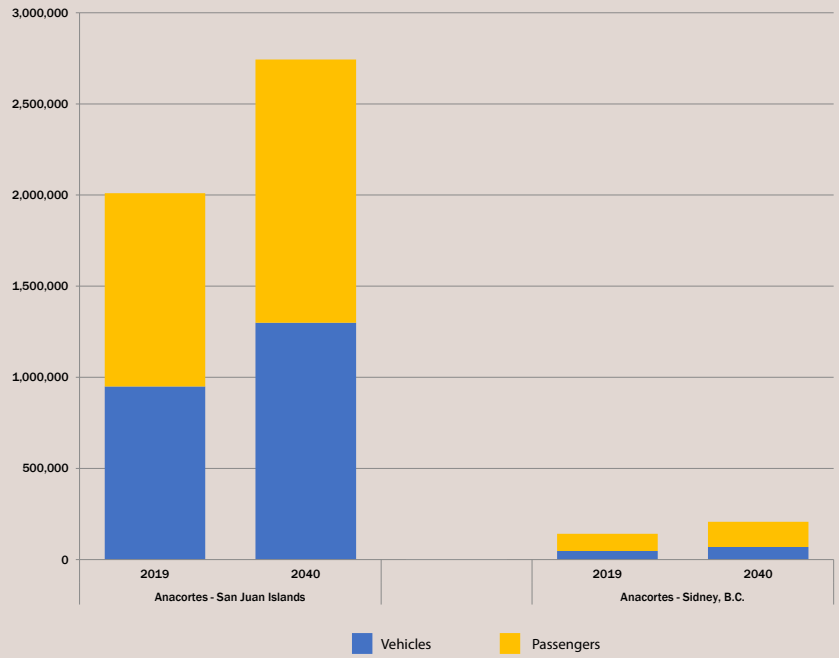
Preserving Regional Roadways

According to WSDOT's Capital Improvement and Preservation Program, there are difficult tradeoffs in preserving the state highway system due to funding limitations. Deferring preservation on existing facilities leads to more expensive repairs in the future, reconstruction, extending assets beyond their useful service life and fails to meet public expectations. Deteriorating infrastructure includes the possibility of:

- Closing bridges, or placing weight restrictions on bridges due to deferred maintenance;
- Rougher pavements resulting in increased tire wear, fuel and repair costs;
- Reducing speed limits; and
- Failing roadways.

- Some implications of underfunding pavement and preservation programs include:
- As of 2020, due to insufficient funding, WSDOT paves only higher speed roadways and is not paving roadways under 40 miles-per-hour, including Interstate 5 on- and off-ramps;
- Because bridge painting is being delayed, costs have been increasing by 10% because of the amount of steel repair necessary due to corrosion.

Exhibit 5-2
Skagit Region Ferry Ridership Forecasts



Source: Washington State Ferries 2040 Long Range Plan, 2019
Note: Does not include Guemes Island Ferry route

These challenges are expected to growth substantially in the future as costs of deferring necessary preservation increase with no commensurate increase in funding.

Source: 2021–2023 Capital Improvement and Preservation Program, September 2020, WSDOT

Ferry System

Ferries play a key role in the regional transportation system by connecting residents, workers, goods, and recreationists to various communities within the Skagit region and elsewhere in western Washington. Guemes Island has no bridge connection to the mainland, therefore residents rely on ferry service for transportation off the island. The state ferry system functions similar to a marine highway and high capacity transit system, supporting the Skagit region's land use and transportation objectives by connecting to transit systems and reducing vehicle miles traveled on regional roadways.

Washington State Ferries (WSF), a division of WSDOT, operates two routes within the Skagit region. These routes provide service to a mixture of automobiles and walk-on passengers. The Anacortes – San Juan Islands route provides service year-round from Anacortes to four of the San Juan Islands. The Anacortes – Sidney B.C. route provides seasonal service during the spring, summer and autumn.

Vehicle trips on these routes, as well as passenger trips, are forecast to increase by about 37% by 2040. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.9%. Only a modest vehicle capacity increase on these routes is expected by 2040. **Exhibit 5-2** shows ridership forecasts for these routes.

WSF replaced a 144-car vessel on the Anacortes – San Juan Islands route in 2015. Five more 144-car vessel replacements are anticipated

for this route during the timeframe of the Plan, occurring between 2028 and 2037. One of the vessel replacements, planned for 2037, will add capacity to the route by replacing a 90-car vessel with a 114-car electric hybrid vessel.

The Washington State Ferries 2040 Long Range Plan recommends adding capacity to the Anacortes – Sidney B.C. route in 2028. One strategy to increase capacity on this route is to relocate customs processing to Sidney, B.C. rather than Anacortes. Service enhancements would also expand summer service into May and October.

Level-of-service standards for the two Anacortes state ferry routes serving the Skagit region are established by WSDOT and SCOG. The standards must balance the interjurisdictional movement of people and goods with the needs of local commuters using state facilities.

The following establishes/reflects the level-of-service standards for the two state ferry routes serving the Skagit region:

- **Anacortes – San Juan Islands**, established jointly by WSDOT-SCOG

  Level 1: 25% in January; 30% in May; 35% in August;

  Level 2: 65% in January; 75% in May; 85% in August;

- **Anacortes – Sidney B.C.**, established by WSDOT

  Level 1: 50% in May; 50% in August; and

  Level 2: 100% in May; 100% in August.

The Level 1 LOS standard indicates when additional pricing and operational strategies might be needed and the Level 2 LOS standard indicates when additional service might be needed. Percentages listed in the Level 1 and Level 2 standards indicate the percentage of all monthly sailings that are filled to their vehicle capacity. The Anacortes – Sidney B.C. route LOS standards are established by WSDOT due to this being identified as a Highway of Statewide Significance. The LOS methodology and standards are consistent with WSDOT's Washington State Ferries 2040 Long Range Plan.

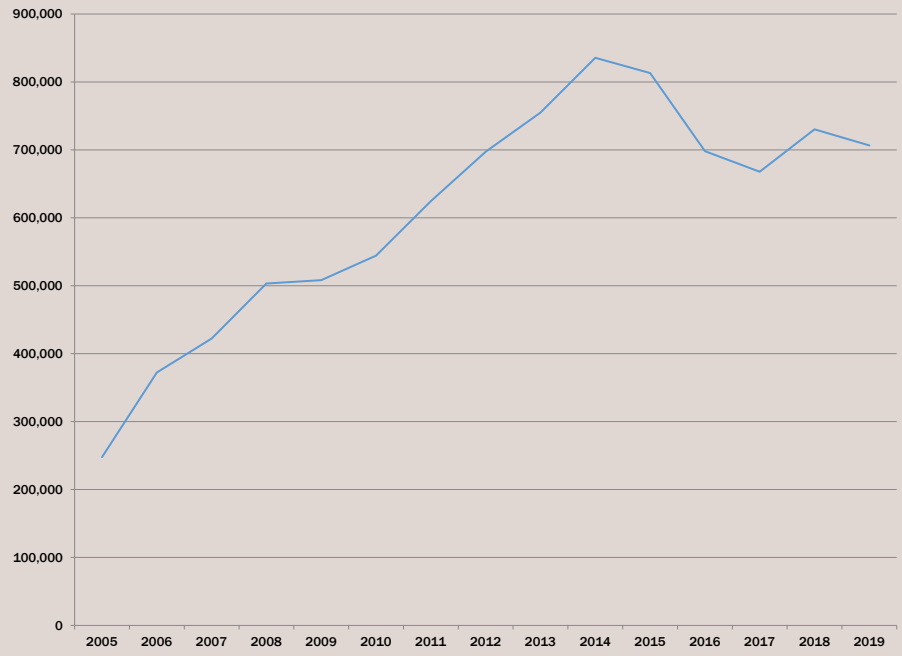
Skagit County operates one ferry route to Guemes Island. The M/V Guemes was built in 1979 and has a capacity of 21 vehicles and 99 passengers. The primary users of the ferry system are the permanent and part-time residents of Guemes Island who rely on the ferry as their link to the mainland. The vessel carried 183,130 vehicles and 381,559 passengers in 2015. Vehicles and passengers are counted going to and coming from Guemes Island, so each ride on the ferry counts as one trip.

Transit System

Public transportation is a critical component to achieving the Skagit region's long-range growth management, economic, environmental and transportation goals. Skagit 2045 promotes strategies for expanding transit to meet future travel demands throughout the Skagit region to provide transportation options to reach destinations within and outside the region. Skagit Transit operates 19 fixed routes in the Skagit region including local routes and intercounty commuter routes to Whatcom and Snohomish counties. Vanpools and paratransit services are also offered by Skagit Transit.

The success of the public transportation system is dependent on integrating key elements that comprise the Plan. Integration of the transit system with the ferry system, intercity rail and bus services, street improvements, bicycle facilities and pedestrian facilities is critical to an effective multimodal transportation system.

Exhibit 5-3
Skagit Transit Annual Fixed-route Ridership



Source: Skagit Transit, 2020

Skagit Transit experienced consistent increases in ridership in recent years, peaking at around 835,500 riders per year in 2014, as shown in **Exhibit 5-3**. Since 2004, annual Skagit Transit ridership has increased by over 350%. Transit trips in the Skagit region comprise under 1% of all transportation trips.

Skagit Transit

Skagit Transit has operated express routes over the past several years to serve working commuters better. After the Chuckanut Park and Ride opened in 2011, Skagit Transit connected local fixed routes with commuter buses there to take customers directly to and from Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, Anacortes, Mount Vernon and other locations. Skagit Transit shares operations of an express route from Mount Vernon to Bellingham, connects to express routes of Island Transit coming from Whidbey and Camano islands, and offers an express route between Mount Vernon and Everett. Skagit Transit is planning ahead for routes reaching further into new communities and to offer more frequency on established routes.

Other Transit Providers

Whatcom Transportation Authority and Island Transit also provide transit services in the Skagit region, providing for an integrated system of intercounty connector transit services linking Skagit, Whatcom, Island and Snohomish counties. These express services primarily offer stops at transit stations and park-and-ride lots in these four counties, and do not offer complimentary paratransit services along these express routes.

The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe provides a tribal transit service to all members of the public from Concrete to Darrington, in Snohomish County.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Systems

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities play a vital role in the Skagit region's transportation system. Skagit 2045 supports the development of a transportation system that provides more travel choices, while limiting the transportation system footprint, preserving and restoring environmental quality and open space. A well-established transportation system encourages healthy recreational activities, reduces vehicle demand on roadways, and enhances safety of all roadway users. Skagit 2045 identifies a regional non-motorized transportation system that includes trails, regional roadways, and other

bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Walking and bicycling are key components of an integrated, multimodal regional transportation system, and are efficient and low-impact modes of travel that can reduce vehicle miles traveled, lessening impacts to air pollution and reducing traffic congestion. Greater accessibility to safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities provides improved mobility to the young, elderly, persons with disabilities, low-income persons, and others who may not have access to a vehicle.

The 2008–2027 Washington State Bicycle Facilities and Pedestrian Walkways Plan includes a goal to decrease bicycle and pedestrian related collisions by 5% per year out to 2027, while doubling the amount of bicycling and walking. The Washington State Department of Transportation is currently updating this plan and expects to complete it in 2021.

Since 2014, SCOG and WSDOT have worked with volunteers to collect pedestrian and bicyclist data at a number of locations in the Skagit region over the course of a few days. This count program is expected to grow in the future, providing better data on non-motorized use of the regional transportation system.

Rail Systems

Passenger Rail System

The Washington State Department of Transportation operates Amtrak Cascades service over the BNSF Railway's north-south main line through Washington state. The alignment roughly parallels Interstate 5 and runs through Skagit County, connecting the region to Seattle, British Columbia and destinations beyond. The Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor, a federally designated high speed rail corridor, has received federal and state funding to support higher rail speeds in the corridor. This 466-mile high speed corridor runs from Eugene, Oregon to Vancouver, British Columbia in Canada. Amtrak provides long-distance service to Seattle and destinations beyond, as well as regional service to Oregon and British Columbia in the high speed corridor. Incremental improvements are planned to eventually support 110 mile-per-hour service with greater frequencies. Amtrak Cascades service from Eugene to Vancouver is Amtrak's ninth busiest route. Amtrak Cascades ridership has grown steadily over the last 20 years, from 180,000 in 1994 to over 829,000 in 2019.

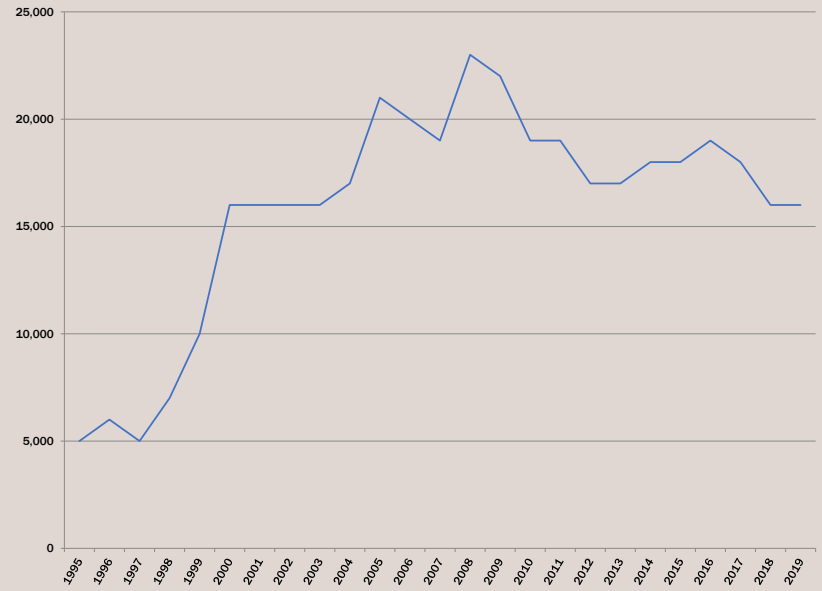
Two daily Amtrak trains travel each direction through Skagit County. Skagit Station, owned and operated by Skagit Transit, is the multimodal transportation facility located in Mount Vernon where Amtrak connects with Skagit Transit, Whatcom Transportation Authority, Island Transit, Greyhound and taxis. Amtrak Cascades began servicing the station in 2004. **Exhibit 5-4** shows historical Amtrak Cascades ridership information at Skagit Station.

WSDOT has identified three potential growth scenarios for the Amtrak Cascades system by 2040: in the moderate-growth scenario, WSDOT plans to increase passenger rail service provided by Amtrak Cascades to three daily trains between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia in each direction; in the high-growth scenario, this frequency would increase to four daily trains.

In the 2019–2040 Washington State Rail Plan, WSDOT acknowledged that Amtrak Cascades has experienced declining on-time performance in recent years, with a sharp decline to 53% on-time performance in 2017. Since this time, on-time performance increased to 60% in 2019. Reasons for delay of passenger trains most commonly included the following:

- Slow order delays from BNSF;

Exhibit 5-4
Amtrak Cascades Skagit Station On-Off Ridership



Sources: Amtrak Cascades Annual Performance Reports and WSDOT Rail Division, 2020

interference;

- Passenger train interference; and
- Crew and system delays.

The plan to increase service frequency and improve train speeds requires a number of capital investments along the rail corridor, including:

- Freight train
- Working with BNSF to reduce delays for Amtrak Cascades trains;
- Upgrading grade crossings to ensure safe passage of trains, vehicles and pedestrians;
- Increasing speeds to improve corridor capacity and travel times;
- Enhancing train control signals to improve corridor capacity, increase train speeds, and enhance safety;
- Purchasing new passenger train equipment to operate along the corridor to increase frequencies and decrease travel time;
- Improving stations and their ability to serve neighboring communities and to provide connections to other modes of travel; and
- Upgrading tracks and facilities to relieve congestion, improve ride quality and safety, increase train speeds, and improve corridor capacity.

Source: 2019–2040 Washington State Rail Plan, August 2020, WSDOT

Freight Rail System

Freight rail is also growing as a mode of choice for moving manufactured and bulk commodities. There are currently ten major rail corridors in the Washington state. One of these corridors is the Everett–Vancouver, British Columbia mainline, which is owned and maintained by BNSF. The importance of improvements to this corridor is critical to continued efforts to diversify the economy of the Skagit region. Where these railroad corridors intersect is important for switching and storage activities resulting in impacts on adjacent communities that are affected by at-grade crossings. Freight rail traffic along this corridor includes intermodal, forest and agricultural products, refuse, chemicals and finished automobiles.

Source: 2019–2040 Washington State Rail Plan, August 2020, WSDOT

Regional Air Transportation System

The regional air transportation system in the Skagit region complements the rail, motorized, and non-motorized transportation systems in the movement of goods and people. The primary purpose of the regional air transportation system is to provide access to a broad national and international aviation network.

Washington's Aviation System

Washington's 136 public-use airports represent an essential element of the state transportation system and provide critical support to the state economy. The importance of air transportation in Washington is accentuated by the state's unique geographic and topographical features, which produce an unusually high reliance on aviation. Airports provide unique transportation access as part of Washington's multimodal transportation system. They are crucial on a local, statewide, national, and global level as they efficiently move people and goods, promote business and commerce, and contribute to a better quality of life. Washington's airports serve a wide range of transportation, economic and emergency activities, including:

- Disaster management;
- Fire fighting;
- Emergency medical transportation;
- Aviation-related business;
- Search and rescue;
- Access to remote communities; and
- Recreation.

National General Aviation Trends

Since 2008, general aviation activity has declined nationally due to economic conditions and increasing fuel costs. Modest growth in general aviation is projected across the nation by 2035. However, Washington state is projected to have nearly triple the national rate of growth for general aviation operations. Reasons for this include the existing disproportionately high number of based aircraft compared with the rest of the nation, as well as a relatively strong per capita income.

General aviation has historically been dominated by single and multiengine piston-powered aircraft, used primarily for personal use, and flown by Visual Flight Rules. However, high performance aircraft used for business purposes and flown by Instrument Flight Rules account for a growing portion of General Aviation (GA) in the U.S. Increasingly, airports across the country are called to accommodate more demanding aircraft and more diverse types of GA activity. Three GA trends in particular have a significant effect on future demand for Washington's airport facilities and services. These three trends are:

1. Declining GA aircraft shipments and billings as an outcome of the 2008 Recession;
2. Continued growth in jet aircraft and decline in piston aircraft; and
3. Increasing share of sport pilots as a percentage of total certified pilots.

Source: Washington Aviation Systems Plan, November 2017, WSDOT

Federal Airport System and Classification

National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems

The National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems identifies airports that are significant to the national aviation system. These airports are eligible for Federal Aviation Administration improvement grants. Anacortes Airport and Skagit Regional Airport are included in the this system.

Federal Airport Classification

The federal airport classification system categorizes airports based upon the type of service they provide to the community. Federal classifications are:

- **Commercial Service Airports** – publicly owned airports with at lease 2,500 passenger boardings each calendar year;
- **Cargo Service Airports** – served by aircraft providing air transportation of only cargo with a total annual landed weight of more than 100 million pounds;
- **Reliever Airports** – designated by the Federal Aviation Administration to relive congestion at Commercial Service Airports and provide community access for general aviation; and
- **General Aviation Airports** – public-use airports with under 2,500 passenger boardings each calendar year, and are the largest single group of airports in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (88%).

Both the Anacortes Airport and Skagit Regional Airport are classified as General Aviation Airports under the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems.

Source: Federal Aviation Administration, Airport Categories, January 2021

Washington Airport Classification System

Washington state's airport classification system identifies the roles and service levels of Washington's public-use airports. State airport classifications do not supersede federal classifications, but supplement them by accounting for airports that may not be significant on a national level, but are important to the state aviation system. State airport classifications, along with the identification of facilities and services appropriate for each classification, are important in helping to identify and prioritize airport improvement and funding needs. Washington state's airport classification system includes the following categories:

- **Major Airports**– Primary activities include commercial service and aircraft or aerospace manufacturing. These airports are classified with Airport Reference Code C-II or greater, as well as a local population over 40,000;
- **Regional Airports**– Primary activities include corporate general aviation and travel business. These airports are classified with Airport Reference Code B-II or greater, as well as a local population over 30,000;
- **Community Airports**– Primary activities include general aviation for personal transportation and business or recreational purposes, as well as pilot training. These airports are characterized as not metropolitan or regional, but have paved primary runways. Community airports have 15 or more based aircraft;
- **Local Airports**– Primary activities include general aviation for personal transportation and business or recreational purposes, pilot training and agriculture. These airports are characterized as not metropolitan or regional, but have paved primary runways. Local airports have less than 15 based aircraft; and

- **General Use Airports**– Primary activities include general aviation for personal transportation and recreation, including backcountry access. The primary runway surface of general use airports is unpaved, and this category includes seaplane bases.

State Airport Classification

Washington state classifies Skagit County airports as follows:

- **Anacortes Airport** – Community Airport;
- **Skagit Regional** – Regional Airport;
- **Mears Field** – Community Airport; and
- **Skyline Seaplane Base** – General Use Airport.

As of 2020, 204 aircraft were based in Skagit County. Skagit Regional Airport, owned and operated by the Port of Skagit, is the region's largest airport with 132 based aircraft. By 2039, the Port of Skagit estimates that registered aircraft in Skagit County will grow by 27%, totaling 364 aircraft and an annual average growth rate of approximately 1.2%.

Source: Port of Skagit, Skagit Regional Airport Master Plan Planning Process (2020)

Facility Descriptions

Anacortes Airport is located in Skagit County, within the Anacortes city limits. The airport has 26 based aircraft, all of which are single-engine. It is served by San Juan Airlines which provides service to five locations in the San Juan Islands using single-engine aircraft. The latest available data, from 2019, indicate that Anacortes Airport experienced 9,000 takeoffs and landings. Anacortes has one runway, Runway 18-36, which is 3,015 feet long and 60 feet wide, has an asphalt surface, and is equipped with pilot controlled medium intensity runway lights. Both ends of Runway 18-36 have visual approaches. Vertical guidance to both runway ends is provided by visual approach slope indicators (VASI).

Anacortes Airport

Skagit Regional Airport is located three miles west of Burlington. The airport has 132 based aircraft, including 113 single-engine, 8 multi-engine, 3 jets, 1 ultralight and 7 rotor based. An estimated 33,500 takeoffs and landings occurred at Skagit Regional Airport in 2019. Aeronautical Services, FedEx, Methow Aviation, San Juan Airlines and Ameriflite provide cargo service to the Airport. The airport has two runways. Runway 11-29 is 5,477 feet long, 100 feet wide, has an asphalt surface, and is equipped with pilot controlled medium-intensity runway lights. Runway 11 is equipped with runway end indicator lights (REIL) and precision approach path indicators (PAPI). This runway has non-precision, non-directional beacon and global positioning systems approaches. Runway ~~28~~29 is equipped with REIL and PAPI, and has a non-precision, global positioning systems approach. Runway 4-22

Skagit Regional Airport

Mears Field

is 3,000 feet long, 60 feet wide, has an asphalt surface, and has PAPI.

Mears Field is located in Skagit County adjacent to State Route 20, at the Town of Concrete's southern boundary. Mears Field has a storage capacity of 56 aircraft, and has 46 based aircraft based at the airport: 44 single-engine aircraft; and 2 multi-engine aircraft. The latest available data indicate that the airport experienced 5,036 takeoffs and landings in 2019. Runway 7-25 is the airport's only runway. This runway is 2,580 feet long, 60 feet wide, and has an asphalt surface. Both runway ends have visual approaches. In addition to the runway, the airport has a 40-foot by 40-foot helipad designated as "H1." The 2017 Washington Aviation Systems Plan projects that the demand for aircraft storage at Mears Field will exceed its capacity by 2034.

Skyline Seaplane Base

Skyline Seaplane Base is located in Skagit County just south of the Skyline Marina in the City of Anacortes. No aircraft are based at the facility and 3 takeoffs and landings were reported in 2016, the latest available year of data. The Northwest-Southeast Waterway, the Seaplane Base's only waterway, is 5,000 feet long and 2,500 feet wide. Approaches to this waterway are visual.

Transportation Improvements and Strategies

The Skagit region experiences a wide range of traffic operations, safety and preservation challenges. These challenges are largely a result of commuter traffic, access to and from regional highways, freight movement, access to regional shopping areas, and travel to and from essential public facilities such as schools, hospitals, airports and marine terminals.

This section provides examples of these challenges for roadways, non-motorized transportation facilities, transit and rail.

Roadways

Forecasted travel demand will bring most segments of Interstate 5 between Hickox Road and Bow Hill Road above or near capacity in 2045. Due to the prohibitive cost of capacity improvements to I-5, Skagit 2045 has identified few projects to address capacity issues on the interstate. WSDOT has indicated that Intelligent Transportation Systems, including active ramp metering, adaptive intersection signal systems, variable message signs, variable speed limits and lane use control signs are the preferred method of addressing future capacity deficiencies on I-5. Accordingly, Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Skagit County arterials may experience increased congestion as future drivers look for alternative routes to I-5.

Cook Road near I-5 is also forecast to be significantly congested in 2045. Both Skagit County and WSDOT have plans to make improvements in this area. Capacity improvements on the I-5 ramps as well as Cook Road will provide congestion relief in an area that is already experiencing significant delays. Skagit County and WSDOT should closely coordinate on the planned improvements on Cook Road to ensure the interchange and busy arterial operate at an efficient

level.

Another notable future capacity issue is the Division Street Bridge in Mount Vernon. The existing two-lane bridge is forecast to have insufficient capacity for travel demand in 2045. Mount Vernon has included a new bridge crossing the Skagit River in the downtown area in its local comprehensive plan. While the need for additional capacity over the river is clear, it is unclear where the alignment would be and how it would be funded. At this time this project is included in Skagit 2045 as an Illustrative priority.

Non-motorized Transportation Facilities

Project sponsors are encouraged to reasonably accommodate all transportation modes when reconstructing roadways or adding additional capacity. Urban arterials should include adequate facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely travel. Facilities adjacent to or near urban arterials may also serve non-motorized transportation needs and may provide a beneficial alternate connection to placing these facilities directly on the arterial. Wherever possible, rural improvements should include shoulders to accommodate bicyclist, pedestrian and, in limited cases, equestrian travel. Completion of missing links in the regional non-motorized transportation system should be given priority in project selection processes.

Two major non-motorized transportation corridors, the Centennial Trail and Cascade Trail, are planned within or along former railroad rights of way within the Skagit region. These links would provide regional connections both east-west and north-south. Much of the right-of-way of the former Centennial Rail Line is in private ownership. Where possible, efforts should be made to continue the trail along the former railroad grade. In locations where following the railroad grade is infeasible, alternative options should be explored.

In 2014, the first U.S. Bicycle Route was designated in Washington state by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. This route, U.S. Bicycle Route 10, follows State Route 20, including the SR 20 spur, from the Anacortes Ferry Terminal to the border of Idaho. Eventually, the route will travel east-west all the way to Maine; one of a number of interstate bicycling routes across the U.S.

Since 2014, several other U.S. Bicycle Routes have been designated by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials that traverse the Skagit region, including:

- **U.S. Bicycle Route 97**, with an alignment from the Canadian border, through Skagit County to Island County;
- **U.S. Bicycle Route 95**, with an alignment from the Canadian border, through Skagit County to Snohomish County; and
- **U.S. Bicycle Route 610**, which provides an alternative alignment to U.S. Bike Route 10 in Sedro-Woolley.

Transit

Skagit Transit provides fixed-route, express, vanpool and paratransit services for much of the Skagit region. A major emphasis of the Plan is to preserve existing transit service, particularly the express routes providing connections to Everett and Bellingham. Skagit Transit has also identified projects to expand current

Rainbow Bridge in La Conner

service to better meet future transportation needs.

Rail

The 2016 Skagit Rail Crossing Study identified three priority locations for future grade-separation projects in the Skagit region: State Route 538 (College Way) in Mount Vernon; Cook Road in unincorporated Skagit County, and SR 20 in Burlington. Completing grade-separated rail crossings in the Skagit region would alleviate traffic congestion, increase safety at rail crossings and improve emergency services response time.

Regionally Significant Transportation Projects

In Skagit 2045, proposed regionally significant transportation projects were submitted by governments in the Skagit region during the planning process, and evaluated using a least-cost planning methodology, as described in **Section 4**.

Skagit Transit at Skagit Valley College

Project Categories

All of the proposed regionally significant projects are grouped into categories in the Plan. Two of the categories, Funded and Planned, are included in the fiscally constrained portion of Skagit 2045. These projects are reasonably expected to be completed during the timeframe of the Plan. Regional estimates of revenues and expenditures were developed as part of the Plan, and are described in **Section 7**. The revenue and expenditure estimates assist with ascertaining what the total need is for the regional transportation system, while balancing the total need with funding forecast as reasonably available to meet those needs. This financial analysis assists with determining which projects are, and are not, fiscally constrained.

Funded Projects

Funded regionally significant projects have secured full or partial funding and are expected to be constructed during the Plan timeframe, between 2021 and 2045. All but one of the Funded projects is expected to be completed in the short term (2021–2030), during the first ten years of the 25-year Plan. All of the Funded projects are either roadway, non-motorized or ferry projects. Because these projects already have some level of funding, they do not receive the same regional evaluation as the Planned and Illustrative projects, which receive project-level evaluations on each of the six regional priorities described in **Section 4**.

Planned Projects

Planned regionally significant projects have not yet secured funding, but are expected to be completed during Skagit 2045's timeframe. These are regionally significant roadway, non-motorized, and transit projects, as well as planning and corridor studies, that are prioritized by the Skagit region for when eligible funding becomes available.

The financial strategy in **Section 7** incorporates cost estimates for the Planned projects.

Illustrative Projects

Illustrative regionally significant projects are not expected to be funded during the Plan timeframe due to reasonable revenue estimates forecast in Skagit 2045, but may be funded if additional resources become available. These Illustrative projects are still priorities of the Skagit region, but tend to be higher cost and/or longer term projects that may be reliant on federal and Washington state grant funding, or other sources outside of those identified in the financial strategy in **Section 7**, to come to fruition.

The following pages display the Funded, Planned and Illustrative projects through a series of exhibits. **Exhibit 5-5** through **Exhibit 5-15** include maps of regionally significant projects along with information about each project.

Detailed project information is available on project sheets in **Appendix A**.

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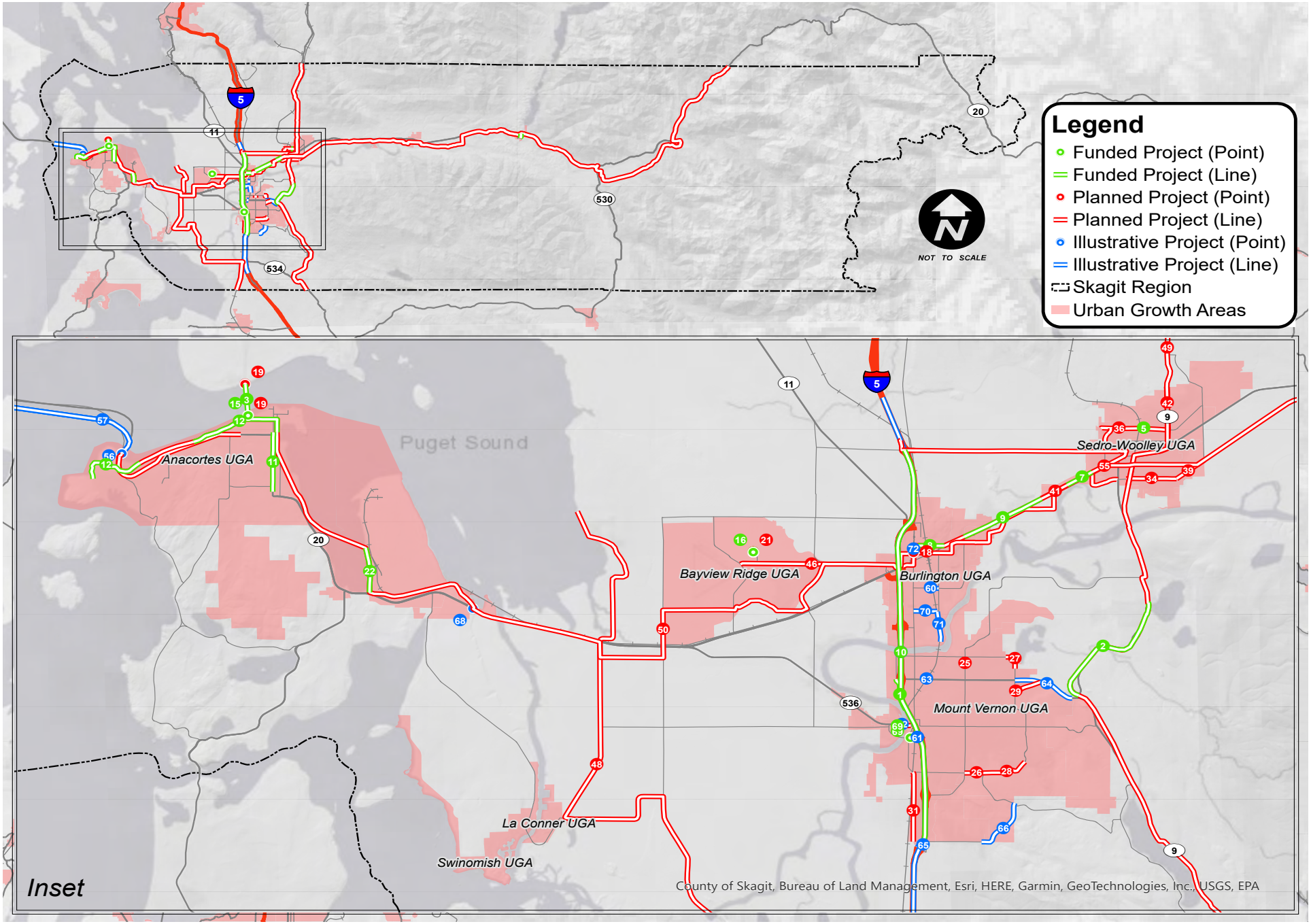

Exhibit 5-5 Regionally Significant Transportation Projects

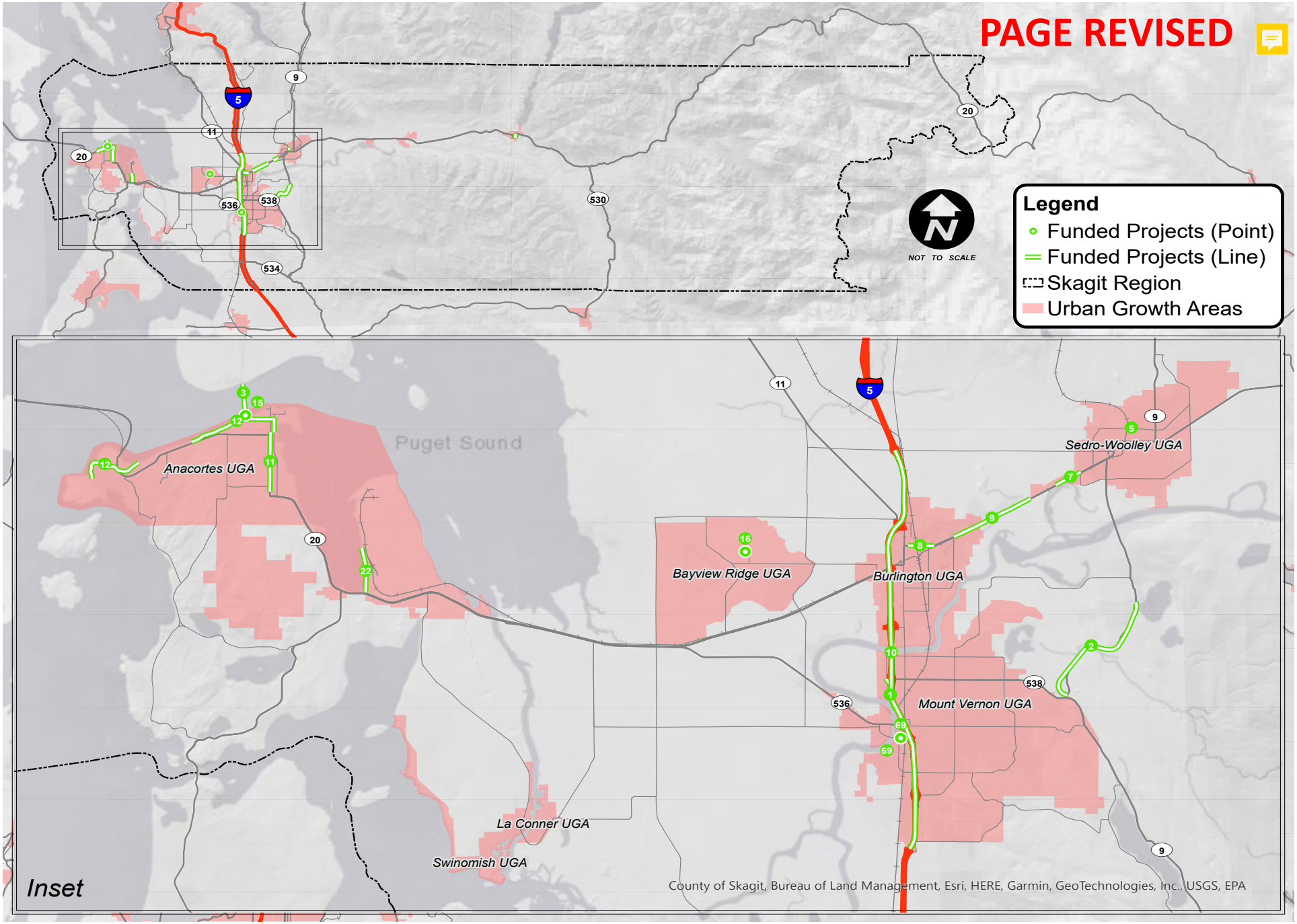

Exhibit 5-6 Funded Regionally Significant Transportation Projects (Fiscally Constrained)

Section 5: **Transportation Improvements & Programs**

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Exhibit 5-7
Funded Projects (Fiscally Constrained)

Cost

$	=	up to $1 million
$$	=	$1 - $10 million
$$$	=	$10 - $100 million
$$$$	=	over $100 million

Timeframe

Short Range	=	2021 - 2030
Long Range	=	2031 - 2045

ID	Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Mode Type	Cost	Time Frame
12	Anacortes	Guemes Channel Trail Phase II, III, V & VI	Complete Guemes Channel Trail from Washington Park to Tommy Thompson Trailhead at 10th Street and Q Avenue. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$$	Long
22	Anacortes	March Point Road Widening	Widen March Point Road and South March Point Road to safely accommodate bike lanes and/or separated bike/pedestrian path	Non-Motorized	$$	Short
11	Anacortes	South Commercial Avenue Corridor Improvements	Corridor-long complete streets and economic development project. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$$$	Short
8	Burlington	SR 20 Nonmotorized & Safety	Road widening including stormwater improvements, utility relocation, lighting, sidewalks, bicycle wayfinding, and bike lanes. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Roadway & Non-Motorized	$$	Short
6	Concrete	Secondary Access Road	Construction of a second access road to school and airport to include traffic lanes, shoulder, traffic curb and gutter, planter strip, and bicycle/pedestrian path as well as possible storm drainage, sewer and water facilities and fire hydrant improvements. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$	Short
1	Mount Vernon	Freeway Drive Improvements (Cameron Way to College Way)	Add center left turn lane to increase capacity; include traffic calming measure(s); additional lighting; bicycle lanes; minimum 4-foot paved shoulder with fog strip; add or improve sidewalks/walkways; and physical buffer between pedestrians and roadway.	Roadway & Non-Motorized	$$	Short
69	Mount Vernon	Library Commons: Regional Transportation Supporting Elements	The Mount Vernon Library Commons project is a multi-use infrastructure project located in historic downtown Mount Vernon along Interstate 5. In addition to a library and community center, the project supports regional transportation with 75 public EV charging spaces, Skagit Transit bus stop facilities, and over 150 spaces available for park & ride use by Skagit Station, a multi-regional bus/Amtrak transit facility, effectively tripling existing parking capacity at Skagit Station.	Transit	$$$	Short
5	Sedro-Woolley	Jones/John Liner RR Undercrossing	Construct new BNSF railroad undercrossing and new major collector from East Jones Road to John Liner Road, including drainage, curbs, sidewalks, HMA, pavement markings and illumination. This project requires coordination with BNSF.	Roadway	$$	Short
7	Sedro-Woolley	SR 20/Cascade Trail West Extension, Phase 2A	Shared-use path. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$	Short
2	Skagit County	Centennial Trail (Big Rock to Clear Lake)	Design and construct a multi-use trail that will link Mount Vernon to Clear Lake.	Non-Motorized	$$	Short

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Exhibit 5-8
Funded Projects (Fiscally Constrained)

Cost		
$	=	up to $1 million
$$	=	$1 - $10 million
$$$	=	$10 - $100 million
$$$$	=	over $100 million

Timeframe		
Short Range	=	2021 - 2030
Long Range	=	2031 - 2045

ID	Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Mode Type	Cost	Time Frame
3	Skagit County	Guemes Ferry Boat Replacement (Electric)	Replace the current rural Guemes Island Ferry with a new electric powered ferry that will include shore side facilities to meet present and future needs of the ferry service.	Ferry	$$$	Short
15	Skagit County	Guemes Ferry Electric Shore-side Facilities	Construction of electric shore side facilities that include a charging station, battery storage facility, charging hookup from shore side charging station to the ferry, and other miscellaneous components required to complete the shore side facilities.	Ferry	$$	Short
16	Skagit Transit	Skagit Transit's Maintenance Operations and Administration Facility: Phase 1	Phase I will complete the energy envelope infrastructure of the south and east section of the facility. Utilities will be readied (rough-in and rough-on) for Phase II construction of the south and east section of the facility.	Transit	$$	Short
10	WSDOT	I-5 Operations and Demand Management Study	Washington's transportation system is evolving and growing; and to meet that need WSDOT will initiate a study assessment on I-5 through Mount Vernon and the Burlington area to identify what is working well and what actions are needed to address the growing demands on the transportation system. The project will first determine if there is a problem on the corridor and second develop strategies and solutions that may be necessary to improve and enhance the operating capacity of the system through the deployment of intelligent transportation systems and demand management options to meet near and long-term needs.	Planning & Corridor Studies	$	Short
9	WSDOT	SR 20/Burlington to Sedro-Woolley - Corridor Improvements	State Route 20 has been identified as a Crash Analysis Corridor. Northwest Region Traffic will developed a strategy with alternatives to improve safety. This project requires coordination with Skagit County, Sedro-Woolley and Burlington.	Roadway	$$	Short

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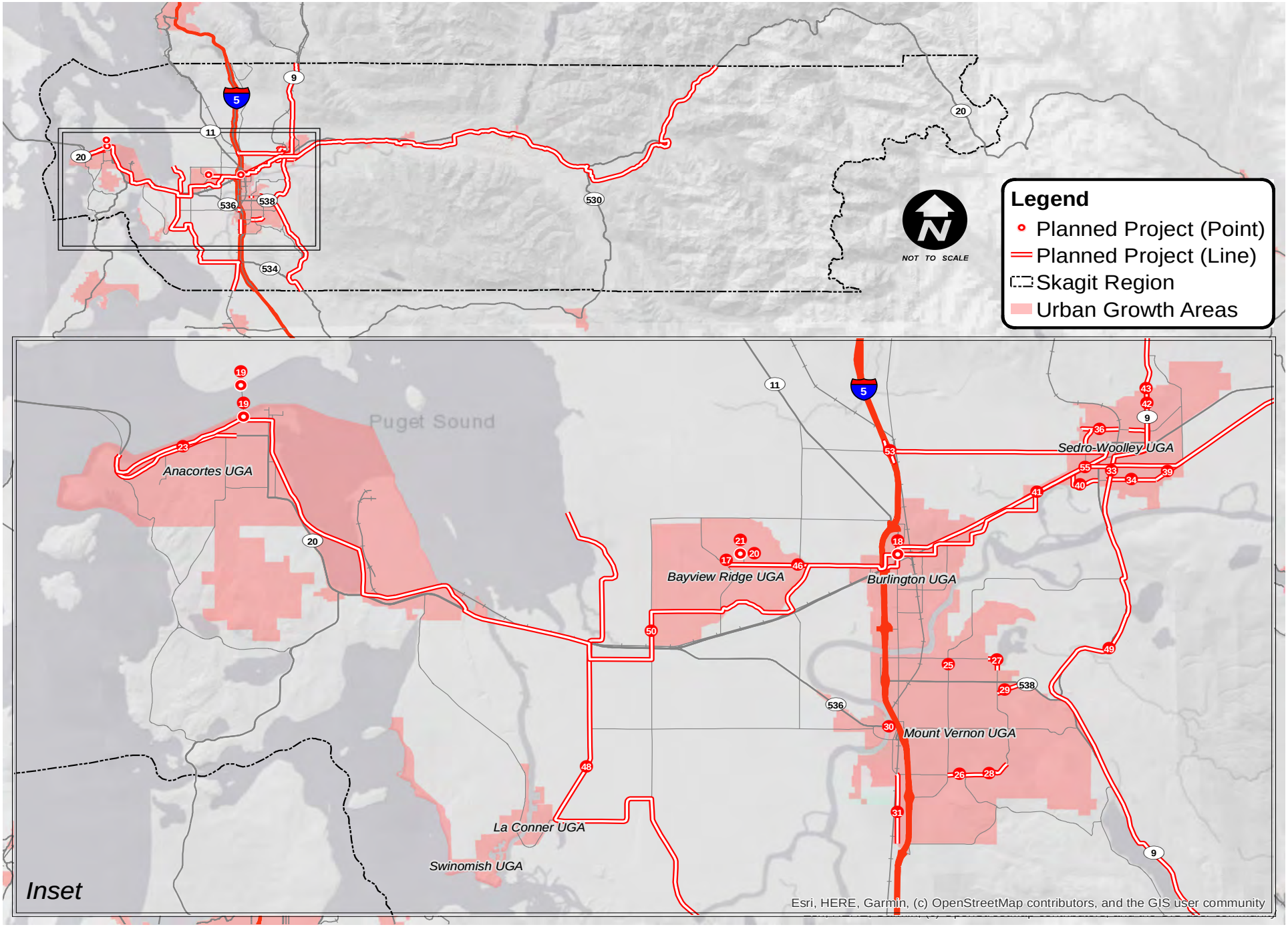

Exhibit 5-9 Planned Regionally Significant Transportation Projects (Fiscally Constrained)

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Section 5: **Transportation Improvements & Programs**

Exhibit 5-10
Planned Projects #1 (Fiscally Constrained)

Addresses Priority
○ = None
◒ = Partial
● = Full

Cost
$ = up to $1 million
$$ = $1 - $10 million
$$$ = $10 - $100 million
$$$$ = over $100 million

Timeframe
Short Range = 2021 - 2030
Long Range = 2031 - 2045

ID	Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Mode Type	Cost	Time Frame	Relative Priority	Economic Vitality	Preservation	Safety	Mobility	Environment	Stewardship
23	Anacortes	SR 20 Spur (Ferry Terminal to G Ave) Sidewalk Improvements	Full widening, bike lanes and sidewalks. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$$	Long	High	◒	●	●	●	◒	●
18	Burlington	Intersection Improvement and Gateway	Construct a roundabout at the intersection of Burlington Boulevard (SR 20) and Fairhaven Avenue to create a well defined entry point to downtown Burlington and improve traffic flow on SR 20. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$	Short	Medium	●	○	●	◒	◒	●
31	Mount Vernon	Bike Lane on Old Highway 99 South	New bike lane added/striped.	Non-Motorized	$	Long	Medium	●	○	●	●	◒	○
28	Mount Vernon	Blackburn Road Extension	Blackburn Road transitions to a 22-foot wide road with no striping east of Little Mountain Road. Part of the conditions of approval for the Eaglemont development is to improve and extend this road (new construction) to Eaglemont Drive and establish a southerly connection to the southerly street network.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	○	○	○	●	◒	○
26	Mount Vernon	Blackburn Road Widening - 1	Improvements will upgrade this section of Blackburn Road to Complete Streets standard to include sidewalks and bike lanes. This segment will provide a connection to Little Mountain Park, a major non-motorized recreation area.	Non-Motorized	$$	Short	Low	◒	○	●	●	●	○
30	Mount Vernon	Division Street Bridge Replacement Study	Study to evaluate the feasibility/cost of replacing the Division Street Bridge and mitigation required to the bridge approaches to improve the level of service. Projects on state highways require the coordinated development of Practical Solutions with WSDOT.	Planning & Corridor Studies	$	Long	Low	●	●	◒	○	○	●
29	Mount Vernon	Kulshan Trail Extension	Extend Kulshan Trail along abandoned railroad grade.	Non-Motorized	$	Long	Medium	◒	○	●	●	●	◒
25	Mount Vernon	Laventure Road Widening	This section links Skagit College and student housing to Hoag Road (and YMCA). These improvements will establish a new sidewalk on the east side, upgrade ADA facilities to modern standards, improve stormwater facilities, add bike lanes, and rehabilitate the pavement to provide greater connectivity and safer pedestrian access.	Non-Motorized	$$	Short	High	●	◒	●	●	●	●
27	Mount Vernon	Martin Road Improvements	This section of Martin Road is a very narrow, 20 footwide, remnant of the original county road. Several years ago a 5 foot wide asphalt path was installed on the west side of the road for pedestrians. Improvements will include widening the road to include a 3 foot paved shoulder on the east side, 11 foot lanes, and converting the existing path to a 10 foot wide, paved, shared use path on the east side.	Non-Motorized	$$	Short	Medium	◒	◒	●	●	●	○
32	Sedro-Woolley	Cascade Trail East Extension	Shared use path.	Non-Motorized	$	Long	High	●	○	●	●	●	●
33	Sedro-Woolley	Centennial Trail South	Improve and extend trail.	Non-Motorized	$	Long	Medium	●	○	●	●	◒	●
34	Sedro-Woolley	Jameson Street Arterial Improvements	Widen and rebuild Jameson Street to secondary arterial standards including three lanes, curb and gutter, bike lanes, planter strip and sidewalks. Some right of way may be required.	Roadway	$$	Short	Medium	●	◒	●	◒	●	○
35	Sedro-Woolley	John Liner Road Arterial Improvements	Reconstruct John Liner Road to major collector section including drainage, curbs, sidewalk, shared use path, HMA, pavement markings and illumination. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	●	○	○	○	◒	●
36	Sedro-Woolley	Jones Rd Arterial Improvements	Reconstruct to major collector section including drainage, curbs, sidewalk, shared use path, HMA, pavement markings and illumination.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	◒	○	○	○	○	●
39	Sedro-Woolley	Railroad Street Arterial Improvements	Reconstruct to arterial standards, including three lanes, bike lanes and sidewalks.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	◒	◒	●	◒	●	○
40	Sedro-Woolley	Rhodes Road Arterial Improvements	Reconstruct to arterial standards, including bike lanes and sidewalks. This project requires coordination with WSDOT and Skagit County.	Roadway	$$	Long	Medium	●	◒	●	◒	◒	○

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Section 5: **Transportation Improvements & Programs**

Exhibit 5-11
Planned Projects #2 (Fiscally Constrained)

Addresses Priority
○ = None
◒ = Partial
● = Full

Cost
$ = up to $1 million
$$ = $1 - $10 million
$$$ = $10 - $100 million
$$$$ = over $100 million

Timeframe
Short Range = 2021 - 2030
Long Range = 2031 - 2045

ID	Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Mode Type	Cost	Time Frame	Relative Priority	Economic Vitality	Preservation	Safety	Mobility	Environment	Stewardship
41	Sedro-Woolley	SR 20/Cascade Trail West Extension, Phase 2B	Shared-use path. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$	Long	Medium	●	○	●	●	◒	●
43	Sedro-Woolley	SR9 / Centennial Trail Ped/Bike Safety Improvements	Construct bike and pedestrian improvements from Summer Meadows Court on the east side of State Route 9. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$$	Long	Medium	◒	○	●	●	◒	●
42	Sedro-Woolley	SR9 / North Township Street Arterial Improvements	Planning phase – reconstruct to arterial standards including three lanes, bike lanes and sidewalk. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Planning & Corridor Studies	$	Long	Medium	●	◒	●	○	◒	●
44	Sedro-Woolley	SR9N Ped/Bike Safety Improvements	Bike lane and sidewalk improvements. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$	Short	High	●	○	●	●	●	●
37	Sedro-Woolley	Trail Road - Garden of Eden Road Extension	Construct new major collector.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	○	○	○	○	○	●
38	Sedro-Woolley	Trail Road Arterial Extension	Construct new major collector.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	◒	○	◒	○	○	●
49	Skagit County	Bicycle Route 13 (Centennial Trail) Corridor Study	This is an existing north/south multimodal transportation corridor from the southern Skagit County Line to the northern Skagit County Line, adjacent or parallel to State Route 9 and Skagit County roads. The proposed project envisions a 10-foot paved trail and a grass shoulder for equestrian use, consistent with the Snohomish County trail sections. The corridor study would consider issues including available right of way, property impacts, shoulder widths and alignment. Coordination with Snohomish and Whatcom counties would also be appropriate to link to their facilities. This study requires coordination with WSDOT and Sedro-Woolley.	Planning & Corridor Studies	$	Short	Medium	●	○	●	●	◒	●
48	Skagit County	Bicycle Route 5 (Coast Millennium Trail) Safety/Mobility Improvement Study	This is an existing north / south multimodal transportation corridor from the Southern County Line north to Bay View State Park which passes through the Town of La Conner and Bay View, utilizing Skagit County roads and the existing Padilla Bay Trail. The projects would include paved shoulder widening, trail improvements and signing along the corridor. Connects or will ultimately connect to bicycle routes in Whatcom and Snohomish counties. This study requires coordination with WSDOT.	Planning & Corridor Studies	$	Short	Low	○	○	●	●	◒	●
45	Skagit County	Cook Road/I-5 Interchange Vicinity Improvements	Cook Road / Interchange / Old Highway 99 (Short Term Improvements) from Interstate 5 through Old Highway 99 North intersection to Green Road in partnership with WSDOT. This project may require the coordinated development of Practical Solutions with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$	Short	Medium	●	○	●	●	◒	●
19	Skagit County	Guemes Ferry Terminal Modifications (Electric Ferry)	Reconfigure/modify the Anacortes and Guemes Island terminals to allow for the new electric ferry. This includes, but is not limited to, apron modifications and dolphin upgrades.	Ferry	$$	Short	Medium	◒	●	○	●	●	●
47	Skagit County	Peterson Road (Shared Use Trail)	Construct a separated shared use path.	Non-Motorized	$	Short	Medium	◒	○	●	●	◒	◒
46	Skagit County	Peterson Road (Urban)	Widen Peterson Road from the Bayview Housing Development to Higgins Airport Way (Port of Skagit) to meet urban standards.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	●	◒	●	◒	○	○
50	Skagit County	US Bicycle Route 10 (Coast to Cascades Trail) Corridor Study	This is an existing east-west multimodal transportation corridor from Fidalgo Island to the Town of Concrete, and east Skagit County line, utilizing State Route 20, city and Skagit County roads and trails. The study would consider shoulder widening where necessary and trail construction and/or existing trail improvements. This study requires coordination with WSDOT, Anacortes, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, Lyman, Hamilton and Concrete.	Planning & Corridor Studies	$	Short	Medium	●	○	●	●	◒	●

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Section 5: **Transportation Improvements & Programs**

Exhibit 5-12
Planned Projects #3 (Fiscally Constrained)

Addresses Priority
○ = None
◒ = Partial
● = Full

Cost
$ = up to $1 million
$$ = $1 - $10 million
$$$ = $10 - $100 million
$$$$ = over $100 million

Timeframe
Short Range = 2021 - 2030
Long Range = 2031 - 2045

ID	Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Mode Type	Cost	Time Frame	Relative Priority	Economic Vitality	Preservation	Safety	Mobility	Environment	Stewardship
17	Skagit Transit	Alternative Fuel Infrastructure	Purchase and installation of alternative fueling infrastructure at M.O.A. for fleet use.	Transit	$	Short	High	◒	●	●	●	●	●
51	Skagit Transit	Fleet Expansion 2021-2030	Expand fixed-route fleet by six buses for service expansions and enhancements. Expand paratransit fleet by three vehicles to address growing demand.	Transit	$$	Short	High	●	●	●	●	●	●
52	Skagit Transit	Fleet Expansion 2031-2045	Expand fixed route fleet by six buses for service expansions and enhancements. Expand paratransit fleet by six vehicles to address growing demand. Expand vanpool fleet by ten vehicles.	Transit	$$	Long	High	●	●	●	●	●	●
20	Skagit Transit	Skagit Transit s Maintenance Operations and Administration Facility: Phase 2	Construction of the south and east section of the facility.	Transit	$$$	Short	High	◒	●	●	●	●	●
21	Skagit Transit	Skagit Transit's Maintenance Operations and Administration Facility: Phase 3	Complete construction of the facility.	Transit	$$$	Short	High	◒	●	●	●	●	●
53	WSDOT	I-5 / Cook Road Interchange Improvements	This project will add intersection control to the ramps at the Interstate 5/Cook Road interchange and some limited road widening. A variety of Automated Traffic Management systems will be installed to prevent queuing traffic from spilling back	Roadway	$$	Short	High	●	●	●	●	○	●

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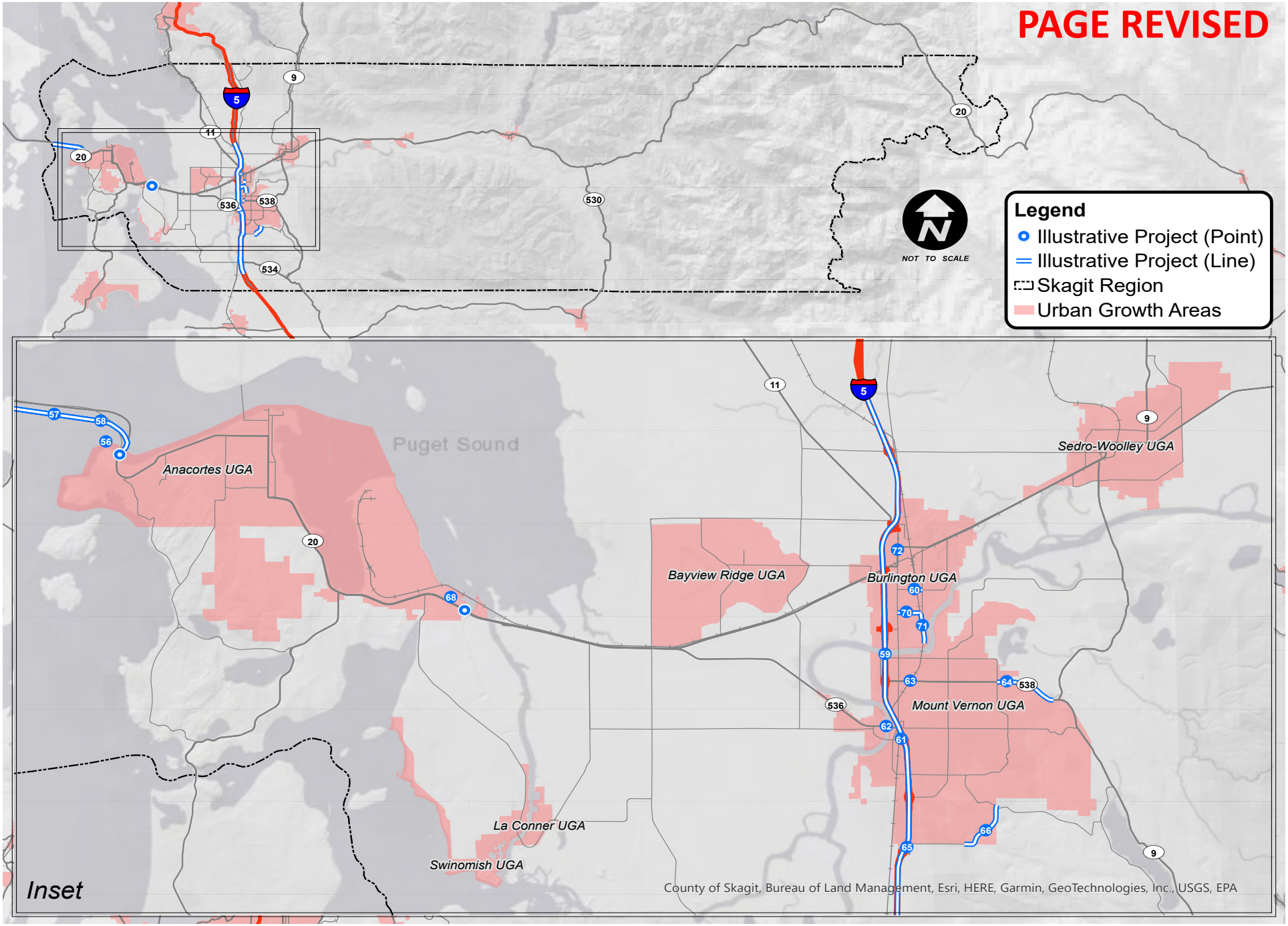

Exhibit 5-13 Illustrative Regionally Significant Transportation Projects (Not Fiscally Constrained)

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Exhibit 5-14

Illustrative Projects #1 (Not Fiscally Constrained)

Addresses Priority

○ = None

◒ = Partial

● = Full

Cost

$ = up to $1 million

$$ = $1 - $10 million

$$$ = $10 - $100 million

$$$$ = over $100 million

Timeframe

Short Range = 2021 - 2030

Long Range = 2031 - 2045

ID	Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Mode Type	Cost	Time Frame	Relative Priority	Economic Vitality	Preservation	Safety	Mobility	Environment	Stewardship
60	Burlington	Construct Grade Separated Rail Crossing and Street Extension	Construct overcrossing over BNSF rail tracks to connect east and west sides of city. This project requires coordination with BNSF.	Roadway	$$$	Short	Medium	●	○	●	●	○	●
72	Burlington	Extend Multiuse Path - Burlington High School Trail	Extend existing multiuse trail from Avon Avenue to Fairhaven Avenue.	Non-Motorized	$	Long	High	●	○	●	●	◒	◒
71	Burlington	New Multiuse Path - Whitmarsh Road	New multiuse path along Whitmarsh Road from Skagit River to Pease Road.	Non-Motorized	$	Long	High	●	◒	●	●	◒	●
70	Burlington	Reconstruct Pease Road to Urban Standards and Construct Multiuse Path	Project will reconstruct Pease Road to urban standards and add a new multiuse path.	Non-Motorized	$$	Long	High	●	○	●	●	◒	○
63	Mount Vernon	College Way Railroad Grade Separation	Grade-separated crossing over/under BNSF railroad line. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$$	Long	Low	●	○	●	○	◒	●
64	Mount Vernon	East College Way Widening	Widen East College Way (SR 538) from two to four travel lanes. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$	Long	Low	●	○	○	◒	◒	●
65	Mount Vernon	Hickox Rd/I-5 Interchange Completion	Completion of the north side of this interchange, providing full northbound and southbound access, is critical for any future development of south Mount Vernon. This project will first require an Access Revision Report approved by FHWA. An ARR is a multimodal traffic operations/safety analysis on the street network and Interstate 5 to identify strategies and alternatives that would best address the problem and identified need on the regional system.	Roadway	$$	Short	Low	●	○	●	○	◒	●
66	Mount Vernon	Hickox Road	New road connection.	Roadway	$$$	Long	Low	○	○	○	●	○	○
61	Mount Vernon	Kincaid Street Corridor Improvements	This arterial is the gateway to downtown Mount Vernon providing access to Interstate 5, regional transit and rail service, and the South Kincaid Subarea Plan. Current planned improvements include a multi-modal complete streets design and roundabouts at 3rd Street and both Interstate 5 ramp locations, as well as railroad crossing enhancements. This project requires coordination with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$$	Short	Medium	●	●	●	○	○	●
67	Mount Vernon	Replacement of Division Street Bridge	Replacement of WSDOT's existing bridge. A Division Street (SR 536) bridge study is identified to help determine the feasibility of replacing the bridge structure and requires the coordinated development of Practical Solutions with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$$	Long	Medium	●	●	○	●	○	●
62	Mount Vernon	Skagit River Pedestrian Bridge	The Skagit River Bridge has a minimal sidewalk on one side and no separated bike lanes; sharing 12-foot lanes with traffic. The concept is to develop a separate 10-foot structure across the Skagit River to accommodate both pedestrian and bicycle traffic across the river. A Division Street (SR 536) bridge study is identified to help determine the feasibility of constructing a separate structure or other feasible crossing alternatives. Projects on state highways require the coordinated development of Practical Solutions with WSDOT.	Non-Motorized	$$$	Short	Medium	●	○	●	●	○	●
68	Swinomish	SR 20 Safe Access Improvements	Design and construct acceleration and deceleration lanes and associated intersection improvements at the SR 20 intersections of South March's Point Road and Padilla Heights Road. Design and construction intersection improvements and non-motorized pathway connections at the nearby intersections of Casino Drive with South March's Point Road and Long John Drive with Padilla Heights Road. Projects on state highways require the coordinated development of Practical Solutions with WSDOT.	Roadway	$$$	Short	High	●	◒	●	●	◒	●

Section 5: **Transportation Improvements & Programs**

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Exhibit 5-15
Illustrative Projects #2 (Not Fiscally Constrained)

Addresses Priority
○ = None
◒ = Partial
● = Full

Cost
$ = up to $1 million
$$ = $1 - $10 million
$$$ = $10 - $100 million
$$$$ = over $100 million

Timeframe
Short Range = 2021 - 2030
Long Range = 2031 - 2045

ID	Agency	Project Name	Project Description	Mode Type	Cost	Time Frame	Relative Priority	Economic Vitality	Preservation	Safety	Mobility	Environment	Stewardship
57	WSDOT	2021-2030 Vessel Replacements	Replace existing vessel with 144-car electric-hybrid Olympic class vessel.	Ferry	$$$$	Short	High	◒	●	●	●	●	●
58	WSDOT	2031-2045 Vessel Replacements	Replace four existing vessels with three 144-car electric-hybrid Olympic class vessels, and one 114-car electric-hybrid interisland vessel.	Ferry	$$$$	Long	High	◒	●	●	●	●	●
56	WSDOT	Anacortes Terminal Replacement	Construction of a new terminal building, including terminal electrification in coordination with electric-hybrid vessel deployment. This project requires coordination with Anacortes.	Ferry	$$$$	Short	High	◒	●	◒	●	●	●
59	WSDOT	I-5 Active Traffic Management	A wide range of technologies and strategies used to optimize traffic throughput and improve safety during periods of peak travel demand, or when incidents and events occur that affect traffic flow and safety. Active Traffic Management may include adaptive ramp metering, adaptive intersection signal systems, variable message signs, variable speed limits and lane use control signs. This project requires coordination with Skagit County, Mount Vernon and Burlington.	Intelligent Transportation Systems	$$$$	Long	High	●	●	●	●	○	●

Evaluating Projects

The least-cost planning methodology utilized in Skagit 2045 included the consideration of projects costs, timing, dedicated project funding, and a project-level evaluation using the six regional priorities from Section 4: Transportation Priorities & Policies. The results of project-level evaluation for each priority is displayed in the project tables. For each project, a full circle indicates fully addressing a priority, a partial circle indicates it partially addressing a priority and an empty circle indicates not addressing a priority. Criteria utilized to evaluate projects used data available to SCOG, from a range of sources. Together, the six priority results were combined to assign a relative priority for each Planned and Illustrative project: High, Medium or Low. Evaluation criteria addressing performance-based planning were included for performance measures included in **Appendix H**.

Travel Demand Modeling Scenarios

A regional travel demand model was used to determine the impacts of the proposed projects on the regional transportation system. The evaluation of future roadway improvements was based on 2045 land-use forecasts, the anticipated 2045 street network and resulting demand to travel across the Skagit region.

The regional travel demand model is a p.m. peak hour model, and is automobile based, not accounting for non-motorized or transit modes. The lane miles of highway and arterial links were evaluated as either approaching or exceeding their planning-level capacity using the link's volume-to-capacity ratio. **Exhibit 5-15** illustrates how the volume-to-capacity ratio correlates to modeled level of service.

Travel demand models are limited in how they represent human travel tendencies and choices. Models such as these provide a tool for estimating and comparing likely outcomes, not a prediction of future traffic conditions. For this reason, some areas in the 2045 scenarios may have higher congestion problems than will actually be experienced. Likewise, congestion in other areas may be underrepresented.

While travel demand models are not crystal balls telling the future of the Skagit region, they are effective for assessing the relative impacts of growth. Further analysis and professional judgment should be used when estimating future travel behaviors in specific locations, to ensure traffic volumes predicted by the model are reasonable.

For Skagit 2045, four scenarios were modeled to help evaluate the impacts of the Skagit region's regionally significant projects:

1. **2018 Existing Scenario**;
2. **2045 Baseline Scenario**;
3. **2045 Planned Scenario**; and
4. **2045 Illustrative Scenario**.

Exhibit 5-16 through **Exhibit 5-19** display map plots from the four scenarios developed during the planning process. The map plots are exported from PTV VISUM software which SCOG uses to model traffic in the Skagit region. On the plots, Heavy Congestion equates to a volume to caption of greater than one, with roadways exceeding capacity. While not possible for any roadway to exceed capacity in practice, for the model scenarios, these areas of Heavy Congestion do indicate where the street network begins to breakdown under the strain of increased demand for travel. This modeled breakdown of the street network is equivalent to LOS F in **Exhibit 5-15**.

2018 Existing Scenario

The 2018 Existing Scenario, displayed in **Exhibit 5-16**, models the

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existing conditions of the regional transportation network. When the travel demand model was being developed, 2018 land-use and street-network data was the most recent available, and was used as inputs to the model. Inputs include employment and population information from 2018. This scenario was validated using traffic counts taken from around the Skagit region during the same year along with location-based services data, which includes smart phone location information.

Heaviest areas of traffic congestion occur on Interstate 5 between Mount Vernon and Burlington in the 2018 Existing Scenario. The Cook Road/Interstate 5 interchange and Division Street Bridge over the Skagit River also appear as congested areas in the scenario. Cook Road in Sedro-Woolley and State Route 20 in Burlington and Sedro-Woolley are other areas with higher levels of congestion.

2045 Baseline Scenario

The 2045 Baseline Scenario, displayed in **Exhibit 5-17**, uses the 2018 Existing Scenario as a starting point, and then includes employment and population forecasts out to 2045. Any projects on the regional transportation system that are already funded, either partially or fully, are included in this scenario. This scenario forecasts the impacts to the regional transportation system if no additional capacity expansions are made by 2045.

Traffic congestion is forecast to continue to worsen along I-5 in the 2045 Baseline Scenario, experiencing level of service F through parts of Mount Vernon and Burlington. Northbound traffic is modeled to be the most congested on this facility.

Roadways in the vicinity of the Cook Road/I-5 interchange also experience level-of-service F, as do all bridges over the Skagit River in Burlington and Mount Vernon.

2045 Planned Scenario

The 2045 Planned Scenario, displayed in **Exhibit 5-18**, is a "partial build" that utilizes the 2045 Baseline Scenario and adds all capacity expansion projects that can be modeled and the Skagit region expects to occur by the end of the Plan's timeframe.

This scenario notably reduces forecast traffic congestion at the Cook Road/I-5 interchange. However, most traffic congestion forecast for the Skagit region changes little with these planned improvements.

2045 Illustrative Scenario

The 2045 Illustrative Scenario, displayed in **Exhibit 5-19** is a "full build", includes all Planned capacity expansion projects and adds all Illustrative projects that can be modeled. This scenario forecasts what traffic would occur in 2045 if all the capacity expansion projects in Skagit 2045 were constructed during the Plan timeframe.

The 2045 Illustrative Scenario provides a new four-lane bridge over the Skagit River in downtown Mount Vernon, thus reducing traffic congestion on State Route 536 in Mount Vernon. However, capacity restrictions occur west of the proposed bridge, worsening traffic congestion nearby. Notably, WSDOT proposes active traffic management for Interstate 5 in the Skagit region that would improve traffic congestion, but operational and management strategies cannot be modeled in the regional travel demand model used for Skagit 2045.

Exhibit 5-16 Level of Service and Volume-to-Capacity Ratio

Level of Service (LOS)	Volume-to-Capacity Ratio
LOS A	<.60
LOS B	.60-.69
LOS C	.70-.79
LOS D	.80-.89
LOS E	.90-.99
LOS F	>.99

Note: Volume-to-capacity ratio is used as the level-of-service measure in SCOG's regional travel demand model. Other service measures, such as delay at signalized intersections, speeds on urban street segments, and percent time-spent-following on two-lane highways may be appropriate for specific elements of the regional transportation system and local transportation systems. The latest edition of the Highway Capacity Manual should be referenced for determining which service measure is the most appropriate for the transportation system element being measured. Model results presented in Skagit 2045 provide a broad, regional perspective of the regional transportation system. Other LOS analyses are likely to yield results more appropriate to individual transportation facilities being reviewed.

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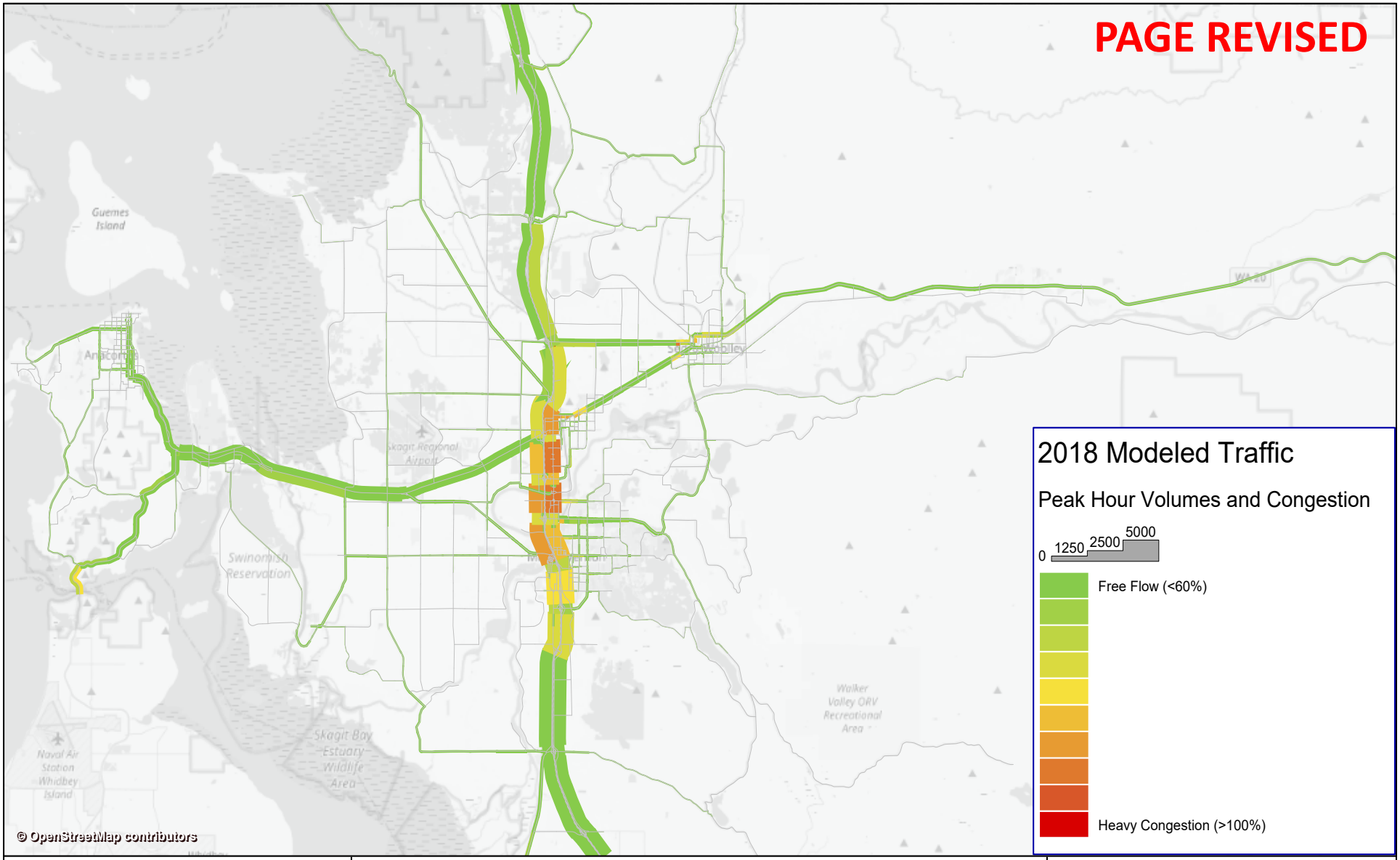

VISUM 20.01 PTV AG		2018 Modeled Traffic
		Existing Scenario

Exhibit 5-17 2018 Existing Scenario

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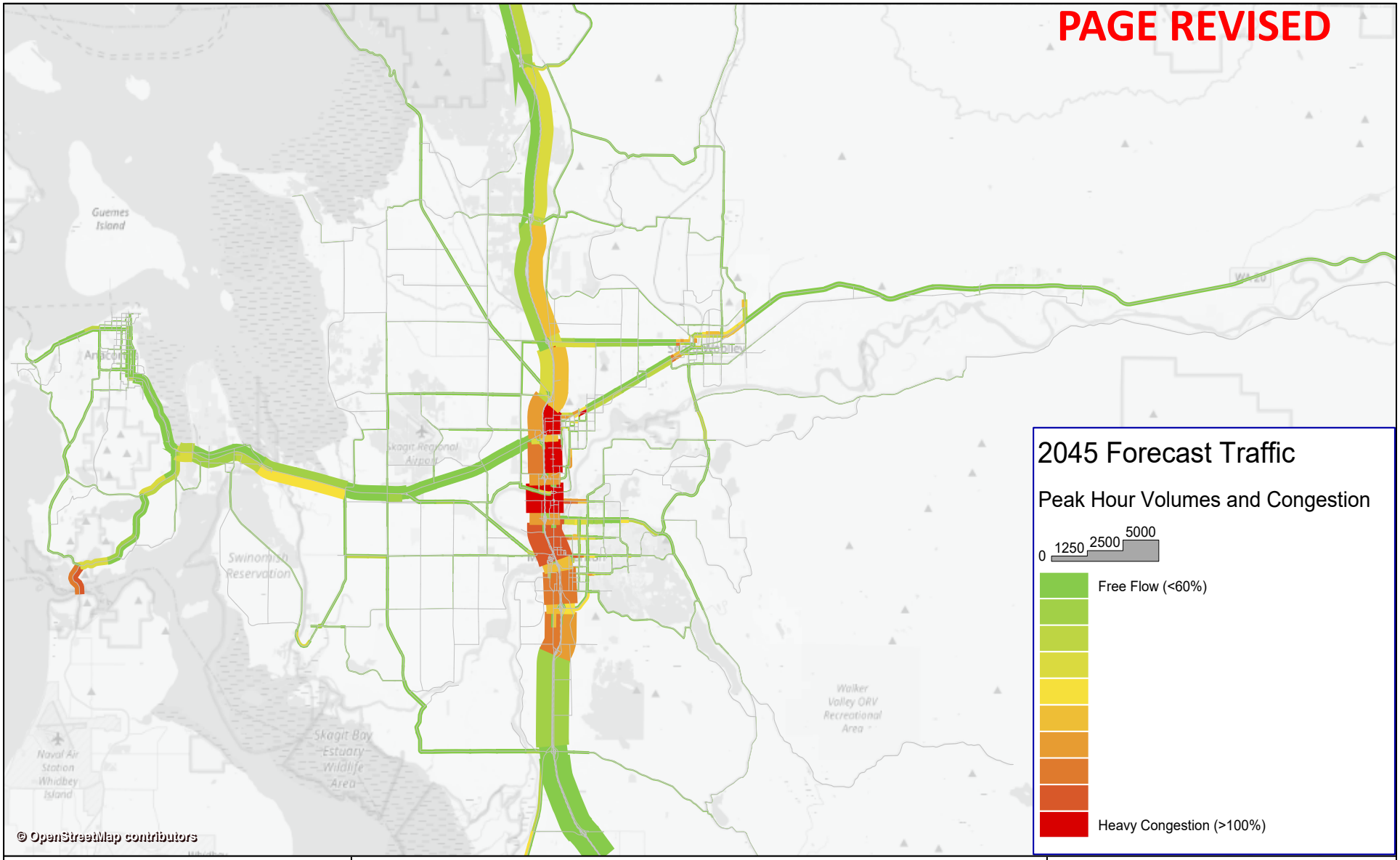

VISUM 20.01 PTV AG		2045 Forecast Traffic
		Baseline Scenario

Exhibit 5-18 2045 Baseline Scenario

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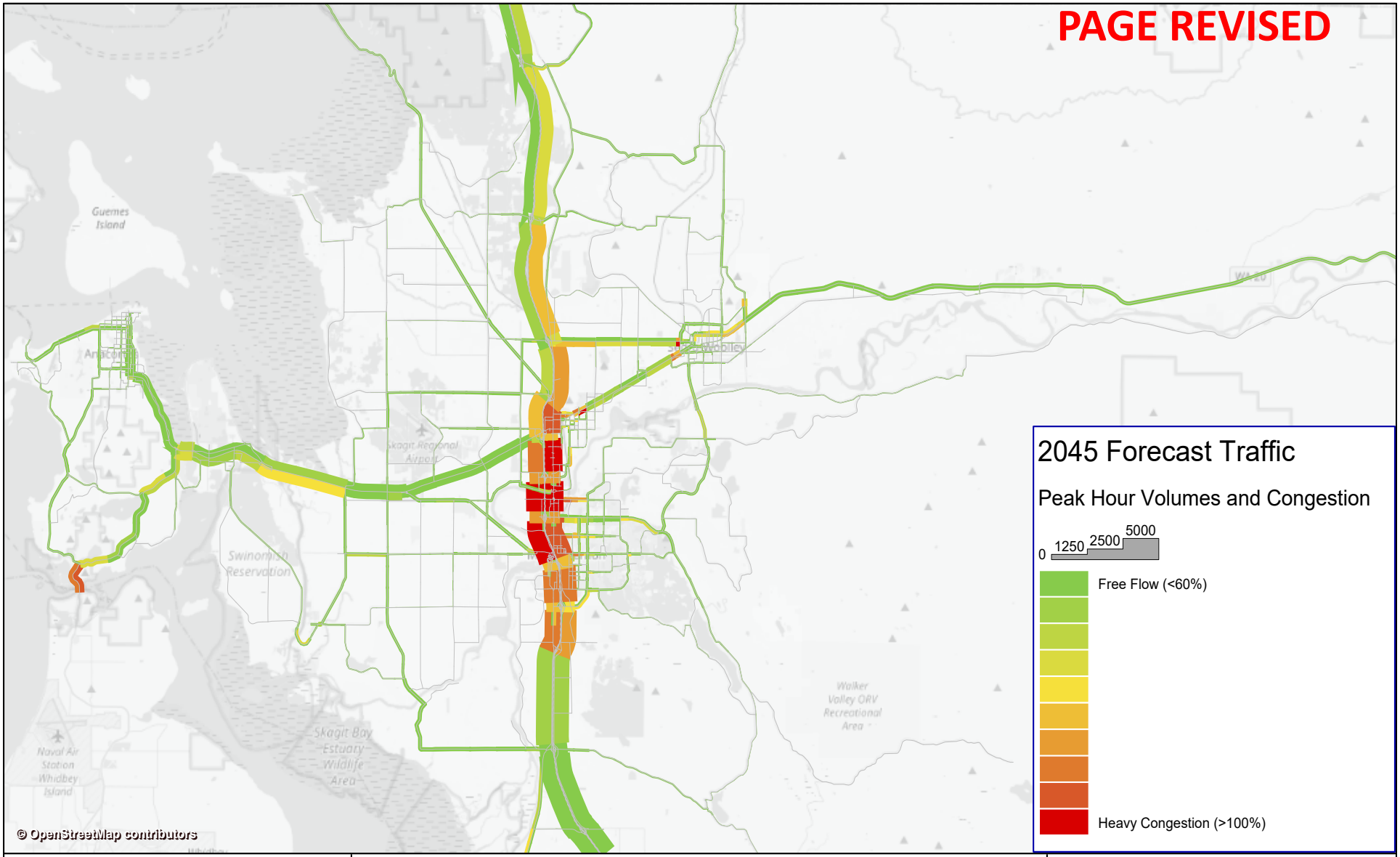

VISUM 20.01 PTV AG		2045 Forecast Traffic
		Planned Scenario

Exhibit 5-19 2045 Planned Scenario

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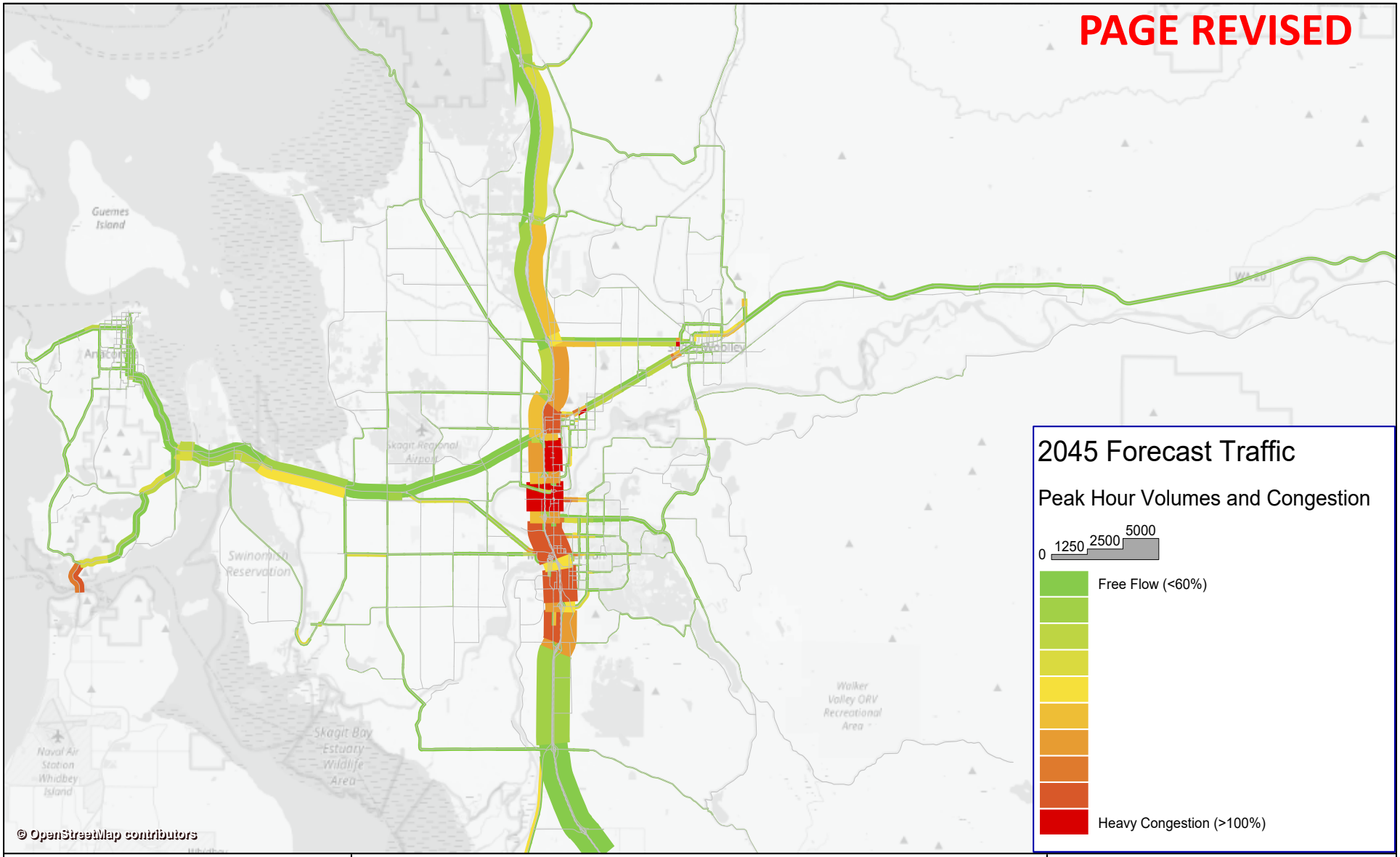

VISUM 20.01 PTV AG		2045 Forecast Traffic
		Illustrative Scenario

Exhibit 5-20 2045 Illustrative Scenario

Evaluation of Scenarios

Performance measures provide policy makers and the public a framework for evaluating progress towards implementing regional transportation policies. The following performance measures were identified to assess the relative impacts of forecasted land-use growth and the benefits of Skagit 2045 system improvements. It is recommended that performance measures be monitored over time to assess the regional investment strategy incorporated into the Plan. The following charts show the relative change in some key transportation performance measures for the region. The charts show results for the four different model scenarios.

Lane Miles and Congestion

Lane miles are calculated by multiplying roadway segment length in miles by the number of travel lanes, and summing for all segments included in the model. This measure helps identify how the capacity of the model network changes across the different scenarios. It also can be broken down by level-of-service threshold (see **Exhibit 5-15**) to illustrate how much of the modeled network operates at differing levels of service. **Exhibit 5-20** illustrates the levels of congestion for LOS D, E and F by lane miles for all four of the model scenarios. The 2018 Existing Scenario includes over 1,341 lane miles. Most of the network (1,323 miles) is modeled to operate at LOS C or higher. Less than half a mile is modeled at over capacity. Around 16 lane miles of congestion (model segments operating at LOS D, E or F) are modeled in the 2018 Existing Scenario.

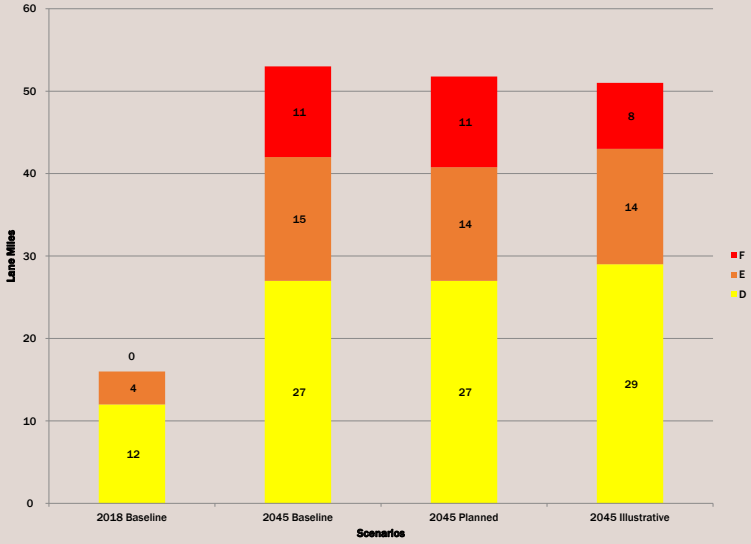

Exhibit 5-21 Comparison of 2018 and 2045 Lanes Miles and Level of Service

The number of lane miles in the 2045 Baseline Scenario increases by six miles due to multiple local projects which are funded but not yet constructed. All other Funded projects that are not yet constructed do not add lane miles to the model network. Projects included in the 2045 Planned Scenario, such as the Trail Road extension and Blackburn Road extension, add an additional three lane miles to the 2045 Baseline Scenario network. Finally, large and/or long-term projects included in the 2045 Illustrative Scenario, such as the Division Street Bridge, add another eight lane miles to the 2045 Planned Scenario. Across all four scenarios, the total lane miles increase by 17 miles. The vast majority of roadway segments in each scenario are modeled to operate at LOS C or better. Lane miles of congestion operating at LOS D or worse are only a small portion of the total lane mileage in each scenario, ranging from 51 to 53 miles in 2045 forecast scenarios. This suggests that most Skagit County roadways have adequate capacity and that future capacity issues are primary limited to the I-5 corridor, bridges over the Skagit River, and other isolated locations.

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Vehicle Miles Traveled

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is calculated by multiplying the segment length in miles by the volume modeled on that segment, and then summing for all of the segments in the model. Future land use growth in the region will add approximately 28% more vehicle miles traveled compared to 2018 Existing conditions, or an annual growth rate of about 1.4%. There is a slight decrease in VMT between 2045 Baseline and Planned scenarios, which reflects an increased ability to travel more directly between destinations due to planned roadway improvements. VMT increases again under the 2045 Illustrative Scenario. This increase is likely due to changes in route assignment of vehicle trips as new facilities, such as an additional bridge across the Skagit River in Mount Vernon, allow for vehicles to take longer detours around congested areas saving time yet increasing vehicle miles traveled. **Exhibit 5-21** shows VMT for each of the four scenarios.

Vehicle Hours of Delay

Vehicle hours of delay (VHD) is a measure of the increase in travel time for all travelers as a result of traffic congestion. Under 2045 Baseline conditions in the Skagit region, there would be approximately 1,771 hours of vehicle delay. The projects included in the 2045 Planned and Illustrative scenarios would reduce total VHD in Skagit County by 1.8% and 8.2%, respectively. **Exhibit 5-22** shows VHD for each of the four scenarios.

Programmatic Transportation Improvements

Regionally significant projects are not the only transportation improvements considered in Skagit 2045. Though not uniquely identified in the Plan, programmatic projects are integral to continued function of the regional transportation system. These programmatic projects address safety, traffic operations, maintenance and preservation, and environmental protection/ restoration. Unlike regionally significant projects, programmatic projectsare

Exhibit 5-22 Comparison of 2018 and 2045 Vehicle Miles Traveled

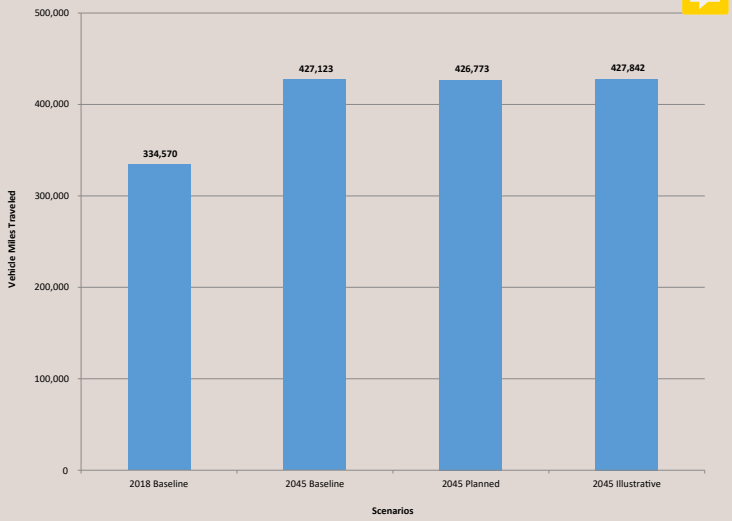
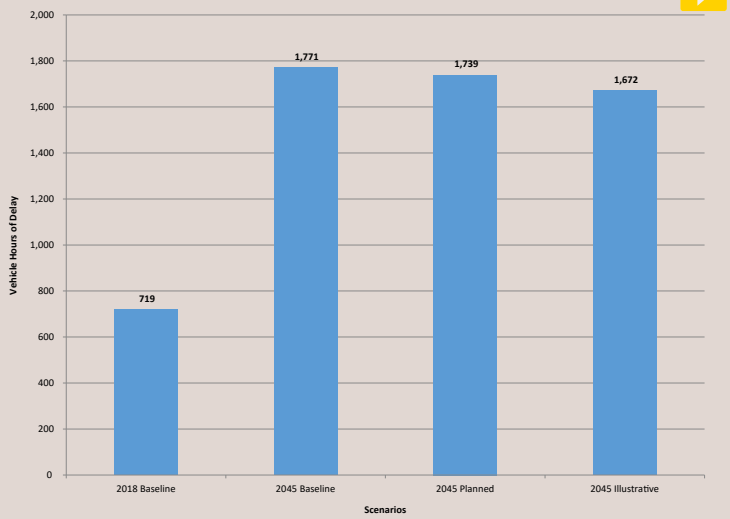


Exhibit 5-23 Comparison of 2018 and 2045 Vehicle Hours of Delay



not individually listed in Skagit 2045 because they are automatically considered to be consistent with the priorities of the Skagit region.

Efficiency Strategies

Improvements to corridors that address existing and forecast safety and operational issues are high priorities in the Plan. Also included are projects that reconstruct existing arterials to current standards to better handle forecast traffic volumes and improve non-motorized facilities. These improvements focus on effectively reducing safety and operational issues along existing arterials, but do not necessarily add additional capacity. They also support a range of travel modes, as automobiles, trucks, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists use these key regional intersections and roadway links. Transportation system management including signal timing upgrades, Intelligent Transportation Systems, and access management strategies, will also be incorporated in the existing corridors. While not listed individually in Skagit 2045 project lists, these programmatic improvements are accounted for in the Plan's financial assumptions.

Maintenance and Preservation

A major priority of Skagit 2045 is to encourage effective maintenance and preservation of prior transportation investments. Any needed maintenance activities, particularly those on the regional transportation system, are consistent with Plan priorities.

The cost of maintaining and preserving the regional transportation system is directly related to its size and the level of service expectations established for each community. Due to the high cost of maintaining and preserving the regional transportation system, difficult decisions may have to be made regarding the tradeoffs of investing in maintenance and preservation, or expanding capacity. Choosing to fund a capacity expansion project that will reduce congestion could mean deferring maintenance on other transportation facilities, potentially lowering the level of service of the regional transportation system as a whole. Funding eligibility requirements add further complications to the decision. A dialogue with the public should help inform the proper balance of transportation funding allocations for each jurisdiction.

Transit and Transportation Demand Management

The Skagit 2045 framework includes strategies for increasing transit mode share and capacity to meet the future travel demands throughout the Skagit region. Strategies to reduce peak period travel demands also are included. The transit and transportation demand management strategies include:

- Improving transportation services for people with special needs, including those dependent on transit;
- Attracting riders to transit services that may otherwise choose a an automobile for travel;
- Expand park-and-ride facilities to connect transit services to drivers and passengers of automobiles, and provide connections to different transit routes and services offered by various transit agencies;
- Expanding fixed-route service coverage in the public transportation benefit area, and express services connecting to neighboring regions;
- Extending service hours;
- Targeting transit service to larger employers; and
- Enhancing transit service to regional destinations.

Other Projects

Skagit 2045 is a fiscally constrained plan which must set priorities since available funding is not expected to meet all identified needs during the Plan's 25-year timeframe. The Plan acknowledges that there are a range of needed improvements, both regional and local, that are desirable to meet the overall transportation needs of the region.

Section 6
Environmental Constraints

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Section 6: **Environmental Constraints**

A programmatic-level review of potential environmental constraints was conducted as part of Skagit 2045. Federal law requires such planning efforts protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and anticipated growth and economic development patterns. A scan of potential environmental constraints is a key component of this review, and can help inform SCOG's Transportation Policy Board, interested parties and others as to the potential limitations that may present themselves as projects move through the development process.

Further, Washington's State Environmental Policy Act provides the context for environmental constraints analysis along with the applicable federal and local regulations. Generally, the environmental analysis for the Plan looked at the potential for impacts from transportation construction projects, in addition to a cursory review of non-construction projects.

This environmental constraints assessment can also help the Transportation Policy Board and their members agencies identify the types of pitfalls that may be encountered through the project development process. Through early screening and identification, it is possible that planning and financially based decisions could be made to better align programming, or prioritization of projects. For example, if a bridge replacement and widening project has several constraints identified, it may be advisable for the Transportation Policy Board to work with local jurisdictions or the Washington State Department of Transportation to identify other projects to potentially fill the gap if the bridge project experiences considerable delays.

Deception Pass Bridge to Island County

Environmental constraints may be encountered during the design, right of way, and construction phases of future transportation improvement projects identified in Skagit 2045.

Through the priority identification process for the Plan, which included input from a variety of interested parties within the Skagit region as well as the public, the Environment priority from **Section 4** is:

- To enhance regional quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities and protect the environment.

It was determined this priority would be accomplished by improving the environmental quality of our neighborhoods and communities to create a sustainable transportation system, while also promoting economic vitality in the Skagit region. This includes finding ways to reduce environmental impacts that could potentially result from a transportation project, as well as taking advantage of opportunities for ecological restoration, and promoting environmentally efficient modes of transportation, such as transit, vanpooling, car-sharing, bicycling and walking.

While the project list generated for Skagit 2045 reflects these principals, a more discrete analysis of the actual environmental impacts of these projects will be conducted on a project-by-project basis. The environmental constraints assessment for the Plan is not intended to identify specific environmental impacts of road projects, nor is Skagit 2045 to be used in determining environmental mitigation. Analysis of specific direct and indirect impacts and potential

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mitigations will occur as individual transportation projects are further defined and permitted.

Environmental Considerations

When making decisions about transportation projects, services and programs, the ecosystem services provided by nature that sustain healthy human communities should be considered. Where ecosystem services are recognized, valued, and protected, communities are more likely to:

- Avoid impacts to sensitive environmental resources and species, particularly those that need protection due to their high quality, sensitivity, rarity and irreplaceability;
- Protect open space, resource lands, air and water quality;
- Provide ecological connectivity to ensure species movement and natural processes continue unimpeded; and
- Ensure quality of life is maintained, and the need for costly constructed solutions to replace lost natural functions is minimized.

As noted, the environmental analysis for Skagit 2045 identified potential impacts through a geographic information systems (GIS)-based evaluation of several aspects of the region's environmental features. Where available, GIS files were compiled to measure potential impacts to:

- Geologic hazard areas;
- Air quality;
- Water resources and wetlands;
- Floodplains;
- Plant and animal habitat areas;
- Land use and housing;
- Shoreline use;
- Noise;
- Aesthetics/light and glare;
- Environmental justice;
- Recreation; and
- Historic and cultural resources.

The agencies with responsibilities for the projects in Skagit 2045 are:

- City of Anacortes;
- City of Burlington;
- City of Mt. Vernon;
- City of Sedro-Woolley;
- Town of Concrete;
- Skagit County;
- Skagit Transit; and
- WSDOT.

The environmental constraints analysis focused on projects that will significantly add to the footprint of roadways by expanding the capacity of the regional transportation system, including projects identified for state highways, as well as regional transportation projects under the responsibility of the associated city, county, tribal government, transit agency or WSDOT. These projects were analyzed individually at a programmatic level. Projects in Skagit 2045 that could significantly add to the footprint of roadways were described by the project sponsor.

Projects such as Intelligent Transportation Systems improvements, preventive maintenance, operational improvements and projects that do not involve significant increases in roadway surface may not have

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Exhibit 6-1 Overview of Environmental Elements

Environmental Element Type	Overview of Environmental Elements
Geological Hazard Areas	Projects will cross or be adjacent to mapped steep slopes, landslide and avalanche risk areas, stream undercutting, and earthquake activity areas. Suitability of soils to be assessed with project level environmental review and permitting.
Air Quality	Conformity standards established through National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and analyzed on an area-wide basis.
Water Resources and Wetlands	Projects will cross or be in the immediate vicinity of rivers, streams or lakes, or in the immediate vicinity of identified wetlands, however the actual presence and location of wetlands must be field verified. Groundwater issues, stormwater management, and any necessary mitigation for protection of aquifers will be evaluated and determined at the project level.
Floodplains	Projects are located within mapped floodplains.
Plant and Animal Habitat Areas	Projects are adjacent to terrestrial (land) or aquatic (water) habitat areas for state- or federal-listed endangered, threatened, or candidate, sensitive or other vulnerable or important species. Where a project may affect an identified habitat area, more investigation is required to confirm the actual, current use of the identified area as habitat.
Land Use and Housing	Projects that may have potential for direct disturbance of an existing land use, land use incompatibilities, or the need to relocate housing units. Actual impacts will likely be fewer where there is existing right-of-way to accommodate road expansion, or where there are intervening topography, buildings or vegetation.
Shoreline Use	Projects that may be located within a shoreline jurisdiction area (i.e. within 200 feet of shorelines of Washington state) and therefore subject to the Washington's Shoreline Management Act (SMA). The SMA is implemented by the shoreline master program in effect in the local jurisdiction.
Noise	Projects are located in proximity to residences, habitat areas, parks, schools, and hospitals, which are considered sensitive to noise. All widening and extension projects, and some other improvement or upgrade projects, will result in increased noise during construction.
Aesthetics/Light and Glare	Changing visual conditions, or added light or glare due to road extension or increased capacity may affect sensitive land uses and/or priority habitat areas.
Environmental Justice	Projects in immediate proximity of concentrations of low-income and/or minority populations, particularly in the vicinity of projects that may generate substantial noise, land use/housing disturbance, land-use incompatibility, aesthetic impacts, light and glare or impacts to recreational resources.
Recreation	Projects in the immediate vicinity of parks or recreational resources.
Historic and Cultural Resources	Projects in the immediate vicinity of state- or federal-designated historic properties (Washington Heritage Register or National Register of Historic Places). The potential for impacts to archaeological resources will be evaluated at the project level due to sensitive nature of the locations of archaeological resources.

environmental constraints that will create notable environmental impacts. Significant impacts that could lengthen the project approval process, increase the cost of project design and approval, require extensive mitigation to offset the impacts, or make the project infeasible. Even though there may be less impacts in terms of roadway surface area, there may be some potential for temporary construction impacts, such as noise and air quality, associated with these projects. It is also possible that projects could have a positive impact on the environment.

Environmental Elements

A brief summary of each element of the environment for which constraints may exist is presented in **Exhibit 6-1**. The discussion of environmental elements is followed by a summary of the potential for environmental impacts that could occur with implementation of projects included in Skagit 2045. Not all of these elements were evaluated due to limited data sets, but are presented to provide examples of environmental constraints that may impact a project.

Exhibit 6-2 provides a classification of environmental constraint, depending upon how likely constraints occur in the vicinity of any project.

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Potential for Environmental Impacts of Major Improvement Projects

The exhibits and text that follow summarize the potential for environmental impacts of the transportation improvement projects identified in Skagit 2045 that will have the greatest potential for significant environmental impacts. Two categories were used to identify the potential for environmental constraints: possible constraint and probable constraint.

The project assessment is summarized for each of the 10 urban growth areas and all non-UGA areas, consistent with the Plan. **Exhibit 6-3** shows the location of all funded, planned, and illustrative transportation projects in relationship to possible environmental constraints. This exhibit summarizes potential constraints and impacts related to regionally significant projects in the Skagit region.

The project assessment was limited to the GIS environmental constraints data available at the time of the Plan update. These data sets were primarily limited to a predictive model of archeological resources, steep slopes, wetlands and other water bodies. As discussed earlier, the environmental constraints assessment for Skagit 2045 is not intended to identify specific environmental impacts of transportation projects included in the Plan, or to be used in determining environmental mitigation. Analysis of specific direct and indirect impacts and potential mitigations will occur as individual transportation projects are further defined and permitted.

Exhibit 6-2 Level of Environmental Constraint

Level	Definition
Possible Constraint	Constrained areas or resources were identified in the vicinity of the project(s) and could potentially be affected based on the actual alignment and design of the project(s). This category indicates any potential ranging from limited to great, but not certain.
Probable Constraint	A resource or constrained area is definitely located in the project(s) area or immediate vicinity, and will likely require further review. Identification of a constraint does not mean that the project(s) will definitely result in impacts, or that impacts will be of a significant degree; instead, it indicates that the potential for impacts will need to be evaluated further at the project level.

Skagit Valley Tulips

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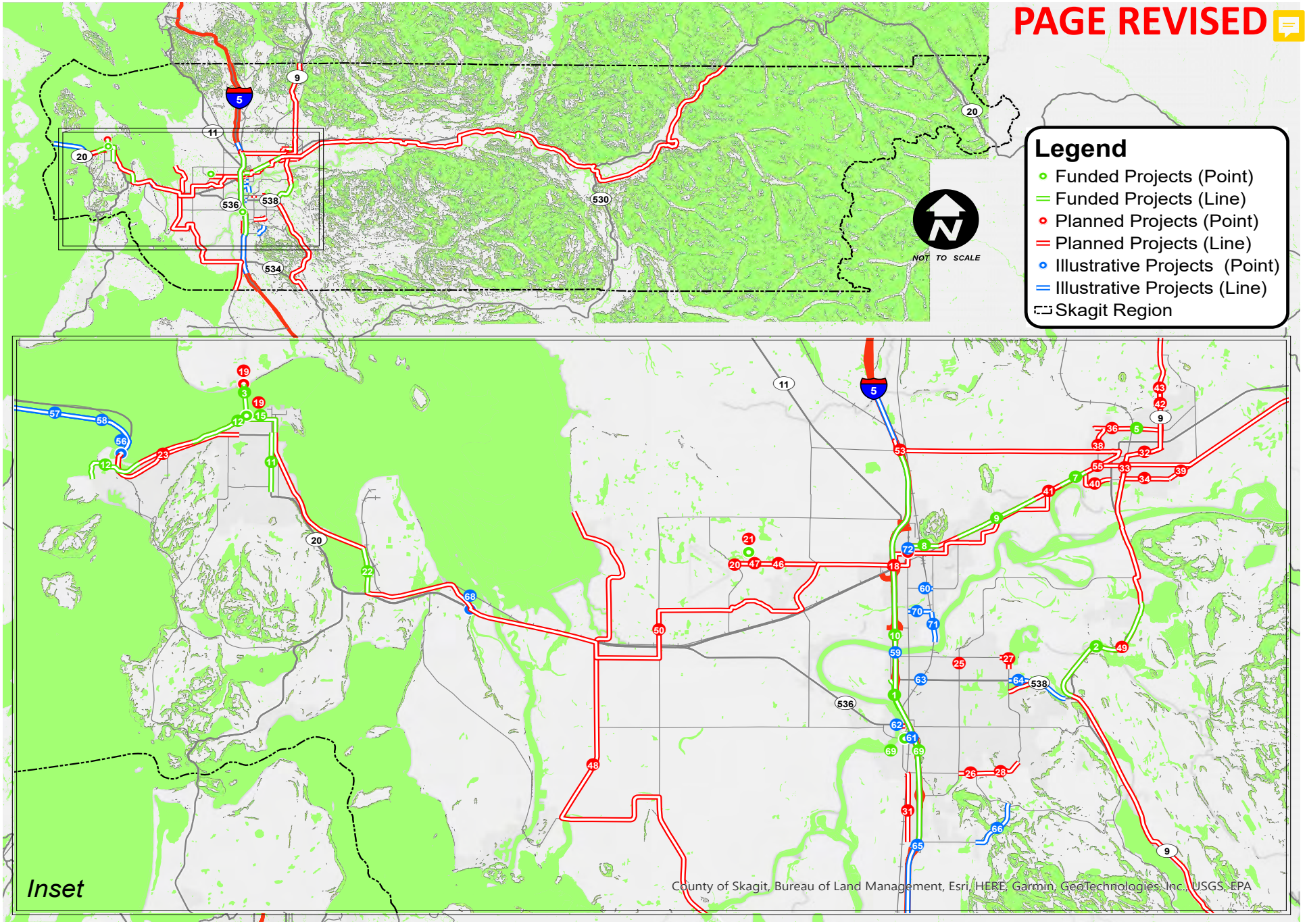

Exhibit 6-3 Potential Environmental Constraints for Regionally Significant Transportation Projects

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Washington State Department of Transportation Projects

In general, widening projects located near rivers, Puget Sound or bays and inlets may affect shoreline jurisdiction area, archeological resources, floodplains, habitat area, aesthetic conditions, wetlands (where they may exist adjacent to rivers), and water quality. Some geologic hazard areas may also be affected. There is also potential to affect park and recreation sites where they are located adjacent to these rivers. Increased noise associated with these projects also has the potential to affect both habitat areas and parks where they are located in the immediate vicinity.

Following are other generalizations derived from past project experience in the Skagit region:

- Projects that will increase capacity through widening or extension of roads will have the greatest effects as they generally involve the most land disturbance, require additional impervious areas and can impact land use over a wider area;
- Projects that will add impervious surface area without increasing capacity are less likely to have land use impacts; and
- Projects located in urban areas are expected to have lower impacts than projects in rural areas, due to existing levels of urbanization, impervious surface area, and habitat disturbance.

Regional Transportation Projects by Urban Growth Area

The potential impacts and constraints of regional transportation projects identified in Skagit 2045 are summarized below by urban growth area (UGA). The locations of these projects in relationship to possible environmental constraints are shown in **Exhibit 6-3**. Environmental constraints associated with Skagit Transit fleet expansion is not analyzed as the expansion is anticipated for the entire public transportation benefit area, and not any one urban growth area.

Evaluation of environmental constraints was conducted for reach project with results included in Section 5, which includes priorities for each project across the six regional priorities, including "Environment". Results are summarized below, organized by urban growth area. Projects fully funded or partially funded are not included in the environmental analysis, due to funding decisions already made on these projects. Environmental review is conducted for these funded projects, and all projects in Skagit 2045, through relevant federal and Washington state requirements.

Urban Growth Areas

Anacortes

Many of the projects in this urban growth area have identified environmental constraints, primarily due to their proximity to shorelines or stream crossings.

Bayview Ridge

Projects for Skagit Transit's new maintenance, operations, and administration base do not have identified environmental constraints, as the footprint of the existing structure that will become the base is not anticipated to substantially change. The Peterson Road projects have potential identified environmental constraints.

BNSF Skagit River Bridge during Flooding

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Burlington

The Railroad Overpass Project in the Burlington UGA cross Gages Slough and is expected to have environmental constraints. Other Burlington projects are expected to have negligible environmental impacts.

Concrete

No projects are identified in the Concrete UGA, other than the Secondary Access project which has secured partial funding.

Hamilton

No projects are identified in the Hamilton UGA.

La Conner

No projects are identified in the La Conner UGA.

Lyman

No projects are identified in the Lyman UGA.

Mount Vernon

In the Mount Vernon UGA, many projects have anticipated environmental constraints – primarily river/stream crossings and steep slopes. A few projects with anticipated minor land disturbances are not expected to have environmental constraints, such as adding a bike lane on Old Highway 99 South and Martin Road Improvements.

Sedro-Woolley

In the Sedro-Woolley UGA, the projects south of State Route 20 appear to have less potential for environmental constraints as they are generally in already developed parts of the city where few environmental constraints are present. Several projects north of State Route 20, however, have identified environmental constraints, primarily stream crossings within the project extent.

Swinomish

No projects are identified in the Swinomish UGA.

Non-Urban Growth Areas

Several trail projects outside of UGAs have identified environmental constraints, including the Centennial Trail project, which cross several streams/rivers. Potential environmental impacts for the Skagit County and WSDOT projects planned in the vicinity of the Cook Road/Interstate 5 interchange include a stream in the vicinity of the southbound off-ramp and potential of archeological resources in the area.

Skagit Transit

The nature of transit improvements generally means less physical construction in undeveloped areas and generally has less potential for adverse impact than roadway capacity expansion projects, such as widening or extensions. Additionally, the alignments for new bus routes are not identified in the Plan, instead they are planned for the public transportation benefit area as a whole.

Washington State Department of Transportation

The I-5 Active Traffic Management project includes a range of technologies and strategies along a 14-mile stretch of Interstate 5 through Mount Vernon and Burlington. There are several potential environmental constraints along this corridor that travels through two urban growth areas, and areas north and south of these UGAs. As this project is further scoped, the precise environmental impacts will become evident through project-specific environmental review, which is outside of the scope of Skagit 2045.

There are also several WSDOT ferries projects in the Plan, including a terminal replacement in Anacortes and replacement of six vessels. Vessel replacements are anticipated to have environmental benefits,

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as diesel-powered ferries are replaced with diesel-electric hybrids. Environmental impacts associated with the Anacortes Terminal Replacement project include potential archeological resources, wetlands, and saltwater related impacts.

Environmental Impacts of Operations, Preservation and Maintenance Projects

Skagit 2045 includes a number of programmatic projects that, due to not expanding the regional transportation system, are not highlighted individually in this summary, nor included in **Appendix A**. These include general operations, maintenance and preservation projects, such as:

- Roadway reconstruction projects that are not regionally significant;
- Signage modifications;
- Sidewalk completion;
- Lighting improvements;
- Minor rail-crossing improvements;
- Safety improvements, such as installation of guardrails; and
- Installation of roadway curbs and gutters.

Many of these projects are categorically excluded from environmental review, while other projects are limited as to what can be specifically identified at the planning level, before preliminary engineering has begun. Projects such as intersection improvements, may result in improved environmental conditions. And fish passage projects improve barriers that restore ecological function, replacing culverts with structures providing habitat gain to fish species.

Some of these operations, preservation and maintenance projects apply to specific road segments, or local areas, while others are area-wide improvements. Area-wide operational and maintenance strategies included in the Plan are not analyzed individually because specific locations are not identified and they do not considered regionally significant in Skagit 2045. These operational and maintenance strategies improve the performance of the existing system by reducing vehicular congestion, improving safety and mobility. For Skagit 2045, projects associated with implementing these strategies are not anticipated to result in increased impervious surface area.

Climate Change

In Washington state, transportation accounts for nearly half of the total greenhouse gas emissions, including emissions from cars, trucks, planes and ships. Emission reduction strategies can help create more efficient driving conditions, reduce the amount of driving and introduce more fuel-efficient vehicles.

Washington state has set the following vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction goals:

- 18% reduction by 2020;
- 30% reduction by 2035; and
- 50% reduction by 2050.

The Skagit region recognizes that reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from transportation sources is a necessity. A goal of Skagit 2045 is to make recommendations to achieve significant reductions in transportation related GHG, and to recommend tools and best practices to achieve vehicle miles traveled reduction goals enacted in Washington state House Bill 2815 (greenhouse gas emissions and green collar jobs).

Action Strategies

Climate change action strategies are included in Skagit 2045 to achieve reductions in GHG and VMT, as well as prepare the Skagit region for threats to the regional transportation system antiquated during the timeframe of the Plan. Action strategies to address climate change at a regional level are as follows:

- Align investment strategies with achievement of VMT and GHG reduction provisions;
- Use GHG/VMT as criteria for funding and pursue new revenue sources to support transportation choices;
- Pursue new revenue sources to support transportation choices, particularly transit operations;
- Expand and enhance transit, rideshare and commuter choice;
- Provide incentives for vanpool and carpool programs;
- Develop more park-and-ride and park-and-pool lots;
- Develop actions to address congestion issues on the transit network (e.g. vehicle capacity, bus lanes, signal priority);
- Address ineffective intermodal connections;
- Pursue additional non-VMT actions to reduce GHG emissions from the transportation sector, including increasing the use of rail for both the movement of passengers and freight;
- Pursue opportunities for reduction in GHG emissions through improvements in traffic operations and roadway design that reduce vehicle delay, idling, and starting and stopping at intersections; and
- Provide resiliency in any existing or new transportation infrastructure that would be vulnerable to sea level.

Section 7
Financial Constraints

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Section 7: **Financial Constraints**

Under federal law, Skagit 2045 must make reasonable financing assumptions, accounting for existing or new revenue sources which are reasonably expected to be available over the timeframe of Skagit 2045 (Title 23 USC 134). The regulations allow the Plan to identify how additional revenues could be generated to fund more projects or programs that are included in the Plan.

The federal metropolitan planning statutes state that the long-range metropolitan transportation plan and short-range transportation improvement program (TIP) must include a "financial plan" that "indicates resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be made available to carry out the plan". The purpose of the financial plan is to demonstrate fiscal constraint. These requirements are implemented by applicable federal transportation planning regulations for the metropolitan transportation plan, metropolitan transportation improvement program and Washington statewide transportation improvement program (STIP). These regulations provide, in essence, that a long-range transportation plan include only projects for which funding "can reasonably be expected to be available".

Canoe Pass and Deception Pass Bridges

The fiscal constraint requirement is intended to ensure that metropolitan transportation plans, TIPs, and STIPs reflect realistic assumptions about future revenues, rather than being lists that include many more projects than could realistically be completed with available revenues. Given this basic purpose, compliance with the fiscal constraint requirement entails an analysis of revenues and costs. The basic question to be answered is:

"Will revenues (federal, state, local and private) identified in the TIP, STIP and metropolitan transportation plan cover the anticipated costs of projects included in the TIP, STIP, and metropolitan transportation plan, while also financing operation and maintenance of the existing system?"

If the projected revenues are sufficient to cover the costs, and the estimates of both revenues and costs are reasonable, then the fiscal constraint requirement has been satisfied. Ideally, the financial strategy that supports the metropolitan transportation plan should reflect "...the estimated costs of constructing, maintaining and operating the total (existing plus planned) transportation system", including portions of the system owned and operated by local governments.

The financial component of Skagit 2045 provides a comparison of revenues and investment needs over the entire planning period, as an aid to determining if the region has the financial capacity to implement the Plan. Financial planning for the Plan has been built upon previous efforts to design a framework for measuring the region's financial capacity, taking into account the unique circumstances of four program areas: (1) city streets; (2) county roads; (3) public transit; and (4) state highways and ferries.

This financial analysis is based on historical trends for revenues and expenditures, and current rules and regulations controlling transportation funding. The estimates are used to establish a likely range of revenues for regional transportation improvements and programs. The estimated revenues are only intended for planning purposes and are not intended to be precise forecasts, which is

Section 7: **Financial Constraints**

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Train Platform at Skagit Station

consistent with the objectives of Skagit 2045. Actual revenues will be sensitive to policy decisions at the local, state, and federal level, economic and market forces, and individual choices. Further, estimated costs for projects are subject to the same influences. Additional detail for each revenue source is included in **Appendix J**.

To develop the fiscally constrained Plan, estimated costs of regional transportation improvement projects and programs are compared to available revenues. Because total improvement project costs exceed the estimated revenues, not all the proposed regionally significant projects can be funded with projected revenues. Those projects deemed the highest priority, and most likely to secure funding, have been included as fiscally constrained projects in Skagit 2045.

Chuckanut Park and Ride

The projects and programs are further divided into three categories:

1. Improvements identified as "**Funded Projects**" are included in the fiscally constrained Plan. These projects have already secured funding and are expected to be completed during the horizon of the Plan. Funded Projects may have fully committed funding to complete the project, or have partially committed funding to complete the project;

2. Improvements identified as "**Planned Projects**" are also included in the fiscally constrained Plan. Although funding has not yet been secured for these projects, they are expected to be

Time Periods

The financial analysis is summarized into two time periods to illustrate the likely funding program based on current assumptions:

- **2021–2030**: this period covers the short term time frame of Skagit 2045 and include time periods covered by local six-year transportation improvement plans and programs. Both funding levels and project lists are considered to be more committed during this time period due to project development timeliness; and
- **2031–2045**: this period covers the outer years of the Plan. Projecting revenues and costs more than 10 years is less reliable because rules, regulations, economic conditions and local priorities change. As Skagit 2045 is updated in the future, the data for these years will be refined.

completed during the Plan timeframe; and

3. Some improvements are identified as supporting the Skagit region's transportation needs, but are challenging to fund given current funding limitations. These projects are not likely to be funded during the Plan timeframe, and are therefore considered "**Illustrative Projects**" in Skagit 2045.

Consistent with federal requirements, revenues and project costs have been projected for 2021–2045 in terms of "year of expenditure dollars" and "constant 2020 dollars". This provides an apples-to-apples comparison of revenues versus costs.

Future Transportation Revenues

Skagit 2045 has to be financially constrained, which is a federally required component of the Plan where project and program costs must be accounted for and balanced with reasonably expected revenues over the life of the Plan. This balancing requires forecasting what transportation revenues are expected in the Skagit region over the life of the Plan, and comparing that to the transportation needs and investments included in Skagit 2045.

The starting point in the development of the Plan's financial strategy is an estimate of future revenues that will be available under current-law. When compared with Skagit 2045 investment costs, the estimated current-law revenues provide the basis for determining the scope of new revenue strategies in the Plan.

Forecasted revenues expected under the current set of laws and tax rates are shown in **Exhibit 7-1**, by program area, for the two time periods of the Plan. Approximately **$2.8 billion** in total revenue is forecast for the Skagit region during the Plan's timeframe.

Plan Investment Needs

Transportation investments included in Skagit 2045 are described in Section 5 of the Plan. Skagit 2045 contains investments that are covered under the Plan's financial strategy, or fiscally constrained plan, but the Plan also contains investments that are, as yet, unprogrammed and not covered by the financial strategy. The rest of this section focuses primarily on the fiscally constrained portion of the Plan. Programmatic estimates of the resources required to maintain and operate city, county, and transit programs have also been developed

Exhibit 7-1
Total Estimated Current-law Revenues (constant 2020 dollars)

Program Area	2021 - 2030	2031 - 2045	Totals
Transit	$156,500,800	$275,562,100	$432,062,900
WSDOT	$462,471,000	$820,899,400	$1,283,370,400
County	$270,413,800	$347,745,900	$618,159,700
City/Town	$209,375,200	$297,982,900	$507,358,100
Totals	**$1,098,760,800**	**$1,742,190,400**	**$2,840,951,100**

Exhibit 7-2
Total Estimated Constrained Costs (constant 2020 dollars)

Program Area	2021 - 2030	2031 - 2045	Totals
Transit	$240,079,400	$391,119,600	$631,199,000
WSDOT	$633,098,100	$917,397,200	$1,550,495,300
County	$372,539,500	$564,330,300	$936,869,800
City/Town	$302,222,100	$328,107,200	$630,329,300
Totals	**$1,547,939,100**	**$2,200,954,300**	**$3,748,893,300**

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in a manner that reflects the timing of these investment needs. Estimated fiscally constrained costs in Skagit 2045 are included in **Exhibit 7-2**. These costs total approximately **$3.7 billion**.

Funding Options and Potential New Revenues

A comparison of Plan investment needs with current-law revenues provides a picture of the new revenue requirements across various transportation programs. New revenue requirements by program area are displayed in **Exhibit 7-3**. The revenue shortfall is approximately **$907 million** between the estimates for current-law revenues and constrained costs. A discussion of additional funding to generate revenues is included in next subsection.

Potential Funds

Potential funds include additional revenues that may be available to the local jurisdictions in the context of their current set of policies, but will depend on market forces and decisions made by local agencies.

Following are a few key funding considerations:

1. Jurisdiction Matters: Each entity – including Skagit County, cities and towns, ports, Indian tribes, Skagit Transit and WSDOT – has its own funding tools available, which are restricted by law and established policy. What mechanisms can be used to generate revenues for desired projects depends on the restrictions placed on the different categories of jurisdictions involved;

2. Current Funding Tools and Levels: Each jurisdiction should examine the current revenue mechanisms that are used and determine if there are adjustments that can be made to these tools to support transportation needs. These might include levy lid lifts (requiring voter approval), utility tax rate increases (some need voter approval, some do not), or a policy change in the prioritization of how general capital funds are used.

3. New Funding Tools: No SCOG member agency is currently using all funding mechanisms available to it. It is important to examine these other potential funding options and consider:

Revenue Generation

- How much revenue can be generated?
- How sustainable is the revenue source?

Implementation Feasibility

- What is required to put a new funding tool in place?
- Can it be passed by council action?
- Does it require voter approval?
- What is required on an ongoing basis to conform to law and/or policy?

4. Matching Funding Mechanism to Project Needs: Funding sources may have statutory restrictions. General Fund revenues may be used for multiple purposes, including capital procurement. For example, some

Exhibit 7-3
New Revenue Requirements (constant 2020 dollars)

Program Area	2021 - 2030	2031 - 2045	Totals
Transit	-$83,578,600	-$115,557,500	-$199,136,100
WSDOT	-$170,627,100	-$96,497,700	-$267,124,800
County	-$102,125,700	-$216,584,400	-$318,710,100
City/Town	-$92,846,900	-$30,124,300	-$122,971,200
Totals	**-$449,178,300**	**-$458,763,900**	**-$907,942,200**

revenues must only be used for capital projects, other revenues must only be used for maintenance or operations projects, and some revenues may be used for maintenance, operations or capital. Narrower still, some grants and loans may only be used on certain types of transportation projects that achieve specific goals.

It is important when considering the larger picture of transportation capital funding to match each potential project with the funding source that best fits its overall goals.

The following three revenue sources may be new funding options that governments in the Skagit region could consider. In some cases, tapping into these revenue sources requires policy changes implemented by individual jurisdictions, and some require voter approval:

1. **Local Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax** (applicable to counties): Established in 1998, the Local Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax allows Washington state counties to levy a local fuel tax, in addition to the state tax, upon approval from the county's legislative body and a majority of voters. This tax may be levied up to a rate equal to 10.0% of the state fuel tax rate and may be used for several transportation purposes, including: (1) maintenance, preservation and expansion of existing roads and streets; (2) new transportation construction and reconstruction; (3) implementation and improvement of public transportation and high-capacity transit programs; (4) planning, design and acquisition of right of way for transportation purposes; and (5) other transportation improvements.

2. **Real Estate Excise Tax** (REET) (applicable to counties and cities): Cities and counties are allowed to levy two portions of REET each at 0.25% of the full sale price of real estate. For those jurisdictions only levying the first 0.25%, the option remains to levy the second 0.25%. Because this funding may be used for different types of capital, and is not restricted to transportation capital only, it is up to the discretion of each jurisdiction as to how they chose to spend these funds. These funds are limited to capital expenditures only, and may not be used for maintenance and operations costs.

3. **Transportation Benefit Districts** (applicable to counties and cities): Chapter 36.73 RCW authorizes cities (see also RCW 35.21.225) and counties to form transportation benefit districts (TBDs), which are quasi-municipal corporations and independent taxing districts that can raise revenue for specific transportation projects, usually through vehicle license fees or sales taxes. Three TBDs have been established in Skagit County, in the cities of Anacortes, Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley.

Financial Strategy

A high priority for Skagit 2045 is to secure funding to maintain and operate our current assets and services. This priority includes securing near-term revenue to maintain local transit operations, federal requirements related to correcting fish-passage barriers, addressing a growing backlog of local maintenance and preservation needs, and capital preservation needs of state highway and ferry assets. Identified regionally significant projects within the fiscally constrained Plan represent only about 5% of the **$3.7 billion** estimated expenditures. Approximately 80–90% of planned investments are needed to simply maintain and operate the current system.

Traditional tax financing (gas tax, etc.) is expected to still play a central role

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in transportation finance, especially in the early years of the Plan.

As indicated in **Exhibit 7-3**, funding shortfalls are expected for all program areas.

Washington State Department of Transportation Program Area

For the Washington State Department of Transportation Program Area, it is important to keep in mind that the revenue estimates are based on the expected amount of state funds, which are primarily gas taxes, available to Skagit County. State funds are estimated based on the amount of taxes generated within Skagit County. The state program is prioritized, and the State legislature ultimately makes expenditure-distribution decisions based on a statewide perspective, making estimates for only 1 of the 39 counties a challenge.

To implement the fiscally constrained Plan, WSDOT is estimated to need an additional **$267.1 million** in revenues. Given the history of the State legislature, the most likely strategy will be an increase to state fuel taxes. Almost all of the shortfall is for programmatic needs such as maintenance, preservation, and environmental – which includes correcting fish-passage barriers. Considering past State legislative actions, it is reasonable to assume another one to three statewide packages similar to the 2015 Connecting Washington funding package to occur within the Skagit 2045 timeframe. Even with two or three packages, it is unlikely that all the programmatic needs would be met. WSDOT will continue to prioritize needs based on keeping state facilities in a state of good repair.

Skagit 2045 includes five replacement ferries at Anacortes, each of which costs nearly **$200 million**. Additionally, the Anacortes Ferry Terminal needs major preservation/replacement. These ferry investments total approximately **$1 billion**, of which little current-law revenue is identified to fund these needs. Therefore, these projects are not included in the fiscally constrained Plan. Funding decisions on ferries are made by the State legislature, and could be included in a new statewide transportation-funding package. Similar to state highways, it is likely some programs would be funded, such as the terminal preservation/replacement and some vessel replacements, though it is uncertain if any funded replacement vessels would serve Anacortes ferry routes.

Future statewide transportation-funding packages should address the significant shortfalls in the Washington state highway system to maintain a state of good repair, as well as address the shortfall in the Washington state ferry system. All of these needs have been documented in state plans.

Transit Program Area

The Transit Program Area is estimated to have a shortfall of approximately **$199.1 million** over the timeframe of the Plan. To address the transit shortfall, there are a couple viable local options to be considered: (1) voter approved retail sales tax; and (2) reduction of service levels and/or slower replacement vehicle schedule. Skagit transit has authority to increase the current sales tax of .04% if the Skagit Board of Directors and voters approve. Increasing the sales tax is the most likely revenue option available if the shortfall is significant. Reducing costs would entail reduction in service levels from today, as well as reduction in fleet size and vehicle replacement schedules below today's standards. Between these two options, the shortfall in the Transit Program Area could be addressed.

County Program Area

The County Program Area is estimated to have a shortfall of approximately **$318.7 million** over the timeframe of the Plan. Over half of the fiscally constrained needs for Skagit County are in preservation and maintenance. To address this shortfall, there are a couple viable local options to be considered: (1) property taxes (Road Levy); and (2) a transportation benefit district. A property tax is collected by Skagit County specifically

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for transportation funding, which accounts for a large portion of their transportation revenues. These funds may be spent on transportation projects only in unincorporated areas of Skagit County and are not available for city/town projects. A transportation benefit district can be formed by Skagit County, as has occurred in the cities of Anacortes, Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley. In addition, if the Washington state gas tax was to be increased, the amount going to the counties would also increase. Local options would not likely cover the expected shortfall, but some of the shortfall could be reduced by increasing the local share of the Washington state gas tax. This increase in local share for counties, cities and towns has been considered by the State legislature in previous transportation-funding packages.

In addition to raising revenues, Skagit County may choose to reduce investment needs for improvements by conducting less maintenance and preservation.

Cities and Towns Program Area

The Cities and Towns Program Area have an estimated shortfall at **$123 million** over the timeframe of the Plan. Similar to the County Program Area, cities and towns have local options that can help generate revenues for their transportation system. One of the most viable is the creation of a transportation benefit district. The cities of Anacortes, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley have created TBDs, and these TBD revenues are includes in estimates of current-law revenues. One option is for Burlington to also create a TBD. Depending upon when additional TBDs are created and fees established, or fees increased for existing TBDs, a range of potential new revenues for the Cities and Towns Program Area is estimated at $40–$60 million. The other current major source of local revenues for the transportation system are city and town general funds. Cities and towns could increase the contribution of general-fund dollars to the transportation system – which would most likely be used to provide local match for significant capital projects, once a grant is secured with a match requirement. Cities would also share in any increase to the Washington state gas tax, similar to the County Program Area.

For large capital projects, especially over **$20 million**, the most likely funding strategy will be a special grant, such as a federal Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development discretionary grant, or new programs in federal surface transportation laws. This strategy also applies to the County and WSDOT program areas.

Some combination of the above strategies will likely be used to address the shortfall in the Cities and Towns Program Area, along with deferring some maintenance and preservation needs and extending capital projects beyond the timeframe of the Plan. Candidates for deferment would be projects in the later part of Skagit 2045, and those larger projects that cannot secure grant funding. Maintenance and preservation needs would be addressed by a combination of reducing acceptable standards, creating TBDs, increasing general fund revenue support, and increases in local receipts from the Washington state gas tax.

It is important to note that Skagit County, and each city and town, make local decisions regarding general funds, TBDs, local funding increases and deferring projects based on the needs of their jurisdiction. There is no regional authority over these local decisions.

The State legislature should include significant increases to the local revenues in any future statewide transportation-funding package. Current levels of gas tax receipts to local governments do not keep pace with basic maintenance and preservation needs at the local level, nor do the current funding options available to local governments provided by Washington state law.

SKAGIT 2045 Regional Transportation Plan

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