

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**APPROVING THE 2026 RECOMMENDED CONVENTION CENTER ALLOCATIONS FOR
TOURISM-RELATED FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES AS DEFINED THROUGH RCW
67.28.1816**

WHEREAS, on October 13, 2025 and October 15, 2025, the Whatcom County Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) held public meetings to review 2026 funding applications for use of Convention Center Funds; and

WHEREAS, the LTAC reviewed thirty-one (31) applications totaling \$3,704,145 and recommends funding for twenty-two (22) eligible applications in the amount of \$3,568,390 as further detailed in Attachment A; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 call for applicants emphasized five funding priorities which include: (1) funding the primary Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism, (2) supporting chambers that have dedicated staff to promote local tourism and provide visitor services, (3) funding organizations that offer broad, year-round services to visitors and the community, (4) allocating funds for infrastructure enhancements that support tourism, and (5) supporting festivals and events hosted in unincorporated areas that have a significant impact on attracting overnight visitors; and

WHEREAS, the twenty-two (22) funding recommendations totaling \$3,568,390 were determined based on the ability to promote and serve tourism activities in Whatcom County as defined in RCW 67.28 and alignment with established LTAC funding priorities; and

WHEREAS, all funding recipients must submit a report to the County describing the actual number of people traveling for business or pleasure on a trip as well as describing the results of the event or activity sponsored by the Convention Center Fund; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 Convention Center Fund revenue is projected at \$1,600,000 and the fund has sufficient balance to support these allocations; and

WHEREAS, this funding cycle includes significant capital infrastructure investments totaling \$2,384,890 to support long-term tourism development including restroom improvements at Glacier (\$475,750), Phase I construction of Birch Bay Beach Park (\$1,800,000), and Northwest Field renovations (\$109,140).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that that the Whatcom County Council hereby authorizes the County Administration to allocate \$3,568,390 from the Lodging Tax Fund for the purposes of tourism-related activities as recommended by the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee and detailed in Attachment A.

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2025

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council

Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Christopher Quinn 10/27/2025
Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Attachment A

Lodging Tax Fund - 2026

Requesting Agency		2026 Requests	Committee Approved
Tourism Promotion Applications			
Bellingham/Whatcom Co. Tourism		\$250,000	\$250,000
Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce		\$30,000	\$30,000
Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce - VIC & Porta-Potties		\$240,000	\$240,000
Blaine Chamber of Commerce - Blaine Visitor Center	(new applicant)	\$30,000	Not Funded
Mt. Baker Chamber of Commerce - Mt. Baker Visitor Center		\$256,000	\$256,000
Point Roberts Chamber of Commerce - Point Roberts Tourism Project		\$30,000	\$30,000
Sea to Sky Events - Sea to Sky Events (DMC Launch)	(new applicant)	\$5,250	Not Funded
Whatcom County Parks Guide/Brochure		\$6,000	\$6,000
Whatcom County Parks Glacier Restroom Maintenance & Operations		\$36,000	\$36,000
Chambers & Tourism SUBTOTAL		\$883,250	\$848,000
Events and Festival Applications			
Allied Arts - Cultural Connections 2026		\$10,000	\$10,000
Bellingham Bay Swim Team & Whatcome Rangers - Bellingham Bay Marathon	(new applicant)	\$32,500	\$10,000
Bellingham SeaFeast - Bellingham SeaFeast Festival		\$20,000	\$20,000
Cascade Mountain Ascents - Peaks and Possibilities: Outdoor Tourism Expansion		\$37,800	\$15,000
CASCADIA International Women's Film Festival		\$10,000	\$10,000
Ferndale Community Services - Ferndale Pride Celebration	(new applicant)	\$5,000	Not funded
Jansen Art Center - "Lens Arts at The J: Come and Stay!"		\$15,000	Not funded
North Cascades Bluegrass Festival - North Cascades Bluegrass Festival		\$35,500	\$35,500
Photo Palooza Events - Photo Palooza PNW	(new applicant)	\$25,000	Not funded
Quest Races - Galbraith Supreme	(new applicant)	\$5,000	Not funded
Ragnar Events, LLC - Ragnar Relay Northwest Passage	(new applicant)	\$25,977	\$15,000
Scottish Dance Society - Bellingham Scottish Gathering		\$25,000	\$25,000
Strings & Things LLC - Strings & Things International Music Festival		\$45,000	\$30,000
Sustainable Connections - Eat, Drink, and Explore Whatcom County: Driving Tourism Through		\$45,000	\$45,000
Warrior Service USA - Warrior Service Blaine Veterans Appreciation Weekend	(new applicant)	\$30,000	Not funded
Whatcom Events - Whatcom Events (Portfolio)		\$50,000	\$50,000
Whatcom Nightmare - Whatcom Nightmare Haunted House Fundraiser	(new applicant)	\$9,228	Not funded
Wings Over Water Northwest - 2026 Wings Over Water NW Birding Festival		\$10,000	\$10,000
Event and Festivals SUBTOTAL		\$436,005	\$275,500
Capital Project Applications			
Ferndale Youth Sports - Northwest Field Renovations (ORIGINAL ASK)		\$59,140	\$59,140
FYS > PENDING ADDITIONAL/AMENDED APPLICATION (ADDITIONAL ASK SET ASIDE) (see 10/15 minutes)		\$50,000	\$50,000
Whatcom County Parks & Rec - Glacier Restroom Improvements Project		\$475,750	\$475,750
Whatcom County Parks & Rec - Birch Bay Beach Park - (Bathrooms) Phase I Construction		\$1,800,000	\$1,800,000
Capitla Projects SUBTOTAL		\$2,384,890	\$2,384,890
Administrative Cost		\$60,000	\$60,000
TOTAL ANNUAL FUNDING REQUESTS		\$3,704,145	\$3,568,390