

# Whatcom County Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPaC)

Ryan Corley

Chair, Whatcom County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Whatcom County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Patrick Alesse, Kelly Kendall, John Upston, Dan Kostrzewski, Charlie Heggem, Patrick Bush, Gervasio Tirigall, Payton Waldo

# BPAC Mission

- The Whatcom County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) was created by Whatcom County Executive Pete Kremen in 2001, and was approved by the County Council through Ordinance 2001-013 to fulfill the purpose set for the Committee.
- Coordinate with various county staff and residents to provide guidance to the County Executive related to potential improvements in the county's pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure
- Goal: Walking and riding a bicycle - for transportation and recreation - can be **safe and welcoming** for people of **all ages and abilities in Whatcom County**.
- [County Code link](#)

## WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL AGENDA BILL

NO. 2001-131

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
Originator: Executive Pete Kremen			<div>RECEIVED</div> <div>MAR 27 2001</div> <div>WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL</div>	4/3/01	Introduction
Division Head:				4/1/01	PW/Council
Dept. Head:					
Prosecutor					
Purchasing/Budget:	PK	3/27/01			
Executive:	PK	3-27-01			
SUBJECT: Ordinance establishing Whatcom County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee					



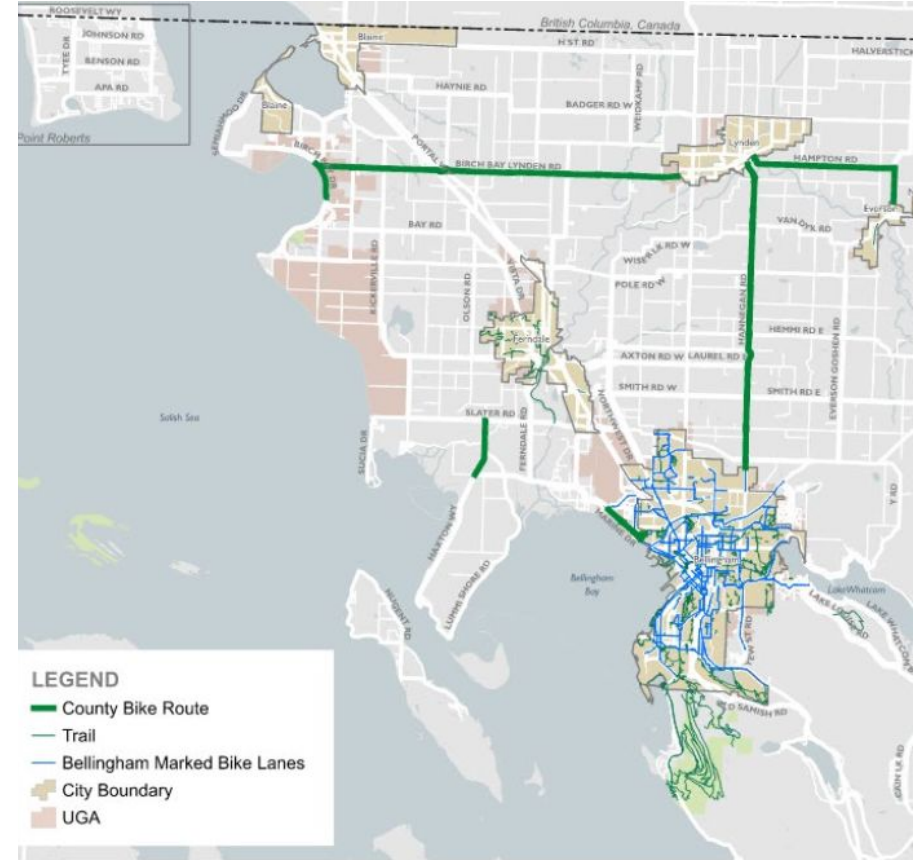
# Active Transportation in Whatcom County



# Whatcom County Bike Infrastructure

## Whatcom County Road Network Overview

- **Total miles of public roads maintained by the county:**
  - 943 miles
- **Road classification (per federal functional classification system):**
  - 3% – Arterials
  - 18% – Major Collectors
  - 17% – Minor Collectors
  - 62% – Local Access Roads
- **County roads with bike lanes or designated bike routes:**
  - 23 miles
  - **≈ 2.4% of total county road mileage**

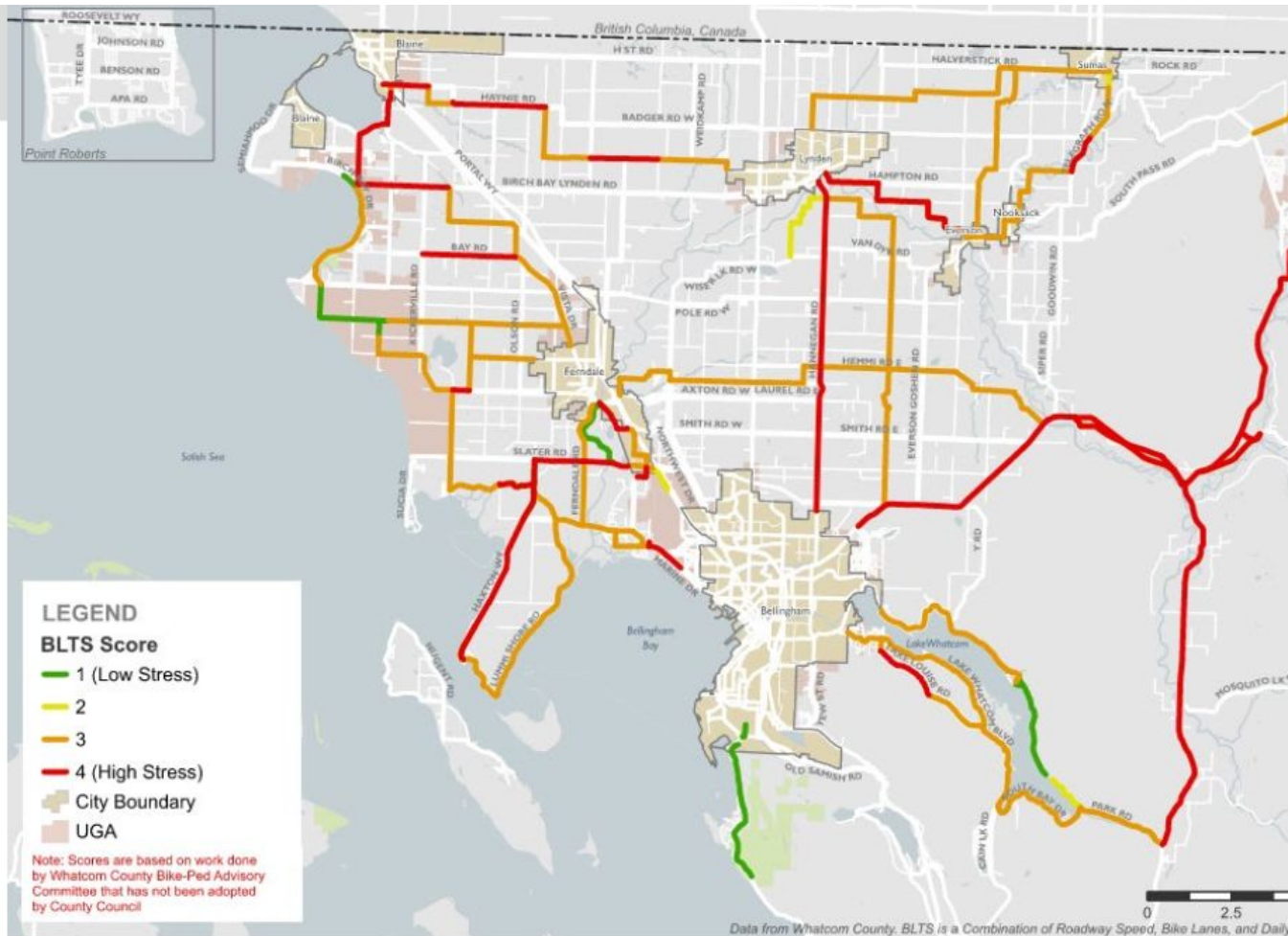


## COMFORT

### Proposed Countywide Bicycle Network 2019 with Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS)

*Produced by WC BPAC*

- Traffic Volume
- Traffic Posted Speed vs. Operating Speed
- Slope/Topography
- Paved vs. Gravel/Dirt
- Bike vs. Vehicle Speed Differential
- Bike Facility Width
- Separation/Buffer from Vehicles



# BPaC Feedback – linked letter

To:  
Sajpal Sidhu <[SSidhu@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:SSidhu@co.whatcom.wa.us)>  
Whatcom County Council <[council@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:council@co.whatcom.wa.us)>

## WHATCOM COUNTY



Ryan Corley, Chair  
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
April 9, 2025  
Whatcom County Executive  
311 Grand Ave, Suite 108  
Bellingham, WA 98225

### Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update - Transportation Element

Dear Executive Sidhu, County Councilmembers,

We are writing to express grave concerns regarding the Proposed Active Transportation Network and Multimodal Levels of Service developed by the consultant. Transpo Group. This new Active Transportation Network and Multimodal Levels of Service are required by House Bill 1181 that was adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 2023 and memorialized in RCW 36.70A.070. At the March 12, 2025 Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting, the consultant Transpo Group presented their current draft work products to comply with this RCW.

We are disappointed in the way the active transportation network recommendations are coming together. They are not in alignment with initial direction presented by the consultant at a previous BPAC meeting, are not in alignment with direction provided to the consultant by BPAC members, are not in alignment with other County plans including the Climate Action Plan, Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and the 2011 Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan, and do not comply with the above mentioned GMA requirements. Furthermore, the current proposed materials are glaringly silent in their consideration of existing Comp Plan Policies 6F-3, 6F-4, and 6F-5, and do not align with the intent of Policies 6F-1 and 6F-2.

Our concerns are:

- **Multimodal paths such as the Bay to Baker Trail and Nooksack Loop Trail have been removed from the plan.** These trails have been in Whatcom County's plans for decades. No advisory groups have recommended their removal. On the contrary, Whatcom County Parks & Recreation has applied for grants and is hiring a staff person to move these connectors forward. If Public Works were amenable to collaboration, Whatcom County could have safe active transportation corridors between many communities. Multimodal paths can be designed and built to comply with active transportation standards, and road funds can be used to plan, acquire rights of way if necessary, and build them. *The current proposed Active Transportation Network ignores these facts and actively excludes them from the planning process.*

- **Undeveloped rights of way that are publicly owned and could be developed for active transportation connections have been ignored.**
- **The consultant has labeled on-road segments "complete" that are high stress, high speed roads without any protection from moving cars.** For example, the proposed bicycle connection between Lynden and Birch Bay is on the high-speed, high-volume Birch Bay Lynden Road. This is considered "complete," despite the fact that people on bicycles would be required to ride on an unprotected 5-foot shoulder of a 50 mph road, where drivers routinely exceed that speed. I would not feel safe riding along this road. I don't know many people who would. Several other "complete" connections are shown on the consultant's map that are similarly dangerous, including Harneggen and Smith Road.
- **Other on-road segments that are identified for improvement would not be improved adequately for the average person to feel comfortable on a bicycle.** A five-foot shoulder with a painted white line is all that is recommended for other similar high-speed, high-volume roadways such as Slater Road, Everson Goheen Road and the Mount Baker Highway.

In short, this plan prioritizes single occupancy vehicle travel throughout Whatcom County. We can do so much better. Approved County plans such as the Climate Action Plan, the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, the Pedestrian & Bicycle Plan, in addition to individual city plans from Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden, and Everson (plus the smaller cities) all identify future bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, both on- and off-road. We should be drawing from these plans to define safe active transportation connections between communities that people want to use.

We ask that you direct the consultant to:

- **Plan low-stress active transportation corridors between the population centers, small cities and urban centers of Whatcom County.** WSDOT has a Growth Management Act (GMA) Comprehensive Plan resources [\[a\]](#) for updating local government comprehensive plans. The final document in this list is [WSDOT Multimodal Level of Service Guidance](#). In this document, *it is recommended that active transportation facilities meet a Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress threshold of 2 or lower.* The consultant's current plan nearly exclusively consists of facilities that are SLTS 3 and 4.
- **Retain and prioritize the Bay to Baker, Nooksack Loop and Coast Millennium Trail corridors,** with the recommendation that they meet active transportation criteria where there is not a low-stress (SLTS 1 or 2) on-road alternative. This must include consideration of County rights of way and identify/prioritize connections with trail plans and corridors developed by the cities and other municipalities in the County.
- **When mapping the above-mentioned trail corridors, identify and include for consideration:**
  - Rights of way that are currently undeveloped
  - Parcels owned by the Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation that have been offered to Whatcom County at no cost for years
  - County owned parcels
  - County held easements
  - City owned parcels and easements
  - Other publicly owned parcels

These parcels, rights of ways, and easements must be considered and prioritized in an Active Transportation Network.

other destinations. Furthermore, projects paved multi-use side paths instead of open lanes to Marine Drive has cost taxpayers would offer a significantly lower level of safety.

- **Incorporate and prioritize active transportation in the County's Comprehensive Plan Policy 6F-2.**

Multimodal trails and paths can easily comply with that the community will actually use and feel safe.

Multimodal trails and paths can easily be funded with effort.

**Trails are transportation.** People who walk and bike are a vital part of our community. We urge you to make this safe network a health, economy and climate. With the rise in population, the first step is drafting a solid plan. The current proposal is unacceptable and does not suffice.

Sincerely,  
Ryan Corley  
Chair, Whatcom County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
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Patrick Alessio, Kelly Kendall, John Upst, Payden Waldo

[Whatcom County 2016 Comprehensive Plan C](#)  
[RCW 36.70A.070 Comprehensive plans - Mandate](#)  
[Whatcom County Climate Action Plan](#) (see page 1)  
[Whatcom County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan](#)  
[Comprehensive Parks, Recreation & Open Space](#)

# Vulnerable User Perspective

- If Public Works recommended a vehicle plan with roads so narrow, steep and rough that only 5-9% of drivers felt comfortable driving on them, would that be an acceptable threshold?
- Is it okay to recommend an active transportation plan with facilities so stressful that only 5-9% of people feel comfortable riding in them?

# Growth Management Act – Chapter 6 Transportation

- "Active transportation component to include collaborative efforts to identify and designate planned improvements for active transportation facilities and corridors that address and encourage enhanced community access and promote healthy lifestyles."
  - Source <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A.070>
- The high-stress plan as written **does not encourage enhanced community access or healthy lifestyles.**
  - We would need a low stress network in order to achieve that

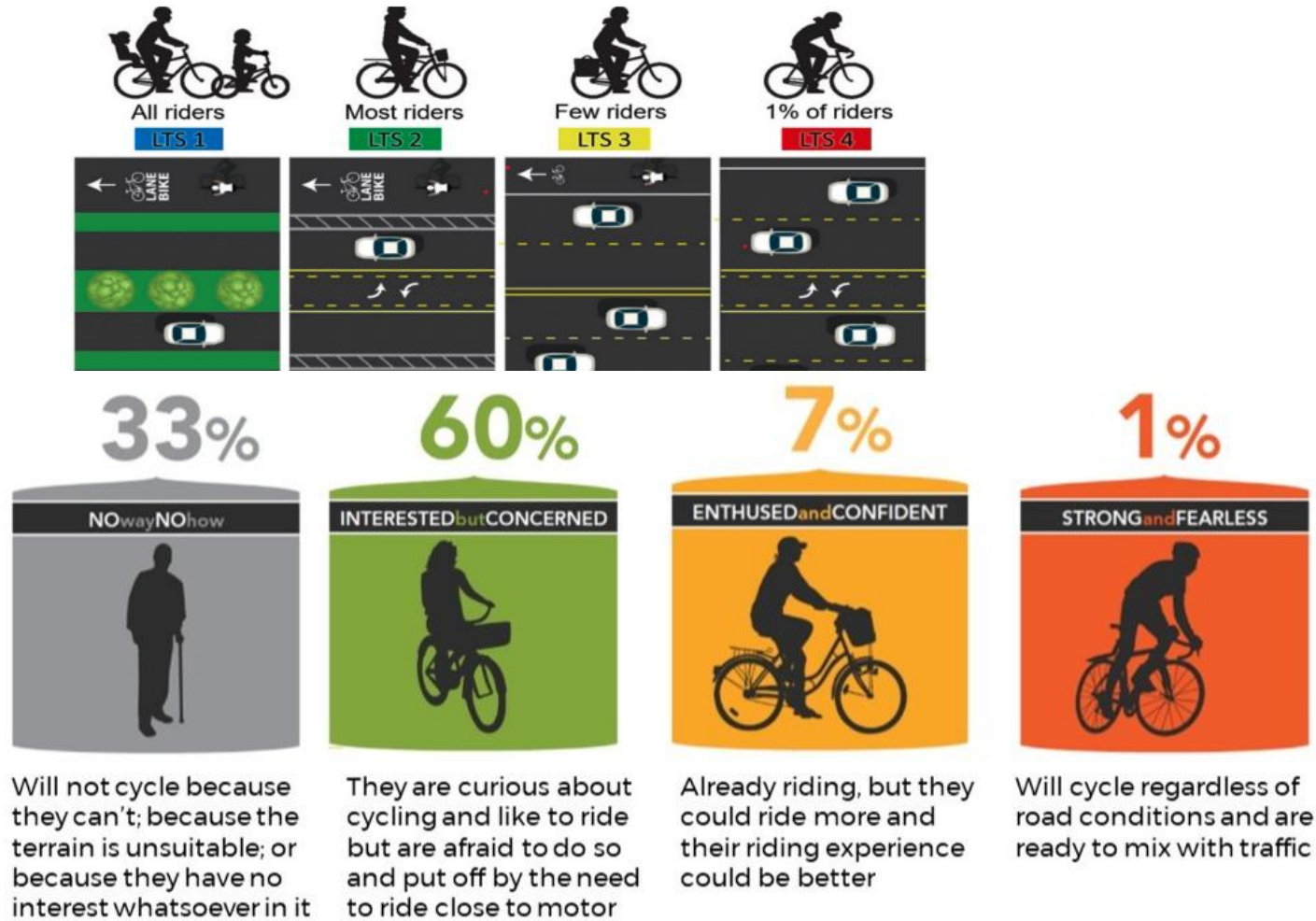
# Is this the best spend?

- Based on LTS scores, **5-9% of people would feel comfortable** cycling in facilities like those indicated in the Transpo Group's presentation. (source FHWA – Federal Highway Administration)
- People who are comfortable cycling on a 5-foot shoulder of a 50 mph road are already doing it
- The updated plan **will NOT going to encourage more people**

# Chapter 9 - Climate

- (A) Result in reductions in overall greenhouse gas emissions generated by transportation and land use within the jurisdiction but without increasing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the state;
- (B) Result in reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled within the jurisdiction but without increasing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere in the state; and"
- As drafted, **the plan will not reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled.**
  - We would need a low stress network to accomplish that.

WSDoT  
Level Of  
Traffic Stress  
Source Link



## BLTS Criteria for Bike Lane without Separation from Traffic (paint stripe or buffer < 2 feet wide)

Bike Lanes are greater than or equal to 7 feet (allows for 5' plus 2' buffer)								
Lanes	AADT	<=20	25	30	35	40	45	50+
1 thru lane per direction (or 1 lane one-way street)	0-750	1	1	2	3	4	4	4
	751-1500	1	1	2	3	4	4	4
	1501-3000	1	1	2	3	4	4	4
	3000+	2	2	2	3	4	4	4
2 thru lanes per direction	0-7000	2	2	2	3	4	4	4
	>7000	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
3+ thru lanes per direction	Any ADT	3	3	3	4	4	4	4

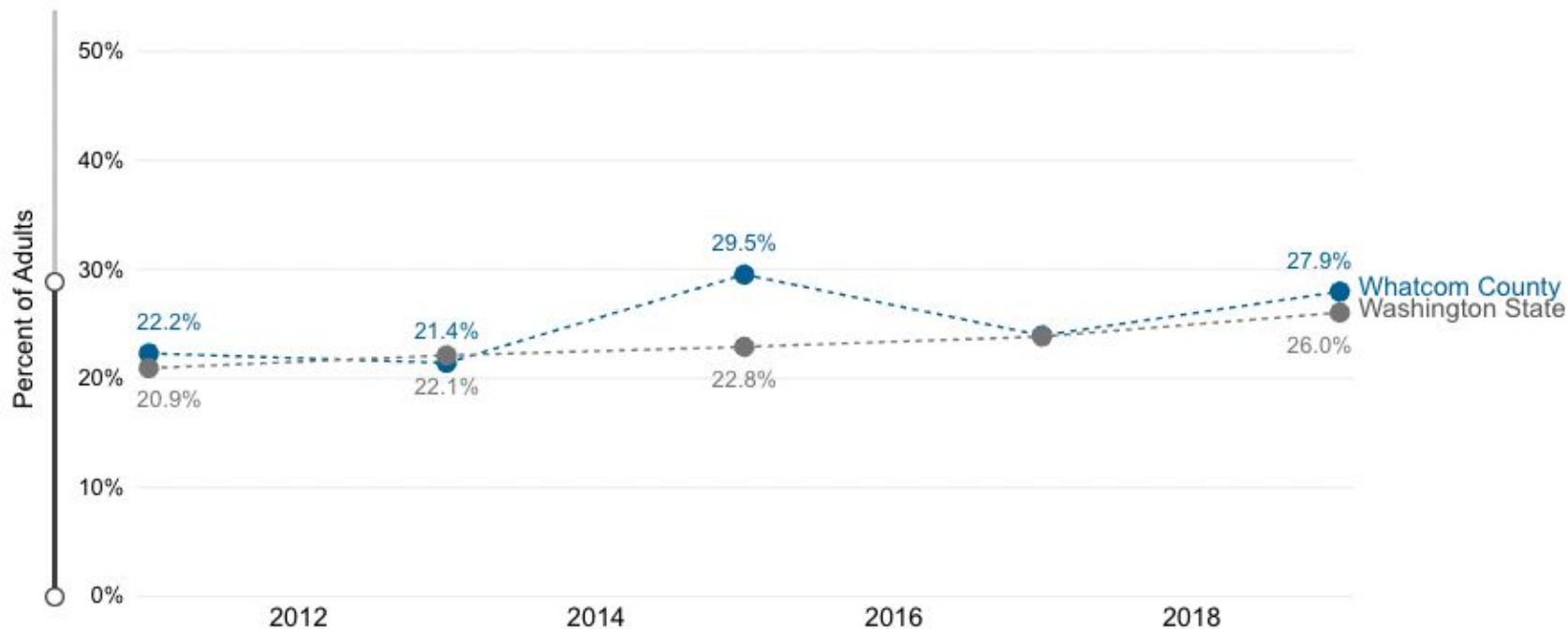
  

Bike Lanes are less than 7 feet (must be 5' or greater to be within standard)								
Lanes	AADT	<=20	25	30	35	40	45	50+
1 thru lane per direction (or 1 lane one-way street)	0-750	1	2	2	4	4	4	4
	751-1500	1	2	2	4	4	4	4
	1501-3000	1	2	2	4	4	4	4
	3000+	2	2	2	4	4	4	4
2 thru lanes per direction	0-7000	2	2	3	4	4	4	4
	>7000	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
3+ thru lanes per direction	Any ADT	3	3	4	4	4	4	4

[WSDoT Source link](#)

## Adults Meeting Exercise Guidelines in Whatcom County, 2011-2019

Percent of adults who participated in enough Aerobic and Muscle Strengthening exercises to meet guidelines (150 min/week, 2 days of strengthening)



Trend

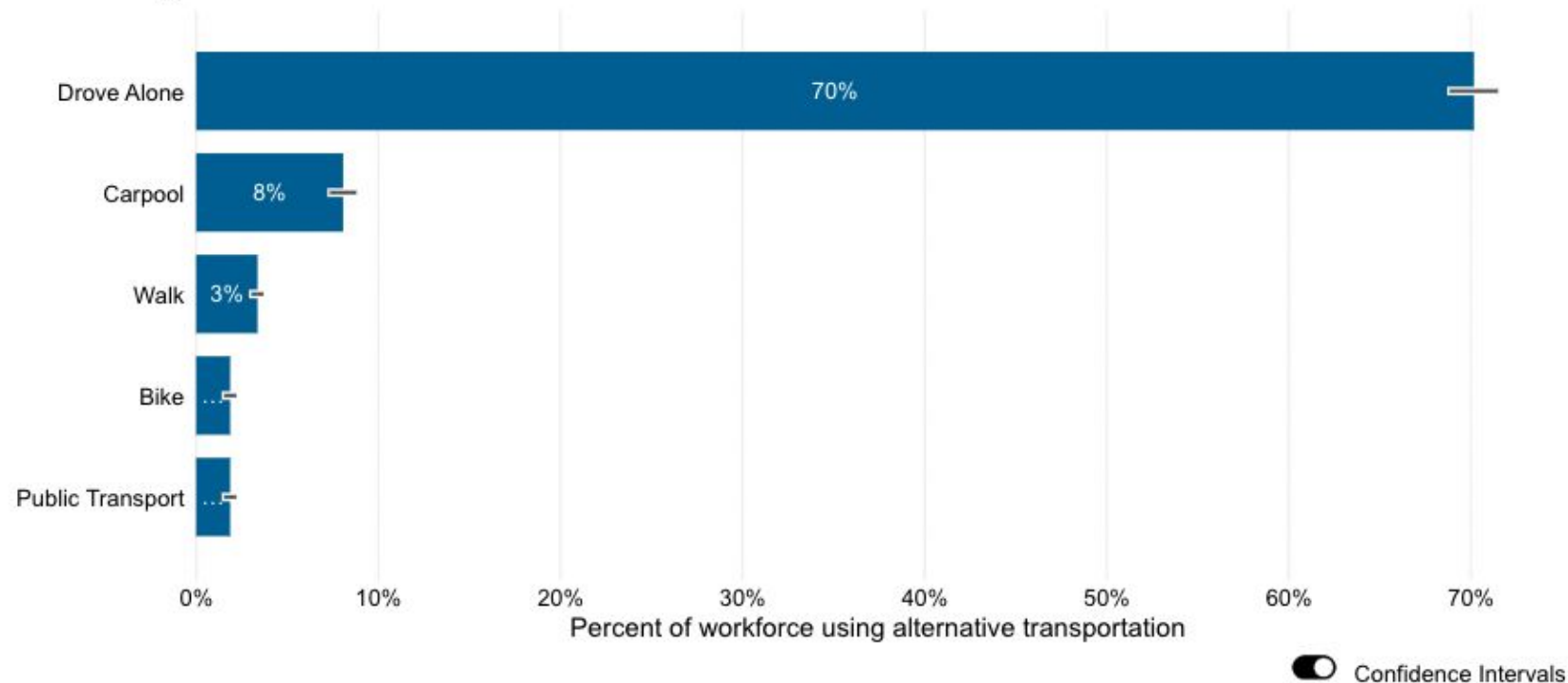
Commuter Type

Data Notes

## Commuters who do not Drive Alone to Work in Whatcom County (2023)

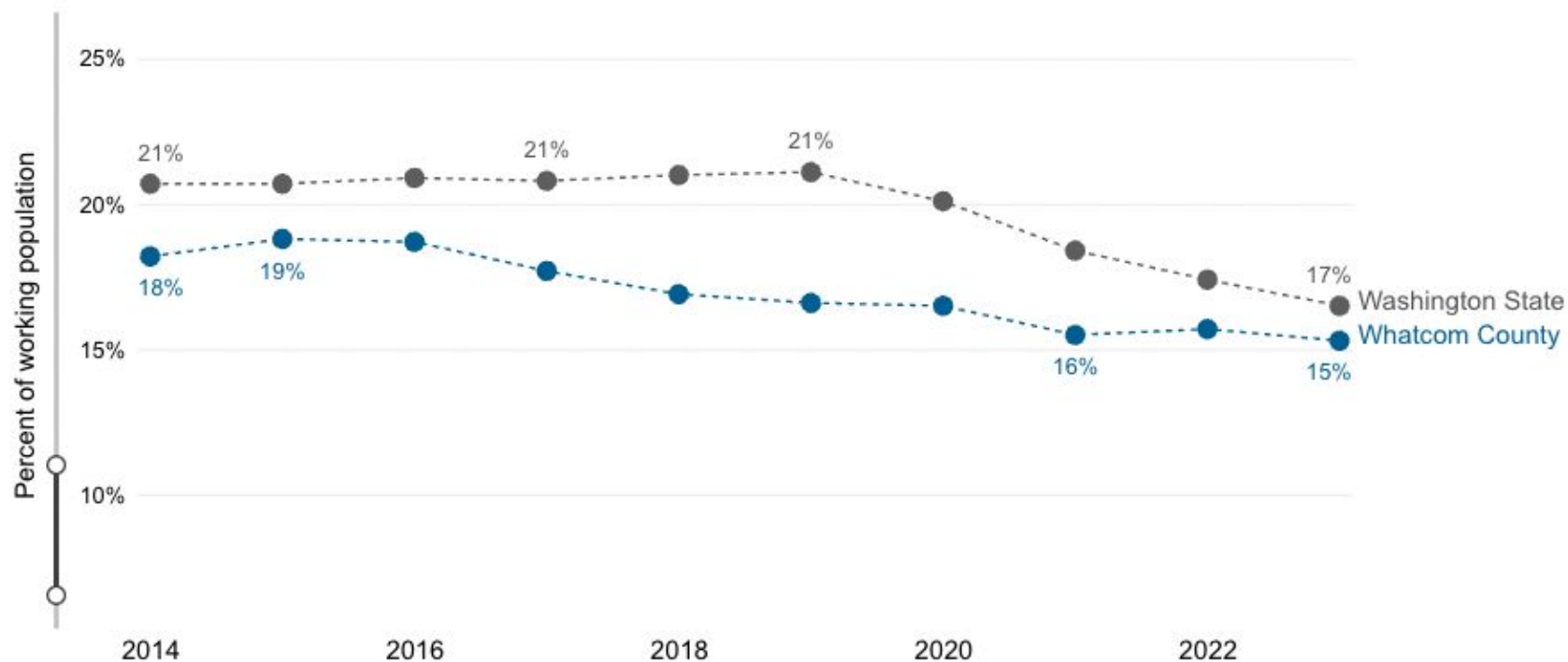
Percent of the working population who carpools, takes public transportation, bikes or walks to work

Commuter Type



## Commuters who do not drive alone to Work in Whatcom County, 2013-2022

Percent of the working population who carpools, takes public transportation, bikes or walks to work

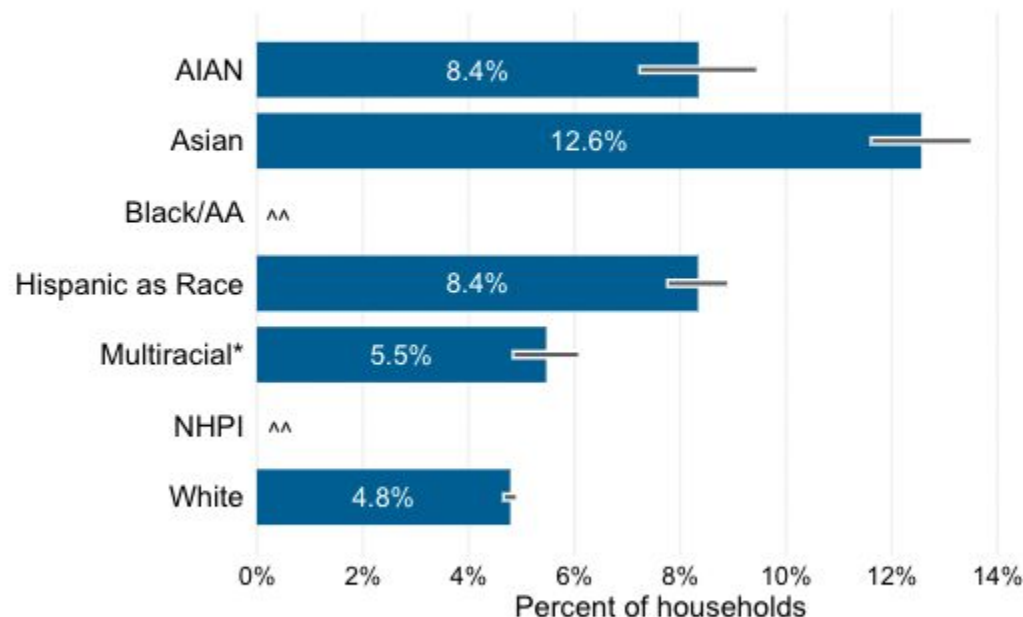


Refreshed on 2/7/2025

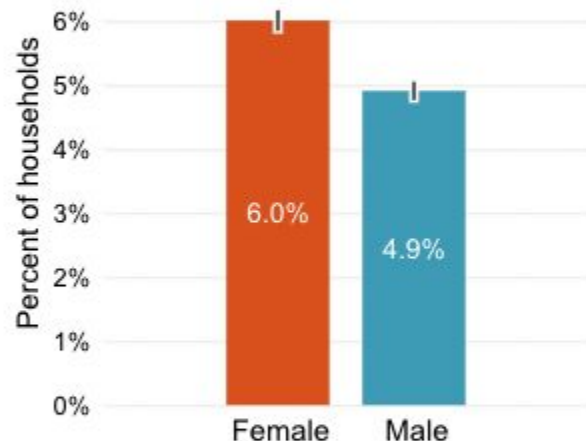
## Households in Whatcom County without a Vehicle (2022)

Percent of households without a vehicle

Race



Sex



### Legend

- Statistically different from each other
- Not statistically different from each other

\* Multiracial data is considered to have questionable accuracy. Interpret results with caution.

AIAN = American Indian/Alaskan Native; NHPI = Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

^^ Data not reported due to small number limitations.

Confidence Intervals

# Statewide E-bike Programs

## E-bike Rebate Program

- 60% rebates for income qualified applicants / 40% non income qualified
- Rebates can be applied to any class of E-bike except E-mountain bikes
- Applicants must be 16 or older and there will be 1 rebate per household.
- Applicants will have approx. 2 weeks to register/apply online.
- Rebate vouchers will be allocated by random selection

## E-bike Lending Libraries

- Collaborating with UW regarding lending library design and loan to own models
- Drafting proposed models

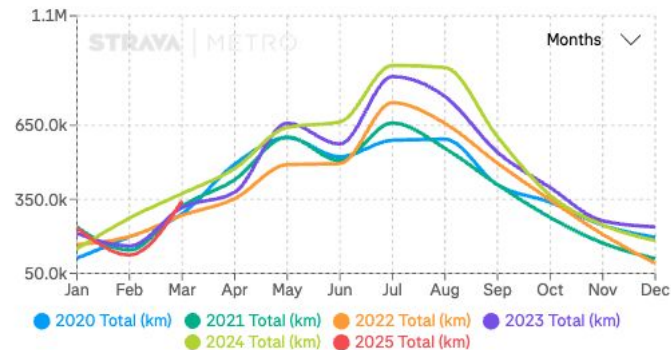


## Distance ①

2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 ☒ Total ☐ Leisure ☐ Commute

2025 Total (km) 2024 Total (km) 2023 Total (km) 2022 Total (km) 2021 Total (km)  
 1.3M 5.8M 5.4M 4.5M 4.4M  
 2020 Total (km)

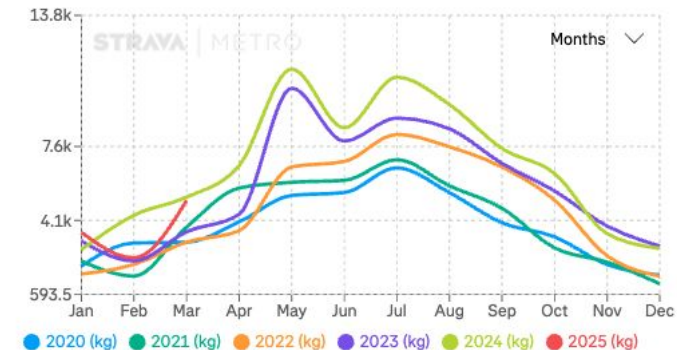
4.6M



## Estimated CO<sub>2</sub> Saved ①

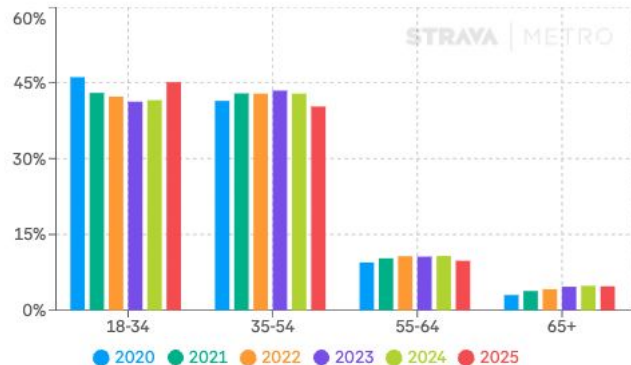
2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 ☐

2025 Total (kg) 2024 Total (kg) 2023 Total (kg) 2022 Total (kg) 2021 Total (kg)  
 17,121 79,144 67,783 55,048 48,310  
 2020 Total (kg)  
 45,562



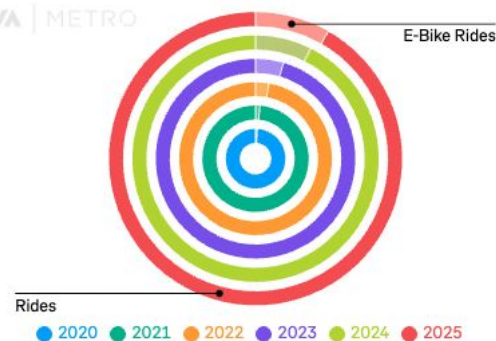
## Demographics ①

2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 ☐



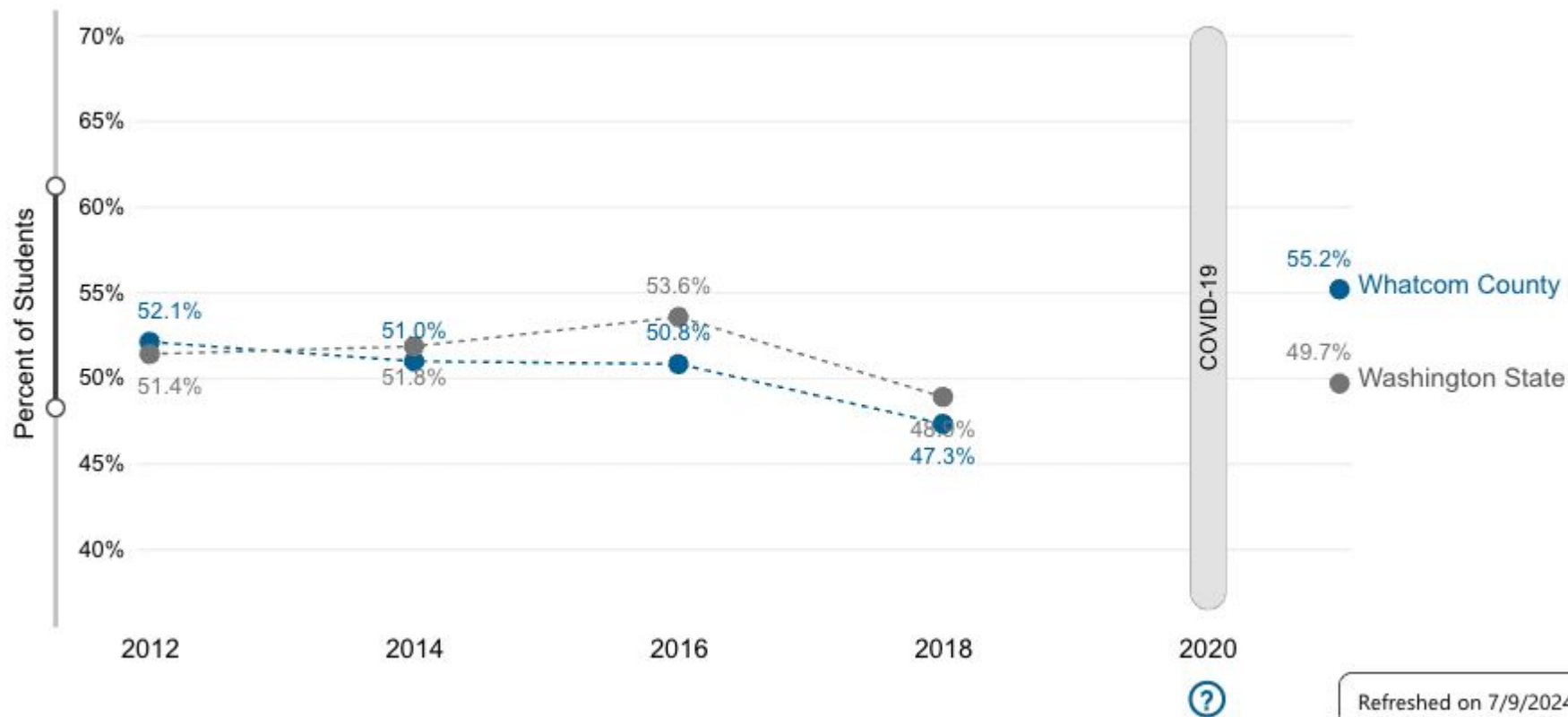
## Activity Types ①

2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 ☐



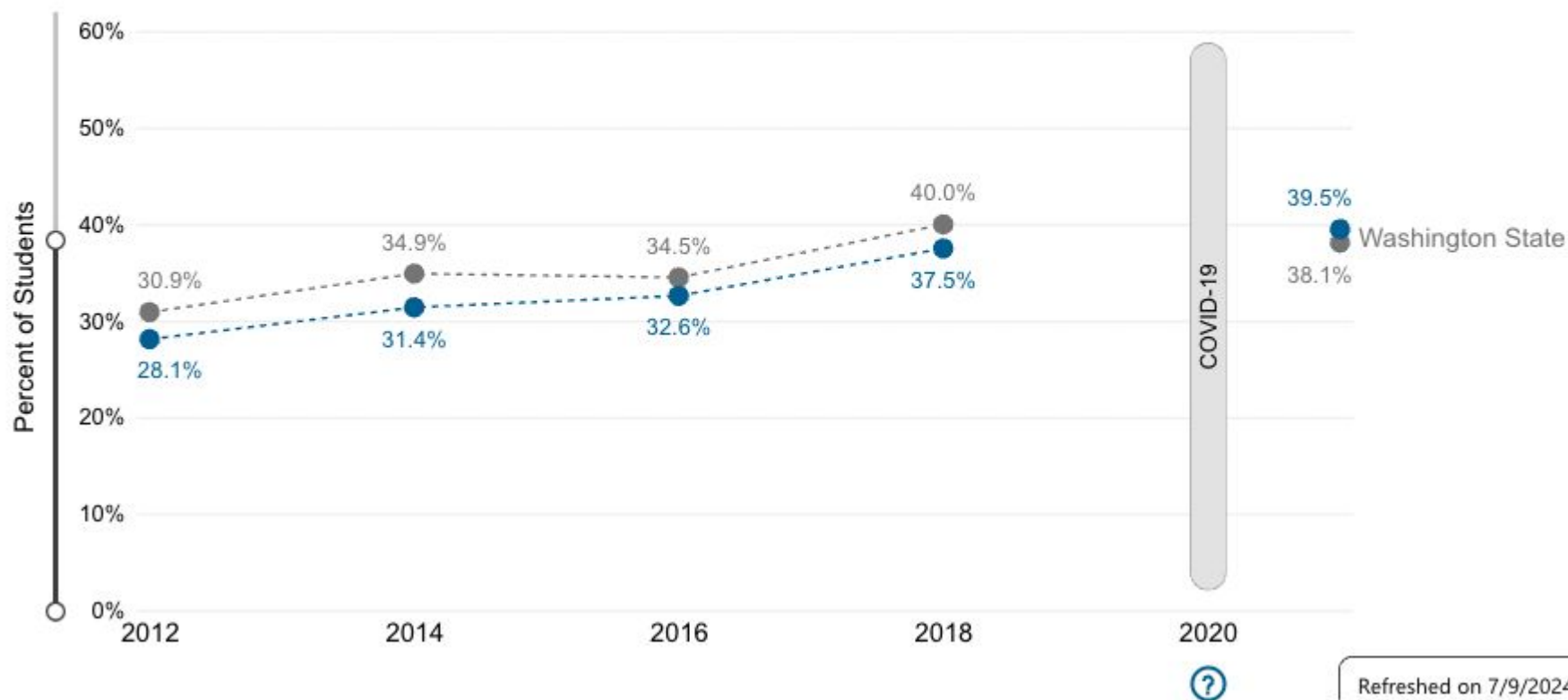
# Physical Activity among Youth in Whatcom County, 2012-2021

Percent of 10th graders who report physical activity 60 minutes a day, 5 or more days a week



## Depressive Feelings among Youth in Whatcom County, 2012-2021

Percent of 10th grade students that report feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities, during the last 12 months



# Statewide School-based Bicycle Education Program

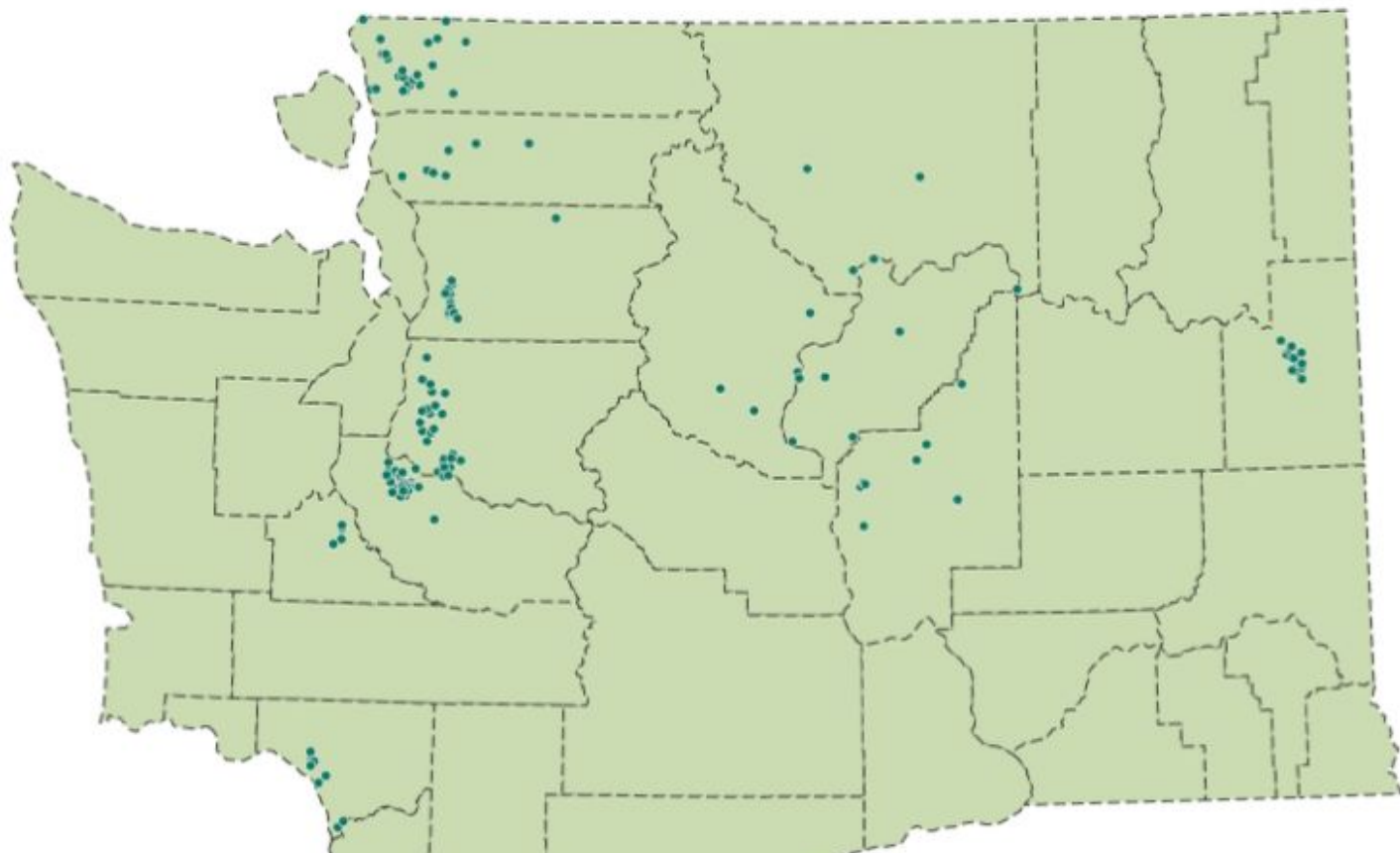
- WSDOT contracts with Cascade Bicycle Club
- In school for grades 3-8. PE teachers are trained and deliver bike education and safe riding through PE lessons
- Out of school providers are trained in a longer curriculum which involves bike maintenance, road safety and trip planning
- Bike fleets are provided (inclusive of adaptive bikes and equipment)
- Eligible children and youth can also receive a free bike and equipment



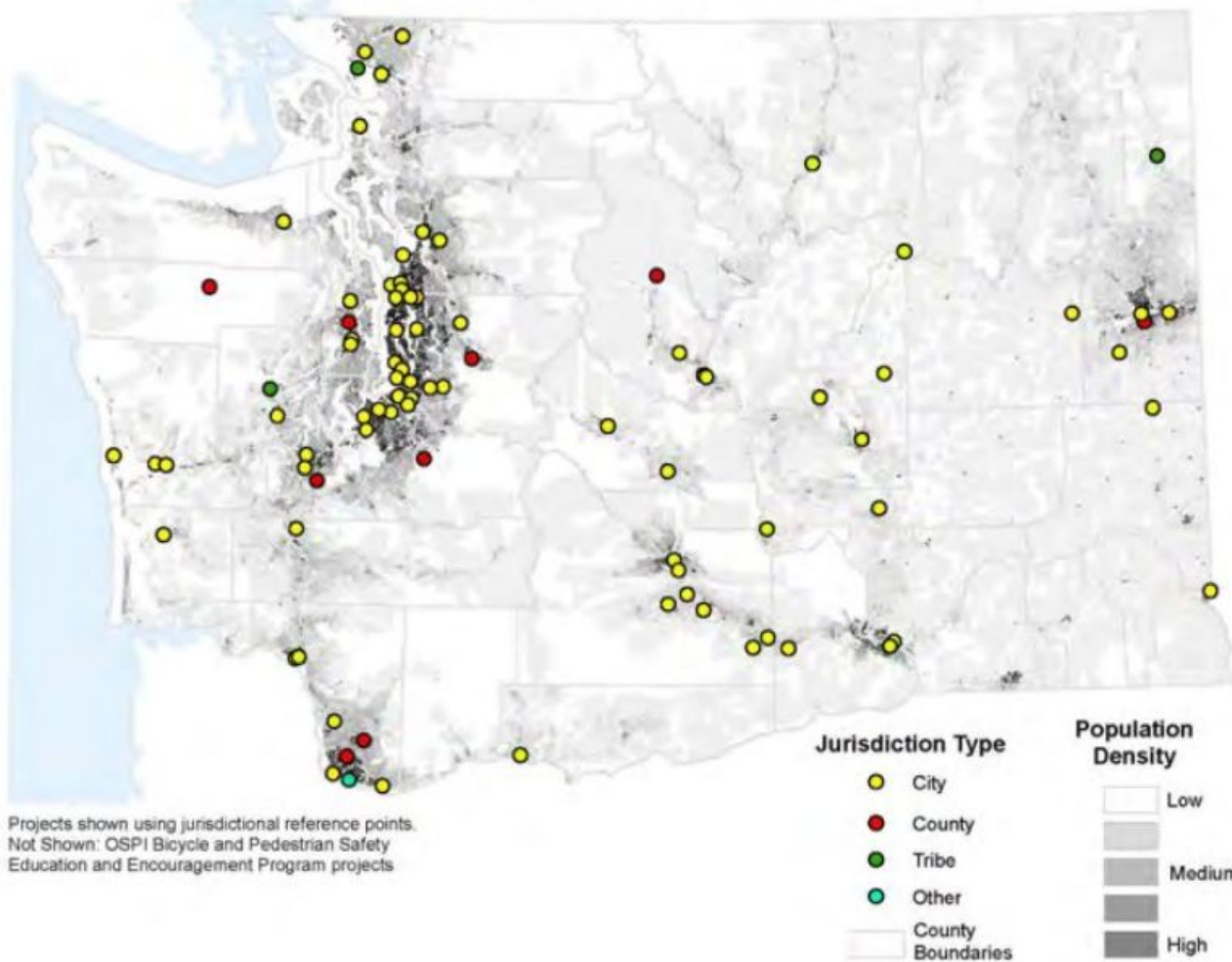
After school partners for the Statewide Bicycle Education Program 2024-2025  
Map shows location of partner and maximum number of schools serving youth who will engage with the program



## Elementary and middle schools across Washington with the in class Statewide Bicycle Education Program 2024-2025



# Safe Routes to School Program Projects: 2015-2023 (153 total)



# BPAC Community Speakers

- WSDoT
- Whatcom County Sheriff Department
- Bellingham Public Schools Transportation Director (UGA Schools)
- Parents from county schools & local community members
- Parents of after school mountain biker programs
- Bike Tour Company
  - To design local educational bike tours that explore the food systems, watersheds, and natural resources sustaining our community. We aim to connect people with their farmers, promote bike travel, and highlight the individuals and systems dedicated to stewarding our land's resources

# BPaC Feedback – linked letter

To:  
Sajpal Sidhu <[SSidhu@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:SSidhu@co.whatcom.wa.us)>  
Whatcom County Council <[council@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:council@co.whatcom.wa.us)>

## WHATCOM COUNTY



Ryan Corley, Chair  
Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
April 9, 2025  
Whatcom County Executive  
311 Grand Ave, Suite 108  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Subject: Comprehensive Plan Update - Transportation Element

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Our concerns are:

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- **When mapping the above-mentioned trail corridors, identify and include for consideration:**
  - Rights of way that are currently undeveloped
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other destinations. Furthermore, projects paved multi-use side paths instead of open lanes to Marine Drive has cost taxpayers more and would offer a significantly lower level of safety.

- **Incorporate and prioritize active transportation in the County's Comprehensive Plan Policy 6F-2.**

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[Whatcom County 2016 Comprehensive Plan](#)  
[RCW 36.70A.070 Comprehensive plans - Municipalities](#)  
[Whatcom County Climate Action Plan](#) (see page 10)  
[Whatcom County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan](#)  
[Comprehensive Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan](#)

# Comp Plan Concerns

- [Letter to County Executive & County Council link](#)
- Multimodal paths such as the Bay to Baker Trail and Nooksack Loop Trail have been removed from the plan.
- Undeveloped rights of way have been ignored for active transportation connections despite being publicly owned
- On-road segments “complete” that are high stress, high speed roads without any protection from moving cars.
- The average person would not feel comfortable on the proposed bicycle on-road segments that are identified for improvement .

# BPAC Requests

- Plan low-stress active transportation corridors between the population centers, small cities and urban centers of Whatcom County.
- Retain and prioritize the Bay to Baker, Nooksack Loop and Coast Millennium Trail corridors,
- When mapping the above-mentioned trail corridors, identify and include for consideration the following land types:
  - Rights of way that are currently undeveloped
  - Parcels owned by the Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation that have been offered to Whatcom County at no cost for years
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  - City owned parcels and easements
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# BPAC Requests

- Continue to prioritize hiring of multi-modal planner role split between Public Works and the Parks and Recreation Departments
- Direct a minimum of 5% of TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) funds annually to improve Whatcom County's active transportation network.
- Prioritize and incorporate active transportation and multimodal improvements around schools to comply with Comp Plan Policy 6F-2.

People who walk and bike deserve a safe, comfortable network on which to travel throughout Whatcom County.

We urge you to make this safe network a reality and stop prioritizing single occupancy vehicle travel for the sake of our safety, health, economy and climate.

We encourage the County Executive and County council to focus on measurement of key health, economic, and climate metrics to measure effectiveness of active transportation policies.

Ryan Corley

*Chair, Whatcom County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee*

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