



# Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105  
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038  
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## Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2025-770

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File ID:	AB2025-770	Version:	1	Status:	Approved
File Created:	10/24/2025	Entered by:	JLogan@co.whatcom.wa.us		
Department:	County Executive's Office	File Type:	Resolution		
Assigned to:	Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee			Final Action:	11/05/2025
Agenda Date:	11/05/2025			Enactment #:	RES 2025-037
Related Files:					

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### TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution approving the 2026 recommended convention center allocations for tourism-related facilities and activities as defined through RCW 67.28.1816

### SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

See attachments

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### HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

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Date:	Acting Body:	Action:	Sent To:
11/05/2025	Council Finance and Administrative Services Committee	RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL Aye: 3 Byrd, Donovan, and Buchanan Nay: 0	
11/05/2025	Council	APPROVED Aye: 7 Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremier Nay: 0	

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**Attachments:** Staff Memo, Proposed Resolution, Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - October 13, 2025, Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - October 15, 2025



PROPOSED BY: EXECUTIVE  
INTRODUCED: NOVEMBER 5, 2025

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-037**

**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

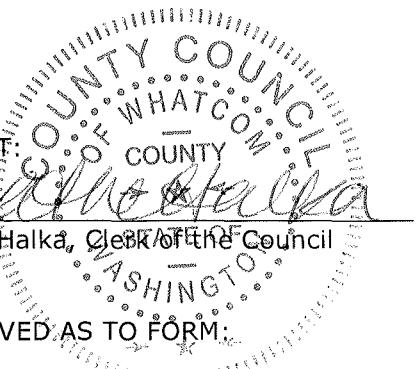
**WHEREAS**, all funding recipients must submit a report to the County describing the actual number of people traveling for business or pleasure on a trip as well as describing the results of the event or activity sponsored by the Convention Center Fund; and

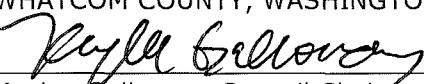
**WHEREAS**, the 2026 Convention Center Fund revenue is projected at \$1,600,000 and the fund has sufficient balance to support these allocations; and

**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 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 5th day of November, 2025

ATTEST:   
Cathy Halka, Clerk of the Council  
Christopher Quinn 10/27/2025  
Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
  
Kaylee Galloway, Council Chair

Attachment A

**Lodging Tax Fund - 2026**

Requesting Agency		2026 Requests	Committee Approved
<b>Tourism Promotion Applications</b>			
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
<b>Chambers &amp; Tourism SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>\$883,250</b>	<b>\$848,000</b>
<b>Events and Festival Applications</b>			
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 Frightmare - Whatcom Frightmare Haunted House Fundraiser	(new applicant)	\$9,228	Not funded
Wings Over Water Northwest - 2026 Wings Over Water NW Birding Festival		\$10,000	\$10,000
<b>Event and Festivals SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>\$436,005</b>	<b>\$275,500</b>
<b>Capital Project Applications</b>			
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
<b>Capital Projects SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,384,890</b>	<b>\$2,384,890</b>
<b>Administrative Cost</b>		<b>\$60,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL FUNDING REQUESTS</b>		<b>\$3,704,145</b>	<b>\$3,568,390</b>