

Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE 311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105 Bellingham, WA 98225-4038 (360) 778-5010

Agenda Bill Master Report

File Number: AB2025-672

File ID:

AB2025-672

Version:

Status: Approved

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09/24/2025

Entered by: tradtke@co.whatcom.wa.us

Department:

Public Works Department

File Type:

Resolution Requiring a Public Hearing

Assigned to:

Council

Final Action: 10/21/2025

Agenda Date: 10/21/2025 Enactment #: RES 2025-033

Related Files:

Primary Contact Email: sdraper@co.whatcom.wa.us

TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution approving the Public Works Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the years 2026-2031

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

See memo

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

Date:	Acting Body:		Action:	Sent To:
10/07/2025	Council		INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING	Council
		Aye: 7	Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenb	aas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler
		Nay: 0		
10/21/2025	Council		APPROVED	
		Aye: 7	Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenb	aas, Galloway, Scanlon, and Stremler
		Nay: 0		

Attachments:

Staff Memo, Proposed Resolution, Attachment A - Program Additions and Removals,

Attachment B - Capital Project List, Attachment C - Cash Flow, Attachment D - Roadway Priority Rating Program, Attachment E - 2024 Annual Bridge Report, Attachment F - Narratives, Notice

of Hearing after 10.7.2025

Agenda Bill Master Report Continued (AB2025-672)		

PROPOSED BY: Public Works

INTRODUCED: 10/7/2025

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-033

APPROVING THE SIX-YEAR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE YEARS 2026 THROUGH 2031

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 36.81.121, Whatcom County is required to prepare and approve a Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program each year; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 36.54.015, Whatcom County is required to prepare a Fourteen-Year Ferry Capital Program each year; and

WHEREAS, the Road Priority Array and the Annual Bridge Report were made available to the legislative authority during the preparation of this program; and

WHEREAS, following approval of the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program, the law requires an annual review of the work accomplished under the program and a determination of current transportation needs; and

WHEREAS, based upon the findings of the annual review, and after a public hearing, a Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program shall be approved; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 36.81.121, the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program and Fourteen-Year Ferry Capital Program must be consistent with the County comprehensive plan pursuant to RCW 36.70A; and

WHEREAS, the Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program attached hereto as Exhibit "A" has been reviewed and determined to be consistent with the County's comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Fourteen-Year Ferry Capital Program attached hereto as Exhibit "B" has been reviewed and determined to be consistent with the County's comprehensive plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council as follows:

- 1. That the Whatcom County Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program for the years 2026 through 2031, which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A", including the capital elements of the first six-years of the Fourteen-Year Ferry Capital Program, which is attached hereto as Exhibit "B", is hereby approved, and
- 2. That the County Engineer is directed to file a copy of the same with the County Road Administration Board and the State Secretary of Transportation.

APPROVED this 21st day of October, 2025.

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

APPROVED AS

By email on 09/24/2025

Christopher Quinn, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Exhibit "A" Six Year Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2031

Agency: Whatcom County County No. 37: Co.Name: Whatcom Co. City No: 0000 - MPO/RPO: NON/WCCG

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Exhibit "A" Six Year Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2031

Agency: Whatcom County County No. 37 Co. Name: Whatcom Co. City No: 0000 MPO/RPO: NON/WCCG

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Exhibit "A" Six Year Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2031

Agency: Whatcom County County No. 37 Co.Name: Whatcom Co. City No: 0000 MPO/RPO: NON/WCCG

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Exhibit "A" Six Year Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2031

Agency: Whatcom County
County No. 37 Co.Name: Whatcom Co.
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Exhibit "A" Six Year Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2031

Agency: Whatcom County County No. 37 Co.Name: Whatcom Co. City No. 0000 MPO/RPO: NON/WCCG

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Exhibit "A" Six Year Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2031

Agency: Whatcom County County No. 37 Co.Name: Whatcom Co. City No: 0000 MPO/RPO: NON/WCCG

	8	PROJECT COSTS IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS PUNDING SOURCE INFORMATION	TS IN THOL	PUNDING S	P DOLLAK OURCE IN	NFORMATA	×				-	ä Tr	EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE	CHEDULE																				_	FUNDEL	FUNDED	_
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EXHIBIT "B"



Photo by Dan Ohms

WHATCOM COUNTY 2026-2039 FOURTEEN-YEAR FERRY CAPITAL PROGRAM

Overview

The Fourteen-Year Ferry Capital Improvement Plan (the "Plan") is a general guide for the effective, efficient, and continuing operation of the Whatcom County ferry system. The Plan was prepared with the assistance and advice of the County Engineer and supports the Public Works Ferry and Engineering Divisions in long-range capital project planning for the replacement and improvement of the Whatcom County ferry transportation system.

Whatcom County has evaluated major elements of its ferry system, providing specific data on its estimated current value, replacement costs, and amortization periods. The county identifies future capital needs and investments and reviews this report annually to adapt to changing fiscal and operational conditions and circumstances. Strict adherence is not expected.

The Whatcom County Council has the authority to determine, prioritize, and authorize expenditures on capital improvement projects. They collaborate with the Public Works Department and the County Engineer to incorporate their recommendations. The capital projects listed in the Plan are the result of determinations from the Public Works Engineering division, Maintenance division, the County Council's ferry advisory committee, regulators, governmental agencies, residents, and citizen groups.

In order to comply with state and federal rules and laws and maintain eligibility for grant funding, capital improvement projects must be listed and updated annually in the county's Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan and on a Fourteen-Year Ferry Capital Facilities Plan.

GOVERNING LAWS AND CODES

The Revised Code of Washington ("RCW") and the Washington Administrative Code ("WAC") contain laws as they pertain to the Fourteen-Year Ferry Capital Improvement Plan and the Six Year Transportation Improvement Program ("TIP"), as follows:

1. (RCW) 36.54.015 Ferries—Fourteen-year long range improvement plan—Contents.

The legislative authority of every county operating ferries shall prepare, with the advice and assistance of the county engineer, a fourteen-year long range capital improvement plan embracing all major elements of the ferry system. Such Plan shall include a listing of each major element of the system showing its estimated current value, its estimated replacement cost, and its amortization period.

2. RCW 36.81.121 Perpetual advanced six-year plans for coordinated transportation program, expenditures—Nonmotorized transportation—Railroad right-of-way.

(1) At any time before adoption of the budget, the legislative authority of each county, after one or more public hearings thereon, shall prepare and adopt a comprehensive transportation program for the ensuing six calendar years. If the county has adopted a comprehensive plan pursuant to chapter 35.63 or 36.70 RCW, the inherent authority of a charter county derived from its charter, or chapter 36.70A RCW, the program shall be consistent with this comprehensive Plan.

The program shall include proposed road and bridge construction work and other transportation facilities and programs deemed appropriate, and for those counties operating ferries shall also include a separate section showing proposed capital expenditures for ferries, docks, and related facilities. The program shall include any new or enhanced bicycle or pedestrian facilities identified pursuant to RCW

36.70A.070(6) or other applicable changes that promote nonmotorized transit. Copies of the program shall be filed with the county road administration board and with the state secretary of transportation not more than thirty days after its adoption by the legislative authority. The purpose of this section is to assure that each county shall perpetually have available advanced plans looking to the future for not less than six years as a guide in carrying out a coordinated transportation program. The program may at any time be revised by a majority of the legislative authority but only after a public hearing thereon.

- (2) Each six-year transportation program forwarded to the secretary in compliance with subsection (1) of this section shall contain information as to how a county will extend its moneys, including funds made available pursuant to chapter 47.30 RCW, for nonmotorized transportation purposes.
- (3) Each six-year transportation program forwarded to the secretary in compliance with subsection (1) of this section shall contain information as to how a county shall act to preserve railroad right-of-way in the event the railroad ceases to operate in the county's jurisdiction.
- (4) The six-year Plan for each county shall specifically set forth those projects and programs of regional significance for inclusion in the transportation improvement program within that region.

3. RCW 47.56.725 County ferries—Deficit reimbursements—Capital improvement funds.

(4) The county road administration board may evaluate requests by Pierce, Skagit, Wahkiakum, and Whatcom counties for county ferry capital improvement funds. The board shall evaluate the requests and, if approved by a majority of the board, submit the requests to the legislature for funding out of the amounts available under RCW 46.68.090(2)(h). Any county making a request under this subsection shall first seek funding through the public works trust fund, or any other available revenue source, where appropriate.

WAC 136-400-040 Six-year transportation program and ferry system fourteen-year plan submittal.

- (1) Each county's six-year transportation program and ferry system fourteen-year long range capital improvement plan shall be prepared and adopted in accordance with RCW 36.81.121 and 36.54.015, respectively, and one copy shall be forwarded to the county road administration board no later than December 31 of each year.
- (2) Any proposed county ferry capital improvement project must be included in both the county's six-year transportation program and ferry system fourteen-year capital improvement plan and must remain on both during all of the phases of the project including:
 - (a) At the time a county requests a call for projects;
 - (b) At the time the county submits a project funding application; and
 - (c) Until the project is completed or the project is otherwise terminated.
- (3) The county ferry capital improvement project cost estimates that are included in the county's sixyear transportation programs and ferry system fourteen-year plans shall be considered preliminary and are not binding on actual county ferry capital improvement project applications.

CAPITAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Table 1: Ferry System Current and Replacement Values: This table meets the state requirements, by including the current value, replacement cost, and amortization periods for the vessels and facilities. The current value of the M/V Whatcom Chief is the insured value, the closest approximation of true worth. The facilities' current value is book value, original cost less depreciation plus depreciated improvements.

Table 2: Projected Revenues: Lays out the known or anticipated operating and capital project funding sources for the 14-Year Plan.

Table 3: Projected Expenditures: This table includes all other expenditures of the system that meet Subsection (2) requirements. Operational expenditures are delineated between the vessel and nonvessel costs. U.S. Coast Guard regulations currently require the ferries to be dry-docked every two years; however, to extend the life, improve reliability, and protect our capital investment Whatcom County schedules dry-docking or an out-of-service maintenance period every year for its vessel. The terminal structures are inspected regularly, as required by the National Bridge Inspection Standards administered through the Washington State Department of Transportation. The inspection report helps identify and schedule major maintenance and replacement of these facilities.

Table 1

142.0 -					
FERRY SYSTEM CURRENT AND REPLACE	MENT VALUES -	- 2025			
VESSEL					
	M/V Whatcom				
Current Statistics	Chief				
LENGTH (ft)	94				
BEAM (ft)	44				
DISPLACEMENT (tons)	78				
YEAR BUILT	1962				
CAPACITY Passengers	100				
CAPACITY Cars	20				
CURRENT INSURED VALUE - 2024	\$840,000				
ESTIMATED CURRENT VALUE - 2024				\$840,000	
Replacement Statistics for 20 car hybrid boat					
YEAR	2025				
LENGTH (ft)	118				
BEAM (ft)	48				
DISPLACEMENT (tons)	309				
CAPACITY Passengers	150				
CAPACITY Cars	20				
ESTIMATED REPLACEMENT VALUE ⁽¹⁾	\$36,393,000				
TOTAL - ESTIMATE REPLACEMENT VALUE	7//				\$36,393,000
	_			-	,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,
FACILITIES					
			SCHEDULED		
			REPLACEMENT		ESTIMATED
	YEAR BUILT OR	AMORTIZATION	/MODIFICATION	CURRENT BOOK	REPLACEMENT
LOCATION	REBUILT	PERIOD END	YEAR	VALUE ⁽⁴⁾	COST
Lummi Island Terminal					
Transfer Span and Dock	1982	2022	2040	\$237,117	\$12,670,000
Dolphins/Wingwall/Breakwater	1978	2018	2024	\$2,308,859	\$8,870,000
Upland Facilities	1978	2018	2024	\$1,379	\$5,070,000
Subtotal - Lummi Island Terminal (2)				\$2,547,356	\$26,610,000
Gooseberry Point Terminal					
Transfer Span and Dock	1987	2027	2024-2046	\$455,866	\$29,770,000
Dolphins/Wingwall ⁽³⁾	2013, 2014	2053, 2054	2024-2046	\$1,143,882	\$3,800,000
Upland Facilities				\$24,895	\$12,030,000
Subtotal - Gooseberry Point Terminal (2)				\$1,624,643	\$45,600,000
Design, Technical and Management Support					\$12,000,000
Regulatory	7			1	\$2,000,000
TOTAL FACILITIES VALUE				\$4,171,999	\$86,210,000
TOTAL VESSEL & FACILITIES VALUE				\$5,011,999	\$108,603,000
NOTES:					

⁽¹⁾ Cost based on 6/10/2024 report to County Council on Ferry Replacement and System Modernization Costs (AB2025-351). Expenditures excalated to the year they are incurred.

²⁾ Per 2018 LOS Alternatives Analysis by KPFF Consulting (Costs have been escalated 3% per year and represent a 2025 replacement cost of the full structure, not a retrofit for a new boat.)

⁽³⁾ Replacement requires relocation. A phased approach to relocation will include modifications to existing facilities prior to completion of the new facility.

⁽⁴⁾ Reported from 2024 year end using a 20-year life for improvements and straight-line depreciation (including depreciated improvements)

Table 2

Table 2							
Lummi	i Island Ferry 14	-Year Capita	I Program				
A	ll \$ in 000's Rev	enues 2026-	2032				
Category	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Multi-Ride Fares (3)	\$ 1,107	\$ 1,304	\$ 1,429	\$ 1,542	\$ 1,646	\$ 1,744	\$ 1,836
Single-Ride Fares (4)	277	326	357	386	412	436	459
Supplement to fares (above existing rates)	549	439	351	281	225	180	144
(Memo 55% of Operating Cost) (1)	1,933	2,069	2,138	2,209	2,283	2,359	2,439
NAVET C. b. of		554	F72	504	505	607	610
MVFT Subsidy & Ferry Deficit Reimb.	550	561	572	584	595	607	619
County Road Fund Operating Subsidy	1,581	1,693	1,749	1,807	1,868	1,930	1,995
Ferry Replacement Fund	160	163	166	170	173	177	180
CRAB Capital Ferry Funding	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
Federal Raise Grant	-	-	5,000	19,000	1,000	-	_
State Move Ahead Washington Funds	436	698	4,166				
Federal Ferry Boat Program Funding	521	521	521				Ī
Bond or other funding (6)					12,000	5,000	
Total Revenues	5,681	6,205	14,813	24,270	18,419	10,574	5,734
Total Expenditures (2)	7,549	27,149	27,076	9,717	11,949	5.676	5,833
	1 7,3,3				1,5 .5	5,070	1 3,000
Net Funded (Unfunded) (5)	(1,868)	(20,944)	(12,263)	14,553	6,470	4,898	(99)

Lummi Isla	nd Ferry 14	l-Year Capit	al Program				
All \$ i	n 000's Rev	enues 2033	-2039				
Category	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039
Multi-Ride Fares (3)	\$ 2,017	\$ 2,085	\$ 2,156	\$ 2,229	\$ 2,305	\$ 2,384	\$ 2,466
Single-Ride Fares (4)	504	521	539	557	576	596	616
Supplement to fares (above existing rates)	115	92	74	59	47	38	30
(Memo 55% of Operating Cost) (1)	2,521	2,606	2,695	2,786	2,882	2,980	3,082
MVFT Subsidy & Ferry Deficit Reimb.	632	644	657	670	684	698	711
County Road Fund Operating Subsidy	2,347	2,422	2,501	2,582	2,665	2,752	2,842
Ferry Replacement Fund	184	187	191	195	199	203	207
CRAB Capital Ferry Funding	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
	1						
Total Revenues	6,184	6,361	6,544	6,734	6,930	7,133	7,343
Total Expenditures (2)	5,996	6,164	6,339	6,519	6,706	6,900	7,101
Net Funded (Unfunded) (5)	188	196	205	214	223	233	242

Note 1: Fare revenue is not calculated on ridership and is instead calculated based on a 55% recovery of expenditures as outlined in farebox recovery legislation. With this collection goal, actual ridership numbers will help determine fare prices.

Note 5: Unfunded ferry capital is generally covered using road fund revenue. In the case of years 2025 to 2027 various funding mechanisms are being looked at supplement the road fund.

Note 6: Bond funding will likely be needed and has been added in to year 2028.

Note 2: As Shown On Table 2, including capital expenditures.

Note 3: Equal to 80% of Fares

Note 4: Equal to 20% of Fares

Table 3

	land Ferry 14-Y						
	Table 2 Expend						
Category	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Operating Expenses							
Vessel Operations							
Personnel	1,768	1,839	1,912	1,989	2,068	2,151	2,237
Fuel & Operating Supplies	1,328	1,368	1,409	1,451	1,494	1,539	1,585
nsurance	94	97	99	102	105	109	112
Other Operating Expenses	215	224	233	242	252	262	272
Total Vessel Operations	3,405	3,527	3,653	3,784	3,920	4,061	4,207
Other Operations							
Administration	422	424	426	428	431	433	435
Parking Lots							
Lummi Island	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
Gooseberry Pt.	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
Staging Areas							
Lummi Island	15	16	16	17	17	18	18
Gooseberry Pt.	8	8	9	9	9	10	10
Docks							
Lummi Island	71	73	74	76	77	79	80
Gooseberry Pt.	257	262	267	273	278	284	289
Total Operating Expenses	4,064	4,323	4,459	4,600	4,746	4,897	5,054
Capital Expenditures							
Replacement of Whatcom Chief	2,750	22,092	20,226	150		-	-
Terminal Modifications	570	517	2,329	4,967	4,998		
Upland Improvements	160	212	57	-	1,427		
Relocation of Gooseberry Terminal	5	5	5				
Potential Debt Service to Outside Funding ⁽¹⁾					778	779	780
Total Capital Program Costs	3,485	22,826	22,617	5,117	7,203	779	780
Total Costs	7,549	27,149	27,076	9,717	11,949	5,676	5,833

Table 3 (continued)

All	in 000's Table 2 Expendi	tures 2033-2	039 Page 2				
Category	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039
Operating Expenses							
Vessel Operations							
Personnel	2,327	2,420	2,516	2,617	2,722	2,831	2,944
Fuel & Operating Supplies	1,633	1,682	1,732	1,784	1,838	1,893	1,950
Insurance	115	119	122	126	130	134	138
Other Operating Expenses	283	295	306	319	331	345	358
Total Vessel Operations	4,358	4,515	4,677	4,846	5,021	5,202	5,390
Other Operations				"			
Administration	437	439	441	444	446	448	450
Parking Lots							
Lummi Island	7	7	7	7	8	8	8
Gooseberry Pt.	7	7	7	7	8	8	8
Staging Areas							
Lummi Island	19	20	20	21	21	22	23
Gooseberry Pt.	10	10	11	11	11	12	12
Docks							
Lummi Island	82	84	85	87	89	91	92
Gooseberry Pt.	295	301	307	313	320	326	333
Total Operating Expenses	5,216	5,383	5,557	5,737	5,923	6,116	6,316
Capital Expenditures							
Replacement of Whatcom Chief	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Terminal Modifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Upland Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Relocation of Gooseberry Terminal	-	-	-	-	-	-	,
Debt Service to Outside Funding	780	781	782	783	783	784	785
Total Capital Program Costs	780	781	782	783	783	784	785
Total Costs	5,996	6,164	6,339	6,519	6,706	6,900	7,101

Lummi Island Ferry System Modernization & Preservation Project CRP # 919008 (Project Based Budget 399100)

Construction Funding Year(s):

2027, 2028 and 2029

Project Narrative:

This project includes replacement of the Whatcom Chief with a 20 car vessel, modifications of the existing ferry terminals to accommodate the new vessel, upland improvements and mitigation work. This work will be accomplished as outlined in the Lummi Island Ferry Service Level of Service Action Plan approved by the Whatcom County Council via Resolution 2018-026. This project is listed **#F1** on the 2026-2031 Six Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Project Status:

Design, real estate and environmental permitting work is underway for the new vessel and terminal modifications. In 2022 Whatcom County received \$25 million in federal funds via the RAISE grant program, \$5.3 million in state funds via the Move Ahead Washington (MAW) capital projects program. In 2023, through the County Ferry Capital Improvement Program (CFCIP) administered by the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), the Washington State Legislation approved an annual commitment of \$500,000 over the next twenty years for a total of \$10 million in state funds for this project.

Environmental Permitting

NEPA (federal), HPA, Shorelines Permit, ACOE Section 404, DOE Section 401, local permits

M/V Whatcom Chief



Relocation of Gooseberry Terminal CRP # 919009

Construction Funding Year(s):

TBD

Project Narrative:

This project involves relocation of the Gooseberry Point Ferry Terminal. This work will be accomplished as outlined in the Lummi Island Ferry Service Level of Service Action Plan approved by the Whatcom County Council via Resolution 2018-026. This project is listed **#F2** on the 2026-2031 Six Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Project Status:

Early action items will likely include an EIS and real estate work.

Environmental Permitting

TBD



Terminal Hydraulic System Replacement CRP #925009

Construction Funding Year(s):

TBD

Project Narrative:

This project is located at the Whatcom County ferry terminals in Section 3, T37N, R01E. This project will include replacing the existing, aging hydraulic systems that operate the live load hanger pins and aprons at both ferry terminals. This project is listed #F3 on the 2026-2031 Six Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Project Status:

Design and permitting work to begin in 2026.

Environmental Permitting

TBD

