

PROPOSED BY: GALLOWAY

INTRODUCTION DATE: _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____

SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO ZERO-EMISSIONS TRANSPORTATION

WHEREAS, in 2017, transportation was the third largest source of Whatcom County's greenhouse gas emissions at 13.7% of which 81.8% was on-road vehicles; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County's transportation demand is projected to increase in the coming years with a growing population; and

WHEREAS, addressing mobility needs while reducing transportation related emissions and vehicle miles traveled should be a primary target of Whatcom County's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts; and

WHEREAS, on November 9, 2021, the Whatcom County Council passed Resolution 2021-049, adopting the 2021 Whatcom County Climate Action Plan, which develops goals, strategies, and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience including for transportation and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Climate Action Plan sets a goal to "reduce transportation-related GHG emissions 45% below 1990 levels by 2030, including eliminating fossil fuels from County government transportation operations where technology permits, while ensuring climate-resilient transportation systems"; and

WHEREAS, strategies to achieve this goal include 1) reduce vehicle miles traveled by promoting alternatives to single occupancy vehicle transportation, 2) promote increased use of electric, hybrid, and alternative fuel vehicles, and 3) improve County vehicle fleet utilization while transitioning to non-fossil alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) 2045 regional/metropolitan transportation plan lists reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a goal, and includes strategies to improve multimodal transportation and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the new Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) 2040 long range plan lists reducing GHG emissions as a goal and a “zero emissions fleet transition” and fleet electrification infrastructure as capital needs; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that Whatcom County support the transition to low or no emissions transportation including:

1. Support electrification of public transportation:
 - Strongly urge WTA to only purchase electric buses, or alternative zero emission technologies, moving forward and actively support their efforts to secure state and federal funds.
 - Work with School Districts to develop a plan to transition to zero emission school buses.
2. Support transition to low or no emissions for the County fleet:
 - Perform analyses designed to optimize County fleet use and incorporate electric vehicles and alternative fueled vehicles where feasible.
 - Support the electrification of the Lummi Island Ferry and related infrastructure.
3. Support community transition to electric vehicles:
 - Facilitate the construction of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This includes:
 - financial, planning, and regulatory support;
 - easing existing barriers by updating relevant development regulations and land use and building codes;
 - For example, easing parking requirements to allow for or incentivize 5-10% of parking spots to be EV-ready on all new industrial, commercial, and residential multi-family construction.
 - prioritizing installation of charging stations at county facilities such as county buildings, parks, and other community spaces like schools, libraries, and senior centers.
 - Support workforce development and a just transition for transportation electrification.

4. Invest in alternative and active modes of transportation and infrastructure:
- Increase education and outreach to county employees and the community (through programs like Whatcom Smart Trips) on opportunities and benefits to using active and public modes of transportation and reduce vehicle miles traveled.
 - Incentivize public and active modes of transportation such as reducing or eliminating fare for all WTA bus services and providing grant funding to employers to pay employees for walking/biking to work.
 - Improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and expand local and regional trail networks for non-motorized transportation to create safe active transportation and connect more people to WTA bus service
 - implement the recommendations of the Whatcom County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan including the Regional Trails Plan and Route Map proposed by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee.
 - Public Works should continue to consider opportunities to expand non-motorized infrastructure in all upcoming projects.
 - Exempt all bikes, including electric bikes, from county sales taxes.
 - Support expanding rail transportation options including advocating for restoration of Amtrak's Cascades route.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Whatcom County shall prioritize intergovernmental collaboration, cooperation, and advocacy to secure additional state and federal funds, combined with sufficient county matching funds, to advance the transition to low or zero emissions transportation and related infrastructure.

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2022.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

(Name of current chair), Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

(Name), Civil Deputy Prosecutor