

PROPOSED BY: GALLOWAY
INTRODUCTION DATE: _____

RESOLUTION NO. _____

SUPPORTING A TRANSITION TO LOW- OR ZERO-EMISSION TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Whatcom County Council supports the transition to a low- or zero- emission transportation system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Whatcom County Council supports budget and policy decisions that reduce or eliminate emissions in public transportation and the county’s fleet; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Whatcom County Council supports the community’s transition to electric vehicles and increasing access to alternative and active modes of transportation; and

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

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that Whatcom County elected officials and staff consider the attached Exhibit A as suggested implementation strategies and actions that could help accomplish the vision outlined in this resolution.

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2022.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

Todd Donovan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Civil Deputy Prosecutor

**EXHIBIT A:
SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

Support low- or zero-emission public transportation

1. Strongly urge WTA to purchase electric or alternative zero emission buses moving forward and actively support their efforts to secure state and federal funds.
2. Work with School Districts to develop a plan to transition to zero emission school buses.

Support low- or zero-emission County fleet

1. Perform analyses designed to optimize County fleet use and incorporate electric vehicles and alternative fueled vehicles where feasible.
2. Support funding for the start-up costs and ongoing maintenance and operations of the County fleet, including training and compensating workforce.
3. Accelerate the transition to electrification or diesel hybrid of the Lummi Island Ferry and related infrastructure.
4. Work with fire departments to develop a plan to transition to zero emission fire/EMS vehicles.

Support community transition to electric vehicles

1. Facilitate the construction of publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure by:
 - Providing financial, planning, and regulatory support.
 - Easing existing barriers by updating relevant development regulations and land use and building codes.
 - For example, update parking requirements to require or incentivize 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.

2. Support workforce development and a just transition for transportation electrification.

3. Work with the seven cities within Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County, Lummi Nation, Nooksack Indian Tribe, and others to support their transition to low- or zero-emission transportation system.

Invest in alternative and active modes of transportation and infrastructure

1. Increase education and outreach to county employees and the community (through programs like Whatcom Smart Trips) on opportunities and benefits to using active modes of transportation and reduce vehicle miles traveled.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Consider opportunities to expand non-motorized infrastructure in all upcoming Whatcom County Public Works infrastructure projects.

5. Exempt all bikes, including electric bikes, from county sales taxes.

6. Support efforts to expand rail transportation options.