

**SKAGIT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (SMPO)****SKAGIT sub-REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION (SRTPO)****2009 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT**

This annual report is a detailed compilation of work done from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009 in meeting the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and Washington State Department of Transportation planning requirements as set forth in the United States Code of Federal regulations and Revised Code of the State of Washington under Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity ACT (SAFETEA-LU) and the Washington State Growth Management Act.

Within the elements of the UPWP, the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SIRTPO) and the Skagit Metropolitan Planning Organization (Skagit MPO) address the emphasis areas identified by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) has not set new emphasis areas for the 2009 Federal Fiscal Year (FFY), but is supportive of the FTA emphases.

FTA emphasis areas include:

- Incorporating Safety and Security into Transportation Planning;
- Participation of Transit Operators in Metropolitan Planning;
- Coordination of Non-Emergency Human Service Transportation;
- Planning for Transit Systems Management/Operations to Increase Ridership; and
- Supporting Transit Capital Investment Decisions through Effective Systems Planning.

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**The following emphasis areas are those identified in the Skagit/Island 2008/2009 UPWP. The information in italics below each emphasis area will identify the work done and achievements.**

**Metropolitan Planning Organization**

(see Exhibit A for revenue and expenditures table)

**I. MPO Administration:** The activities in this work program element include applicable expenses-related administration, coordination, public information, intergovernmental coordination and meetings, travel expenses, overhead, equipment and supplies, report preparation, etcetera.

*In 2008 SCOG had a large staff turnover. This led to a reduction in expenditures which we expect to use in 2009. SCOG staff provided administrative support for the Skagit MPO as set forth in the 2008-2009 Skagit/Island UPWP. Administrative oversight in areas of Public Participation opportunities were achieved within the guidelines and requirements of FHWA Title VI. Budget review, Office administration and Grant administration were accomplished by monthly, quarterly and annual meetings*

*with the Technical Advisory Committees and the Skagit MPO Policy Board. With a full staff SCOG expects an increase in the planning expenditures due to the update of the Skagit/Island RTP/MTP, a new coordinated planning effort for climate change and working with San Juan County who may be submitting a request to join the Skagit/Island RTPO.*

***In 2009 the Skagit MPO staff provided administrative support for the Skagit MPO as set forth in the 2008-2009 Skagit/Island UPWP. Administrative oversight in areas of Public Participation opportunities were achieved within the guidelines and requirements of FHWA Title VI. Budget review, Office administration and Grant administration were accomplished by monthly, quarterly and annual updates and meetings with the Technical Advisory Committees and the Skagit MPO Policy Board.***

**II. Regional Data Collection and Modeling Effort:** With current and anticipated growth in the region, the Skagit MPO recognizes that proactive and effective planning will require an effective program of coordinated data collection and transportation modeling. In addition to traditionally-recognized areas for attention such as traffic counts and distribution, data collection efforts will also incorporate development of information related to transportation security issues and transit systems management.

*Data program expenditures for 2008 reflect an 8 month Modeler vacancy and extra training needs. With the completion of the I-5 Corridor Master Plan Study from Conway to Cook Road there is expected to be an increase in 2009 for modeling services. There has already been an increase for modeling services by local jurisdictions in the last few months regarding modeling of local systems for the I-5 Corridor Master Plan Study proposals.*

***Data program expenditures for 2009 reflect continued training on the Skagit/Island regional model, the purchase of SINCRO model software and training, and coordinating with Island County on their Comprehensive Plan update effort.***

### **III. Regional Transit Planning:**

*2008 Worked towards better integration of public transportation into the regional model and working closely with Skagit transit in securing funding for Park-n-Rides and other transit related projects. SCOG staff worked with the new staff at Skagit transit in implementing Title IV policy and provided training and consultation for their 2008 TIP and funding and administrative reporting questions. SCOG continues to work on planning for transit systems management/operations to increase ridership, and supporting transit capital investment decisions through effective systems planning. This effort is being funded largely through Federal Transit Administration grants passed through the WSDOT. All WSDOT transit planning funds allocated to the RTPO were passed on to SKAT and Island Transit to compensate for their administration of regional human services transportation planning efforts.*

***2009 Regional Transit Planning efforts focused on working with Skagit and Island Transit on their 2009 TIP's, ARRA funding and projects, and coordination with Skagit Transit on Title VI Policy. The Skagit MPO continues to work with Skagit and Island Transit's on regional issues through monthly Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Board meetings, and the Bi-annual SIRTPO Policy Board meetings. The Skagit MPO and both Skagit and Island Transit agency's are very involved in the NSCCP, AKA The Farmhouse Gang and through this group coordinate with Whatcom Transit Authority and Community Transit on connectivity issues.***

**IV. Creation of the MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** The MPO TIP is required by federal law. It must be prepared at least every two years, cover a period of not less than four years and approved by the MPO and the Governor. The frequency of the updates must be consistent with the development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Projects in the TIP must come from the MPO Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The TIP must include all federally funded and/or regionally significant projects. The TIP must be financially constrained. This year's TIP analyses will include consideration of the identified FTA emphases areas.

*2008 - SCOG staff worked with all reporting jurisdictions in Skagit/Island Counties in preparing their local TIP's by providing training for the STIP software. SCOG staff produced the Skagit/Island RTIP and Skagit MTIP and coordinated with WSDOT on the Skagit/Island portion of the STIP.*

**2009 - SCOG Staff produced the Skagit MTIP and Skagit/Island RTIP and coordinated with WSDOT on State projects within the Skagit/Island region and the Skagit /Island portion of the STIP. SCOG staff coordinated with Skagit and Island jurisdictions on TIP amendments, and ARRA funded projects and related issues.**

**V. Regulatory Compliance:** The metropolitan transportation planning process requires the MPO to have a proactive public involvement and Title VI processes. This effort will track compliance with those processes:

*2008 Skagit MPO Title VI effort continued to be enhanced through ADA accessibility for meetings and the use of the SCOG website to allow non-English speaking person's access to meeting information. SCOG staff continues to look for opportunities to broaden participation of the public in transportation issues.*

**2009 Skagit sub-RTPO Title VI effort continued to be enhanced through ADA accessibility for meetings and the use of the SCOG website and other media forms as necessary to allow non-English speaking person's access to meeting information. SCOG staff continues to look for opportunities to broaden participation of the public in transportation issues.**

**VI. North Sound Connecting Communities Project:** The North Sound Connecting Communities Partnership (NSCCP), or colloquially, 'the Farmhouse Gang', is an ad hoc organization comprised of elected and staff level representatives from the four northwestern Washington counties (Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan and Island), and the northern part of Snohomish County. The Farmhouse Gang addresses transportation issues of regional significance, and is facilitated by staff of the Skagit MPO. Through the acquisition of a \$1,000,000 earmark from Representative Rick Larsen, the Farmhouse Gang has the resources to examine several critical regional issues. Identified areas which will be examined over the next four years include Transit, Passenger and Freight Rail Corridors, Non-Motorized, and Regional highways. Examination of these areas will include consideration of specific areas tied to FTA, FHWA, and WSDOT interests and emphases, including safety and security, systems management, freight mobility, and regional and interregional coordination.

*In 2008 NSCCP planning efforts are continuing with studies underway for a Bellingham to Friday Harbor ferry run, Transit funding and route issues, and Freight and Rail corridors. The NSCCP is continuing to look for ways to have a permanent funding source and will take this up in 2009.*

**2009 NSCCP planning efforts continued to work on regional mobility issues involving Transit, Cross Border, Non-motorized, Passenger Rail, and Ferries. In October 2008 a Workshop was held that included participants from the North Sound Five Counties and other agencies that had a vested**

*interest in promoting a concerted effort at Regional Mobility Coordination and to discuss the future of the Farmhouse Gang and long term goals. Skagit is the lead agency for the Farmhouse Gang and continues to provide opportunities for discussion of regional issues through meetings and workshops throughout the year.*

*The increase in expenses in 2009, were related to a Household Travel Survey, special studies and coordination on connectivity between Bellingham to Friday Harbor Ferry run, a Bike/Ped Map (still in development) showing connectivity between Whatcom, Skagit Island and North Snohomish counties, Passenger Rail study and coordination with US and Canada on Second AMTRAK Train to Vancouver B.C and Transit connectivity coordination.*

**VII. Special Transportation Studies:** These studies are not mandatory but are performed with the goal of identifying potential improvements to the transportation system in the Skagit MPO region. The SMPO expenditures in this activity will complement planned RTPO expenditures. For FY 2008 the following projects have been identified:

- *2008 - SR 5 (I-5) Comprehensive Corridor Needs Study: This effort will partner with WSDOT on an intersection-level analysis of I-5 from the Conway to north of Cook Road. This facility currently has a number of areas which are demanding attention, with issues including congestion, safety, security, maintenance and preservation, and infrastructure expansion among them. By undertaking a comprehensive analysis of these needs, we can choose an effective and logical prioritization process, ensuring the effective use of taxpayers' funding to address these needs in the appropriate sequence. In addition, information gleaned from this effort will help local jurisdictions make their own prudent decisions regarding allocation of scarce transportation resources.*
- *Non-motorized Transportation Data Development and Analysis: This effort will continue work underway to assess the state of non-motorized facilities in the region, in conjunction with WSDOT and the federal Centers for Disease Control. Included in this will be implementation of a trail counter program to procure data regarding usage. In addition, the effort will also consider issues of safety and security.*

*Special studies efforts in 2008 ended up being largely confined to non-motorized efforts and I-5 Comprehensive Corridor Needs Study. The information gleaned from the I-5 report should be available in 2009 and will support the need for local jurisdictions in coordination with SCOG to look at the effects the recommendations from WSDOT will have on the local transportation infrastructure.*

*2009 – A Trail Coalition group that is developing a regional trail list and map that will show gaps in connecting trail corridors and identify critical needs for safety improvements. Through the use of traffic calming practices and the use of smart technologies safer non-motorize regional mobility will be achieved.*

*Creation of a data base that incorporates data gathered from Trail counters deployed around trails in the Skagit County region. Jurisdictions have access to this information and have contributed in support of new trail counters.*

### **Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO)**

(see Exhibit A for revenue and expenditures table)

**I. Skagit sub-RTPO Program Administration:** The activities in this work program element include

applicable expenses-related administration, coordination, public information, intergovernmental coordination and meetings, travel expenses, overhead, equipment and supplies, report preparation, etcetera.

*Reduced administrative expenditures for 2008 reflect efficiencies gained through administrative allocations to other funding sources, as well as through a more rigorous allocation of hours to specific tasks by staff.*

***In 2009 the Skagit RTPO staff provided administrative support for the Skagit/Island RTPO (SIRTPO) as set forth in the 2008-2009 Skagit/Island UPWP. Administrative oversight in areas of Public Participation opportunities were achieved within the guidelines and requirements of FHWA Title IV. Budget review, Office administration and Grant administration were accomplished by monthly, quarterly and annual reports and meetings with the Technical Advisory Committees and the Skagit RTPO Policy Board.***

**II. RTPO Comprehensive Plan Certification:** As the lead agency for the RTPO it is the responsibility of the SMPO to comply with RCW 47.80.026 “Comprehensive plans, transportation guidelines and principles”. Through this process the SMPO must certify that the transportation elements of comprehensive plans adopted by counties, cities, and towns within the region reflect the guidelines and principles as defined in RCW 47.80.02 6 are consistent with the adopted regional transportation plan, and, conform with the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070.

*In 2008 SCOG hired a SR. Planner/Modeler who is currently working with local jurisdictions and reviewing the process for RTPO Comprehensive Plan Certification. Jurisdictions required less assistance than anticipated in addressing regional transportation issues in their comprehensive plan updates, resulting in a lowered expenditure.*

***2009 – The Skagit MPO started working with the Skagit/Island RTPO in developing the Skagit/Island MTP/RTP which should be completed by August 2010. Within the MTP/RTP the comp-plan certification process will be revisited and addressed.***

**III. Implementation of Regional Data Collection and Modeling Effort:** With current and anticipated growth in the region, the Skagit MPO recognizes that proactive and effective planning will require an effective program of coordinated data collection and transportation modeling. In addition to traditionally-recognized areas for attention such as traffic counts and distribution, future data collection efforts will also incorporate development of information related to transportation security issues. Towards that end, FY2005 began an implementation of that effort. In FY 2007, an expansion of the data program will include a regional pavement management system.

*Data program expenditures for 2008 reflect a 8 month Modeler vacancy and extra training needs. With the completion of the I-5 Corridor Master Plan Study from Conway to Cook Road there is expected to be and increase in 2009 for modeling services. There has already been an increase for modeling services by local jurisdictions and Island County in the last few months regarding modeling of local systems.*

***Data program expenditures for 2009 reflect continued training on the Skagit/Island regional model, the purchase of SINCRO model software and training, and coordinating with Island County on their Comprehensive Plan update effort.***

**IV. Skagit County Surface Transportation Program (STP) Regional Program Administration:**

Federal STP funds are utilized for transportation projects. The Skagit MPO will monitor use of these funds on projects and track project development until completion.

*2008 - The predominant STP administrative costs in 2008 were tied to the change in prioritization processes. Thanks in part to WSDOT and FHWA requirements making clear the necessity of these changes, the changes themselves involved little controversy, and as a result were at a lowered cost than anticipated.*

*2009 – The Skagit MPO continues to monitor the use of STP Regional Program Funds. The increase in administration expenditures for STP Regional Program Funds was due to administration of ARRA funded projects.*

*The following are (open projects) that have received STP funds:*

*City of Anacortes – Project FA# 6228001: Sunset Avenue Widening- \$140,000 - (status) funds obligated.*

*City of Mount Vernon – Project FA# 7337003: Anderson/Laventure Extension Phase I- \$805,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*City of Mount Vernon – Project FA# 0538005: College/Urban Signal - \$636,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*City of Mount Vernon – Project FA# 0538006: College Way/Riverside – \$750,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*City of Mount Vernon – Project FA# 7300001: Roosevelt Ave. Extension – \$765,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*City of Sedro-Woolley – Project FA# 0020117: G/S Grade Rd./Skagit industrial Access - \$1,082,279.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*Skagit County – Project FA# 7337005: Anderson/Laventure Extension Phase II - \$525,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*Skagit County – Project FA# 7337004: Anderson/Laventure Extension Phase III - \$2,170,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*Skagit County – Project FA# 29HR001: Helmick Road Improvement - \$1,450,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

*Skagit Transit – Project FA# 2029044: Skagit Station Operation - \$65,000.00 – (status) funds obligated.*

**V. Regulatory Compliance** The Skagit sub-RTPO has adopted the same public involvement and Title VI processes used by the Skagit MPO. This effort will track compliance with those processes.

*2008 - With most regulatory compliance issues requiring MPO attention, RTPO needs—and consequently costs—in this area were limited, with correspondingly lowered costs.*

***2009 Skagit sub-RTPO Title VI effort continued to be enhanced through ADA accessibility for meetings and the use of the SCOG website and other media forms as necessary to allow non-English speaking person's access to meeting information. SCOG staff continues to look for opportunities to broaden participation of the public in transportation issues.***

**VI. Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP):** As with the MPO the RTPO must also prepare and submit a TIP. The TIP will be developed in conjunction with member organizations, transit agencies and the WSDOT Regional Offices. The TIP is a six-year document which proposes regionally significant transportation projects and programs and transportation demand management measures be programmed for funding. The program is a priority list of projects derived from the Regional Transportation Plan.

*2008 - Improved training for the SCOG planner handling the RTIP and MTIP efforts resulted in lowered overall costs of putting the RTIP together. These savings are likely to carry forward into future years.*

***2009- Improved knowledge of the TIP program and training to jurisdictions in the use of the software have greatly enhanced the Skagit/Island RTIP.***

**VII. Special Transportation Studies:** These studies are not mandatory but are performed with the goal of identifying potential improvements to the transportation system in the SIRTPO area. For FY 2008 the following projects have been identified:

- *2008 - SR 5 (I-5) Comprehensive Corridor Needs Study: This effort will partner with WSDOT on an intersection-level analysis of I-5 from the Conway to north of Cook Road. This facility currently has a number of areas which are demanding attention, with issues including congestion, safety, security, maintenance and preservation, and infrastructure expansion among them. By undertaking a comprehensive analysis of these needs, we can choose an effective and logical prioritization process, ensuring the effective use of taxpayers' funding to address these needs in the appropriate sequence. In addition, information gleaned from this effort will help local jurisdictions make their own prudent decisions regarding allocation of scarce transportation resources.*
- *Non-motorized Transportation Data Development and Analysis, Workshops, Creation of a Bike/Ped Gap list for the WSDOT Bike/Ped update and Maps: This effort will continue work underway to assess the state of non-motorized facilities in the region, in conjunction with WSDOT and the federal Centers for Disease Control.*

*Special studies efforts in 2008 had a lower cost relative to motorized corridor studies as reflected in the lowered expenditures for the year. The I-5 Comprehensive Corridor Master Plan Study was funded primarily by a grant through WSDOT. A broader I-5 effort for local jurisdictions should be incorporated in 2009, with a corresponding increase in special studies outlays.*

***2009 – Update and printing of the Skagit Bike Map through the Active Community Taskforce (ACT) group, a technical advisory committee to the TAC and RTPO Policy Board.***

*A Trail Coalition group that is developing a regional trail list and map that will show gaps in connecting trail corridors and identify critical needs for safety improvements. Through the use of traffic calming practices and the use of smart technologies safer non-motorize regional mobility will be achieved.*

*Creation of a data base that incorporates data gathered from Trail counters deployed around trails in the Skagit County region. Jurisdictions have access to this information and have contributed in support of new trail counters.*

Exhibit A

SFY 2008/2009 UPWP revenues and expenditures for the Skagit MPO/sub-RTPO:

(S) Skagit (I) Island Long Range and RTPO breakdown listed for ease of understanding these grant funds expenditures.

Program	Revenues 2008/2009	Expenditures 2008	Expenditures 2009	% of Expenditures to Revenues
ACEs	\$3,350	\$3,350	0.00	100%
NSCCP (HPP) Farmhouse Gang	\$602,839	\$112,507	422,864	88.81%
FHWA	\$286,871	\$45,761	\$65,147	38.66%
FTA	\$57,778	\$25,444	\$20,828	80.08%
RTPO	Total \$233,593			
	(S) \$145,033	(S) \$60,098	(S) \$84,935	100%
	(I) \$88,560	(I) \$43,460	(I) \$45,100	100%
STP-R	\$440,000	\$78,911	\$95,032	39.53%
Total	\$1,624,431	\$369,531	\$733,906	67.93%

Please note that due to rounding errors, some columns may not add up to the totals