



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

GROWTH  
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The Skagit Council of Governments has lead regional planning efforts in Skagit County for over 50 years. Jurisdictions across Skagit County have a long history of working together to solve regional issues, and SCOG has assisted in many of those efforts.

SCOG is a voluntary organization of local governments and members that fosters cooperative efforts in resolving problems. SCOG focuses primarily on the two important areas that affect the membership of the organization and the citizens of Skagit County.

First, SCOG is focused on *Transportation*. SCOG prepares regional transportation plans consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans, manages federal grant funds to construct projects, and provides a forum for discussing and coordinating regional transportation issues.

Second, SCOG also focuses on *Growth Management*. SCOG convenes elected representatives from Skagit County, Anacortes, Burlington, Concrete, Hamilton, La Conner, Lyman, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley to monitor and discuss issues related to the region’s growing population.

In 2017, SCOG released the Baseline Growth Monitoring Report. The report uses the most current data to annually track population, employment, and housing trends for Skagit County.

Other notable works that SCOG completed in 2017 include the Cook Road Corridor Study and the Skagit County Housing Inventory and Transportation Analysis Report. Both reports are available on SCOG’s website.

Additionally, SCOG began transferring assets from its Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program. SCOG’s Board of Directors decided to discontinue the RLF Program in 2017 due to its under-utilization. Now, assets that funded the RLF Program are being transferred to new organizations that will continue serving the region.

Each year, SCOG’s success depends on the many talented and committed elected officials, staff, and Skagit County citizens that engaging in work at the regional level. There is a lot more in store for SCOG throughout the next 50 years, and SCOG looks forward to working together to create a more prosperous future for Skagit County.

# HISTORY

## INTRODUCTION

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The Skagit Council of Governments was first formed in 1967 through an agreement between Skagit County and the City of Anacortes. Formerly known as the Skagit Regional Planning Council, SCOG's membership included all the cities in the county by the end of the year. At the end of the 1970's, all of Skagit County's cities, towns, port authorities, and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community were a part of SCOG.

SCOG's initial planning efforts were focused on transportation, land-use, economic development, social services, solid waste, sewer and drainage, and others. Throughout the 1970's, SCOG worked on plans both regional and local in scope.

In 1985, SCOG's revolving loan program began after a widespread loss of manufacturing jobs in the county. Several loans were made directly to local companies to create or retain jobs.

With the passage of the Growth Management Act in 1990, regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) were created to ensure coordinated planning and cooperation among state and local jurisdictions. Skagit and Island counties formed an RTPO

shortly thereafter, encompassing both counties. The RTPO was dissolved in 2015 and Skagit County now has a single county RTPO.

The 2000 decennial Census identified, for the first time, an Urbanized Area in Skagit County with a population of 50,000 or more. With this designation, a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) was established in 2003. As a MPO, SCOG carries out regional transportation planning and programming in the Urbanized Area (which included Mount Vernon, Burlington, Sedro-Woolley, and some surrounding areas).

SCOG's focus on regional planning issues has remained strong for over 50 years. In the future, SCOG will continue to provide a forum for the regional issues facing all jurisdictions in Skagit County.





# MEMBER AGENCIES

## Cities

- City of Anacortes
- City of Burlington
- City of Mount Vernon
- City of Sedro-Woolley

## County

- Skagit County

## Ports

- Port of Anacortes
- Port of Skagit

## Special Districts

- Skagit PUD #1

## State Agency

- Washington State Department of Transportation

## Towns

- Town of Concrete
- Town of Hamilton
- Town of La Conner
- Town of Lyman

## Transit

- Skagit Transit

## Tribes

- Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
- Samish Indian Nation



# REVOLVING LOAN FUND

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The RLF Program was originally funded between 1985 and 2000 in response to the loss of over 1,500 jobs in the early 1980's. The total amount of funding received for the RLF Program between 1985 and 2000 is over \$1.6 million dollars and the total value of RLF loans made from 1985 to 2016 is approximately \$6.5 million dollars. The estimated number of jobs saved or created as a result of RLF loans is 1,837.

The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program was discontinued during 2017. The RLF Program has been under-utilized since 2010 with only 2 loans made between 2010 and 2016. Both of the loans made during this time were repaid in full.

The Board of Directors contracted the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County (EDASC) to provide marketing and outreach services for

the RLF Program in 2016, which generated no new loan inquiries. Staff also participated in Access to Capital Workshops and met with local bankers and Chambers of Commerce with negligible results. SCOG's Board of Directors determined the RLF Program was no longer a viable economic development tool and decided to terminate the program. The assets remaining in the Economic Development Administration funded RLF were transferred to the National Development Council (NDC), an SBA preferred lender. NDC is a national economic development organization which is now able to expand its service area to include Skagit County.

The assets in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that funded the RLF Program will be transferred to Skagit County upon approval of a Program Income Reuse Plan.

# TRANSPORTATION

## 2017 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF SCOG

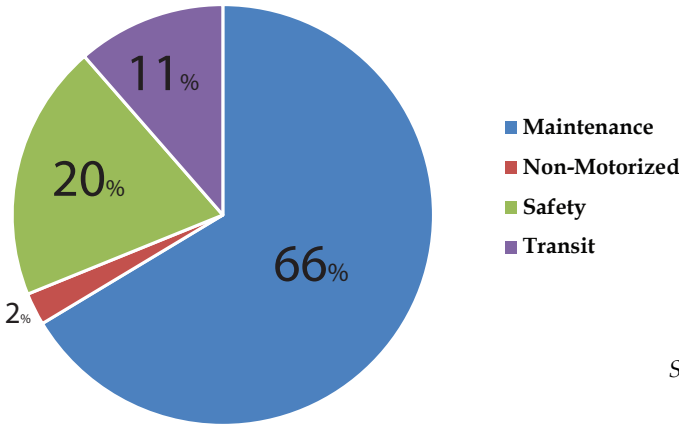
Completed Cook Road Corridor Study  
Updated Demographic Profile for Skagit County

Transportation planning is a primary regional function of the Skagit Council of Governments. Through its metropolitan planning organization responsibilities, SCOG conducts a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive multimodal transportation planning process.

The process is ongoing. Every year, SCOG updates its work program, which lists all the transportation-related activities being conducted by the organization, to implement the regional transportation planning process.

## 2017 Federal Fund Obligations by Project Type

Total: \$15,864,208



Source: SCOG

# TRANSPORTATION INDICATORS

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**\$2,305,519** Funds for Regional  
Projects Obligated in 2017

**\$15,864,208** Federal Obligations for  
Transportation Projects in 2017

**\$591,916** Grant Funding Returned  
to State/Feds in 2017

**3** Regionally Funded Projects  
Completed

Mount Vernon's Hoag Road Sidewalk and Bike Lane  
Skagit Transit's Skagit Station Improvements  
Skagit Transit's Flex Bus Stop Seating/Bike Shelter

**-24.2%** Skagit Transit Ridership  
Decrease 2016 to 2017 - WSDOT 2016 Summary of  
Public Transportation & Skagit Transit

## THE MEANING OF OBLIGATION

"Obligation" refers to funding being designated for a project. It does not mean that funds have been spent, only that they have been set aside for future spending.



**4** Projects Obligated Regional  
Funds in 2017

Burlington:

George Hopper Interchange Improvements,  
Phase 1 Right of Way Purchase

Concrete:

Main Street, Phase 3  
Main Street, Phase 4

Mount Vernon:

College Way SR 538 @ I-5

# TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

SCOG maintains the transportation plan for the region. The current regional transportation plan, *Skagit 2040*, coordinates transportation planning across all of the jurisdictions in Skagit County and meets the transportation plan requirements in federal and state laws. *Skagit 2040* was developed through a variety of stakeholder groups, technical advisory committees, member organizations and public participation.

To implement *Skagit 2040*, SCOG maintains a regional transportation improvement program (RTIP). The RTIP reflects the investment priorities found in *Skagit 2040*, and all projects listed in the RTIP must be consistent with that plan.

Funds from the federal government, state government, and other sources are used by local agencies to undertake transportation projects around Skagit County. The transportation planning process starts with a long-range vision, which leads to the programming and construction of transportation projects.

In 2016, SCOG led a process to prioritize human services transportation projects in Skagit

County, which culminated in the adoption of a prioritized list of projects. The list of projects is then considered for funding through a state-wide grant program that utilizes both funds from the state and Federal Transit Administration.

In addition to developing transportation plans and project lists, SCOG conducts traffic counts on a regular basis for jurisdictions across Skagit County and SCOG's partners in transportation studies. Completed in 2017, the Cook Road Corridor Study focused on examining the corridor's road-rail conflict and identifying potential solutions for the interchange's congestion.



Cook Road Corridor Study Open House



# TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

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SCOG does not construct any transportation projects. Instead, SCOG leads the process for determining funding decisions at a regional level. The following are the regionally funded projects completed in 2017 by members of SCOG.

## **Mount Vernon** *(photo of project on cover)* *Hoag Road Sidewalk and Bike Lanes*

Mount Vernon's project widened the roadway, installed storm drainage, constructed sidewalk, added a bike lane, and relocated utilities along the south side of Hoag Road near Urban Avenue. The project added safe facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists and improved existing infrastructure.

### **FUNDING PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING**

In the past few years, a greater share of regional funds for transportation has gone to preliminary engineering for projects. A relatively minor amount of funding is available through regional processes. Many jurisdictions pursue regional funding to pay for a project's preliminary engineering, then complete the project later through sources with greater funding. Kick-starting a project using regional funds often allows jurisdictions to leverage funds from other sources to successfully complete projects.



## **Skagit Transit**

### *Skagit Station Improvements*

Regional grant funding paid for approximately 25% of the many improvements made to Skagit Station in 2017. The upgrades included: a wiring upgrade, conference room technology upgrades, installing a new public announcing system, new LED lighting, and security camera upgrades.

### *Flex Bus Stop Seating / Bike Shelter*

Twelve new bus stop seats and one bike shelter were purchased and installed along Skagit Station's routes. The new bus stop seats and shelters benefit transit riders around the region.

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Under the Washington state Growth Management Act (GMA), Skagit County as well as all of its cities and towns are required to plan for expected population growth. Skagit County and its jurisdictions have established collaborative processes for: adopting countywide planning policies, modifying urban growth areas, and allocating population and employment growth across the county.

The 2002 Framework Agreement was executed by Skagit County, the Town of La Conner, and the cities of Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley. The Town of Hamilton signed onto the agreement in 2014, and the Town of Concrete signed on in 2017. The Town of Lyman was the last to execute the agreement, signing on in 2018. The Framework Agreement includes provisions and procedures to address the collaborative requirement for planning at the regional level through GMA.

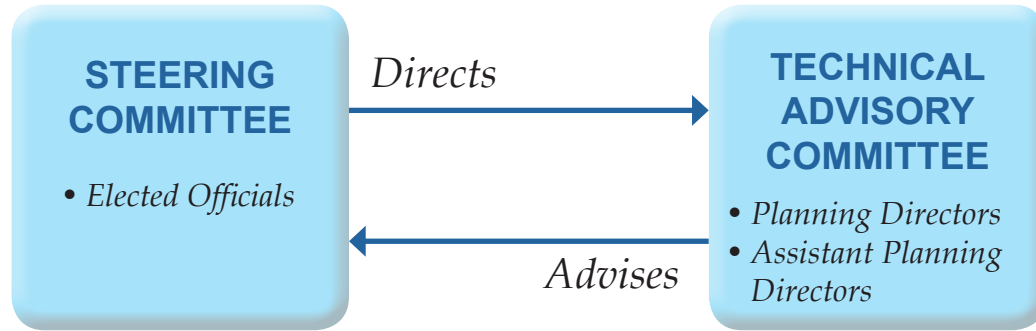
The Framework Agreement replaced an earlier agreement, from 1992, that established countywide

planning policies in Skagit County after GMA was signed into law. The 1992 agreement was subsequently amended in 1996. The current 2002 Framework Agreement includes the most recent set of countywide planning policies or CPPs. The adopted set of CPPs provide a countywide framework by which county, city, and town comprehensive plans are developed and adopted.

SCOG is not a party to the Framework Agreement; however, SCOG provides administrative support to the planning organization identified in the Framework Agreement. That organization, the Growth Management Act Steering Committee, is composed of elected officials from each jurisdiction that signed onto the 2002 Framework Agreement.

The Steering Committee is supported by a Technical Advisory Committee, which is staffed by planning directors and assistant planning directors. Altogether, the Steering Committee develops recommendations for CPPs, urban growth areas, and allocations of population and employment for use in local comprehensive planning.

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT



## Responsibilities over:

1. Countywide Planning Policies;
2. Urban Growth Areas; and
3. Population and Employment Allocations.

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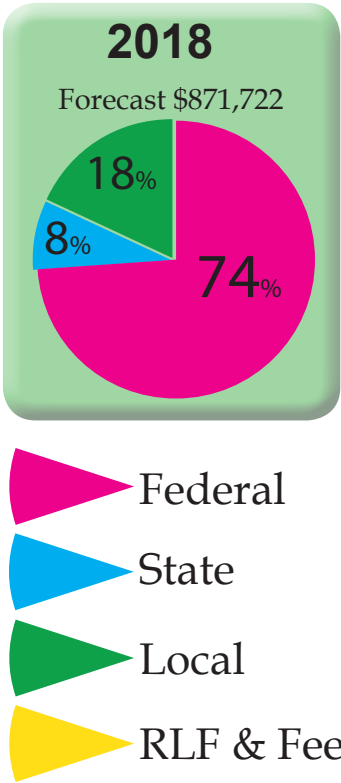
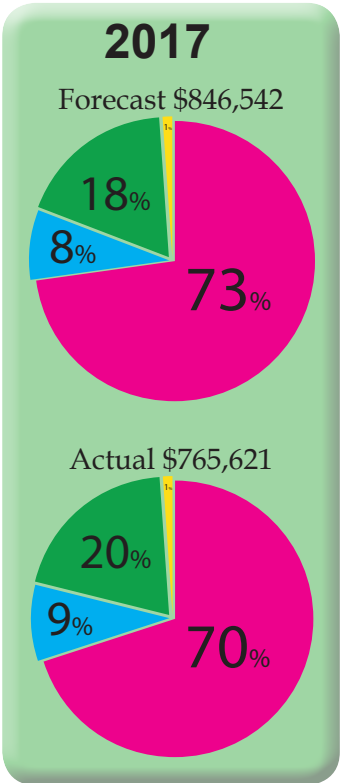
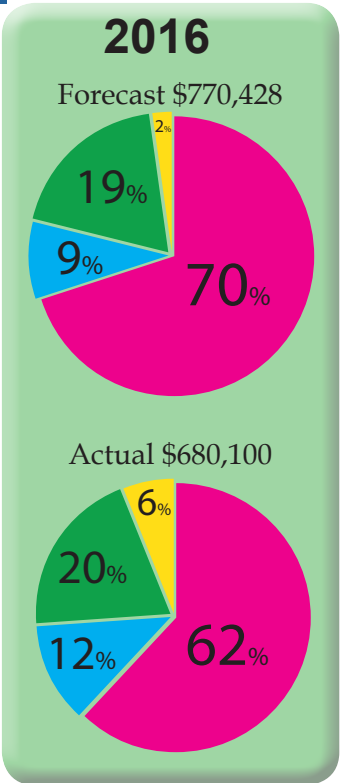
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# REVENUES



Notes: 2016 ending net cash and investments were \$231,689; "Local" revenues include contributions, donations, investment interest and misc. revenues; and percentages are rounded and therefore may not equal 100% when combined.

# EXPENSES

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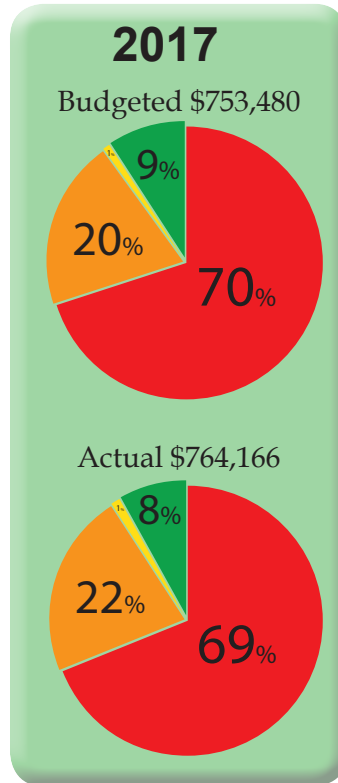
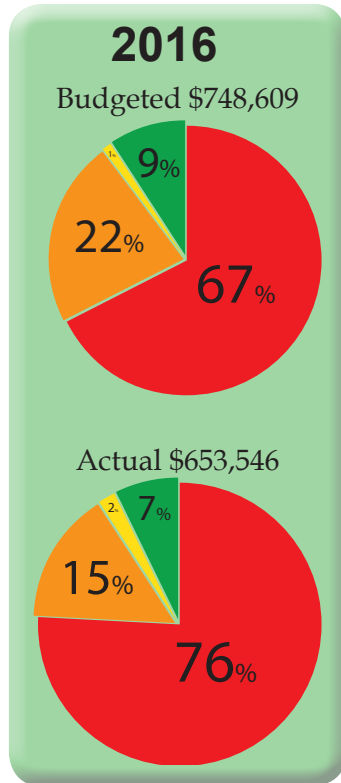
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Notes: 2016 ending net cash and investments were \$231,689; "Other" expenses include supplies, printing, insurance, training, software, rent and misc. expenses; and percentages are rounded and therefore may not equal 100% when combined.



# WHAT'S COMING IN 2018?

## TRANSPORTATION

### Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

SCOG will update the CPT-HSTP in partnership with Skagit Transit, non-profit special needs transportation providers, tribes, and other stakeholders. The updated plan will be released by December 2018.

### Environmental Justice Assessment of 2019-2024 RTIP

SCOG will review planning, programming, and project selections to ensure SCOG decisions do not have a disproportionate adverse impact on protected populations.

### Household Travel Survey

The household travel survey will study regional travel behavior and public sentiment for transportation investments. The project will inform the update to the regional travel demand model.

### Regional Performance Targets

In cooperation with Skagit Transit and WSDOT, SCOG will develop regional performance targets for the transportation network.

### Regional Transportation Plan Update

SCOG will begin scoping needs and timelines related to the next update of the regional transportation plan in 2021.

### Skagit County Bike Map

SCOG's Non-Motorized Advisory Committee will develop and publish an updated Skagit County Bike Map by the end of the 2018 summer biking season.

### Traffic Counts

SCOG' will continue to coordinate traffic counts for member jurisdictions, and participate in WSDOT's annual bicycle and pedestrian documentation project..

# WHAT'S COMING IN 2018?

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

### Framework Agreement Workshop

SCOG staff will meet with Growth Management Act Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee members to discuss the Framework Agreement and countywide planning policies.

### Growth Monitoring

SCOG will update the 2017 Baseline Growth Monitoring Report with the most recent data to monitor population and employment trends.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### RLF Transition

The transfer of the Community Development Block Grant funded RLF assets is expected to be completed in 2018.



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# SCOG

**Skagit Council of Governments**

## CONTACTS

**Kevin Murphy**  
*Executive Director*  
(360) 416-7871  
kevinm@scog.net

**Pam Carlson**  
*Finance Manager*  
(360) 416-7875  
pamc@scog.net

**Mark Hamilton**  
*Senior Transportation Planner*  
(360) 416-7876  
markh@scog.net

**Rose Howe**  
*Assistant Planner*  
(360) 416-6678  
roseh@scog.net

**Address:**  
315 South Third Street  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

**Website:**  
[www.scog.net](http://www.scog.net)

