



**U.S. REPRESENTATIVE**  
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**WASHINGTON'S 2<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT**

**Keeping Our Economy Moving:  
Northwest Washington's  
Transportation Needs**

**July 2015**

## Introduction

Washingtonians are uniquely reliant on all forms of transportation infrastructure for our economic well-being. We use rail to move our goods to our ports, we take ferries to commute across the Puget Sound, and we use bike lanes and sidewalks to get to school. We rely on runways to connect with international business partners, and we take transit to get to work. We use county-owned roads in Skagit County to move tulips around the globe, and we rely on I-5 for commerce, work, school and more. We depend on this infrastructure to live our daily lives.

Nearly one-quarter of jobs are in manufacturing in Snohomish County, which includes 64,000 jobs, more than 750 companies and \$5.5 billion in wages, according to Economic Alliance Snohomish County (EASC).<sup>1</sup> These manufacturing jobs depend on a strong transportation system—people need to get to work, and products need to get to market.

In Washington state, transportation means jobs. Investments in infrastructure create immediate jobs in the construction sector and support long-term job growth in manufacturing, agriculture, and trade-related sectors. These investments can also help support our environment, reducing emissions by decreasing congestion.

Washington state cannot have a big league economy with little league infrastructure. The U.S. is failing to make the needed investments. Congress has passed 12 short-term reauthorizations of highway spending over the last decade, and the lack of a long-term vision hurts job growth and economic competitiveness. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), nearly one-third of America's roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and one in four bridges require significant repair or cannot handle today's traffic. [ASCE's overall assessment of our nation's infrastructure rated America at a D+.](#)<sup>2</sup>

**On July 31, the authorization for spending out of the federal Highway Trust Fund will expire.** The fund is the primary source of federal funding for roads, bridges, highways and transit. For Washington state's economy to continue to succeed, Congress must stop its pattern of delays and pass a robust transportation authorization with long-term funding.

**As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I want a long-term bill.** Earlier this year I helped introduce the [GROW AMERICA Act](#), a six-year, \$478 billion surface transportation bill that the Obama administration backs. Without a long-term transportation bill that provides predictable investments for our nation's roads, bridges, highways, and transit systems, we are slamming the brakes on the economy and jobs.

This report provides examples of where we stand on transportation issues, and where I believe we have opportunities to improve our infrastructure investments and grow our economy. While the report is not exhaustive of the transportation projects in Northwest Washington, it provides a look at some of our successes and greatest needs.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.economicalliancesc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2015\\_EASC\\_Transpo\\_Priorities.pdf](https://www.economicalliancesc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2015_EASC_Transpo_Priorities.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/a/%20-%20p/grade-sheet/gpa>

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# 1) Infrastructure and International Competition

Other countries make the infrastructure investments they need. The U.S. was ranked 6th worldwide in infrastructure quality as recently as 2008. But we now rank 16th in the quality of our infrastructure, behind Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, and Japan, according to the World Economic Forum.<sup>3</sup> According to McKinsey and Company, China spent 8.5% of its GDP on infrastructure between 1992 and 2011, while the United States spent 2.6% of GDP on infrastructure. China has now surpassed the United States as the world's largest investor in infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

Washington competes in the international marketplace more than nearly any other state. In Washington state, about 40 percent of all jobs are tied to trade in some way, and the pay for these jobs is nearly 20 percent higher than the average annual wage.<sup>5,6</sup> Our state exported more than \$90 billion in goods and services in 2014, making us the largest exporting state per capita in the country.<sup>7</sup> These trade-related jobs depend on robust infrastructure. If you are a dairy farmer in Whatcom County, you compete with dairy farmers in New Zealand, India and Brazil. Traffic, slow ports and congested rail mean that the cost of getting U.S. products to market quickly goes up. Other countries are making investments in their infrastructure that allow them to better compete with our goods.

During my trips to China as the co-chair of the U.S.-China Working Group and to Panama to examine the improvements to the Panama Canal, I have seen firsthand the investment that other nations are making in their infrastructure. China's economic planning agency in May 2015 released a list of more than 1,000 projects requiring more than \$300 billion in new investment it intends to build. This infrastructure development plan includes \$8 billion for a single subway project. The Washington Post called the plan a "New Deal" for China.<sup>8</sup>

As a long-time China observer, I assess that the Chinese government will not fall short on its infrastructure investments as we have in the United States. China is making and will continue to make the sustained, long-term investments in infrastructure that the U.S. is failing to make in our own roads, bridges, highways and transit systems. Transportation investment will improve China's ability to compete against the U.S. in the world economy.

The expansion of the Panama Canal is another example of international investment impacting the Northwest. The ability for Panamax ships to travel to the East Coast, Europe and Africa without stopping at West Coast ports will continue to put pressure on the Port of Seattle, Port of Tacoma and Port of Everett. By investing in these ports, we can better compete not only with East Coast ports, but ports globally. We exist in a world economy – increasing interdependence will require better infrastructure for us to keep up.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2014-2015/rankings/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/winning\\_in\\_emerging\\_markets/chinese\\_infrastructure\\_the\\_big\\_picture](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/winning_in_emerging_markets/chinese_infrastructure_the_big_picture)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.seattletradealliance.com/discover/publications/intlcompstrat/compat.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/cea\\_trade\\_report\\_final\\_non-embargoed\\_v2.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/cea_trade_report_final_non-embargoed_v2.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/state/data/wa.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/innovations/wp/2015/05/28/chinas-big-bet-on-infrastructure-shows-a-commitment-to-innovation/>

## 2) Transportation in Washington State

Washington state's diverse transportation network helps residents get to and from work, school, health appointments and recreation. Our roads, bridges and highways also get goods to market. To maintain our high quality of life and keep our economy strong, our transportation infrastructure must keep up. The following sections address projects that are working and projects we need now when it comes to our roads, bridges, transit, ferries, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

### Roads

Roads are an easy part of our lives to ignore—if they are pothole-free and not jammed with traffic. Only about a quarter of our state's roads in urban areas are in good condition.<sup>9</sup> That means people are paying more to maintain their vehicles because of rough roads. Delays caused by congestion on our state's highways cost an average of \$125 per state resident in 2013.<sup>10</sup> While there are some strong examples of road improvement projects that are working, like Cattle Point Road in San Juan County, we have a lot of room for improvement.

### **Roads: Projects That Are Working**

#### Cattle Point Road – San Juan County

Cattle Point Road passes through the San Juan Island National Historical Park and serves the neighboring communities of Cattle Point and Cape San Juan, home to approximately 270 residents. The road provides sole access to lands of the Department of Natural Resources and Bureau of Land Management within the national park as well as to the public and private properties within the communities. Visitors and tourists also frequently use Cattle Point Road to enjoy the scenic viewpoints that look out onto the Cascade and Olympic ranges, or to access the nearby trail network for walking or cycling.



**Rep. Larsen at Cattle Point Park.**

<sup>9</sup> [http://tripnet.org/docs/WA\\_Transportation\\_Challenges\\_TRIP\\_Report\\_April\\_2015.pdf](http://tripnet.org/docs/WA_Transportation_Challenges_TRIP_Report_April_2015.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



Ongoing construction at Cattle Point Road. (Courtesy FHWA)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is working with the San Juan Island National Historical Park, Washington State Department of Natural Resources and San Juan County to realign about a mile of the road to protect against erosion that is threatening its continued existence. [I have worked on this project for more than a decade, helping secure federal funds](#) so the families in the area can continue to travel safely to and from their homes. The new road is projected to last for 100 years and will be complete in October 2015. Eighty percent of the funding for the project came from FHWA’s Federal Lands Access Program, which provided \$5.5 million.

Guide Meridian Road in Bellingham – Whatcom County

Guide Meridian Road (also known as State Route 539) is one of the busiest roads in Bellingham. In 2013, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) used \$3 million in federal funding to make improvements to reduce traffic accidents and improve mobility on Guide Meridian. In the five years before the project, congestion led to nearly 700 collisions in the corridor. This project was funded through the federal Coordinated Border Infrastructure program that was included in a previous surface transportation bill. Pedestrians are now safer, and traffic is moving better so people can get where they are going in a timely way.



Map of Guide Meridian Road. (Courtesy WSDOT)

## Burlington Boulevard – Skagit County

In the past, Burlington Boulevard ranked near the top of dangerous transportation corridors within Washington state. The federal Highway Safety Improvement Program provided \$1.9 million to add safety and mobility features to the boulevard. These improvements upgraded 11 intersections, incorporated improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and created a traffic management system allowing Burlington to actively manage its traffic signals. Traffic congestion will decrease, and Burlington residents can now more safely get to work and school on a major thoroughfare.

## Tribal Programs

Under the Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) program at the Bureau of the Interior and the Tribal Transportation Program, tribes in Northwest Washington receive funding to improve roads in their jurisdictions and provide transit services. The previous surface transportation bill authorized \$450 million for these programs annually. Tribes are putting these dollars to good use in Washington state. For example, the Tulalip Tribes receive approximately \$1.6 million annually to run a transit service and improve roads around the Tulalip Reservation.

## **Roads: Projects We Need Now**

### EASC 2015 Snohomish County Regional Transportation Priorities

[EASC has identified 23 needed improvements](#) among all modes of transportation in the region that require over \$1 billion to complete. These include improvements to enhance the aerospace sector, improve freight mobility, and connect people to job centers. A long-term federal transportation bill would provide certainty that these projects have support from the federal government to go forward. Two projects the EASC includes in its report are:

#### Arlington: SR 531/43rd Ave. NE to 67th Ave. NE

Arlington is a key part of the Puget Sound's aerospace economy as an important general aviation airport and emergency services location. State Route 531 is a critical link between I-5 and State Route 9, but congestion is increasing commute times and delaying manufacturers' ability to get their products to market. The City of Arlington is working to recruit aerospace and manufacturing businesses, and better traffic flow would improve the city's economic development proposals. One of EASC's proposals is to widen SR 531 to allow for better and safer traffic flow, while increasing the area's attractiveness to businesses.

#### Marysville: State Route 529 and I-5 interchange

Marysville is located along both I-5 and the BNSF rail line, creating conflicts between rail and road traffic. The off-ramp for I-5 at State Route 529 is just in front of the BNSF's rail tracks. When I visited Marysville in October 2014, Mayor Jon Nehring indicated that traffic backs up onto I-5 during rush hour, creating a critical safety issue. The city is proposing to create a new southbound on-ramp for I-5 and a new northbound off-ramp. Both of these would avoid the rail line, which currently intersects with the on- and off-ramps.

[I introduced legislation to provide \\$300 million per year](#) for projects around the country near at-grade crossings like those in Marysville.<sup>11</sup> The city estimates this project will cost a total of \$47.5 million. The city has received \$5 million for this project from the state Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board, and I have supported Marysville's efforts for a TIGER grant to meet the additional need.

### Helping Small- and Mid-Sized Cities Compete for Federal Transportation Dollars

I introduced a bill to allocate job-creating transportation dollars more fairly to small- and medium-sized cities. [My Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery for Cities Underfunded Because of Size \(TIGER CUBS\) Act of 2015](#) would set aside 20 percent of special transportation infrastructure funding specifically for smaller cities.<sup>12</sup>

Federal TIGER grants have proven a successful way to get job-creating transportation dollars out to cities with ready projects. But smaller cities often lose out on this opportunity because they do not have the same resources to compete with big cities for these grants. TIGER CUBS is designed to help medium-sized cities land the big-time funds they need to repair and build up their roads. I am working to include TIGER CUBS in the transportation bill.

## **Bridges**

Washington state's unique geography means we rely on hundreds of bridges to help us get where we are going. Our state has experienced firsthand the economic damage and potential tragedy of a bridge collapse. Keeping our bridges safe and traffic flowing requires more investment that we are making today.

## **Bridges: Projects That Are Working**

### I-5 improvements

I-5 is the economic backbone of the Northwest economy. As the country's major north-south transportation artery, it is critical for moving freight and people. Without I-5, our state's commerce would come to a screeching halt.

The May 2013 I-5 bridge collapse over the Skagit River highlighted how critical our regional and national infrastructure deficits are. But there are lessons from how quickly and efficiently the bridge replacement worked that can be applied to future construction projects. [Using emergency authorities, WSDOT installed two temporary spans on I-5](#), which allowed the bridge to reopen to traffic only one month later. I asked Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx to look into how those emergency authorities could be used in other transportation projects, and the GROW AMERICA Act includes new authorities to expedite projects, including concurrent permit reviews among federal agencies.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://larsen.house.gov/sites/larsen.house.gov/files/documents/ACE%20Act%20fact%20sheet%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://larsen.house.gov/press-release/larsen%E2%80%99s-tiger-cubs-bill-help-small-and-mid-sized-cities-land-job-creating>



## Stillaguamish River Bridge

In 2014, WSDOT rehabilitated the deck of the I-5 bridge over the Stillaguamish River near Stanwood after 81 years in service. The original deck had numerous potholes and cracks that were beyond repair. Cooperating with the City of Arlington and the Stillaguamish Tribe, WSDOT spent \$8 million in federal funding to rehab the bridge, giving it another 50 years of safe operation. \$7 million for the project came from the National Highway Performance Program, and an additional \$1 million came from FHWA's Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program. These are formula funds that distribute federal money through state DOTs.

## **Bridges: Projects We Need Now**

### I-5 Improvements at Risk

There are bridge projects on I-5 this summer that are in danger of losing funding if Congress does not act by July 31. The Union, Steamboat, and Ebey's Slough bridges all need repair today – and without a long-term transportation bill, they may not receive those repairs this summer.<sup>13</sup>

### Skagit County Bridges

According to the Skagit County Public Works Department, Skagit County has 36 bridges older than 50 years. It also has 8 bridges over 70 years old, some dating back to the 1930s. The county's funding need to replace bridges that older than 50 years is \$170 million.

When the Skagit River Bridge collapsed, some traffic was diverted to the North Fork Bridge at Best Road in Skagit County. Ironically, the North Folk Bridge is rated structurally deficient and functionally obsolete – meaning traffic was diverted from one deteriorating bridge to another. The bridge cannot handle the regular heavy truck traffic that much of Skagit County's agricultural producers need. According to the county, it will cost \$25 million to replace the bridge.

The Old Highway 99 bridge over the BNSF rail tracks Skagit County is in even worse shape. Built in 1936, the bridge rates a 3 out of 100 on the FHWA bridge inspection rating system. Its sub-structure is built mostly of wood, which is susceptible to rotting and has required many repairs in the last 80 years. The bridge has already received a federal grant for \$10 million for replacement of the bridge, but requires another \$6 million for complete replacement.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://larsen.house.gov/sites/larsen.house.gov/files/documents/2015-06-01%20WSDOT%20Federal%20Funding%20Crisis%20Background%20Paper.pdf>

## **Transit**

Transit options are a critical piece of solving our region's congestion issues. Public transportation also cuts down on emissions, a benefit to our air quality. The Puget Sound region has several transit projects under way that will give people more ways to travel safely and efficiently. We also have many opportunities to fill in gaps in our transit system that will improve traffic flow, connect people to school and jobs, and help strengthen our economic future.

### **Transit: Projects That Are Working**

#### **Community Transit Swift Line – Snohomish County**

Community Transit in Snohomish County created the state's first Bus Rapid Transit line in 2009. It has been a huge success. Swift carries about 5,700 riders every weekday, 125,000 riders a month, and about 1.5 million riders a year. Buses on the Swift line arrive every 12 minutes during heavy use hours, and every 20 minutes at night and on Saturdays.

The Swift line was funded with federal assistance, including: \$1.5 million from FHWA's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program; \$11.3 million in capital to purchase 15 Swift buses from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) bus and bus facilities accounts; and \$480,000 to operate Swift for late night/weekend service, through FTA's Job Access and Reverse Commute program. Without this more than \$13 million in support, the Swift line could not have been the success it has been. All of those funding accounts are in jeopardy if Congress does not pass a long-term surface transportation bill.

#### **Everett Station – Snohomish County**

Everett Station opened in 2002 and has been a key piece of the region's multimodal transportation ever since. It provides access to Amtrak, Sound Transit, Community Transit, Skagit Transit, Everett Transit, Greyhound and other bus service. The station was built with a combination of federal, state and local contributions.

### **Transit: Projects We Need Now**

#### **Swift II – Snohomish County**

Because of the success of the Swift line, Community Transit plans to expand it to better serve employment centers in Snohomish County. Swift II would extend the line from a new transit center in Everett to the existing Canyon Park park-and-ride lot. The line would include 18 new stations. Through the Federal Transit Administration's Small Starts program, Community Transit anticipates applying for \$38 million; but without Congressional action to shore up the funding for this program, new Swift service cannot go forward.

## Sound Transit Extension – Snohomish County

The Sound Transit 2 plan to extend light rail service to Lynnwood continues to move forward, with service targeted to begin in 2023. Sound Transit and the Federal Transit Administration issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement for the extension in April, and the Sound Transit Board of Directors unanimously approved the route to bring the line to Snohomish County. To construct this extension, FTA funding will be critical. That funding comes from the federal Highway Trust Fund, which expires July 31.

## **Ferries**

In Washington state, ferryboats are a necessity, not a luxury. For the 58,000 people on Whidbey Island, the 6,800 people in the San Juan Islands, and for many other communities in the Puget Sound, ferryboats are a lifeline to work, school and medical care. Washington’s ferries are an extension of the highway system and receive federal funding through the Highway Trust Fund. Washington State Ferries is the country’s largest ferry system, with over 23 million riders in 2014. In the last surface transportation bill, I worked with Congressman Don Young of Alaska and Senators Murray and Cantwell to increase guaranteed funding for the ferryboat program for Washington.

## **Ferries: Projects That Are Working**

### Mukilteo Ferry Terminal – Snohomish and Island Counties

The Mukilteo to Clinton ferry route serves nearly 4 million people every year. It is the system’s second busiest route. For South Whidbey Island residents, the ferry is the key link to the rest of the region. Replacing the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal is part of a large multimodal redevelopment at the Mukilteo waterfront that will improve traffic, provide easy rail access to Seattle via Sounder commuter rail, and increase recreation and tourism options along the waterfront. In 2014, FTA’s Ferryboat Discretionary Program granted \$4.7 million to the Mukilteo project. [I worked for many years to transfer the property for the terminal to the Port of Everett.](#) Construction began in spring 2015 and continues through this summer.



**Congestion at the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal. (Courtesy WSDOT)<sup>14</sup>**

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wsdot/5961327819/in/album-72157627124939979/>

## **Ferries: Projects We Need Now**

### Ferryboat and Ferry Terminal Improvements

Because of the aging fleet of ferryboats and aging ferry terminals, delays and canceled trips on the ferry system are a real problem. WSDOT's 2009 long-term plan called for \$3.3 billion in new ferryboat capital investment, and \$125 million for terminal improvements. WSDOT estimates that state revenues will not be enough to meet the need in the ferry system, and that the "difference will likely need to be made up through higher federal funding commitments for several key projects."<sup>15</sup>

Federal formula funding totaled more than \$14 million for Washington ferry improvements in 2014. An expiration of the Highway Trust Fund would prevent 2015 funding from going forward, leading to lower investment in the system and more delays for ferry passengers.

### Rail Congestion

Increased shipments of crude oil by rail have created new traffic and safety concerns throughout Northwest Washington and the country. The [U.S. Department of Transportation recently announced stronger standards for tank cars and rail inspections](#), an important milestone to hold shippers and railroads accountable and ensure the highest level of safety for our communities. But the growth in crude oil shipped by rail is creating safety impacts and traffic backups near at-grade crossings, where rail incidents are mostly likely to occur and where rail lines have the highest impact on car traffic. A 2014 report by the Puget Sound Regional Council indicated that rail crossing improvements will be critical to lessen congestion and safety impacts of increasing rail traffic.<sup>16</sup>

### At-Grade Crossing Enhancement (ACE) Act

At-grade crossings are conflict zones for safety, efficiency and mobility in Washington state. According to the Association of Washington Cities, increased rail traffic is "delaying public safety vehicles, increasing commute times, and hindering development of certain parts of cities."

Local officials have told me that improving at-grade crossings is critical for safety and traffic flow. Rail incidents are mostly likely to happen at these crossings, and they can lead to traffic congestion that delays people on their way to work, goods on their way to market, and public safety vehicles on their way to save lives. In 2014, the number of people who died as a result of accidents between cars and trains increased.

As our rail lines carry more goods, including crude oil, I am working to improve community safety. That is why I introduced the ACE Act to create real solutions to the impacts of rail traffic increases.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/41834A0B-DABC-48FA-9700-DF0298AA65B4/58554/FinalLRPCompleteDocument1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.psrc.org/transportation/gateway-pacific-terminal-economic-study>

<sup>17</sup> <http://larsen.house.gov/sites/larsen.house.gov/files/documents/ACE%20Act%20fact%20sheet%20FINAL.pdf>

The bill creates \$300 million in annual grants to upgrade at-grade crossing, improve safety, spark freight mobility, and provide training and technical assistance. The program will be administered by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), which has experience in freight mobility projects and rail safety needs. State, local and tribal governments, along with Metropolitan Planning Organizations, will be eligible to apply for grants to improve rail crossings, relocate rail lines, and provide training and technical assistance for future improvements.

#### Other Federal Efforts: FRA Partnership with Google

The ACE Act complements action the FRA announced on June 30 to use Google Maps to provide better information to drivers about rail crossings. The partnership will incorporate FRA data about at-grade crossing locations nationwide into Google Maps, as well as providing drivers using Google navigation with alerts when they near crossings.

At-grade crossing accidents are on the rise, and better safety information and improved infrastructure can help save lives.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure**

Washington state was recently named the most bicycle friendly state by the League of American Bicyclists for the eighth year in a row.<sup>18</sup> Our state is a leader in recognizing the value of bikes and legs as transportation options. I think we can do more to protecting our most vulnerable road users and to further encourage biking and walking as mainstream ways to get from point A to B, especially when the trip is short.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure: Projects That Are Working**

### Bellingham Pedestrian Improvements – Whatcom County

Bellingham is in the midst of a long-term plan to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities and is using federal funds to do so. For example, the FHWA Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is providing \$1.4 million to improve the Alabama Street Corridor with new crosswalk protections, turn lane improvements, bike lane construction, and transit improvements. According to the City of Bellingham, the area “sees more vehicle collisions than any other city-owned road in Bellingham... From 2006 to 2011, there were more than 262 vehicle collisions, 93 of which resulted in injury. In 2012 and 2013, there were another 52 total vehicle collisions while proposed safety measures were being analyzed, 18 of which involved injuries.”<sup>19</sup> Construction on the project began in May 2015, and federal HSIP funds are covering nearly half of the project’s cost.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://bikeleague.org/content/bicycle-friendly-state-ranking-released>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.cob.org/features/2015-05-19-alabama-street.aspx>

Bellingham is also taking the lead in protecting kids on their way to school through the federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. In April 2013, the city used SRTS funding to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Northwest Avenue and McLeod Road, one-third of a mile away from Shuksan Middle School.

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure: Projects We Need Now**

### Guemes Channel Trail Completion – Skagit County

The Guemes Channel Trail, when completed, will connect downtown Anacortes, the Tommy Thompson Trail, and the Anacortes ferry terminal. This will be a key link for growing the tourism economy in Anacortes, allowing safe outdoor recreation for kids and families, and allowing ferry commuters a new, safe way to get to Anacortes and the San Juan Islands.

While Washington state has stepped up with \$700,000 in funding for the trail, the federal government has not been as helpful. A new federal transportation bill will be an opportunity to provide new funding for the trail through the Transportation Alternatives program. [My TIGER CUBS legislation](#) also would create a pot of funding for medium-sized cities and communities like Anacortes to access funding through the competitive TIGER grant program for projects like the Guemes Channel Trail.



**Rep. Larsen at the Guemes Trail.**

### **3) Looking Forward**

People in the Pacific Northwest rely on many forms of transportation in their daily lives—car, ferry, bike, plane and their feet. Funding for all of these modes of transit is a strong example of partnerships between local, state and federal governments. But the federal government has got to do its part. Without Congressional action, bridges on I-5 will not be upgraded, our ferry system will continue to have delays, and transit projects like Swift II will hit insurmountable roadblocks. A degraded transportation system will hurt both our local economy and our ability to compete globally.

Congress must act quickly to pass a long-term transportation bill that provides funding for the infrastructure that safely carries people to work, kids to school and goods to market. The U.S. is falling behind, and the longer Congress waits the more expensive infrastructure repairs and upgrades will be. Now is the time to work together on a transportation bill that keeps our economy moving today and in the future.