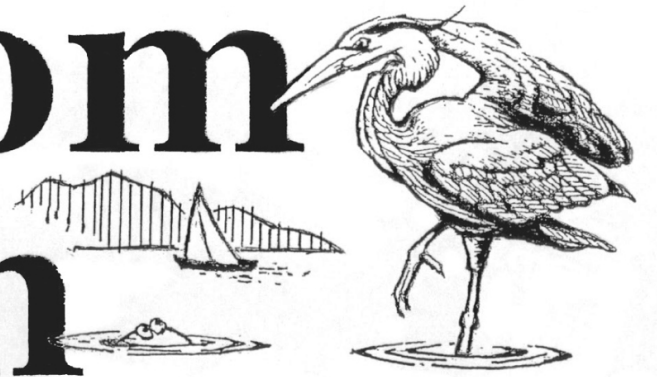


# Whatcom Watch



a community forum on government, environmental issues and media • www.whatcomwatch.org

Volume 35, Number 4/5

In print since 1992

April/May 2026

## Whatcom Transportation Authority's Unfair Fare Hikes Time for Reform?

by Preston L. Schiller

On December 4, 2025, the Whatcom Transportation Authority's (WTA) Board of Directors held an open house for public comment about its proposed steep fare hikes. Over 225 citizens attended, the vast majority of whom were Western Washington University (WWU) students, with several advocates for senior and disabilities groups also in attendance. Such a high attendance, especially at 8 a.m., is highly unusual, possibly unique.

Yet the WTA board still limited the hearing to only one hour rather than extending it to be as inclusive as possible. There was only sufficient time to hear a small number of attendees — the board then high-handedly invited citizens to leave their remaining comments until the end of the next day.

*Continued on page 14*

*Preston L. Schiller, Ph.D., has been a frequent contributor to Whatcom Watch since 1997. In 2011-2012, he wrote a series of articles alerting the public to the dangers of coal trains and the coal terminal proposed for Cherry Point, north of Bellingham, and in 2019-2020, he wrote a series of articles about WTA. He has taught courses in transportation planning at Western Washington University, Queen's University (Kingston, Ontario, Canada) and the University of Washington, Seattle. He is the principal author of "An Introduction to Sustainable Transportation: Policy, Planning and Implementation," 2nd Ed., 2018, Routledge, Taylor & Francis.*



Whatcom Transportation Authority bus depot on Railroad Avenue.

photo: Joe Meche

## Kaylee Galloway Talks About Climate Issues

by Liam Walsh

Whatcom County Councilmember Kaylee Galloway is one of the leading voices for climate action in the community. Her work includes the county's Climate Action Plan, which aims to reduce emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Galloway was first elected in 2021, and is currently serving her second term after her re-election in 2025. She volunteers on the

*Liam Walsh is a senior at Western studying journalism with a news/editorial focus. In his free time, he plays on the Western rugby team and enjoys hiking and swimming.*

Whatcom County Climate Impact Advisory Committee as well as the Regional Fisheries Coalition. "I'm kind of what you might call the go-to Councilmember on these issues," Galloway said. "I got my fingers in a lot of areas, and, as you start to piece together all these moving pieces, you just realize how big of an issue this issue is for our county."

Galloway grew up in the Snoqualmie Valley and had an interest in politics from a young age. "My inspiration for politics and government started in high school," Galloway said. "I participated in the Washington State Legislature's page program. As a page for a member of the House, I got to learn a little bit about Olympia, and also partici-

pated in a training geared towards encouraging young women to run for political office."

### Western Washington University

Galloway then attended Western Washington University where she studied politics, philosophy and economics, minoring in law, diversity and justice and energy policy. It was at Western where she became interested in various issues around economics, education, environment, natural resources and climate. In her third and final year at Western, she was elected to be the Associated Students Vice President for Government Affairs. "That's where I started to really see the practical application of the political science degree in kind of a real world government scenario,"

she said.

Before running for county government, Galloway worked in Washington, DC, under Senator Maria Cantwell. She then worked for Congresswoman Suzan DelBene representing parts of Whatcom and Skagit counties, so Galloway was her sort-of northern counties' community liaison. She also spent time working for representatives Debra Lekanoff, and Sharon Shewmake.

Her passion for climate advocacy had been growing steadily, but it was her work as a volunteer on the Climate Impact Advisory Committee working on the county's Climate Action Plan where she began to understand the impact she could make. "It just became

*Continued on page 8*

### In This Issue

Sidewalk Inventory .....	2	Tree Protection Ordinance .....	10
Unresolved Birchwood Questions .....	2	The Oeser Company.....	11
Aloha .....	3	Vanishing Science, Vanishing Fairness .....	12
Protecting Lake Whatcom .....	4	Watch on Government	
Articles You Might Have Missed.....	6	Bellingham City Council.....	18
Red Alder at Work .....	7	Port of Bellingham Commission .....	21
Public Safety and Other Fables .....	9	Whatcom County Council.....	22

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Whatcom Watch  
PO Box 1441  
Bellingham, WA 98227-1441

PRSRST STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Bellingham, WA  
Permit No. 25