

Skagit-Island HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Prepared for the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization • November 2014

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WHAT TRANSPORTATION CAN BE.





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1. Introduction

Across the Skagit-Island region people with special needs, including seniors, people with a low-income, and people with disabilities, face daily transportation challenges. These challenges make it more difficult to run errands, access services, get to and from work, or visit family and friends.

This plan, called the Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP), was developed by engaging special needs populations in conversations about their needs, documenting existing services, identifying needs and highlighting service gaps. Based on this information, this plan then defines regional priorities and recommends projects for state and federal grant funding.

Addressing both federal and state HSTP requirements, this plan was developed using best practices identified in the statewide HSTP. This includes “listening sessions” at events and other locations with concentrated special needs populations, identification of special needs populations through census data, and prioritization of projects using an objective and transparent methodology.

Washington state has been a national leader on human services transportation planning. In 1998, the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) was created by the state legislature with a mission to direct and promote activities that efficiently use all available state and community resources for special needs transportation, including improved coordination and elimination of cross-jurisdictional

barriers between transportation providers. Since then, federal surface transportation programs passed in 2005 and 2012 have required that regions develop a, “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these, and prioritizing services.”¹ This is the third HSTP to be developed for Skagit and Island counties, with updates occurring on a four-year cycle.

The Federal Transit Administration, as well as Washington state, fund special needs transportation services including capital investments, operating support, mobility management and planning grants. In Washington state, these funds are combined and distributed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) consolidated grant program on a biennial basis.

To be eligible for WSDOT consolidated grant funding, projects must address the needs and gaps identified in the regional HSTP and must be included on the regional HSTP project list. This plan does both, with the regional priority list available in Appendix F.

This planning work, which occurred between June and November 2014, was funded through a WSDOT planning grant and managed by staff from the Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG). A special needs transportation committee was created by the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization

(RTPO) to oversee and guide the plan; however the RTPO Board maintained oversight and final approval of the plan.

The major components of the plan are summarized in Section 2.

Footnotes:

¹ Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)

2. Project Methodology

The following sections summarize the steps taken to support each of the key project findings.

Documentation of Existing Services

This work involved documentation of the range of public transportation services currently provided in Skagit and Island counties. These services include fixed-route transit service, dial-a-ride paratransit services, vanpool services and pocket services. It also includes transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies, as well as Medicaid brokerage and long-distance transportation services.

Public Engagement

This plan used a variety of methods to engage and communicate with the public. A special needs transportation committee was formed, made up of a diverse set of stakeholders, from human services providers and transportation providers to tribes and social services organizations. This committee informed and guided the process and helped to engage their customers and the general public.

To directly engage special needs users, “listening sessions” were conducted at existing community events, where the project team could engage the appropriate people in conversation. A total of 210 individuals were engaged at the follow listening sessions:

- Skagit Senior Day in the Park

- Out and About: Persons with Disabilities
- Skagit Project Homeless Connect
- Oak Harbor Senior Center
- Stanwood-Camano Persons with Disabilities
- Skagit County Buddy Walk

To complement the listening sessions, a survey (printed and online) of special needs users was developed to collect information on how their transportation needs are currently being met. A total of 143 surveys were collected. Additionally, in-person user surveys were collected on Skagit Transit paratransit vehicles, capturing feedback from a total of 38 paratransit users.

Needs Analysis

A “needs analysis” was conducted to develop a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by special needs populations. In addition to using public engagement findings, data was collected to identify needs. In order to identify the most common locations traveled to by special needs populations, the project team reviewed information on common origins and destinations. Population demographics data from the US Census Bureau were also evaluated to identify the highest needs areas within Skagit and Island counties.

Emergency Management

The Skagit and Island county emergency management plans were reviewed to ensure they addressed special

needs populations. Several action items were recommended.

Technology

The use of technology by transportation providers was reviewed, particularly with relation to how technology can improve communication between transportation providers and customers. This was a recurring trend, especially among paratransit riders.

Identification of Strategies and Activities

A set of strategies and activities were developed from public engagement and the needs analysis. These were based on strategies identified in the statewide HSTP, however adapted and expanded to better address the local context. Strategies capture the high-level priorities, while the activities identify specific actions that can be taken to deliver on each strategy. The finalized strategies were prioritized by the Skagit-Island RTPO and then used to rank regional projects for WSDOT consolidated grant funding.

WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program

This section is intended to be a resource for grant applicants and provides information on the WSDOT consolidated grant program, including a summary of the types of projects eligible for grant funding and the application process.

3. Existing Transportation Services

Public Transit Providers

Skagit Transit



Skagit Transit operates transit service within Skagit County including fixed-route (local and express county connector), paratransit, pocket and vanpool service. Weekday service is provided on all routes, with reduced service on Saturdays and Sundays. Standard bus fares are \$1.00, with youth and reduced fares of \$0.50.

Fixed-Route and Express Service

Fixed-route service is provided on weekdays between approximately 6 am and 9 pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays between approximately 8 am and 6 pm. On weekdays, service in urban areas comes generally every 30 minutes, with service in rural areas coming generally every hour.

Both local bus service as well as express commuter service is provided, with all buses on those routes ADA accessible. In 2013, local bus service carried approximately 645,000 passengers and express commuter service carried 110,000.

In 2013 Skagit Transit operated 48,000 annual revenue service hours and logged 731,000 annual vehicle revenue miles.

Paratransit Service

Skagit Transit also provides specialized paratransit service for passengers who are unable to get to the

nearest bus stop or use fixed-route bus service.

Paratransit service is provided within 3/4 mile of fixed-route transit service with a span of service matching the fixed-route service. Those wishing to use the service must fill out an application to determine if they are eligible for the service. Trips must be pre-scheduled.

In 2013, Skagit Transit provided 55,200 paratransit trips, operated 25,000 annual revenue service hours and logged 280,000 annual vehicle revenue miles.

Pocket Service

Skagit Transit provides pocket service to rural communities not served by fixed-route service. This service, which is available on a specific day(s) of the week, connects riders in rural communities to nearby transit centers where riders can transfer to other

Island Transit Vanpool



routes or access nearby services.

This service operates Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm and riders are required to register to use the service. Skagit Transit takes specific trip requests although its ability to meet the requests are not guaranteed.

Vanpool Program

The vanpool program is an affordable, convenient and comfortable way for employees to travel to work. The program is intended for groups of five to fifteen people who commute more than 20 miles each direction. This program works particularly well for employees on a fixed work schedule.

In 2013, there were 127,000 vanpool trips. Vans are not ADA accessible. Vans are leased on a month-to-month basis with Skagit Transit covering insurance for the drivers, riders, and vans, as well as maintenance and operations costs.

Island Transit



Island Transit operates fixed-route (local and express county connector), route deviation, paratransit, and vanpool service throughout Whidbey and Camano Island. Connection to and from the Washington State Ferries are provided, however no weekend service is currently provided.

Island Transit has operated as a fare free system for

Due to financial difficulties Island Transit was forced to reduce transit service starting on September 1st, 2014. The service reductions included:

- Elimination of weekend service
- Suspension of Route 5 and Route 9
- Conversion of Route 8 to a commuter route
- Service every other hour on Route 6.
- Service every hour on Route 10

over 25 years. The reason for this is two-fold. First, fare free systems have been shown to increase transit ridership by reducing the barrier of use, especially for those with limited income.

Second, national research and industry experience has shown that charging fares for small or rural transit systems produces limited operating revenue because the costs to collect and administer a fare program are significant compared to the revenue generated. Therefore, charging a fare reduces ridership while creating little additional revenue for operating the system.

Fixed-Route, Route Deviation and Express Service

Island Transit currently operates 13 routes serving Clinton, Langley, Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Fort Casey, Terry's Corner, Windermere and Shuksan. Regional connections to Stanwood and Mount Vernon are also provided.

Service operates between approximately 5 am and 8 pm on weekdays. Route deviation service follows a regular fixed-route, but provides improved access to destinations like neighborhoods and businesses upon request. Express commuter service is also provided to the Clinton Ferry. Currently no weekend service is provided.

All buses are fully ADA accessible. In 2013, Island Transit provided 1,090,600 trips, operated 59,000 annual revenue service hours and logged 1,755,000 annual vehicle revenue miles.

Paratransit Service

Island Transit provides curb-to-curb paratransit service for ADA eligible persons with a disability who are unable to use the regular fixed-route bus service, due to their disability.

Paratransit service is based upon the same days, hours, and route structure, as the regular fixed-route service and extends 3/4ths of a mile on either side of the fixed-route service. Service beyond this area is provided on a space-available basis.

In 2013, Island Transit provided 64,100 paratransit trips, operated 30,000 annual service hours and logged 391,000 annual vehicle revenue miles.

Vanpool Program

Island Transit provides additional service through their vanpool program. The fees collected cover operating costs including fuel, maintenance, insurance and the capital cost of the vans.

Vanpools are eligible for discounts on Washington State Ferry services as well as preferential loading.

Vanpool vehicles are not ADA accessible.

Whatcom Transportation Authority

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) operates fixed-route, paratransit and vanpool services in Whatcom County. County connector service from Mount Vernon connects to local services at Lincoln Creek Park-and-Ride and Bellingham Station.

Shuttle service to Western Washington University is available from Lincoln Creek Park-and-Ride and transfers to frequent Go-Line routes, as well as much of the WTA network, is possible at Bellingham Station.

Community Transit

Community Transit operates fixed-route and paratransit services within Snohomish County in addition to commuter and vanpool service in and between Snohomish and King counties. Skagit Transit and Island Transit provide connecting service to local and express commuter service at Stanwood Station.

Island Transit Bus



Human Services Transportation

Providers

A variety of programs offer transportation services in addition to services provided by Skagit Transit and Island Transit. Many of these service providers focus on the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities. Very few are solely transportation providers, with most offering transportation services in conjunction with other social service or volunteer programs.

These providers range from for-profit companies to non-profit organizations and state government agencies.

Some programs directly provide transportation while others sponsor transportation by contracting with, or buying passes/tickets for, other providers. Those that provide transportation utilize paid drivers, agency staff and/or program volunteers to transport passengers.

Human services transportation providers depend on a variety of funding sources including those dedicated to senior services, individuals with disabilities or family support programs. Some funding programs are narrow in scope and limit the population to which they offer rides to and/or the number or trip purposes they can fulfill.

The following provides a summary of the major human service transportation providers in Skagit and Island counties, organized by the clientele they serve.

Seniors

Camano Center

Camano Center provides by-appointment transportation services for seniors to Skagit County for medical appointments, social and health services. Prescription pick-up and delivery, meals on wheels and grocery deliveries are also provided.

Island County Medical Transportation & Volunteers Services

Volunteers provides transportation for medical or other essential needs in addition to grocery trips and household up-keep assistance.

Senior Services of Island County

This group provides meals on wheels to seniors and contracts with the Northwest Regional Council to provide Medicaid trips for seniors.

Island Transit Paratransit Customer



Medical

Disabled American Veterans

The Disabled American Veterans group provides transportation services to the Veterans Administration hospital in Seattle five days a week. Service is provided from Oak Harbor, Mount Vernon and points south and is operated by volunteers.

Northwest Regional Council

The Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) provides Medical Assistance Administration Transportation, which consists of non-ambulance transportation, to all people eligible for Medicaid who have no other means of transportation to covered medical services as well as meals on wheels program.

The NWRC serves as the broker for these services, authorizing and arranging transportation for people in Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom counties. On average, the NWRC contracts 180,000 annual trips. The private brokers used for Medicaid include:

- Beck & Call Concierge Services
- Care E Me, Inc.
- Cascade Ambulance
- City/Yellow Cap
- City Paratransit
- Birch Bay Taxi (red cab)
- Mercy Transportation
- Safe Transportation
- Sound Cabulance
- Western Van Services

Other

Community Action of Skagit County

Community Action of Skagit County provides rides through the Senior & Disabled Volunteer Services Program in addition to providing transit passes and gas vouchers to clients receiving services through the East County Resources Center, Housing and Essential Needs Program, Housing, Critical Needs, Jail Transition and WorkFirst programs. In partnership with Skagit Transit, increased distribution of free bus passes is planned to begin in January 2015.

Goodwill

Goodwill provides free Skagit Transit bus tickets for clients.

Northwest Educational Services District (NWESD) #189

NWESD #189 provides rides to students ages 3-21 as part of their individualized educational program during the school year. The NWESD is able to provide transportation services beyond students, however no additional service is currently provided.

North Sound 2-1-1

North Sound 2-1-1, operated by Volunteers of America, is a one-stop information portal for special needs populations. North Sound 2-1-1 works with callers to identify which transportation services they are eligible for and connects them to those providers. This service is provided within Skagit and Island counties, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Stillaguamish Tribal Transit Service

The Stillaguamish Department of Transportation provides transportation services, which includes demand responsive service as well as vanpool services. This service is offered by the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians to native and non-native individuals who need to travel to native businesses and facilities or other facilities in the northern Snohomish County area. Service is provided weekdays between 5:30 am and 4:30 pm.

State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

DSHS sometimes provides assistance with acquiring bus passes or gas vouchers for individuals on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Long-Distance Transportation Providers

Washington State Ferries

The Washington State Ferries operates daily service in Skagit County from the terminal at Anacortes to the San Juan Islands and Vancouver Island, with connecting Skagit Transit service.

Ferry service in Island County operates from Clinton to Mukilteo and Coupeville to Port Townsend, which is also served by transit at each ferry terminal. Transit service to and from the Clinton-Mukilteo ferry is a key component of the transportation system as vehicular travel demand on that route exceeds capacity during the peak periods.

Amtrak Cascades

Amtrak Cascades stops in Mount Vernon twice daily in route from Seattle to Vancouver BC, as well from Vancouver BC to Seattle.

Amtrak also runs an afternoon bus between Bellingham and Seattle with a stop in Mount Vernon. Amtrak Cascades service is ADA compatible but requires attendant notification.

Greyhound

Greyhound service is available at Skagit Station in Mount Vernon, with morning and afternoon service to Bellingham, Seattle or elsewhere along the Greyhound route.

There is no Greyhound service in any of the other cities in Skagit or Island counties with the nearest Bolt Bus stop (another service of Greyhound) in Bellingham.

Airport Shuttle Service

Shuttle service to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and Bellingham International Airport is provided by the Whidbey SeaTac Shuttle. Bellair Airporter Shuttle provides service to SeaTac Airport.

4. Public Engagement

Development of a comprehensive and inclusive human services transportation plan requires extensive and varied public engagement. This plan utilized a variety of public engagement methods to capture feedback from a diverse set of stakeholders, including the spectrum of special needs populations such as seniors, people with disabilities and people with low-income.

To engage these special needs populations in the most efficient manner possible, the project team identified existing meetings and events where these groups would already be present.

By bringing the planning process directly to them, the plan’s public engagement was very successful and resulted in approximately 210 unique individual engagements. A survey of human services transportation was also developed and distributed, capturing 143 individuals via survey responses.

This approach to public outreach was also mindful of geographic diversity of input from people throughout the study area as well as the needs of Indian tribes.

Listening sessions were held throughout both counties, and a similar planning effort by the Samish Tribe was engaged and integrated with this plan. Transportation providers, including Island Transit and Skagit Transit, non-profit transportation providers, and private transportation providers, were also engaged through creation of an ad-hoc advisory committee, called the Skagit-Island Special Needs

Transportation Committee.

Additionally, health and human services providers, who work with special needs populations on a daily basis, were also engaged through the Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee.

Project resources including project documents, meeting agendas and minutes were shared online using the SCOG website.

A public call for projects was issued on September 29, 2014 through public notices in local newspapers, a notice on SCOG’s website and an email to a special needs distribution list.

The subsections below provide additional detail on the ad-hoc advisory committee, survey, listening sessions and reference plans.

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee

In preparation for the HSTP, the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Organization Policy Board approved the creation of the Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee.

This advisory committee was structured to include representatives from organizations representing major employers, education/youth, Medicaid/healthcare providers, transit agencies, tribes, veterans, people with disabilities, people with low-



I live alone, clear up near Timber Lake at Hwy 20, a mile from the nearest service, have to get a friend to drive me to the bus stop. I wish there was more service off the scheduled route.

- Senior

[I would like] dial-a-ride [service] that you can take out of town (La Conner, Mt. Vernon)
- Samish Tribal member

I use Skagit Transit. It meets all my needs.
- Homeless man

No evening service makes night event impossible since they can get dropped off but not picked up from events.
- Senior services provider



Skagit County Buddy Walk



income and seniors. A total of five monthly meetings were held throughout the plan’s development.

The committee provided guidance and valuable insight into the needs of the region in addition to contributing a wealth of institutional and historical knowledge about Skagit and Island counties. For example, committee members were vital in the identification of listening session opportunities to connect directly with special needs populations.

The organizations which were involved or invited to participate are listed below.

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee Members

- Disabled American Veterans, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
- Opportunity Council of Island County
- Community Action of Skagit County
- Island Transit
- Skagit Transit
- Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
- Camano Center
- Northwest Regional Council
- Volunteers of America – North Sound 211
- Northwest Educational Services District #189
- Washington State Department of Transportation

Other Organizations Invited to Participate

- American Cancer Society
- Boy and Girls Clubs of Skagit County
- Catholic Community Services
- Chinook Enterprises
- Community Transportation Association of the Northwest
- Community Transit
- Compass Health
- Developmental Disabilities of Island County
- Developmental Disabilities Program, Skagit County
- Goodwill
- Housing Authority of Skagit County
- North Sound Mental Health
- Samish Tribe
- Sauk-Suiattle Tribe
- Senior Services of Island County
- Service Alternatives
- Skagit Valley Hospital
- Sno-Isle Libraries
- Stillaguamish Tribe
- United General Hospital
- Upper Skagit Tribe
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
- Washington Vocational Services
- Whidbey General Hospital
- YMCA-YWCA

Many of the organizations above provided input that assisted in the needs assessment, and provided a comprehensive accounting of human services transportation across the region.

While many of the organizations did not provide transportation services directly, many had input on the state of existing services and specific needs of people they come in contact with on a regular basis.

A few of the contacts to this list of organizations yielded what became two listening sessions with persons with disabilities, one with a Skagit County focus and the other with a Camano-Stanwood focus.

Committee Meetings

A total of five committee meetings were held between July and November 2014. SCOG and consultant staff presented progress updates on the plan, involved and educated the committee on HSTP planning, gathered guidance and engaged the committee on prioritization activities.

SCOG and WSDOT staff also provided information on grant funding opportunities and how they can submit a project for inclusion on the regional prioritized project list of human services transportation projects.

Details of the organizations represented on the committee are provided in Appendix A. The appendix includes details of each agency’s mission, what types of services they provide, what they hope to get from the planning process and details about their vehicle fleet and service, if they provide transportation services. A summary of each meeting is provided below with complete meeting summaries also available in Appendix A.

“ [The] drivers are fantastic. I’ve never had a bad ride. ”
 – Paratransit rider

Meeting #1

The kickoff meeting began with introductions including the committee member’s name, the agency or group they represent, what they do, what transportation services they offer and what they would like to get out of the HSTP update. The purpose of the committee was discussed, which primarily included guiding the plan’s development and prioritization of regional human services transportation projects for WSDOT consolidated grant funding.

An overview of the planning process, was presented including required elements and best practices with details on how the consultant planned to solicit robust public engagement and how a “need index” based on demographics data would be developed and used in the planning process. WSDOT staff then provided an overview of the consolidated grant program as well as the types of projects which are eligible for funding.

Meeting #2

This meeting began with a review of the information collected thus far including census data and committee member data. The consultant presented a draft of the prepared survey and collected feedback from the committee including changes to several questions. The committee also provided feedback on the most efficient ways to distribute the survey and volunteered to help collect feedback through their various channels.

The consultant then led an interactive workshop to identify high-level plan priorities. Based on feedback,

it was decided that local priorities would build off those developed in the statewide HSTP due to the completeness of the priorities developed in that plan.

Meeting #3

The meeting began with a review of the existing transportation services chapter including an inventory of all transportation providers. The consultant also presented a draft of the needs assessment. This included a list of needs such as lack of transit service or span of service. Additionally, a draft of the geographic needs assessment was presented to the committee.

SCOG staff then presented an overview of the WSDOT consolidated grant program and led a prioritization exercise to finalize the weighting factors for the priorities identified at the last committee meeting.

Meeting #4

A presentation of the core HSTP components was provided by the consultant. This included presentation of existing transportation services inventory, preliminary public engagement results, the finalized needs assessment, an overview of emergency management, technology and a draft of the strategies and activities.

The committee provided valuable feedback on the draft strategies and activities including additions and changes to ensure that the projects eligible for state funding are included in the HSTP. SCOG staff then led a discussion to determine what ongoing implementation and coordination efforts would be valuable.

Meeting #5

The final meeting of the committee concluded their involvement with the planning process. The committee reviewed the draft HSTP and recommended it to the SIRTPO Policy Board. The committee also reviewed the prioritized list of regional human services transportation projects and recommended it to the SIRTPO Policy Board.

Special Needs Survey

Maximizing the amount of public engagement and input was a key goal of the HSTP. Identical online and print surveys were developed to capture written feedback via multiple channels from special needs populations.

The purpose of the survey was to understand who needs human services transportation, why they are using the service and how well their needs are being met.

The survey results informed the planning process, however, the results are not statistically valid. The population which took the survey self-selected, and therefore may not represent the overall special needs population in Skagit and Island counties.

“ I don't know if I qualify for Paratransit but it would be nice. ”
 – Survey response

Public Outreach at Skagit County Buddy Walk



While Skagit Transit and Island Transit already have usage data, their data is not directly comparable because it only includes information from users, where as this survey was targeted at both users and non-users of existing transportation services.

The survey was based on one developed by People for People for the Yakima HSTP, and adapted based on consultant suggestions and committee feedback. This included replacing open-ended questions with multiple-choice answers to ease completion of the survey.

A travel training question was added at the suggestion of the committee to identify people that may be interested in learning how to use transit. Responses to these questions, with information identifying those interested, was distributed to the transit agencies so they could follow-up with survey respondents.

The survey was hosted online and distributed to the public via the agencies and groups involved. Survey responses were collected from August 13th to September 30th, 2014 with a total of 143 surveys completed.

Listening Sessions

A number of listening sessions, which varied in format from hosted meeting to information booths, were conducted throughout the HSTP development. The goal of these sessions was to capture direct input from a full range of special needs populations. This included seniors, people with disabilities and people with low-income.

To maximize community feedback, SCOG and consultant staff took these sessions to the public rather than asking the public to attend an open house specifically for this plan. A summary of each event is included below. Complete documentation of comments collected at each listening session is included in Appendix B.

Skagit Senior Day in the Park

This annual event is a chance for seniors to receive health screenings, hear about product promotions, learn about services offered to them in the community and receive a free lunch. Held on August 14th at Maiben Park in Burlington, this event was the first listening session attended by SCOG staff.

SCOG staff presented a list of potential plan priorities and asked people to put dots next to their highest priorities. They were also asked to fill out a paper version of the survey.

Many participants were not receptive to this approach and found it confusing and difficult for a variety of reasons, including that the language used was overly technical and the type used on materials was too small to easily read. To improve engagement, SCOG staff switched approaches, spoke directly with seniors about what they liked and disliked, noting

“ More service is needed in Skagit County.
– Homeless man ”

“ I would use it [the bus] more if it was cheaper.
– Homeless woman ”

responses. In total, an estimated 110 individuals were engaged.

Out and About: Persons with Disabilities

On September 10th, SCOG staff meet with the Out and About: Persons with Disabilities support group at the Burlington Library. Ten of the eleven participants were physically or developmentally disabled with the meeting feedback and comments representative of the transportation challenges they face.

The group was well informed about coordinated planning within Washington state and discussed common challenges like getting to and from evening events. The Peer Group Coordinator from the Center for Independence North Sound also provided follow-up comments.

Skagit Project Homeless Connect

Project Homeless Connect is an annual event at which people with low-income and those who are homeless are provided a wide array of health and non-health human services. This includes medical and dental checkups as well as food, clothing, job training and other social services. The event was held on September 11th at Skagit Valley College.

Skagit Transit service was free throughout the day to provide participants a free way to get there. SCOG

staffed a booth throughout the day and made contact with approximately 50 individuals.

Project Homeless Connect also provided an opportunity to reach persons with limited English proficiency. Input from four Spanish speakers was translated by an event volunteer and was included in the meeting summary for the event. SCOG staff prepared for this event by reviewing common Spanish phrases in case translation services would not be available.

Oak Harbor Senior Center

SCOG staff conducted outreach to senior citizens on September 5th at the Oak Harbor Senior Center. Throughout the outreach event a total of 24 seniors provided comments with their comments paraphrased and documented by SCOG staff. Comments were generally related to the paratransit systems, including both things that riders liked but also things they did not like.

A major reoccurring theme was how the system is a lifeline for many riders. Multiple comments were also

“ We need more cross-county transit—life goes on beyond Skagit County! If you want good quality medical care, you have to go outside of Skagit County because the good doctors in Skagit County aren't taking any more patients.
– Senior with disabilities ”



My clients often don't know how to ride the bus or they don't understand the system... The main reason clients miss their appointments, including medical and opportunities to get free food and services, is lack of transportation.

- Human service provider

I use the SKAT bus but I want to use Dial-A-Ride and the questions about qualifying are too confusing.

- Disabled senior

[I would like] school bus all year to and from work. Only one of us has a license and she works. So it created some difficulties with her at times.

- Samish Tribal member



made about Island Transit's financial and management issues.

Stanwood-Camano Persons with Disabilities

A focus group was held on September 16th at the Stanwood-Camano Community Center. SCOG staff met with seven people, including representatives of Washington Vocational Services and the Camano/Stanwood Aktion Club, which serves adults with disabilities.

Many comments were received, including comments on the importance of transit service for people with disabilities to get to jobs, the importance of connection between transit agencies (Island Transit, Skagit Transit and Community Transit) in the Stanwood area and the special needs of people with developmental disabilities.

Skagit County Buddy Walk

The Skagit County Buddy Walk is an annual event to promote acceptance and raise awareness of persons with Down Syndrome. This year it was held on October 11th with approximately 250 participants. SCOG staff attended the event, gathered feedback including key travel destinations (work/school, shopping, medical and other), agreement or disagreement with previously collected statements on paratransit and dial-a-ride service and written responses.

Ride-Alongs

Multiple "ride-along" surveys were conducted by Skagit Transit to help identify the successes of paratransit service and to gather suggestions for areas that can be improved. Respondents were asked open-ended questions about how they access the service, what they like about the service, and what aspects can be improved. A total of 38 on-board ride-along interviews were completed. Ride-along survey responses are included in Appendix B.

Reference Plans

Review of past HSTP plans and other regional or local plans can provide valuable context and a fresh perspective on human services transportation. This is because most plans include public engagement and stakeholder guidance on topics that intersect with human services transportation. Reviewing other plans leverages those efforts while also providing a more complete picture of the historical issues and how transportation relates to so many aspects of peoples' lives. Comparison of public feedback from this plan to past HSTPs helps validate the feedback contained in this plan.

Statewide HSTP

The Washington State Department of Transportation developed its first statewide HSTP in 2013 to guide regional HSTP planning efforts and present a clear vision for the future of special needs transportation across the state.

The plan included a greater emphasis on consistency in regional HSTP plan development, more robust guidance on project prioritization, examples of regional and national best practices, added emphasis on performance measures and provides recommendations to improve special needs transportation in Washington state.

Skagit-Island 2007 and 2010 HSTP

The 2007 and 2010 HSTP plans were developed in a similar fashion as the current plan, however less state guidance was available during those times. Since then, the state Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation has developed an HSTP template and WSDOT has developed a statewide HSTP which provides additional structure to this effort.

The 2007 and 2010 plans were used as reference documents, especially in areas where they excelled, including document structure and demographic analysis. They were also helpful points of reference, particularly with respect to documentation of unmet needs and some of the geographic coverage issues present in Skagit and Island counties.

Samish Tribal Transit Plan

The Samish Tribe is currently in the process of developing a tribal transit plan with elements similar to this plan. For example, their plan will include an assessment of current transit options to tribal facilities and a community survey.

Outreach to tribal members has already begun and a list of transit challenges was presented at a September community meeting. They include:

- Lack of regular bus service to the Longhouse
- Need to connect residential and rural areas of Anacortes (Mount Vernon and beyond)
- Expanded transit service hours on weekends
- Additional on-demand service options
- Accessible bus stops
- Improved pedestrian infrastructure and more bus shelters
- Service to match future needs
- Increasing local Samish population in Anacortes
- Future Tribal enterprises

A final plan is anticipated in December 2014.

Skagit Prosperity Report

The Skagit Prosperity Report: A Community Needs Assessment 2013 was developed by Community Action of Skagit County. The plan studies the broad array of needs and resources for low-income people in Skagit County.

The plan identifies transportation as an area of need which is above average in importance but also an area with an above average availability of resources. Transportation was identified as an issue, particularly with respect to employment access for people with low-income. Transportation challenges also included affording gas and insurance.



Sometimes I see three busses pass, one right after the other. That's a waste of money. Can't they consolidate stops?

- Senior

I use the bus because sometimes I don't have anyone to take me to where I need to go. I wish it passed by more often—every 30 minutes.

- Translation from Spanish speaker

Most drivers are very courteous; they're like family. If I'm going off the (Whidbey) Island, I have to hunt for a ride. I'm taking beginning computer classes for seniors at the Oak Harbor Senior Center, which is possible thanks to Paratransit.

- Survey response



5. Needs Assessment

The following section includes a variety of information sources which are used to identify the need for human services transportation. These information sources include a summary of paratransit trip origins and destinations, a demographic profile of Skagit and Island counties, as well as an analysis of high need locations and a compilation of unmet needs.

Development of Unmet Needs

The comments and findings developed through the various methods discussed in this section were consolidated into a findings and comment tracking sheet. This sheet, located in Appendix C, was used to systematically consolidate and summarize the identified unmet needs, which are presented at the end of this section.

Common Origins and Destinations

Anonymous origin and destination (O-D) data provided by Skagit Transit and Island Transit identifies the most frequently visited paratransit service locations, providing a better understanding of the relative travel demand of the most visited locations by paratransit riders.

To compile the O-D information, Skagit Transit and Island Transit paratransit pick-up and drop-off data was compiled and sorted first by county and then categorized by destination type. The raw data provided by the service providers are from June 2010

Figure 1: Group Homes, Senior Centers and Shopping Facilities Paratransit Destinations

Group Homes			
Island Transit		Skagit Transit	
Summerhill	10,953	Life Care Center – Mount Vernon	14,880
Careage	8,626	Vintage at Mount Vernon	12,992
Whidbey Manor	7,023	Mira Vista	12,191
Cambridge Cove	6,044	Life Care Center – Sedro-Woolley	7,783
Regency	5,060	Alpine Ridge	7,073
Cambey	4,057	Adult Day Care	6,569
Harbor Towers	3,220	Group Home – Burlington	6,408
Brookhaven	2,774	Country Meadows	5,742
Maple Ridge	2,344	Mountain Glen	5,377
HomePlace	1,827	Group Home – Mount Vernon	5,362
Dean Manor	1,597	Prestige Nursing Home	4,931
		Highland Greens	3,364

Senior Centers			
Island Transit		Skagit Transit	
Oak Harbor Senior Center	11,711	Senior Center – Anacortes	6,243
Time Together/Bayview Senior Center	9,787	Senior Center – Mount Vernon	5,223
		Senior Center – Burlington	3,325

Shopping Facilities			
Island Transit		Skagit Transit	
WalMart	9,252	Food Pavilion	8,618
Safeway	4,996	Cascade Mall	6,060
Saar’s Market	3,687	Walmart	5,899
Payless Shopping Complex	2,506	Fred Meyer	5,557
Albertsons	1,875	Safeway	3,583
Rite Aide	791		
Navy Exchange/Commissary	287		

Source: Skagit Transit and Island Transit, June 2010 to June 2014

Figure 2: Medical Facilities, Religious Facilities and Other Frequent Paratransit Destinations

Medical Facilities			
Island Transit		Skagit Transit	
Davita Dialysis	13,726	Mount Vernon Dialysis Center	34,878
Whidbey General North	12,297	Skagit Regional Medical Center	6,907
Kidney Center	12,043	Compass Health	6,605
Whidbey General Hospital	8,181	Skagit Wound Healing Institute	5,596
Whidbey Community Physicians	5,036	Skagit Valley Hospital	3,078
Whidbey General South	936		
Religious Facilities			
Island Transit			
Oak Harbor Lutheran Church	314		
Christian Missionary of Langley	534		
Trinity Lutheran	291		
Church on the Rock	146		
Family Bible Church	649		
St. Augustine’s Catholic Church	654		
Other Frequent Destinations			
Island Transit		Skagit Transit	
Thrive Fitness Center	13,742	Chinook Enterprises	24,236
Island Athletic Club	5,531	YMCA	13,387
Oak Harbor High School	5,217	Ovenell’s	6,746
Oak Harbor Library	3,966	Skyline	5,606
American Legion	798	Riverside Health Club	4,643
CMA Church Soup Kitchen	649		
DSHS	571		
Bayview Food Bank	508		
Langley Library	468		
Freeland Library	312		
Oak Harbor Post Office	227		
Coupeville Library	223		
Clinton Library	174		
Opportunity Council	150		

Source: Skagit Transit and Island Transit, June 2010 to June 2014

to June 2014. While all available data provided by Island Transit was used in the analysis, Transfer Center data provided by Skagit Transit was omitted because these trips typically serve as intermediate transfers which could result in double counting trips.

Adult Care Homes/Assisted Living was the most frequented trip destination, representing 28% of the top trip destinations. Medical Centers were the second most frequented destination, representing 21% of the top trip destinations. Of the top medical facility trips, 44% were to dialysis facilities including Davita Dialysis and Mount Vernon Dialysis Center, with Mount Vernon Dialysis Center being the top overall destination in the region, generating nearly 35,000 trips over the last four years.

Paratransit users are also using the service to connect to physical fitness facilities and to employment centers. The top destination in Island County was Thrive Fitness Center, generating nearly 14,000 trips over the same 2010-2014 timeframe. Chinook Enterprises, a private non-profit that provides employment opportunities to persons with disabilities in Mount Vernon, was the second most frequented destination in the region, generating over 24,000 trips.

Public Engagement Findings

As documented in Section 4, an extensive public engagement effort was conducted using online and print surveys, listening sessions, ride-alongs and an advisory committee.

One of the major components of this effort was a public survey. A total of 143 surveys were completed,



Figure 3: I need transportation because:

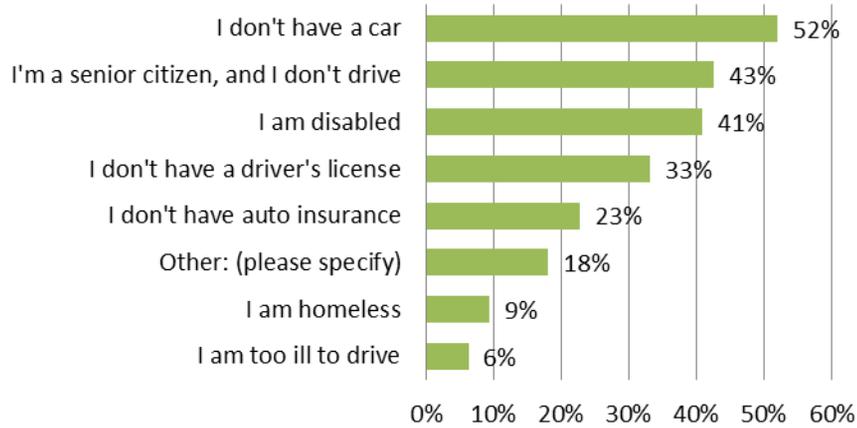


Figure 4: I need transportation to:

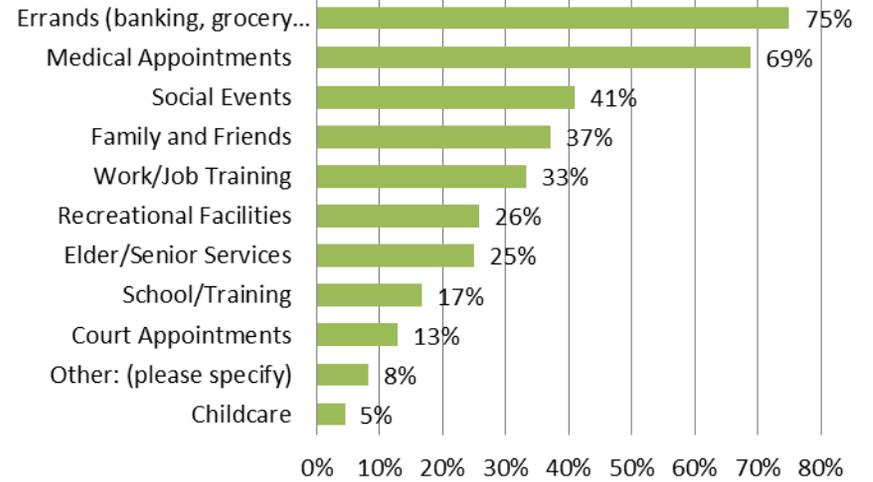
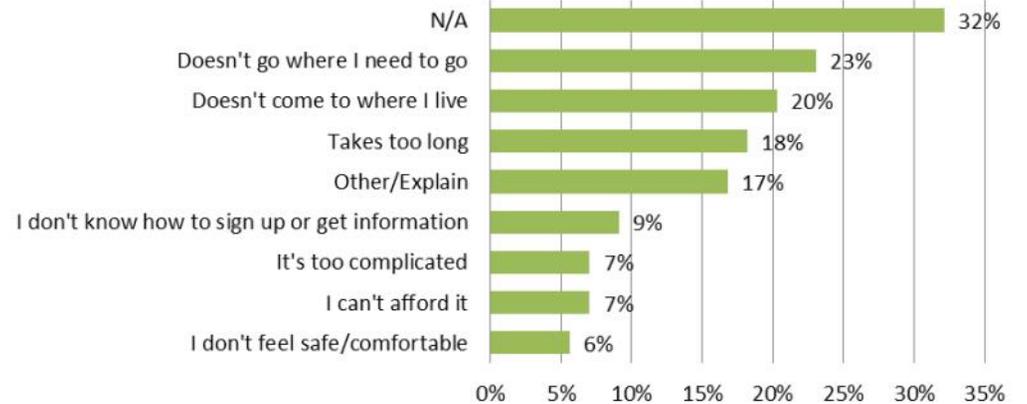


Figure 5: On a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high), rank how current transportation options are meeting your needs:



Figure 6: Why don't the existing transportation options meet your needs? (Select all)



however some survey questions were left unanswered on a few of the questionnaires. Based on the zip code provided by survey respondents, Oak Harbor, Camano Island, and Langley were identified as the most heavily represented areas. A summary of

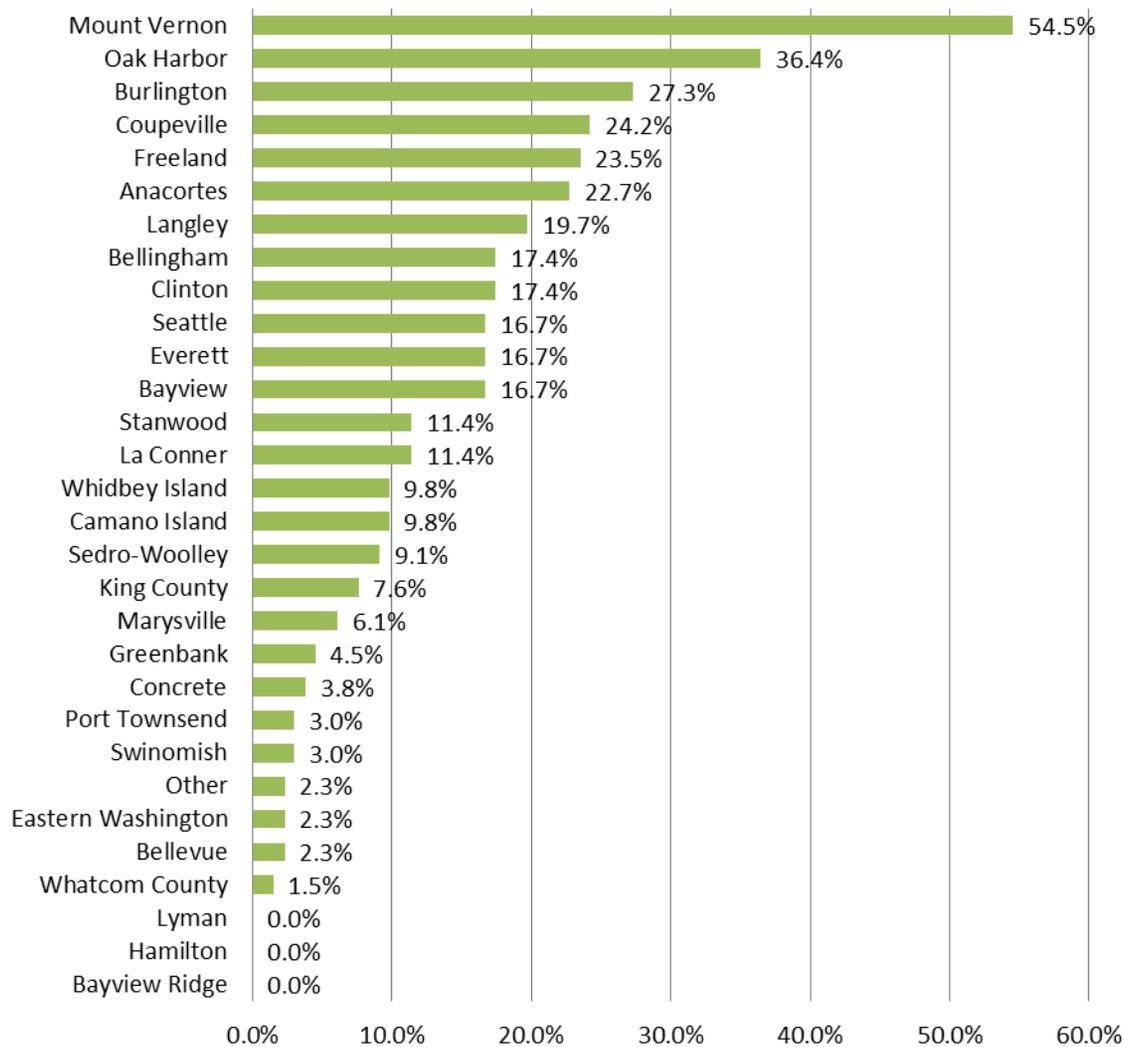
common responses are listed below with a complete summary of survey responses in Appendix D:

- The single largest reason why people need transportation is because they don't own a

vehicle, followed by age and disability. This information informed the needs index analysis.

- Transit is by far the most used means of transportation, however family, friends and volunteers as well as non-vehicular

Figure 7: I need to go to (top three destinations):



transportation are also key means of transportation.

- Running errands and medical appointments are the most frequently mentioned travel purposes, followed by social events, seeing

family and friends, and work or job training. These results align with Skagit Transit and Island Transit paratransit trip data; however the paratransit trip data highlights the importance of locations which are used on a

frequent and recurring basis.

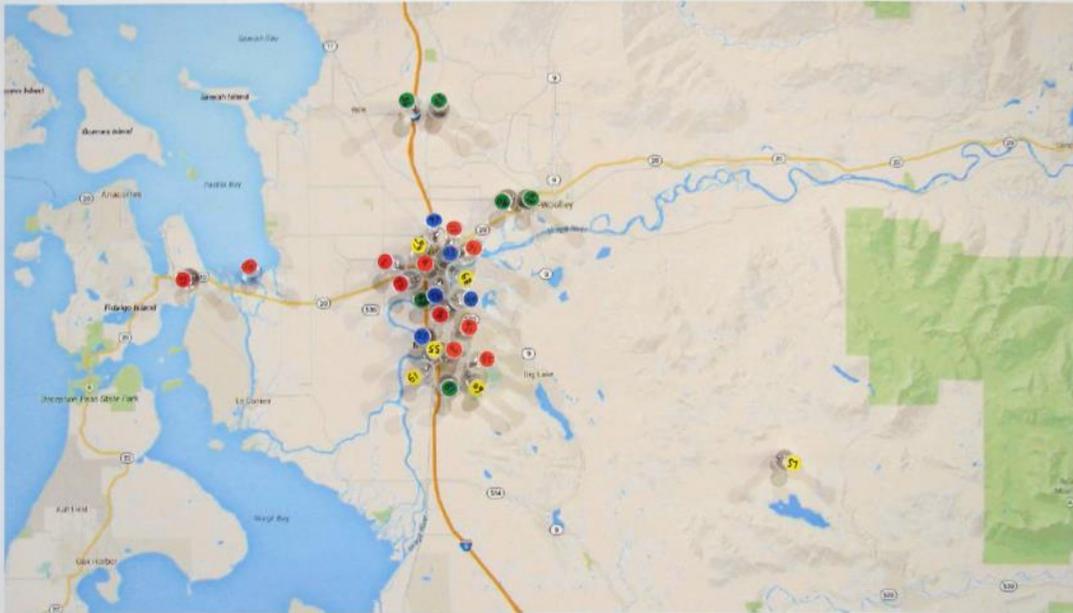
- Over half of respondents mentioned Mount Vernon as one of their top three destinations, followed by Oak Harbor and Burlington.
- The vast majority of survey respondents were somewhat knowledgeable to very familiar with their transportation options.
- Nearly half of participants said that some of their transportation needs are being met. An additional 40 percent said that more than some of their transportation needs are being met, while 14 percent of respondents said that less than some of their transportation needs are being met.
- The top two reasons respondents do not use existing services are because it does not go to where they need to go or does not come to where they live. Additionally, 18 percent of respondents said existing services take too long and 9 percent said they do not know how to sign up or get information about existing services.
- Nearly half of respondents said that lack of transportation impacted their ability to participate in community events, meet medical and health needs or accomplish daily tasks.

Special Needs Populations

To help capture feedback from a variety of special needs populations, a variety of events and engagement strategies were used. Generally, each event targeted one of the key special needs populations: seniors, people with disabilities, or people with low-income. A summary of each group’s needs are included below.

Public Feedback from Skagit County Buddy Walk

Where is the most important place you usually need to get to?



(please use push pins for map, one per person please)



Seniors

- There was a great appreciation that Island Transit is fare-free
- Access to fixed-route transit service can be difficult
- Frequency of service, especially to rural areas, is very limited
- Concern that buses aren't run as efficiently as

they could be

- Feeling that the bus system is for commuters, not seniors
- The lack of scheduling flexibility can make it hard to use
- Expanded span of service, including Sunday, would be nice
- Samish Island in Skagit County, and other areas

- needs transit service
- Not knowing how to ride the bus can prevent seniors from riding the bus
- Paratransit service provided personal freedom and access to community events
- Paratransit operators were very appreciated

Persons with Disabilities

- Personal freedom and job access was a major concern
- Scheduling paratransit service was difficult and required advanced planning
- Return trips, after an appointment for example, could be frustrating because of the long wait, especially if riders must wait outside in bad weather
- Better communication about schedule could make service easier to use
- Transit services end too early to attend some events and appointments

People with Low-Income

- The intake survey for Project Homeless Connect, indicated that 20% of event attendees arrived at the event by bus, 40% drove themselves, 18% walked and 20% carpooled
- People appreciate that Island Transit is free and said that Skagit Transit's fare can present a barrier to some
- Paratransit service is greatly appreciated but can be slow, with return trips hard to schedule
- More frequent service with an expanded service area is needed
- Transit service is a lifeline for some users
- Some riders said they felt unsafe riding on the

bus, either because of the driver or other passengers

- County connector service is important, but more service is needed
- Driving can be easier and cheaper although paying for gas can be an issue
- The span of bus service, especially on the weekend, makes it hard to use the bus to get to/from work
- Pocket service needs to be more frequent and should give people more time to run errands in town
- Lack of transportation is the number one reason people miss human services appointments

Demographic Profile

To understand where special needs populations live, a demographic profile of Skagit and Island counties was developed. This demographic profile draws from 2010 Decennial Census data and 2008-2012, 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, which are both data products of the US Census Bureau.

Mapping of the data illustrates where specific high needs populations are concentrated. However, several limitations exist including the large geographic scale of some of the census tracts, particularly in eastern Skagit County.

The clustering or magnitude of special needs populations within these areas can help guide decision-making by maintaining or directing additional resources to those areas with high need. The data contained in this profile focuses on four

Figure 8: Skagit and Island County Demographic Data

County	Population (1)	Age 65+ (2)	Poverty (1)	Disability (1)	No Vehicle (1)
Skagit County	122,200	18,900 (15.4%)	25,900 (21.2%)	15,100 (12.3%)	2,000 (1.6%)
Island County	78,500	14,400 (18.3%)	12,400 (15.7%)	9,700 (12.3%)	1,200 (1.5%)
Total	200,700	33,300	38,300	24,800	3,200

Source: (1) 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2008-2012), (2) 2010 Decennial Census

special needs populations: people age 65 and over, people with disabilities, people with low-income and households without a vehicle. Combined, there is a total population of 200,700 among the two counties, with 122,200 in Skagit County and 78,500 in Island County.

Skagit County has the highest poverty ratio between the two counties, with 21 percent of the population falling at 150 percent of the poverty level; while Island County has 16 percent. Skagit County has 43,700 more residents than Island County, so 21 percent also represents a larger number of people. Persons with a disability account for 12 percent of the population in both counties again with a larger total number of people in Skagit County. Poverty data was compiled using 2008-2012, 5-year ACS data while disability data is from 2010 Decennial Census data.

Data summarized by county and demographic type is shown in Figure 8.

The statewide HSTP reviewed the same demographic measures on at a statewide level by county. This analysis helped to identify counties with either a large total special needs population or a large special

needs population relative to the countywide population. Skagit and Island counties did not place in the top 25% percentile for any of the above measures in the statewide HSTP.

These measures are indicators of the population who rely on human services transportation. Maps illustrating the census data for these population groups are available in Appendix E.

High Needs Areas

A needs assessment, using the census data previously identified, was conducted for census tracts in Skagit and Island counties to determine which geographic areas have the greatest need for human services transportation. Census block group data was aggregated to the census tract level and data for the two counties was combined to produce a Composite Need Index, which was then used to display the Proportional Need and Density Need throughout Skagit and Island counties.

Methodology

The previously summarized demographic data, which is representative of populations that rely most on the human services transportation system, was used for this analysis. These demographic measures are consistent with the previous 2010 Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan as well as grant funding streams used by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

To determine which census tracts have the greatest need for human services transportation, a Composite Need Index score was developed using the four demographic measures summarized above. First, the Composite Need Index score was calculated by multiplying each demographic measure by a criteria weight. The criteria weights were as follows:

- Age 65+ – 20
- 150 percent below poverty level – 20
- Disability – 25
- No Vehicle – 35

These criteria weights were established based on initial survey feedback and previous human service transportation planning experience. The larger the weight, the more “need” the demographic measure has on the Composite Need Index.

Next, the Composite Need Index was used to calculate the Proportional Need Index and Density Need Index results. These two measures were calculated because each measure captures a different aspect of the overall need picture:

Proportional Need Index: This measure identifies areas with a large special needs population relative to the total population of the area. This was calculated by dividing the Composite Need Index by the total population of the area. This helps to identify areas where need is greater than would be expected based on total population.

Density Need Index: This measure identifies areas with a high density of people with special needs. This was calculated by dividing the Composite Need Index by the total size of the area. This measure identifies areas where a large concentration of people with special needs live.

Census tracts scoring within the top 25 percent of both measures were mapped in Figure 9 on the next page.

Findings

The analysis shows that needs are distributed throughout Skagit and Island counties, with both the proportional and density need index measures indicating overlapping high need in areas of Anacortes and Oak Harbor. This shows that compared to other census tracts and block groups these areas have both a higher proportion of need as well as a higher density of need.

Taken individually, the index measures also provide helpful information. The proportional need index indicates high need on many of the largely rural Island County communities of South Whidbey Island and East-South Camano Island in addition to East Skagit County, the Swinomish Indian Reservation and

Guemes Island. In addition to parts of Anacortes and Oak Harbor, Mount Vernon and Burlington are also identified as areas with a high density of need.

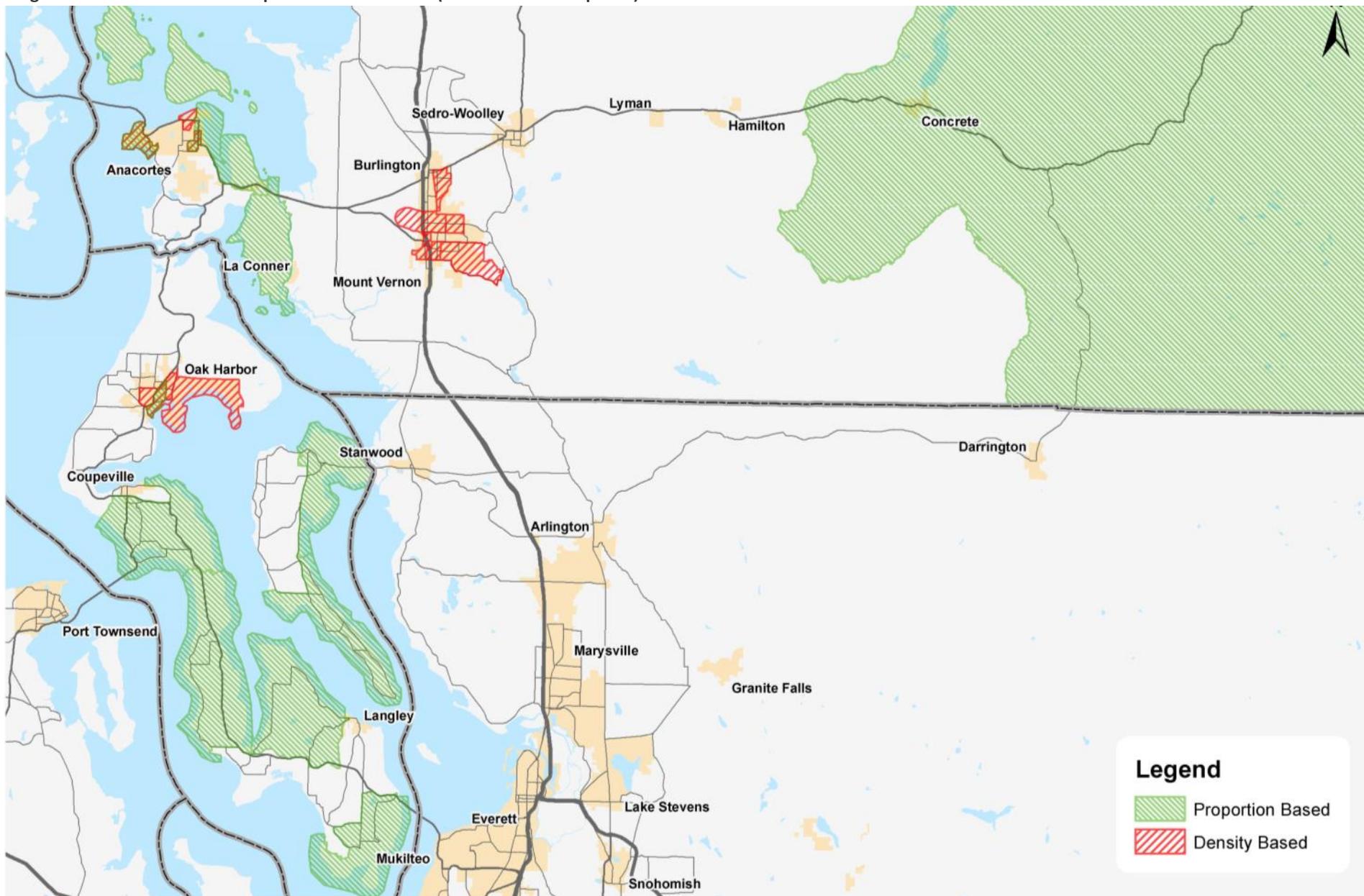
Unmet Needs

Based on public engagement (surveys, listening sessions, and ride-along), committee discussions, and a review of past HSTP and other related plans – a range of unmet needs were identified. The strategies and activities identified by this plan, and ultimately the projects prioritized for WSDOT consolidated grant



County Connector Service

Figure 9: Human Services Transportation Need Index (Census Tract in Top 25%)



Source: 2010 Decennial Census (Population 65+) and 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2008-2012 (No Vehicle Household, People with Disabilities, People of Low-Income)



funding, were developed to address these unmet needs.

Below is a list of areas in which current services were identified as not meeting needs.

Maintain System

- Existing transportation services are not meeting all needs. About half of the survey respondents said that the current system is meeting some of their needs, with 15 percent saying it met less than some of their needs and 40 percent saying it meets more than some of their needs.
- Maintaining existing transit service and restoring suspended or cut service was broadly identified as a key need, especially in Island County.

Increase and Improve Service

- Increasing service levels was broadly identified as a need, especially among existing riders. Areas which were identified as high needs areas include:
 - Anacortes
 - Mount Vernon
 - Burlington
 - Oak Harbor
 - South Whidbey
 - East-South Camano Island
 - East Skagit County
 - Swinomish Indian Reservation
 - Guemes Island
 - March’s Point
- Extending the span of service during evenings

and weekends was identified as a very common need, especially among those who need to get to and from work or rely on human service transportation to get to and from community or social events.

- Increased system coverage including fixed-route, paratransit and pocket service was identified by a cross section of users as a need. The following areas were specifically mentioned:
 - South Whidbey
 - Guemes Island
 - Samish Island
 - Stanwood
 - Sedro-Woolley
 - March’s Point
- Improved connections and coordination between transit/ferry service in Skagit County and Island County, including tribal reservations, and to regional destinations like Bellingham, Everett and Seattle were identified. This included both better connections to service and improved frequency of county connector service. This was mentioned more frequently by those in Anacortes and in Island County.
- Improve on-time reliability of fixed-route service.

Increase Access

- The cost of public transit in Skagit County and other transportation options can be a cost burden for those with low-income.
- Accessing fixed-route service can be difficult and unsafe, particularly for those in rural areas.
- Bus stop facilities are minimal with few stops

providing weather protection and seating. This was particularly mentioned by paratransit riders.

Improve Coordination and Communication

- Providing more information about services and how to ride, particularly for those who may be eligible for paratransit service or do not have internet access.
- While paratransit service is greatly appreciated, scheduling of service is inflexible and requires a significant amount of advanced planning. This was a very common comment from paratransit riders.
- Real-time bus location information would make it easier for passengers to use services.

6. Emergency Management

During emergencies, people who rely on the human services transportation system may still need transportation services, particularly if they are required to evacuate or leave their home. To prepare for emergencies Skagit and Island counties have created plans that identify key agencies, their roles, communication channels and responsibilities through their departments of emergency management .

To ensure that human services transportation providers are part of the emergency planning work, state planning guidance requires that emergency planners are made aware of the HSTPs developed by agencies within their jurisdiction. Skagit Transit and Island Transit have already been engaged in local emergency comprehensive planning efforts, with a summary of the emergency plans currently in place below. Upon adoption of this plan, SCOG will contact local emergency planning staff, make them aware of this plan, and communicate the importance of continued engagement.

Skagit Transit

Skagit Transit has a defined role in two emergency management plans. The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan developed by the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management identifies Skagit Transit as an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) member. The plan calls for Skagit Transit to support transportation coordination efforts including the movement of persons with special needs,

including in the case of evacuation.

In this role, Skagit Transit acts as a support agency with guidance from other agencies at the EOC. The plan also identifies Skagit Transit as a resource to help provide a damage assessment throughout the county. The specifics of this coordination are clearly laid out in an interlocal agreement signed in September 2007 between Skagit Transit and Skagit County.

The second plan, developed by the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program, includes emergency closure of I-5 and other major highways. In the long-term, increased transit service or new transit service provided by Skagit Transit was identified as a response strategy.

Island Transit

Two emergency management plans were identified for Island County. The first, which was prepared by the Island County Department of Emergency Management, identifies Island Transit as an EOC participant with responsibility for transportation coordination.

The second plan, developed by the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program, identifies scenarios in which land connections to Whidbey or Camano Island are destroyed. This plan also identifies Island Transit as an EOC participant with responsibility to provide increased or new transit service to ferry terminals.

While these plans exist, no interlocal agreement or memorandum of understanding has been developed between Island Transit and Island County. State guidance suggests that such an agreement be developed to ensure mutual and clear understanding of Island Transit's role, abilities and responsibilities during an emergency.

7. Technology

Advances in technology, particularly around Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), Computer Aided Dispatch and Traveler Information Systems have given transit providers new tools to better operate, plan and manage their bus fleets. The deployment of technology in the transportation sector is broadly categorized as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). Implementation of ITS, which Skagit Transit and Island Transit have already used to varying degrees, helps improve the efficiency of operations, ease of use, safety and quality of experience for transit riders.

Using ITS to improve communication with riders was a common theme identified during public engagement. Rider information such as real-time bus location or arrival information available through an application or on a kiosk was a common request. This information helps reduce anxiety for riders when transferring between buses or between the bus system and Washington State Ferries. It also helps riders deal with transit services delays or know if they have missed their bus.

Below is a summary of existing and planned ITS projects by Skagit Transit and Island Transit. WSDOT has developed a statewide ITS architecture plan which includes a list of potential future ITS investments, including ITS investments in transit.

Skagit Transit

The information below was developed and documented in the Skagit Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) ITS Architecture Plan which was approved in December 2011.

Existing Technology

- Vehicles used for demand responsive service have AVL systems
- Security camera systems on all buses
- Security monitoring systems at Skagit Station, South Mount Vernon Park & Ride and other locations

Planned Projects

- No projects in the Skagit MPO ITS Architecture Plan are currently planned

Potential Projects

The following projects were identified as potential future projects:

- Installation of AVL systems on all buses for improved schedule adherence tracking and real-time information
- Monitoring abilities at all park and ride locations and stations
- Dissemination of real-time information about schedules and vehicle locations to the public
- Coordinate trip planning and information with Washington State Ferries, Whatcom

Transportation Authority, and other regional agencies

- Installation of information kiosks
- Electronic information at transit stops and stations
- Develop transit trip planning tools
- Have the ability to collect electronic fare/passenger information
- Develop transit signal priority systems with local jurisdictions

Island Transit

The information below was documented in the Island Transit ITS Inventory which was compiled in September 2014.

Existing Technology

- All fixed-route and paratransit vehicles have AVL with Mobile Data Terminals
- Video monitoring at:
 - Harbor Station Transit Center
 - Oak Harbor
 - Prairie Station Transit Park (Coupeville)
 - Noble Creek Transit Park (Langley)
 - Whidbey Island Park and Ride (Clinton)
 - Freeland Park and Ride
 - Transit Maintenance Facilities (Camano Island and Coupeville)
- Radio over Internet Protocol to improve radio communication (in progress)
- Trip planning through Google Maps

Planned Projects

- No projects are currently planned or included in the WSDOT ITS Architecture

Potential Projects

The projects below have been identified as potential future projects based on the Island Transit ITS inventory.

- Expanded video monitoring at Bayview Park and Ride, North Oak Harbor Park and Ride and Terry's Corner Park and Ride
- Real-time security audio and video streaming from buses
- Development of a trip planning app
- Installation of real-time bus location information kiosks at major transfer points and potentially development of a smart phone app
- Installation of in-bus automated stop announcement system and reader board

Closed Circuit Surveillance Camera



8. Strategies and Activities

A key deliverable of this plan, the strategies and activities identified below, were developed through an iterative process which included integration of the needs analysis, distillation of public engagement and input from the Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee. The strategies and activities form a shared regional vision of how to improve human services transportation in Skagit and Island counties, including the investment priorities which are used to score and rank projects.

The committee provided early recommendations for each of the strategies, activities and priorities, with the SIRTPO Policy Board adopting their recommendations with some modifications.

Strategies identify the desired high-level priorities of the HSTP, with activities focused on actionable steps that can be taken to advance the associated strategy. The activities included below are commonly used by transportation providers to improve their service and address issues faced by special needs riders.

However, these activities should not be viewed as the only options available to address the intent of each strategy. Additional guidance is available in Section 9.

To complete the application process for WSDOT consolidated grants, applicants must show how their project addresses the identified strategies. The extent to which a project addresses these strategies will determine how high it scores as a regional funding priority.

Project prioritization and WSDOT consolidated grant funding occurs every two years, with HSTP updates completed every four years. Because of this offset

schedule, the project prioritization methodology and priority project list are detailed separately in Appendix F, allowing an easy mid-cycle update to the project priorities in 2016.

Identified Strategies and Activities

The HSTP strategies (“S”) and activities (“A”) are included below.

S1 Preserve Existing Services: maintain or restore existing service levels and vehicle fleet

A1-1: Fund operations of existing or restored service

A1-2: Maintain and/or replace bus fleet to ensure a state of good repair

A1-3: Maintain and build adequate capital reserves to fund fleet replacement

A1-4: Conduct planning and other support tasks necessary to maintain service

S2 Expand Services: increase service levels

A2-1: Increase coverage of service

A2-2: Increase span of service (weekends and evenings)

A2-3: Increase frequency of service

S3 Address High Need Areas: provide service to areas scoring high in human services transportation need index

A3-1: Maintain, restore or expand

County Connector Route 80X



transportation services in high need areas

A3-2: Work with communities in high needs areas to identify gaps and how best to meet needs

S4 Improve Regional Connections: improve cross-regional connections

A4-1: Increase span, frequency and capacity of service

A4-2: Improve schedule integration between systems

A4-3: Cooperatively operate or fund cross-jurisdictional service

S5 Increase User Knowledge: increase knowledge of available transportation options to targeted users

A5-1: Improve user knowledge among special needs populations

A5-2: Leverage existing communication tools to better inform the public of transportation options

A5-3: Increase public knowledge of travel training programs

A5-4: Ensure agencies, groups and communities who support special needs populations are well informed

S6 Improve Existing Service Timeliness: improve quality of timeliness of service

A6-1: Track on-time performance of routes and identify solutions

A6-2: Make changes such as increased schedule padding to improve timeliness of service

S7 Utilize Existing Services: improve utilization of existing transportation services

A7-1: Improve access to service through investments in bus stops, ADA equipment and bicycle equipment

A7-2: Reduce financial barriers to access through a voucher program

A7-3: Continue to improve schedule coordination with different modes and service providers

S8 Expand Driver Training: promote driver training to encourage “compassionate professionalism”

A8-1: Maintain driver training standards

S9 Improve Provider-User Coordination: improve coordination between transit service providers,

human services providers and users

A9-1: Plan and implement mobility management projects

A9-2: Host periodic (annual or quarterly) meetings between transit providers and human services providers

S10 Utilize Technology: utilize technology to provide improved efficiency and user access to mobility options

A10-1: Improve rider information using real-time information systems

A10-2: Implement and utilize radio systems and computer-aided dispatch to improve scheduling efficiency

A10-3: Improve rider information and trip planning tools

A10-4: Improve driver and rider safety through security investments on buses and at stops

S11 Inform Users of Mobility Options: assist human service providers in guiding users to the most efficient mobility options

A11-1: Provide travel training for fixed-route and paratransit service

S12 Improve Provider Regional Coordination: improve coordination between regional and cross-regional transit service providers

A12-1: Modify or add human service or transit service to ensure both services can be provided in concert

A12-2: Coordinate county and city public works investments in transportation

infrastructure to support access to and from transit service

A12-3: Encourage siting of human services and housing for special needs populations near existing fixed-route transit service

S13 Promote Innovation: promote innovative programs, processes and tools that improve efficiency and reduce cost

A13-1: Utilize social media and mobile workshops to engage special needs populations

S14 Promote Environmental Sustainability: incorporate environmentally sustainable practices into regional coordinated transportation planning and services

A14-1: Reduce fleet emissions through increased fleet efficiency and/or alternative fuel source vehicles

S15 Leverage Funding: further leverage available funding

A15-1: Develop funding partnerships to fund projects using a variety of sources other than the WSDOT consolidated grant program

Prioritization of Strategies

While all of the identified strategies are important, some are of higher importance than others. This dynamic was captured by assigning weighted factors to each strategy, with higher values assigned to more important strategies.

Weights were developed by the Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee using a “budgeting” approach, with a total of 100 points allocated among the strategies. The weighted factors were then

reviewed by the Skagit and Island sub-RTPO policy boards and finalized by the SIRTPO Policy Board.

The finalized weighted factors are included in Figure 10. These factors are used to prioritize projects based on which strategy or strategies they satisfy.

Coordination and Implementation

Ongoing coordination and project implementation are some of the key goals of the HSTP. Better communication and coordination between special needs populations, human services providers, transportation providers and other related parties was agreed upon as a valuable outcome from the HSTP work.

Based on suggestions from the Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee, a “menu of options” for continued coordination and implementation were identified. They include:

- An online forum which could provide an avenue for committee members to keep abreast of ongoing efforts, coordinate and provide input
- Mobility Managers – which other counties use as a way to improve communication between organizations on an ongoing basis
- Monthly group meeting – which other counties utilize to coordinate on issues
- Designate a north Puget Sound mobility manager, rather than a county level mobility manager, which would be valuable in helping address cross-county coordination challenges
- Hold an annual transportation forum, which could provide updates on progress and reconvene the advisory committee organizations

Future Steps

Using this menu of options the SIRTPO Policy Board, Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee, stakeholders, and elected officials can determine which, if any, of the above options are appropriate next steps for the region.

Major future work items required for continued eligibility of WSDOT consolidated grant funds includes

an updated prioritized project list in two years and an updated HSTP in four years.

Continued regional coordination and project implementation can strengthen this ongoing effort, improving human services transportation in Skagit and Island counties as well as improving competitiveness for the next grant funding cycle.

Figure 10: Prioritized Strategies and Weights

Implementation Strategies	Weights
S1 Preserve Existing Services: maintain or restore existing service levels and vehicle fleet	15
S2 Expand Services: increase service levels	15
S3 Address High Need Areas: provide service to areas scoring high in human services transportation need index	15
S4 Improve Regional Connections: improve cross-regional connections	15
S5 Increase User Knowledge: increase knowledge of available transportation options to targeted users	10
S6 Improve Existing Service Timeliness: improve quality of timeliness of service	5
S7 Utilize Existing Services: improve utilization of existing transportation services	5
S8 Expand Driver Training: promote driver training to encourage “compassionate professionalism”	5
S9 Improve Provider-User Coordination: improve coordination between transit service providers, human services providers and users	5
S10 Utilize Technology: utilize technology to provide improved efficiency and user access to mobility options	5
S11 Inform Users of Mobility Options: assist human service providers in guiding users to the most efficient mobility options	5
S12 Improve Provider Regional Coordination: improve coordination between regional and cross-regional transit service providers	5
S13 Promote Innovation: promote innovative programs, processes and tools that improve efficiency and reduce cost	5
S14 Promote Environmental Sustainability: incorporate environmentally sustainable practices into regional coordinated transportation planning and services	5
S15 Leverage Funding: further leverage available funding	5

9. WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program

The Washington State Department of Transportation distributes federal and state grant funds through a consolidated, biennial grant funding cycle. This HSTP will inform grant funding for the 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 funding cycles. This system simplifies the grant application process, allowing applicants to apply for multiple grant funding sources with a single application every two years. This also improves WSDOT grant funding flexibility which helps ensure that available funds are fully utilized. The WSDOT consolidated grant program distributes funds competitively from:

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Programs Section 5310, 5311, 5316 and 5317
- State Rural Mobility Program
- State Paratransit/Special Needs Program for nonprofit organizations



Deception Pass

Details on grant applications including application process, project ranking and deadlines are provided in Appendix F and on WSDOT's website.

Program Goals

The consolidated grant program is part of Moving Washington, an integrated, multimodal approach to transportation planning. Key investment principals include maintaining the transportation system, ensuring safety of the traveling public and investing in cost-effective solutions (operate efficiently, manage demand, add capacity strategically).

Specific goals of the consolidated grant program include:

Address Deficiencies – Encourage communities to identify and address deficiencies in paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation.

Provide a Community Benefit – Assist local areas with determining community benefits and support for paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation.

Preservation or Enhancement – Provide funding to preserve or enhance paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation where there is a demonstrated need and measurable benefit.

Community Connections – Support a sustainable network of transportation services within and

between communities.

Financial Partnerships – Establish opportunities for collaboration among local jurisdictions, regional organizations, private sector agencies, state and federal governments, and tribal governments. Ensure stakeholders have a voice in project development. Encourage appropriate cost sharing for projects.

Support Coordination and Multimodal Development – Local organizations are required to coordinate services with other transportation providers in their area, as well as other organizations potentially able to use or purchase the services. Organizations are encouraged to consider all modes/forms of transportation beyond traditional sources to enhance the effectiveness of their services.

Maintain Fleets – As part of Governor Inslee's Results Washington, WSDOT has been given the goal of maintaining the percentage of transit vehicles in the state that are within their minimum useful life.

Eligible Projects

A variety of project types are eligible for grant funding including operating assistance, capital projects, mobility management projects and planning projects. New projects are required to have at least a 5% local match, or 10% match, for continuing projects. Federal

grants require large local match ratios, however in some situations, in-kind contributions can be counted toward the local match. WSDOT’s consolidated grant application provides specific guidance on local match requirements. WSDOT guidance on eligible projects is reproduced below:

Eligible Operating Projects

Operating assistance consists of activities and services directly provided or purchased by the applicant. Project funds may be used for expenses

such as labor, supplies, fuel, etc. Operating grant funds cannot be used for the depreciation of vehicles purchased with federal or state dollars, or for costs associated with expenses incurred during timeframes outside of the grant period (such as prepaid insurance coverage). Examples of eligible operating grants include, but are not limited to:

- *Operating assistance for rural public transportation services*
- *Operating assistance for paratransit/*

special needs transportation services

- *Feeder bus service for the intercity network*
- *Equipment to assist with mobility management activities*

Eligible Capital Projects

All equipment purchased through the consolidated grant program must be used to provide the passenger transportation services outlined in the project application. Examples of eligible capital projects include, but are not limited to:

- *Purchasing buses, vans, and other passenger service vehicles*
- *Refurbishing existing passenger service vehicles*
- *Retrofitting vehicles for wheelchair lifts*
- *Replacement parts for passenger service vehicles*
- *Radios and communications equipment*
- *Computer hardware and software, including dispatching software and data systems*
- *Equipment needed for new technologies, through innovative and improved products, for public transportation that enhances operations, mobility, and access*
- *Other equipment such as bicycle racks and fareboxes*
- *Pre-owned or used wheelchair-accessible, passenger-service vehicles (only if it is clearly identified in the application)*
- *Bus shelters*
- *Maintenance equipment (such as bus lifts*



Chuckanut Park and Ride

- *and specialized diagnostic tools)*
- *Security equipment*

Eligible Mobility Management Projects

Mobility management describes projects that assist special needs populations maintain a quality of life by connecting them to vital services through outreach, information and education, and working to break down transportation barriers for special needs populations. These funds may be used to support salaries and administration of mobility management programs and staff, develop, and/or purchase educational and outreach materials, and support information sharing. Examples of mobility management projects include, but are not limited to:

- *Planning and coordination and/or policy work addressing critical gaps in special needs transportation*
- *Supporting travel training programs*
- *Programs providing information and/or education about special needs transportation*

Eligible Planning Projects

Planning projects consist of planning, coordination, or other activities to address the needs of the applicant and/or the community they serve. Examples of eligible planning projects include, but are not limited to:

- *Local or regional marketing plan for special needs or rural public transportation*

- *Development of a local or regional coordination plan*
- *Agency financial and operating plan*
- *Comprehensive Transportation Plan*

Project Ranking

Based on the priority projects identified by the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board, projects are assigned a letter grade of A, B, C, or D. The top five projects will receive an A grade, the second five will receive a B grade and the third four will receive a C grade. The remainder of projects coming from a region will receive a D grade.

Here are the additional percentile points projects receive through the regional process:

- A** – Top 5 Projects (Additional 50 points)
- B** – Second 5 Projects (Additional 25 points)
- C** – Third 4 Projects (Additional 12 points)
- D** – Remaining Project (0 percentile points added)

When projects are evaluated at the statewide level, they can receive up to 100 points. The maximum score any project can receive is 150 points, which would occur if the project received 100 points through statewide scoring and also received an “A” in the regional ranking process, giving the project an additional 50 points.

The statewide evaluation consists of an evaluation committee which is given a random sample of projects submitted across the state. The committee then conducts a forced-pairs analysis whereby each project is compared with every other project in the random sample. This head-to-head comparison of projects allows evaluators to create a prioritized

project list based upon how well each project fares when compared directly to other projects.

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Appendix A - Committee Meeting Summaries and Responses

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee Meeting
Meeting Summary
SCOG Meeting Room--July 10, 2014, 10am

Present:

Noah Bannister, Boys & Girls Club of Skagit County
Carolyn Chase, Skagit Transit
Lisa Clark, Opportunity Council
Doug Cox, Island County
Elisa Delgado, Volunteers of America
Anna Esquibel, Northwest Educational Services District #189
Mark Hamilton, SCOG
Ally Horry, NWRC
Karla Jacks, Camano Center
Patrick Lynch, Transpo
Evan Olsen, WSDOT
Adam Parast, Transpo
Tara Satushek, Swinomish Tribe
Marcy Smith, Skagit Transit
Liz Theaker, SCOG (intern)
Dee Wells, Skagit Transit

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am.

SCOG Introduction and Process Overview

Following introductions, Mark Hamilton's presentation included SCOG's history and roles since inception in the 1960s. He explained the relationship with Island County and the structure of the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). Mark explained that the Skagit Island Special Needs Transportation Committee (SIRTPO) was created by the RTPO and is an advisory vs. decision-making body. The committee will focus primarily on:

1. Preparing a regional coordinated public transit human services transportation plan, and
2. Prioritizing regional human services transportation projects.

Mark explained that this must be done every four years, with the resulting plan presented to the State. A WSDOT project schedule from 2013 was presented. The draft plan must be completed by September 2014 and approved by the RTPO. Once approved, the plan must be submitted no later than December 2014.

The committee's goal is to meet once per month July through November with five meetings total, with meetings lasting roughly 1.5 hours each. Mark distributed questionnaires for the purpose of collecting committee-member demographics as required by Title VI of the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA).

Transpo Group Introduction and Process Overview

Adam and Patrick explained that a major challenge to creating a Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) is the collection and prioritization of information and needs. Transpo has worked with Pierce County and the State of Washington in developing HSTPs; the group has extensive experience collecting and distilling large amounts of information. They explained that while the final plan may not fulfill everyone's needs, it will be informed by all stakeholders present. They gave an overview of the previous Transpo HSTP for Skagit-Island counties and felt the structure was conducive to structuring essential information needed for filling out grant applications. Mark mentioned that the documents discussed by Transpo are available for committee review at www.scog.net, and that he would also create a section in the SCOG website where he would upload pertinent documents.

Transpo identified the "high-importance population" as older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income persons. Three main strategies in developing a new HSTP are: Committee, Listening Session & Survey (of service providers), and Ride Along (ride on a service and experience it, challenges, etc.). The Ride Along, which is an informal survey, may involve participation by committee members.

Transpo will also focus on a service gap assessment that will consist of three parts: Awareness (customer perception of the service), Customers (Are customers getting where they need to go? What areas are underserved? Are there issues with inter-jurisdictional cooperation, expansion, or safety?), and Operations (funding to preserve service, fleet maintenance, etc.). Coordination initiatives include: Policies (goals), Programs (objectives: programs intended to break down barriers that make system seem disjointed), and Projects (measures: projects typically defined as capital or operations; outgrowth of certain programmatic initiatives). Additional items include: Review of Past Projects (did they meet goals and objectives?) and a Clear Prioritization Process.

WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program Overview

Evan Olsen identified the mission of this program: To support mobility for those unable to transport themselves. The strategy is: To address gaps in transportation through grants for special needs purposes.

This mission and strategy are met through the HSTP process (a requirement for Federal funds):

- Participation by stakeholders
- Addresses service gaps for special needs

- Locally derived priority project list

Evan gave an overview of the Consolidated Grants program, which includes two state program grants (Paratransit/Special Needs and Rural Mobility Competitive grants) and four federal grants (FTA 5310, 5311, 5316, and 5317). The Consolidated Grants program helps streamline a grant process that was previously challenged by the multiple funding cycles/fiscal years of various granting agencies.

Eligible Project Types include Planning, Operating, Capital Vehicles and Equipment, and Mobility Management. Evan mentioned that some of these grant sources are underutilized, and that eligible recipients include Public Agencies, Non-profits, For-profits, and Tribes. Since 2005, historical funding levels have ranged from \$27-\$39 million per biennium. Evan also explained the evaluation process, which includes a Forced Pairs analysis and a regional ranking point system (A's, B's, C's, D's). Grant reviewers allocate funds by ranking and recommending projects to WSDOT, who in turn matches appropriate federal and state funds to those projects. Evaluations occur in early January 2014, funding is awarded that spring, and the projects are expected to start July 1, 2015. The grant application deadline has been moved up to November 2014 for the next funding cycle.

Logistics for Future Meetings

Morning meetings are preferred, and can occur in the SCOG meeting room. August 6 at 10 a.m. will be the next meeting, and the committee can discuss future meeting logistics at that time. Mark added that any committee members wanting additional items on the agenda are welcome to contact him at markh@scog.net.

Next Steps and Homework Assignment

Transpo Group needs more detail regarding what specific transportation services are offered by the entities represented on the Special Needs Committee. This information can be e-mailed to Liz Theaker at lizt@scog.net. The ideal information will include general service area, origins and destinations of trips, and results of any outreach efforts conducted by individual organizations. Transpo will send more specific data requests to Mark as needed, but more information is better.

The committee is also asked to send responses to the following two questions no later than two weeks prior to the August 6 meeting:

1. What do you hope to get out of the planning process?
2. Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?

The meeting ended at 11:33am.

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee
Meeting Summary
SCOG Meeting Room--August 6, 2014, 10am

Present:

Carolyn Chase, Skagit Transit
Robert Gummere, Skagit Transit
Mark Hamilton, SCOG
Aly Horry, NWRC
Karla Jacks, Camano Center
Monica Lopez, Opportunity Council
Kevin Murphy, SCOG
Evan Olsen, WSDOT
Adam Parast, Transpo
Martha Rose, Island Transit
Gail Sealander, Volunteers of America NS 211
Marcia Smith, Skagit Transit
Liz Theaker, SCOG (intern)
Dee Wells, Island Transit

Meeting called to order at 10:05am

Findings on Information Gathering

Data has been gathered from Skagit Prosperity Report, top Island Transit origin-destinations, top Skagit Transit origin-destinations, responses to agency questionnaire, demographics information, and NW Educational Services District data. Additional information collected will be included in the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (HSTP). Demographics still being collected for Service Gaps Analysis; data will come from U.S. Census Bureau data (variables will include disability status, population older than 65, no access to vehicle, and low income (150%)).

Survey and Sharing of Existing Data

Adam developed a draft survey; committee feedback is requested. Mark needs to know: 1. What data each agency has available, and 2. Whether that data is confidential. This also helps prevent duplication of survey responses. Each agency is encouraged to brainstorm and share how they might get the survey distributed to their ridership (paper, online survey via SurveyMonkey, etc.). Adam encouraged committee members to view the survey as a tool to gather information needed by their own agencies as well as supplement the final report. An additional goal is to streamline the survey and eliminate/consolidate questions prior to distribution.

Suggestions for the survey included:

- Add question "Would you like to receive training to transition from paratransit?"
- Add spaces for name, phone, etc. in case someone would like to be contacted re: training

- Change responses to “Do you know what transportation services are currently available to you?” from nominal to ordinal level
- Convert some of the nominal responses to ordinal level
- Add Camano Island, Everett, Clinton, Bayview, Stanwood, Greenbank to list of destinations

General comments/comments on how to effectively distribute surveys to vast range of respondents:

- For Camano, use senior center during lunches, Meals-On-Wheels, one-on-one contact, fire auxiliary groups, social clubs; electronic communication not recommended for this area
- Many people are intimidated by transit process
- Promote URL, gather responses over phone
- Meals on Wheels, Community Action (Mark will contact C.A.)
- Churches on Camano; pastors know who is struggling in community
- Mark hoping each agency can devise method to collect surveys
- Cross-county connections
- Check with tribes to see if they endorse use of ACS data to accurately reflect the demographics within their tribes

Additional communication with tribes is sought. WSDOT allows agencies with main transportation center outside of Skagit/Island with services in Skagit/Island to participate in transportation grant program even if their main offices are located outside of the region.

Responses to the survey can be scanned and e-mailed; that’s easiest for SCOG and Transpo. Mailed copies or hand delivery also would work.

Exercise to Identify Properties

Adam feels the accuracy/specificity of project priorities can be improved upon since last report, and briefly reviewed the 2007 and 2010 plan outlines. Dot exercise for priorities listed on a panel at meeting measured committee priority preferences for topics in the following general areas (followed by number of votes in parentheses):

- Coordination and Communication (7)
- System Efficiency (3)
- User Experience (4)
- System Preservation (9)
- Environment (0)
- Integrated Planning (0)
- Innovative Planning (4)

Comments:

- Paperwork for users to sign up for transit services is lengthy, and this can be costly for agencies
- Decrease barriers of cross-regional transit, and simplify sign-up process in general
- Agencies sometimes pay for taxis to transport users between areas of service (service boundaries)
- Transit to rural areas continues to be a challenge

- Committee member had questions about the idea of an “information clearinghouse;” Mark mentioned that many organizations/regions have a mobility manager that serves this purpose
- This region relies heavily on “Google Transit”
- There is no one entity that organizes regional transit
- One committee member feels the use of funds to support a clearinghouse is wasteful; Mark clarified that the idea where mobility managers are used in other regions is to create a central coordinated function to prevent users having to navigate through multiple transportation service agencies
- “Travel trainers” are important for assisting users needing guidance in the actual utilization of the transit resource (example: assisting a young rider with autism)
- Committee members felt the list provided by Transpo for dot exercise was comprehensive and accurately reflects a full range of concerns
- “Statewide dialogue on Medicaid Brokerage Procedures” continues to be a challenge; committee feels it should remain in list of policies moving forward

Adam will update the 2014 list to reflect dot exercise preferences and feedback. Mark mentioned that priorities would be developed at the September meeting, as a recommendation to elected officials, which will ultimately assist with evaluating regional special needs transportation projects.

Roundtable and Feedback in Process So Far

Mark distributed handout featuring a timeline for “milestones” that must be reached for grant applications and the HSTP (now through December 2014). Timeline tasks are color coded to specify which agency is responsible for each task. Mark reviewed milestones listed on timeline.

There are two listening sessions in contract with Transpo. Mark requested committee inform him of events/venues that might serve as good listening locations. They recommended:

- Project Homeless Connect, coordinated by Community Action Agency: event where homeless or those risking homelessness can get services (mobile dentist, Veterans service, ID cards, etc).
- Community Resources Network
- Senior Fair(s)
- Skagit Senior Day in the Park/Maiben Park, Burlington (August)
- Buddy Walk (Special Needs event, 300-500 people)
- Whidbey Island locations
- Check with Camano/Stanwood Family Resource Center to reach special needs/disabled families (contact: Christy Connors)
- Veterans organizations

Ridealongs will happen soon as another way to reach out to transportation system users. This may be coordinated in conjunction with some event dates listed above. Committee members suggested those conducting ridealongs contact individual agencies first to find out heaviest route times.

Additional comments:

Camano Island currently relies heavily on Snohomish County transit services; many commuters are going south from Stanwood to medical services at Providence.

Next Steps and Homework Assignment

1. Review survey and provide feedback so it can be finalized. Once finalized, it will be e-mailed to committee for distribution.
2. Please provide feedback by the end of the week (5pm, August 8) to lizt@scog.net.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 10

Meeting ended at 11:35am

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee
Meeting Summary
SCOG Meeting Room — September 11, 2014, 10am

Present:

Doug Cox, Island County
Carolyn Chase, Skagit Transit
Elisa Delgado, Volunteers of America NS 211
Robert Gummere, Skagit Transit
Mark Hamilton, SCOG
Karla Jacks, Camano Center
Monica Lopez, Opportunity Council
Evan Olsen, WSDOT
Adam Parast, Transpo
Gabe Philips, SCOG
Tara Satushek, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Dee Wells, Island Transit

Meeting called to order at 10:05am

Welcome

Mark welcomed committee members to the 3rd Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee meeting.

Transportation Service Provider Inventory

Adam presented the findings from the inventory collection work that Transpo has been doing over the past month. He is documenting all public transit providers, including those based outside of the region such as Whatcom Transportation Authority and Community Transit, as well as other providers in the region. Skagit Transit provided 640,000 fixed route trips and 55,000 paratransit trips in 2013. Island Transit provided 1.1 million fixed route trips in 2013 and 64,000 paratransit trips.

Island Transit experienced severe service cuts beginning in September 2014. The Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) will likely have a section describing the extent of these cuts due to their importance to public transportation regionally.

Adam described other human service providers in the region including services directed at seniors and other clients. Companies with private transportation services were also presented.

Needs and Gaps Assessment

Following the inventory, Adam described the work being done to identify human services transportation needs and gaps across the region. He noted the sources used in the needs and gaps assessment which included committee meetings, rider surveys, events, previous plans and other plans.

A draft needs index map was created by Transpo to show where the highest number and proportion of elderly persons, persons with disabilities, persons without a vehicle and persons in poverty live. Preliminary areas with the highest need, both by total number of persons and by proportion: east Skagit County, south Whidbey Island; and south Camano Island. Many other parts of Island County and west Skagit County also indicated a high need for human transportation services, based on the factors considered.

Karla mentioned that she thought the results were accurate based on her understanding of south Camano Island. She said transit service is limited to north Camano Island and many island residents catch Community Transit buses in Stanwood.

Mark noted at the end of the presentation that the needs assessment would continue and that we are still gathering information through surveys, community events and other outreach.

WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program

Mark gave an overview of the WSDOT consolidated grant program. The application materials were released in August and this is the first time that the committee has got to discuss them since then. The committee discussed several aspects of the grant program including the various grant funding available through the consolidated program, matching requirements and the relationship between the grant applications and the HSTP.

Tara mentioned that Swinomish applied for and received a grant in 2008, but that Skagit Transit offered the transportation services that the grant funded. Evan said that WSDOT consolidated grant program would allow that type of project as well where funding would actually go to a different agency than the applicant; that in return offers the services for the applicant.

Evan presented draft results for distribution of regional ranking allotments across the state. He said that the regional "letter grades" should be finalized soon, after a meeting of the state MPO-RTPO coordinating committee.

Finalizing Priorities for Implementation, Weighting Priorities and Recommendation

The committee reviewed the strategies that they had seen at their previous meeting, and were presented the results of an earlier weighting exercise that they did and was done at Skagit Senior Day in the Park.

The committee went through discussions to finalize the list of strategies and develop priority weights for each strategy. 15 strategies were settled-on for prioritization. These recommended strategies and weights were:

Recommended Implementation Strategies	Recommended Priority Weights
Preserve Existing Services: maintain or restore existing service levels and vehicle fleet	20
Expand Services: increase service levels	15
Increase User Knowledge: increase knowledge of available transportation options to target users	10
Address High Need Area: provide service to area scoring high in human services transportation need index	10
Improve Existing Service Timeliness: improve quality of timeliness of service	5
Utilize Existing Services: improve utilization of existing transportation services	5
Improve Regional Connections: improve cross-regional connections	5
Expand Driver Training: promote driver training to encourage “compassionate professionalism”	5
Improve Provider-User Coordination: improve coordination between transit service providers, human services providers and users	5
Utilize Technology: utilize technology to provide improved efficiency and user access to mobility options	5
Inform Users of Mobility Options: assist human service providers in guiding users to the most efficient mobility options	5
Improve Provider Regional Coordination: improve coordination between transit service providers, human service providers and users	5
Promote Innovation: promote innovative programs, processes and tools that improve efficiency and reduce cost	5
Promote Environmental Sustainability: promote environmentally sustainable practices into state coordinated transportation planning and services	5
Leverage Funding: further leverage available funding	5

The above strategies and weights were recommended by the committee to the Skagit sub-RTPO and Island sub-RTPO to evaluate regional human services transportation projects in Skagit and Island counties. Once approved, the strategies will be used as criteria to evaluate grant applications through a regional competitive process, the results of which will inform the prioritized project list of human services transportation projects for the region.

Roundtable and Feedback in Process So Far

Over 80 completed paper surveys were brought to the meeting and given to Mark. Mark said that the survey would close at the end of September so to continue to distribute the surveys until then. Paper surveys can be mailed, emailed or hand delivered to Mark, or brought to the next meeting on October 1st.

Robert mentioned that the Buddy Walk would be happening October 11th and would be a good chance to get further input into the planning process. Mark said he will contact the event organizer and that SCOG plans on participating, though it will be too late to survey as the survey will be closed. Mark

mentioned that as with Project Homeless Connect, it would be better to streamline how we ask for input to tailor our approach to the intended audience at the events.

Mark mentioned that there will be two upcoming outreach opportunities in Island County. On Monday, September 15th, SCOG staff will be visiting several locations on Whidbey Island and on the next day, SCOG staff will be facilitating a focus group with Camano residents with disabilities.

Next Steps

Mark noted that the recommendation from today's meeting would go to the Skagit sub-RTPO on September 17th and the Island sub-RTPO on September 24th. After criteria and weights are approved by decision-making bodies, SCOG anticipates issuing a Call for Projects shortly thereafter.

The committee agreed that a one-month window for the Call for Projects was reasonable. Mark said that right after the call closes; the committee will be sent all applications and be given about a week to evaluate them. A scoring sheet will be included for evaluation of each project. Applicants cannot score their own project(s).

Finally, Mark said that Transpo will be developing a first draft of the HSTP for committee review for their meeting on October 1st. The committee will be asked to review the draft prior to the public comment period.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 1st at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting ended at 11:45am

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee
Meeting Summary
SCOG Meeting Room — October 1, 2014, 10 am

Present:

Doug Cox, Island County
Carolyn Chase, Skagit Transit
Lynn Christofersen, Community Action
Elisa Delgado, Volunteers of America North Sound 211
Coey Gilliland, Stillaguamish Tribe
Robert Gummere, Skagit Transit
Mark Hamilton, SCOG
Aly Horry, Northwest Regional Council
Karla Jacks, Camano Center
Linda Madigan, Goodwill
Adam Parast, Transpo
Gabe Philips, SCOG
Tara Satushek, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Gail Selander, Volunteers of America North Sound 211
Marcy Smith, Skagit Transit
Dee Wells, Island Transit

Meeting called to order at 10:00 am

Welcome

Mark welcomed committee members to the 4th Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee meeting. First time attendees to a committee meeting were Coey Gilliland, Lynn Christofersen and Linda Madigan.

Draft Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP)

Adam provided an overview of what has been done so far in preparing the HSTP. He went over an outline of the HSTP, highlighting key aspects of what each section will include. The survey and survey responses will be included in an appendix. Another appendix will include the prioritized list of projects for the region.

Adam provided a summary of the needs analysis, a more thorough version of which was presented at an earlier meeting. He also presented an updated needs index map which used proportion based (% of population special needs) and population based (total special needs persons) metrics. Age, income, disability status and access to a vehicle were used in the needs index map, with the top 25% of special needs persons identified as the highest need areas.

Emergency management and technology are two new sections in the HSTP that are required by the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT). Skagit County has an emergency management plan and an interlocal agreement between Skagit County and Skagit Transit to respond to emergency

events. Island County has a disaster preparedness program and has developed scenarios of how response would occur if key bridges (SR-20 & SR 532) were closed.

Skagit County has an intelligent transportation systems (ITS) architecture document which includes technology employed or planned to improve the transportation system. Skagit Transit has several technologies used or planned to improve their transportation services. Island County does not have a similar ITS architecture, but Island Transit utilizes several ITS technologies, and plans security upgrades to park-and-ride lots and transfer stations.

Determining “Activities” for HSTP

The committee had already recommended draft strategies for the HSTP at their last meeting. Since then, Adam has prepared a list of activities to consider to implement those strategies. Nearly all the strategies had one or more draft activities associated with them, and Adam presented these to the group.

Mark told the committee to think about projects their organization might propose and ensure they felt comfortable that the activities accurately represented projects they are considering to implement the HSTP. He said now would be the time to suggest additions, if there are activities that should be included.

Adam noted there are three strategies that do not have activities directly associated with them.

The committee suggested the following:

- Changing the wording of the first strategy. Mark mentioned that the strategies had already gone to the decision-makers so he would not recommend changing them at this point. There was already agreement among the decision-makers, at the sub-RTPO levels, with the strategy language.
- Adding “planning” as an activity under the existing services strategy. Planning allows organizations to continue offering existing services.
- Adding “voucher programs” as an activity under the utilizing existing services strategy. This type of activity would provide qualified persons free vouchers to use existing transportation services.
- Adding “alternative fuel vehicles” under the environmental sustainability strategy. These vehicles could also reduce fleet emissions, but it should be clear that utilizing these types of vehicles is an activity that promotes environmental sustainability.
- Add “additional stops” as an expanding services strategy. There are examples of areas, such as Exit 210 on Interstate 5, the site of a future economic development hub, where adding stops to existing transportation services may be warranted in the future.
- Adding “improving existing facilities” under the appropriate strategy. An example was given whereby bus shelters could be added to an existing stop without shelters, but this type of improvement is not specifically identified in any activity.
- Ensure that “activities” are identified as examples of activities and that the activities included are not all inclusive. There may be additional activities that implement the strategies.

Mark noted that activities will not always cleanly fit into only one strategy and there may be crossover from one activity to more than one strategy. For example, mobility managers could inform users of mobility options (one strategy) and improve provider-user coordination (another strategy). Projects

that organizations propose as part of the regional ranking program may address many strategies in the plan.

Ongoing Implementation after HSTP Adoption

Mark provided a summary of the outreach done to-date as part of the planning process including at public events, at meetings, through surveys and a prioritization exercise. He also noted that there is an emphasis from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), which is new for this plan, to ensure that ongoing outreach and plan implementation continue after plan adoption. The HSTP is scheduled to be adopted in December 2014 and the contract with WSDOT runs through June 2015. The committee is created for calendar year 2014 only, as a Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization advisory committee. Finally, Mark noted that SCOG has retained a public involvement consultant to assist with continuing HSTP outreach through June 2015, in whatever form it takes.

The committee presented several ideas for continuing outreach and coordination. These ideas, and examples of how coordination is done in other areas, are as follows:

- It is valuable to have a group to communicate with that conducts special needs transportation services.
- We could have an online forum where we are kept abreast of ongoing efforts, as a committee, and to provide input and coordinate through this type of venue.
- Other counties have mobility managers, which was discussed as an activity to be included in the HSTP today. It is these persons' responsibilities to coordinate special needs transportation in their area and provide a linkage between different county/regional organizations that provide special needs transportation services. SCOG could work with this coordinator in some way.
- Snohomish County has a mobility manager and a countywide group of special needs transportation service providers. This group meets monthly and just recently submitted a prioritized list of projects for the county to an executive committee for approval.
- What is needed is a regional mobility manager that coordinates all the North Puget Sound counties, as regional connections are so important to special needs transportation. Currently, mobility managers tend to be county-specific or focus on areas even smaller than the county level (ex. King County has three). Mobilizing a regional perspective, through a regional mobility manager, would be quite an undertaking.
- We could have an annual transportation forum. Information (surveys, other data) could be collected on a regular basis and it could be shared at this annual event. Participants could be similar to the ones on this committee. Getting more information out to the region can only be beneficial in coordinating our transportation services.
- It is important to keep connected on a regular basis. Emerging issues can be addressed more quickly if there is regular contact between different transportation service providers.

Mark asked if there should be ongoing opportunities to connect with special needs persons directly, similar to what has been done as part of the planning process over the past couple months. He stated that he is hesitant to attend to many events presenting what has been done on the HSTP, and instead would like to do outreach that garners input that will inform the process in some way. This answer was received:

- Skagit Transit is always attending these types of events, notifying the public of transportation services offered and gathering input. Something similar could be done as part of HSTP ongoing outreach, gathering additional input and informing the public of services that are offered by a multitude of regional organizations.

Roundtable and Feedback on Process So Far

Mark discussed the upcoming Buddy Walk as an opportunity for public outreach, but a limited opportunity because the draft HSTP is being finalized and the essential information gathering stage has passed. Similar to the last agenda item, he would prefer to seek input, but as it is getting late in the planning process, opportunities for input appear to be much more limited.

The committee discussed the positives and negatives of attendance. There was no consensus as to whether or not SCOG staff should attend. Mark said he would think it over further based on what was said at the meeting, and talk again with the event coordinator before deciding on whether or not to attend.

Update and Next Steps

Mark noted that the survey has closed and the results have been analyzed by Transpo. Survey results will be included in the HSTP, as an appendix.

Mark provided an update on the evaluation criteria (strategies) and weights that were recommended by the committee to Skagit and Island sub-RTPO policy boards. The boards agreed on the strategies, but did not agree entirely on the weights assigned to each strategy. A final decision will be made at the full Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization Policy Board meeting on October 15th.

Mark presented a timeline showing the major steps between issuance of the Call for Projects on September 29th and the next committee meeting on November 5th.

Mark said that the HSTP is being drafted currently by Transpo and a draft would be ready and distributed to the committee by October 15th at the latest. Any comments from the committee as Transpo develops the draft should be sent to Mark for consideration as the document is prepared.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 5th at 10:00 am

Meeting ended at 11:30 am

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee
Meeting Summary
SCOG Meeting Room — November 5, 2014, 10 am

Present:

Carolyn Chase, Skagit Transit
Mark Hamilton, SCOG
Aly Horry, Northwest Regional Council
Jen Milton, Community Action of Skagit County
Shirley Johnson Murray, Washington Vocational
Evan Olsen, WSDOT
Adam Parast, Transpo
Gabe Philips, SCOG
Nicholas Pinch, Island Transit
Ken Riley, Island Transit
Tara Satushek, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Marcy Smith, Skagit Transit
Dee Wells, Island Transit
Bretta Williams, Washington Vocational

Meeting called to order at 10:00 am

Welcome

Mark welcomed committee members to the 5th and final Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee meeting. First time attendees to a committee meeting were Shirley Johnson Murray, Nicholas Pinch, Ken Riley, Jen Milton and Bretta Williams.

Evaluation of Regional Human Services Transportation Projects

Mark presented an overview of the process for ranking regional human services transportation projects in Skagit and Island counties. Skagit-Island has received letter grades from WSDOT to assign to projects, having received 5 A's, 5 B's and 4 C's. A's get an extra 50 points in the statewide competitive process, B's get an extra 25 points and C's get an extra 12 points.

There were seven projects submitted through the call for projects: three by Skagit Transit; one by Community Action of Skagit County; and three by Island Transit. Evaluators on the committee submitted evaluations of projects to Mark by 11/3, and did not score any projects they had submitted, if any. Seven of the organizations scored applications and submitted them to Mark.

Applications were evaluated based on 15 criteria, approved with weights by the SIRTPO Policy Board at their October 15, 2014 meeting. The maximum any project could receive was 120 points.

Representatives from Skagit Transit, Community Action and Island Transit described each of their applications submitted into the regional competitive process and answered questions committee members had regarding their applications.

The average total scores, ranking and letter grade recommended by the committee to the SIRTPO Policy Board are as follows:

Skagit Transit Projects

- **#1 Expansion of Fixed Route Services in Sedro Woolley and Burlington**
 - 66.33 average total score, ranked 2 of 7
 - “A” letter grade
- **#2 ADA Next Stop Announcement System**
 - 59.33 average total score, ranked 5 of 7
 - “B”* letter grade
- **#3 Mobility Management Specialist**
 - 61.83 average total score, ranked 3 of 7
 - “A” letter grade

Community Action Project

- **#1 Utilize Existing Services: Improve Utilization of Existing Transportation Services**
 - 66.67 average total score, ranked 1 of 7
 - “A” letter grade

Island Transit Projects

- **#1 Five Medium Duty Cutaways and Five 7-8 Passenger Vans**
 - 52.33 average total score, ranked 7 of 7
 - “A”* letter grade
- **#2 Preserve and Replace Capital Equipment and Bus Communications: 2 Bus Shelters; Paint Oak Harbor Transit Station; 10 Bus Surveillance Systems; 65 Tablets; 11 Rebuilt Engines; Alignment Machine**
 - 52.47 average total score, ranked 6 of 7
 - “B” letter grade
- **#3 Specific Operating Assistance to Preserve Existing Service**
 - 60.20 average total score, ranked 4 of 7
 - “A” letter grade

*Note: Skagit Transit staff offered for their Project #2 to receive a B letter grade, even though it was ranked 5 of 7 in the process, so that Island Transit could receive an A letter grade for their Project #1 – noted by Island Transit staff as a very important need given their aging fleet.

Mark and Nicholas noted that Island Transit Project #3 was missing some financial information when the application was submitted to SCOG. The funding request to the state was excluded. The funding request is for approximately \$1,400,000. The committee unanimously recommended including the project for consideration by the SIRTPO Policy Board even though the funding request was omitted from

the application. The committee said the project should not be excluded from consideration due to missing financial information. The funding request amount for project applications was not considered by the evaluators when scoring the projects.

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP)

Adam presented the final version of the HSTP to the committee. The committee recommended approval of the HSTP to the SIRTPO Policy Board. Mark said that the recommendation would go to the Skagit and Island sub-RTPOs in November and the full SIRTPO Policy Board in December. There will be a 14-day public comment period on the HSTP, beginning today.

Roundtable

The committee expressed their appreciation for the process and pleasure with the final product of the project prioritization and HSTP.

Carolyn said that what she thought were good projects didn't seem to fit well with the criteria. Marcy noted that the high need areas map in the HSTP didn't factor in low-income populations very well. She said there are areas in Anacortes that appear to have a very high need, but have much higher income than Sedro-Woolley, which doesn't appear as a high need area on the map.

Dee expressed her appreciation for Skagit Transit taking a "B" on one of their projects so that an Island Transit project could receive an "A". Ken seconded that.

Aly said that that she was involved with project prioritization in Skagit-Island and in Whatcom County, and she felt that the Skagit-Island process was much more robust.

Update and Final Steps

Mark noted that he attended the Skagit Buddy Walk in October to get some final input for the HSTP.

Mark stated that both recommendations from the committee would come to the Skagit and Island sub-RTPOs in November and to the full SIRTPO Policy Board in December.

Mark reminded organizations to submit project applications directly to WSDOT by November 19, 2014 and recommended coordinating with Evan leading up to that deadline to ensure that all application materials were complete before submittal.

Finally, Mark said that a public comment period for the HSTP would begin today, November 5, and continue for two weeks. The HSTP will be posted on SCOG's website and public notice will be posted in newspapers in Skagit and Island counties.

Next Meeting

This was the last meeting of the Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee.

Meeting ended at 11:30 am

Special Need Committee Response

Agency	Question	Response	
Camano Center	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	More support and coverage area.	
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	(Not answered.)	
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	Our services are targeted at most special needs of the senior population.	
	How many trips annually do you provide?	We do on average 40 Field trips a year.	
	What is your service area?	Camano and Stanwood	
	What kind of service do you provide?	We have services for folks to and from the Dr's appointments done by volunteer medical drivers. Prescription pickup and delivery services, also done by volunteers. Some of the volunteer drivers also deliver an average of 4800 meals on wheels per year. We also do Grocery deliveries for folks who cannot drive but need groceries and necessities We do have a bus that is ADA but at this time it is only used for trips.	
	What is your general span of service?	Monday- Friday 8am-8pm	
	What is your agency's mission?	The mission of Camano Senior and Community Center is to provide programs, activities, services and educational opportunities for seniors and the community of Camano Island.	
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	Trips vary from month to month. We go as far south as Seattle and as far north as Bellingham	
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	We have a bus that is wheel chair accessible, a minivan, pickup truck and a box truck	
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	We have 1 paid Fleet manager and we rely on the rest of our drivers as volunteers.	
	Community Action	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	My goal would be to represent the interests of low-income community members for whom transportation and mobility can often be barriers to economic success.
		Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	I saw a lot of tribal communities but didn't see the Swinomish. Other social service agencies might include Goodwill, DSHS Community Service Office, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Compass Health and the Housing Authority of Skagit County.
		Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	Low-income community members that may include seniors and disabled.
How many trips annually do you provide?		Through our Senior & Disabled Volunteer Services Program we provide about 300 volunteer provided rides annually. We also purchase \$14,767 worth of bus passes and distribute 656 bus passes for people receiving services through our East County Resource Center, Housing and Essential Needs Program, Housing, Critical Needs, Jail Transition and WorkFirst Programs. Additionally we've been promised free one day bus passes from SKAT to distribute to low-income community members and we expect to have those in our possession in January. We also provide 1,250+ gas vouchers per year to low-income community members so they can get to work and take care of other basic needs.	
What is your service area?		All of Skagit County and for a few services we work in the additional counties of Whatcom, Island, San Juan & Snohomish. The majority of clients originate from the Mount Vernon area, then Sedro-Woolley, Anacortes, Burlington, and other areas.	
What kind of service do you provide?	Bus passes, gas vouchers and volunteer provided rides to medical treatments. The vast majority of destinations involve medical visits, then shopping, and other errands. Community Action provides volunteer transportation services through the Senior & Disabled Program. The majority of clients originate from the Mount Vernon area, then Sedro-Woolley, Anacortes, Burlington, and other areas. The vast majority of destinations involve medical visits, then shopping, and other errands. Geographically, most destinations are to Mount Vernon (including Skagit Valley Hospital and related clinics), the Burlington, Sedro-Woolley (including United General and related clinics), Anacortes (including Island Hospital and related clinics), Bellingham (including St. Joseph's and related clinics), Stanwood, and Everett (including Providence and related clinics).		

Agency	Question	Response
	What is your general span of service?	Our offices are open Monday – Friday from 8:30 to 5 (WIC open until 6:30 M-Th). Often demand outstrips supply especially the gas vouchers. Customers may only receive one Critical Needs voucher every six months and the funds are often exhausted by the second week of the month. Senior & Disabled persons receiving assistance with transportation may be served for an extended (months) period of time while they are undergoing prolonged medical treatments.
	What is your agency's mission?	Our mission is to foster and advocate for self-sufficiency among low-income people in Skagit County.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	Geographically, most destinations are to Mount Vernon (including Skagit Valley Hospital and related clinics), the Burlington, Sedro-Woolley (including United General and related clinics), Anacortes (including Island Hospital and related clinics), Bellingham (including St. Joseph's and related clinics), Stanwood, and Everett (including Providence and related clinics).
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	We have no fleet of vehicles. Volunteers use their own vehicles for Senior & Disabled Services.
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	Volunteer drivers. Volunteers may submit their mileage for reimbursement.
Disabled American Veterans	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	Not sure at this time.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	Not yet.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	Yes.
	How many trips annually do you provide?	We provide a van that goes to the VA hospital in Seattle 5 days a week.
	What is your service area?	We serve Oak Harbor, Mount Vernon, and points south
	What kind of service do you provide?	Fixed route
	What is your general span of service?	Monday - Friday, 6 a.m. until return.
	What is your agency's mission?	To help our veterans in need. To help veterans, widows and children.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	Oak Harbor - Seattle VA medical center.
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	1 8-passenger van.
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	Our van drivers are all volunteers.
Island Transit	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	Well, we hope to learn if there are any "gaps" in service that we are in a position to close.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	I would think that a representative from any of the most frequented origins and destinations for our paratransit riders would have some type of input as they deal with our riders on a professional basis. DSHS, Senior Services, Compass Health, Service Alternatives, Opportunity Council, etc. These entities obviously have a better understanding of the life challenges that our riders face. I fear confidentiality may be an issue.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	No, all are welcome. Our Mobility Training is for anyone who would like help riding the fixed route, transitional youth, or specific para riders who are able to transition to the fixed route from paratransit. We do not prioritize our paratransit trips.

Agency	Question	Response
	How many trips annually do you provide?	2010: 623,338 Fixed-Route (6-1-2010 through 12-31-2010 only) and 26,180 Para-Transit 2011: 1,062,055 Fixed-Route and 57,795 Para-Transit 2012: 1,097,886 Fixed-Route and 61,925 Para-Transit 2013: 1,090,643 Fixed-Route and 64,106 Para-Transit 2014: 552,660 Fixed-Route (1-1-2014 through 6-30-2014 only) and 31,988 Para-Transit
	What is your service area?	Island Transit services from the Clinton Ferry North to March's Point. We also service Camano Island into Stanwood and Skagit Station. See attached maps and detailed explanation.
	What kind of service do you provide?	Fixed Route, Paratransit, Route Deviation, Van Pool, Ride Matching Programs
	What is your general span of service?	Weekdays, our first Route starts at 3:45 am and ends at 8:15 pm. Saturdays, our earliest start time is 7:00 am and we run until 7:00 pm. We are closed on Sunday.
	What is your agency's mission?	To provide a package of rider-sharing services which emphasizes rider use, safety, and satisfaction, and results in increased mobility opportunities, less dependence on the automobile, decreased traffic congestion, and improved air quality for all people in the service area, riders and non riders alike.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	See attached list by location name of our most frequented paratransit trip origin/destinations.
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	We have 15 paratransit specific buses. They are 22 feet and can seat 8 or a combination of ambulatory passengers and two wheelchairs. Lift capabilities from 800 to 1000 lbs. We have 19 Gilligs that are 35 or 40 feet long. We use these for our commuter runs as they hold 35 to 43 riders. Lift capabilities are limited to 600 lbs. We have 17 El Dorado buses that are 26 feet long. They can seat 21 riders and are used for both fixed route and paratransit. Lift capabilities are 800 lbs. We have 13 Internationals that are 29 feet long and carry 25-27 riders. Lift capabilities are 800 to 1000 lbs. We have 10 Chevys that are also 29 feet long and carry 23 riders. Lift capabilities are 800 lbs. We have 5 ARBOCs that are 23 feet long and carry 19 riders. These buses have ramps with 660 lb weight capacity. We have 87 vanpool vans and currently 68 are assigned and on the road.
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	Our operators are paid, non-union employees. All new hires go through in-house CDL training even if they already have their Commercial Driver's License. Our operators receive training in Customer Service/Internal Relations, Para & Wheelchair Securement, Managing Emergencies, and First Aid. Operators receive yearly evaluations and periodic refresher training as well.
Northwest Educational Services District	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	Share information about school district transportation and learn more about the need for special needs coordinated transportation. Assist as liaison where possible between districts and county needs.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	I would be happy to set up a meeting with Skagit and Island school district transportation administrators. Each district will have it's own level of interest in providing transportation outside of their student services. July is a bad month to get ahold of supervisors, August, second/third week and on is when they start returning for school startup.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	Students, ages 3 – 21, who require transportation as part of their individualized educational program, Section 501 and McKinney Vento public school students
	How many trips annually do you provide?	School year transportation is provided 180 days from Sept – June. For special programs: 190 per day/ 34,200 yr
	What is your service area?	Those have been provided.
	What kind of service do you provide?	Fixed route for public school children to and from school.
	What is your general span of service?	See maps. School districts primarily provide basic transport within district boundaries, however some special needs routes include destinations outside district boundaries.
	What is your agency's mission?	Transportation of public school students to and from school and school related activities.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	Aproximately 80 locations. See attached.
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	That has been provided to you.

Agency	Question	Response
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	Paid and unionized.
Northwest Regional Council	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	The Northwest Regional Council would like to represent Medicaid clients, seniors, and adults with disabilities living in Skagit and Island counties. An increase in public transportation services in rural areas of the counties would greatly reduce costs to Medicaid Transportation and would allow greater healthcare accessibility.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	Skagit and Island County both have a Volunteer Services program (run out of Opportunity Council and Senior Services of Island County, respectively) that transports seniors and adults with disabilities to grocery stores, medical appointments, and other services. They are contractors with Northwest Regional but may be beneficial to hear from them directly.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	The Northwest Regional Council plans for and implements community-based care/supportive services for seniors, people who are low-income, and adults with disabilities in Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan counties. We provide case management for people needing long-term care and are a Medicaid Transportation broker for people on Medicaid (now Washington Apple Health).
	How many trips annually do you provide?	Medicaid Transportation is contracted to provide an average of 177,000 trips per year.
	What is your service area?	The Northwest Regional Council serves people in Island, Skagit, Whatcom, and San Juan counties. Medicaid Transportation will transport clients to Medicaid paid appointments. We transport to the nearest provider of type so sometimes that means transporting to specialists in Seattle, Everett, etc. Occasionally we transport out of state if warranted. Sometimes trips originate from outside the four counties we serve but only for clients that have an address in our service area.
	What kind of service do you provide?	The Northwest Regional Council contracts with vendors to provide Meals on Wheels and volunteer chore services in the four local counties. Additionally Medicaid Transportation subcontracts with taxi and cabulance companies to provide transportation to medical appointments. We have agreements with area tribes to provide van services (i.e. Stillaguamish transfers clients from the Skagit bus station to Island Crossing Counseling six days a week). We reimburse for ferry tickets and mileage and can also provide gas vouchers and lodging if clients are unable to pay. Medicaid Transportation also provides bus passes to Medicaid clients that can use fixed route and paratransit services so that they can access Medicaid-paid appointments.
	What is your general span of service?	Services are generally provided M-F, 8am-5pm. Medicaid Transportation does operate a 24-hour dispatch in case clients have an emergency after hours and need to visit the ER/are discharged from the hospital.
	What is your agency's mission?	The Northwest Regional Council will serve as the Area Agency on Aging and may organize and direct services and supports for people with disabilities in Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties. To fulfill this mission, the NWRC is to develop, foster, and advocate for a comprehensive and coordinated service delivery system response to the needs of older individuals and people served the by programs administered by the NWRC in Northwest Washington. The service system will promote the greatest degree of personal independence and dignity in a home environment for people capable of self care with appropriate services. The service system will also improve the quality of life by removing individual and social barriers to economic and personal independence.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	Transportation from/within/to Skagit, Whatcom, San Juan, Island Counties. All clients are residents of these counties. We transport all over the state and out-of-state to medical appointments. We have to travel outside of the four counties if resources don't exist locally.
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	114 Ambulatory (vans, cabs) vehicles, and 28 Non-Ambulatory (paratransit, wheelchair vans, etc.) vehicles through the paid vendors listed below. The tribes invoice us for trips they provide, but we do not know how many vehicles they operate.
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	Combination of paid and volunteer: Paid vendors include: Beck & Call Concierge Services, Care E Me Inc., Cascase Ambulance, City/Yellow Cab, City Paratransit, Birch Bay Taxi (dba Red Cab), Mercy Transporation, Safe Transportation, Sound Cabulance, Western Van Service. Volunteer: Senior Services of Island County provide volunteer drivers for our Island County residents.
Opportunity Council	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	As a transportation user as opposed to a provider, what I hope to get out of the process is a clear understanding of how funding recommendations are made, provide input to inform those decisions as it relates to low-income households and in turn provide appropriate transportation information and opportunities to the clients we serve.

Agency	Question	Response
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	Based on the information regarding # of trips and where they went you have identified those others who would be important partners: Whidbey General Hospital/Clinics, Senior Services of Island County and a Sno-Isle Library Representative.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	The Island County Service Center primarily serves low-income/homeless households of all ages and all abilities.
	How many trips annually do you provide?	N/A
	What is your service area?	N/A
	What kind of service do you provide?	N/A
	What is your general span of service?	N/A
	What is your agency's mission?	The Opportunity Council is a private, non-profit human service organization that acts as a catalyst for positive change, both in the community and in the lives of the people it serves.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	N/A
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	N/A
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	N/A
Skagit Transit	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	Skagit Transit hopes the planning process results in a HSTP with realistic goals and objectives (or programs and projects) that can inform the way Skagit Transit plans for and operates ADA transit. One need is for objectives to be written broadly enough so that they can be applied to a range of similar scenarios for grant funding purposes. Also, Skagit Transit has learned a lot in the last few years about the provision of pocket service and flex routes designed to accommodate both ADA passengers and the general population. The challenges ST has faced in providing these services is creating a new focus on the provision of fixed route with ADA complementary service within ¼ miles.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	No suggestions for additions.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	Skagit Transit's ADA Transit services are provided to individuals that have applied for the service. Services are for those individuals whose conditions and/or disabilities prevent them from using Skagit Transit's regular fixed-route buses. Based on the review of an application for Dial-A-Ride service, an applicant may receive curb to curb service, curb to fixed-route service or fixed route service only (with training). Skagit Transit does not prioritize trips. Once approved for ADA transit services, a reservation can be made for any type of trip.
	How many trips annually do you provide?	In 2013, Skagit Transit provided 55,204 Dial-A-Ride (ADA Transit) passenger trips. In 2013, our agency provided 644,968 fixed route trips, 109,897 commuter bus trips, and 126,746 vanpool passenger trips. These are all reported as unlinked passenger trips (i.e. individual boardings).
	What is your service area?	With a few exceptions, Skagit Transit Provides ADA Transit services to eligible clients within ¼ of a mile of one of our fixed local routes. Skagit Transit is in the process of improving our mapping capabilities. Currently, all of our route maps are on the website at: http://www.skagittransit.org/routes/ .
	What kind of service do you provide?	Skagit Transit provides fixed route service (local routes and commuter routes), a vanpool program, and complementary ADA transit service (i.e. ADA service compliments local fixed routes by serving eligible clients within ¼ of a mile of a fixed route during those days and times the local fixed route operates).
	What is your general span of service?	Service days and hours differ by route. Routes serving more populated areas including Mount Vernon and Burlington run Monday through Sunday with longer hours during weekdays and reduced hours on weekends. Roughly Monday through Friday 6 AM to 9 PM and Weekends roughly 8 AM to 6:15 PM. More rural routes may only have service Monday through Friday or Monday through Saturday service and times are generally shorter.

Agency	Question	Response
	What is your agency's mission?	To enhance the quality of life in our service area by excelling in the efficient and effective provision of safe, accessible, reliable and attractive public transportation services by courteous and professional employees.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	Please see attached.
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	68 Vanpool Vans, 21 Fixed Route (local) Buses (All are ADA Accessible), 29 ADA Transit Vehicles, and 7 Commuter Bus Coaches (All ADA Accessible)
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	Skagit Transit buses are operated by full- and part-time, paid employees that are union represented.
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	1) Better understanding and identification of special transportation needs and gaps within the Reservation community, and individuals who could benefit from such services; 2) Identification of resources and opportunities to fill special transportation needs and gaps.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	No recommendations on this at this time.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	(The Tribe does not currently provide any transportation or transit services, so we did not complete the additional questions pertaining to providers.)
	How many trips annually do you provide?	N/A
	What is your service area?	N/A
	What kind of service do you provide?	N/A
	What is your general span of service?	N/A
	What is your agency's mission?	N/A
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	N/A
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	N/A
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	N/A
Volunteers of America - North Sound 211	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	a. We hope to be considered as an integral part of the Special Needs Transportation System for Skagit and Island counties, and want to learn more about the upcoming call for projects and applications for grant processes. b. We also would like to learn about all the different transportation service providers and what populations are served by each provider.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	a. We have no suggestions at this point. The list provided looks comprehensive.
	Is your service targeted at a specific special needs population or specific trip type?	a. No, the services Northsound 2-1-1 can offer would target all special needs populations and trip types.
	How many trips annually do you provide?	a. N/A. We are proposing to be the centralized access point for people to call and learn about all available transportation types. And collect data that may be helpful to determine who is requesting transportation services. We can also provide follow-up to callers to determine who the transportation services met their needs.
	What is your service area?	a. Our service area covers all of Skagit and Island county. Anyone from these counties can call and access Northsound 2-1-1. Northsound 2-1-1 is staffed with trained Information and Referral Specialists, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Agency	Question	Response
	What kind of service do you provide?	a. Northsound 2-1-1 is part of the Washington State 2-1-1 information and referral network. 2-1-1 is an easy to remember phone number that connects people to a wide range of health and human services. 2-1-1 is a free and reliable service with the purpose of connecting people to community services. 2-1-1 is supported by a statewide community resources database (the most comprehensive and accurate of its kind). Trained Information & Referral Specialists are able to search through more than 16,000 services offered by 5,000 agencies to find the right resources for our callers.
	What is your general span of service?	a. Northsound 2-1-1 is staffed by trained Information & Referral Specialists 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
	What is your agency's mission?	a. The mission of Volunteers of America is to serve people and communities in need and create opportunities for people to experience the joy of serving others.
	Trip origins and destination by location name or location (city, ZIP, GPS, other)?	a. N/A. Northsound 2-1-1 has the ability to offer all available transportation types to people needing access to special needs transportation in Skagit and Island counties
	Describe your fleet makeup (number and type of vehicles in fleet).	a. N/A
	Please describe your operators (paid, volunteer, training, etc.).	a. Northsound 2-1-1 uses paid staff to answer all Northsound 2-1-1 calls. All staff go through a rigorous training process before going live on the phones. Continuous training is provided to ensure all staff have the most up to date information and resources to meet caller's needs.
WSDOT	What do you hope to get out of the planning process?	I hope to come away with a HSTP that really embodies coordination and thoroughly discusses the special needs of all populations in Skagit/Island counties. Further, I hope that any interested agency feels empowered to submit applications for the Consolidated Grant process. I also want to see a broader inclusion of special needs partners at the table discussing the needs of the two county area.
	Who else should be involved and how best to involve them?	Other agencies that I might add are those that deal with fair housing issues since the connection between transportation and low-income housing can often have barriers.

Appendix B - Input from Listening Sessions and Ride-Along Surveys

Skagit Senior Day in the Park, 8/14/14

Survey/Public Response Results

- Event scheduled from 10am-2pm; fairly empty by 1pm
- Paper surveys collected & entered: **11**
- Additional surveys distributed: **roughly 50**
- Respondents to the dot exercise: **21** (63 dots)
- Estimated public interaction: **110 individuals**

Comments from event participants:

- The wording on the dot exercise is too sophisticated—I don't understand it.
- I don't want to fill out this survey, "it's too long"/"I can't read small print."
- I appreciate Dial-A-Ride; it's my primary means of getting around.
- I'm grateful that Island Transit is fare-free.
- I live alone, clear up near Timber Lake at Hwy 20, a mile from the nearest service, have to get a friend to drive me to the bus stop. I wish there was more service off the scheduled route.
- SKAT only comes to Marblemount once a week—I have no car and this is my only way to get around!
- Often when I get on the bus, I'm the only one on it—why aren't more people using the bus?
- Sometimes I see three busses pass, one right after the other. That's a waste of money. Can't they consolidate stops?

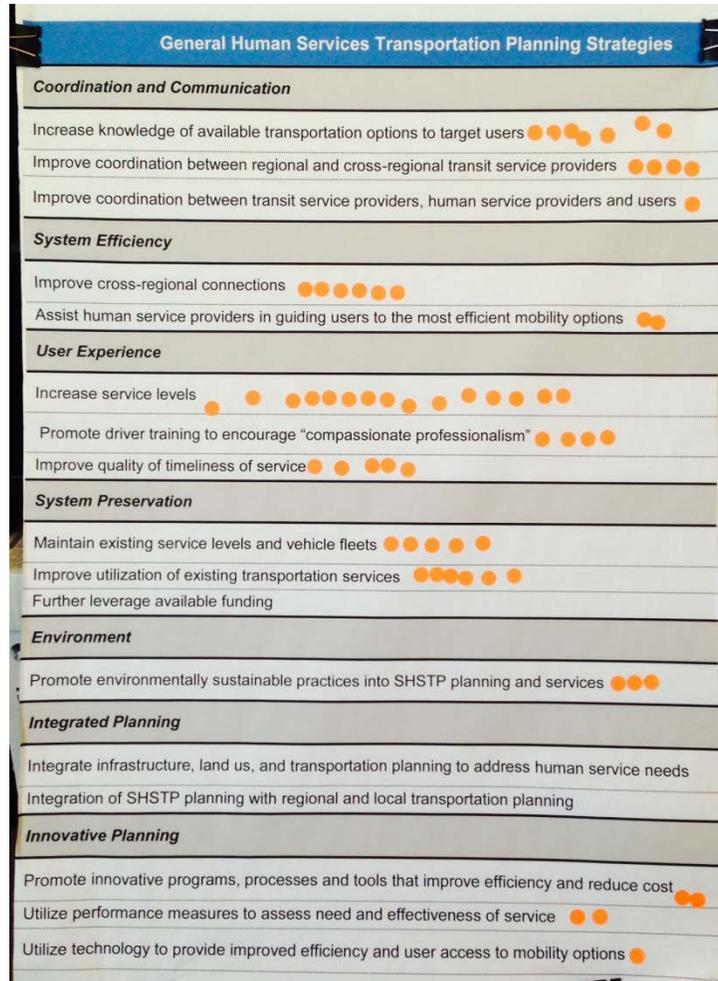


Figure 1: results of prioritization exercise at event

- I feel the bus schedule is designed for commuters, not retired people.
- I ride the bus the equivalent of 2-3 thousand miles per year, between Whatcom and Skagit counties, it's an excellent resource.
- My mother is 101 years old, and it's too hard to get her ready for a scheduled service—she's always late. So we drive her everywhere.
- Retired pastor in La Conner commented that he wishes there was Sunday service to La Conner.
- Samish River Park—transit stop is too far away.
- There is a large group of seniors on Samish Island who need transit, but there is no longer service there!
- I'm blind—is there a transportation service I can use, or do I have to have someone ride with me every time?
- I want to thank the railroad companies for keeping the trains on side tracks around noon, so we (seniors) can make it to the senior centers between 11am-1pm in Mount Vernon. This is a sincere thank you!

-Notes by Liz Theaker, SCOG intern

Oak Harbor Senior Center Outreach, 9/5/14

Total number of seniors who commented on the public transportation system: **24**

Senior Center comments; those not in quotes are paraphrased.

Female, disabled senior

She lives below the poverty level and has been riding Paratransit since 2005. “I would be lost without Paratransit.” She has no driver’s license and no vehicle. Feels Island Transit/Paratransit are “very clear” on how to sign up and use the system—she places a phone call, and there are prompts after that for scheduling. Recalls the customer service from when she first signed up; a representative came to her home to do an interview. She now has a laminated photo ID card for Paratransit, which she appreciates. She talked at length about her gratitude for the kindness and familiarity of the Island Transit drivers.

She sometimes sees younger people using the buses, including some with mental and physical disabilities who receive transport to and from Oak Harbor schools. “Paratransit is my family, just like the staff here is my family.” She remarked on the courtesy of the drivers, who will also carry items to the rider’s door if they need help. She said a Paratransit driver visited her in the hospital last year, and that meant a great deal to her.

Female, senior with glaucoma

“Paratransit is a necessity.” The system is on time, but sometimes comes too early. There is often a long span of time to wait for the return ride; in excess of two hours. She walks 1.5 miles to the bus stop, but can’t walk uphill so they drop her off at her home. Her most frequent trip is to medical appointments. She expects Island Transit to be conservative with funds and feels the system is abused by those not needing what she calls “necessary” services—hair appointments vs. medical appointments, etc. She feels it should be preserved for those riders who need it for more critical purposes. She also feels Island Transit needs to bring back Saturday service. “The senior population is growing, and they (are willing to) pay to ride.”

Male, disabled senior

“The money (at Island Transit) is going to the fancy offices. There’s a misappropriation of funds. They need to can a few people at the top.”

Female, senior with macular degeneration

Can no longer drive; says Paratransit is “great.” If not for Paratransit, she would have to sit home five days per week. She mostly uses the system to access social activities like the Senior Center luncheons and gatherings, and eats at the Senior Center 3 days per week (\$4 per meal). Her son lives nearby and is able to take her to most medical appointments, but he works full time and this is inconvenient. Reiterates that she would be “stuck at home” were it not for Paratransit.

Male, disabled senior, 28-year Army veteran

Paratransit should be improved, especially on the Southern part of Whidbey Island—they lack (adequate) service. “Take the politics out of it, and get back to basics.” Island and Skagit Transit need to partner with the “Metra.” He needs to get

to King County's VA hospital, but the Disabled American Veterans van goes the hard way up and around Whidbey Island and it takes too long and leaves too early in the morning. Feels Island Transit is especially useful because it's free, but they should install a "token box" if they can't afford to keep the current services. "Charge money!"

Male, senior

"I got rid of my car when I moved here from Houston. The public transit system is cheaper than having a car, paying insurance, et cetera. I use them mostly to get to my medical appointments in Coupeville. I hardly need a car."

Male, senior

"I'm very impressed with Paratransit. The drivers are very friendly, and I've been riding since 2005. In all that time, I've only seen one driver act like he had a bad day." Feels that increased public transportation leads to more jobs and higher employment.

Male and female, senior spouses

"There is a lack of coordination between transit agencies and ferry system—this leads to hostility." His ferry was once late by 15 minutes, and he missed the last bus and was left at the ferry dock. Luckily he had a friend who could give him a ride from Clinton ferry to Oak Harbor. Feels strongly that late ferries should coordinate with transit system so no one is left without a ride.

"Some people are trying to end the fee bus system altogether because they think it's socialist that everyone pays and only some use it." He and his wife would be happy to pay additional taxes to keep it going. Tax cuts are damaging; "taxes run the country." Island Transit needs sustainable funding plan—not "mismanagement."

The schedule of the buses doesn't fit peoples' needs. "Why does the bus run at 8:30am instead of 7:30am?" People could get to work; they could have two buses coming on and off Whidbey Island every morning. "Instead, we see hundreds of cars."

-Notes by Liz Theaker, SCOG intern.

Samish Tribal Transit Plan – Community Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2014

Location: Samish Administration Building

Participants: Carolyn St. James, Eunice Thomas, Samara Thomas, Sally Barrett, Julie Pederson, Charlotte Auclair, Becky Bendixen, George Adams, Leslie Eastwood, Larry Thomas Jr.

The meeting began with a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the purpose, process, and preliminary activities of the Samish Tribal Transit Plan. Topics included:

- Background information on project
- Summary of area transit providers / resources
 - Skagit Transit
 - Island Transit
 - Ferry System
- Current transit service options to Tribal facilities
- Samish department-based transit services
- Process for gathering stakeholder input
- Community survey results
- Transit challenges in the Anacortes area



Participants were asked to share their thoughts on area transit needs. Discussion items from the audience are summarized below:

- There are a limited number of Samish members living in Anacortes, and their homes are widely spread throughout the area. This creates challenges when planning transit routes.
- Tribal members would likely use transit for health care appointments (particularly for appointments in Mt. Vernon).
- There is not enough awareness of Paratransit among Samish community members.
- Many Tribal members require transit to attend cultural events, particularly during evening hours.
- The Elders program offers weekly art and cultural activities at the Samish Administration building. The new Elders bus is used for transporting participants.
- The Tribe needs additional drivers with CDL licenses. The lack of qualified drivers has hindered the Tribe's ability to provide transportation for Tribal members in the past.
- Tribal members are frustrated by traffic congestion due to light synchronization issues extending from Burlington to Anacortes. There are 8-10 traffic lights – cars often must stop at every light. This may impact transit times.
- The “stacking lane” for cars waiting to board the ferry becomes backed-up and blocks traffic.

Samish Tribal Transit Plan – Community Meeting

Meeting Minutes

- Tribal members recall that D Street was once served by a fixed bus route (years ago). It is unclear why this service was discontinued.
- Tribally-provided carpool / vanpool options are needed. One group of staff members carpools regularly from Bellingham. Priuses might be a good option.
- The Fidalgo Bay RV Park is not currently served by an existing bus stop. Although SKAT Route 410 passes near Fidalgo Bay, the bus stays on Highway 20 and does not stop at the RV park.
- Cultural events such as Camp Samish would benefit from the availability of transit.
- Expanded transit options are needed to the local islands (e.g. Guemes Island and Lopez Island).
- The Tribe should explore partnership opportunities with area transit providers. For example, consider an arrangement where the Tribe owns a vehicle, but leases it back to a transit provider – they maintain the vehicle, but the Tribe can use it when needed.
- In addition to the new Elders bus, the Tribe owns a smart car (new), van (old), and Ford Ranger (old).
- Additional transit options are needed connecting Anacortes to surrounding cities – direct, streamlined service options. The Bellingham-to-Anacortes commute via bus is 90 minutes each way.
- The cost of transit is an obstacle for some HHS clients.
- The Samish Tribe should have more meaningful input on area transit services. Transit extends within the Tribe’s ancestral land and natural resources. The Tribe should be a vested partner in regional transit decisions. Samish members should copy legislators when sending comments related to transit needs.
- Clearer communication is needed regarding existing regional transit options. Transit providers increasingly use their websites as their primary communication tool. Some of the groups with the greatest transit needs (e.g. elders, low-income) may not have Internet access.
- Skagit Transit employs a Travel Trainer – the Tribe may request that she attend a future Elders luncheon and give a presentation on Skagit Transit’s various options (e.g. fixed, deviated-fixed, pocket, paratransit, on-demand/DAR, vanpool, etc.).

“Out and About: Persons with Disabilities” Support Group Focus Group Meeting and Follow-up Comments, 9-10-14

Burlington Library

Total number of participants was 11, 10 of which were physically or developmentally disabled. Three members were confined to wheelchairs. One participant was not disabled but is the full-time caregiver to her disabled adult son.

Group Comments:

Evening events are difficult for persons with disabilities who use public transportation because the bus schedule ends too early for night return.

Inter-county transit continues to be a challenge. One member mentioned the ORCAS card in the Pierce/Snohomish/King County area; this one card is rechargeable and universal throughout the counties. It would be nice if there was a similar system in Skagit/Island/Whatcom counties.

A [WA state bill](#) was passed a few years ago with the purpose of bringing together the various Special Needs groups in the state, along with the transit services so that everyone could “sit at the same table.” Group is called Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, or ACCT.

Would like to see more interaction between entities across the state so that once central conversation about special needs transit can happen more efficiently.

Group discussed various recreational activities they would like to do together; for every suggestion (art museum, island trip, festivals) there was a conversation on whether or not there was bus service/paratransit/Dial-A-Ride service to the area and when the bus/transit service returned.

Group wondered if Skagit Transit could provide a van for them to travel from Burlington to a festival in Bellingham, as most are physically disabled and would require ADA accessible vehicle service.

The following comments were later sent to SCOG by Shawn Latham, Peer Group Coordinator for the Center for Independence North Sound:

“I am very interested in helping my participants from the Center get adequate transportation. I myself have a van but most people with disabilities don’t have the luxury. The top 4 concerns I see are:

1. No evening service, which makes night event impossible since they can get dropped off but not picked up from events.
2. It would be nice if more transportation systems work together. All of the Sound counties had the Orca Card which helps us go from one county to another. It would be great if Skagit/Island added it https://www.orcacard.com/ERG-Seattle/p1_001.do

3. On the same note it seems like using dial a ride/shuttle/Para transit are hard when you have to use two or more shuttles to go from county to county. It can take a whole day to get there. Not sure what to do other than have all the agencies have constant communication to help with this.

4. On my wish list and I do realize these would take more money is: more bus routes since most in Skagit are only main roads and to shorten the 7 day reservation period just to get a dial a ride bus. One consumer told me they have to call in 7 days exactly no earlier or later to get a ride.”

-Notes by Liz Theaker, SCOG intern

Skagit Project Homeless Connect, 9/11/14

Total number of participants who commented on the public transportation system: **52**

Comments:

Male, homeless

Skagit Transit used to be free, but they started charging. Some people don't have a dollar or even fifty cents to ride. Why can't they add it (the fare) to property taxes? Do you know how many people in Skagit own homes and pay property taxes?

Female, disabled

I use Paratransit, and I like it. I'm having heart issues, so I'll need it even more in the future. I can't stand for an hour waiting for the bus when I have heart issues.

I try calling the Mobile Food Express, which was turned over from Community Action to the Food Bank in Mount Vernon. Since then, nobody calls back! They need to notify the public if the service has ended. I call for a meal, and they don't show up until two days later—and then the meal is small.

Male, homeless

More service is needed in Skagit County.

Female, senior, homeless, disabled

Route 300 to Sedro-Woolley needs to run more often—every half hour instead of every hour. We appreciate free transit on Skagit Project Homeless Connect days!

Male and female, both disabled

My wife is disabled and gets a free bus pass, and I get a monthly pass for \$12.50. It's how she gets around to her medical appointments. We're happy with the service and the cost, and the drivers are very friendly.

Male, homeless, disabled

(When asked if he uses public transportation) I live in my van, so it's easier for me to get around that way. But sometimes I don't have gas money.

Female, Hispanic, ESL

I walk. The bus doesn't go where I need to go, and it's too far away.

Female, homeless

I've got a car, and the (Skagit) bus is too expensive.

Female, homeless

I would use it (the bus) more if it was cheaper.

Female, disabled, senior

I don't trust the driver safety. I rode a bus and the driver ran a red light.

Female, disabled, senior

I use SKAT and County Commuter—I'm very happy with the service.

Couple, homeless

The bus system is perfect! But they changed routes from March's Point. That makes me sad.

Female, homeless, disabled

I use Dial-A-Ride, but the wait times are a bit long, especially after a doctor's appointment when you're not feeling good. Waiting 1-1 ½ hours is aggravating after my mental health appointment.

Female, disabled

I drive—I don't walk well, and it's easier to drive. I have appointments in Island County and have to deal with County Commuter. Doesn't Dial-A-Ride take me from the county line to my doctor in Anacortes? Why isn't Island Transit here (at the event)?

Male and female

We need more stops further East on College Way—there are bus stops, but no bus comes! If a bus came further out on College Way, I would go to work on the bus every day. And they're always late.

Female

Expand the hours, especially on the weekends! It's hard to keep a job. I have to come in to work too early, and then I need the bus until 9 or 10pm. Otherwise I have to take the Greyhound and that's expensive. My only other choice is the train, and that's too expensive.

Female, senior, disabled

We need more cross-county transit—life goes on beyond Skagit County! If you want good quality medical care, you have to go outside of Skagit County because the good doctors in Skagit County aren't taking any more patients.

Female, senior, disabled

If I don't have money for a cab after I go to Urgent Care, I end up having to stay in the Emergency Room overnight until the first bus runs in the morning.

Female, disabled

I'm scared of the bus. I have mental illness, and my provider is in Bellingham. I would have to wait for hours. We need more Medicare providers.

Female, addiction recovery advocate

All bus drivers should carry [Narcan](#). My son was an addict, he was stranded, and what did he do all night? He rode the bus. If someone overdoses on a bus they only have a few minutes.

Female

The drivers aren't safe. Once on College Way, I was forced into oncoming traffic by a Skagit Transit bus that was merging into my lane. His blinker was on, but I was in the middle of the bus with my car and I had nowhere to go. I know he saw me, and he knows I saw him. He merged anyway.

Male and Female, married

The bus needs to run more often. We're a 1-car family. There are too few runs to Anacortes. I wish Skagit Transit was free like Island Transit. I lived near Concrete, and the bus runs were so early and so late in the day that my husband couldn't get a job for many months.

Male, homeless

We need more service to Bellingham, especially on Sunday. I have kids in Bellingham, but I can't see them as much as I want.

Female, homeless living in shelter

I'm a single mom and I have four kids—the bus doesn't work for me. (Was also grateful that Island Transit was free.)

Male, homeless

I use Skagit Transit. It meets all my needs.

Two males, homeless

We get ONE bus to Marblemount! Do you know why? It's because they can't make money on it. There used to be more service, but at the council meeting they took the daily bus away. Nobody on the council even uses the bus. Do you think any of us were there? No. Marblemount lacks representation. The transit services should be run by Commissioners only, because the Mayors will favor their city. Island Transit is free. Someone in Marblemount who wants to shop in Burlington only gets ½ hour before the bus leaves again. There is a "west" and "east" Skagit County, and the east has no representation.

Female, disabled, senior

Uses Dial-A-Ride; working on getting the "return time" down because it's not always easy to identify the return time.

Male and female, both disabled seniors

I use the SKAT bus but I want to use Dial-A-Ride and the questions about qualifying are too confusing. My husband will go through cancer treatment soon so we'll need to sign up for Dial-A-Ride.

Staff member at Community Action Agency

My clients often don't know how to ride the bus or they don't understand the system. Why don't we have T.V. commercials? Everyone watches T.V. The main reason clients miss their appointments, including medical and opportunities to get free food and services, is lack of transportation.

Replies translated from Spanish (4):

- I use the bus because it's cheap.
- I use the bus because sometimes I don't have anyone to take me to where I need to go. I wish it passed by more often—every 30 minutes
- I use the bus; the drivers drive well. We need more frequent routes; around 15 minutes apart.
- I use the bus sometimes. Sometimes I don't have a car and transportation is very important. The bus system needs more routes. The times that I've used the bus everything has gone well.

-Notes by Liz Theaker, SCOG intern

Stanwood-Camano Community Center Focus Group Meeting, 9/16/14

Total number in group: **7**, including Shirley Johnson-Murray of Washington Vocational Services and members of Camano/Stanwood Aktion Club

Comments & Notes:

- Shirley gave overview of Aktion Club, which services adults with disabilities and also supports a kid's Aktion Club which functions as a service group. Both are supported by the local Kiwanis group.
- The public transit overlap between Skagit, Island, and Snohomish counties is significant. Many of Shirley's Developmentally Disabled (DD) clients take the bus to the doctors, to social security office, Coupeville (Island County seat), and shopping. Camano/Stanwood is a difficult area to place DD persons in jobs; there's a large pool of workers but limited jobs. People are forced to go north or south to find jobs. The bus that runs from Camano Island to Oak Harbor is often pretty full. The Park & Ride at I-5 is always packed; Camano Transit needs to go to that Park & Ride.
- Washington Vocational Services works hard to get DD people jobs, and then they can't get there.
- Island Transit is a huge part of our lives (in Stanwood/Camano). It gives an opportunity for people to get out of the area and into other regions.
- So many individuals need the transit system for dialysis.
- People will often continue to drive, even without their driver's license or car insurance because they have to get to medical appointments. They might be racking up \$5,000, \$8,000 in fines, but they have no other options.
- When Shirley is getting jobs for DD clients, they have to have some means of transportation—it has to be reliable and consistent. Some days we're beating our heads against the wall. Transportation is key—it has to be the #1 priority. We are constantly looking for solutions.
- The Stillaguamish Tribe provides some transportation service on Camano Island—it's free for anybody.
- Both senior centers (Camano and Stanwood) are major hubs for our community.
- One participant has a disabled and her life revolves around him. She gets him to work, to his volunteer job—and everywhere he needs to go. The DD community is seeking independence, but transportation is key. Transporting disabled family members around is extremely time-consuming for family members/care givers.
- One participant is blind and lives on Camano Island, uses Paratransit for many things including a volunteer position with the local elementary school. He's working on developing a self-employed business as a motivational speaker, but he will need transportation to reach speaking engagements and the bus service ends too early.
- One participant is a physically and developmentally disabled senior. He uses Paratransit to reach art classes and social events at the Camano Center as well as his doctor's appointments.
- Paratransit is fantastic; the Island County dispatches on Camano Island are amazing human beings. They go above and beyond to give exemplary service.
- Island Transit "cuts off" the southern tip of Camano Island. Do those people need services? They might need a survey of that area. The cheaper homes are on the south end, and there's also an elementary school there.
- The hub at Terry's Corner is very efficient and located near the new library.
- Many seniors are using the bus to get to events and luncheons.

- Timely connections are important; someone could spend an entire day getting where they need to be. It's especially difficult for medical appointments. People have ended up at the hospital on an emergency room trip, stuck with no way to get home.
- Staff/supervisors of regional service organizations sometimes take it upon themselves to provide transportation with their personal vehicle or deviate from scheduled routes when seniors are in emergency situations and stranded. Examples included staff at the table and Paratransit on Camano.
- The Island Transit constituents on Camano are incredible people—we need more service and more connections.
- Island Transit is becoming a political football. The local paper is one-sided. They don't take the bus or live in the community, so they should just "butt out."

-Notes by Liz Theaker, SCOG intern

Skagit-Island Special Needs Transportation Committee

Skagit County Buddy Walk, 10-11-14

Bakerview Park, Mount Vernon

Total number of participants providing input: **28**

Background:

- The Buddy Walk is held every year across the country to raise awareness for persons with Down Syndrome
- One of the populations targeted through the coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (HSTP) planning process are persons with disabilities
- This year's Buddy Walk in Skagit County attracted approximately 250 participants.



Figure 1: Buddies on the Buddy Walk

Input Received:

- An exercise was presented asking participants where the most important place they need to get to is
- 28 pins were placed on the map – all but 7 of which were in the Mount Vernon and Burlington areas
- Work/school was the most popular destination with 11, the other three (Shopping, Medical, Other) were nearly equal
- All of the Shopping and Medical pins were placed in the Mount Vernon and Burlington areas, except one
- Four of the Other pins were placed outside of Mount Vernon and Burlington, near Sedro-Woolley and by the Skagit Casino
- Two Work/school pins were placed near Anacortes.



Figure 2: Mapping Exercise

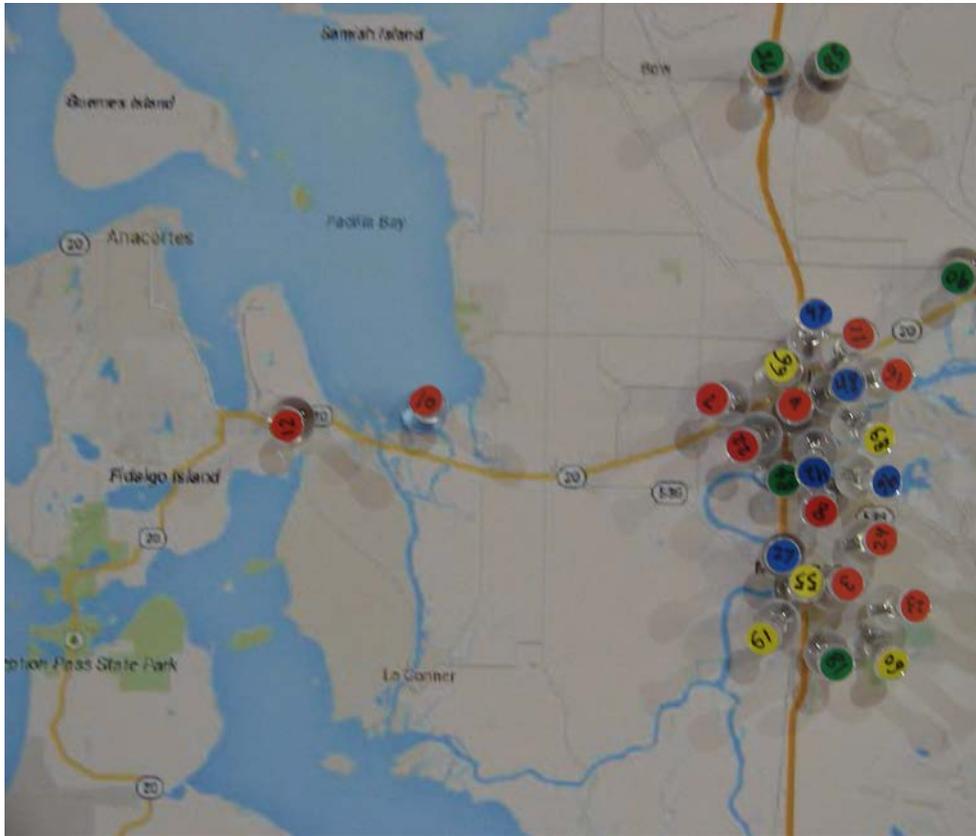


Figure 3: Close-up of Mapping Exercise

- A We Want to Hear From You comment validation exercise was provided to validate comments received at previous events or through other forms of input
- Participants were asked to mark a “✓” if they agreed with a comment and a “✗” if they disagreed
- The results are listed below:

Specific Paratransit or Dial-a-ride Quotes

We need “more service on the weekends, more buses and longer hours” – 8 agree

For paratransit, “I love the drivers. They are so helpful. I am so grateful” – 6 agree

What I like best about paratransit is “the convenience of being able to get to and from where I need to” – 7 agree

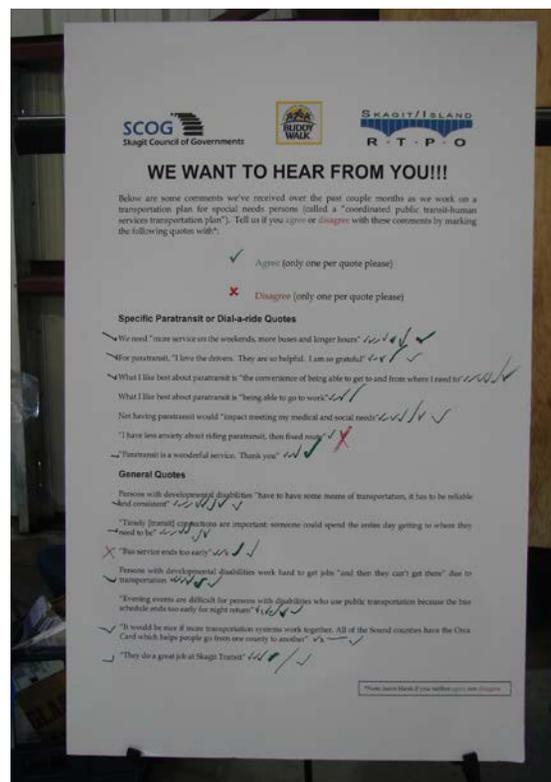


Figure 4: Comment Validation Exercise

What I like best about paratransit is “being able to go to work” – 4 agree

Not having paratransit would “impact meeting my medical and social needs” – 7 agree

“I have less anxiety about riding paratransit, then fixed route” – 1 agree, 1 disagree

“Paratransit is a wonderful service. Thank you” – 4 agree

General Quotes

Persons with developmental disabilities “have to have some means of transportation, it has to be reliable and consistent” - 9 agree

“Timely [transit] connections are important; someone could spend the entire day getting to where they need to be” – 8 agree

“Bus service ends too early” – 4 agree, 2 disagree

Persons with developmental disabilities work hard to get jobs “and then they can’t get there” due to transportation – 7 agree

“Evening events are difficult for persons with disabilities who use public transportation because the bus schedule ends too early for night return” – 5 agree, 1 disagree

“It would be nice if more transportation systems work together. All of the Sound counties have the Orca Card which helps people go from one county to another” – 4 agree, 1 disagree

“They do a great job at Skagit Transit” – 7 agree

Additional Comments Received:

1. Skagit Transit really does have great drivers!
2. My son uses paratransit to get from our home in Sedro-Woolley to his job at McDonald’s in Burlington. He takes the bus to Burlington Boulevard, but it is dangerous walking from the bus stop along SR 20 to McDonald’s.
3. Medicaid transportation services can be difficult for families to use as they will only transport the patient and not the rest of the family. A family I know does not use Medicaid transportation services and misses medical appointments because the family is headed by a single mother with three special needs children, and they cannot all ride the bus together.
4. Cuts to transit service between Mount Vernon and Oak Harbor have made it much harder to get from Oak Harbor to medical appointments in Mount Vernon for one of my family members. She can’t go after school, because after her medical appointment, it would be too late for her to catch the bus back home.
5. I’m 80 and drive myself. In 10 years I may not be able to drive anymore. At that point, I may have to use transit, but it is confusing to me now (how to pay, where routes go, etc.).
6. We need more transit service on 30th and Martin streets in Mount Vernon.
7. It would be great to have an early bus run to La Conner where I teach. Thank you!

Ride Along Survey Results

Coming from:

Mt. Vernon Hospital
Mt. Vernon Hospital
Mt. Vernon (Alpine Ridge)
Mt. Vernon (Burger King)
Mt. Vernon (DSHS)
Mt. Vernon (home)
Burlington (Ovenells)
Burlington (Ovenells)
Sedro-Woolley
Sedro-Woolley
Burlington
Anacortes
Anacortes

Going to:

Mt. Vernon
Mt. Vernon (Williams Way)
Mt. Vernon (Would care center(Wood?))
Bow (home)
Mt. Vernon (home)
Burlington (physical therapy)
Mt. Vernon (Compass Health)
Mt. Vernon (Compass Health)
Sedro-Woolley
Mt Vernon
Sedro-Woolley
Anacortes
Anacortes

Issues getting to and from the bus?

No 111111

Yes 11

Comment:

Quite a walk from my drop off to my apartment

Out of service area so relative has to meet at connection point and take home

Issues accessing locations they need to go on the bus

No 11111

Yes 111

Comment:

Out of the service area

Stanwood

Would like to go to Samish Island
Doesn't go to Sedro anymore so can't visit family
Couldn't get schedule times

What 2 things would you change about the paratranist service?

Not a thing, better than Dart

Nothing

More service on the weekends more buses and longer hours. Bus rides take too long, sometimes.

Would like the drivers to give me their names when they get on. I am blind and don't always recognize their voices. I don't like having to call each week to go to the same places. I call two times everyday.

Calls twice a day – for times and to make appointment. Works 5 days a week.

Would be good if they could wait if I just need to run in and pay a bill or mail a letter

Nothing really "fits just right"

Likes the service

Better access to schedule

Would like bus shelter

More buses. Quicker times

Drivers would call when outside when it's cold. Better access to schedules

Couldn't get appoint a few times when calling days in advance

Don't like it when times change. Waited outside for a long time once.

Easier way to schedule appointments. Confusing.

Hard to schedule – calling 7 days in advance. More space available on buses.

Scheduling 7 days in advance is hard.

Better scheduling system

What do you like best about paratransit service?

Wonderful drivers, wonderful schedulers, everyone is helpful

Drivers are fantastic. Never had a bad ride

Can go fun places like to the movies and shopping

The drivers

The drivers. Very helpful. Very clean vehicles and consistent. Everything is in same place which is great because I cannot see.

The drivers are awesome

Riding around and seeing scenery in comfort and safety. Drivers are helpful and considerate.

Drivers are good and go the speed limit

Convenience

Getting out without having to rely on others for rides

Freedom

Gets me there

Anything else we should know about our service?

No

I don't like when other passengers complain, on the bus, about the service

More drivers on the weekends because I cannot to too early to church with kids. I love that rides don't take too long. Love the schedulers.

The whole program is awesome

Likes the arm rests. Don't like answering these questions.

Drivers are nice

Gets to have a job because of it. (mentioned a few times throughout surveys)

Get to work

Appendix C - Comment and Findings Tracking Sheet

Comment and Findings Tracking Sheet

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
Oak Harbor Senior Center	She lives below the poverty level and has been riding Paratransit since 2005. "I would be lost without Paratransit." She has no driver's license and no vehicle. Feels Island Transit/Paratransit are "very clear" on how to sign up and use the system—she places a phone call, and there are prompts after that for scheduling. Recalls the customer service from when she first signed up; a representative came to her home to do an interview. She now has a laminated photo ID card for Paratransit, which she appreciates. She talked at length about her gratitude for the kindness and familiarity of the Island Transit drivers.	Captured - Maintain service levels
	She sometimes sees younger people using the buses, including some with mental and physical disabilities who receive transport to and from Oak Harbor schools. "Paratransit is my family, just like the staff here is my family." She remarked on the courtesy of the drivers, who will also carry items to the rider's door if they need help. She said a Paratransit driver visited her in the hospital last year, and that meant a great deal to her.	Noted
	"Paratransit is a necessity." The system is on time, but sometimes comes too early. There is often a long span of time to wait for the return ride; in excess of two hours. She walks 1.5 miles to the bus stop, but can't walk uphill so they drop her off at her home. Her most frequent trip is to medical appointments. She expects Island Transit to be conservative with funds and feels the system is abused by those not needing what she calls "necessary" services—hair appointments vs. medical appointments, etc. She feels it should be preserved for those riders who need it for more critical purposes. She also feels Island Transit needs to bring back Saturday service. "The senior population is growing, and they (are willing to) pay to ride."	Captured - Scheduling of service
	"The money (at Island Transit) is going to the fancy offices. There's a misappropriation of funds. They need to can a few people at the top."	Noted
	Can no longer drive; says Paratransit is "great." If not for Paratransit, she would have to sit home five days per week. She mostly uses the system to access social activities like the Senior Center luncheons and gatherings, and eats at the Senior Center 3 days per week (\$4 per meal). Her son lives nearby and is able to take her to most medical appointments, but he works full time and this is inconvenient. Reiterates that she would be "stuck at home" were it not for Paratransit.	Captured - Maintain service levels
	Paratransit should be improved, especially on the Southern part of Whidbey Island—they lack (adequate) service. "Take the politics out of it, and get back to basics." Island and Skagit Transit need to partner with the "Metra." He needs to get to King County's VA hospital, but the Disabled American Veterans van goes the hard way up and around Whidbey Island and it takes too long and leaves too early in the morning. Feels Island Transit is especially useful because it's free, but they should install a "token box" if they can't afford to keep the current services. "Charge money!"	Captured - Increase coverage of service, improved connections/coordination, costs
	"I'm very impressed with Paratransit. The drivers are very friendly, and I've been riding since 2005. In all that time, I've only seen one driver act like he had a bad day." Feels that increased public transportation leads to more jobs and higher employment.	Noted
	"There is a lack of coordination between transit agencies and ferry system—this leads to hostility." His ferry was once late by 15 minutes, and he missed the last bus and was left at the ferry dock. Luckily he had a friend who could give him a ride from Clinton ferry to Oak Harbor. Feels strongly that late ferries should coordinate with transit system so no one is left without a ride.	Captured - Connections/coordination
	"Some people are trying to end the fee bus system altogether because they think it's socialist that everyone pays and only some use it." He and his wife would be happy to pay additional taxes to keep it going. Tax cuts are damaging; "taxes run the country." Island Transit needs sustainable funding plan—not "mismanagement."	Noted

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
Out and About: Persons With Disabilities	The schedule of the buses doesn't fit peoples' needs. "Why does the bus run at 8:30am instead of 7:30am?" People could get to work; they could have two buses coming on and off Whidbey Island every morning. "Instead, we see hundreds of cars."	Captured - Increase span of service
	Evening event are difficult for persons with disabilities who use public transportation because the bus schedule ends too early for night return.	Captured - Increase span of service
	Inter-county transit continues to be a challenge. One member mentioned the ORCAS card in the Pierce/Snohomish/King County area; this one card is rechargeable and universal throughout the counties. It would be nice if there was a similar system in Skagit/Island/Whatcom counties	Captured - Connection/coordination
	A WA state bill was passed a few years ago with the purpose of bringing together the various Special Needs groups in the state, along with the transit services so that everyone could "sit at the same table." Group is called Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, or ACCT	Captured - Connection/coordination
	Would like to see more interaction between entities across the state so that once central conversation about special needs transit can happen more efficiently.	Noted
	Group discussed various recreational activities they would like to do together; for every suggestion (art museum, island trip, festivals) there was a conversation on whether or not there was bus service/paratransit/Dial-A-Ride service to the area and when the bus/transit service returned.	Captured - Increase span of service, coverage
	Group wondered if Skagit Transit could provide a van for them to travel from Burlington to a festival in Bellingham, as most are physically disabled and would require ADA accessible vehicle service.	Captured - Increase span of service, coverage
	No evening service, which makes night event impossible since they can get dropped off but not picked up from events.	Captured - Increased span of service
	It would be nice if more transportation systems work together. All of the Sound counties had the Orca Card which helps us go from one county to another. It would be great if Skagit/Island added it	Captured - Connection/coordination
	On the same note it seems like using dial a ride/shuttle/Para transit are hard when you have to use two or more shuttles to go from county to county. It can take a whole day to get there. Not sure what to do other than have all the agencies have contestant communication to help with this.	Captured - Connection/coordination
	On my wish list and I do realize these would take more money is: more bus routes since most in Skagit are only main roads and to shorten the 7 day reservation period just to get a dial a ride bus. One consumer told me they have to call in 7 days exactly no earlier or later to get a ride."	Captured - Scheduling of service
Ride-Alongs	Issues getting to and from the bus? Quite a walk from my drop off to my apartment Out of service area so relative has to meet at connection point and take home Issues accessing locations they need to go on the bus Out of the service area Stanwood Would like to go to Samish Island Doesn't go to Sedro anymore so can't visit family Couldn't get schedule times	Captured - Increase coverage Captured - Increase coverage

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	<p>What 2 things would you change about the paratransit service? Not a thing, better than Dart Nothing More service on the weekends more buses and longer hours. Bus rides take too long, sometimes. Would like the drivers to give me their names when they get on. I am blind and don't always recognize their voices. I don't like having to call each week to go to the same places. I call two times everyday. Calls twice a day – for times and to make appointment. Works 5 days a week. Would be good if they could wait if I just need to run in and pay a bill or mail a letter Nothing really “fits just right” Likes the service Better access to schedule Would like bus shelter More buses. Quicker times Drivers would call when outside when it's cold. Better access to schedules Couldn't get appoint a few times when calling days in advance Don't like it when times change. Waited outside for a long time once. Easier way to schedule appointments. Confusing. Hard to schedule – calling 7 days in advance. More space available on buses. Scheduling 7 days in advance is hard. Better scheduling system</p>	<p>Captured - Increased span of service, scheduling of service, weather protection and seating, real-time information,</p>
	<p>What do you like best about paratransit service? Wonderful drivers, wonderful schedulers, everyone is helpful Drivers are fantastic. Never had a bad ride Can go fun places like to the movies and shopping The drivers The drivers. Very helpful. Very clean vehicles and consistent. Everything is in same place which is great because I cannot see. The drivers are awesome Riding around and seeing scenery in comfort and safety. Drivers are helpful and considerate. Drivers are good and go the speed limit Convenience Getting out without having to rely on others for rides Freedom Gets me there</p>	<p>Noted</p>
	<p>Anything else we should know about our service? No I don't like when other passengers complain, on the bus, about the service More drivers on the weekends because I cannot to too early to church with kids. I love that rides don't take too long. Love the schedulers. The whole program is awesome Likes the arm rests. Don't like answering these questions. Drivers are nice Gets to have a job because of it. (mentioned a few times throughout surveys) Get to work</p>	<p>Captured - Span of service</p>
<p>Samish Tribe</p>	<p>There are a limited number of Samish members living in Anacortes, and their homes are widely spread throughout the area. This creates challenges when planning transit routes.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
	<p>Tribal members would likely use transit for health care appointments (particularly for appointments in Mt. Vernon).</p>	<p>Noted</p>
	<p>There is not enough awareness of Paratransit among Samish community members.</p>	<p>Captured - More information</p>

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	Many Tribal members require transit to attend cultural events, particularly during evening hours.	Captured - Increase span of service
	The Elders program offers weekly art and cultural activities at the Samish Administration building. The new Elders bus is used for transporting participants.	Noted
	The Tribe needs additional drivers with CDL licenses. The lack of qualified drivers has hindered the Tribe's ability to provide transportation for Tribal members in the past.	Captured - Maintain fleet and trained operators
	Tribal members are frustrated by traffic congestion due to light synchronization issues extending from Burlington to Anacortes. There are 8-10 traffic lights – cars often must stop at every light. This may impact transit times.	Noted
	The "stacking lane" for cars waiting to board the ferry becomes backed-up and blocks traffic.	Noted
	Tribal members recall that D Street was once served by a fixed bus route (years ago). It is unclear why this service was discontinued.	Noted
	Tribally-provided carpool / vanpool options are needed. One group of staff members carpools regularly from Bellingham. Priuses might be a good option.	Noted
	The Fidalgo Bay RV Park is not currently served by an existing bus stop. Although SKAT Route 410 passes near Fidalgo Bay, the bus stays on Highway 20 and does not stop at the RV park.	Noted
	Cultural events such as Camp Samish would benefit from the availability of transit.	Noted
	Expanded transit options are needed to the local islands (e.g. Guemes Island and Lopez Island).	Captured - Expand service coverage
	The Tribe should explore partnership opportunities with area transit providers. For example, consider an arrangement where the Tribe owns a vehicle, but leases it back to a transit provider – they maintain the vehicle, but the Tribe can use it when needed.	Captured - Connections/coordination
	In addition to the new Elders bus, the Tribe owns a smart car (new), van (old), and Ford Ranger (old).	Noted
	Additional transit options are needed connecting Anacortes to surrounding cities – direct, streamlined service options. The Bellingham-to-Anacortes commute via bus is 90 minutes each way.	Captured - Connections/coordination
	The cost of transit is an obstacle for some HHS clients.	Captured - Cost
	The Samish Tribe should have more meaningful input on area transit services. Transit extends within the Tribe's ancestral land and natural resources. The Tribe should be a vested partner in regional transit decisions. Samish members should copy legislators when sending comments related to transit needs.	Captured - coordination
	Clearer communication is needed regarding existing regional transit options. Transit providers increasingly use their websites as their primary communication tool. Some of the groups with the greatest transit needs (e.g. elders, low-income) may not have Internet access.	Captured - More information
	Skagit Transit employs a Travel Trainer – the Tribe may request that she attend a future Elders luncheon and give a presentation on Skagit Transit's various options (e.g. fixed, deviated-fixed, pocket, paratransit, on-demand/DAR, vanpool, etc.).	Noted
Project Homeless Connect	The local (Skagit) transit used to be free, but they started charging. Some people don't have a dollar or even fifty cents to ride. Why can't they add it (the fare) to property taxes? Do you know how many people in Skagit own homes and pay property taxes?	Captured - Cost
	I use Paratransit, and I like it. I'm having heart issues, so I'll need it even more in the future. I can't stand for an hour waiting for the bus when I have heart issues.	Captured - weather protection and seating
	I try calling the Mobile Food Express, which was turned over from Community Action to the Food Bank in Mount Vernon. Since then, nobody calls back! They need to notify the public if the service has ended. I call for a meal, and they don't show up until two days later—and then the meal is small.	Noted
	More service is needed in Skagit County.	Captured - increase service
	The 300 to Sedro-Woolley needs to run more often—every half hour instead of every hour. We appreciate free transit on Skagit Project Homeless Connect days!	Captured - increase service

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	My wife is disabled and gets a free bus pass, and I get a monthly pass for \$12.50. It's how she gets around to her medical appointments. We're happy with the service and the cost, and the drivers are very friendly.	Noted
	(When asked if he uses public transportation) I live in my van, so it's easier for me to get around that way. But sometimes I don't have gas money.	Captured - Cost
	I walk. The bus doesn't go where I need to go, and it's too far away.	Captured - increase coverage
	I've got a car, and the (Skagit) bus is too expensive.	Captured - Cost
	I would use it (the bus) more if it was cheaper.	Captured - Cost
	I don't trust the driver safety. I rode a bus and the driver ran a red light.	Noted
	I use SKAT and County Commuter—I'm very happy with the service.	Noted
	The bus system is perfect! But they changed routes from March's Point. That makes me sad.	Captured - Increase coverage
	I use Dial-A-Ride, but the wait times are a bit long, especially after a doctor's appointment when you're not feeling good. Waiting 1-1 ½ hours is aggravating after my mental health appointment.	Captured - Scheduling of service
	I drive—I don't walk well, and it's easier to drive. I have appointments in Island County and have to deal with County Commuter. Doesn't Dial-A-Ride take me from the county line to my doctor in Anacortes? Why isn't Island Transit here (at the event)?	Captured - connection/coordination
	We need more stops further East on College Way—there are bus stops, but no bus comes! If a bus came further out on College Way, I would go to work on the bus every day. And they're always late.	Captured - increase coverage, improve reliability
	Expand the hours, especially on the weekends! It's hard to keep a job. I have to come in to work too early, and then I need the bus until 9 or 10pm. Otherwise I have to take the Greyhound and that's expensive. My only other choice is the train, and that's too expensive.	Captured - Span of service
	We need more cross-county transit—life goes on beyond Skagit County! If you want good quality medical care, you have to go outside of Skagit County because the good doctors in Skagit County aren't taking any more patients.	Captured - Connection/coordination
	If I don't have money for a cab after I go to Urgent Care, I end up having to stay in the Emergency Room overnight until the first bus runs in the morning.	Captured - Span of service
	I'm scared of the bus. I have mental illness, and my provider is in Bellingham. I would have to wait for hours. We need more Medicare providers.	Captured - Safety
	All bus drivers should carry Narcan. My son was an addict, he was stranded, and what did he do all night? He rode the bus. If someone overdoses on a bus they only have a few minutes. The drivers aren't safe. Once on College Way, I was forced into oncoming traffic by a Skagit Transit bus that was merging into my lane. His blinker was on, but I was in the middle of the bus with my car and I had nowhere to go. I know he saw me, and he knows I saw him. He merged anyway.	Captured - Safety
	The bus needs to run more often. We're a 1-car family. There are too few runs to Anacortes. I wish Skagit Transit was free like Island Transit. I lived near Concrete, and the bus runs were so early and so late in the day that my husband couldn't get a job for many months.	Captured - increase service
	We need more service to Bellingham, especially on Sunday. I have kids in Bellingham, but I can't see them as much as I want.	Captured - Connection/coordination
	I'm a single mom and I have four kids—the bus doesn't work for me. (Was also grateful that Island Transit was free.)	Noted
	I use Skagit Transit. It meets all my needs.	Noted
	We get ONE bus to Marblemount! Do you know why? It's because they can't make money on it. There used to be more service, but at the council meeting they took the daily bus away. Nobody on the council even uses the bus. Do you think any of us were there? No. Marblemount lacks representation. The transit services should be run by Commissioners only, because the Mayors will favor their city. Island Transit is free. Someone in Marblemount who wants to shop in Burlington only gets ½ hour before the bus leaves again. There is a "west" and "east" Skagit County, and the east has no representation.	Captured - Increase service

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	Uses Dial-A-Ride; working on getting the “return time” down because it’s not always easy to identify the return time.	Captured - Scheduling of service
	I use the SKAT bus but I want to use Dial-A-Ride and the questions about qualifying are too confusing. My husband will go through cancer treatment soon so we’ll need to sign up for Dial-A-Ride.	Captured - More information
	My clients often don’t know how to ride the bus or they don’t understand the system. Why don’t we have T.V. commercials? Everyone watches T.V. The main reason clients miss their appointments, including medical and opportunities to get free food and services, is lack of transportation.	Captured - More information
	I use the bus because it’s cheap.	Noted
	I use the bus because sometimes I don’t have anyone to take me to where I need to go. I wish it passed by more often—every 30 minutes	Captured - increase service
	I use the bus; the drivers drive well. We need more frequent routes; around 15 minutes apart.	Captured - increase service
	I use the bus sometimes. Sometimes I don’t have a car and transportation is very important. The bus system needs more routes. The times that I’ve used the bus everything has gone well.	Captured - increase coverage
Senior Day in the Park	The wording on the dot exercise is too sophisticated—I don’t understand it.	Noted
	I don’t want to fill out this survey, “it’s too long”/“I can’t read small print.”	Noted
	I appreciate Dial-A-Ride; it’s my primary means of getting around.	Noted
	I’m grateful that Island Transit is fare-free.	Noted
	I live alone, clear up near Timber Lake at Hwy 20, a mile from the nearest service, have to get a friend to drive me to the bus stop. I wish there was more service off the scheduled route.	Captured - increase coverage
	SKAT only comes to Marblemount once a week—I have no car and this is my only way to get around!	Captured - increased service
	Often when I get on the bus, I’m the only one on it—why aren’t more people using the bus?	Noted
	Sometimes I see three busses pass, one right after the other. That’s a waste of money. Can’t they consolidate stops?	Noted
	I feel the bus schedule is designed for commuters, not retired people.	Noted
	I ride the bus the equivalent of 2-3 thousand miles per year, between Whatcom and Skagit Counties, it’s an excellent resource.	Noted
	My mother is 101 years old, and it’s too hard to get her ready for a scheduled service—she’s always late. So we drive her everywhere.	Captured - Scheduling of service
	Retired pastor in La Conner commented that he wishes there was Sunday service to La Conner.	Captured - Span of service
	Samish River Park—transit stop is too far away.	Captured - Increase coverage
	There is a large group of seniors on Samish Island who need transit, but there is no longer service there!	Captured - increase coverage
	I’m blind—is there a transportation service I can use, or do I have to have someone ride with me every time?	Captured - More information
	I want to thank the railroad companies for keeping the trains on side tracks around noon, so we (seniors) can make it to the senior centers between 11am-1pm in Mount Vernon. This is a sincere thank you!	Noted
	Voting (5+ Votes): Increase knowledge of options - 7 Improve cross regional coordination - 6 Increase service levels - 15 Timeliness of service - 5 Maintain service - 5 Improve use of existing service - 6	Captured
Skagit County Buddy Walk	28 pins were placed on the map – all but 7 of which were in the Mount Vernon and Burlington areas	Captured - High need areas
	Work/school was the most popular destination with 11, the other three (Shopping, Medical, Other) were nearly equal	Noted

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	All of the Shopping and Medical pins were placed in the Mount Vernon and Burlington areas, except one	Noted
	Four of the Other pins were placed outside of Mount Vernon and Burlington, near Sedro-Woolley and by the Skagit Casino	Noted
	Two Work/school pins were placed near Anacortes.	Noted
	We need "more service on the weekends, more buses and longer hours" – 8 agree	Captured - Span of service
	For paratransit, "I love the drivers. They are so helpful. I am so grateful" – 6 agree	Noted
	What I like best about paratransit is "the convenience of being able to get to and from where I need to" – 7 agree	Noted
	What I like best about paratransit is "being able to go to work" – 4 agree	Noted
	Not having paratransit would "impact meeting my medical and social needs" – 7 agree	Noted
	"I have less anxiety about riding paratransit, then fixed route" – 1 agree, 1 disagree	Noted
	"Paratransit is a wonderful service. Thank you" – 4 agree	Noted
	Persons with developmental disabilities "have to have some means of transportation, it has to be reliable and consistent"- 9 agree	Noted
	"Timely [transit] connections are important; someone could spend the entire day getting to where they need to be" – 8 agree	Captured - Coordination, Scheduling
	"Bus service ends too early" – 4 agree, 2 disagree	Captured - Span of service
	Persons with developmental disabilities work hard to get jobs "and then they can't get there" due to transportation – 7 agree	Captured - Span of service, coverage
	"Evening events are difficult for persons with disabilities who use public transportation because the bus schedule ends too early for night return" – 5 agree, 1 disagree	Captured - span of service
	"It would be nice if more transportation systems work together. All of the Sound counties have the Orca Card which helps people go from one county to another" – 4 agree, 1 disagree	Captured - coordination
	"They do a great job at Skagit Transit" – 7 agree	Noted
	Skagit Transit really does have great drivers!	Noted
	My son uses paratransit to get from our home in Sedro-Woolley to his job at McDonald's in Burlington. He takes the bus to Burlington Boulevard, but it is dangerous walking from the bus stop along SR 20 to McDonald's.	Captured - Access fixed route
	Medicaid transportation services can be difficult for families to use as they will only transport the patient and not the rest of the family. A family I know does not use Medicaid transportation services and misses medical appointments because the family is headed by a single mother with three special needs children, and they cannot all ride the bus together.	Noted
	Cuts to transit service between Mount Vernon and Oak Harbor have made it much harder to get from Oak Harbor to medical appointments in Mount Vernon for one of my family members. She can't go after school, because after her medical appointment, it would be too late for her to catch the bus back home.	Captured - Span of service
	I'm 80 and drive myself. In 10 years I may not be able to drive anymore. At that point, I may have to use transit, but it is confusing to me now (how to pay, where routes go, etc.).	Captured - More information
	We need more transit service on 30th and Martin streets in Mount Vernon.	Noted
	It would be great to have an early bus run to La Conner where I teach. Thank you!	Captured - Span of service
Stanwood-Camano Community Center Focus Group	The public transit overlap between Skagit, Island, and Snohomish counties is significant. Many of Shirley's Developmentally Disabled (DD) clients take the bus to the doctors, to social security office, Coupeville (Island County seat), and shopping. Camano/Stanwood is a difficult area to place DD persons in jobs; there's a large pool of workers but limited jobs. People are forced to go north or south to find jobs. The bus that runs from Camano Island to Oak Harbor is often pretty full. The Park & Ride at I-5 is always packed; Camano Transit needs to go to that Park & Ride.	Captured - connection/coordination

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	Washington Vocational Services works hard to get DD people jobs, and then they can't get there.	Captured - span of service, coverage
	Island Transit is a huge part of our lives (in Stanwood/Camano). It gives an opportunity for people to get out of the area and into other regions.	Noted
	So many individuals need the transit system for dialysis.	Noted
	People will often continue to drive, even without their driver's license or car insurance because they have to get to medical appointments. They might be racking up \$5,000, \$8,000 in fines, but they have no other options.	Noted
	When Shirley is getting jobs for DD clients, they have to have some means of transportation—it has to be reliable and consistent. Some days we're beating our heads against the wall. Transportation is key—it has to be the #1 priority. We are constantly looking for solutions.	Noted
	The Stillaguamish Tribe provides some transportation service on Camano Island—it's free for anybody.	Noted
	Both senior centers (Camano and Stanwood) are major hubs for our community.	Noted
	One participant has a disabled and her life revolves around him. She gets him to work, to his volunteer job—and everywhere he needs to go. The DD community is seeking independence, but transportation is key. Transporting disabled family members around is extremely time-consuming for family members/care givers.	Noted
	One participant is blind and lives on Camano Island, uses Paratransit for many things including a volunteer position with the local elementary school. He's working on developing a self-employed business as a motivational speaker, but he will need transportation to reach speaking engagements and the bus service ends too early.	Captured - span of service
	One participant is a physically and developmentally disabled senior. He uses Paratransit to reach art classes and social events at the Camano Center as well as his doctor's appointments.	Noted
	Paratransit is fantastic; the Island County dispatches on Camano Island are amazing human beings. They go above and beyond to give exemplary service.	Noted
	Island Transit "cuts off" the southern tip of Camano Island. Do those people need services? They might need a survey of that area. The cheaper homes are on the south end, and there's also an elementary school there.	Captured - coverage
	The hub at Terry's Corner is very efficient and located near the new library.	Noted
	Many seniors are using the bus to get to events and luncheons.	Noted
	Timely connections are important; someone could spend an entire day getting where they need to be. It's especially difficult for medical appointments. People have ended up at the hospital on an emergency room trip, stuck with no way to get home.	Captured - connection/coordination
	Staff/supervisors of regional service organizations sometimes take it upon themselves to provide transportation with their personal vehicle or deviate from scheduled routes when seniors are in emergency situations and stranded. Examples included staff at the table and Paratransit on Camano.	Noted
	The Island Transit constituents on Camano are incredible people—we need more service and more connections.	Noted
	Island Transit is becoming a political football. The local paper is one-sided. They don't take the bus or live in the community, so they should just "butt out."	Noted
Survey Response	I use special needs transportation because: 52% - I don't have a car 42% - I'm a senior and I don't drive 40% - I'm disabled 9% - I'm homeless 6% - I'm too ill to drive	Noted
	How do you get around: 73% Transit 47% Family, friends or volunteers 38% Non-motorized 30% my vehicle	Noted

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	I need transportation to: 75% - Errands 68% - Medical appointments 41% - Social Events 37% - Friends and family	Noted
	I need to go to: 54% Mount Vernon 36% Oak Harbor 27% Burlington	Noted
	Current service is meeting _____ of my transportation needs: Less than some 14% Some 46% More than some 40%	Noted
	Existing service doesn't meet my needs because: Doesn't go where I need to go 23% Doesn't go where I live 20%	Captured - Coverage
	Lack of Transportation impacts my ability to: Participate in community and social events 46% Meet medical and health needs 46% Accomplish daily tasks 45% Get employment 31% Participate in recreational activities 27%	Noted
Common O-D Data	Group homes are a major destination	Noted
	Medical transportation makes up a very large percentage of paratransit service, particularly dialysis centers.	Noted
	Fitness and job employment centers for people with disabilities are also a high demand destination.	Noted
Demographic Profile		Noted
	In total numbers Skagit county has a larger special needs population and total population	Noted
	Skagit county has nearly twice as many people in poverty as Island County	Noted
	Island county has a slightly higher percentage of seniors, although Skagit county has a larger total number	Noted
	Compared to other counties within Washington State, neither counties stand out with regards to special needs populations.	Noted
Needs Analysis	Multiple areas in Anacortes and parts of Oak harbor are within the top 25% of proportional and density need	Captured - High need areas
	Communities of South Whidbey Island and East-South Camano Island in addition to East Skagit County, the Swinomish Indian Reservation and Guemes Island	Captured - High need areas
	Parts of Anacortes and Oak Harbor, Mount Vernon and Burlington are also identified as areas with a high density of need	Captured - High need areas
Survey - Open Ended		Noted
	Non-fossil fuel buses are the future easy to understand, nice job!	Noted
	I need service in Island, Skagit and Snohomish Counties. My family transports me, but I would like to be more independent. It's not fair to my family.	Noted
	I use Skagit Transit. I get to my doctor appointments and have the \$12.50 disability bus pass. I need the bus to run later on Saturdays and Sundays; if I work late, there's no bus and I'm stuck.	Captured - Span of Service
	I use the bus to get to work. We need more routes and more often--I work past 5pm on Sundays and can't get a bus home.	Captured - Span of service, service levels
	Many times classes I take are not covered with busses at night or early in the morning. (I will take the bus) if car breaks down or gas goes up to \$4.50 a gallon. I go to the soup kitchen in Langley on Tuesday. I was dishes. I used to take the bus from Freeland to Langley on Tuesdays.	Captured - Span of service
	Please keep the service as-is. We are willing to donate per ride.	Noted
	I can still drive, but due to limited income I use Paratransit for doctor appointments in Freeland and Coupeville.	Noted

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	I deliver the mail to Coupeville on Monday and to Langley Tuesday through Saturday using a company truck. But for getting around while I am here for ten hours, I use the bus.	Noted
	Car and gas are too expensive. The process of Oak Harbor to Langley is taking two busses.	Captured - Connection/coordination
	I do like my bus service and my drivers, They all call me by name.	Noted
	It is so sad that 24 people lost their jobs because of poor management! I am a caregiver and am answering for many seniors. I also think that some would be willing to pay as I have asked around. Also we didn't need such extravagant bus garage and we need to check all books weekly as we do our own checkbooks. All are to blame--top officials.	Noted
	Wonderful service. I hope you can recoup your lost money.	Noted
	I depend on transit when my car is down.	Noted
	I use Paratransit and it works for me.	Noted
	I feel the #8 and the #5 could be made into one run. People could plan around that. With no #5, several people will not be able to get to town. Wishing you all the best. Get the routes back and the drivers back to work.	Noted
	We have four disabled adults who need Saturday transportation.	Captured - Span of service
	Thank you Mr. Hamilton and Staff. Thank you for considering this survey at this most critical time at Island Transit Bus Co. I do not have Paratransit because I am close to Town of Langley and #7 bus.	Noted
	Loss of Paratransit service will impact my ability to meet my medical and social needs.	Captured - Maintain service levels
	Island Paratransit is extremely important to my brother, who needs to get to the Senior Center 5 days a week. I would have used Paratransit for my daughter (39 years old) who has Multiple Sclerosis, but the service is being cut. Paratransit cuts will impact my brother, daughter, and husband who is starting cancer treatment & I will not be able to meet all the needs without Paratransit.	Captured - Maintain service levels
	Current transportation options are great.	Noted
	I understand that it is necessary for Island Transit to cut out runs in order to stay open. When there are better circumstances it would be very much appreciated to have Saturday service back.	Captured - span of service
	Paratransit is a wonderful service. Thank you.	Noted
	Very much appreciate the rides. The drivers are friendly and helpful when I need it.	Noted
	All of your drivers are wonderful.	Noted
	I go 4 times each week to Island Athletic Club for my health, especially since knee surgery, but I am trying to cut my car driving way down especially at night and when weather gets cold, wet, rainy, snowy, icy--then I won't go out at all. I am 78--want to live to be 100 and the busses and exercise can sure help!	Noted
	I don't know if I qualify for Paratransit but it would be nice. I'm 76 years old.	Captured - More information
	Go get some \$ to run better busses.	Noted
	Currently use Paratransit and Island County bus service.	Noted
	I have ridden the bus most of my life. I feel that if Sunday and Saturday were more available, it could help my ability to maintain employment opportunities and student success availability on a vast island.	Captured - Span of Service
	I really appreciate the services provided. I hope it continues. Thanks.	Noted
	All the new changes that have time lapses in between running times in the afternoon is a disappointment as making any rider wait so long to catch a bus/public transportation.	Captured - Maintain service levels
	The buses do not run early enough for me to get to school.	Captured - Span of service
	I hope transportation to Seattle can be brought about.	Noted
	I've only been in Oak Harbor since December, but I really appreciate the free service and courtesy of the drivers.	Noted
	I am very thankful for transit.	Noted

Source	Comment/Finding	Unmet Need
	Need busses in Oak Harbor. Route 10 and 2 later hours and on both Saturday and Sunday.	Captured - Span of service
	Would very much like to clear up this "blue" card that I was issued some time ago. "Blue Card"--"ODOR on the bus was UNBEARABLE." Have since showered and done laundry.	Noted
	Drivers who aren't respectful don't seem to last long. Most drivers are very courteous; they're like family. If I'm going off the (Whidbey) Island, I have to hunt for a ride. I'm taking beginning computer classes for seniors at the Oak Harbor Senior Center, which is possible thanks to Paratransit.	Noted
	You guys messed the bus system up horribly.	Noted
	Please keep the bus going, not only me but no other ones could get out. Don't like to see the bus drivers without jobs. All the bus drivers are very nice and helpful for everyone. And I'm glad we got them, otherwise I can't get out or anyone else. Please keep in mind we all need to get around. Lots of people feel like me. When we all get together for a nice lunch, we all enjoy (it).	Captured - Maintain service levels
	The transit system is a valuable asset to seniors and the handicapped. It should never be cut even though the buses are very seldom full. I am disabled but I still drive most of the time, then I use the bus. Bus service is essential to any community. --Mike Rossner.	Noted
	Overall service is good. Drivers kind and polite. A little sketchy at Skagit Station. Lot's of homeless.	Captured - Security/Safety
	To date, I have only used the 410 and 49 routes. I'm a new resident. So far, so good.	Noted
	I do appreciate the service as it exists. My family has helped greatly with my needs; but I DO LIKE the bus as transportation. I grew up with it; I have lived in cities which have public transportation.	Noted
	thanks for your service and picking it up when Island transit had to cut back.	Noted
	I really appreciate Skagit Transit - it's a lifeline. I just wish we had better service from Sedro-Woolley to/from the county connectors and gave input in the Skagit Transit 6-year plan.	Captured - system coverage
	Dial-A-Ride has truly been a blessing for me! I cannot express enough how much I appreciate Dial-A-Ride. From the "top brass" down to the wonderful drivers, maintenance people, the office workers, who are always very courteous and helpful! Dial-A-Ride is beyond description. Outstanding. There is positively not the words to say how appreciative I am of this service. Many, many, many thanks for making this service possible for me and others!	Noted
	I use Dial-A-Ride.	Noted
	I live in the Day Creek area of Sedro-Woolley, and there is no service. I would use public transit if it were available.	Captured - system coverage
	Dial-A-Ride is friendly and very easy to set up appointments.	Noted
	It's great to have public service.	Noted
	Samish Island needs better service. Please bring a bus back to Samish Island! Thanks. (respondent added that there are additional seniors on Samish Island who have no transit options other than family or friends)	Captured - system coverage

Appendix D - Survey Questionnaire and Responses

Island and Skagit County Special Needs Transportation Services Survey

Your opinion is important to determine the transportation needs in your community. Please complete one survey only. You may complete as much of the survey as you like.

I need transportation services because: (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am an elder or senior citizen, and I don't drive | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have a car |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am disabled | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have a driver's license |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am homeless | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't have auto insurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am too ill to drive | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

I currently use the following means of transportation: (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public transit | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional transportation (Amtrak, Greyhound, Ferry) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taxi service | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family, friends or volunteers | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-motorized (walk, bicycle, wheelchair) | |

How do you arrive at the pick-up locations for these options: (Select all that apply)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walk | <input type="checkbox"/> Family, friend or volunteer | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive device (walker, wheelchair, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|

I need transportation to: (Select your top 3 choices)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Errands (banking, grocery shopping) | <input type="checkbox"/> School/Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Family and Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder/Senior Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court Appointments | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Appointments | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work/Job Training | |

I need to go to: (Select your top 3 most frequent destinations)

- | <u>Skagit County</u> | <u>Island County</u> | <u>Regional</u> |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anacortes | <input type="checkbox"/> Bayview | <input type="checkbox"/> Bellevue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bayview Ridge | <input type="checkbox"/> Coupeville | <input type="checkbox"/> Bellingham |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burlington | <input type="checkbox"/> Freeland | <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Washington |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> Langley | <input type="checkbox"/> Everett |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenbank | <input type="checkbox"/> Oak Harbor | <input type="checkbox"/> King County |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton | <input type="checkbox"/> Camano Island | <input type="checkbox"/> Marysville |
| <input type="checkbox"/> La Conner | <input type="checkbox"/> Clinton | <input type="checkbox"/> Port Townsend |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lyman | <input type="checkbox"/> Whidbey Island | <input type="checkbox"/> Seattle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mount Vernon | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | <input type="checkbox"/> Stanwood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sedro-Woolley | | <input type="checkbox"/> Whatcom County |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swinomish | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |

What is your 5-digit zip code? Zip Code: _____

Additional questions on reverse side

I need transportation on the following days of the week: (Select all that apply)

- Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday
 Thursday Friday Saturday

I need transportation at the following times: (Select all that apply)

- Morning Afternoon Evening Night

On a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high) rank your knowledge of the transportation options currently available to you?

- 1 (No knowledge) 2 3 (Some knowledge) 4 5 (Very familiar)

On a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high) rank how current transportation options are meeting your needs?

- 1 (None) 2 3 (Some) 4 5 (All)

Why don't the existing transportation options meet your needs? (Select all that apply)

- Takes too long Doesn't operate when I need it Doesn't go where I need to go Doesn't come to where I live
 I don't know how to sign up or get information I don't feel safe/comfortable I can't afford it It's too complicated

Please explain other reasons: _____

Does lack of transportation impact your ability to: (Select all that apply)

- Meet medical and health needs Access community and social services to improve your quality of life Participate in social and community events
 Employment/business opportunities Accomplish daily activities (errands, shopping, etc.) Participate in recreational activities (sporting events, outdoors)

Would you like to learn how to ride?

- Paratransit service Transition from paratransit to regular bus service Regular bus service

If you would like to be contacted for training please provide your contact information below:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Thank you for completing this survey. Please feel free to comment on the survey in the space below. If you have any questions please contact Mark Hamilton at (360) 416-7876 or markh@scog.net

Comments:

Island and Skagit County Special Needs Transportation Services Survey

I need transportation because: (Choose all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I am an elder or senior citizen, and I don't drive	42.5%	54
I am disabled	40.9%	52
I am homeless	9.4%	12
I am too ill to drive	6.3%	8
I don't have a car	52.0%	66
I don't have a driver's license	33.1%	42
I don't have auto insurance	22.8%	29
Other: (please specify)	18.1%	23
<i>answered question</i>		127
<i>skipped question</i>		16

I currently use the following means of transportation: (Select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Public Transit	73.5%	100
My Vehicle	30.1%	41
Taxi Service	8.1%	11
Family, Friends or Volunteers	47.1%	64
Non-motorized (walk, bicycle, wheelchair)	38.2%	52
Regional Transportation (Amtrak, Greyhound, Ferry)	14.7%	20
Medical Transportation	14.0%	19
Please describe how you arrive at the pick-up locations for these options:		64
<i>answered question</i>		136
<i>skipped question</i>		7

I need transportation to: (Select your top 3 choices)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Errands (banking, grocery shopping)	75.0%	99
Childcare	4.5%	6
Social Events	40.9%	54
Court Appointments	12.9%	17
Medical Appointments	68.9%	91
Work/Job Training	33.3%	44
School/Training	16.7%	22
Family and Friends	37.1%	49
Elder/Senior Services	25.0%	33
Recreational Facilities	25.8%	34
Other: (please specify)	8.3%	11
	<i>answered question</i>	132
	<i>skipped question</i>	11

I need to go to: (Select your top 3 most frequent destinations)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Anacortes	22.7%	30
Bayview Ridge	0.0%	0
Burlington	27.3%	36
Concrete	3.8%	5
Greenbank	4.5%	6
Hamilton	0.0%	0
La Conner	11.4%	15
Lyman	0.0%	0
Mount Vernon	54.5%	72
Sedro-Woolley	9.1%	12
Swinomish	3.0%	4
Bayview	16.7%	22
Coupeville	24.2%	32
Freeland	23.5%	31
Langley	19.7%	26
Oak Harbor	36.4%	48
Camano Island	9.8%	13
Clinton	17.4%	23
Whidbey Island	9.8%	13
Bellevue	2.3%	3
Bellingham	17.4%	23
Eastern Washington	2.3%	3
Everett	16.7%	22
King County	7.6%	10
Marysville	6.1%	8
Port Townsend	3.0%	4
Seattle	16.7%	22
Stanwood	11.4%	15
Whatcom County	1.5%	2
Other	2.3%	3
If other, please specify:		3
<i>answered question</i>		132
<i>skipped question</i>		11

I need transportation on the following days of the week: (Select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Sunday	42.7%	53
Monday	90.3%	112
Tuesday	87.1%	108
Wednesday	87.9%	109
Thursday	84.7%	105
Friday	88.7%	110
Saturday	58.9%	73
<i>answered question</i>		124
<i>skipped question</i>		19

I need transportation at the following times: (Select all that apply)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Morning	90.8%	109
Afternoon	86.7%	104
Evening	67.5%	81
Night	30.0%	36
<i>answered question</i>		120
<i>skipped question</i>		23

On a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high), rank your knowledge of the transportation options currently available to you:							
Answer Options	1 (No knowledge)	2	3 (Some knowledge)	4	5 (Very familiar)	Rating Average	Response Count
	5	6	47	24	45	3.77	127
<i>answered question</i>							127
<i>skipped question</i>							16

Island and Skagit County Special Needs Transportation Services Survey

On a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high), rank how current transportation options are meeting your needs:

Answer Options	1 (None)	2	3 (Some)	4	5 (All)	Rating Average	Response Count	
	9	9	56	29	20	3.34	123	
	<i>answered question</i>							123
	<i>skipped question</i>							20

Why don't the existing transportation options meet your needs? (Select all that apply)

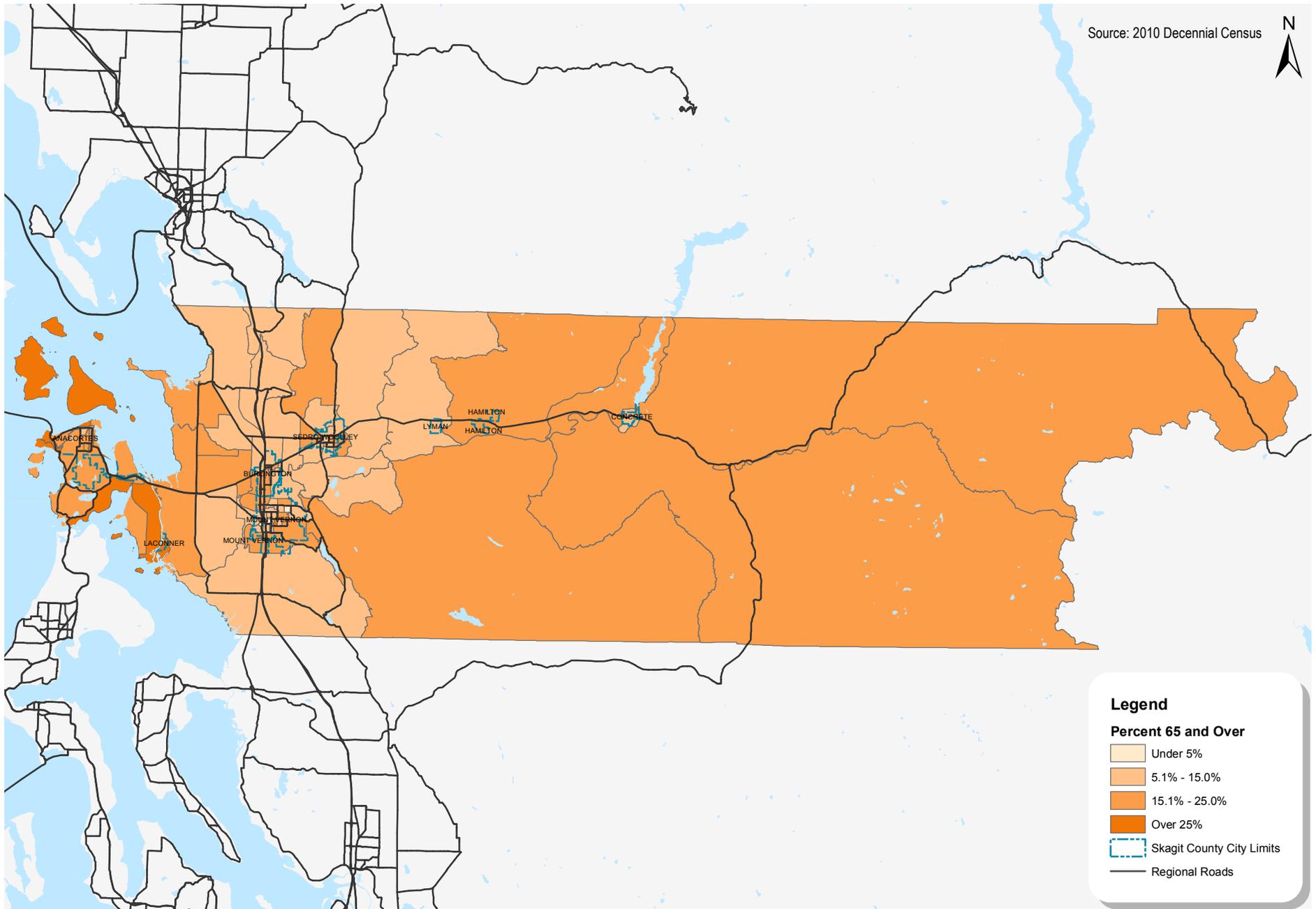
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Takes too long	26.8%	26
Doesn't operate when I need it	52.6%	51
Doesn't go where I need to go	34.0%	33
Doesn't come to where I live	29.9%	29
I don't know how to sign up or get information	13.4%	13
I don't feel safe/comfortable	8.2%	8
I can't afford it	10.3%	10
It's too complicated	10.3%	10
Please explain other reasons:	24.7%	24
	<i>answered question</i>	97
	<i>skipped question</i>	46

Does lack of transportation impact your ability to: (Select all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Meet medical and health needs	62.3%	66
Get employment/business opportunities	41.5%	44
Access community and social services to improve your	67.0%	71
Accomplish daily activities (errands, shopping, etc.)	60.4%	64
Participate in social and community events	62.3%	66
Participate in recreational activities (sporting events,	35.8%	38
	<i>answered question</i>	106
	<i>skipped question</i>	37

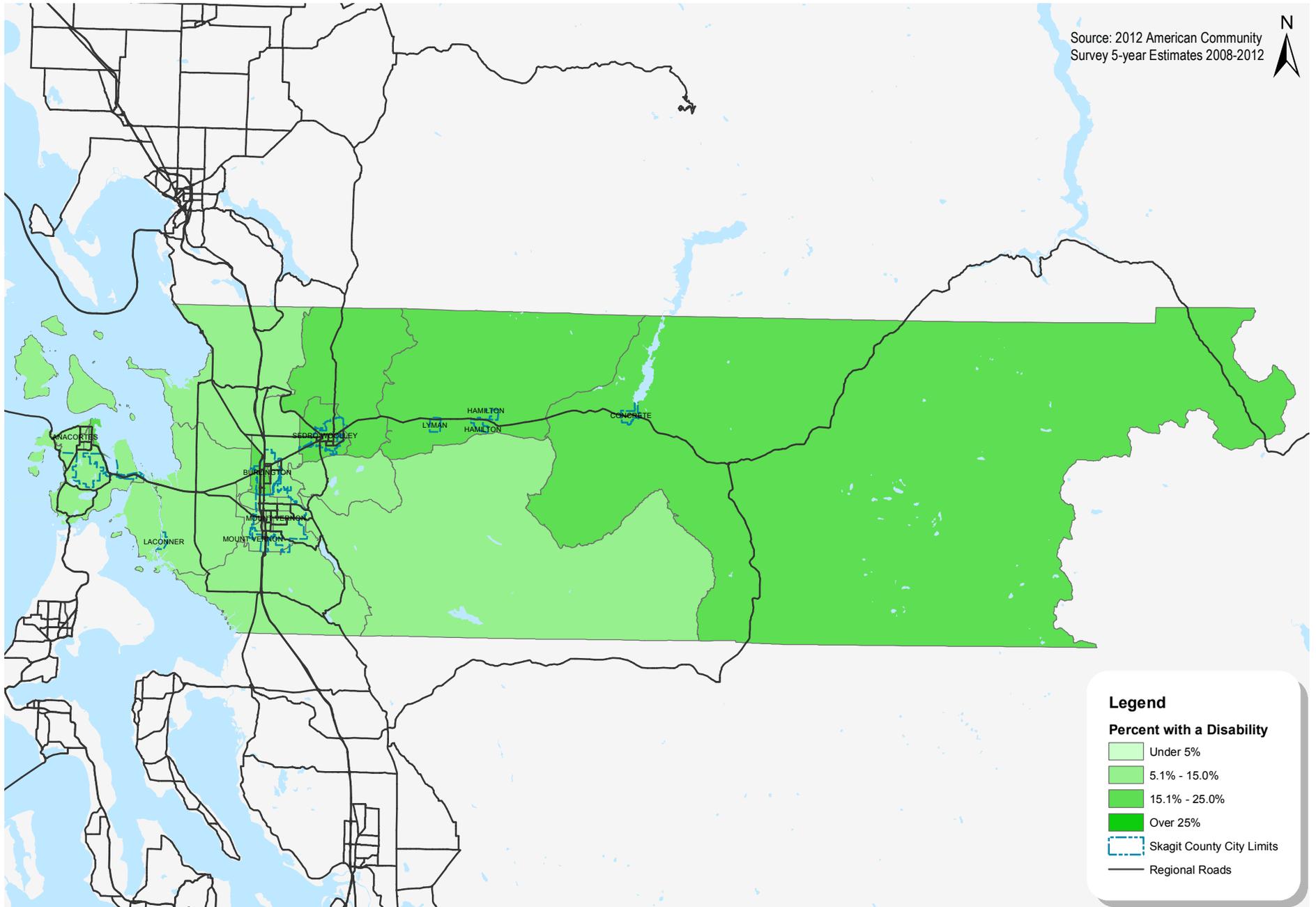
Would you like to learn how to ride?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Paratransit service	37.2%	16
Transition from paratransit to regular bus service	30.2%	13
Regular bus service	72.1%	31
If you would like to be contacted for training, please provide your name		18
	<i>answered question</i>	43
	<i>skipped question</i>	100

Appendix E - Demographic Maps



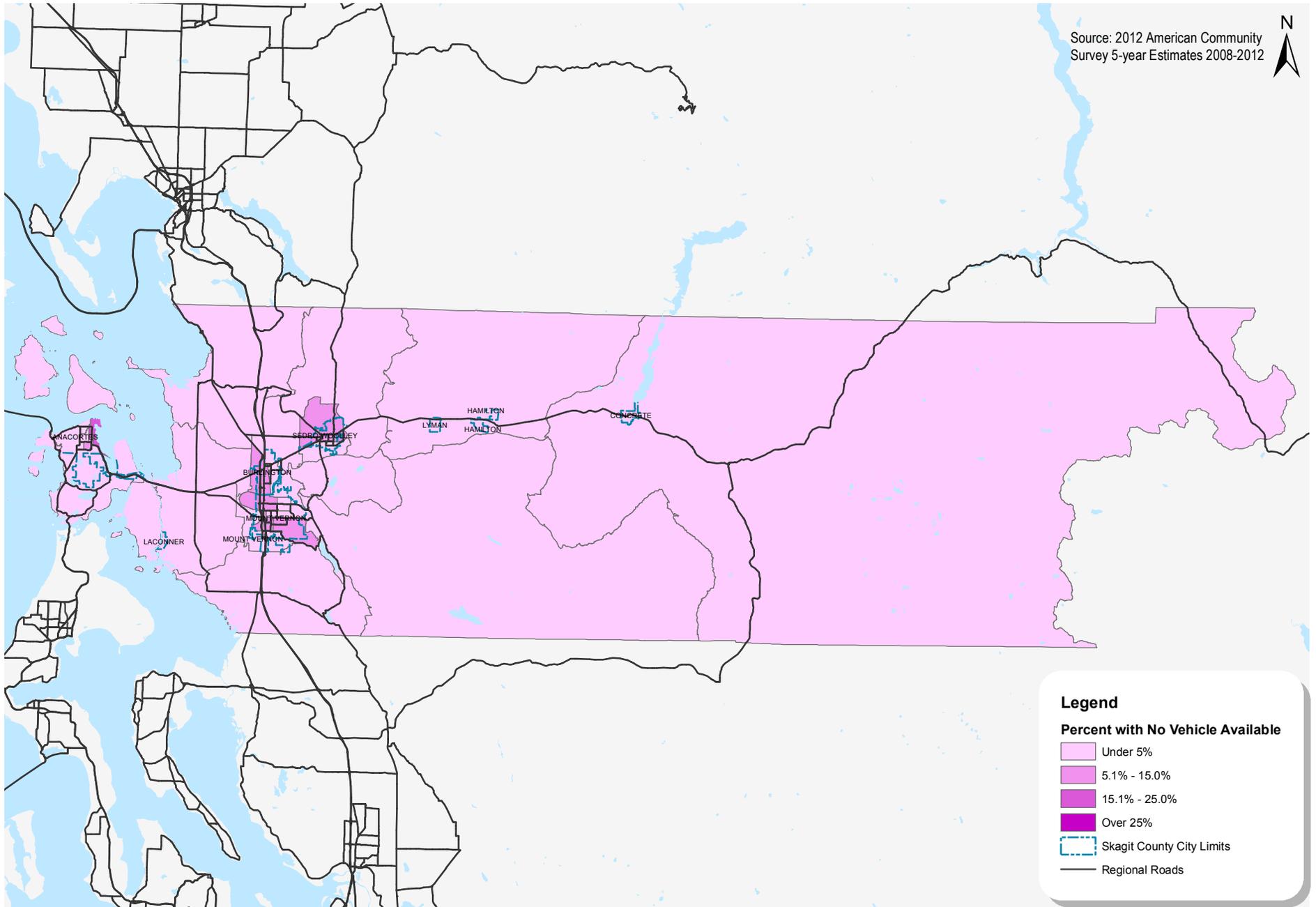
Skagit County - Census Tracts by Percent 65 and Over

Source: 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2008-2012



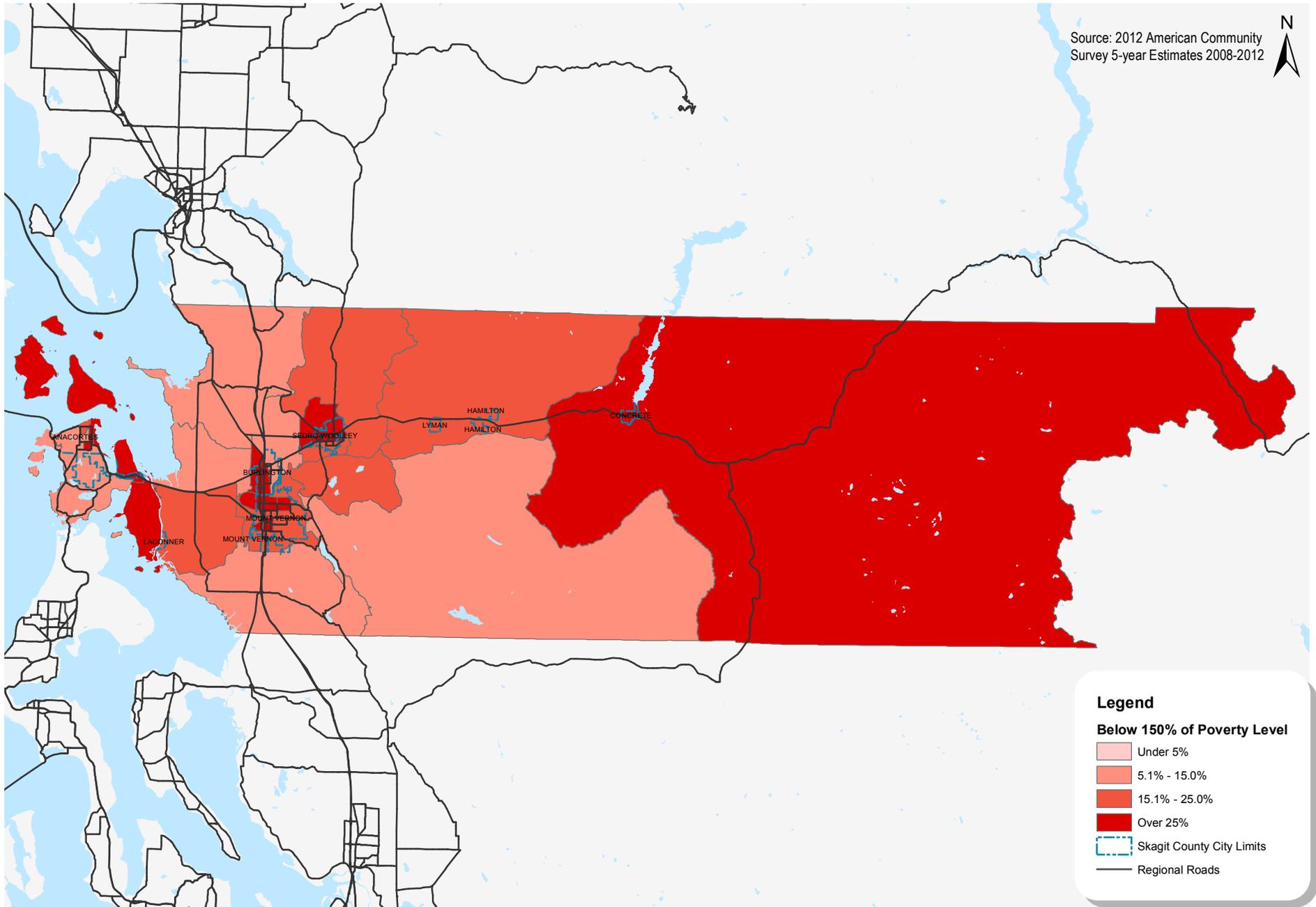
Skagit County - Census Tracts by Percent with Disability

Source: 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2008-2012



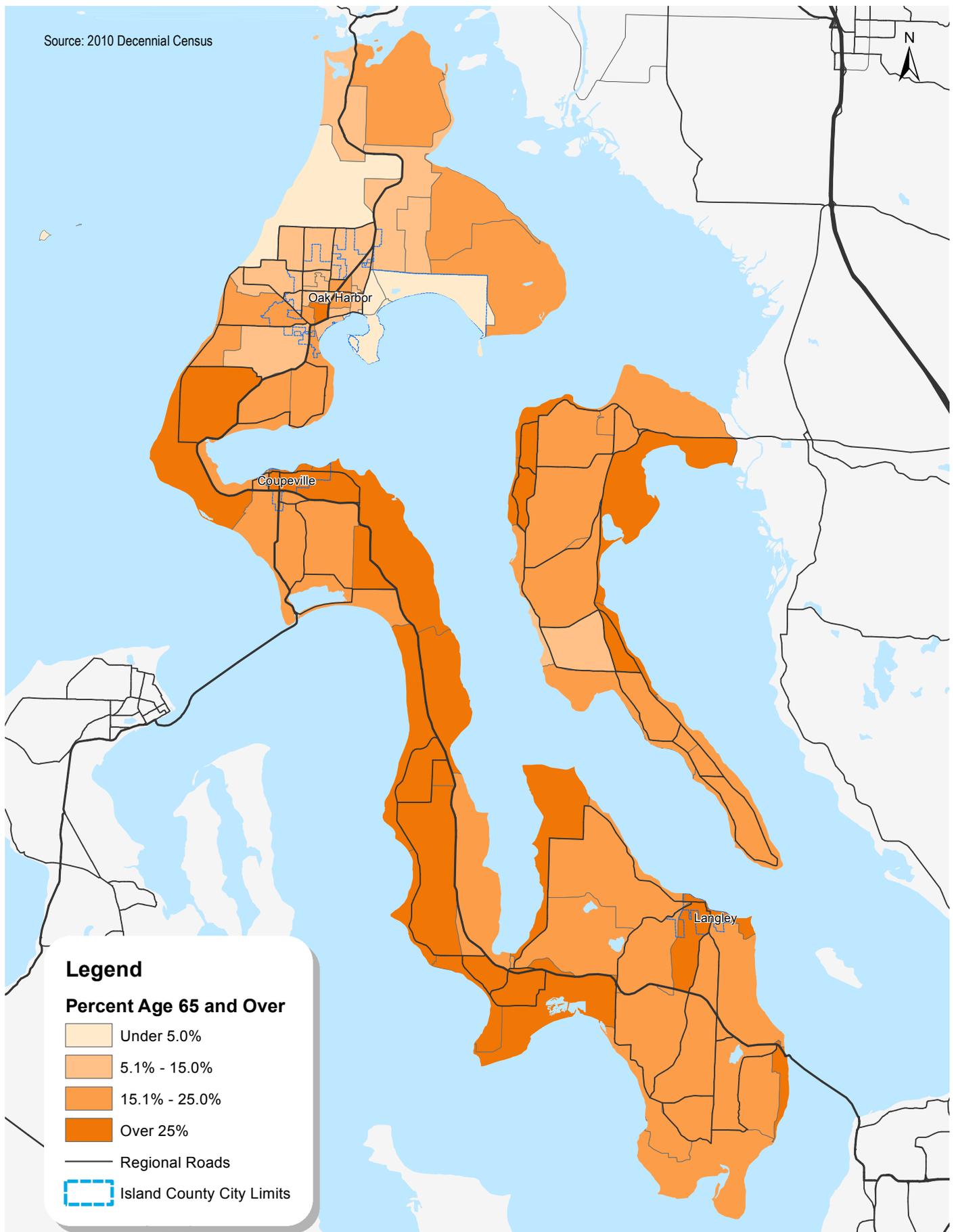
Skagit County - Census Tracts by Percent with No Vehicles

Source: 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2008-2012



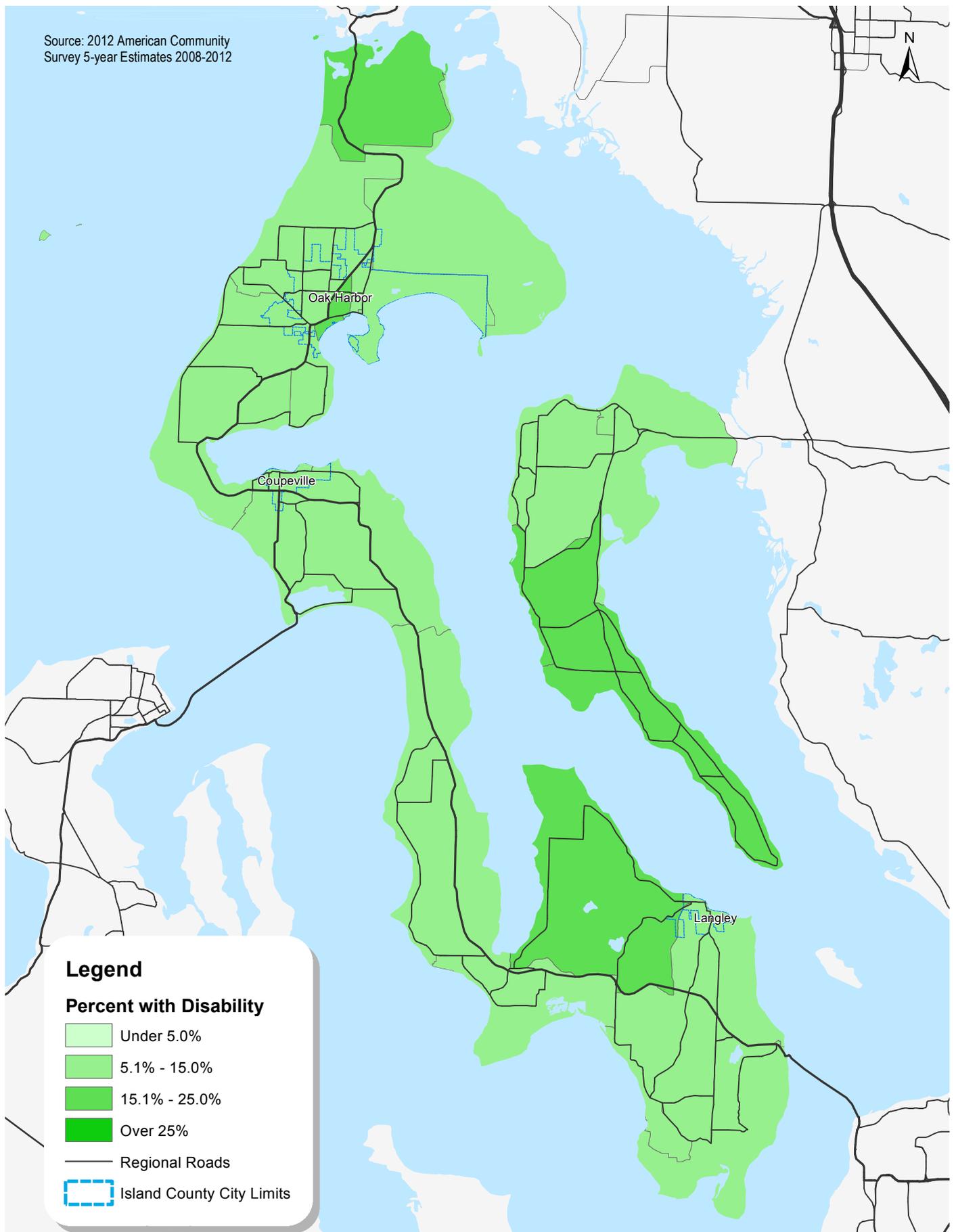
Skagit County - Census Tracts by Percent below 150% of Poverty Level

Source: 2010 Decennial Census



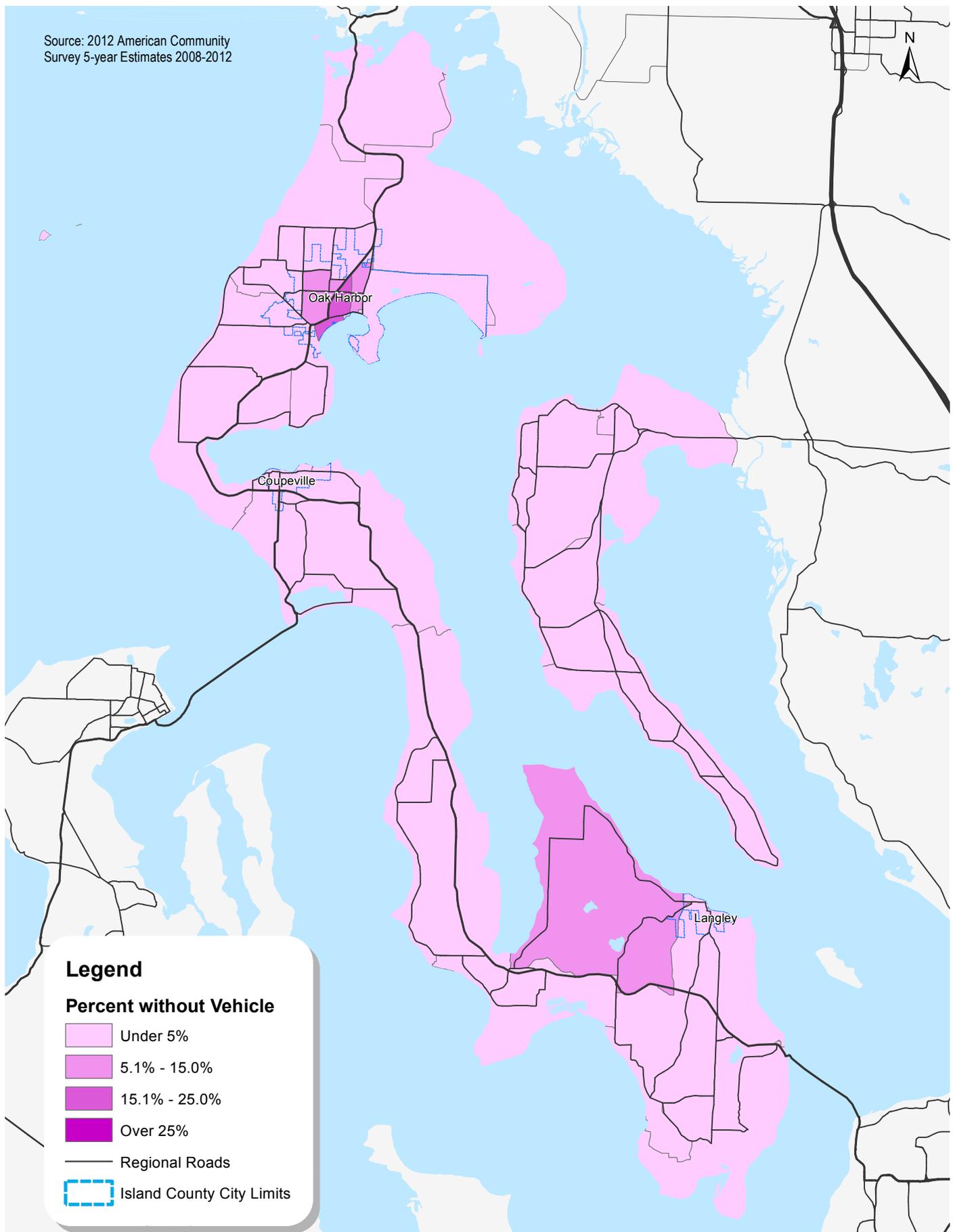
Island County - Census Tracts by Percent 65 and Over

Source: 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2008-2012



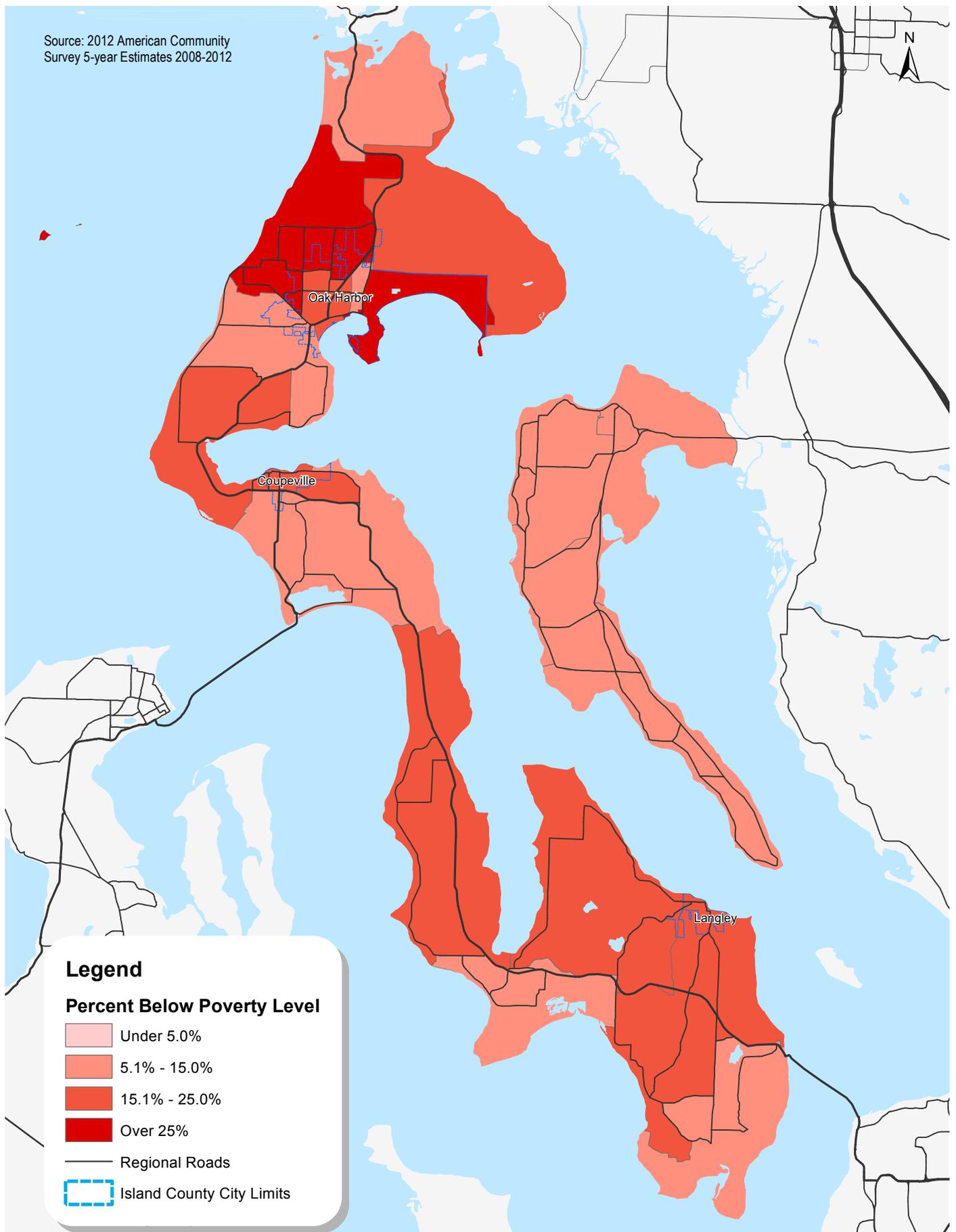
Island County - Census Tracts by Percent with Disability

Source: 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2008-2012



Island County - Census Tracts by Percent with No Vehicle Available

Source: 2012 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2008-2012



Island County - Census Tracts by Percent below 150% of Poverty Level

Appendix F - Prioritized Human Services Transportation Projects