



Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

November 2010

Prepared by:



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Project Methodology	8
Coordination Initiatives.....	10
Policies	10
Programs	14
Projects	16
Transportation Service Providers.....	20
Other Human Service Transportation Providers.....	22
Other Transportation Services	23
Coordinated Transportation Funding Sources.....	24
Demographic Profile	26
Appendix	34

Introduction

Planning for coordinated human services transportation in the year 2010 is notably different than it was in 2007 when the Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Plan was originally developed. The economic struggles across the United States and in the State of Washington have left a mark on all transportation agencies, no matter their level of financial stability. Perhaps nowhere has this impact been felt more than in the realm of human services transportation.



The fiscal challenges facing transportation providers in 2010 threatens the ability of agencies to preserve existing services.

In 2007, federal and state funding programs were relatively stable, agencies were exploring expansion of services, and regional planning organizations and transit operators were embarking on a new effort to secure additional funding through the development of Coordinated Transportation Plans. Since then, declining revenues have forced transit agencies to cut services; inconsistency in fuel prices and local policies have left most agencies unable to modify fares to adjust to these fluctuations; and overall costs for agencies continue to rise. The prospects for

major expansion of geographic coverage or services have evolved from 2007 into a struggle in 2010 to maintain the core of existing services and provide basic transportation services to those who need it most.

Despite these challenges, measurable progress has been made over the past three years in Island and Skagit Counties to achieve greater coordination among human service transportation providers. This is primarily due to positive working relationships between agency staff members and their policy boards. The agencies providing human service transportation are keenly aware of mutual needs between the two counties and a reliance among citizens of each county on the other for healthcare, job access, shopping and other day-to-day activities.

Collectively, the challenges of planning and implementing coordinated human service transportation in 2010 and positive influences that exist with Island and Skagit Counties helped frame this update of the plan. The 2007 plan established a baseline for coordinated transportation planning within the region and contained many features that will remain relevant for years to come. The 2010 update serves as a revisiting of the goals, objectives and initiatives identified in the original plan.

Developed by the consulting firm Nelson-Nygaard, the 2007 plan contains summaries of federal funding programs and regional services, the context of coordinated planning in

Washington State, and demographic profiles based on the 2000 Census and 2005 American Community Survey.

This 2010 plan update, produced by Transpo Group, did not attempt to revisit all facets of the original plan and contains some materials and language organized as it was in 2007. The changes from the original plan reflected in this document represent the revisiting of the basic goals, objectives and initiatives, and contain summary guidance on how Skagit and Island Counties, through the work of Skagit Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), its member agencies, Skagit Transit, and Island Transit can work to provide greater coordinated transportation.

Much of the focus of past planning and grant pursuits focused on specific “projects” that would allow an operator to provide service to a new geographic area or a new population center; expand existing service hours or types; or offer more options for travel beyond the typical service hours. The 2010 plan update also offers a slightly different perspective on how regions can address coordinated transportation. This reflects a need to achieve coordination not only through funding pursuits, but also through regionwide or statewide initiatives.

The recommendations contained in this plan were developed through consultation with the RTPO, Skagit Transit and Island Transit, and area stakeholders. A public workshop was conducted July 19, 2010 in Anacortes to engage the public and stakeholders in a dialogue and regional focus group session to pose new ideas and revisit existing strategies for coordinated transportation. Public outreach for this coordinated planning effort was also done in collaboration with the update of the RTPO’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan and presented alongside the MTP at public open houses and workshops in December 2009 and August 2010.

The recommendations are ordered under the broader umbrella of “Coordination Initiatives” to better reflect the breadth and depth of strategies to achieve a fully coordinated system. These initiatives are organized as follows:

- ▣ **Policies:** To foster greater cooperation among agencies and to develop a united message for interests outside the Skagit/Island region, a set of policy-based recommendations were developed through examination of the context of Washington State and how agencies operate under these parameters. Policy recommendations can serve as a “game plan” for transit operators and municipalities to pursue greater incorporation of human service transportation needs into local or regional policies and present a united voice for policy changes needed at the state level. Changes or modification of these policies will foster greater coordination and allow service providers to gain greater leverage when pursuing specific programs and projects, as described below.

- ☐ **Programs:** Historically, this has been a focus of human service transportation planning efforts and grant applications as programs are the impetus for most coordination initiatives. Programs are intended to help break down institutional barriers that the federal government and advocates viewed as a primary contributor to transportation systems characterizes as disjointed. The identification of programs is also a way in which agencies can pursue funding jointly with other agencies to achieve coordinated transportation without having to endure laborious proceedings to consolidate agencies or service providers. The programmatic efforts of agencies have been hindered greatly by the economy, which has forced many transportation service providers to focus on their core mission and bottom line.
- ☐ **Projects:** Identification of projects and grant applications that are project-based are another historical focus and an outgrowth of the programmatic initiatives within coordinated transportation plans. Projects are typically defined as capital or operations within the context of a transportation service provider. Most coordinated transportation efforts reflect a combination of projects and programs, whereby projects are an out-growth of certain programmatic initiatives, such as buying new vehicles to expand services through a new program or investing in technologies to better integrate scheduling and dispatching services through a one-stop shop.

The figure below outlines the context in which these 3 “Ps” of coordinated transportation planning are devised.



The Need for a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is the designated recipient for federal funding programs aimed at achieving coordinated human service transportation and reviews grant applications during each funding cycle. WSDOT is requiring that projects funded through the next funding cycle, effective September 1, 2010, be derived from a coordinated plan that is current and updated since the 2007 effort. The original plan was intended to be applicable over the course of three annual funding cycles (2007 through 2009) and the 2010 plan will serve that same function for 2011-2013.

The federal government’s transportation funding bill, known as SAFETEA-LU, establishes funding levels for dozens of a transit-related programs and outlines the policies that must be adhered to in order to be eligible to receive these funds. The State of

Washington, as the designated recipient, has also

developed requirements for agencies wishing to receive these funds. It is likely that a new federal transportation reauthorization bill will be passed during the life of this plan and may alter some aspects of the funding programs available for coordinated human services transportation. Fortunately for operators, the speed at which this legislation and ensuing policies will be developed will likely mean few changes through 2013 but might necessitate a full revisiting of the plan for funding cycles beyond the horizon year of this plan update.



Several transportation agencies and services help create a coordinated human service transportation system.

A critical goal in developing this or any other transportation plan is to provide opportunities for input from the citizens who are most reliant upon transportation services. Understanding the diversity of the human service transportation client base and their specific needs is crucial as agencies pursue policy, program and project initiatives. The needs of these citizens are generally under- or mis-represented in larger multi-faceted planning efforts and related initiatives, which is why it is imperative that those agencies providing support or services to these populations utilize this coordinated planning effort to present a united voice for their interests.

Specifically, the stakeholders are called upon to identify service gaps and/or barriers, strategize on solutions most appropriate to meet these needs based on local circumstances, and prioritize these needs for inclusion in the plan. This was the purpose of past public involvement efforts in December 2009 and August 2010 as part of the

regional metropolitan transportation plan update and the coordinated transportation-specific workshop held in July 2010.

As noted in the 2007 plan, stakeholder outreach and participation is a key element to the development of a coordinated plan, and federal guidance issued by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires this participation, recommending that it come from a broad base of groups and organizations involved in the coordinated planning process. This is to include, at minimum:

- ▣ Area transportation planning agencies;
- ▣ Transit riders and potential riders;
- ▣ Public transportation providers;
- ▣ Private transportation providers;
- ▣ Non-profit transportation providers;
- ▣ Human service agencies funding and/or supporting access for human services; and
- ▣ Other government agencies that administer programs for targeted population, advocacy organizations, community-based organizations, elected officials, and tribal representatives.

This plan update is intended both to capture those local stakeholder discussions, originally organized in 2006/2007, and to establish the framework for potential future planning and coordination activities as new information has become available in 2010 and economic circumstances have changed.

Federal & State Roles to Promote Human Service Transportation Coordination

Incentives to coordinate human services transportation programs are defined and elaborated upon in numerous initiatives and documents. These were originally defined through the course of the 2007 plan and remain relevant.

Coordination can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate cost-effective solutions with available resources. Enhanced coordination also results in joint ownership and oversight of service delivery by both human service and transportation service agencies. The requirements of SAFETEA-LU build upon previous federal initiatives intended to enhance social service transportation coordination. These include:

- ▣ **Presidential Executive Order 13330 – Human Service Transportation Coordination:** In 2004, President Bush signed the Executive Order establishing an Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility to focus 10 federal agencies on the coordination agenda. The requirements established through SAFETEA-LU are an outgrowth of this Executive Order. The order may be accessed at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/pdf/04-4451.pdf>

- ❏ **A Framework for Action:** The Framework for Action is a self-assessment tool that states and communities can use to identify areas of success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation. This tool has been developed through the United We Ride initiative sponsored by FTA, and can be found on the United We Ride website: http://www.unitedweride.gov/1_81_ENG_HTML.htm

- ❏ **Medicaid Transportation Initiatives:**
 - (1) *Transit Passes:* Federal regulations require that Medicaid eligible persons who need transportation for non-emergent medical care be provided transportation. For many people, the most cost-effective way to provide this transportation is with public transportation. Medicaid rules now allow the purchase of a monthly bus pass as an allowable Medicaid program expense.

 - (2) *Medicaid brokerages:* Some states, including Washington, provide transportation services for Medicaid eligible persons through a brokerage arrangement. The manner in which these brokerages are conducted can and do vary by state, which is discussed in the policy-specific recommendations later in this plan.

Typically, the broker will confirm the passenger’s eligibility status, arrange for the trip through an appropriate vendor, and manage the fiscal oversight for the program. In Washington State, vendors are either public or private and the manner in which a passenger is assigned to a service provider is based on need and, sometimes, cost advantages.

- ❏ **Continuing Research:** Numerous studies and reports have documented the benefits of enhanced coordination efforts among federal programs that fund or sponsor transportation for their clients. This research base continues to expand as coordination initiatives across the United States are documented, best practices are defined, and services agencies have compiled better use data.

Washington State Coordination Efforts

In Washington, the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) is a partnership of representatives from the state legislature, state agencies, transportation providers and consumer advocates whose mission is to direct and promote activities that efficiently use all available state and community resources for special needs transportation across the state. ACCT was created by the legislature in 1998 to facilitate coordination and eliminate cross-jurisdictional and government program barriers to

transportation. ACCT serves a lead role in working with transportation providers and planning organizations throughout the state to implement federal planning requirements.

As a means of providing more efficient, cost-effective non-emergency medical transportation, Washington converted its transportation program into a brokerage service model. The Medicaid brokerage system has been able to keep transportation costs down by coordinating transportation services with other State agencies. Nine regional brokerage agencies are contracted to provide transportation services to 13 separate regions. The manner in which this brokerage program is implemented is the subject of one of the policy initiatives defined later in this report.

Washington has been successful in providing expanded and effective access to medical services and is recognized as a model for other brokerage programs across the country. A staff representative from Northwest Regional Council, the Medicaid brokerage serving residents of Island and Skagit Counties, was actively engaged in the 2007 planning process.

Project Methodology

As noted in introduction, the 2010 plan update does not represent a wholesale revisiting of the findings and methodologies of the original 2007 plan. Much of the original project methodology remains intact and has been updated, where applicable, to reflect new findings or data. This section provides a general overview of the factors that have contributed to development of this and past plans.

Coordination Initiatives

The baseline needs assessment contained in the 2007 plan was revisited for the 2010 update. Feedback from Skagit and Island Transit representatives indicated that the initiatives identified in the original plan were viewed, in hindsight, as too specific to effectively position the agencies to maximize funding available for these programs.

The findings from the original needs assessment have been retooled to reflect what are now termed Coordination Initiatives that are organized into broad policy, program and project recommendations as noted in the introduction to this report. These coordination initiative summaries should form the basis for not only applications for grants but a collaborative regional dialogue and potential legislative agenda to achieve greater efficiencies and opportunities for coordination transportation.

The sections of the 2007 plan that included Identification of Strategies and Prioritization of Service needs have also been consolidated within the Coordination Initiatives section.

Document Existing Transportation Services

One of the main purposes of the federal government requiring coordinated human service transportation plans was to gain a basic inventory of the wide variety of transportation services available within a community or region. In a planning context, the disconnected nature of our surface transportation systems is a hindrance to providing the most basic of coordinated services and operating efficiencies for transit agencies.

In Skagit and Island Counties, this is particularly true as a variety of services (e.g. ferries, inter-city bus, passenger rail) are external influences to the mobility of the population but do not always link to the existing transit system.

While all aspects of coordination cannot be solved through this plan, the documentation of the existing services should help decision-makers understand the value of the long-term linkages between these services. These services summarized in this section include public fixed route and Specialized Paratransit Service, vanpool services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies.

Stakeholder Involvement

In 2010, through a jointly-managed effort to update the coordinated plan and regional long-range transportation plan, the RTPO organized several public engagement



More than a dozen citizens and agency representatives attended the July 2010 workshop in Anacortes.

meetings intended to gather input from residents of Skagit and Island Counties. A workshop focus group on the coordinated plan update effort was organized in Anacortes on July 19, 2010. Other public input opportunities were advertised through the Metropolitan Transportation Plan update and related workshops and open houses in December 2009 and August 2010. More than a dozen representatives from the two counties, service agencies and passengers attended the focus group session which was aimed at identifying transportation needs from a geographic perspective and re-visiting the recommendations contained in the 2007 plan.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile from the 2007 plan was confirmed using 2000 Census data and other estimates made by the State of Washington and Federal Government. These sources provide a broad understanding of where population groups are concentrated but have limitations in that they are only summarized within large block group geographies, particularly in eastern Skagit County.

While the clustering or magnitude of certain populations within these block groups can help guide decision-making and impact funding, the use of this data is limited for purposes of establishing specific programs and services. The data contained in this profile focuses on three population group datasets: persons with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status. These groups are most reflective of the population who rely on human service transportation. Maps reflecting the 2000 Census block group data for these population groups are contained in the plan appendix.

The 2010 Census results (available some time in 2012) will influence how transportation funding is allocated at the federal and state level. Federal and state agencies will continue to disburse funding based on the 2000 Census data and utilize other updated state or federal demographic estimates to help inform funding decisions.

Coordination Initiatives

This section outlines several coordination initiatives that form an action plan for the RTPO, Skagit Transit, Island Transit, and other regional stakeholders to address coordinated human service transportation from several perspectives.

As noted in the introduction, the recommendations are ordered under the broader umbrella of “Coordination Initiatives” to better reflect the breadth and depth of strategies to achieve a fully coordinated system organized by policies, programs and projects. There was also the desire among Skagit Transit and Island Transit representatives to generate recommendations within the plan that were less specific than those contained in the 2007 plan.

The goal of this arrangement of Coordination Initiatives is to recognize that several organized efforts at various levels of state and local governments must be pursued to truly achieve coordinated transportation. This approach allows agencies and operators with a role in providing transportation services to pursue coordinated transportation as it relates to their roles and responsibilities within the region. For example, the RTPO may be most interested in policies that can be incorporated into their short- and long-range planning efforts, their Board policies and their legislative agenda; the transit agencies may pursue various programs to manage the system more efficiently; and other service providers, transit agencies and municipalities could pursue individual projects through local, state or federal funding sources.

While the method by which these were adopted is a slight departure from the manner in which strategies were identified in the 2007, the underlying theme is the same: Determine the best ways to address unmet transportation needs.

As stated in the 2007 plan, unmet transportation needs are defined as:

- ☐ Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds;
- ☐ New service established to meet an identified need; and
- ☐ Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need.

Policies

The policy initiatives outlined below were developed to foster greater cooperation among agencies and development of a united message among municipalities within and for interests outside the Skagit/Island region. The consultant team has identified these policies through evaluation of the existing framework in the Skagit/Island region, as well as work on other coordinated planning efforts not only Washington State but through research and work on other similar projects in the Puget Sound region and throughout the United States.

Policy initiatives are intended to be the outline of an action plan for the RTPO, transit operators and municipalities to pursue greater incorporation of human service transportation needs into local or regional policies and present a united voice for policy changes needed at the state level. Changes or modification of existing policies to reflect these needs present the region with an opportunity to foster greater coordination and allow service providers to gain greater leverage when pursuing specific programs and projects.

Policy Initiative #1: Organize an Information Clearinghouse

The concept of an “Information Clearinghouse” builds upon the idea of the one-stop shop recommendations contained in most coordinated plans developed in Washington State and throughout the United States. Such efforts are seen in most circles as the quintessential component of achieving coordinated transportation.



A centralized demographics and ridership statistics database can help identify services gaps, inform funding decisions, position agencies for funding, and determine how to best meet unmet transportation needs.

The information clearinghouse concept is much more than a call center and brokerage service. It is organized to better position the region to address coordination at levels beyond the day-to-day passenger and operations needs. The information clearinghouse acts as a centralized resource for human service transportation system performance, progress, refinements and accomplishments.

This concept is more critical given the two-county nature of transportation services in the Skagit/Island region. The introduction of this report noted the upcoming federal transportation reauthorization act. In the discussions related to reauthorization is recognition of the need to

better measure performance of transportation investments, both from a capital and operations standpoint. This will likely culminate in the requirement for MPOs and state DOTs to develop performance metrics as part of their required reporting to the federal government and mandated transportation planning efforts such as the long-range transportation plan, statewide and metropolitan transportation improvement programs, and congestion management strategies, where applicable.

Required input for institution of these performance metrics will be derived from centralized agency information, dissemination, mapping, demographic analysis & funding approaches. In order to continue making a strong case for the needs of citizens requiring human service transportation, the information clearinghouse would be able to readily provide agencies, MPOs and DOTs with valuable information to incorporate into their broader planning objectives. It will also help the region put forth a common voice when it comes to regional and statewide legislative agendas.

Policy Initiative #2: Develop Coordinated Transportation Quality of Service Standards

A valuable, but seldom used, tool developed by the Transportation Research Board’s Transit Cooperative Research Program is the Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual (Report 100), which is now in its second edition.¹ The manual’s intended use is for the operations and planning of fixed route transit services in urban areas. It is recommended that agencies in Washington State, through a partnership with WSDOT, pursue development of a Quality of Service approach to evaluating human service systems with the goal of establishing common measures for performance evaluation.

The institution of a human service transportation-specific QOS manual would help to standardize service needs among different agencies operating in overlapping geographies which, at its essence, is one of the primary goals of coordinated transportation.

Traditional transportation planning and engineering concepts have focused on “level of service”, by which a numeric rating (A through F) is assigned to denote increasing levels of congestion and need for greater capacity within the highway system.

The TCRP Report 100 developed similar measures to evaluate transit systems, recognizing that level of service and its relationship to capacity is only one factor that is part of several “quality of service” (QOS) considerations. The document contains methods to evaluate system characteristics such as service coverage, scheduling, capacity, information dissemination, passenger loads, reliability, travel time, cost, safety and security and passenger comfort. These factors are similar to the day-to-day service decisions made by human service transportation operators, however the QOS manual does not provide for guidance on this type of transit services.

Policy Initiative #3: Maximize Rider-Based Federal Incentive Programs

The federal government has organized financial incentive programs that could help bolster the bottom line for human service transportation providers. The Federal Mass Transit Benefit Program was created by President Clinton via Executive Order in 2000.² Section 1 of the Executive Order created the Mass Transportation and Vanpool Fringe Benefit Program, making all federal employees eligible for fare reimbursement for mass transit and vanpool services. The recent American Reinvestment and Recovery Act raised the eligible monthly reimbursement to \$230.

Given the presence of the Whidbey Naval Air Station and other federal employment centers within Skagit and Island Counties, there is the potential for local human service

¹ TRB's Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 100: Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 2nd Edition. www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/Transit_Capacity_and_Quality_of_Service_Manual_2nd_153590.aspx

² Executive Order 13150: Federal Workforce Transportation. April 21, 2000. www.fta.dot.gov/printer_friendly/news_events_4648.html.

transportation passengers who are federal employees or work at these installations to utilize this program to help pay for their transit fares.

The primary reason this is listed as a policy initiative is that human service transportation passengers who work at federal installations are typically hired through contracts with local or state social service agencies, meaning that their check comes from a non-federal source even though the source is the federal treasury. This restricts their eligibility to enroll in the fringe benefit program and puts a greater financial burden on service providers and social service agencies.

From a policy perspective, it would be worthwhile for transportation agencies located in regions where there is a high concentration of federal or military employees to explore alterations to the existing employment methods in order to allow these passengers to tap into non-social service-based funding for these trips. The result could be less stress on funding sources within both social service transportation funds and among the service providers.

Policy Initiative #4: Regional Planning / Corridor Analysis

The RTPO and other planning entities in Western Washington are regularly updating their long-range transportation plans in a similar timeframe that is required for updates to human services transportation plans. As noted previously, there can be a disconnect in the understanding at the regional planning level about human services transportation and the role it plays for both social service and mobility needs.

By working closely with regional planning entities, not just within the Skagit/Island region, but also within the Puget Sound Region and Whatcom County, the service providers for human services transportation should be coordinating with the COGs and MPOs, and vice versa, to ensure this aspect of transportation is part of regional policies and considerations. By virtue of this plan being developed as part of the RTPO's role within the region and in concert within the metropolitan transportation plan update, there exists an opportunity to integrate the interests of the two planning efforts.

Further, as policy initiatives are pursued related to policy initiatives #1 and #2, the results of these efforts can then easily be folded into regional planning efforts and new performance metrics.

Regional planning entities are also involved to a great extent in land use and transportation planning efforts at a sub-area or neighborhood level. The placement of certain uses such as senior centers, hospitals and assisted living facilities within a region or city can have a major impact on the resource allocations of human service transportation providers. Mobility-based investments in corridors are also a major

component of regional planning and could be enhanced by input from human service transportation agencies.

The potential outcomes of greater integration of coordinated transportation within regional planning are:

- Better site selection for land uses that generate high numbers of passengers;
- Potential for transition of users from demand response to fixed route services;
- Investments in corridors through spot improvements or design features to allow for greater mobility of all transit vehicles and passengers;
- Reduced trips or trip lengths due to smarter land use decisions; and
- More competitive pursuit of alternative funding sources.

Policy Initiative #5: Statewide Dialogue on Medicaid Brokerage Procedures

A sensitive issue within Washington State is the system by which Medicaid brokerage is managed through reimbursement procedures to local transit services. The current practice in Washington favors use of fare-only reimbursement to transit agencies providing for Medicaid trips even though full cost payments are made to private transportation providers. These practices have been codified either within Washington State law or by state-specific agreements with the federal government as to how the funding for this program is distributed.

Several states, including Oregon, have reimbursement or brokerage systems that reflect either a full cost reimbursement to the transit agency or some type of over-arching service agreement with the transit agency where a negotiated per trip cost is mutually agreed to by the agencies.

Recognizing the sensitivities of this issue and potential financial impacts to both the state Medicaid services and transit agencies, it is not the intent of this plan to recommend any type of wholesale changes to the system. Rather, the suggestion is that there is a need for a dialogue among agencies and the State of Washington to determine the short- and long-term fiscal impacts of changing the system to more equitably reimburse transit agencies at a rate that is aligned with their per trips costs.

Programs

Historically, this has been a focus of human service transportation planning efforts and grant applications as programs are the impetus for most coordination initiatives. Programs are intended to help break down institutional barriers that the federal government and advocates viewed as a primary contributor to what was seen as disjointed transportation systems across the United States. The identification of programs is also a way in which agencies can pursue joint funding with other agencies to achieve coordinated transportation without having to endure laborious proceedings and

political maneuvering to consolidate agencies or service providers. The ability of agencies to pursue programmatic efforts has been hindered greatly by the economy, which has forced many transportation service providers to focus on their core mission and bottom line, which led to some of the recommendations outlined below.

Program Initiative #1: Maintain Current Levels of Service

The pressures felt by transit agencies during the current economic slump has heightened an already tenuous position among service providers who are seeking ways to continue to either maintain basic levels of services or avoid additional service cuts



Maintaining existing levels of service, both for special services and vehicle replacement, is a critical concern for agencies given current economic conditions.

beyond those instituted during the past two to three years. Grant applications, local outreach and coordination efforts with other agencies within the region should be focused on identifying ways in which to avoid further reductions in service.

This programmatic objective was a principal component of the 2007 plan. Since then, the region has acquired funding from JARC and New Freedom for programs such as preservation and expansion of pocket services, and introduction of

Sunday fixed route services. The replacement of vehicles is also a critical aspect of maintaining current levels of service.

Program Initiative #2: Align Paratransit to Meet Needs of the Mobility-Impaired

Paratransit services face the ever-present challenge of meeting the needs of those who are most dependent upon the transit system—persons with mobility impairments that prevent them from independent travel or use of fixed route services. To simply state that a program should meet the needs of paratransit passengers does not adequately address the complexity involved in aligning services to meet these needs.

A major theme of the 2007 plan was that program staff managing paratransit programs noted that these services are not always a feasible option for their passengers. Frail elderly people cannot always manage the length of time in the vehicle nor have needs that cannot always be accommodated in advance of their ride. Accommodations for dependents of paratransit passengers, variability in the design of wheelchairs and other mobility devices, and need for escort or personal care attendant to ride along with the client create challenges for agencies in responding to trip requests.

Program Initiative #3: Fill Service Gaps to Un-served or Underserved areas

As was the case in 2007, residents within Skagit and Island Counties who live or work beyond the agencies' core service area cannot readily access public transit. The

workshop participants in July 2010 confirmed several areas that should be the focus of filling service gaps. These included:

- ❑ Access employment opportunities in Anacortes, Burlington, Port of Skagit, Mt. Vernon, Eastern Skagit County, Everett, Bellingham and the Seattle area;
- ❑ Further expansion of pocket services;
- ❑ Expanded paratransit service outside the corridor structure in Island County
- ❑ Timing of services to better meet commuter and ferry services, where possible, to decrease dwell times for passengers and create a more seamless system for rural residents; and
- ❑ Expand Fixed Route Weekend services.

Program Initiative #4: Connections to adjacent communities

The need for connectivity to other systems or services is especially acute for this study area, which is comprised of islands, and with core services (medical, employment, social service programs, education facilities) spread throughout the immediate region and beyond. Specific service gaps identified in 2007 and confirmed in 2010 include:

- ❑ More frequent service needed between Whidbey and Camano Islands;
- ❑ More frequent service between Island County and Mount Vernon;
- ❑ Better connections needed with Whatcom and Snohomish Counties (both Island and Skagit Counties);
- ❑ Weekend service to Whatcom and Snohomish Counties;
- ❑ Medical services for residents of both counties needed into Seattle or other facilities in King County; and
- ❑ Expand service between rural towns (i.e. La Conner, Anacortes, and Concrete) that are not within the MPO boundaries.

Projects

Identification of initiatives and grant pursuits that are project-based are another historical focus along with programmatic initiatives within coordinated transportation. Projects are typically defined as capital or operations within the context of a transportation service provider. Most coordinated transportation efforts reflect a combination of projects and programs, whereby projects are an outgrowth of certain programmatic initiatives, such as buying new vehicles to expand services through a new program or investing in technologies to better integrate scheduling and dispatching services.

Projects Initiative #1: Build Facilities to Transition Paratransit Riders to Fixed Routes

Transit agencies are recognizing that greater participation within capital improvement plans administered by municipalities to construct new pedestrian facilities can help provide greater independence to existing paratransit riders. Some elderly persons or those with disabilities that do not fully restrict independent mobility would be able to



Upgrading bus stops and nearby pedestrian amenities was identified as a project-based initiative for Skagit and Island Transit to pursue.

use fixed route bus services if certain aspects of the built environment along streets and within neighborhoods were improved to provide a safe route from the person's home to the bus stop and from a bus stop to their destination. The transfer of some paratransit passengers to fixed routes would also lower per trip costs for transit agencies, allowing them to focus more resources on those who are in the most need of paratransit. To adequately provide for these trips, facilities along these routes are required to meet the design guidelines established by the United States Access Board for implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The types of improvements that should be encouraged through partnerships between transit agencies, municipal governments and WSDOT include:

- ❑ Accessible bus stops with paved landing, shelters, benches, and other amenities;
- ❑ Curb ramps or curb cuts at intersections;
- ❑ ADA-compliant sidewalk routes to and from bus stops;
- ❑ Improved driveway crossing to eliminate cross slopes; and
- ❑ Accessible pedestrian signals and buttons at signalized intersections or crossing.

Addressing funding needs for facilities adjacent to or within walking distance of bus stops has historically been a capital improvement not evidently eligible for Federal Transit Administration funding. Agencies who have utilized FTA funding programs for these types of improvements have faced elongated project development schedules due to the non-traditional nature of pedestrian accessibility being funded through these programs. This is due to change as FTA released proposed guidance in late 2009 for utilization of transit funding for pedestrian system improvements within a ½-mile radius of stops and stations³.

This ruling will provide transit agencies with greater leverage to use not only those sources identified for coordinated human service transportation but other FTA programs available for more diverse capital and operations expenditures.

Projects Initiative #2: Expand Specialized Paratransit Service Fleet

Fixed route transit operators would consider a seated or standing load of passengers a sign of success. For human service transportation operators, the same scenario signals a problem in terms of available resources from rolling stock or service availability.

³ "Proposed Policy Statement on the Eligibility of Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Under Federal Transit Law," Federal Register 74 FR 218 (13 November 2009), pp. 58678-58681.

Participants at the July 2010 workshop expressed concerns over increased crowding on demand response routes due to increases in demand, population increases, and economic hardship for citizens within the region.

While fleet expansion is the obvious way in which to expand these services and provide more “seats”, there are operational and other resource implications. The transit agencies should pursue the purchase of additional vehicles as operations resources are available.

Island Transit and Skagit Transit have a history of working as partners to ensure optimum efficiency and delivery of services for residents in both counties. This partnership consists of flexing schedules and coordinating services cooperatively in the best interests of the citizens within the two counties.

Projects Initiative #3: Promote Technology Integration for Operations and Vehicles

Technologies available to promote greater services integration and coordination are constantly evolving as time-tested technologies become cheaper due to economies of scale and mobile devices provide a new medium to reach passengers and clients. The region already has databases for tracking of riders and organizing client information. Automated Vehicle Location and other vehicle-based technologies have also been incorporated within the fleets.

The region should track the availability and financial feasibility of incorporating new technologies as they arise. Many agencies that do not provide high volume fixed route services have not considered the potential impact that widespread availability of mobile phones and data devices can have on their services. Social service programs are now providing these phones and devices to clients for better communication, which also presents a possibility for human service transportation providers to reach out to their clients and provide them with real-time information and feedback regarding their scheduled trips or transportation options.

Projects Initiative #4: Develop Awareness-based Marketing Campaigns

The 2007 plan identified overall service awareness as a need for the region. Many social service programs support the provision of transportation for their clients, either by providing them with bus passes, gas vouchers, or otherwise financially subsidizing the cost of transportation, especially for those seeking employment. At the staff level, there was an acknowledged need to raise internal awareness of existing transit services (and alternatives) as well as easier access to information for their clients.

This should also be the goal of a joint awareness-based public service marketing campaign in Island and Skagit Counties. Many of the initiatives outlined above address the need for greater financial stability, preservation of existing services, and expansion of services to alleviate over-crowding on existing services or serve new geographies. Obviously, the ability and willingness of the region to engage the public in a more robust

marketing campaign to raise awareness of these services could have a deleterious effect on the agencies if the previously-outlined initiatives are not realized. Therefore, this initiative should only be pursued once there is a level of comfort among the service providers that greater demand would not stress the existing system and decrease the quality of service provided to its existing passengers.

Increasingly, persons for whom English is not a native language are moving into the region, often to outlying areas where housing is more affordable, but where access to services is more difficult. These campaigns should also take into consideration the increase in non-English speaking residents and tailor messages to these populations. The 2010 Census results will provide information on the prevalence of non-English speaking populations.

Transportation Service Providers



**SKAGIT
TRANSIT**

Skagit Transit operates 17 fixed bus routes within the County and to surrounding areas. Service is provided on the weekdays between approximately 6 am and 9 pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays between approximately 8 am and 6 pm.

Pocket Service. Skagit Transit provides pocket service to areas of Skagit County not served by fixed bus routes. This service, which is available on specified days in designated areas, connects riders to the nearest fixed route bus transfer point between 8 am and 8 pm. Riders must call in advance to register for this service. If a rider is eligible for Specialized Paratransit Service, curb-to-curb or curb-to-bus service is provided. Other general public riders are either picked up at their address or at another designated location.

Specialized Paratransit Service. Skagit Transit also provides Specialized Paratransit Service for passengers who are unable to get to the nearest bus stop or use a fixed route bus. Potential passengers must fill out an application to determine if they are eligible for the service. Specialized Paratransit Service operates between 7 am and 9 pm on weekdays and between 8 am and 6 pm on weekends, with hours varying depending on the route. Weekend service is limited to Burlington, Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley on both days, with limited service in Anacortes on Saturday. Specialized Paratransit Service is free service, but a donation is requested from passengers.

Vanpool Program. SKAT VanGo is the name of Skagit Transit's vanpool program. This program allows a group of five to 15 people to use a van supplied by the agency for commuting to and from work. The program is recommended for long commuting distances; over 20 miles one way. At least five people are needed to form a vanpool, with the entire group sharing a monthly fare. The fare is based on a \$200 monthly flat fee plus either \$0.30 per mile traveled for seven-passenger vans or \$0.38 per mile traveled for 12 or 15 passenger vans. The program requires that a manager/bookkeeper be identified to help organize the vanpool and that there be one primary driver established, as well as one or two backup drivers. 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 operates 16 routes serving both Whidbey and Camano Island. Three of these routes serve as regional connectors, providing service to Everett, Stanwood, and Mt Vernon. The other routes either connect cities within Island County or operate as city shuttles. Service operates between approximately 3:45 am and 8 pm on the weekdays and approximately 7 am

and 7 pm on Saturdays. Saturday service is more limited and no transit service is provided on Sundays.

Island Transit is a fare free service for all users. The Island Transit Board of Directors feels charging a fare would be contrary to the mission of Island Transit. Typically for smaller or rural transit systems, collecting a fare generates virtually no usable revenue for operating the service because of the costs to administer a fare program. In addition, the fare box imposes an unnecessary inconvenience which is detrimental to ridership and therefore contrary to the mission.

Island Transit Route Deviation Service. Island Transit Paratransit is a curb-to-curb service for ADA eligible persons of disability who are unable to use the regular fixed route bus service, due to their disability. Island Transit Paratransit is based upon the same days, hours, and route structure, as the regular fixed route service. The route deviation service is a corridor centered on the regular fixed route service, extending 3/4ths of a mile on either side of the fixed route service.

Island Transit Vanpool. Island Transit provides additional service through their not-for-profit vanpool program. The fees collected cover operating costs including fuel, maintenance, insurance and the capital cost of the van. Each person riding in an Island Transit vanpool van shares in the responsibilities of operating the van, such as helping to keep the van clean, being courteous and considerate in their dealings with fellow riders and the public, and recruiting riders and drivers when necessary. Benefits include:

- ❑ Employers often provide financial incentives or subsidies, as well as preferential parking for employees who vanpool.
- ❑ Through Washington State Ferries' (WSF) Rideshare Registration program, vanpool groups are eligible for fare discounts and preferential loading on Washington State Ferries.
- ❑ Vanpool groups have access to Park & Ride lots and the use of HOV lanes.
- ❑ There are ecological benefits, such as: Reduced emissions/cleaner air to breathe;
- ❑ Minimizing the need for additional roadways and other infrastructure to support a greater number of vehicles; Conservation of natural resources (such as fuel); Decreased number of tires requiring disposal.
- ❑ Utilizing alternative modes of transportation results in reduced congestion on our state's roadways. It also diminishes the costs of maintaining our roadways.
- ❑ Using alternative modes of travel also results in personal benefits, such as: Reduced wear and tear on your personal vehicle; Lowered mileage on your vehicle, resulting in additional value at sales or trade-in time; Decreased insurance premiums on your personal vehicle, due to fewer miles traveled by that vehicle; Reduction in new tire purchases due to fewer miles traveled; Fewer fuel purchases.

Other Human Service Transportation Providers

A variety of programs offer transportation service in addition to those provided by two public transit providers. Many of these focus on the special needs of senior and disabled populations. Very few are solely transportation providers, with most offering transportation in conjunction with other social service or volunteer programs. These other 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 service 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 can offer rides and/or the number of trip purposes they can fulfill.

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

Seniors

The Camano Senior Services Association provides weekly transportation service for seniors to Skagit County for medical appointments, social, and health services.

Island County Volunteer Chore and Medical Transportation provides transportation through volunteers for medical or other essential needs and chore services.

Client-Based

State of Washington Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) directly provides medical as well as work/school trips for clients of program (primarily long distance trips).

State of Washington Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) sponsors work and school trips for disabled clients in their program. Within DSHS, the Children's Administration provides rides to clients, primarily with agency staff driving the clients.

State of Washington Employment Security Department sponsors transportation for individuals (primarily without disabilities) to aid in obtaining employment.

Medical

The Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) also provides Medical Assistance Administration (MAA) Transportation, which consists of non-ambulance transportation to all people eligible for Medicaid who have no other means of transportation to covered medical services. The NWRC serves as the broker for these services, authorizing

and arranging transportation for people in Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom Counties.

Other Transportation Services



The Washington State Ferries provide connections to existing transit services.

Washington State Ferries

The Washington State Ferries operate daily service in Skagit County from the terminal at Anacortes to the San Juan Islands. Skagit Transit provides connecting service to the ferries through Route 410-Anacortes. There is also daily ferry service in Island County from Clinton to Mukilteo and Coupeville to Port Townsend. Island Transit provides connecting service to each of these terminals and public transit provider on the Olympic Peninsula.

Greyhound

Greyhound service is available at Skagit Station in Mount Vernon, with morning, afternoon and evening 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.

Airport

Skagit County has Anacortes Municipal Airport, which has one regional airline and a 3,015-foot runway. Skagit Regional Airport offers charter service. Island County has Wes Lupien Airport near Oak Harbor.

Airporter Shuttle Service

Skagit County and Island County are both served by private airporter shuttle services: Whidbey SeaTac Shuttle and Bellair Airporter Shuttle.

Amtrak

Amtrak Cascades does make a stop in Mount Vernon at Skagit Station before traveling north along its route to Vancouver British Columbia, or south to Portland, Oregon. There is also a daily high speed commuter Amtrak train service between Seattle and Vancouver that makes a stop in Mount Vernon. Amtrak runs a bus as its afternoon mode of transportation between Seattle and Bellingham with stops at Mount Vernon and Stanwood Station.

Coordinated Transportation Funding Sources

As mentioned previously, four sources of federal funds are subject to this plan, and projects funded with those grant funds are required to be selected through a competitive process, and derived from this coordinated planning effort. Many, if not all, of the suggested strategies and solutions could be structured to take advantage of available program funds. The sources of funds and examples of eligible projects are described below:

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)

The purpose of the JARC program is to fund local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals. JARC funds are distributed to states on a formula basis, depending on that state's rate of low-income population. This approach differs from previous funding cycles, when grants were awarded purely on an "earmark" basis. JARC funds will pay for up to 50% of operating funds to support the project budget, and 80% for a capital project.

The remaining funds are required to be provided through local match sources. Eligible applicants for JARC funds include local government agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), tribal governments, social service agencies, private and public transit operators, and nonprofit organizations. Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- ☐ Late-night and weekend service;
- ☐ Guaranteed Ride Home Programs;
- ☐ Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites;
- ☐ Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos; and
- ☐ Access to child care and training.

New Freedom Program

The New Freedom Program provides funding to serve persons with disabilities. Overall, the purpose of the program is to go "beyond" the minimal requirements of the ADA. Funds are distributed to states based on that state's population of persons with disabilities. The same match requirements as for JARC apply for the New Freedom Program. Eligible applicants for New Freedom funds include local government agencies, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), tribal governments, social service agencies, private and public transit operators, and nonprofit organizations. Examples of eligible New Freedom Program projects include:

- ☐ Expansion of paratransit service hours or service area beyond minimal requirements;
- ☐ Purchase of accessible taxi or other vehicles;
- ☐ Purchase of equipment to improve access;
- ☐ Promotion of accessible ride sharing or vanpool programs;

- ☐ Administration of volunteer programs;
- ☐ Building ADA-compliant curb-cuts,
- ☐ Providing accessible bus stops; and
- ☐ Travel Training programs.

Elderly and Disabled Program (Section 5310)

Funds for this program are again allocated by formula to each state for capital costs of providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities. A 20% local match is required. Applicants are eligible if they are private, non-profit corporations or public agencies under the following circumstances:

- A. Coordinator (or Provider) of services to older adults and/or persons with disabilities; or
- B. Certify to the Governor that no non-profit agencies are available to carry out the proposed services.

General Public Transportation: Non-urbanized areas (Section 5311)

SAFETEA-LU does not require that Section 5311 funds be subject to the coordinated plan; however, WSDOT has established this requirement. Federal Section 5311 funds are intended to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation. Services are available to the general public, but may also be used to support services for elderly and disabled. The match requirement is consistent with the JARC and New Freedom programs. Examples of eligible projects include:

- ☐ Wheelchair accessible passenger vehicles;
- ☐ Communications equipment;
- ☐ Purchase and installation of bus shelters or other amenities; and
- ☐ Operating Assistance.
- ☐

In addition to these federal funds, the State of Washington also provides grants funded with State dollars to support Rural Mobility grants, and Special Needs Paratransit services for private non-profit agencies.

Demographic Profile

The Study Area

Skagit County is located in the northwest portion of Washington State, north of Seattle and south of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Cascade Mountains border the county on the east, and the Puget Sound Basin lies to the west. Agriculture, as well as fishing, wood products, tourism, international trade, and specialized manufacturing make up the economy of Skagit Valley. Based on its ports and refineries, Skagit County is also the center of Washington's petroleum industry. In 2010 Skagit County's total population was estimated to be 123,888 according to the Office of Financial Management (OFM). The largest city in the county is Mount Vernon, which is approximately 60 miles north of Seattle, and about the same distance from Vancouver, BC, Canada.

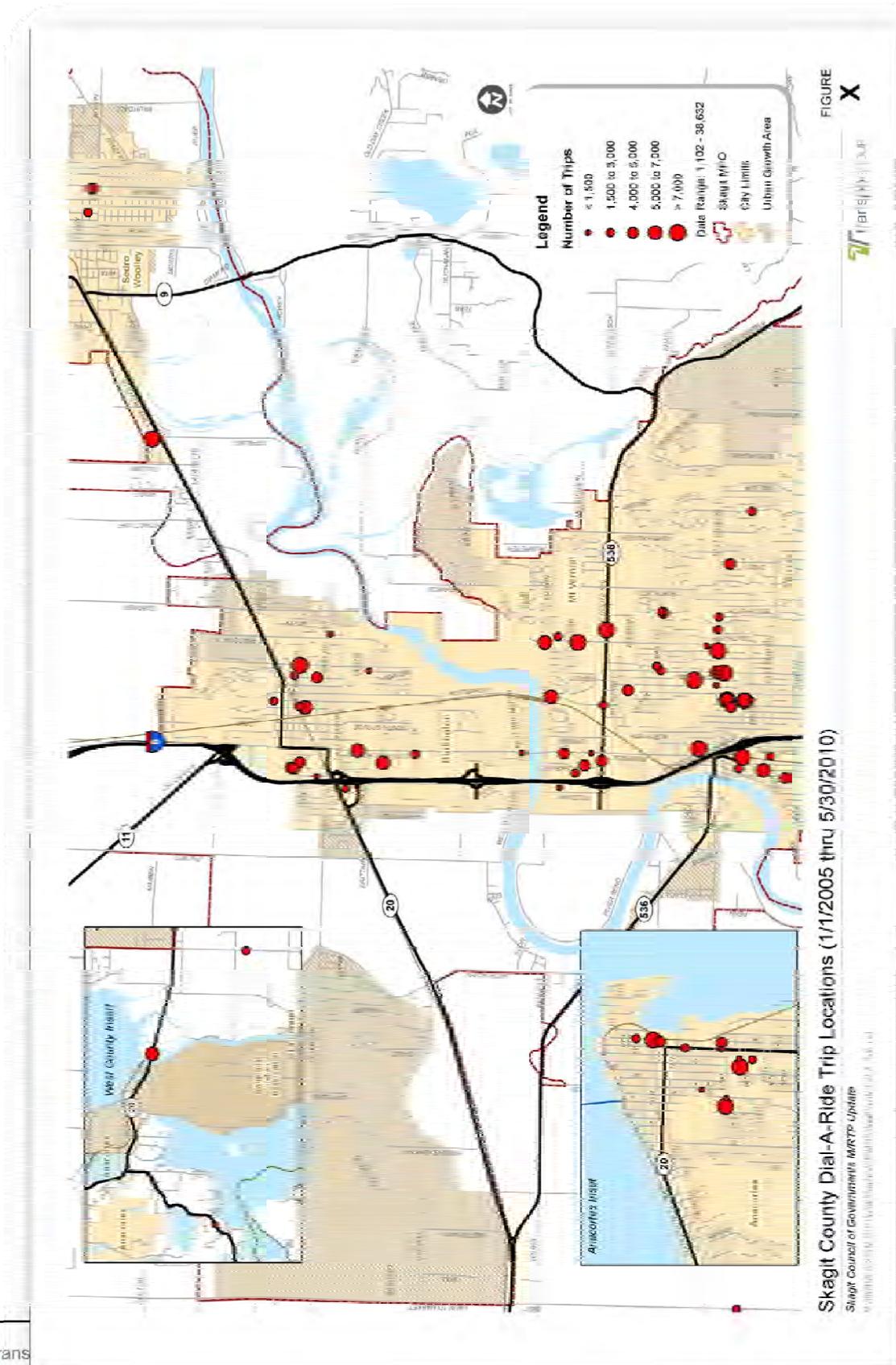
Island County consists of Whidbey and Camano Islands, and is located in the Puget Sound Basin, adjacent to Seattle and Skagit County. Island County's total population was estimated to be 80,703 in 2010, according to the OFM. Based on its location in the Puget Sound and proximity to the San Juan Islands, the County economy is largely based on tourism. The largest city in the county is Oak Harbor, which is also the location of the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, a major employer on the island.

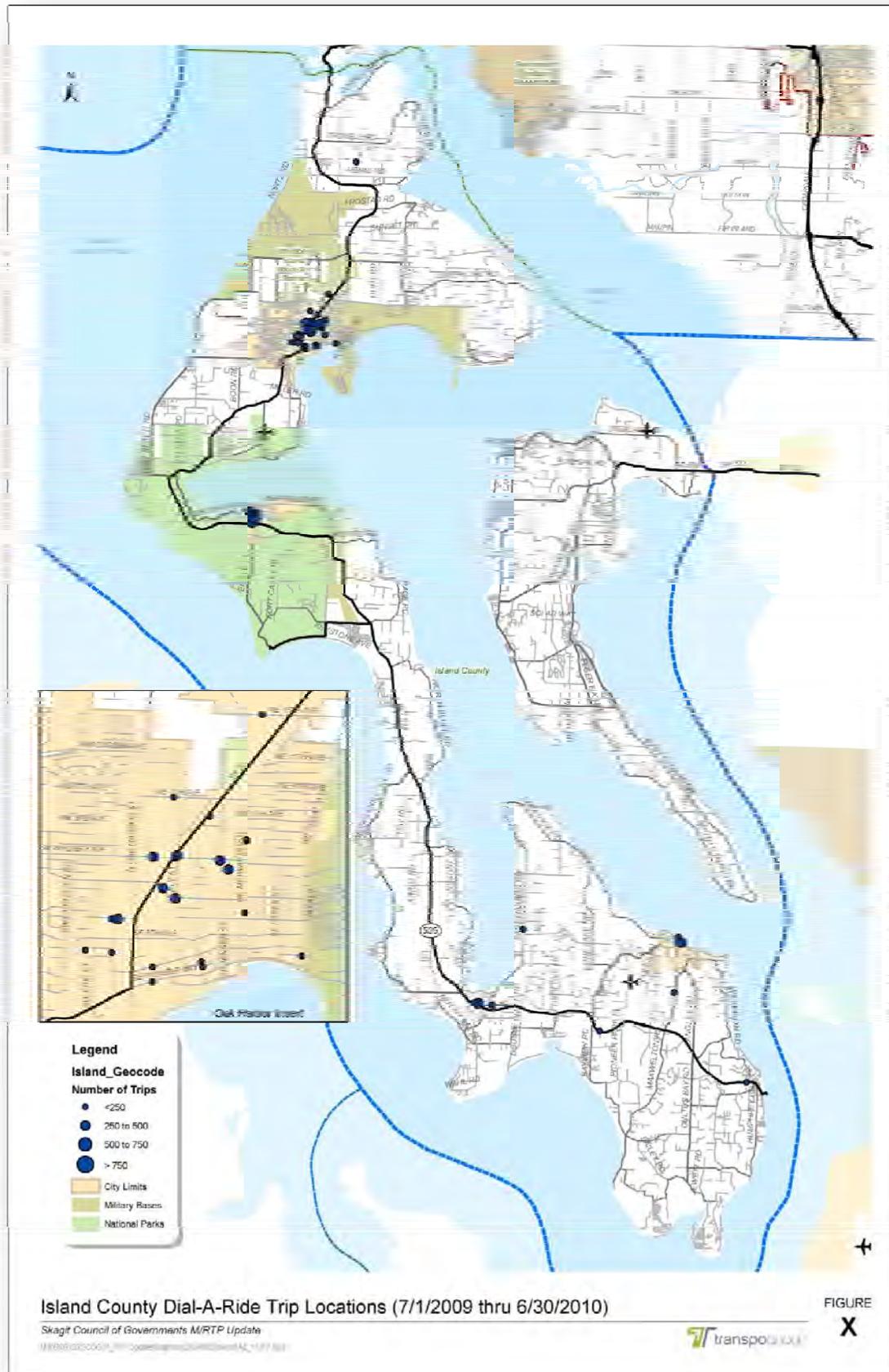
The demographic profile was prepared to document important characteristics about the region as they relate to this planning effort. In particular, the profile examines the presence and locations of older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income persons within the region. The profile also identifies the region's key employment sites, which are important to keep in mind when considering transportation gaps, as some gaps emerged with respect to accessing certain sites.

This aspect of the plan relies on three sources of data: The United States Census, The American Community Survey, and The State of Washington Office of Financial Management. While some countywide census information has been updated to reflect the population characteristics of the most current year (depending on data availability), this information is not available at the individual community level and some data points of interest to this plan (i.e. Households without vehicles) are only available for 2000. Where applicable, data for both 2000 and the most current year (depending on data availability) are shown. For each of the illustrating tables, the applicable data source is referenced.

Data was also obtained from Skagit Transit and Island Transit regarding their top origins and destinations for Specialized Paratransit Service. The map on the following page shows the top destinations for Skagit Transit Specialized Paratransit Service trips. *A similar map will be compiled for Island Transit for the final plan. The geocoding of*

addresses for Island County in GIS requires that these be manually placed on the map and this has not yet been completed.





2000 Basic Population Characteristics¹

Area	Total Population	% of State Population	% Persons aged 65+	% Persons w/ Disability ²	% Poverty Level
Washington State	5,894,121		11.2%	18.2%	10.6%
Island County	71,558	1.2%	14.3%	17.4%	7.0%
Skagit County	102,979	1.8%	14.6%	19.4%	11.1%

1. Source: 2000 US Census.

2. The US Census only counts persons 5 years and older for disabilities, which are self reported.

2008 Basic Population Characteristics¹

Area	Total Population	% of State Population	% Persons aged 65+	% Persons w/ Disability	% Poverty Level
Washington State	6,549,224		12.0%	12.2%	11.3%
Island County	81,424	1.2%	20.7%	14.1%	8.0%
Skagit County	118,000	1.8%	15.0%	12.6%	11.0%

1. Source: 2008 American Community Survey

In the next ten years the most significant population growth will occur in Skagit County, which will increase its total population by 18 percent from 123,888 in 2010 to 150,305 in 2020. Island County will increase by 14 percent between 2010 and 2020, from 80,703 to 94,275. Between 2010 and 2020 both counties population will grow at a faster rate than the projected statewide average of approximately 12 percent.

These projected increases in the total population are important to keep in mind as they are compared to the projected increase in the population of persons aged 65 and over (the following table). Between 2010 and 2020 Island County population of persons aged 65 and over is projected to grow by over one-third (35.4 percent), and Skagit County’s senior population will increase by slightly under one-third (32.5 percent).

Population Change for Persons aged 65 Years and Over¹

Area	2000	2010	Population Change 2000 - 2010	2020	Population Change 2010 - 2020	2030	Population Change 2020 - 2030
Washington State	662,148	818,437	19.1%	1,231,193	33.5%	1,659,664	25.8%
Island County	10,211	14,529	29.7%	22,488	35.4%	32,177	30.1%
Skagit County	15,034	18,616	19.2%	27,590	32.5%	36,081	23.5%

1. Source: OFM/Forecasting, April 2010

Disabilities

The definition of “disability” varies; for this project, information cited is consistent with definitions reported in the Census 2000. The Census 2000 included two questions with a total of six subparts with which to identify people with disabilities. It should be noted that this definition differs from that used to determine eligibility for paratransit services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA paratransit services, an individual’s disability must prevent them from independently being able to use the fixed route transit service, even though the vehicle itself is accessible to persons with disabilities (i.e. lift or ramp equipped).

Both Island and Skagit Counties reported a relatively consistent rate of persons who state they have a disability, less than 2 percent difference when compared to the state average (12.2 percent in 2008).

Income

According to the 2008 American Community Survey, Island County had a median household income at \$55,525 and Skagit County had slightly lower at \$53,348. Both of these median household incomes were lower than the 2008 state average of \$58,078. According to the 2000 Census, Skagit County had a consistent percentage of respondents with the state average (11 percent), who reported living below the federal poverty level. Island County had a much lower percentage of respondents living below the federal poverty level (7 percent). The table below shows the total population in the three counties (as of 2000) that are living below the Census designated federal poverty level.

Total Population Living Below Poverty¹

Area	Total Population	Population for whom poverty status is determined	Persons living below federal poverty level	Percent of population living below federal poverty level
Washington	5,894,121	5,765,201	312,370	11%
Island County	71,558	69,924	4,895	7%
Skagit County	102,979	101,170	11,244	11%
Anacortes	14,707	14,578	1,125	8%
Burlington	6,623	6,376	948	15%
Camano CDP	13,529	13,501	754	6%
Concrete	832	808	113	14%
Coupeville	1,738	1,610	183	11%
Hamilton	330	324	74	23%
La Conner	782	782	92	12%
Langley	938	933	99	11%
Lyman	384	376	59	16%
Mount Vernon	26,297	25,479	4,054	16%
Oak Harbor	19,905	19,755	1,839	9%
Sedro-Woolley	8,698	8,402	950	11%

1. Source: US Census 2000

Specific communities within the two-county region at or above the county’s poverty level, thereby representing the most impoverished communities, include:

Island County	Percent in Poverty
Langley	11%
Coupeville	11%

Skagit County	Percent in Poverty
Burlington	15%
Hamilton	23%
Lyman	16%
Mount Vernon	16%

Employment

The major (non-government) industry in 2008 in Skagit County was manufacturing, with 16 percent of employment being in that industry. Other major industries in the county were retail (14 percent), construction (10 percent), healthcare (9 percent), and agriculture (5 percent).⁴

Retail was the largest (non-military) employer in Island County in 2008, with more than 13 percent of employment in that industry. Other major industries were construction (8 percent), health care (7 percent), manufacturing (5 percent), and accommodation/ food service (5 percent).⁵

Another major employer of Island County is the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI), a United States Navy base located in two sections around Oak Harbor. It was commissioned in September 21, 1942, and was an important west coast base during World War II.

The main portion of the base is called Ault Field, which is located approximately three miles north of Oak Harbor. The other section of the base is called the Seaplane base. It is the primary location of the base Navy Exchange and is also where most of the Navy housing is located. It is situated on the eastern shore of Whidbey Island, at the edge of the town of Oak Harbor. Due to lack of local housing, some military personnel live in Skagit County, and commute to Oak Harbor. Over the years, Island Transit has worked closely with base personnel to promote coordination and use of public transit. Currently, Island Transit operates its fixed route within about two blocks of the base.

⁴ Source: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/county/skag.pdf>

⁵ Source: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/county/isla.pdf>

Vehicle Ownership

Vehicle Ownership can be another indicator of transportation needs in an area. Both Island and Skagit County are below the state average (7 percent) of households without access to a vehicle, four and six percent respectively.

Households without a vehicle¹

Area	Total Population Surveyed	Households without a Vehicle	Percentage of households without a vehicle
Washington	2,271,398	168,376	7%
Island County	27,784	1,013	4%
Skagit County	38,852	2,249	6%
Anacortes	6,116	346	6%
Burlington	2,404	194	8%
Camano CDP	5,367	92	2%
Concrete	298	24	8%
Coupeville	747	89	12%
Hamilton	123	5	4%
La Conner	376	33	9%
Langley	475	52	11%
Lyman	164	18	11%
Mount Vernon	9,308	844	9%
Oak Harbor	7,349	422	6%
Sedro-Woolley	3,125	257	8%

1. Source: 2000 US Census

Languages Spoken Other than English

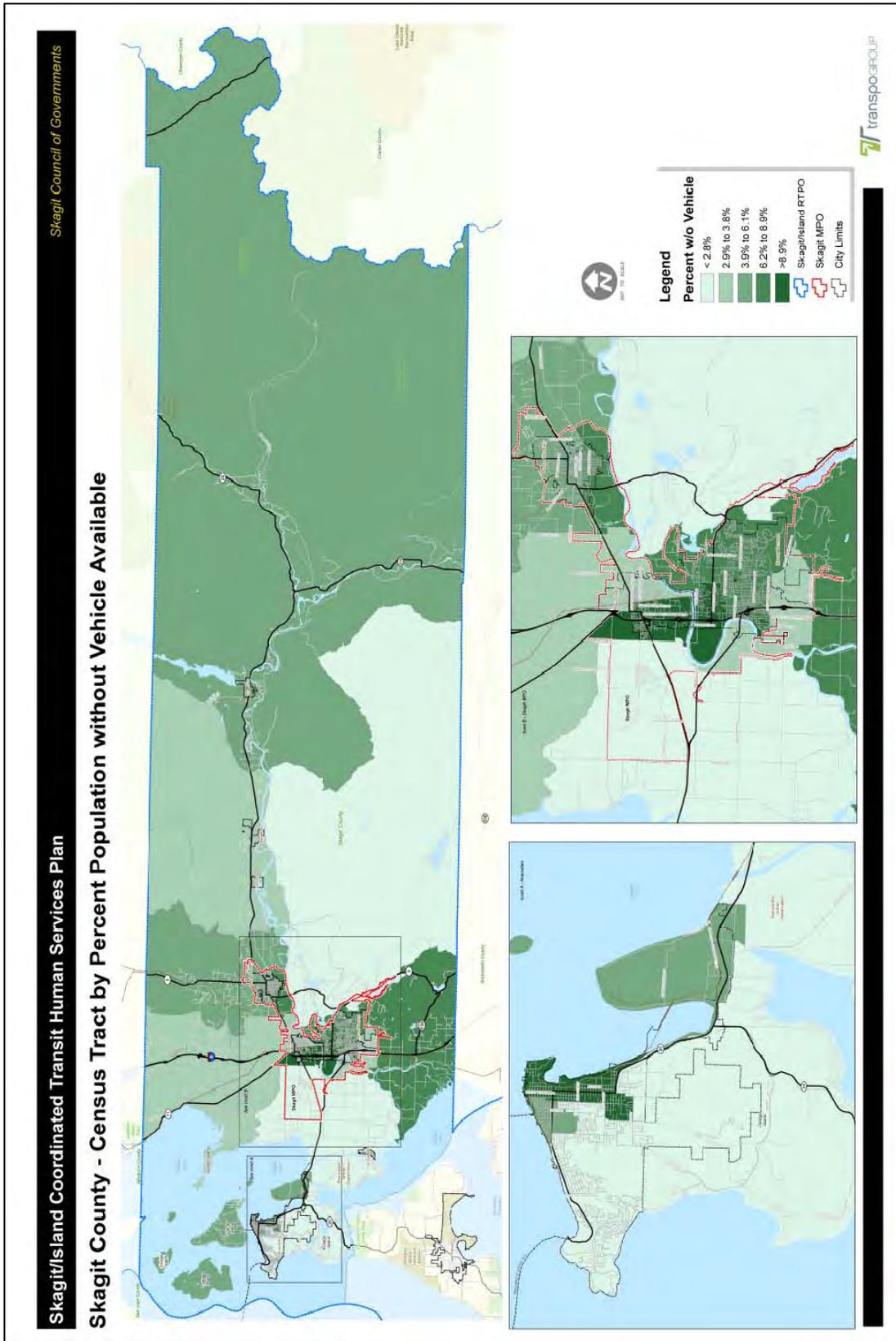
According to the 2000 Census, Island and Skagit County are both below the state average (14 percent) for households that speak languages other than English, with eight percent for Island County and 12 percent for Skagit County. Although the majority of Island and Skagit County populations speak only English, there are high percentages of residents in certain cities that speak languages other than English. For example, 25 percent of respondents in Mount Vernon stated they spoke languages other than English. In Burlington, 21 percent of respondents stated they speak languages other than English. The table below provides more detail on languages other than English spoken in Island and Skagit County.

Languages Spoken other than English¹

Area	Total Population*	Percentage that speak languages other than English	Percentage speak only English
Washington	5,501,398	14%	86%
Island County	66,796	8%	92%
Skagit County	96,277	12%	88%
Anacortes	13,868	5%	95%
Burlington	6,026	21%	79%
Camano CDP	12,746	4%	96%
Concrete	777	2%	98%
Coupeville	1,623	7%	93%
Hamilton	308	5%	95%
La Conner	733	5%	95%
Langley	898	4%	96%
Lyman	358	4%	96%
Mount Vernon	24,130	25%	75%
Oak Harbor	17,863	13%	87%
Sedro-Woolley	8,058	7%	93%

1. Source: US Census 2000

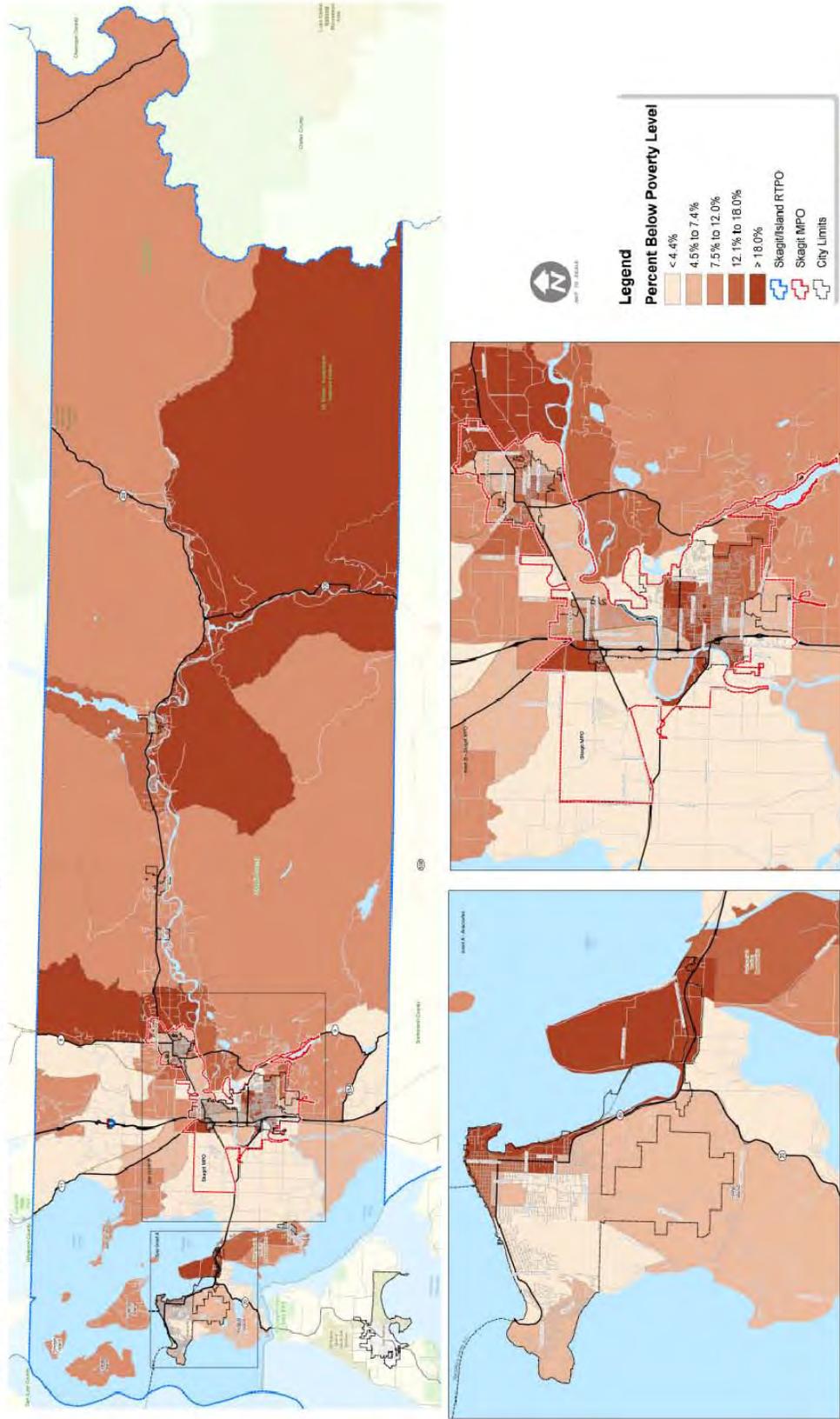
Appendix: Census Maps



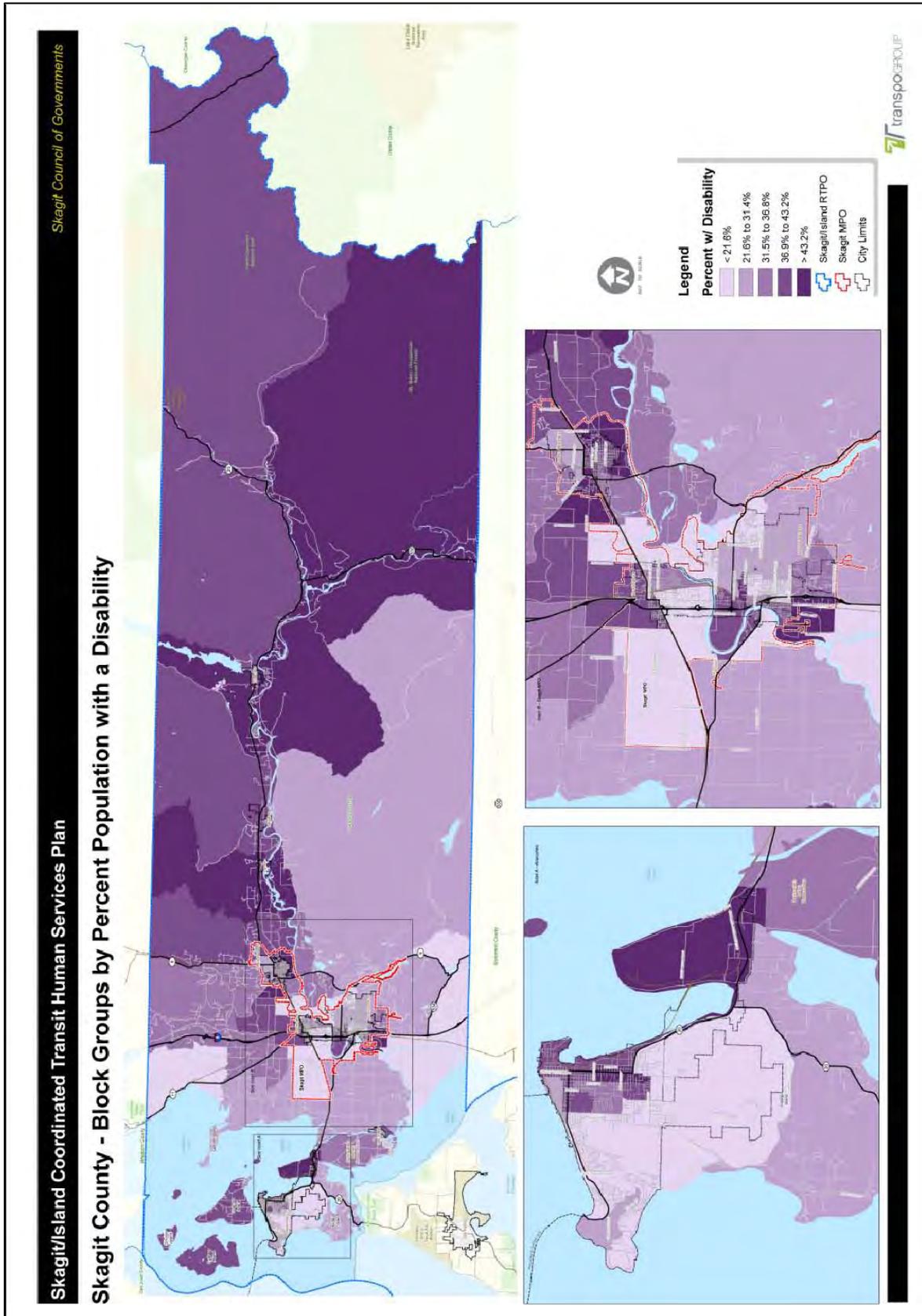
Skagit Council of Governments

Skagit/Island Coordinated Transit Human Services Plan

Skagit County - Block Groups by Percent Population Below Poverty Level



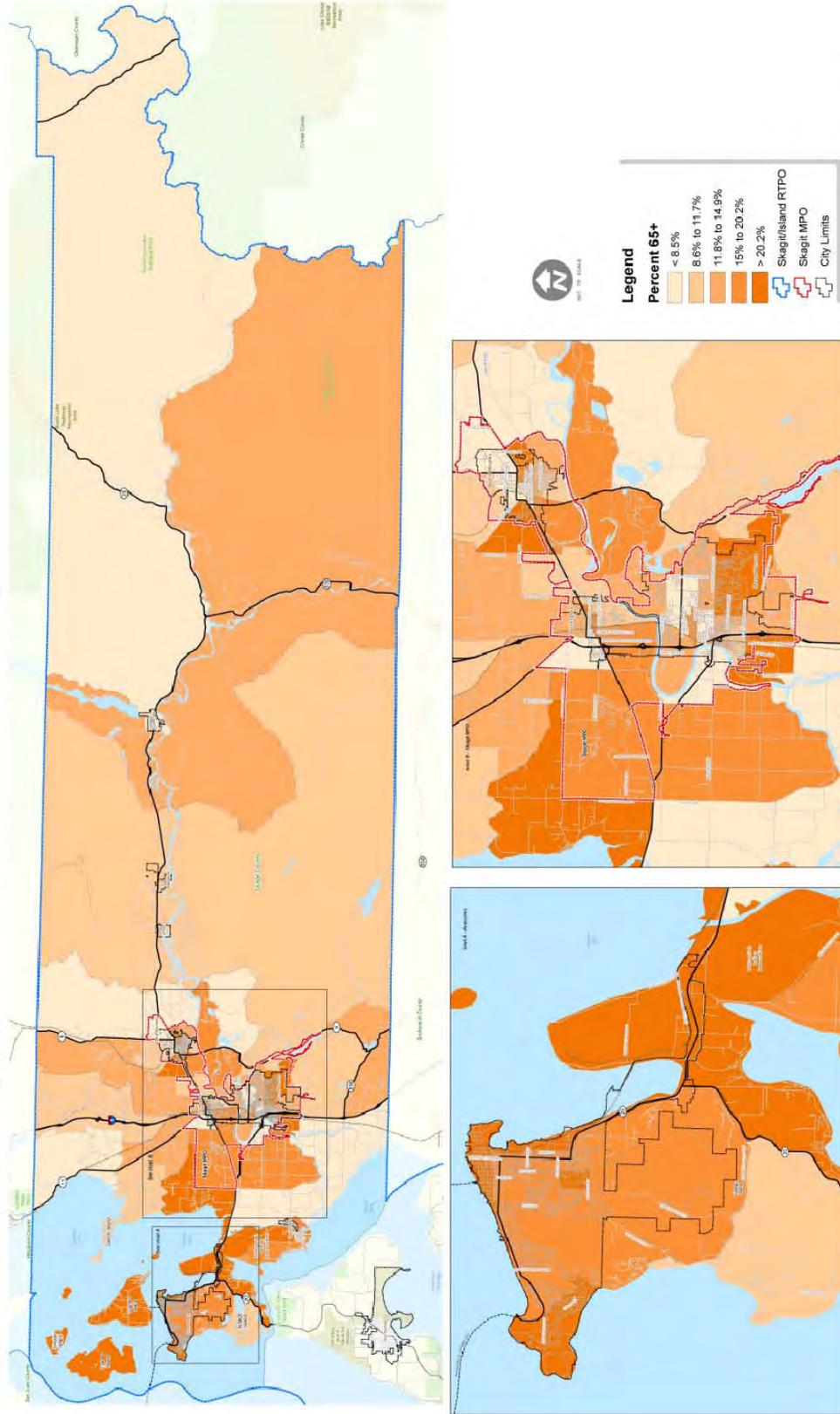
transpoGROUP



Skagit Council of Governments

Skagit/Island Coordinated Transit Human Services Plan

Skagit County - Block Groups by Percent Population Greater than Age 65

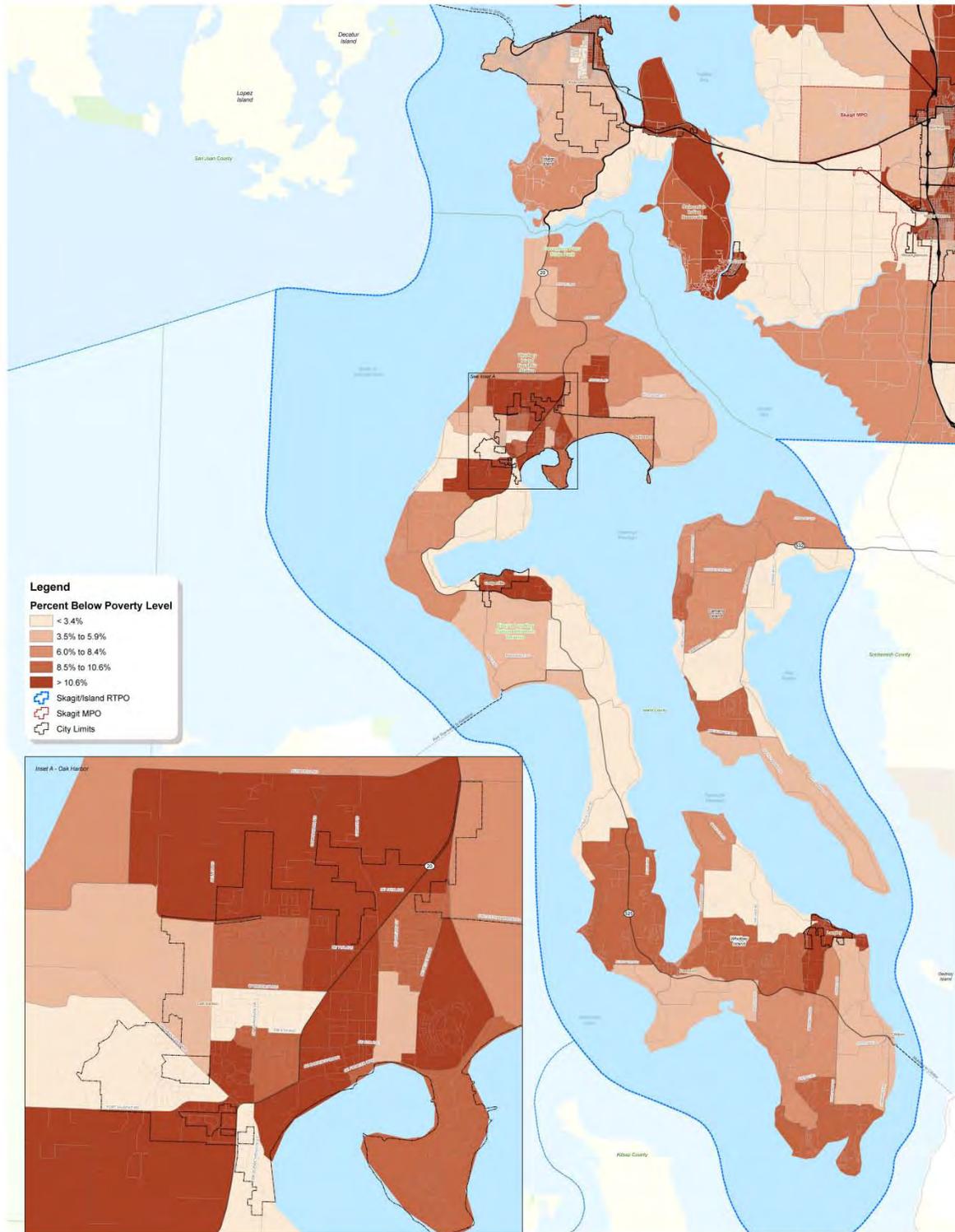


transpoGROUP

Skagit/Island Coordinated Transit Human Services Plan

Skagit Council of Governments

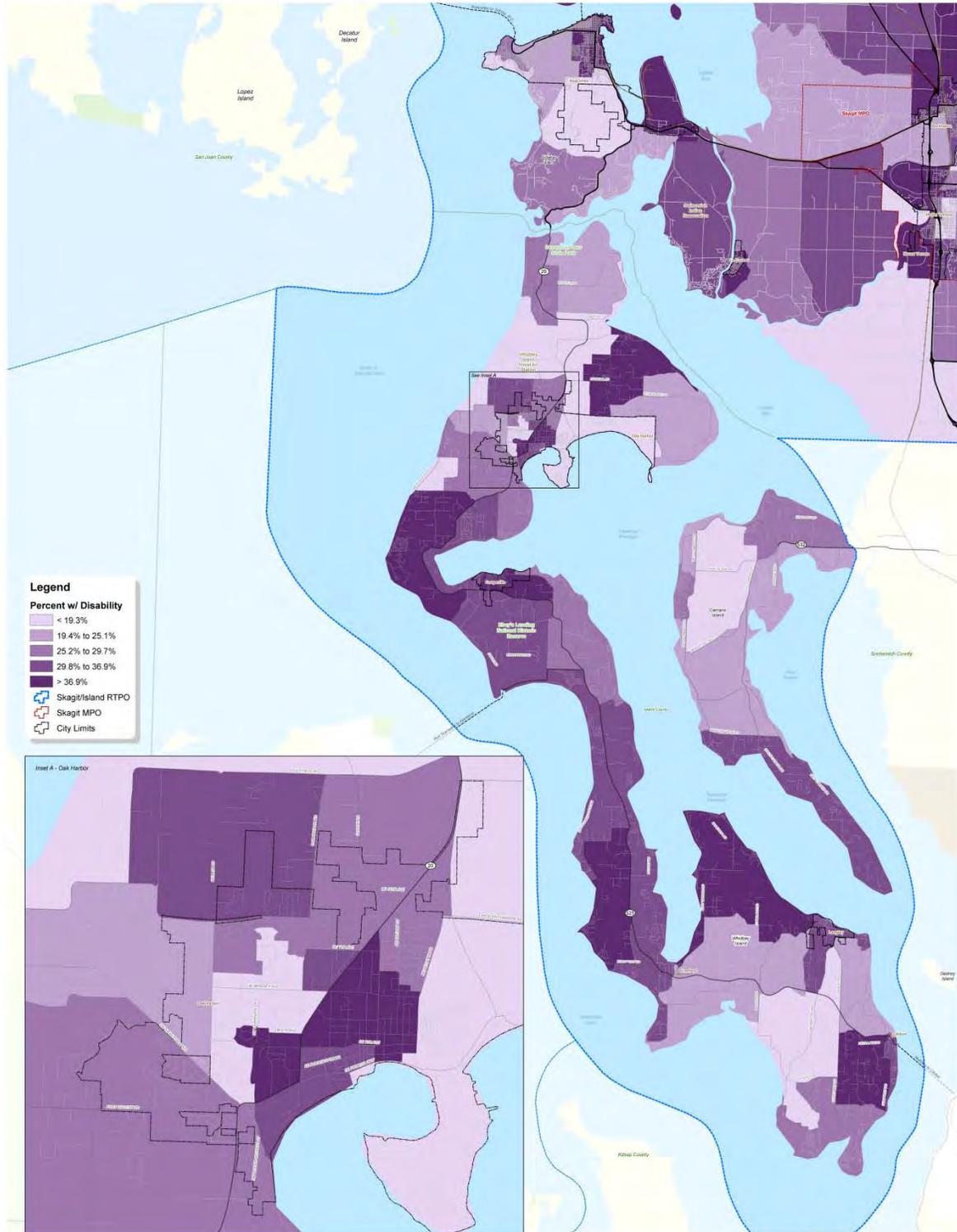
Island County - Block Groups by Percent Population Below Poverty Level



Skagit/Island Coordinated Transit Human Services Plan

Skagit Council of Governments

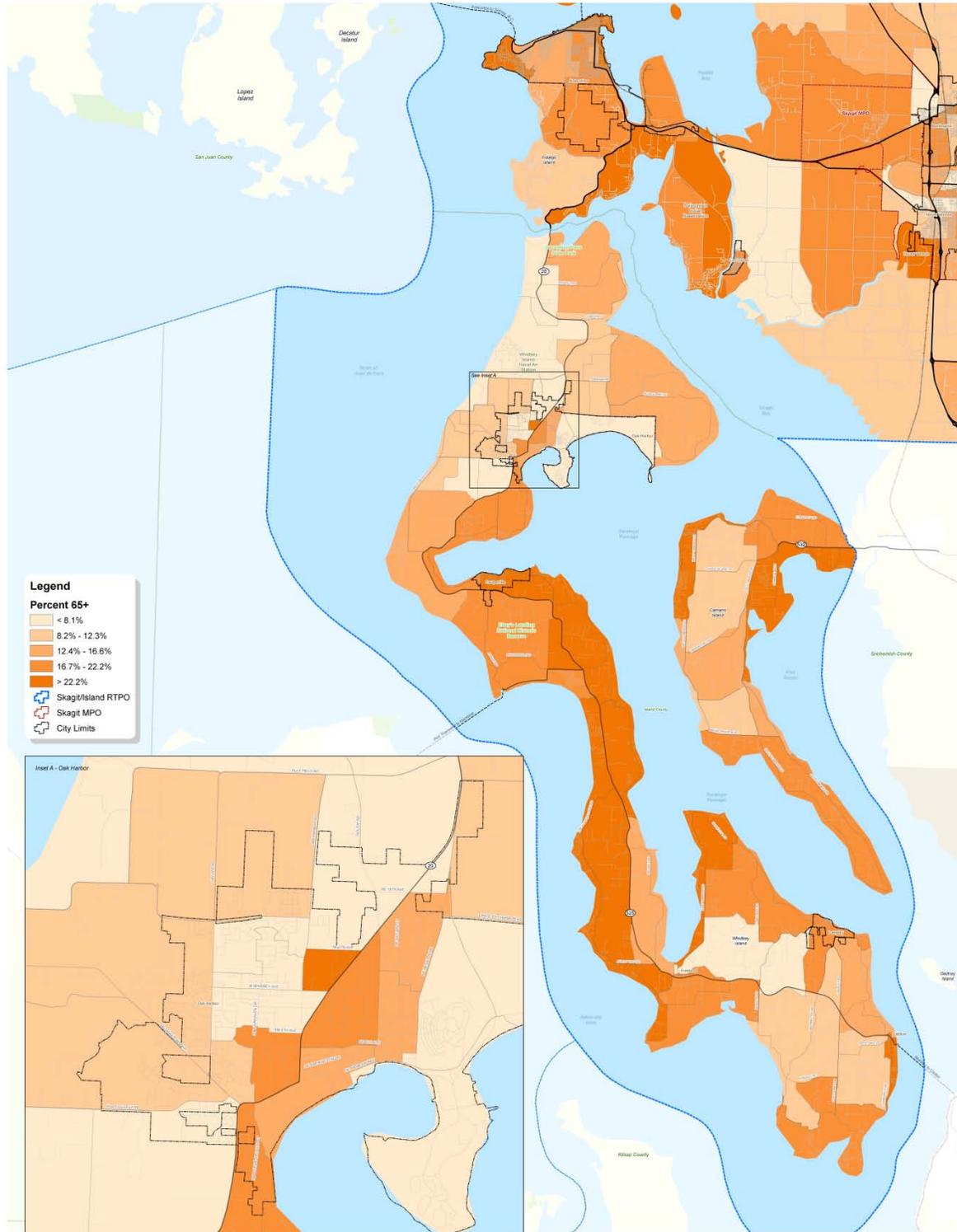
Island County - Block Groups by Percent Population with a Disability



Skagit/Island Coordinated Transit Human Services Plan

Skagit Council of Governments

Island County - Block Groups by Population Greater Than Age 65



Appendix: Top Specialized Paratransit Service Locations

Skagit Specialized Paratransit Service Pick-Up & Drop-Off Locations (Jan 2005 to May 2010)¹

Location Name	Pick-Up & Drop-Off Trips
CHINOOK ENTERPRISES	38,632
DIALYSIS	20,695
LIFE CARE CENTER MOUNT VERNON	19,879
ADULT DAY CARE BURLINGTON	15,968
MIRA VISTA	15,126
VINTAGE AT MT. VERNON (APTS.)	14,940
FOOD PAVILLION SEDRO WOOLLEY	11,759
SKAGIT STATION	9,822
SENIOR CENTER ANACORTES	9,710
CONCRETE TRANSFER CENTER	9,671
UNITED GENERAL HOSPITAL	9,504
ISLAND HOSPITAL	8,408
ANACORTES TRANSFER CENTER	8,122
COUNTRY MEADOWS	8,001
ALPINE RIDGE	7,680
SKAGIT VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER	7,645
YMCA	7,340
SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE	7,165
SKAGIT VALLEY HOSPITAL	6,890
CASCADE MALL	6,720
FRED MEYER	6,661
MOUNTAIN GLEN	6,547
COMPASS HEALTH MOUNT VERNON	6,544
GROUP HOME	6,467
OVENELL'S	6,450
LIFE CARE CENTER SEDRO WOOLLEY	6,225
SKAGIT WOUND HEALING INSTITUTE	5,315
SALEM VILLAGE	5,169

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

GROUP HOME	4,995
WALMART	4,946
SENIOR CENTER MOUNT VERNON	4,798
RIDGEVIEW TERRACE APTS 1	4,581
RIVERSIDE HEALTH CLUB	4,158
SENIOR CENTER BURLINGTON	3,670
SAN JUAN CARE CENTER	3,463
SKAGIT REGIONAL CANC CARE CENTER	3,452
SAFEWAY ANACORTES	3,439
HILLSVIEW APARTMENTS	3,417
SAFEWAY MOUNT VERNON	3,114
GROUP HOME	3,113
GROUP HOME	3,096
CHURCH OF NAZARENE MV	3,053
GROUP HOME	3,037
CHRISTENSEN SEED	2,944
COLONIAL PARK	2,844
BURTON'S NURSING HOME	2,833
SKAGIT COUNTY COURTHOUSE	2,756
PARK VILLAGE	2,743
CHRISTIANSEN NURSERY	2,712
APT COMPLEX	2,576
APT COMPLEX	2,518
SENIOR CENTER SEDRO WOOLLEY	2,460
HARBOR HOUSE	2,434
GROUP HOME	2,242
VILLA KATHLEEN APTS	2,130
FIDALGO CARE/ALLIANCE	2,853
RIVERSIDE LANES	2,036
MOUNT VERNON MANOR APTS	2,025

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

NW ORTHO SURGEONS MV	2,012
RIDGEVIEW TERRACE APTS 2	1,757
MCDONALDS BURLINGTON	1,724
TARGET	1,624
CK CHESTERTONS COFFEE HOUSE	1,609
FOOD PAVILLION/MARKET ANA	1,553
GROUP HOME	1,524
GROUP HOME	1,381
ROYAL FORK	1,356
HIGHLAND GREEN APARTMENTS	1,349
CENTRAL VALLEY ASSEMBLY	1,340
SELECT STYLING	1,312
MCDONALDS BURLINGTON	1,300
ANACORTES MANOR	1,293
WHERE THE HEART IS	1,288
MCDONALDS MV	1,245
DRS OFFICE/ LAM AND KUMAR	1,227
EC STOP AT CAPE HORN AND S SKAGIT	1,226
MED CTR MV MULTIPLE DRS	1,224
FOOD PAVILLION MOUNT VERNON	1,222
THE BRIDGE	1,216
FIDALGO POOL	1,206
EC STOP AT MARBLEMOUNT CABOOSE	1,200
FIDALGO MEDICAL	1,166
EVERGREEN PT/SPORTS REHAB SVMED CTR	1,161
SKAGIT ISLAND ORTHO	1,056
NORTHWEST EYE ASSOCIATES	1,012

1. Source: Skagit Island

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

Island Specialized Paratransit Service Pick-Up & Drop-Off Locations (Jan 2005 to May 2010)¹

Location Name	Pick-Up & Drop-Off Trips
KIDNEY CENTER	1946
TIME TOGETHER	1854
SENIOR CENTER(NORTH)	1507
WGH N	997
SAFEWAY	992
HARBOR STATION	969
SENIOR CENTER(BAYVIEW)	840
WGH	815
SUMMERHILL	813
WALMART	761
CAREAGE	747
REGENCY	640
MAPLE RIDGE	481
CAMBEY	436
SWIMMING POOL-O.H.	427
CAMBRIDGE COVE/ ARAUJO	407
HOMEPLACE	402
SAAR'S MARKET PLACE	375
NW CAREGIVERS COVE(DAYBREA	372
ISLAND ATHLETIC CLUB	323
HARBOR TOWER	295
FAMILY CARE PT NORTH	279
WHIDBEY COMM PHYSICIANS	259
BROOKHAVEN	257
SUNSHINE HOUSE	257
WHIDBEY MANOR	248
MCKINLEY HOUSE	240
AA HALL OAK HARBOR	236

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

LIBRARY OAK HARBOR	222
RITE AIDE	220
KMART	218
COMPASS HEALTH CPV	211
HOME ON THE HARBOR	195
PAYLESS GROCERY	195
OAK HARBOR CITY SHOP	190
COMMUNITY THRIFT	179
SW INTER. ELEMENTARY	174
THRIVE COMMUNITY FITNESS	169
FAMILY FOOT AND ANKLE	150
RED CROSS	147
ALBERTSONS	145
ALL ABOUT HAIR	145
SALON ON 20	145
OAK BOWL	139
CURRIER, REGINA DPM	130
HARADA, STEVE PT	130
LYCKSELL	128
JONIS HAIR DESIGN(BAYVIEW)	122
KANJO/ PSE BUILDING	114
WGH SOUTH	107
Oak Harbor Knits	102
OAK HARBOR LUTHERAN CHURCH	99
LEE, TERRY M.D.	95
TEDDY BEAR LEARNING CENTER	93
LIBRARY LANGLEY	90
DOMINO'S PIZZA	89
HAIR TRENDS/Next to Curves	87
OAK HARBOR ADULT CARE HOME	85

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

HILLCREST ELEM	75
NAVY EXCHANGE / Commissary	74
FAMILY CARE PT	73
CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY OF LANG	69
LINDS FREELAND PHARMACY	64
ACCENT ON STYLE	62
VALLEY COLLEGE SOUTH	62
LIBRARY CLINTON	60
WHIDBEY EYE CENTER	59
AA MEETING	58
ISLAND DRUG (OAK HARBOR)	57
SOUTH WHIDBEY HEALTHCARE	57
DYNA-CARE LABS	56
HELP HOUSE-Closed 12 to 1PM	54
TRINITY LUTHERAN	54
USELESS BAY ANML CLIN	53
RACE RD FIRE STATION	50
ALL SPORTS PUB & EATERY	49
DOLLAR TREE	49
LIBRARY FREELAND	49
DEAN MANOR	48
SEAMAR DENTAL	47
CICHOWSKI, MARK M.D.	46
DR JOHNSON	45
GENESIS HAIR & Tanning	44
SKAGIT VALLEY COLLEGE	43
COUPEVILLE MEDICAL CLINIC	42
P AND S HAIR	42
PICCO-WHIDBEY ORTHO SURGEO	42
CHURCH ON THE ROCK	40

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

LIVERMORE, JAMES MD	39
BURGESS, DR	38
PHOENIX RECOVERY SERVICES	38
VRACIN, WYLIE MD	37
HAIR GARDEN	36
HAIR HAPPENINGS	36
WHIDBEY SEA-TAC SHUTTLE	36
AMERICAN LEGION (NORTH)	35
DAVITA DIALYSIS CENTER	35
POST OFFICE OAK HARBOR	35
APPLEBEES	34
LANGROCK, DOUGLAS	34
WHIDBEY VISION CARE	33
MATHIS ADULT HOME	32
US BANK (MIDWAY)	32
FAMILY BIBLE CHURCH	31
WELLS FARGO BANK (PIONEER)	31
WHIDBEY ISLAND BANK	31
GRETCHENS	30
ISLAND CHIROPRACTIC	30
KEYES, GORDON DDS	30
ROOF, LEE MD	30
BAYVIEW FOOD BANK	29
DSHS	29
QUILTER'S WORK SHOP	29
VISION PLUS	29
HORSE RIDING CAMP	28
OFFICE MAX	28
WHIDBEY PLAYHOUSE	28
ALASKA FED CRDT UNION	27

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

KENS CORNER FAMILY CARE PT	27
TOBYS	27
BEVERLY'S MUTINY BAY SALON	26
LIBERTY TAX	26
OP COUNCIL	26
THOMAS PRIMAVERA	26
COMPASS HEALTH	25
SOUP KITCHEN CMA CHURCH	24
ISLAND THRIFT	22
MIDWAY COIN LAUNDRY	22
TSI - TECH SER INST	22
WENDYS RESTURANT	22
PERKINS, ROBERT DDS	21
ST STEPHENS ANGLICAN CHURCH	21
DUTCH MAID LAUNDRY	20
HU, BENJAMIN M.D.	20
ISLAND FAMILY HEARING CLINIC	20
ROBERT BURNETT	20
ISLAND PET CENTER	19
TACO BELL	19
BERNER, GARY DDS	18
HOME DEPOT	18
RECYCLE STOP	18
DIEM, CHARLES DDS	16
ELKS CLUB	16
KALLANDER, KIRK D.D.S.	16
PURPLE MOON	16
WIRTH, DOUGLAS D.M.D.	16
GISWOLD, ROBERT DDS	15
ISLAND WOMENS CLINIC	15

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

NEW IMAGE SALON	15
POST OFFICE FREELAND	15
WAIF THRIFT SHOP	15
WHIDBEY TELECOM	15
WORKSOURCE WHIDBEY	15
PLAZA CINEMA	14
SMOKE PLUS	14
TOP NAIL	14
AULD HOLLAND INN/ ERPS	13
WHIDBEY ISLAND BANK (N OAK)	13
BEDAZZLED	12
CARLAS SHEAR INSPIRATION	12
DK MARKET	12
LIBRARY COUPEVILLE	12
PEOPLES BANK-OAK HARBOR	12
STARBUCKS COFFEE CO	12
WALGREENS DRUG STORE	12
WOOD, DOUGLAS DDS	12
BAYSHORE CHIROPRACTIC	11
GREAT CLIPS(NEXT TO SAFEWAY	11
HERRERA	11
LARUE COUNSELING	11
LIGHTHOUSE CAFE/WHIDBEY COF	11
SOUTH WHIDBEY PT	11
ACE HARDWARE-O.H.	10
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	10
CHINA CITY (OLD MITZELS)	10
CHURCHHILL AND ASSO, REALTO	10
CLICK MUSIC	10
HOUSING AUTH. of ISL CTY	10

Island & Skagit Counties Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan Update

ISLAND DRUG (CLINTON)	10
JACK IN THE BOX	10
PRAIRIE CENTER/RED APPLE	10
WELLS FARGO BANK (COUP)	10
WHIDBEY ISLAND BANK(COUP)	10
WHIDBEY MEDICAL CLINIC	10
LANGLEY CLINIC	9
NAIL MASTERS	9
NAVY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION	9
OAK HARBOR INTERNAL MEDICIN	9
OAK HARBOR MUNICIPLE COURT	9
PILGRIM'S NUTRITION	9
ULTIMATE CUTS	9
WYMAN, ANDREW DDS	9
7/11 BY BASKIN ROBBINS	8
LIQUOR STORE OAK HARBOR	8
SERVICE ALTERNATIVES INC	8
SW MEDICAL BUILD	8
WELLS FARGO BANK (MIDWAY)	8
WHIDBEY ISLAND CHIROPRACTIC	8

1. Source: Island Transit
