Employment Access and Coordinated Human Services (EACH)

Transportation Plan for Whatcom County

Approved by RTPO Board 15 December 2010

Whatcom Council of Governments
Whatcom County, Washington

"Many people with disabilities are students or working adults who need to fit recreation into evening or weekend hours when public transportation is limited or not running."

-- Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program, *Leisure Opportunities for Persons with Developmental Disabilities*, 2002

This plan represents the culmination of months of work and dedication by professionals, community volunteers, and advocates. Special thanks are owed to all of those who participated in the development of this plan.

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Acknowledgements

In June, 2006, Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) received a grant from Washington State Department of Transportation to develop a coordinated transportation plan for access to employment and human services. As the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for Whatcom County, WCOG convened a stakeholder group composed of local and regional human services agencies and transportation providers advised and assisted in writing the Employment Access and Coordinated Human Services Transportation (EACH) Plan. A complete list of the groups invited to participate is included in the appendix.

WCOG consulted with two standing committees that advise the Regional Transportation Planning Organization Board: the Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) and the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC). Members of these groups reviewed and assisted in refining the EACH plan.

Community Transportation Advisory Group Members include:

Larry Wickkiser, BellAir Charters
Carol Berry, WWU Sustainable Transportation Coordinator
Dave Pros, Real Estate Professional
Chris Hatch, Forestry Industry
Kathy Berg, Birch Bay Community
Glenn Hallman, Council on Aging
Carol Macdonald, Mt. Baker Foothills Chamber of Commerce
Patrick Pollock, Cherry Point Industrial Area
A. J. Garcia, Western Washington University Associated Students
Terry Terry, Lummi Island Community

Transportation Technical Advisory Committee members include representatives from the following agencies and jurisdictions. Participants generally represent the Public Works Engineering and Planning Departments of these jurisdictions.

City of Bellingham
City of Blaine
City of Everson
City of Ferndale
City of Lynden
City of Sumas
Whatcom County
Lummi Nation
Nooksack Indian Tribe
Whatcom Transportation Authority
Port of Bellingham
Washington State Department of Transportation
Whatcom Council of Governments

CTAG and TTAC advise the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) Policy Board on transportation issues and priorities. The RTPO Board is composed of elected officials from each of the member jurisdictions in Whatcom County. One role of the RTPO Board is the publication of the *Whatcom Transportation Plan* in fulfillment of federal and state requirements. The 2010 update of the Employment Access and Coordinated Human-services Transportation (EACH) Plan was presented to the RTPO Policy Board in October 2010 for adoption. The 2012 update of the *Whatcom Transportation Plan* will include elements of the EACH Plan.

Introduction

Coordinated Transportation

In the broadest sense, everyone in Whatcom County benefits when transportation planning and implementation is done in a coordinated way: coordination of transportation services can result in less duplication of service and better stewardship of public funds. The EACH Transportation Plan focuses on improving coordination among the agencies and organizations providing transportation for community members who have special needs. The EACH stakeholder group, including representatives from a wide variety of agencies serving special needs populations, prepared the EACH Plan and continue to work together to advise on updates.

Transportation and the Economy

Whatcom County population grew 11% from 2005 to 2010 (180,800 to 196,529). During the same period, economic difficulties grew at significantly higher rates. Here are some examples of economic difficulties (years where data available):

- unemployment increased 90% (8.3% in 2009, up from 4.9 in 2005)
- foreclosures increased 100% (1.6% , up from 0.8% in 2005)
- homelessness due to job loss increased 100% (39% , up from 19% in 2007)
- foodbank visits increased 40% (2007 to 2009)
- major decline in transit agency funding, due to reduction in sales tax collections

Economic hardship has created a larger proportion of the Whatcom County population who have special needs due to low income. Human services agencies are affected by an increase in the number of people seeking assistance. Transit and passenger rail ridership numbers are higher, but funding to support local transit has declined. When transit service is reduced while ridership is high, those who need transportation assistance may have to wait longer for buses and find conditions are more crowded once the bus arrives.

More aware of the high cost of owning and operating a car, those who have cars are driving less to save money on fuel. According to a July 2010 *Wall Street Journal* article, people are choosing houses close enough to walk to stores and amenities and buyers are willing to pay higher prices for homes in walkable neighborhoods: the cost of transportation has become a bigger part of the real-estate equation.

While the high cost of driving has caused difficulties for low income travelers, the reduced rates of driving appears to have increased safety nationwide. Fatality rates are lower as fewer people are driving, and traffic congestion stabilized. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, people are driving less or driving fewer miles when they do drive. Fewer people appear to have access to cars: car sales in 2009 were at their lowest level since 1982, according to *Business Week*.

Public transportation ridership increased each year from 2005 – 2010.

- Amtrak Cascades – increased 17 % from 2009 to 2010
- WTA – increase of about 50 % from 2006 to 2009
- Airporter Shuttle – increase of 13% from 2005-2009

WTA bus trips now represent 5% of all trips in the Bellingham area (compared to 3% average nationwide). During the same period, the number of walking trips increased 12% and bicycling increased 25%.

At a time when economic conditions heighten the demand for bus service, fewer buses will be running. WTA is primarily (90%) funded by sales tax revenue, similar to highways, roads, and airports which are publicly subsidized by other taxes. Because of reduced sales tax revenue, WTA reduced service beginning in autumn 2010. And even though rising fuel costs have increased bus ridership, fuel costs have increased the cost of operating the bus system even more.

Economic decline has expanded the proportion of Whatcom County residents who have limited income. Low income is one of the special needs categories for which the EACH coordinated human services transportation plan is intended. Economic pressures highlight the importance of efficient investment of scarce public resources in transportation.

People with special needs rely on private automobiles for transportation for many trips. Examples include volunteers who drive shelter residents to appointments, and people with spinal cord injuries who can afford cars and drive vehicles with adaptive features.

Chapter 1

Participation

Defining EACH focus: Who needs transportation assistance?

People with special needs sometimes need assistance with transportation. People with special needs are technically defined as those who for age, income, or disability reasons cannot transport themselves. Planning for transportation that works for these populations can be a task shared by planners and human services agencies.

Transportation planning in Whatcom County is carried out by several agencies:

- City and County planning and public works departments
- Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
- Lummi Nation
- Whatcom Council of Governments
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Port of Bellingham

Here are some examples of transportation assistance and services provided by some human service agencies:

Northwest Regional Council	▪ Medicaid Brokerage: transportation vouchers or subsidies to medical appointments for those eligible
School Districts	▪ School Bus ▪ Walk Route Maps
The Willows Retirement Residence	▪ wheelchair vans for scheduled outings
Head Start	▪ mini-buses for eligible children, where funded
Camp ReBound	▪ summer camp bus
Places of worship	▪ mini-vans for seniors or members with disabilities
Meals on Wheels	▪ home delivered meals ▪ congregate meal distribution
Mt. Baker Ski Area	▪ shuttle bus for seasonal employees ▪ shuttle bus for 5th graders
Whatcom County Health	▪ mobile dental health clinic
Disabled Veterans Association (DAV)	▪ medical shuttle to Veterans Administration Hospital in Seattle
Domestic Violence Shelters	▪ volunteer drivers, as requested (volunteers must pass a security screening process)

Whatcom Volunteer CHORE program	▪ volunteer drivers for seniors
Various church alms programs	▪ small cash donations to pay for vehicle fuel or bus fare
Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access	▪ mobile medical care services
Sterling Drive Church "The Bike Shop"	▪ bicycle repair for low-income children and children of farm workers
everybodyBIKE and The Hub	▪ bicycles and bike education for low-income adults and children

Human service agencies are invited to participate in planning and project prioritization through the public participation process of each jurisdiction. Few human service agencies participate in transportation planning meetings on a regular basis.

Schools and human service agencies such as hospitals and food banks do not often allocate funds or resources to transportation planning. Some offer case-by-case transportation advice to clients, as requested. According to the Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access (WAHA), lack of transportation is often a barrier for community members to access medical appointments. The following examples illustrate some of the transportation challenges identified by social service providers:

- A person living in a shelter has an average of six case managers, each located in different places and each requiring regular visits.
- Head Start rules restrict bus ride for children participating in the program to a maximum of 30 minutes. An eligible child in Glacier cannot reach the Kendall Head Start location within that time limit.
- Some Head Start students in Blaine, Ferndale, or Glacier can't enroll because of lack of transportation or inflexible federal transportation policies
- A low-income mother reported that she needs four bus transfers to get to work and drop her child at child care
- For low income families, missing an energy appointment for their house can result in not having heat during the entire winter.
- Residents who want to see a doctor four miles away sometimes are paying or subsidized for a 25 mile taxi ride because of their distance from the taxi base
- The hub-and-spoke model of the current bus routes leaves gaps for those who need to travel between the "spokes" (e.g., Sumas to Lynden, etc.)
- Lummi Nation elders who were eligible for Specialized Transit service found the application process complex and didn't apply or, in some cases, did not know they were eligible
- Low-wage, entry-level jobs are often scheduled for nights and weekends when bus service is low or absent
- School districts provide transportation for homeless students to attend their school of origin. Families housed in temporary shelter distant from the original home have resulted in unbudgeted additional school bus trips of hundreds of miles each day

Transportation planning includes a variety of activities. Special needs transportation often focuses on public bus service, specialized vans, private bus shuttle service, or taxi service.

Transportation service providers described some challenges to meeting the needs of social service travel and employment access:

- Low population in remote areas makes regular WTA bus service too costly
    - For example, cost efficiency is measured in "boardings per revenue hour." When buses travel long distances in rural areas with few residents, more hours reap few boardings: high cost, low revenue. The WTA board has difficulty justifying inefficient operations.

- Policy barriers prevent "grouping" some travelers to common destinations in the same taxi
    - For example, a taxi paid for by medicaid for a qualified medical appointment cannot transport in the same vehicle another person going to the same destination for an unrelated purpose.

- Policies emphasizing independent living at subsidized housing complexes provide no incentive for ride-sharing on paratransit to common destinations, resulting in higher overall costs per trip
    - For example, multiple paratransit vans may be dispatched to a low-income housing complex to take one individual at time to the main discount grocery store, each traveling at a different time of day or different day of the week.

- The cost of maintaining and operating vehicles has become too expensive for many social service organizations
    - For example, Whatcom County Parks Department formerly provided transportation to recreation classes and activities in the National Forest but sold the passenger vans due to the increased cost of maintenance

- Transportation planners and WTA hold public outreach meetings to gather suggestions about how to improve service but few people with special needs appear to be able to attend. Some meetings are held during hours or in locations where public bus service is unavailable
    - For example, low income parents sometimes hold more than one job to make ends meet and do not have time to attend meetings or learn about issues and comment.

Transportation Investments

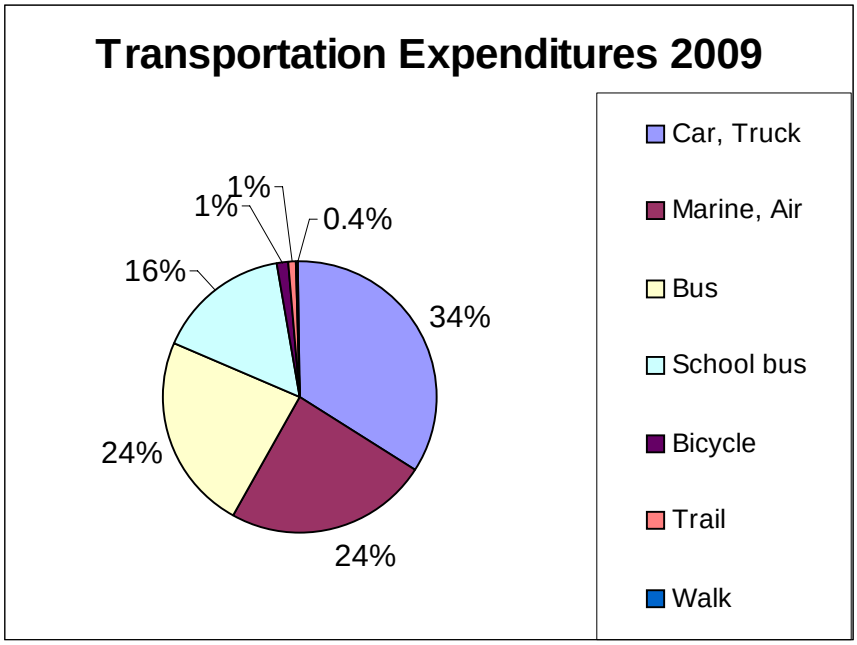
Each jurisdiction plans and pays for transportation facilities. Here are some examples of local investments in transportation:

- maintaining or widening roads
- building new roads
- building sidewalks
- building trails and boardwalks
- building park & ride lots and parking garages

- operating public bus service
- operating ferry, train, or airport services

Leaders in Whatcom County recognize the cost effectiveness of supporting a wide array of transportation modes and projects. The Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan goals and policies support multi-modal transportation, noting benefits to the economy, reductions in traffic congestion, improvements to health, and equitable access for people of all abilities. Coordinated transportation planning for human services furthers these Comprehensive Plan goals.

Transportation projects paid for by public funds each year take many forms: roads, highways, sidewalks, airports, ferries, bike lanes, buses, and more. The chart shows the rough proportion of 2009 public funds spent by the port, county, cities, state, transit authority, and school districts on projects serving various modes of transportation. The total amount spent for these projects is about $167 million.

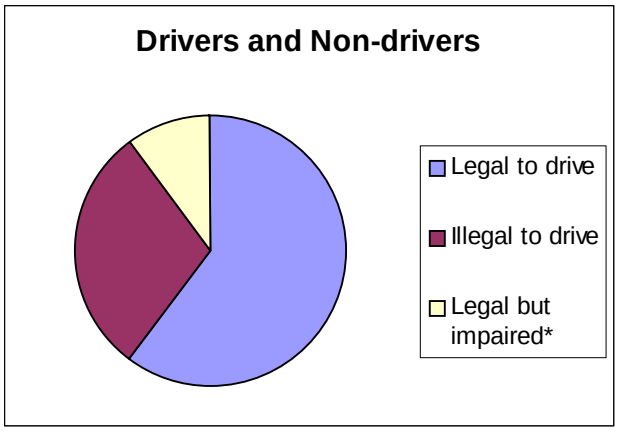


Proportional transportation expenditures in Whatcom County estimated based on 2009 budgets

(Note: Figures based on Whatcom Transportation Improvement Program, Port of Bellingham budget, average daily cost per pupil for bus transport as estimated by Bellingham School District applied to all school districts; WTA budget. The proportion of expenditures labeled "Car" does not include total planning, administration and operations costs, however, WTA and Port budgets do include administration and operations costs. Consequently, the proportion of local budgets spent on car/truck infrastructure may be higher than shown in the chart. Sidewalk, trail, and bike lane projects were estimated at 25% of total project costs where these were included in road project budgets.)

People with special needs walk for transportation at higher rates than the general population. According to the national 2008 Fatal Accident Reporting System (FARS) Data, 13% of traffic fatalities in Washington State were people walking. Statewide, 1.21% of Section 402 safety funds were spent on pedestrian safety improvements. In Whatcom County, pedestrian projects received less than 1% of transportation investments in 2009.

About 30% of the population are legally not permitted to drive for age or disability reasons. An additional 10% are permitted to drive but, due to seizures, medication, vision, or other impairments, pose an increased crash risk for other roadway users and perhaps would not choose to drive if other transportation options were available. According to the Northwest Area Agency on Aging, drivers over the age of 70 are involved in traffic crashes at a higher rate per mile driven than other adults. By 2030, 20% of the population will be over the age of 65.



** About 10% of people legally licensed to drive regularly experience medical or other conditions that impair their ability to drive safely.*

People with special needs rely on cars for some trips and support the maintenance of a safe and reliable road system through their taxes. Those with special needs who cannot drive may benefit from a portion of the road taxes directed toward projects that serve other types of transportation needs than driving.

Chapter 2

EACH Stakeholder Group Formation

WCOG began to form its advisory group for the EACH Transportation Plan by asking:

- What types of people need access to employment?
- What are the demographics of people who need access to medical care and other human services?
- Where are the organizations located that serve these populations?
- What services could help meet unfilled transportation needs?

Organizations that work with people who need transportation assistance include almost every demographic group: employers, schools, hospitals, and more. The 2007 stakeholder group was formed of representatives from human services agencies contacted through e-mail, telephone, outreach meetings, presentations, and website postings. Other groups such as employers, public works engineers, planners, and pedestrian advocates were invited and kept informed through e-mail, telephone, and announcements at area meetings of these interest groups. The EACH stakeholder meetings took place in Bellingham at the WCOG office. Stakeholders located in the Mt. Baker foothills and the Sumas area participated via conference telephone due to distance.

The 2010 EACH update process addressed the EACH goal of involving a wider variety of transportation and human services providers than had participated in 2007. Through presentations to these and other groups, wider participation was encouraged:

- Readiness to Learn consortium (school district professionals serving homeless students and other students with special needs)
- Community Resource Network monthly meeting (Bellingham area Opportunity Council meeting of representatives from shelters, food banks, alms ministiries, financial literacy programs, transition housing, disabled services, and others)
- Ferndale Community Resource Network (Ferndale area social services groups)
- Bellingham School District Assistant Superintendent for Transportation
- Bellingham/Whatcom Housing Authority (Senior and Disabled Housing)
- WorkSource (Workforce Development Council)
- Whatcom Community College Transitions Program (Support program for special needs students transitioning from social services to career-building and work)
- Spinal Cord Injury Support Group
- State Independent Living Council, Whatcom interest group
- Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (Regional Transportation Planning Organization advisory body composed of transportation engineers and planners for all local jurisdictions)
- Community Transportation Advisory Group (Regional Transportation Planning Organization and WTA citizen advisory committee)

Human service agencies' staff recognized that coordination of transportation could result in greater efficiency in allocation of their own agencies' resources. Jurisdictions could save money on road budgets through improved mobility management programs. Participation in the EACH stakeholder group gave many human service agencies their first opportunity to participate in transportation planning.

The table below lists the groups invited to participate in the 2010 EACH Plan update. Description of the transportation needs and services provided by these organizations is included in Appendix 2.

Human Services Agencies

Aging and Disabilities Services Administration
ARC of Whatcom County
Bellingham Food Bank
Bellingham /Whatcom County Housing Authority
Boys and Girls' Clubs of Whatcom County
Cascade Vocational Services
Catholic Community Services
Department of Social and Health Services, Whatcom Office
Early Learning and Family Services Northwest
Interfaith Coalition (Clinic, Housing)
Kulshan Community Land Trust
Lighthouse Mission Ministries
Lions' Club
Nooksack Tribe Health Services
Northwest Regional Council (Area Agency on Aging)
Opportunity Council
Rebound of Whatcom County
St. Joseph Hospital
SeaMar Health Clinic
Spinal Cord Injury Support Group
Visiting Angels
Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access
Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities
Whatcom Community and Family Network
Whatcom Council on Aging (Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers, "55 Alive")
Whatcom/Skagit Housing (Rural Self-help Homes)
YMCA (childcare, etc.)
YWCA (transition housing, etc.)

Schools

Blaine School District
Bellingham Technical College
Northwest Educational Service District (School Bus)
Readiness to Learn Consortium (participants from all school districts)
Whatcom Community College

Western Washington University

Transportation Providers

BellAir Charters
Cascade Ambulance Service, Inc.
Love, INC (volunteer drivers)
Lummi Transit Service
Northwest Regional Council (Medicaid Brokerage Transport)
Rural Metro (Medical Transport)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Medical Transport
Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
Whatcom Volunteer Center CHORE program
Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT)
Yellow Cab of Whatcom County

Jurisdictions or Departments

Bellingham Emergency Management
City of Bellingham public works/Transportation Options Department
City of Bellingham Consolidated Plan for Human Services (Community Development Department)
Whatcom County Public Works Engineering
Whatcom County Health Department (Developmental Disabilities)
Whatcom County Department of Emergency Management

Employers and Employer Groups

Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce
Farm Friends/Farmworker Groups
Mt. Baker Chamber of Commerce
Sustainable Connections
Workforce Development Council/Worksource

BellAir Charters operates the Airporter Shuttle, connecting many cities along the I-5 corridor north of Seattle.

Chapter 3

Vision of Coordinated Transportation

EACH stakeholders agreed on the following vision statement for the work of the group:

> "A barrier-free transportation system that helps people with special needs in Whatcom County to carry out daily trips in a convenient and cost effective way."

The EACH Stakeholders agreed to define special needs populations according to Revised Code of Washington 47.06b: "Those people, including their attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation."

Mission of Coordinated Transportation:

> "To coordinate services, resources, and investments to transform Whatcom's transportation system into one that serves people of all abilities in an equitable and convenient way."

Goals of Coordinated Transportation:

The group agreed on the following goals, listed in priority order:

1. **Clear and Understandable:** All social service organizations and their participants understand and benefit from a simple and effective system of coordinated transportation.
2. **Equitable Funding:** Public investments favor projects and services that improve transportation conditions for people of all ability levels.
3. **Safe and Comfortable:** The transportation system is safe, accessible and comfortable for children and other special needs travelers.
4. **Environmentally Friendly:** Balance comfort, environmental-friendliness, and existing resources so that everyone has a safe, accessible way to meet daily service or transportation needs.

Initial Objectives for Coordinated Transportation:

EACH stakeholders came to consensus that the first tasks to address the top priority goal include three equally important and mutually interconnected objectives. While the stakeholders agreed that all three must happen concurrently, they agreed on the following priority order for the initial objectives:

1. Increase connectivity by reducing gaps in the public transportation system.

2. Increase awareness of existing services and of the coordination work of the EACH stakeholder group.
3. Reduce the complexity of trip arrangements and of eligibility requirements for services.

Strategic Action Recommendations

Stakeholders recommended several project actions to carry out the objectives. Partners and stakeholders implemented some projects from 2005 to 2009 with EACH grant funding. A summary description of project results follows the action list below. Numbers in parentheses (e.g., (1-A)) refer to projects where action has been taken. The status updates in the next section give more detail on the actions taken.

1. Increase connectivity:

- (1-A) Identify the highest priority "spokes" to connect; inform WTA board what frequency would be needed.
    - Areas to study: Everson to Sumas; Sumas to Kendall; Birch Bay to Blaine; Lynden to Sumas; Lynden to Blaine; Ferndale to Lummi Nation
- (1-B) Evaluate feasibility of changing the school bus system to a WTA system to eliminate duplication of facilities and services while increasing cost-effectiveness.
- Develop innovative solutions to serve areas where bus service is economically impractical using methods such as:
    - Engage private sector transportation providers in bridging gaps in the public transportation system where this would improve cost effectiveness and efficiency
    - Establish a "sub" base for taxi or other private shuttle service in Everson or Deming area
    - Design and implement an innovative pilot project transportation arrangement to provide trips during nights, weekends, and holidays and to places where WTA service is not cost-effective to offer
    - Expand the on-line Ride-Match service for trips other than work commutes
    - Contract with individuals in remote cities to transport their "neighbors" to services (i.e., expand on existing programs providing gas vouchers)
    - Study feasibility of contracting with school buses and their drivers (outside of school service times) to transport special needs clients during the mid-day period. (A program of this sort in Mason County resulted in increased income for low-income drivers and increased cost-effective use of vehicles, benefiting schools.)

- (1-C) Reduce car trips through Transportation Demand Management and other support services such as:
    - Provide services nearer to the client rather than requiring the client to travel large distances
    - Resolve conflicting issues between land use policies (designed to prevent sprawl and protect farmland) and human services transportation (designed to serve remote residences equitably)

    - Coordinate with Transportation Demand Management programs to encourage ride-sharing
    - Congregate human services in centralized offices accessible by multiple transportation modes
    - Provide additional public transportation service to outlying areas currently not served, where compatible with growth management goals

- Replace Fixed Route Transit Buses: Some of the WTA bus fleet in operation in 2010 have mileage in excess of recommended standards such that maintenance costs exceed replacement. Replacing aging portions of the WTA fleet is a priority to meet the demands of providing reliable, cost-effective transit service.

2. Increase awareness:

- Increase public and agency awareness of transportation services available and how to use them through methods such as:
    - (2-A) Fund a "travel trainer" position or hot-line (WTA began this in 2008; also adding an on-line trip planner on internet site)
    - Establish a volunteer-staffed hotline for peer training on bus or other transportation options (peers can be seniors, college students, other demographic groups)
    - (2-B) Conduct community group presentations, outreach booths at Farmers' Markets, etc., around the county to inform public about transportation services and options
    - Expand outreach to employers to facilitate carpooling to neighboring employers
- (2-C) Increase awareness among agencies and providers of the EACH planning effort and how they can benefit and participate by such means as:
    - Work with the school district transportation managers to find ways to better coordinate
    - Create maps of transportation services and gaps for each target population
    - Create an inventory and matrix of groups who should be involved in coordinated transportation planning and increase outreach to and involvement of special needs travelers and groups not currently represented in the EACH Stakeholder Group.
- Find funding for on-going facilitation of a coordinated human services transportation planning group at WCOG or WTA
    - Coordinate the update of the 2007 Whatcom Transportation Plan with the EACH action plan and strategies

3. Increase convenience, simplicity:

- Improve the convenience of trip arrangements (e.g., number of bus transfers)
- Simplify the eligibility process and help everyone understand it
    - Connect rural residents to the "spokes" of fixed route service
    - Connect school students with after-school activities such as Boys' and Girls' Clubs, YMCA, child care centers, etc.

Implementation Status Report

Connecting the "spokes" in Rural Areas (1-A) – The word "spokes" refers to rural towns at the ends of the bus lines, unconnected to each other by bus service. For example, to travel from Sumas to Lynden by WTA bus results in a forty mile trip (total four hours), but the towns themselves are 10 miles apart.

WCOG met with special needs residents in some of the rural towns to begin to measure the degree of need for direct bus service in some of the rural areas. People with special needs from the Kendall and Sumas areas expressed interest in accessing community and medical services in Lynden. Participants proposed starting an hourly circulator mini-bus connecting Kendall, Sumas, Lynden, Blaine, and Birch Bay. A pilot project could help determine ridership and demand for such a circulator.

WCOG discussed such a circulator with WTA representatives on the EACH stakeholder group. Ridership for such a circulator would be too low to justify WTA service. BellAir Charters, a private shuttle business, could potentially operate a circulator pilot project to build ridership over time. Fares for riders on a private shuttle would be higher than typical WTA fares, however, fare assistance could be made available to low-income riders through an EACH grant.

Connecting Lummi Nation to Ferndale (1-A) – Lummi Nation established fixed-route transit service for the reservation in 2006, connecting residential areas to employment and service centers and to WTA fixed-route service. In 2009, total ridership increased to 41,449 with an average of 3,454 passengers per month, a 37.6% average annual increase. Lummi Transit anticipates ridership of 57,000 passengers by the end of 2010 and plans to add direct service to Ferndale in 2011.

School Bus System (1-B) – School districts in Whatcom County spent $6 million on pupil transportation in 2008, and costs have continued to rise since then. WCOG met with the Assistant Superintendent of the Bellingham School District to discuss opportunities for coordination between school buses and other transportation in the community. Many regulations, policies, and liability concerns limit flexibility on school transportation. For example, a mini-van – rather than a school bus - might offer cost sharing benefits if it could be made available to serve community transport needs outside the hours it is used to transport one or two homeless students. But policy barriers restrict the school district's ability to substitute a mini-van.

Barriers to making such a mini-van available for wider use include district policies, negotiated agreements, parental concerns, and costs for maintenance, fueling, insurance, liability, and union-driver rules. School district budgets do not include funding for staff to work toward developing such agreements and plans. If funding

from an outside source, such as an EACH grant, became available to pay for coordination meetings and planning, school district staff could potentially participate and work towards coordination.

WTA bus excursions for groups of seniors teach transit options.

Transportation Demand Management (1-C) – Whatcom Smart Trips is a community-wide trip reduction program that encourages and rewards people for making more of their daily trips by walking, bicycling, sharing rides and riding the bus. The program has taken 1.6 million car trips off the roads, a total of 26 million miles not driven since starting in 2006. The positive messaging and sophisticated marketing helps everyone feel good about using travel modes other than the private car. This strategy has helped people with special needs to feel better about their transportation options. EACH Mobility Management outreach leveraged Whatcom Smart Trips marketing to teach low-income seniors and activity directors about fixed route bus service that could meet their needs more conveniently than the specialized paratransit service. Low-income workers received bicycles and bike safety training for work and school commutes.

Add Public Transportation in Rural Areas (1-C) - Ridership increased in 2008 on WTA routes serving the Kendall area (with a higher proportion of low-income residents). WTA added service and capacity to meet demand.

Travel Training and Outreach (2-A)– WTA established a Travel Trainer staff position in 2008 to teach people with special needs about how to use fixed route bus service. At least six workshops have been held each year through the "Transitions Program" at which participants practice boarding a bus, using the stop request device, reading a schedule, and paying fares.

(2-B) WCOG staffed community outreach boothsat events and Farmers' Markets to educate the public about transportation options. Outreach at congregate meals at four senior centers included distribution of the "Travel Car Free" North Sound Connections guide.

WCOG worked with thirty elementary and middle schools to teach traffic safety skills for students walking and bicycling to school. Collaboration to improve walking and cycling routes for school children is resulting in cost savings on "hazard bussing" within the one-mile walk zone for Carl Cozier elementary school in Bellingham.

(2-C) WCOG contacted an expanded list of humans services providers to invite participation in the EACH stakeholder group. WCOG made EACH presentations at the Community Resource Network monthly meetings and the bi-annual Readiness to Learn Consortium.

Chapter 4

People with Special Needs

People with special needs have a wide range of abilities and differing transportation needs. This chapter describes some strengths and challenges of population groups and how coordinated transportation can serve them.

There are some common characteristics and abilities among people with special needs and there are also some distinct differences. Sometimes a solution for one special need is a barrier for a different group. For example, wheelchair ramps in curbs can be a hazard to people with vision-impairments: people with low vision rely on feeling the curb edge to know there's a street to cross. Understanding some of the different needs helps focus coordination efforts among transportation planning agencies and human service providers.

Elders/Seniors

Advanced age does not, in and of itself, correspond to a need for transportation assistance. Many people who are over 65 years of age maintain active community involvement and continue to walk, drive, or use the bus as they have throughout life. According to the U.S. Census, 12.4% of Whatcom County residents are over the age of 65, a rate 10% higher than the statewide average of 11.5%. The senior population is rising more quickly as the baby boomers age.

Aging eventually brings a decrease in abilities that can restrict transportation options. Many seniors suffer from common illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, and medications for such diseases can impair one's ability to drive. Depending on physical abilities, elderly people may change transportation habits gradually. For example, a 70-year-old may choose to limit driving at night or on high speed roadways or in poor weather, rather than quit driving altogether.

Transportation helps older adults maintain social engagement.

Transportation helps older adults maintain social engagement, a key to mental health and vitality. "Next to health," according to one 80-year-old, "transportation is the most important thing," allowing her to participate in her community. The proximity of the senior's home to community activities and services becomes part of the transportation equation: a home far from stores, bus stops and community centers exacerbates isolation and the mental health risks associated with isolation.

Disabled seniors who do not have access to other transportation may qualify for WTA's Specialized Transportation services. After applying and completing the interview and approval process, seniors may request door-to-door Specialized Transportation for their

specific trips within the WTA service area. The cash fare for Specialized Transport is the same as the fixed route fare ($1.00 in 2010). A care-giver may accompany the disabled rider fare free. Seniors age 75 and older ride free. Seniors 65 and older receive a 50% discount with a reduced fare card. The reduced fare is not applicable to Specialized Transport.

Some human services can be provided in the senior's home rather than requiring the elderly person to travel. However, providing in-home services should be balanced with the need for outside social interaction.

People with Disabilities

People who have sustained a long-term or permanent injury may need transportation assistance to reach vocational training and rehabilitation locations. People with disabilities that affect their ability to navigate the bus system on their own are eligible for Specialized Transportation service. Disabled riders who need assistance may be accompanied by a care-giver on the Specialized Transit bus.

> "Transportation is a vital link to access employment and community activities. Most individuals with developmental disabilities do not drive and must rely on public transportation to get to work, leisure activities and shopping. Transportation ensures that all individuals have options for inclusion in the community."
>
> - *Creating Community: Leisure Opportunities for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, 2002*

There are many different kinds of disability. Facilities vary greatly in the ways they address transportation needs for different disabilities. The chart below illustrates how some transportation facilities work for certain types of disability but not for others. Wheelchair ramps, for example, are common facilities to address mobility challenges, but the chart shows that several other types of disability are not helped by wheelchair ramps. While public bus service is an essential service for most people with disabilities, it is worth remembering that there are some people whose disabilities prevent them from using the bus. The chart shows that places to walk or use a wheelchair safely can benefit many.

Many disabilities do not pose a barrier to use of sidewalks, public trails or even bicycles. Some people with disabilities require training in the types of services available and how to use them.

physical ability	**walk**	**bike**	**bus**	**drive**	**wheelchair**
vision impairment	x	*	x		
hearing loss	x	x	x	x	
paralysis, leg amputation	(w)	*	x	x	x
balance impairment	(w)	*	x	x	x
limited mobility †	(w)	*	x	x	x
obesity (see note)	(w)	*	?	x	x

behavioral ability	walk	bike	bus	drive	wheelchair
slowed reaction time	x		x		x
developmental disability	x	x	x		
seizures, epilepsy	x	x	x		
behavioral issues	x	x	?	?	
alcohol/drug use	x	x	?		

*A variety of cycle designs serve many types of ability. Examples include: handcycle, electric-assist cycle, tandem (to assist vision impaired person), three-wheel cycle or cargo cycle. Recumbent cycles are designed to reduce knee stress.

† e.g., An injury to knee or hip can limit walking distance; chronic conditions resulting in weakness such as asthma, diabetes, heart condition, etc.

(w) indicates wheelchair use or balance-assist device such as a walker. Feasible to use where sidewalks or other walkway infrastructure is available.

Note: In cases of severe obesity, wheelchairs are larger than the width of the standard public transit bus doorways and/or the combined weight of the rider and the electric-power battery pack for the wheelchair is heavier than the capacity of the standard WTA bus ramp lifts.

?: indicates that, in some cases, use of the mode is precluded for people with a certain condition. For example, a person who has been violent or who has not followed WTA rules on alcohol consumption may be trespassed from WTA property and not permitted to ride the bus.

Case Study: Senior & Disabled Housing Residents

WCOG met with residents of a senior housing apartment to find out what types of transportation services serve their needs well. Residents reported regularly using Specialized Transportation to go from the apartment to a large discount department store for weekly or monthly grocery shopping. The residents reported they were generally satisfied with the service of the Specialized Transit.

WTA estimates the fully-allocated average cost for each trip on Specialized Transportation is $43 per rider, while the average fully-allocated cost per rider for a fixed route bus is about $4. Regular WTA bus service departs every 15 minutes from the bus stop in front of the apartment building, connecting to hourly bus service to the large discount department store. The regular service offers the advantage of greater flexibility, less waiting time, and no need to call 24 hours in advance to request service. The residents reported that knee injuries limit their ability to walk from the bus stop to the door of the department store, a distance of about 100m (300 ft.). Inside the store, they use electric carts to navigate the aisles without walking. If the electric carts could be made available at the bus stop (e.g., by request), these residents could choose fixed route buses for these trips.

Food delivery reduces transportation trips for groceries, but deprives recipients of the social aspect of shopping.

The residents were asked whether a delivery service would be useful to save them the time and physical

difficulties of traveling to and from the grocery or department stores and carrying their purchases. Such a delivery service to a subsidized housing or assisted living center could aggregate several residents' purchases in one trip, potentially reducing traffic congestion and expense. All residents in the focus group indicated they would not use a delivery service. The shopping trip is valued as an outing and social opportunity.

Future research is needed to determine whether an increase in social outing opportunities separate from shopping could help reduce public transportation costs. Additional research is needed to measure the feasibility of coordinating shopping trips to common destinations from multi-unit housing centers to increase the number of riders per Specialized Transit vehicle trip.

Rural Residents

Rural areas are characterized by farms, forests, or open spaces with few houses. The cost of building or operating transportation facilities in low density areas is high relative to the small number of people using those facilities. One example of this is rural road design standards in Whatcom County: the cost to build sidewalks and shoulders is generally too high to justify for most rural roads. Transit is another example: the cost per rider for WTA bus routes in rural areas is 2 to 3 times higher than for urban locations.

Rural residents with special needs present the challenge of how to allocate transportation budgets fairly. The higher cost of providing public services to people in rural areas results in limitations on the availability of that service. Rural levels of service are lower than urban levels of service for transportation, enforcement, parks, and other public amenities.

Rural areas are characterized by farms, few services, and longer distances between houses.

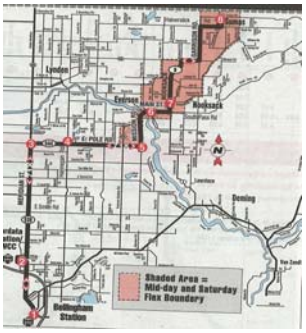
Human services are essential for the health of rural residents with special needs. Seniors with special needs in rural areas may have lived there all their lives. The trauma of moving from a family home can exacerbate health problems for elderly people. The Meals on Wheels program is an example of a human services program with a substantial transportation component. Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers deliver prepared food to the homes of people with special needs. Congregate meals are offered at community centers in rural areas so that people can eat together and benefit from social interactions.

Newcomers to rural Whatcom County may choose housing in rural areas because of the lower house prices. Transportation becomes a cost that is shifted from the home owner to public agencies when the rural resident has special needs that qualify for

public health or other services. Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) is the Medicaid Brokerage in Whatcom County. NWRC reports that transportation costs take 75% of the Medicaid Brokerage dollar, and 33% of that transport money is spent on 1% of trips (often taxi) for remote rural residents. Transportation represents about 35% of the total NWRC annual budget.

Further research is needed to develop strategies to resolve the disproportionate public cost of transportation associated with serving rural residents with specialneeds. Research should review the ways that land use policies affect housing prices in rural and urban areas, in turn influencing home-buying decisions. Research should review whether adequate supplies of affordable housing are available situated in close proximity to human services and transportation providers.

"Flex service" on certain rural WTA bus routes allow the regular bus routes to deviate from the established route within a specified area (see diagram). Flex service makes it possible for those living within a mile of a regular bus route to access it. In some cases, flex routes compensate for the lack of trails or sidewalks: some special needs residents could walk or bicycle to the nearest bus route if a safe facility were available. Ridematch or carpool programs may be cost effective ways to assist rural residents.



"Flex" service areas are indicated in shaded red on the route map.

> "Housing costs do not end when we sign our rent or mortgage checks. Where we live has other costs associated with getting around: to work, to school, to the grocery store. How much that costs depends on where we live and what options are available to move us from point A to point B."
>
> *- Center for Neighborhood Technology's Policy News, July 2010*

Native American Rural Residents

Lummi Nation

The Lummi people established a civilization in the Whatcom region about 12,000 years ago, traveling among the islands, lowlands and mountains of the north Puget Sound and Georgia Straits. They shared a common language and culture with the other tribes in the Salish Sea region including the Semiahmoo, the Saanich, the Songhees, the Sookes, the Klallams and the Samish. Salmon fishing has always been of great importance to the Lummi people.

The Point Elliot Treaty of 1855 established the reservation boundaries of Cha-shoo-sen island, composed of Lummi penninsula bounded on the north by the Nooksack and Lummi Rivers. The Lummi Indian Reservation consists of a 13,000 acre area located in Whatcom County in the northwest corner of Washington State. It is eight miles west of

the city of Bellingham, and has a population of about 4,200 residents, about 53% of whom are registered tribal members or identify themselves as Native American.

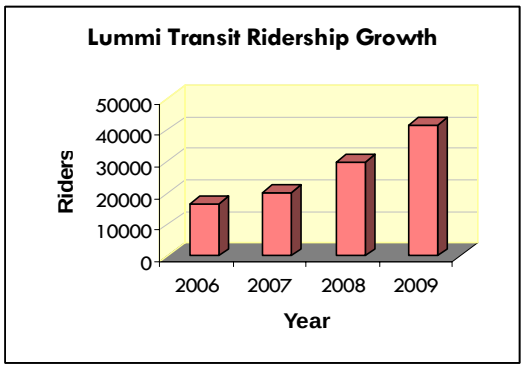
Lummi Nation approved a tribal constitution in 1948 and established an executive Lummi Indian Business Council (LIBC) responsible for administering community and health services. The Lummi Housing Authority was established in 1968, building and assisting with hundreds of affordable housing projects since then. In recent years, the LIBC has improved economic opportunities, but throughout the 1900s systematic exclusion from native fishing grounds resulted in devastating poverty for the Lummi Nation and some effects of that poverty remain.

About 30 percent of enrolled Lummi members cannot drive for age or disability reasons. Forty-five percent of Lummi households have incomes of less than $15,000 and the unemployment rate on the reservation in 2000 was 38% (as compared to a 5.8% unemployment rate county-wide). About 23% of the reservation is zoned for residential use and tribal member homes are located along the roadways or clustered at historic centers and in tribal housing enclaves. Non-Lummi residential properties are concentrated at Sandy Point and along the eastern peninsula shoreline.

By 2025, transportation plans include completion and upgrade of Lummi Shore Road, construction of new roads on the interior of the reservation, safety improvements on existing roadways, improved bus service and new sidewalks, bicycle paths and recreational trails. Population is expected to triple, dictating an increased emphasis on non-motorized facilities such as sidewalks, pathways, and recreational trails.

Example of Lummi Transit Routes from the 2007 Lummi Nation Transportation Plan

In 2006, Lummi Nation Transportation/Planning Department, in cooperation with the Whatcom Transit Authority, established a fixed route bus route on the Lummi Reservation. The route provides Lummi residents with access to major employment sites such as the Silver Reef Casino, the Tribal Center, and Northwest Indian College. The Lummi Transit serves parts of the reservation where the WTA bus does not provide service and links residents to the clinic and service centers. On-demand service is available on weekends.



Annual ridership has increased an average of 37.6% each year since inception. In 2009, Lummi Transit served an average of 3,454 passengers per month. By the end of 2010, a projected 57,000 annual ridership is expected.

To meet increased demand, Lummi Transit plans to expand service hours on weekends and add a second bus run to the previously unserved Red River neighborhood and Ferndale. Negotiations for a new interlocal agreement with WTA will allow future non-stop service from the Lummi Reservation to the main retail center in downtown Ferndale.

Nooksack Tribe

The Nooksack Tribal center is located near Deming, Washington, on the banks of the Nooksack River near the confluence of the south fork and the main stem. Nooksack lands consist of several separate plots near the Mt. Baker foothills area in Whatcom County. Historically, the Nooksack peoples occupied a much larger land area: from the areas now known as Skagit County to British Columbia to areas east of the Cascade Mountains. The Nooksack developed an extensive in-land trading network and were skillful river canoe travelers.

The Nooksack Tribal center offers health and human services to tribal members. Located in and around the center are an elementary school, a medical and dental clinic, a Head Start program for pre-school children, and administrative offices. Because the tribal lands are scattered and separated around the County, transport for tribal members who live far from the tribal center can be a barrier to access the services.

Nooksack Tribal headquarters are located near Deming, near the confluence of the Nooksack River South Fork and Main Stem.

Since 1994, The Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) Tribal Outreach and Assistance Program has successfully linked American Indian Elders with services they need. Serving the Lummi and Nooksack, this program assures access to elders and provides technical assistance for programs on and off the reservations. Focused outreach uses culturally appropriate materials and a culturally relevant approach to make services understandable and effective for older Indians.

Support for tribal caregivers, especially those who provide kinship care (care for young children or grandchildren) is an important part of the program, particularly because of the higher incidence of kinship care in Indian Country. NWRC received special recognition statewide for best practices in its kinship caregiver program. Transportation can be a barrier for non-parent relatives caring for low-income children or who have special needs because many social services are limited to parents, not other relatives. The Kinship Care support program was established in 2004 to address these types of issues.

Case Study: Deming Library Access for Nooksack Tribe Head Start

The Nooksack Elementary School and Head Start programs use the resources of the Deming Public Library, located across the street from the tribal center. The street is a state highway, SR542. The library offers weekly story-telling sessions and other educational activities oriented toward teaching children how to use the library resources. The distance between the tribal center and the library is 50m (150 ft). The tribe transports the children in a school bus once a week for library visits.

The Nooksack children's human services transportation challenge is either to limit their access to educational resources at the library (in order to stay away from traffic), or to walk across the highway to access the library and its educational programs. Head Start programs in other parts of Whatcom County have cut funding for transit vans in recent years.

State Route 542 has paved shoulders and additional lanes for safety for turning vehicles near the Nooksack Tribal Head Start offices.

During the times that the school bus is not operating, children and adults (both tribal members and Deming residents) walk the short distance to the library, crossing the highway. State Route 542 does not have marked crosswalks in the Deming tribal and commercial center.

Active Involvement of Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

WSDOT investigated the Deming location in 2008 and found that best practices in traffic management do not support installation of a pedestrian island, crossing light or other facility with the conditions present at this location. A significant consideration is the presence of turn lane and driveway into the Casino. The Nooksack Tribe re-constructed the Casino driveway in 2000. WSDOT engineers identified some design considerations for the driveway and near-by side streets that affect pedestrian crossing.

- A conventional crosswalk is not feasible because the necessary refuge median would conflict with turning movements into the Nooksack Casino and commercial center. The use of other mid-block crossing technologies (i.e., pedestrian bridge or tunnel) must be warranted by volume of pedestrian usage.

- WSDOT observed and counted pedestrians crossing the highway on one afternoon in fall 2008 when school was in session. The number of pedestrian crossings did not meet the minimum required to warrant an intervention. Several adult and child pedestrians crossed the highway during the observation period.

Based on the WSDOT 2008 findings, the existing facilities are sufficient for pedestrians at this location. WSDOT continues to work with the community to focus attention on other opportunities for coordinated human services transportation.

WSDOT engineers discussed the feasibility of construction of a pedestrian island or crossing lights or other facilities (e.g., elevated pedestrian bridge) to assist children crossing to the library from the schools. Engineers determined that the number of people walking across the highway does not meet the minimum required to warrant a constructed or signed facility. Installation of crosswalks or other crossing facilities and signage for School Zones on state highways in unincorporated areas (i.e., not within cities) is not standard practice in Washington. Kendall Elementary School is an additional example in Whatcom County of an elementary school on a state highway (547) where School Zone signage is not posted.

People with Low Income

People whose annual household income is at or near the poverty line qualify for some types of public assistance to meet basic needs. The poverty line is an income level lower than the amount needed to pay for basic services such as food, housing, transportation, and medical care. Each year, the federal Department of Health and Human Services calculates and sets a poverty income level, taking into account current economic conditions. The calculation assumes that housing costs are about 14% of the household budget.

In 2010, the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) low income level for a family of four in Bellingham was $32,200, that is, half the median income. Some human services are available to individuals or families whose income is higher than the official low income threshold. For example, Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access reports that individuals can qualify for assistance through the Behaviorial Health Program with an income up to 250% of the Federal poverty level or lower.

Federal poverty thresholds are set every year by the Census Bureau and vary by size of family and ages of family members. A high poverty rate is both a cause and a consequence of poor economic conditions.

- *WhatcomCoalition for Healthy Communities*

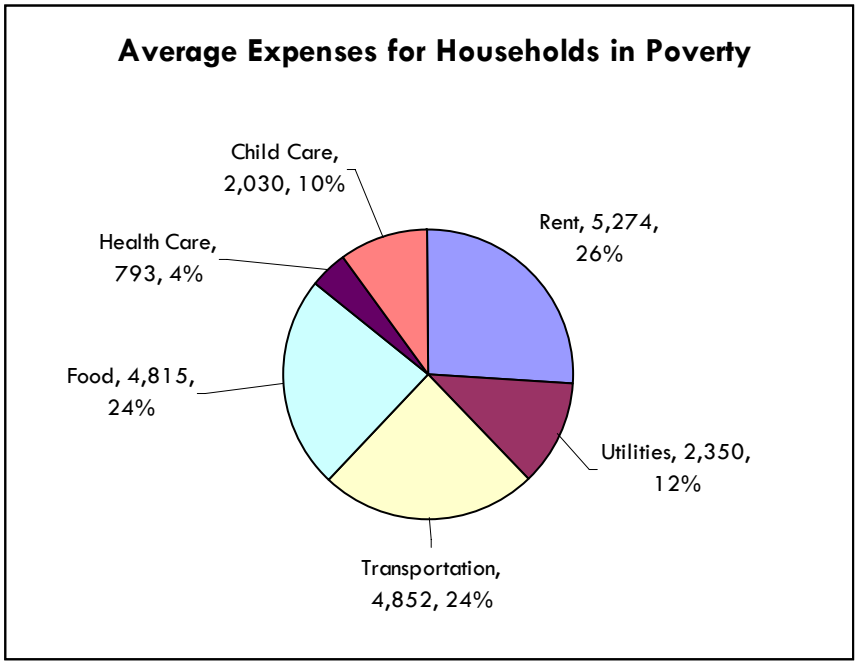
The federal poverty line assumes housing costs are approximately 14% of a typical household budget.

- *Unicef 2002*

Each year, people of all ages and backgrounds find themselves without enough income to make ends meet. When these life circumstances are persistent, poverty results. A well-off person may become a low-income person after a bankruptcy, an uninsured health condition, loss of house or income from divorce, substance abuse, domestic violence, job loss, long-term disability or other events. For at least 4,000 Whatcom County residents annually, these challenges result in homelessness, according to the 2008 *Whatcom County 10 year Plan to End Homelessness*. Thousands of other Whatcom County residents do not fit the technical definition of homelessness because they are sharing housing with family or friends. These familes have low income and struggle to pay for basic needs. WorkSource reports some instances of an employer offering a job to a qualified individual who has had to decline due to lack of transportation. In some cases, income from as little as three months' employment could have afforded the person sufficient resources to pay for transportation. Facilitated ridesharing or bridge transit funding for these cases could be a useful employment access transportation project.

Average household expenses for a family of four living on a poverty-level income were published in the Catholic Campaign for Human Development's publication Poverty USA, 2004. Transportation constitutes a higher proportion of the budget than food and nearly equals rent.

Source: Bellingham Consolidated Strategic Plan 2008-2012, Housing



Services for individuals or families living on a low income may include:

- free or reduced price meals
- debit cards for purchasing of food (Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, formerly called food stamps)
- free or reduced price medical or dental care
- vocational training
- community voice mail
- free or reduced price child care or early learning programs
- transit passes or fare tokens

The goal of human services for people with low income is to assist them with skills, training, and support necessary for securing employment and stable, adequate income. Services address the circumstances that contribute to low income. Some of the services to which low income persons may need to travel are shown in the chart, correlated with samples of the types of circumstances that might be associated with these services.

Some Services That Address Low Income Circumstances

Services	Criminal Justice	Loss of income or home	Domestic Violence shelter	Family care (elders, children)	Injury or Disability
Boys and Girls Clubs				x	
Vocational Services	x	x			x
Catholic Community Services				x	x
Dept. Social & Health Svcs.	x		x	x	
Early Learning/Head Start				x	

Services	Criminal Justice	Loss of income or home	Domestic Violence shelter	Family care (elders, children)	Injury or Disability
Interfaith Clinic		x	x	x	x
Community Land Trust		x			
Dept. of Corrections	x				
Court/Parole Officer	x				
Mission/Emergency Shelter		x	x		
Veterans		x			x
Alliance for Healthcare Access				x	x
Council on Aging				x	
Housing or self-help homes	x	x	x	x	x
Financial literacy class		x	x		
WorkSource	x	x			x
Food Banks		x	x	x	
Substance Abuse treatment	x			x	
Clothing/School supplies		x	x	x	
Library		x		x	
Childcare		x	x	x	
Case managers	x	x	x	x	x
Adult Day Health				x	x
Day labor employment		x			
Medicaid/Medicare			x	x	x
Eviction prevention		x	x	x	

It is clear from the chart that people with low income need transportation to many locations for different services, perhaps even more daily travel than those with higher income levels.

The cost of transportation to a medical appointment can be affected by factors unrelated to the medical care and unrelated to transportation. For example, a single parent with three toddlers cannot leave the toddlers unattended while going to the doctor. A taxi trip to a Medicaid appointment, if paid for by Medicaid Brokerage, cannot transport people other than the patient in that taxi, per federal policy. If the parent cannot afford childcare for the toddlers, the parent may have to skip needed treatments. Delay in addressing a medical condition may lead to relying on public assistance for a longer period of time before he or she can regain work and adequate income.

When it is not possible for the parent to bring children along, the cost of paying for a sitter becomes part of the transportation equation. A trip that takes a longer time increases the cost of childcare (for example, paratransit or bus routes with low frequency service). Multiple bus transfers can be physically taxing when traveling with supplies, children, and strollers.

Case Study: Domestic Violence Survivor

Darlene (ficticious name) escaped from a violent partner with her two children aged 3 and 5. While she was living in the shelter for survivors of domestic violence, she worked on several goals:

- Counseling and medical care for the effects of the violence (adult and children)
- Attending support groups or classes for domestic violence awareness
- Apply for TANF, Workfirst, food stamps, other assistance (if qualified)
- Re-training for future employment
- Getting stable child care for her children, enrolling 5 yr old in school
- Applying for and gaining stable employment
- Transitioning to stable, safe, affordable housing
- Legal and criminal court processes related to the domestic violence

The table below shows the distances from Darlene's Bellingham shelter to the service centers to which she traveled regularly (daily, weekly, or monthly). Travel time indicates the total estimated amount of time for Darlene to walk to the bus stop, ride the bus, and then walk to the destination.

Sample Destinations	**Frequency**	**Distance** (both ways), **Travel time** (bus & walk)
Food Bank	weekly	4 miles, 2 hrs.
Department of Social and Health Services office	monthly	8 miles, 3 hrs.
Workfirst case worker	monthly	8 miles, 3 hrs.
Workfirst classes at Community College	daily	8 miles, 2 ½ hrs
County Courthouse	monthly	4 miles, 2 hrs.
Public Defender or law office	various	4 miles, 2 hrs.
Childcare center	daily	3 ½ miles, 2 hrs
Elementary School	varies	varies*
Family Services Center (e.g., counseling)	weekly	4 miles, 2 hrs.
Discount grocery store(s)	weekly	9 miles, 4 hrs.
Al-Anon or other support group(s)	weekly	within shelter
Interfaith Medical clinic	varies	4 miles, 2 hrs
Financial Literacy or other classes	weekly	4 miles, 2 hrs.

*If it is in the child's best interest, school districts transport children to their "original" school, which may be in a different county or in a different district, depending on whether the family could be placed in a shelter near or far from their original home.

Travel times to the sample destinations are estimated based on a shelter location where bus service operates once per hour during week days. Travel times would be shorter for those living in the downtown core or along high-frequency bus routes (called "GO lines"). Travel times can double for a person living in a rural area or in cities with low frequency bus service (e.g., Sumas or Blaine).

Shelters offer training on how to re-establish credit, budget, manage expenses, and save. Some trainings give specific guidance on buying a car. According to the Whatcom Educational Credit Union, buying a car too soon unbalances a newly established budget, returning a low income person back into debt. The instructor reported several examples of a low income family "gifted" with a car by a well-intentioned family member finding that the hidden costs of the car's maintenance, registration, insurance, fuel, and parking, overwhelm and derail budget plans.

The lesson appears to be that even if a private car is a good long term solution for low income person's transportation needs, there is a period of months or years while re-establishing financial strength during which that person or family cannot afford to own and operate a private car. During that period, a variety of transportation options (walking, bicycling, transit, ride-share, etc.) are necessary for full access to human services and life activities.

People with low income sometimes walk or bicycle because it can be less expensive. But they are more likely not to have health insurance or other resources. Safety is a priority because they are less able to afford medical treatment and the risk of job loss. Where roads have high traffic but no sidewalks, shoulders, or trails, a low-income person may feel exposed to increased risk while walking or biking. The cost of protective equipment (lights, reflective clothing, helmets, secure storage, etc.) can be a barrier.

The 2007 homeless population is as diverse as the larger community population: they are old and young, male and female, unaccompanied individuals, and families. Of those counted this year:

- 72% of homeless households include only one person
- 26% of homeless households are unsheltered
- There were 171 families with children; the median family size is 3 persons
- 78% of homeless families with children are single-parent families (92% female parent)

-- Whatcom 10 Year Plan To End Homelessness

EACH project funding established a program in 2008 to help low income people and families learn how to use a bicycle for transportation. After completion of the three-session training, the "everybodyBIKE Earn-a-Bike" program assists in providing bicycles for transportation use.

School Children

"Youth" conjures up images of health and energy, but youngsters fit the defininition of people with special needs in transportation: most children cannot provide for their own transportation due to age. About half of the special needs travelers in Whatcom County are children. Children need to travel to many of the same destinations as adults: shops, events, special classes, sports practice, friends' houses, jobs, and more.

Until the late 1970s, most children walked or bicycled for transportation regularly in the U.S. They still do in most other countries, but much less so in the U.S. A study of three generations of 9-year-olds in the U.S. found that by 1990, the radius around

the home in which children were allowed to play had shrunk to a ninth of what it had been in 1970. Physical activity is important for healthy child development and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend walking and bicycling for transportation as daily physical activity for all ages.

Since 2005, federal and state-funded programs have encouraged walking to school through supervised walking groups called "Walking School Buses." Safe Routes to School education, enforcement and engineering efforts may increase the proportion of child trips made by walking. Parental and community acceptance of walking as appropriate transportation for children will hinge on accessible and continuous sidewalks, safe crossing facilities at intersections, and enforcement emphasis that favors pedestrian safety.

Bicycle safety education and parent-led "bike trains" or "walking school buses" provide both transportation and physical activity.

School bus service provides some assistance for school children during the school year for attendance during regular school hours. But after school activities are not part of the school bus service schedule. Students and their families benefit from access to the school grounds during evening, summer, weekends, and other times when regular classes are not in session.

Coordinated transportation planning should include provision for safe routes to walk or bike within one mile of each school. Where traffic hazards exist within the one-mile radius, human services transportation should address the hazards with a goal to facilitate walking or cycling to school (rather than hazard bussing as an open-ended solution). For students living outside the one-mile walk radius, school bus transportation is part of the range of human services transportation modes.

School bus transportation

The cost of school bus equipment and operations is significant for every school district. In 2008, 3% of the Bellingham School District annual budget went to busing, equivalent to the entire vocational education budget. State funds paid for about half the cost, the remaining $970,000 came from cuts to instructional programs. Bellingham identified some school bus transportation-related expenditures to consider cutting to address the 2009 budget shortfall. The school board reports that a comprehensive transportation study is required before changes to the school bus system can be implemented. Funding for such a study could be an appropriate EACH grant project.

Nationwide, the annual amount spent for school bus transportation exceeds the expenditures of all public transit agencies combined. Coordination between public transit and school buses seems like an opportunity for mutual cost savings. The Federal Transit Administration commissioned a Transportation Research Board Report

(TCRP Report 56) in 1999 that documented transit and school bus cooperation projects nationwide. In spite of many barriers -- legislative, policy, funding, operations, union contracts, attitudes – thirteen communities succeeded in some degree of coordination. According to the Bellingham school district, coordination with WTA for maintenance facilities or fuel purchases could potentially be evaluated at some future time to determine whether cost savings would result. A significant barrier is the cost of paying school district and WTA staff to meet together regularly over time to define and negotiate the terms of coordination. This type of planning could be an appropriate project for EACH funding.

Safe Routes to School Case Study

Carl Cozier Elementary School provided hazard bussing to students living 3/4 mile from the school along a section of Fraser Street without sidewalks. Apartments in this area of Fraser Street house several young families of modest means. In 2010, the City of Bellingham constructed sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and a trail boardwalk along Fraser Street. The mayor, superintendent, school principal and the neighborhood association hosted a special ribbon-cutting event to begin the school year celebrating walking to school. The school district estimates an annual savings of more than $20,000 that formerly was spent on hazard bussing.

Car-free Residents

Some Whatcom County residents choose not to own or use a private car, or to reduce their use of a private car, for reasons other than income, age, or ability. Reasons might include:

- reducing traffic congestion
- reducing air and water pollution
- reducing energy consumption
- observing religious customs
- traveling from an event where alcohol is served
- suspension of license due to a previous driving infraction
- increasing physical activity
- increasing social interaction

Since 2008, the number of people interested in reducing car use has increased due to the high cost of petroleum, increased enforcement against driving while intoxicated, and heightened publicity about non-car options. In the 1990s, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) was increasing at 4% per year (while population growth was half that). In 2008, VMT declined 0.5% nationwide, and in Bellingham, VMT declined 4% from 2007 to 2009.

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT) declined in 2008 (-0.5%) and remained steady in 2009 (0.2%). Crash rates fall when VMT ralls: fatal crashes in 2008 and 2009 declined more than 8% each year to the lowest level since 1954.

Around Washington State, various coordinated transportation programs, called "Mobility Management," help people make daily trips without driving. Mobility Management programs ease highway traffic congestion during commute times, while helping people with disabilities access needed services. In Whatcom County, Whatcom Smart Trips is the mobility management program that assists and rewards people of all ability levels to make more of their daily trips by sharing rides, riding the bus, walking or cycling. Ride-share and ride-match programs, education, publicity, events, and advocacy for trails and sidewalks are part of a program to provide connectivity to bus routes and destinations for people of all abilities.

In 2009, the EACH Travel Training program published the North Sound Connections guide and, in partnership with the North Sound Connecting Communities project, launched the North Sound Connections website (www.NorthSoundConnections.com). The guide features schedules for regional public and private transportation providers in a four county area, along with contact information, trip planning tips, and a map. The website offers a basic on-line trip planning service: the traveler enters her origin and destination points, and the website provides a list of transportation providers and links to schedules for that trip. In the future, when transit schedules on-line are available in compatible, linkable digital formats, a more detailed regional trip planner will be possible. Seniors traveling to Seattle area medical centers use information from North Sound Connections to avoid the drive.

Summary

Residents with special needs live throughout Whatcom County often in dispersed locations. Clusters of low income housing and senior assisted living centers can be identified, but an equally large proportion of people with special needs live independently. School children, elderly non-drivers, and job-seekers are some examples of people whose homes could be far from service providers but who need access to school, medical appointments, or employment, or training. Transportation assistance to and from dispersed rural areas may require site-specific solutions, but some overall policies that coordinate transportation planning generally will help special needs populations.

Chapter 5

Existing Transportation Services

Public roads, transit buses, private shuttles, ferries and rail are some of the transportation services that serve all residents of Whatcom County, including people with special needs. Paratransit (also called Specialized Transportation), Medicaid brokerage transport services, volunteer driver programs, special event vans, and school buses are examples of services that specifically assist people with special needs. This chapter describes the main types of public and private services available.

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is the County's public transportation provider, operating a variety of bus and van services.

Fixed route bus service: WTA operates 36 routes served by large, conventional buses, serving regular stops on a published schedule. These routes serve specific corridors and stops are marked by posted signs. The fare is $1.00 per ride for the general public and $0.50 for those with a reduced fare card or over 65 years of age. Children under 8 years of age and seniors over 75 may ride free of charge.

Specialized bus service: Smaller van-type buses offer door-to-door service for people who qualify through an eligibility process. The service is available within a ¼ mile area of the fixed route corridors during regular service hours. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides for specialized transportation service within this type of ¼ mile corridor.

Flex routes: Specific rural routes (for example, 71X and 72X) offer the option for a passenger to request the bus to deviate slightly from the established route, within a designated zone. This service helps people to use the regular bus, and helps those with mobility impairments who can't otherwise get to the bus stop. When no one has pre-requested a deviation to the route, the bus travels as a Fixed Route bus.

Safety Net Service: In areas of the County not served by other WTA services, the Safety Net offers a minimum service on designated days of the week. The service is available to all residents by calling and requesting a ride, but it is only available on assigned days of the week for each area. While the pick up and drop-off is door-to-door, timing may be problematic, requiring a "window" of up to two hours within which the ride could arrive.

Van-pool Service: For groups coming from and going to a similar destination, Van Pools offer a subscription service using volunteer drivers. WTA supplies and maintains the van. The service is self-sustaining with the cost paid by the subscribing users. The

program is popular. In July 2008, a waiting list of nine groups had submitted requests for Van Pool vehicles.

Community Use Van: From 2000 to 2006, WTA-supplied and maintained vans assigned to community groups for use in areas outside the fixed route service. Volunteer drivers completed a training and provided limited service according to the needs of the local community. These vans acted as collectors to bring riders to fixed route stations or other destinations not served by the WTA. Point Roberts, Lummi Island, a treatment center in north Lake Whatcom, and Lummi Nation operated vans. WTA has helped these groups to find other solutions since termination of the program

County Connector Bus: Pilot project fixed-route bus between Skagit and Whatcom Counties. Service is provided through a partnership between the two agencies and is dependent on funding from a state grant.

Lummi Nation Transit Provides deviated fixed route transportation service to Lummi Reservation residents.

Lummi Transit Fixed Route Provides weekday service from 6:20 am to 8:14 pm and weekend service from 8:13 am to 6:00 pm. Lummi Transit is fare-free and provides transportation primarily to residents in the southern end of the reservation to connect them to government offices, stores, schools, clinics, and employment centers.

Lummi Transit's two 25 passenger buses and one 14 passenger bus operate on a fixed-route as shown on the map. The route connects with WTA for travel to Bellingham and other areas in Whatcom County. Lummi Transit transports patients off-reservation to access the regional Methadone treatment clinic and to access off-reservation tribal clinics. Ridership demand for these medical transport services exceeds capacity on the existing equipment.

In 2006, Lummi Transit served 16,560 passengers with an average of 1,380 passengers per month. By 2009, total ridership jumped to 41,449 with an average of 3,454 passengers per month. This ridership increase amounted to a 37.6% average annual increase. Lummi Transit estimates it will serve 57,000 passengers by December 2010, a 37.6% annual increase.

Ridership surveys show increased demand for expanded hours on weekends and a second bus route to serve the Red River neighborhood, at the northern end of the reservation, and Ferndale. Completion of an interlocal agreement with WTA is expected to result in non-stop Lummi Transit service from the Reservation to Ferndale's commercial center. Ridership counts on the test run, community surveys, and future funding will determine the permanency of the expanded route.

Amtrak Regularly scheduled regional passenger rail service connecting cities in the state, nationally, and internationally. Rail service is supplemented by Thru-way Bus coach services. Discounted, Multi-ride tickets available.

Whatcom Chief Ferry Regularly scheduled daily ferry service connecting Lummi Reservation and Lummi Island. Operated by Whatcom County Public Works, the ferry transports motor vehicles, and walking and bicycling passengers.

Private Transportation Businesses offering transit or shuttle services:

Airporter Shuttle/BellAir Charters: Daily scheduled bus service connecting to SeaTac Airport and intermediate points. The Shuttle serves Blaine (by reservation only); Birch Bay, Lynden, Ferndale and Bellingham, providing 11 roundtrips each day. Charter and contracted services are also provided by special arrangement. Within Whatcom County, the Bellair Baker Shuttle offers service to the Ski area on a seasonal basis. Recent new services include a Thanksgiving Shuttle service from Western Washington University to the Bellevue area in King County and back.

Taxi and Limousine Services: Individual car and van service customized for each trip; some social services provide taxi vouchers or arrange taxi transportation for eligible medical patients where applicable public transportation services are not available. Yellow Cab and Yellow Van taxi companies offer a full-time call center and a range of services for older riders. A family member can create a personal account for an older relative and add money as needed. Yellow Van's five wheelchair accessible vans comprise the largest fleet of all taxi services in the northPuget Sound region. A premium fee ($45 per ride, in 2009) is added to the standard taxi fare for each use of the wheelchair service.

Medicaid Brokerage Statewide, NWRC is recognized among its sister agencies as having a highly cost-efficient system for allocation of transportation funds.

Intercity Bus: Regularly scheduled regional bus service connecting to major cities is provided by the Greyhound company and by Quick Shuttle. Until the 1970s, this type of carrier was required to serve cities within and between counties.

Private Charter Coach: Several private corporations, such as Hesselgrave, casinos, and tour companies offer contracted service for events, charters or to serve client companies.

Victoria San Juan Cruises Provides seasonal passenger-only ferry service from Bellingham to Victoria B.C. and to San Juan Island County. (Also called "San Juan Commuter")

Charter Airlines Charter flights can be arranged to and from Bellingham International Airport. Island Air is based in Friday Harbor, San Juan County. St. Joseph Hospital reports a significant number of residents of San Juan County who travel to Bellingham for medical care.

Other services:

School Bus Services: Each of Whatcom County's eight public school districts provide bus service to bring students to and from regularly scheduled classes. Some schools offer additional bus service to serve students participating in extra-curricular activities. School Districts are required to provide bus service outside of their district to homeless students who have been relocated to a shelter far from their "home" school. This pupil transportation need has increased in recent years and has created additional costs. Where possible, School Districts have collaborated with each other to share the transportation responsibilities for homeless students.

Private Schools: Of the 28 private schools in Whatcom County, only five provide bus or van shuttle services. Lynden Christian School is the largest with over 1,000 students, providing daily with a fleet of ten buses. Private schools offer specialized programs or instructional methods that can result in students traveling several miles each way.

Event/Community Group bus or van service: Many places of worship, summer camps, and assisted living residences operate van or bus service to assist members to attend weekly services and events. Some of these van services are operated on a volunteer basis and others are operated by employee drivers. Some hotels and casinos operate charter or shuttle services. Rental companies offer mini-vans and shuttle buses to organizations with appropriate insurance for operating such vehicles.

VFW VA Hospital Shuttle: The local Veterans' group offers a week-day shuttle service for Seattle-area hospital appointments for veterans. The van is purchased through fundraising by VFW volunteers, and is not wheel-chair accessible. Insurance and maintenance are paid for by the Veterans Administration, the drivers are unpaid volunteers. Veterans' medical care and access was identified as a priority statewide in 2009.

Taxi Vouchers: DSHS has in the past provided a limited number of taxi vouchers in special cases to assist a person with a new job until she or he can make other arrangements. Whatcom Yellow Cab serves a large volume of Medicaid taxi trips each day, receiving a list of trips from the hospital and other service providers the day before trips are scheduled. Northwest Regional Council has a good system in place to ensure that those who can, use the bus, instead of taxis.

Gasoline Vouchers: The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) Medicaid Services Coordinator provide a limited amount of vouchers to purchase automobile fuel. People can use these to reimburse colleagues with whom they carpool. (This service was more commonly used prior to the expansion of WTA service to Kendall and Lummi Nation areas).

Delivery Services:

DSHS sends staff to remote site offices on a regular basis to serve residents who cannot access the Bellingham office. Some vendors offer delivery of materials or purchases for a fee, or if a minimum order value is reached. Two grocery stores and two specialty food delivery services offer home delivery of groceries for a fee.

Whatcom Volunteer Center "CHORE" program and the non-profit Love, INC., offer volunteer drivers for transportation or for delivery for people with special needs.

RideMatch Service: Internet-based car-pool match service for commute trips. Individuals register and make contacts for sharing commute trips or for special events. The website "Craig's List" offers an informal ride-share program and Western Washington University students can access a ride-share program at through the university website.

Medical Transport: Private non-emergency ambulance services such as Cascade Ambulance Service and Rural Metro transport people to local or distant hospitals and medical centers.

Car Share or Rental Services Private rental businesses offer short term use of motor vehicles for those who cannot afford to or choose not to own a car. Car Share services such as Zip Car operate on a membership basis with fees based on hourly use. In 2010, there was no local car share service operating in Whatcom County.

PediCab Service Short distance non-motorized transport service for special events or in downtown areas. A private business has operated this service in Bellingham from 2003 to 2009. A similar service is scheduled to resume in 2011.

Mobility Management: Special needs populations benefit from community-wide education programs and marketing to increase awareness of transportation options. Whatcom Smart Trips educates people of all ability levels through marketing and promotion of walking, taking the bus, sharing a ride, and bicycling to reduce car trips. Participants benefit from the message that walking, bicycling, riding the bus, and sharing rides is a popular and positive way for everyone to travel, not just those with special needs. Discounts, prizes, reduced-rate bus passes, emergency ride home, and other incentives inspire community members to use the variety of transportation available. Appendix 4 includes a detailed description of the Whatcom Smart Trips program.

Whatcom Smart Trips is the mobility management program in Whatcom County. Posters and ads like this example educate and encourage everyone about transportation options.

Low Income Children's Bicycle Transportation: A non-profit social services bicycle shop located in a low-income neighborhood teaches children bicycle riding skills and maintenance through hands-on, supervised instruction. The children may earn a bicycle through work and by paying a modest sum. Supervised bicycle rides teach bicycle traffic skills and an understanding of bike and trail routes for transportation. The project addresses several special needs issues in one project: transportation, job skills-training, healthy physical activity, and confidence building. With bicycle transportation skills and equipment, the children access libraries, after-school programs, community events, and other services that are not available to those relying on an adult to transport or accompany them.

Chapter 6

Transportation Service Gaps

People with special needs living in rural areas report many service gaps for transportation, often citing lower frequency bus service. If public bus service in rural areas with low population density were offered frequently enough to meet all the needs of special needs residents, it would be costly. In spring, 2010, a wide majority of rural residents voted against funding public transit at current service levels. Elected officials determine that it is not cost effective for a public transit service to run frequent bus service where there are few riders, just as road widening is too expensive for every low-traffic road. Safety Net and Specialized service can meet some of the needs in low-ridership areas.

Recognizing the high cost of building and operating transportation services, stakeholders note that the costs of housing, human services and transportation are intertwined. Coordinated transportation will be more sustainable if it includes efforts to address the economic factors that encourage social service recipients to choose inexpensive housing in remote locations. When special needs residents move to rural areas, their lower housing cost shifts significant transportation costs for human services onto agencies or the public. Cost of delivering social services to remote locations is higher, as is the cost of offering transit service to low-density areas.

Other innovations offer some promise for increasing connectivity while remaining cost effective. The EACH Stakeholder Group discussed the following potential innovations:

- Contracted shuttle service from small rural towns (e.g., Sumas) to larger rural cities (e.g., Lynden). Service providers could be private business (e.g., Taxi or Airporter) or non-profit (e.g., church or volunteer program). Service would operate when and where WTA bus is not available.
- Agencies could contract with school bus drivers to provide mid-day rides for special needs trips. This approach works to supplement the income of school bus drivers who would otherwise have un-paid mid-day time when they are not driving the school bus.

Participating human service agencies provided data on trip origination and destination points for those utilizing agency services. The data was then compared with existing public bus fixed route service to determine where some gaps in service may exist. WTA service area map for 2008 is shown in the Appendix. WTA information on the location of specialized transit trips does not show strong concentrations of trip origin and destination points: most trips are not concentrated in particular areas. Social services and WTA have limited ability to share information about specialized trips, due to privacy concerns.

Population growth data and anonymized specialized transit trip data suggest that circulator shuttle connections among the smaller cities could serve a number of special needs trips. Stakeholders suggest a shuttle route connecting Kendall, Sumas, Everson and Lynden on a 90-minute schedule during week days could serve youth, seniors, and medical

human services trips. Connection to Lynden allows access to the WTA fixed-route bus to Bellingham and to commercial and medical services in Lynden. A pilot project operated by a private company is included in the priority project list as a method to determine demand, build ridership, and measure feasibility for larger scale implementation.

A second area for potential shuttle service could include Cherry Point, Birch Bay, Blaine, Ferndale, and (depending on Lummi Transit service plans) Lummi Nation.

These smaller cities are currently served only by bus routes that travel to and from the central hub of Bellingham. The current WTA "hub and spoke" design does not offer connection between the "spokes," and the low ridership projections in rural cities makes it cost prohibitive for WTA to begin a rural circulator route. A private shuttle could build ridership to levels necessary for WTA participation. Rural residents may ride the bus if service is provided in the currently unserved areas, if the example of the Lummi Transit program is a guide: ridership there grew 30% per year.

WTA's priority is to serve the most populous corridors by providing service along routes that radiate out from the highest population area. This system of "hub" and "spokes" is cost effective in serving the most passengers per mile of bus travel. Regular frequent service between "spokes," i.e., the rural towns and small cities in the table above, is not cost effective because the population density is low. Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan policies emphasize maintaining low population in the agricultural and forestry areas. Additional research is needed to determine cost effective approaches that meet land use planning goals while providing for special needs transportation in these areas.

Rural residential development is characterized by houses distant from each other and from services. Rurual roads and transit meet minimum standards, but funding for amenities like sidewalks or frequent bus service may not be justified by the tax-base.

Transportation Needs

To serve the employment access and medical and human service needs with an effective coordinated transportation system, EACH Stakeholders identified the following gaps:

- Night, weekend, and holiday public transportation service – throughout the County and connecting to other counties
- Connecting the "spokes" – between small cities and rural residential centers (for example, a circulator among Sumas, Nooksack, Everson, and Lynden; or Lummi Transit connections to Ferndale)
- Rural service more than the designated two Safety Net days per week
- Wheelchair-accessible intercity public transit and medical shuttles to out-of-county services (for example, Seattle area hospitals or transportation hubs)
- Sidewalks or trails connecting human services centers to transit stops and commercial or residential destinations within ¼ mile
- Sidewalks or trails connecting rural commercial centers to residences within ¼ mile

- Employee and visitor transportation to Mt. Baker Ski Area and National Forest

A detailed list of projects addressing these gaps is listed in priority order in the Priority Project List, Chapter 10.

Duplications of service that were identified include the following:

- Veterans Medical shuttle (daily to Seattle) and Lummi Nation medical shuttle (daily to Everett) and volunteer drivers (periodically driving seniors to Seattle area medical specialists)
- Daily or weekly delivery of Meals-on-Wheels to rural locations; Food Bank delivers to rural locations; some rural residents travel to Bellingham Food Bank
- School bus service in some cases travels similar routes and times as public bus; children eligible for school bus are sometimes driven to school by parents
- Duplicated transportation provided by separate vehicles for different patients from and to identical locations at the same time, a situation created by policies of different funding organizations that prohibit combining trips.
- Cost of long-distance taxi service in remote rural areas (where circulator or shuttle services could provide a wider range of service for lower cost)
- Cost of community group van ownership and maintenance (such as places of worship, veterans groups, group homes, or charities) when the vans are used a small portion of the year
- Private shuttle services for recreation sites such as casinos or resorts

Emergency Management

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Employment hosted a community forum in Lynden in November, 2009. The Lynden Fire District Chief described the training and planning process for addressing the needs of people with disabilities during emergencies. Fire fighters are trained to assist people who use wheelchairs in evacuating buildings during emergencies. There are gaps in training for some special needs transportation issues in emergencies such as: communicating with people who have hearing impairments or developmental disabilities, or whose language is other than English.

Whatcom County Department of Emergency Management plans for and coordinates response for emergencies throughout Whatcom County and all its cities except Bellingham. The Bellingham Department of Emergency Management coordinates emergency response within city limits and publishes the City of Bellingham Emergency Management Plan. Both Whatcom and Bellingham emergency plans acknowledge the need for coordination of transportation during emergencies and both have established agreements with WTA for emergency use of transit vehicles and drivers, if needed. A specific methodology for addressing people with special needs is not included. Neither emergency management department has communicated with the school districts about potential use of school buses for emergency evacuation. The types of floods, earthquakes, or hurricanes for which such time-sensitive evaculation would be necessary are not likely to occur in this region, according to one emergency management staffer.

A project to assist the Emergency Management staff in defining in greater detail the methods, agreements, and preparations for emergency special needs transportation may be an appropriate EACH grant proposal.

Chapter 7

Common Origination Points

In cities or towns where there are higher general residential densities, EACH stakeholders identified clusters of housing where special needs populations constitute a higher percentage than average. In those locations, coordinated transportation may result in solutions that serve more people for a lower cost per traveler. Below are some of the areas or towns where EACH stakeholders identified potential clusters of residences using special needs transportation:

Paradise Lakes and Peaceful Valley Residential Area, located two miles north of Kendall Elementary School on the Kendall-Sumas Road, state route 547. Paradise Lakes is home to about 4,000 residents, of whom about 70% meet the definition of special needs residents for income or age reasons. Paradise Lakes is an unincorporated residential area in a part of the county mainly zoned for forestry. Locally available services in Paradise Lakes are limited to regular daily bus service to Bellingham. The residential area is two miles from the elementary school, library, and store. The two-mile distance is a barrier for school and playground access for children and other special needs travelers because there is no sidewalk or trail along the highway. The City of Sumas is about 8 miles northwest of Paradise Lakes and is the closest employment and service center. There is no regular bus service between Paradise Lakes and Sumas.

The Paradise Lakes and Peaceful Valley residential area is located in the Mt. Baker Foothills.

Lummi Nation, located 8 miles west of Bellingham and 6 miles south of Ferndale has a population of about 4,200. Facilities and employers on the Lummi Nation include the Silver Reef Casino, Northwest Indian College, the Lummi Nation School, elder housing, farms, and tribal government offices. Regular daily WTA and Lummi Transit bus routes serve travelers on the reservation to get to services and jobs on the reservation. Residents of Lummi Nation travel to Ferndale for many services, and Lummi Transit proposes expanded bus service there.

Nooksack Tribe. Registered tribal members live on lands dispersed throughout eastern Whatcom County foothills. The tribal offices, social services, and elementary school are located in Deming, along with the Nooksack Casino.

East County Foothills includes the cities of Sumas, Nooskack and Everson. Everson is located 20 miles northeast of Bellingham and has a population of 2,135. It is a small

employment and service center for the surrounding rural unincorporated area where agriculture is a leading employer. Unincorporated villages include Nugents Corner, Kendall, and areas zoned for forestry in the Cascade Mountain foothills. There are medical and dental offices, a library, elementary school, day care centers, and a full-service grocery store in Everson. Rural residents and visitors with private transportation can access services in Everson from Sumas, Kendall and villages in the foothills. Weekday bus service brings travelers to Bellingham (south) but no buses connect the east county communities to Lynden or Blaine (west).

Lynden is an incorporated city located 15 miles north of Bellingham and has a population of approximately 11,000. It is a commercial and service center for a large farming area in unincorporated northwestern Whatcom County. Regular bus service carries travelers going to Bellingham and on a circulator route within Lynden. Access to Lynden's medical, dental, educational and employment services is geographically closer than Bellingham for residents in the rural areas and small cities to the north and east of Lynden. Five retirement and senior residences are located within the Lynden city limits.

Ferndale is an incorporated city located 7 miles northwest of Bellingham and has a population of 11,000. It is the second largest city in Whatcom County and is an employment, commerce, and service center for the area. Two regular daily bus routes serve travelers going to Bellingham or Blaine, and one of the routes offers a local circulator route. Ferndale is the residence for many employees of the Cherry Point Industrial area located 10 miles west of the city. Human services available in Ferndale include retirement and assisted living housing, a Senior Activity Center, and several schools and childcare facilities.

Blaine is an incorporated city located at the northwest corner of Whatcom County at the border with Canada and it has a population of 5,000. The Blaine school district serves students from Birch Bay, an unincorporated area 5 miles south of the city with a rapidly growing population of more than 5,000. There are retirement and assisted living housing units in Blaine and Birch Bay. Regular daily bus routes serve travelers to Birch Bay, Ferndale, and Bellingham.

Maple Falls and *Glacier* are located in eastern Whatcom County near the National Forest boundary. The year-around combined population of these two villages is estimated to be fewer than 400, and recreational visitors represent a seasonal population increase of up to 4,000. The Mt. Baker School District serves students living in these villages. The closest social services are in Sumas or Everson, 20 or 30 miles west. Safety Net bus service is available one day per week by reservation.

Bellingham is the largest city in Whatcom County with a population of 80,000. It is the largest employment center for the County and provides a large variety of human services for residents throughout the county, including a large regional hospital, university, and community and technical college. The Lighthouse Mission is an example of an emergency shelter offered in Bellingham that is not available in other parts of Whatcom County. Retirement homes and assisted living centers are located

in the Birchwood area near the hospital, downtown, along Fairhaven Parkway, and in north Bellingham's Cordata neighborhood.

More than 30 regular daily bus routes serve Bellingham area along with daily passenger rail, airline flights, regional Airporter shuttle service, regional and local ferries, and taxi service.

Bellingham Farm Worker Housing. Sterling Meadows is a housing development located in the northwest area of Bellingham to serve low income people who work on the farms in Whatcom County. Workers travel from this residential site to farms in the rural areas around Everson and Lynden, and many other agricultural work sites.

Chapter 8

Common Destinations

Residents with special needs travel to the same spectrum of sites that the general population visits: employment sites, childcare facilities, schools, medical services, commercial areas, recreation areas and more. Some residents with special needs travel more frequently to sites that offer specific types of services:

- Vocational training
- Medical and rehabilitation centers
- Senior and assisted living activity centers
- Residential shelters
- Human services appointments (e.g., DSHS, Case Managers, etc.)

The majority of these sites are clustered in the Bellingham area. For special needs residents in the small cities and rural areas, transportation to Bellingham is not cost effective. People traveling to work during late night hours or on weekends have few transportation options available.

According to data from the Opportunity Council, all Whatcom's providers of mental health services receiving federal funding are located in Bellingham, as are 75% of the substance abuse care providers. Of the remaining 25%, one substance abuse care provider is located in each of Everson and Lynden, and two are located in Ferndale. About 70% of the total number of persons with developmental disabilities in Whatcom County live in Bellingham and Ferndale.

The following list describes some of the destinations accessed by people with special needs:

Department of Social and Health Services, Bellingham Office: The DSHS office offers programs to assist people with low income. People come to the DSHS office to apply for cash or food assistance, medical assistance, in-home and nursing-home care for elderly people, and treatment programs for substance misuse. The office is located in a shopping mall area in north Bellingham, about ¼ mile from the Cordata bus terminal. The office is two miles from downtown Bellingham where the nearest subsidized housing complex, emergency shelters and food bank are located. In September 2010, the office reported approximately 90 new applications each day, a rate 70% higher than 2009 average levels.

Goodwill Jobs Training Center: The center offers free classes in computer programs, job search skills, language proficiency, and high school graduation equivalency degree (GED) preparation. The center is located in a shopping mall northeast of Bellingham, about ¼ mile from a high-frequency bus line. The center is located about one mile from a child care center.

Interfaith and *Planned Parenthood Health Clinics:* These clinics offer sliding-scale medical services to people with low income. A range of preventative, diagnostic, and educational services are available in addition to medical care. The clinics are located in downtown Bellingham, within three blocks of the WTA terminal, and within walking distance of two shelters, three subsidized housing complexes, a senior center, the food bank, and two day-use drop-in centers for people without homes.

Lighthouse Mission and other shelter or meal programs: Drop-in centers offering temporary shelter and once-a-day meals to people without homes. At least three area churches offer once-per-week community meals on different days of the week.The Lighthouse Mission is located in downtown Bellingham and it offers daily meals and shelter for men in need. Agape House, Dorothy Place, and other shelters offer temporary shelter for women and children without homes. Three shelters and five subsidized housing complexes are located in downtown Bellingham, within walking distance of medical and dental clinics, drop-in centers (e.g., for washing), the transit terminal and other services.

Triage Center: A Triage Center is located in the Irongate Industrial area in the northeast part of Bellingham. The Center offers emergency assistance and assessment during night or weekend hours specifically for behavioral health and substance abuse issues. The goal of the Center is to reduce reliance on emergency room visits: emergency room visits are costly and visits to the emergency room have increased for certain populations because there was no other option available. The urgent nature of emergency situations dictates that access the Triage Center would not generally be by public bus. However, persons treated and discharged from the Triage Center are likely to benefit from public bus service. The Irongate Industrial area is not served by frequent bus service and the level of bus service that is offered is not consistent with the needs of the population being served by the Triage Center.

Adult Family and Assisted Living Homes: Adult family homes serve a wide variety of special needs populations. When these homes are established outside the transit service corridor where the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides access, transportation becomes problematic and costs increase. Strategies to encourage these residential services to locate along the transit corridors would reduce specialized transportation costs. Historically, the homes operated vans to transport residents but increased expense of vehicle operation and maintenance has generally curtailed this service.

Mt. Baker Ski Area Located in the National Forest at the end of State Route 542, the Mt. Baker Scenic Byway, the ski area (in winter) and the recreational camping and trails (in other seasons) are a major destination in Whatcom County. Daily visitors to the Ski Area and the National Forest hiking and camping areas are estimated to be more than 4,000 on high traffic days, summer or winter. Employees at the ski area are seasonal and receive incomes that are generally too low to support daily private car travel from areas with affordable housing. The Ski Area business funds a seasonal ski bus to transport children in the fifth grade to and from the ski area. The

Ski area business subsidizes a shuttle van for employees going to and from the ski area for work during the winter season.

Rural Industrial Jobs Food processing plants are located outside Blaine and Lynden; a major employment center with oil refineries, an aluminum smelter, and shipping terminals is located south of Birch Bay at Cherry Point. Public transportation to these remote sites is not available. Refineries have security regulations that restrict the number of private cars at the site, giving the Cherry Point area an interest in more transportation options for employees and contractors. Shuttle or bus service, park and ride sites, and connectivity to existing transit could create opportunities for collaboration with human services transportation.

Farms and Agricultural Processors: Rural and widely spaced by definition, farms in Whatcom County are a major industry and provide employment to many farm workers. Transportation to and from farms is a challenge for those farm workers with low incomes. Affordable housing for farm workers is located in north Bellingham. Some farms assist in providing transportation. Farm workers sometimes have jobs at more than one farm, necessitating miles of travel during the day to access different work sites.

Chapter 9

Recommendations for Action

Improvements to coordinated transportation fill gaps in the human services transportation system or reduce the duplication of service and increase cost efficiency. As described in Chapter 3, improvements focus on three priority areas:

- new public transportation services
- increased public awareness of transportation options
- reduced complexity for eligibility and use of services

Research shows that system improvements without ample and concurrent public education results in low ridership and low cost-efficiency. Strong public awareness-building and education along must go hand in hand with system expansions.

Stakeholders developed a priority project list that includes actions to address each emphasis area. Key projects are listed below, categorized according to the three emphasis areas. Some projects address more than one category.

I. Increase Connectivity:

1. Expand Lummi Transit fixed route service and on-demand service on and off the Lummi reservation. Improve tribal transit signage, bus shelters, and facilities for both Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe. Investigate the coordinated transportation service needs for the Nooksack Tribe.
2. Develop transportation services to connect residents of rural areas to neighboring service or employement areas (e.g., Kendall, Sumas, Everson, Lynden, Cherry Point, Acme). Evaluate innovations such as volunteer-driven vans, contracted shuttle drivers, or enhanced ride-match/ride-share programs.
3. Work with private businesses to evaluate improved shuttle services in rural locations. Consider contracted services or rider-driver programs similar to the Community Connection vans formerly offered by WTA.
4. Address the lack of bus shelters at fixed-route stops by such measures as:
   - inventorying existing bus shelter facilities,
   - establishing funding for systematic construction of additional shelters as part of annual transportation program,
   - changing development standards to require construction of bus shelters and pull-outs for developments over a threshold size.
5. Provide comprehensive Travel Planning and Ride Match service to broker human services trips and other types of mobility management and trip reduction; promote and publicize this service.

6. Provide shared-ride coordination, shuttle services, or public transportation service for low-income seasonal employees at rural or unserved remote areas (e.g., Ski Area, National Forest, industrial and agriculture processing sites, farms).
7. Inventory safe walking and bicycling facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, etc.) within one mile of each elementary and middle school in Whatcom County and establish a strategy for addressing missing links.

II. Increasing Awareness/Reduce complexity:

8. Travel Training – increase the methods and outreach to assist special needs travelers to learn how to use existing services, including fixed-route service, and to understand eligibility requirements for specialized or Para-transit service. Assist special needs travelers with completing eligibility process.
9. Travel training volunteer coordinator – establish a staff position or system to coordinate peer-to-peer instruction or a "hotline" to teach people how to use the bus and increase awareness of the range of services available to special needs groups and the general public.
10. Mobility Management – increase publicity and outreach for the Whatcom Smart Trips program and implement additional Individualized Marketing programs. A summary description of Whatcom Smart Trips is included in Appendix 4.
11. Educate low-income children and families on bicycle traffic safety and bicycle maintenance to increase transportation options. Assist people with special needs to learn how to cycle and to acquire bicycles for transportation use.

III. Increasing Coordination:

12. Assist jurisdictions to complete and implement Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plans, as required by law.
13. Increase outreach to and involvement of special needs groups in the on-going EACH Stakeholders and CTAG planning.
14. Augment research into Coordinated Human Services Transportation needs for inclusion in the Whatcom Transportation Plan 2012.
15. Promote and facilitate ridesharing through mobile electronic technology and/or through incentives such as gas vouchers and the Whatcom Smart Trips Transportation Demand Management program.
16. Evaluate transportation projects for human services criteria in ranking projects for annual Transportation Improvement Program funds.
17. Increase the number and type of human services available in small cities (Everson, Sumas) closer to rural populations.
18. Encourage public agencies to hold meetings in places served by public bus and to include instructions for access to offices and meeting sites by bus, bike,

walking, or sharing a ride. Use innovative methods of reaching special needs groups such as interviewing those at locations where such populations congregate (e.g., Opportunity Council waiting room, SeaMar Health waiting room, etc.).

19. Research the feasibility of assisting people with re-instatement of drivers' licenses in cases where court-ordered requirements have been met.
20. Engage school districts to pursue a dialogue with WTA to determine opportunities to leverage resources for greater efficiency and cost effectiveness. Topics may include: sharing maintenance facilities, coordinating fuel purchases for greater discounts, investigating other methods for collaboration and cost savings.
21. Work with organizations which operate shuttle vans (e.g., churches, retirement homes, etc.) to determine whether coordination would offer cost savings and mutual transportation benefits for the organizations and for special needs travelers in rural areas.
22. Investigate whether coordination between delivery programs (such as Meals on Wheels) and resource programs (such as the Food Banks) can assist rural low income families to access services and lower transportation costs.
23. Assist School Districts or homeless families with Homeless Student Transportation where feasible.

Chapter 10

Coordinated Transportation Project Priorities

The goals described in Chapter 3 form the basis for evaluating and ranking priorities.

Stakeholders reviewed projects and ranked them according to the following criteria:

EACH Goals
1. Increase connectivity by reducing gaps in the public transportation system.
2. Increase awareness of existing services and of the coordination work of the EACH stakeholder group.
3. Reduce the complexity of trip arrangements and of eligibility requirements for services.

1. Population served – *the project serves a variety of types of special needs*
   the project serves a large number of people
   the project serves a population which is otherwise unserved or underserved

2. Ability of the project to leverage existing resources – *the project benefits from a variety of funding sources and partners*
   the project has sustainable funding for future continuation

3. Short timeline for implementation – *the project is ready to begin*
   the project has a lead agency ready to implement

4. Measurability of results – *the project can document cost efficiencies*
   the project measures increased ridership of existing services
   the project gives accurate reporting and analysis

Employment Access and Coordinated Human-services Transportation (EACH) Plan
Prioritized Project List 2010 Update

Rank	Project	Interested Parties	Capital or Operations
1 (A)	WTA Ride Passes and Tokens: Purchase and provide transit passes, ride coupons and free-transfers to social service agencies for distribution to people with special needs.	NWRC, DSHS, Opportunity Council	Operations
2 (A)	Existing Lummi Nation Transit Service: Maintain existing service of deviated fixed route transit service and para transit on and around the Lummi Reservation	Lummi Nation, Health Department, NWRC	Operations

Rank	Project	Interested Parties	Capital or Operations
3 (A)	Expand Lummi Transit Service: Expand transit service to Ferndale and unserved areas of the reservation.	Lummi, Health, NWRC	Operations
4 (A)	Lummi Transit Vehicle Purchase: Purchase vehicles and equipment to replace existing vehicles on fixed route and para transit service.	Lummi Nation, City of Ferndale	Capital
5 (B)	Mobile Food Bank: Coordinate food delivery service for seniors and people with special needs. Collaborate with Meals on Wheels and with other Food Banks in County.	Food bank, NWRC, Senior Services	Operations
6 (B)	Medical Shuttle Operations: Provide services for medical shuttle service to out-of-county services for special needs residents.	VFW, Lummi, Senior Services	Operations
7 (B)	Mobility Management: Expand community outreach to educate seniors, special needs travelers and their families and the general public on transportation options, and assist them to use the systems.	WCOG, WTA, Lummi, Senior Services	Operations (Special)
8 (B)	Mental Health Awareness Training: Conduct trainings for WTA staff and other transportation professionals to improve skills interacting with people with mental health conditions. Staff and implement outreach programs.	Whatcom County Health	Operations
9 (C)	Community Connection Shuttle: Operate scheduled service connecting small cities in eastern Whatcom County with each other & WTA	NWRC, Early Learning, WCOG	Operations
10 (C)	Mileage Reimbursement: for volunteer drivers providing rides using private vehicles	NWRC, Volunteer Ctr, Food Bank	Operations
11 (C)	Shared Vehicles: Operate services to augment homeless student and other special needs travel; coordinate use of shared vehicles.	School Districts, NWRC, Interfaith	Operations
12 (C)	Medical Shuttle: Purchase wheel-chair accessible van for providing medical shuttle service to specialists and VA hospitals outside Whatcom County. Partner with VFW and others.	VFW, Lummi, Senior Services	Capital
13 (D)	Travel Training: Conduct education and marketing outreach and education to inform special needs populations about transportation options and bus riding. Develop new outreach methods and support existing travel training.	WTA, WCOG, Senior Programs	Operations

Rank	Project	Interested Parties	Capital or Operations
14 (D)	Low Income Children's Bicycle Transportation: Fund operations of educational program teaching low-income children and adults about bicycle transportation and repair, assist them to acquire and maintain bicycles for daily use.	WCOG, Sterling Meadows/Farmworker	Operations
15 (D)	Transit Evening, Sunday, Holiday Service: Expand operations to provide fixed route service on more routes during evenings, weekends, and major holidays by public or private transit providers.	WTA, BellAir Charters	Operations
16 (D)	School access walkway: Construct sidewalks or mulit-use path along streets near elementary schools. (*Note: construction projects not eligible 2011-2013 grant cycle*)	Whatcom County, School District	Capital
17 (D)	Bulk Purchase Discount Bus Pass program: Purchase and distribute discount or free bus passes for large employer sites or groups.	Shelters, NWRC, schools, worksource	Operations
18 (D)	Bike Lockers: purchase and install bike lockers at shelters, libraries, transit hubs, low-income housing, schools, employement centers, etc. for use by people with special needs.	Housing Authority, WTA, shelters, libraries	Capital
19 (D)	Integrated Traveler Service: Plan, coordinate, and mangage a regional integrated traveler service based on the FTA pilot project MART Integrated Traveler Services (2008).		Operations
20 (D)	Integrated Traveler Service: Purchase equipment and software to manage the brokerage service.		Capital
21 (D)	Intercounty connector: Purchase vehicles to provide job access shuttle service between Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties, & Ferry.	WCOG, BellAir Charters	Capital
22 (D)	Car Share Program: Coordinate, Market and manage a community car-sharing project to provide low income residents with occasional access to vehicles at low cost.		Operations
23 (D)	Car Share Program: Purchase vehicles, equipment, software, etc. for car sharing program.		Capital

Rank	Project	Interested Parties	Capital or Operations
24 (D)	Emergency Management: Work with Emergency Management departments, fire districts, and enforcement staff to plan for special needs transportation during emergencies.	Fire Districts, County, City Emergency Mgmt	Operations
25 (D)	Regional Trip Planning Website: Develop and operate internet-based trip planner software system with multiple transportation service providers; develop protocol for automatic update of schedule and rate data.	WTA, WCOG	Operations
26 (D)	Equity for Wheelchair Taxi Users: Create a fund to reimburse low-income wheelchair users the amount of the access fee charged by private taxi services.	Yellow Van	Operations
27 (D)	One-Stop- Social-Services -Shop: collaborate to plan a centralized or clustered Social Services center to reduce trips by service recipients.	NWRC, Health Dept,	Operations (Program Development)
28 (D)	Special Needs Bus Shelters: Purchase and install or construct bus shelters and/or covered bicycle parking shelters at WTA stations to serve special needs and low income transit users. *(Note: construction projects not eligible 2011-2013 grant cycle)*	WTA, Lummi	Capital
29 (D)	EACH Plan Update: Coordinate, collaborate with partners, research, conduct outreach, and publish update for EACH plan. Coordinate planning for sharing vehicles to maximize resource use and cost efficiencies.	WCOG	Operations (Program Development)
30 (D)	Job Access Ski Area Shuttle: Purchase shuttle bus vehicle to transport workers and customers between Mt. Baker Ski Area and Kendall WTA station.	WCOG, BellAir Charters, WorkSource	Capital
31 (D)	Community Connection Shuttle: Purchase equipment to provide scheduled shuttle service connecting small cities and villages in eastern Whatcom County with each other.	NWRC, WCOG	Capital
32 (D)	Bike Locker Management: Plan, coordinate, market, monitor, and maintain bike lockers and/o establish and follow-up on agreements with partner agencies for management of lockers	Housing Authority, WTA, Mission, Library System	Operations

Rank	Project	Interested Parties	Capital or Operations
33 (D)	Job Access Ski Area Shuttle Operations: Provide administrative, operations, publicity and maintenance services for shuttle transport between Mt. Baker Ski Area and Kendall WTA station.	WCOG, WorkSource, BellAir Charters	Operations
34 (D)	Construct Lummi Transit Facilities: Construct bus washing facility and bus shelters and amenities on and around the Lummi Reservation to improve service. *(Note: construction not eligible 2011-2013 grant cycle)*	Lummi	Capital
35 (D)	Expand Paratransit, Flex Routes and ADA corridors: Purchase equipment for expansion.	WTA, Health Dept., NWRC	Capital
36 (D)	Expand Paratransit, Flex Routes and ADA corridors: Administer increased service.	WTA, Health Dept., NWRC	Operations
37 (D)	Shared Vehicles: Purchase vehicles to supplement the existing vehicles shared by non-profit and human service organizations collaborating on transport of people with special needs.	School Districts, NWRC, Interfaith	Capital
38 (D)	Automatic Vehicle Locator technology package: purchase, install, and operate devices that track location of WTA fixed route buses and relay real-time info to special needs travelers.	WTA, WCOG	Capital
39 (D)	Lummi Island Community Transit: pilot project for island-based transit shuttle using innovative, energy efficient technology.	Lummi,	Capital
40 (D)	Intercounty connector: Operate job access shuttle service between Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties with link to San Juan Ferry.	WCOG, BellAir Charters, WSF	Operations
41 (D)	Neighborhood-Based Outreach: Provide guidance and assistance to neighborhood groups (including school-based groups) to conduct outreach activities (including safe walk route events) to increase child transportation safety, reduce senior isolation and prepare for emergency situations. Collaborate with schools, Friendly Visitors program, CHORE Program, emergency management 72-hour preparation program, or other neighborhood or senior organizations.	WCOG, Health Dept., Lummi, Senior Center, School District	Operations
42 (D)	Fixed-Route Video Monitoring: purchase and install video recording equipment to upgrade security technology on all fixed route vehicles.	WTA, Lummi Nation	Capital

Rank	Project	Interested Parties	Capital or Operations
43 (D)	Real-Time Bus Arrival Time Signage: Purchase and install equipment and software to indicate next bus arrival time at bus shelters/hubs.	WTA, Lummi Transit,	Capital
44 (D)	Real-Time Bus Arrival Time Signage: Manage and maintain equipment and software	WTA, Lummi Transit	Operations
45 (D)	Coordinate Vehicle Sharing: Plan and coordinate a system to increase the cost-sharing among groups, places of worship, and others for vans and mini-buses.	Places of Worship, Senior Activity Groups	Operations
46 (D)	Multi-lingual and Multi-cultural Improvements: Develop an action plan for providing transit information in multiple languages and creating a multi-cultural outreach program. Increase multi-cultural awareness among transportation professionals. Staff and fund implementation.	Whatcom Human Rights Coalition, Interfaith Clinic	Operations
47 (D)	Real-Time Ride-Share On-line: Plan and coordinate a mobile-phone-based regional ride share system pilot project.	Transit, Mobility Management	Operations
48 (D)	Five 40-Foot Replacement Buses for Fixed Route Transit Service in Whatcom County: Purchase fixed route transit buses to replace fully-depreciated buses.	WTA	Capital

Chapter 11

Coordination for the Future

Whatcom Council of Governments is updating the *Whatcom Transportation Plan* for publication in 2012. The *Whatcom Transportation Plan* identifies the combined Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organization goals, policies, and projects for Whatcom County. It describes the projects for each jurisdiction and includes the priority project list for funding. Elements of the Employment Access and Coordinated Human Services Transportation (EACH) Plan will be included in the *Whatcom Transportation Plan* update.

WCOG facilitates the Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) composed of community members who provide input about ways the transportation system can better serve residents and business in Whatcom County. Members of CTAG represent human services agencies and special needs populations. These CTAG members represent EACH priorities and ensure that the regional and metropolitan plans address these priorities.

Methods to improve coordination related to special needs transportation may include:

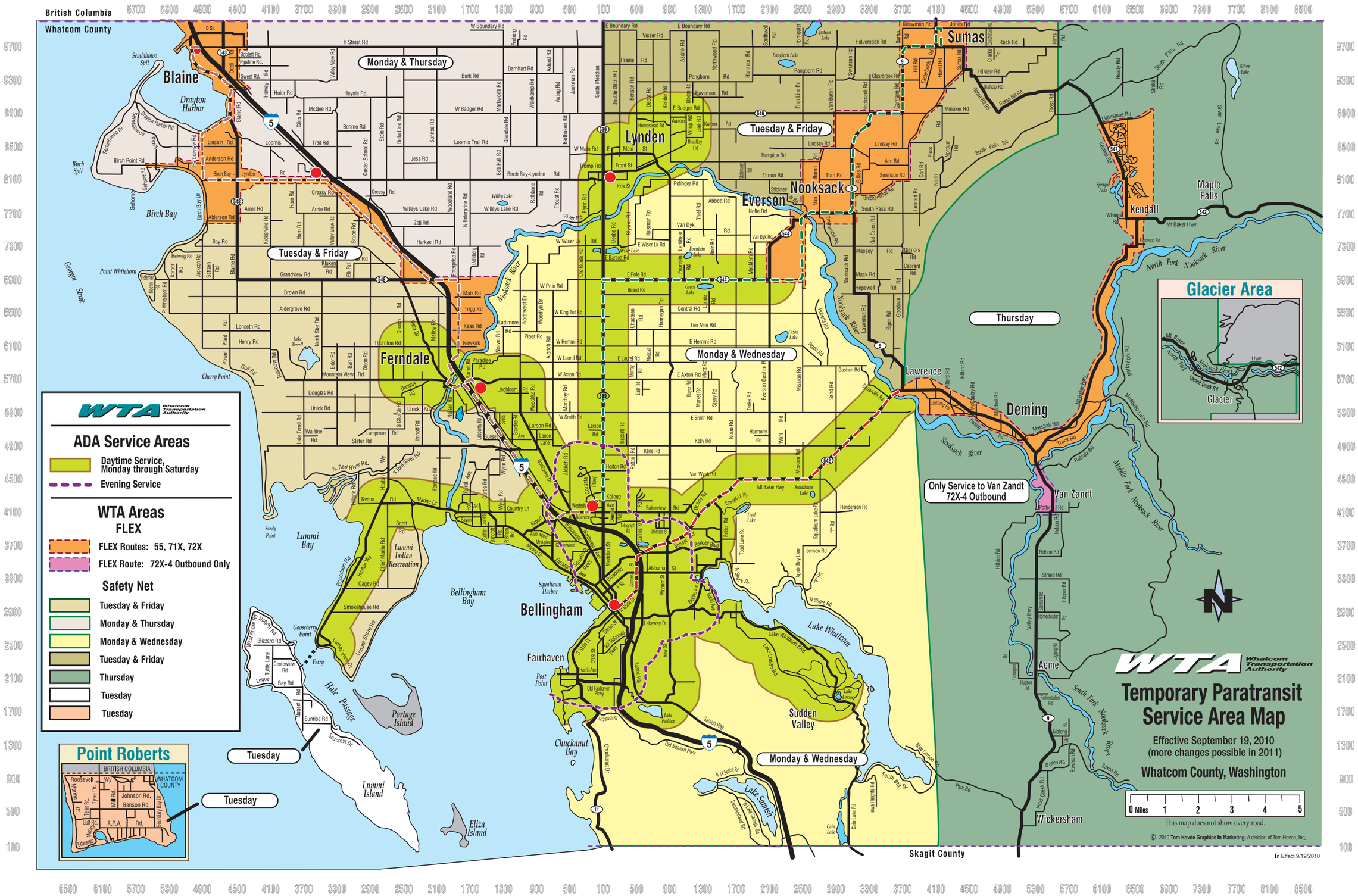
- Increase the number of CTAG members representing human services agencies and special needs travelers.
- Recommend to the RTPO Policy Board that scoring criteria for projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) give increased weight to projects that serve special needs travelers.
- Expand and improve the regional on-line ride match system to serve various types of trips
- Expand the WTA travel trainer position to allow for more outreach; consider adding volunteer hotline coordinator duties
- Add an on-line trip planner interactive service to the WTA website and develop an expanded on-line regional multi-provider trip-planner website and publicity
- Engage a broader spectrum of human services representatives in the transportation planning process.
- Learn about transportation needs by talking directly with the people who are using or are expected to benefit from the service and use their advice to design the solutions that will work for them.

Appendix 1:

Map of WTA Service Area and Routes 2008

Note: Routes have changed since September 2010

(see insert pages)


Temporary Paratransit Service Area Map
Effective September 19, 2010
(more changes possible in 2011)
Whatcom County, Washington
WTA Whatcom Transportation Authority
ADA Service Areas
Daytime Service, Monday through Saturday
Evening Service
WTA Areas
FLEX
FLEX Routes: 55, 71X, 72X
FLEX Route: 72X-4 Outbound Only
Safety Net
Tuesday & Friday
Monday & Thursday
Monday & Wednesday
Tuesday & Friday
Thursday
Tuesday
Tuesday
Monday & Thursday
Tuesday & Friday
Tuesday & Friday
Monday & Wednesday
Thursday
Monday & Wednesday
Tuesday
Tuesday
Only Service to Van Zandt 72X-4 Outbound
Glacier Area
Point Roberts
Blaine
Birch Bay
Lynden
Nooksack
Everson
Sumas
Ferndale
Lawrence
Deming
Kendall
Maple Falls
Van Zandt
Acme
Wickersham
Bellingham
Fairhaven
Sudden Valley
Lummi Indian Reservation
Lummi Island
Portage Island
Eliza Island
Lake Whatcom
Lake Samish
Lake Terrell
Lake Padden
Lake Louisa
Lake Ralph Hess
Lake Samish
Cain Lake
Silver Lake
Fazon Lake
Fountain Lake
Green Lake
Homestead Lake
Jackson Lake
Pangborn Lake
Spragua Lake
Toad Lake
Willey Lake
Wiser Lake
Squalicum Lake
Nooksack River
North Fork Nooksack River
South Fork Nooksack River
Middle Fork Nooksack River
Silver Creek
Skagit County
Whatcom County
British Columbia
Georgia Strait
Hale Passage
Bellingham Bay
Lummi Bay
Chuckanut Bay
Birch Bay
Drayton Harbor
Semiahmoo Spit
Birch Spit
Point Whitehorn
Cherry Point
Sandy Point
Gooseberry Point
Post Point
Squalicum Harbor
Ferry
Mt Baker
Glacier
Hwy
Cornell Creek Rd
Mt Baker Hwy
Truck Rd
Rutsatz Rd
Henderson Rd
Jensen Rd
Nelson Rd
Strand Rd
Clipper Rd
Homesteader Rd
Valley Hwy
Loggey Rd
Hudson Rd
Rothenbuhler Rd
Maleng Rd
Dixon Rd
Bowman Rd
Mosquito Lake Rd
Nooksack River
Blue Canyon Rd
Park Rd
South Bay Dr
Iowa Heights Rd
Cain Lake Rd
Lake Whatcom Blvd
Lake Louisa Rd
Samish Way
Old Samish Hwy
Lakeway Dr
Alabama St
Barkley Blvd
Britton Rd
Toad Lake Rd
Squalicum Lake Rd
Aqua Bay Lane
Jensen Rd
N Shore Rd
Henderson Rd
Mt Baker Hwy
Van Wyck Rd
Kelly Rd
E Smith Rd
Goshen Rd
Sand Rd
Mission Rd
Van Dyk Rd
Nolte Rd
Abbott Rd
Timon Rd
Hampton Rd
Lindsay Rd
Alm Rd
Sorenson Rd
Tom Rd
Stickney Rd
Brickman Rd
South Pass Rd
Massey Rd
Gilmore Rd
Cabrant Rd
Mack Rd
Hopewell Rd
Central Rd
Ten Mile Rd
E Hemmi Rd
W Hemmi Rd
W Laurel Rd
E Laurel Rd
W Axton Rd
E Axton Rd
W Smith Rd
Kline Rd
Horton Rd
Kellogg Ave
Bakerview Rd
Division St
Telegraph Rd
Meridian St
Westerly
Lincoln Rd
Anderson Rd
Birch Bay - Lynden Rd
Birch Point Rd
Alderson Rd
Arnie Rd
Creasy Rd
Willeys Lake Rd
Zell Rd
Harksell Rd
Grandview Rd
Brown Rd
Aldergrove Rd
Douglas Rd
Unick Rd
Lonseth Rd
Henry Rd
Mountain View Rd
Thornton Rd
Matz Rd
Trigg Rd
Kaas Rd
Newkirk
Paradise Rd
Lingbloom Rd
Slater Rd
Lampman Rd
Kwina Rd
Scott Rd
Cagey Rd
Smokehouse Rd
Lummi Shore Rd
Nugent Rd
Blizzard Rd
Centerview Rd
Bay Rd
Sunrise Rd
Seacrest Dr
Chuckanut Dr
Old Fairhaven Pkwy
Harris Ave
Sunset Ave
Cordata Pkwy
Aldrich Rd
Northwest Dr
Lake Terrell Rd
Haxton Way
Robertson Rd
Chief Martin Rd
Marine Dr
Slater Rd
Hannegan Rd
Kickerville Rd
Valley View Rd
Ham Rd
Bruce Rd
Giles Rd
Haynie Rd
Hoier Rd
Harvey Rd
Blaine Rd
Boblett Rd
Pipeline Rd
Sweet Rd
H Street Rd
W Boundary Rd
E Boundary Rd
Visser Rd
Prairie Rd
Pangborn Rd
Haveman Rd
Aaron Rd
Karnm Rd
Bradley Rd
Vinup Rd
Line Rd
Homestead Rd
Loomis Trail Rd
Jess Rd
Birch Bay-Lynden Rd
W Main Rd
E Main St
Front St
Tromp Rd
Kok St
River Rd
W Wiser Lk Rd
E Wiser Lk Rd
E Bartlett Rd
E Pole Rd
W Pole Rd
Beard Rd
W King Tut Rd
Piper Rd
Douglas Rd
Ulrich Rd
Lake Terrell Rd
Walltine Rd
N. Red River Rd.
S Red River Rd
Ferndale Rd
Bellis Ave
Portal Way
Northwest Dr
Aldrich Rd
Cordata Pkwy
Westerly
Kellogg Ave
Horton Rd
Kline Rd
Van Wyck Rd
Mt Baker Hwy
Emerald Ln Wy
Henderson Rd
Jensen Rd
Nelson Rd
Strand Rd
Clipper Rd
Homesteader Rd
Valley Hwy
Loggey Rd
Hudson Rd
Rothenbuhler Rd
Maleng Rd
Dixon Rd
Bowman Rd
Mosquito Lake Rd
Nooksack River
Blue Canyon Rd
Park Rd
South Bay Dr
Iowa Heights Rd
Cain Lake Rd
Lake Whatcom Blvd
Lake Louisa Rd
Samish Way
Old Samish Hwy
Lakeway Dr
Alabama St
Barkley Blvd
Britton Rd
Toad Lake Rd
Squalicum Lake Rd
Aqua Bay Lane
Jensen Rd
N Shore Rd
Henderson Rd
Mt Baker Hwy
Van Wyck Rd
Kelly Rd
E Smith Rd
Goshen Rd
Sand Rd
Mission Rd
Van Dyk Rd
Nolte Rd
Abbott Rd
Timon Rd
Hampton Rd
Lindsay Rd
Alm Rd
Sorenson Rd
Tom Rd
Stickney Rd
Brickman Rd
South Pass Rd
Massey Rd
Gilmore Rd
Cabrant Rd
Mack Rd
Hopewell Rd
Central Rd
Ten Mile Rd
E Hemmi Rd
W Hemmi Rd
W Laurel Rd
E Laurel Rd
W Axton Rd
E Axton Rd
W Smith Rd
Kline Rd
Horton Rd
Kellogg Ave
Bakerview Rd
Division St
Telegraph Rd
Meridian St
Westerly
Lincoln Rd
Anderson Rd
Birch Bay - Lynden Rd
Birch Point Rd
Alderson Rd
Arnie Rd
Creasy Rd
Willeys Lake Rd
Zell Rd
Harksell Rd
Grandview Rd
Brown Rd
Aldergrove Rd
Douglas Rd
Unick Rd
Lonseth Rd
Henry Rd
Mountain View Rd
Thornton Rd
Matz Rd
Trigg Rd
Kaas Rd
Newkirk
Paradise Rd
Lingbloom Rd
Slater Rd
Lampman Rd
Kwina Rd
Scott Rd
Cagey Rd
Smokehouse Rd
Lummi Shore Rd
Nugent Rd
Blizzard Rd
Centerview Rd
Bay Rd
Sunrise Rd
Seacrest Dr
Chuckanut Dr
Old Fairhaven Pkwy
Harris Ave
Sunset Ave
Cordata Pkwy
Aldrich Rd
Northwest Dr
Lake Terrell Rd
Haxton Way
Robertson Rd
Chief Martin Rd
Marine Dr
Slater Rd
Hannegan Rd
Kickerville Rd
Valley View Rd
Ham Rd
Bruce Rd
Giles Rd
Haynie Rd
Hoier Rd
Harvey Rd
Blaine Rd
Boblett Rd
Pipeline Rd
Sweet Rd
H Street Rd
W Boundary Rd
E Boundary Rd
Visser Rd
Prairie Rd
Pangborn Rd
Haveman Rd
Aaron Rd
Karnm Rd
Bradley Rd
Vinup Rd
Line Rd
Homestead Rd
Loomis Trail Rd
Jess Rd
Birch Bay-Lynden Rd
W Main Rd
E Main St
Front St
Tromp Rd
Kok St
River Rd
W Wiser Lk Rd
E Wiser Lk Rd
E Bartlett Rd
E Pole Rd
W Pole Rd
Beard Rd
W King Tut Rd
Piper Rd
Douglas Rd
Unick Rd
Lake Terrell Rd
Walltine Rd
N. Red River Rd.
S Red River Rd
Ferndale Rd
Bellis Ave
Portal Way
Northwest Dr
Aldrich Rd
Cordata Pkwy
Westerly
Kellogg Ave
Horton Rd
Kline Rd
Van Wyck Rd
Mt Baker Hwy
Emerald Ln Wy
Henderson Rd
Jensen Rd
Nelson Rd
Strand Rd
Clipper Rd
Homesteader Rd
Valley Hwy
Loggey Rd
Hudson Rd
Rothenbuhler Rd
Maleng Rd
Dixon Rd
Bowman Rd
Mosquito Lake Rd
Nooksack River
Blue Canyon Rd
Park Rd
South Bay Dr
Iowa Heights Rd
Cain Lake Rd
Lake Whatcom Blvd
Lake Louisa Rd
Samish Way
Old Samish Hwy
Lakeway Dr
Alabama St
Barkley Blvd
Britton Rd
Toad Lake Rd
Squalicum Lake Rd
Aqua Bay Lane
Jensen Rd
N Shore Rd
Henderson Rd
Mt Baker Hwy
Van Wyck Rd
Kelly Rd
E Smith Rd
Goshen Rd
Sand Rd
Mission Rd
Van Dyk Rd
Nolte Rd
Abbott Rd
Timon Rd
Hampton Rd
Lindsay Rd
Alm Rd
Sorenson Rd
Tom Rd
Stickney Rd
Brickman Rd
South Pass Rd
Massey Rd
Gilmore Rd
Cabrant Rd
Mack Rd
Hopewell Rd
Central Rd
Ten Mile Rd
E Hemmi Rd
W Hemmi Rd
W Laurel Rd
E Laurel Rd
W Axton Rd
E Axton Rd
W Smith Rd
Kline Rd
Horton Rd
Kellogg Ave
Bakerview Rd
Division St
Telegraph Rd
Meridian St
Westerly
Lincoln Rd
Anderson Rd
Birch Bay - Lynden Rd
Birch Point Rd
Alderson Rd
Arnie Rd
Creasy Rd
Willeys Lake Rd
Zell Rd
Harksell Rd
Grandview Rd
Brown Rd
Aldergrove Rd
Douglas Rd
Unick Rd
Lonseth Rd
Henry Rd
Mountain View Rd
Thornton Rd
Matz Rd
Trigg Rd
Kaas Rd
Newkirk
Paradise Rd
Lingbloom Rd
Slater Rd
Lampman Rd
Kwina Rd
Scott Rd
Cagey Rd
Smokehouse Rd
Lummi Shore Rd
Nugent Rd
Blizzard Rd
Centerview Rd
Bay Rd
Sunrise Rd
Seacrest Dr
Chuckanut Dr
Old Fairhaven Pkwy
Harris Ave
Sunset Ave
Cordata Pkwy
Aldrich Rd
Northwest Dr
Lake Terrell Rd
Haxton Way
Robertson Rd
Chief Martin Rd
Marine Dr
Slater Rd
Hannegan Rd
Kickerville Rd
Valley View Rd
Ham Rd
Bruce Rd
Giles Rd
Haynie Rd
Hoier Rd
Harvey Rd
Blaine Rd
Boblett Rd
Pipeline Rd
Sweet Rd
H Street Rd
W Boundary Rd
E Boundary Rd
Visser Rd
Prairie Rd
Pangborn Rd
Haveman Rd
Aaron Rd
Karnm Rd
Bradley Rd
Vinup Rd
Line Rd
Homestead Rd
Loomis Trail Rd
Jess Rd
Birch Bay-Lynden Rd
W Main Rd
E Main St
Front St
Tromp Rd
Kok St
River Rd
W Wiser Lk Rd
E Wiser Lk Rd
E Bartlett Rd
E Pole Rd
W Pole Rd
Beard Rd
W King Tut Rd
Piper Rd
Douglas Rd
Unick Rd
Lake Terrell Rd
Walltine Rd
N. Red River Rd.
S Red River Rd
Ferndale Rd
Bellis Ave
Portal Way
Northwest Dr
Aldrich Rd
Cordata Pkwy
Westerly
Kellogg Ave
Horton Rd
Kline Rd
Van Wyck Rd
Mt Baker Hwy
Emerald Ln Wy
Henderson Rd
Jensen Rd
Nelson Rd
Strand Rd
Clipper Rd
Homesteader Rd
Valley Hwy
Loggey Rd
Hudson Rd
Rothenbuhler Rd
Maleng Rd
Dixon Rd
Bowman Rd
Mosquito Lake Rd
Nooksack Rd

Appendix 2:

Needs and Services: Partial List of Transportation Services Provided or Needed

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Social Service Providers		
Area Agency on Aging The Northwest Regional Council serves as the Area Agency on Aging for Whatcom and surrounding Counties. Answers questions and refers people to appropriate services.	Information provided on request about transportation services available for the elderly	
Washington State Aging and Disabilities Administration Administers service programs for in-home, community and residential Long Term Care for seniors and persons with disabilities, including persons with developmental disabilities. Answers questions and refers people to appropriate services.		
ARC of Whatcom County Advocates and assists in improving the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities. Projects increase independence and full inclusion in the community.		Transport from home to activity centers, esp. weekends and evenings
Bellingham Food Bank Distributes food to people who visit the Bellingham facility; assists other food banks in Whatcom County.	Periodic volunteer delivery of excess food to other food banks in County	▪ Transport to Food Bank themselves ▪ Delivery of food
Bellingham /Whatcom County Housing Authority Local agency providing housing to low income, senior, disabled and special needs families. Manages apartment complexes and single-family houses in Bellingham and throughout the County.	▪ Most apartments located near services and transit routes	▪ Transport to services ▪ Education on transportation options & how to use the bus ▪ Secure bicycle parking
Boys and Girls' Clubs of Whatcom County Offers programs to improve the health and social development of children and adolescents, especially those at risk.	▪ Coordinates with school district and day care buses	▪ Transport to and from Club sites to homes when bus not running ▪ Secure bicycle parking and repair

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Cascade Vocational Services Provides employment services to people with disabilities and other special needs in Whatcom County. Collaborates with businesses to find employment solutions		▪ Transport to work sites during non-bus hours/days ▪ Bus buddies and education on transport options
Catholic Community Services Assists people with special needs by providing housing, family education and mental health guidance.	▪ Housing located in proximity to services and transit ▪ Home health aids sometimes transport by private car	▪ Education on transport options ▪ Secure bicycle parking ▪ Car-share system
Department of Social and Health Services Whatcom Office *Work First Program* *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*	If qualified: ▪ Gas vouchers or reimbursements ▪ Transit passes or tokens ▪ Office location ¼ mi from bus terminal ▪	▪ Office location far from human services, shelters, housing ▪ Accessible sidewalks ▪ Secure bicycle parking
Early Learning and Family Services Northwest Provides education and support for expectant parents, health and nutrition services, and child development and education.	▪ Shuttle vans for Head Start program	▪ Transit passes or tokens ▪ Variance procedure for van trips longer than 30 min.
Interfaith Coalition Medical and Dental Clinic Provides affordable comprehensive health care for children and adults.	▪ Mobile dental clinic ▪ Location of clinics near bus stops ▪ Location walkable to shelters and services	▪ Mobile medical clinic ▪ Secure bicycle parking
Kulshan Community Land Trust Facilitates affordable home ownership; preserves the affordability of land trust properties in perpetuity.	▪ Many house locations near transit or in walkable neighborhoods ▪ Transportation costs are part of financial qualification process	▪ Location Efficient Mortgage® financing partner
Lighthouse Mission Ministries Provides shelter, drop-in center, meals, rehabilitation, and assistance to homeless adults and children. Medical care through SeaMar Health Clinic	▪ Location close to bus stops and walkable to services ▪ Transit vouchers or tokens (as available)	▪ Short notice transport to/from services, other shelters, Triage Center, etc. ▪ Secure bike storage

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Lions' Club (and similar service clubs) Various community services such as volunteer drivers for seniors' errands	▪ Some volunteer drivers assist seniors with errands ▪ Wheelchair loan program	▪ Coordination with other human services or transport programs ▪ Transport of donated wheelchairs
Maple Alley Inn, Community Meal programs Various programs serve weekly meals to people in need	▪ Volunteers pick up donated food and transport to meal preparation sites	▪ Carpool or transport arrangements for meal attendees
Nooksack Tribe Health Services Medical and Dental care for Nooksack Tribe members	▪ Mini van for school transport ▪ Clinic location near services, residences ▪	▪ Transport for tribal members far from office
Northwest Regional Council - Area Agency on Aging Medicaid Transportation Brokerage for Whatcom and surrounding counties.	For Medicaid qualified individuals to medical appointments: ▪ Transit passes, tokens ▪ Gas vouchers or reimbursement ▪ Taxi ▪ Relocation guidance and assistance (helps rural residents move closer to services) ▪ Office located close to bus stop ▪	▪ Reduced rate purchase price for transit passes, tokens ▪ Reduced rate quarterly pass ▪ Weekend and evening transit ▪ Rural shuttle ▪ Out-of-county medical shuttle
Opportunity Council Community Action program for education, shelter, food, and assistance to people in crisis or with special needs	▪ Transit passes and ride coupons (as available) ▪ Office walkable to services, transit ▪ Bike rack ▪	▪ Mobile outreach services ▪ Co-location with other services ▪ More transit passes and ride coupons to meet needs ▪ Out-of-County transportation assistance
Rebound of Whatcom County and other camps Provides low income children with outdoor enrichment programs during summer and after-school program during school year	▪ Shuttle van/bus transport to and from camp ▪ Pick up from schools for after-school care ▪ After-school care located on bus route, near low income housing ▪	▪ Coordination to share vehicle cost ▪ Cost-effective vehicle use during school year

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
St. Joseph Hospital Central provider of medical care for the region. Specialists in heart care, tests, surgery, rehabilitation, emergency care, etc.	▪ Located on bus route ▪ Ample car parking and wheelchair parking area	▪ Mobile outreach or branch clinics ▪ Certified child car seat technician on staff ▪ Evening, night, or Sunday bus ▪ Hourly weekday bus service ▪ Secure bicycle storage ▪ Transport to shelters for discharged low income patients ▪ Transport to or from Triage Center ▪ Walk/Bike education classes
Spinal Cord Injury Support Group Peer group offering guidance, support, and advocacy for people with spinal cord injuries that limit mobility		▪ County, City ADA implementation staff, advisory committees ▪ ADA Transition Plans implementation for all jurisdictions ▪ Wheelchair accessible inter-city bus (e.g. Greyhound, ThruWay Coach by Amtrak) ▪ Wheelchair curb cuts ▪ WTA service later in evening, on Sunday ▪ Enforce wheelchair parking violations ▪ Parking discount for wheelchair vans ▪ Universal Design standards for buildings, e.g., gas pump pay stations at wheelchair height
Visiting Angels; Visiting Nurse, etc. For-profit home healthcare and daily-living task assistance contractor for people with disabilities or special needs.	▪ Helpers drive clients in private vehicles for errands (mileage reimbursement) ▪ Safety inspection of employee vehicles ▪ Helpers assist clients to ride transit	▪ Coordination with other human services or transport programs
Places of Worship, Faith Communities Religious groups conducting worship services, events, and congregational care	▪ Vans and mini-buses to drive attendees to services ▪ Volunteer drivers, fuel reimbursement	▪ Coordination with other programs to maximize cost sharing

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access Coalition of health care providers assisting people with special needs to get needed health and dental care	▪ Mobile and remote/visiting clinics ▪ Traveling specialists	▪ Mobile clinic van(s) ▪ Reduced cost or free transit passes or tokens ▪ Policy variances to allow transport of special needs clients in staff vehicles
Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities Clearing house sharing information about agencies and groups working to improve the community strength, capacity, and health of Whatcom County communities	▪ Transportation information and links on website ▪ Convened 2001 Transportation Summit; co-authored "It Matters How We Get There" ▪ Founded Community Transport. Advisory Group (CTAG)	▪ Re-energized participation in CTAG
Whatcom Community and Family Network Facilitates efforts to prevent child abuse, neglect, youth substance abuse, and to support families in transition	▪ Office located near bus stops, walkable to services ▪ Coordinates with other resource groups to reduce duplication	▪ Transportation options classes
Whatcom Homeless Service Center Coalition offering assistance to prevent eviction, assist in re-housing, and coordinate services for people at risk of losing homes.	▪ Co-location of services on-site ▪ Office and meetings located near frequent bus lines and during bus service hours ▪ Transport assistance to move possessions ▪ Annual event with bicycle education, among other services ▪	▪ Discount or free ride coupons for bus ▪ Incentives for housing near bus lines within walking/biking distance of services, jobs
Whatcom Council on Aging *Meals on Wheels* *Senior Centers* *"55 Alive" Driver Education* Non-profit organization advising on programs to assist the elderly. Recruits and coordinates volunteers.	▪ Senior Centers located near bus lines ▪ Meals transported to rural houses & congregate meal sites ▪ Limited carpooling for special events ▪ Sponsors driver training program to reduce insurance premiums for senior drivers	▪ Coordinate transport with other human services ▪ Transit and multi-modal training for those reducing or no longer driving ▪ Carpool coordination for congregate meal attendees

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Whatcom/Skagit Housing (Rural Self-help Homes) Sweat-equity house building program to assist low income residents to own houses.		▪ Location of houses near transit or walkable/bikeable to services
YMCA Supports healthy families with child care services and family activities.	▪ Locations near bus terminals ▪ Van/mini-bus transport for children to activities	▪ Bicycle skills education ▪ Secure bicycle storage ▪ Wheelchair access
YWCA Transitional housing for women and children with special needs, including those leaving domestic violence.	▪ Location near bus line ▪ Bicycle rack ▪ Wheelchair access	▪ Transit and multi-modal training for those without cars ▪ Reduced rate or free transit passes or tokens ▪ Secure bicycle storage
Schools		
School Districts Public educational districts offering elementary, middle, and high school instruction. Blaine, Nooksack Valley, Ferndale, Meridian, Mt. Baker, Lynden, Bellingham	▪ Wheelchair accessible School Bus ▪ School Walk Route maps ▪ school campus located near bus, services ▪ Sidewalks, parking ▪	▪ Facilities for vision or hearing impaired ▪ Transit and multi-modal education ▪ Secure bike storage ▪ Trail access to campus ▪ Walking School Bus or Safe Routes to School programs
Bellingham Technical College Vocational, certificate, and degree programs and community interest courses	▪ Wheelchair accessible facilities ▪ Sidewalks, parking ▪ Location on bus route ▪ Bike racks ▪ Rural satellite class locations ▪	▪ Secure bike storage ▪ Transit and multi-modal education
Northwest Educational Service District Provides consolidated administrative oversight for four-county regional school districts, especially for school bus compliance and training.	▪ Coordinates trainings for multi-county district – reducing duplication ▪ Helps districts find bus equipment at lower prices (bulk purchase, etc.) ▪ Forum for coordination of transportation managers (e.g., homeless transport)	▪ Safe Routes to School programs ▪ Coordination planning to integrate multi-modal transport with school bus system

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Readiness to Learn Consortium Forum to coordinate human services programs assisting school children with special needs; participants from all school districts and social service agencies	▪ Semi-yearly meetings held near bus line ▪ Transport partnering for some child care sites and schools	▪ Pragram to shelter homeless families in their original school district ▪ Meetings located far from service centers ▪ Carpool among attendees
Whatcom Community College Vocational and degree programs for enrolled students and for enrichment.	▪ Free parking for students and staff ▪ Campus location near bus terminal ▪ Campus located ½ mi from DSHS office ▪ On-line classes	▪ Secure bicycle parking ▪ Reduced-rate or free bus passes ▪ Co-location with child-care provider (e.g., TANF parents) ▪ Rural satellite class locations
Western Washington University Accredited university offering four-year undergraduate degree programs and masters degree graduate programs for matriculated students.	▪ Pay parking lots for students and staff ▪ Bus pass provided to all students through activity fee ▪ Covered bicycle parking ▪ Managed bike lockers ▪ Night shuttle bus ▪ Parking shuttle bus ▪ Frequent WTA service	
Northwest Indian College Accredited four-year college offering degree programs and technical training; reduced tuition for enrolled tribal members.	▪ Free parking for students and staff ▪ Location near service agencies and bus lines ▪	▪ Wheelchair accessible parking
Transportation Providers		
BellAir Charters Airporter Shuttle	▪ Daily inter-county shuttle service to major cities from Blaine to SeaTac ▪ Wheelchair access vans (24 hr advance reservation) ▪ Participation in EACH stakeholder group ▪ Ski-bus and event charter service	▪ Wheelchair access for all buses ▪ Bicycle transport option ▪ Multi-modal links (rail stations, transit) ▪ Bus stops located closer to services

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Cascade Ambulance Service, Inc. Medical transport for non-emergency patient care at regional hospitals, clinics or specialist care providers	▪ Wheelchair access ▪ Can accommodate people with all types of mobility impairments	
Love, INC Religious organization offering volunteers to assist seniors and others with special needs	▪ Volunteers drive seniors to appointments, errands ▪ Delivery of groceries	▪ Funds for reimbursement of fuel/car costs of volunteers
Lummi Transit Service Tribal bus service	▪ Full-service transit (see description in Chapter 5)	▪ Capital and Operations needs described in project list (see Chapter 10)
Rural Metro Medical transport provided on a fee basis to patients needing medical support during transit.	▪ Medical equipped vans and ambulances ▪ Most services central Puget Sound	
Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Volunteers drive a VA-owned van to provide medical transport to Seattle-area veterans hospital(s).	▪ Weekday service, one round-trip per day ▪	▪ Wheelchair accessible van/bus ▪ Coordination with other medical transport needs/groups ▪ Increased capacity (more runs per day or on weekends; more destinations) ▪ Funding to compensate drivers or improve vehicles
WTA (Whatcom Transportation Authority)	▪ Full-service public transit (see description in Chapter 5)	▪ Capital and Operations needs described in project list (see Chapter 10)
Whatcom Volunteer Center CHORE program offers volunteer assistance to seniors for various tasks, including driving to appointments or errands, or delivery service.	▪ Reimbursement for mileage/fuel for volunteers who drive personal vehicles ▪ Coordination to match volunteers with special needs	▪ Funds for salary for drivers to meet demand
Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation Statewide advisory committee working with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to improve transportation for Special Needs	▪	▪ Regional representation ▪ Coordination with other special needs committees ▪ Local reporting or input gathering

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Yellow Cab of Whatcom County Feefor-service provider of taxi transport; contractswith WTA to supplement paratransit service and contracts with NWRC for medicaid transport.	▪ Largest wheelchair accessible van fleet in region ▪ Discount contract rates for social services agencies ▪ Regional dispatch system ▪	▪ Policy changes at some agencies to allow multiple riders where funding rules currently restrict ▪ Funding for additional taxi vouchers for low income needs ▪ Subsidy to allow low income wheelchair users to be reimbursed for wheelchair van fee
Jurisdictions and Departments		
Bellingham Emergency Management Planning and coordination for emergencies and disasters. Evacuation plans.	▪ Agreements with WTA for transportation during emergencies	▪ Coordination with school districts for potential use of school buses during emergency evacuation
Bellingham Public Works Engineering Plans, designs, builds, and maintains roads, on-street parking, bike lanes, and city parking lots.	▪ Funding through property taxes and portion of sales tax ▪ Citizen comment system for maintenance requests ▪ New arterials to include sidewalk as standard ▪ Bike secure parking area in parkade	▪ Funding for increased sidewalk maintenance and construction ▪ Funding for bus shelters and lighting ▪ ADA Transition Plan
Bellingham Public Works Transportation Options Promotes trip reduction, walking, bicycling, and transit to reduce car traffic. Educates staff and public.	▪ Coordination with enforcement, planning, and public works ▪ Coordination with citizen Transportation Commission	▪ Funding for free or reduced-price transit passes for employee commute trips ▪ Secure bike storage and parking ▪ Transportation Benefit District funding for WTA
Bellingham Consolidated Plan for Human Services Strategic plan to address homelessness and housing problems for people with special needs	▪ Strategies to maintain transport independence of seniors in public housing	▪ Implementation of strategic plan elements related to transportation

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Whatcom County Public Works Engineering	▪ Funding for road construction and maintenance	▪ Wheelchair curb cut additional funding ▪ Funding for bus shelters, bike racks ▪ Sidewalk program near schools ▪ ADA Transition plan
Whatcom County Emergency Management	▪ Agreements with WTA for emergency use of buses	▪ Coordination with school districts for emergency use of buses
Whatcom County Health Department Developmental Disabilities Division	▪ Information and support for people with developmental disabilities and their families	▪ Evening, weekend, and holiday transit service ▪ Additional "safety net" service for rural areas
Whatcom County Superior Court	▪ Limited number of WTA ride coupons	▪ Funding for free or reduced-price transit passes for DUI offenders
Washington State Department of Corrections, Bellingham Office		▪ Funding for free or reduced-price transit passes for offenders in re-entry programs ▪ Travel training
Employers and Employer Groups		
Chambers of Commerce; Sustainable Connections Non-profit interest groups representing the interests of local private businesses	▪ Advocacy for transportation that benefits retail, commercial and freight businesses ▪	▪ Transit shuttle for visitors to National Forest and related businesses
Whatcom Farm Friends Advocacy interest group for agricultural businesses and farm owners	▪ Community Supported Agriculture programs weekly deliveries	▪ Coordinated transport of produce to markets/ individuals
Farm worker advocacy group(s) Farm workers advocating for improved housing and transportation currently have a community presence in the Whatcom Human Rights Task Force	▪ Housing for farm workers (Sterling Meadows) ▪ Improved standards for living and working conditions	▪ Public transportation to and from agricultural work sites ▪ satellite social services sites

Agency Name and Mission	Transportation Provided	Transportation Needs
Workforce Development Council (WorkSource) Resource center assisting people to find jobs, get re-training, access unemployment assistance, etc.	▪ Central location near bus lines	▪ Funding for reduced-price bus tokens ▪ Additional car parking for class participants ▪ Temporary transport assistance to prevent refusing a job offer due to lack of car
Goodwill Industries Job Training Job skills training program for people new or returning to the workforce.	▪ Location near bus line ▪ Transit or gas voucher assistance for enrolled participants in good standing ▪ Bike rack	▪ On-site childcare for parents of participants ▪ Funding for additional reduced-price bus tokens ▪ Carpool or ride-share coordination

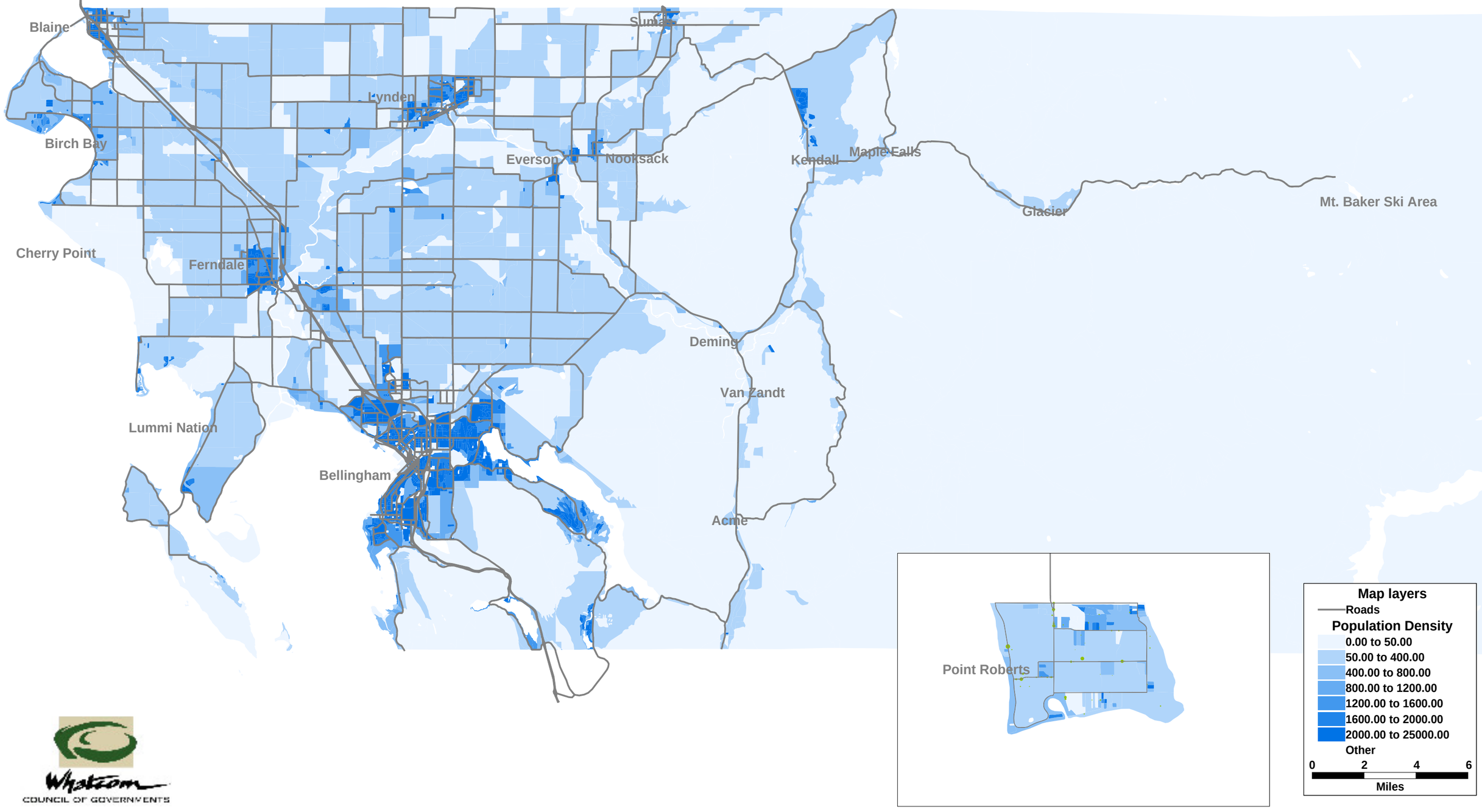
Appendix 3:

Maps:

- **Whatcom Population Densities Map**
- **Whatcom Population, Jobs, and Transit Map**
- **Whatcom County 2000 Census: Below 50% of Median Income**

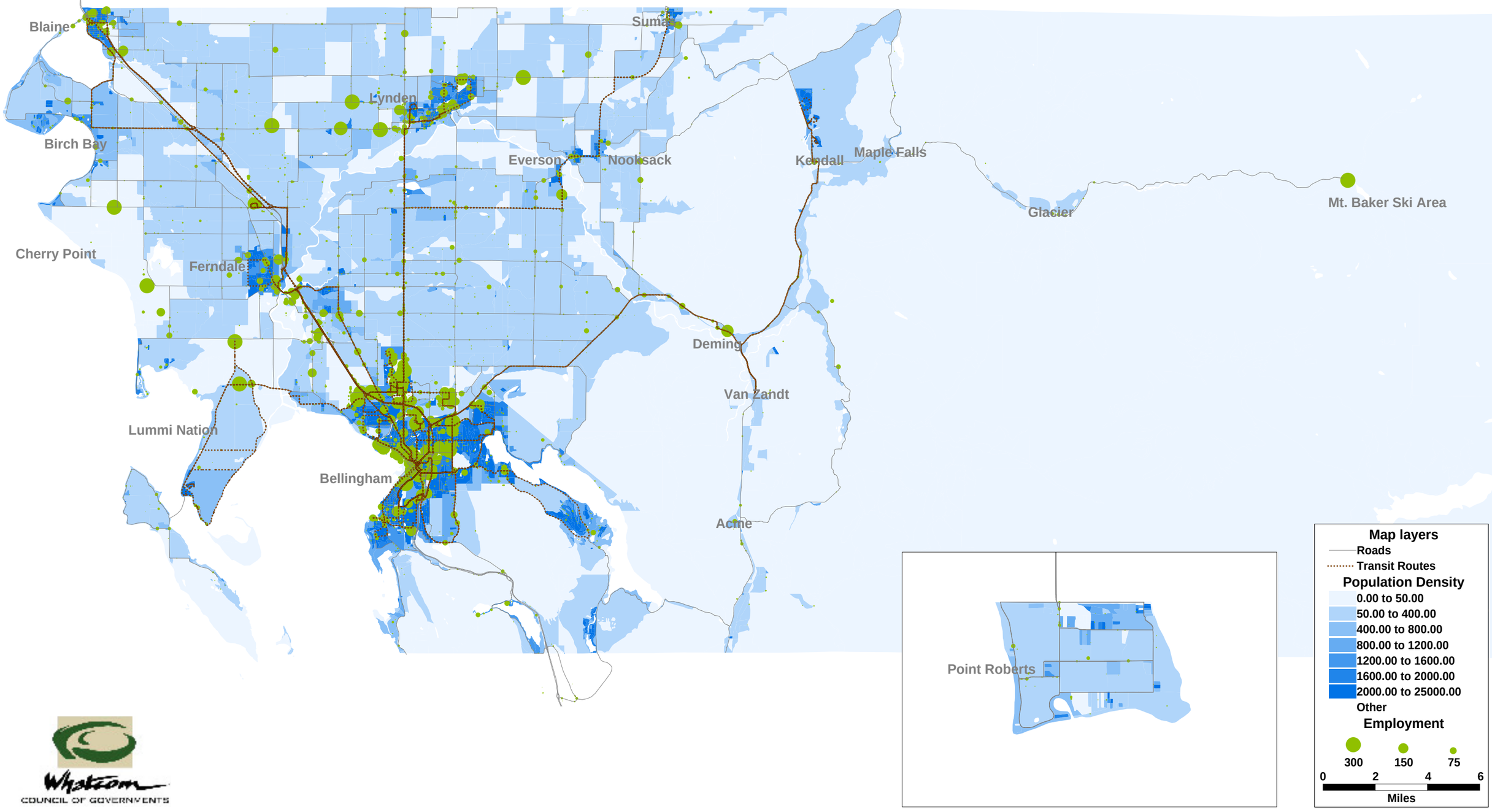
(see insert pages)

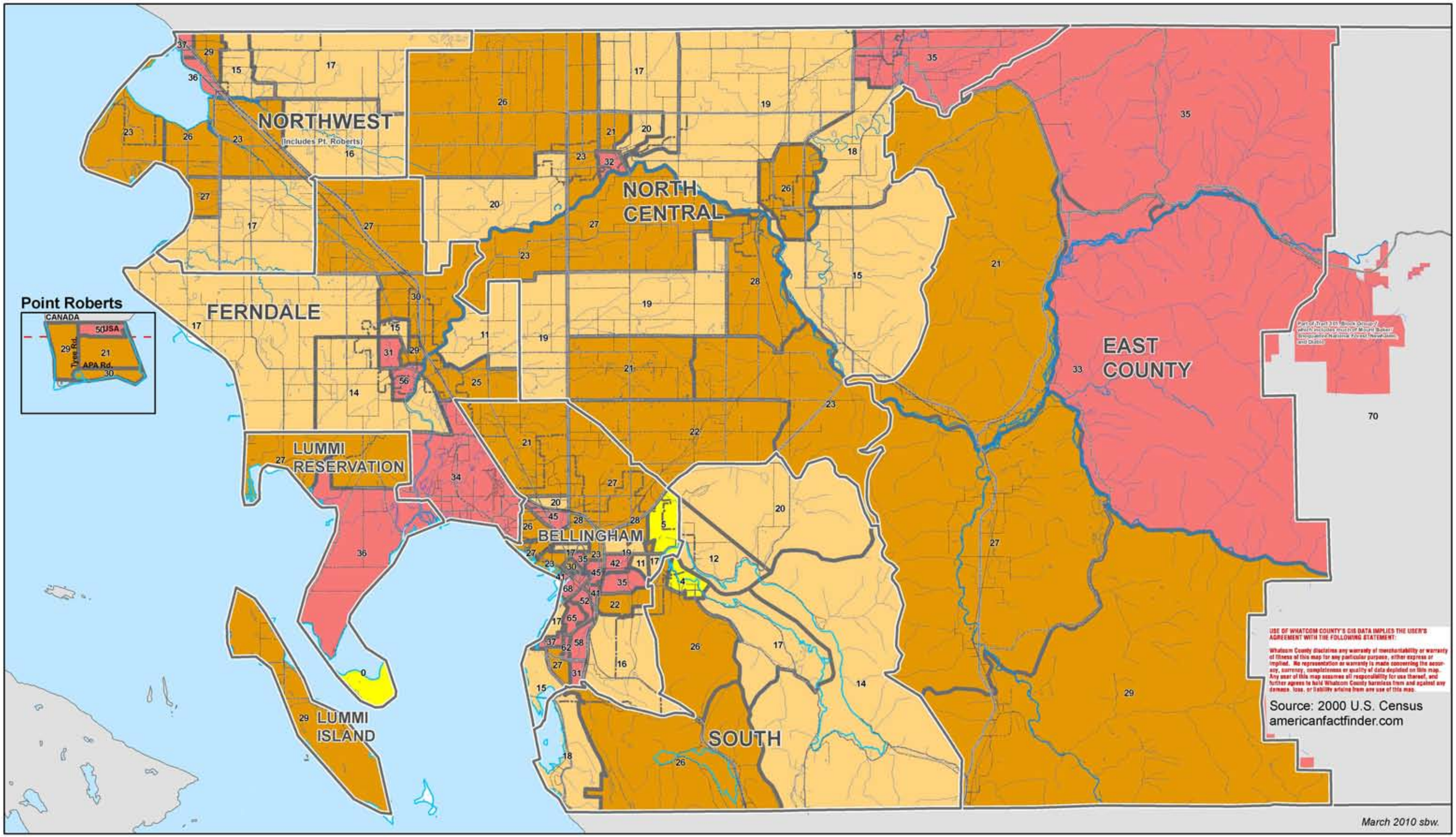
Whatcom County Population Density



Whatcom
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Whatcom County Population Density, Jobs, and Transit





Whatcom County
2000 Census -% of Households Below 50% of Median Income

Legend

- 0% - 10%
- 11% - 20%
- 21% - 30%
- >31%

Median Incomes Used from 2008:
-Bellingham $40,146
-Whatcom County (including remaining cities) $49,372

0 1 2 4 6 8 Miles

Appendix 4:

Whatcom Smart Trips Program Summary

Whatcom Smart Trips is a program that markets sustainable transportation choices to the entire community. It is supported by the City of Bellingham, Whatcom Transportation Authority, Whatcom County, Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) and Washington State Department of Transportation. Whatcom Smart Trips is an outgrowth of our community's experience with the worksite-based Commute Trip Reduction program (CTR), which has reduced the percentage of single-occupant vehicle trips to CTR worksites from 78.08% to 73.52%.

Whatcom Smart Trips is also an outgrowth of a residential-based education and assistance program (called Individualized Marketing) that was piloted in Bellingham in 2004. Individualized Marketing resulted in an overall reduction in drive-alone trips of 8%. In combining these two approaches we maintain the value of employer investments in worksite programs, while we create new trip reduction opportunities by engaging more people in the effort. Many community members have an interest in reducing their vehicle trips, but the work trip is not necessarily the easiest trip for them to make on foot, by bicycle or on the bus. The new program encourages them to choose where they want to begin.

Whatcom Smart Trips includes the following list of educational, assistance and incentive programs. Except where noted, Whatcom Smart Trips programs are available to everyone age 18 or older and traveling to destinations in Whatcom County.

- **Whatcom Smart Trips Website** – allows adults living or working in Whatcom County to record the walking, cycling, transit and ridesharing trips that they make and track the vehicle miles not driven and pollution prevented at www.WhatcomSmartTrips.org .
- **Smart Trips Incentives** – include, discount cards, gift certificates, cash prizes and recognition for Smart Trips participants as they reach certain milestones in the number of smart trips made.
- **Emergency Ride Home** – provides limited, free taxi service to bus riders and Smart Trips participants who experience an emergency or illness at work and need to get home quickly.
- **Employer Assistance** – provides assistance to employers who implement voluntary and/or CTR-required worksite trip reduction programs.
- **Group Bus Pass Sales** – will provide discounted bus passes to individuals in groups where large percentages of the individuals will purchase bus passes. (The current demonstration project provides free passes to employees and residents of downtown Bellingham and Fairhaven.)
- **School Smart Trips** – This program is still being developed. It is expected to include educational and incentive programs at middle schools and may involve high school student leaders.
- **everybodyBIKE** – provides educational opportunities for children and adults who want to learn how to ride bicycles as transportation.

- **Neighborhood Smart Trips** – will provide home-based education and assistance to all interested individuals in Bellingham households. State and/or federal funding is being sought for this program.
- **Smart Trips Public Awareness Campaign** – includes advertising and public presentations to make the community aware of all elements of the Smart Trips program.

Appendix 5:

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