

Appendices

Appendix A: Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee

Organization	Representative	Alternate
Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County	Manny Smith	
Center for Independence: North Sound	Kelsey Severson	Alex Hatcher
Community Action of Skagit County	Justin Keefe	Lynn Christofersen, Jen Milton
Mercy Transportation	Shirley Allen	
Northwest Educational Service District #189	Mark Dennis	
Northwest Regional Council	Aly Horry	
Samish Indian Nation	Nora Pederson	
Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe	Joni Soriano	Kevin Lenon, Natalie Misanes, Ronda Metcalf
Skagit Transit	Brad Windler	Marcia Smith
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community	Keri Cleary	
Town of Concrete	Cody Hart	
Volunteers of America, Northsound 211	Chris Hatch	
Washington State Department of Transportation	Stacy Clauson	
Washington Vocational Services	Julie Handy	

Appendix B:

Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes, June through October 2018

Appendix C: Public Involvement Plan

Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Planning Services

Public Involvement Plan

Adopted July 18, 2018

Prepared for

Skagit Council of Governments

By

KFH Group, Inc.
Seattle, Washington
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Public Involvement Plan

INTRODUCTION

This Public Involvement Plan was developed to assist the Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) to fulfill part of the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT's) requirements to prepare a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP). Public involvement in the development of the CPT-HSTP will help ensure that the community is aware of the planning process and has an opportunity to provide input.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

Based on input from the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee and the KFH Group's experience in conducting public engagement activities for CPT-HSTPs, several activities are recommended for the Skagit CPT-HSPT planning process. Each activity is introduced below, with a detailed list of tasks, time frames, and responsible organizations proposed for each activity attached as Table 1.

- **Interview Special Needs Committee Members** – The members of the SCOG Special Needs Committee represent many of the key stakeholder organizations in Skagit County and beyond, including public transportation providers, tribes, and organizations that serve the target populations for public and specialized transportation services. We recommend interviewing each member by telephone as one of the earliest steps in the public involvement process, to:
 - gain their input regarding issues and concerns to be addressed in the planning process,
 - gain an understanding of their perspectives of the transportation needs in the community, as well as their perceived issues and challenges to meeting the needs,
 - request any data or previous studies they may have on transportation needs, and
 - ask what their anticipated funding request will be for the FY 2019-21 WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program cycle and beyond.

- **Prepare and Maintain Email Distribution List of Interested Parties** – To keep interested parties informed, SCOG will create an email list of stakeholders (in addition the Special Transportation Needs Committee) to provide updates throughout the planning process. A preliminary list of organizations is attached as Table 2.
- **Survey Other Stakeholder Organizations** – In addition to the organizations represented on the Special Needs Committee, many other organizations, including public agencies, other tribes, nonprofit organizations, and school districts, provide services for the target populations in Skagit County. We recommend surveying each of these stakeholder organizations to gain their perspectives of transportation needs. This survey would be prepared in a web-based format that can be emailed to each stakeholder organization for which we have a valid email address, and would be paper-mailed to those for which no email address is available (or the email transmittal bounces back). Organizations that prefer to answer questions verbally would be interviewed by telephone. A preliminary list of organizations to survey or interview (including Special Needs Committee Members) is attached as Table 2. Respondents will be asked to indicate their name, title, and organization, to ensure that responses come from as appropriate sources.
- **Develop Informational Flyer/Comment Card for Consumers** – For use at outreach events, the KFH Group will develop an information flyer about the CPT-HSTP with a comment card to obtain written comments from consumers. This handout will be translated into Spanish and distributed for at outreach events at service locations (described next). Copies will also be available to Skagit Transit and other Special Transportation Needs Committee members for use at their community outreach events (such as the Skagit County Fair, Senior Day in the Park, and Project Homeless Connect).
- **Conduct Outreach at Service Locations** – To reach the target populations themselves, the Special Needs Committee recommended talking with participants / members at gathering places such as local American Legions, VFWs, food banks, senior centers, the DSHS lobby, and Community Action of Skagit County. A focus group with parents of participants in Boys and Girls Clubs programs was also suggested. (Youth will not be directly interviewed.) The project team proposes that this outreach be conducted at selected sites during a week in mid-August. Recommended criteria for selecting locations include geographic location (to cover as much of the County as possible), dates/times of service, number of individuals likely to be encountered, representation of each the target population groups, and inclusion of Spanish speakers who may have transportation needs (such as migrant farmworkers and their families). We understand that translation services (Spanish and/or Ukrainian) may be needed at some locations. Participants would be encouraged to place markers on maps for important locations for which they need transportation. A preliminary list of locations to visit is attached as Table 3.

If a Skagit Transit bus is available to be parked on-site at any of the consumer outreach visits listed about, the outreach could be conducted on the bus itself. This would provide an opportunity for Skagit Transit to market its own services, as well as to provide a highly visible location in which to hold discussions in a non-intimidating manner.

- **Conduct Community Workshop** – Community workshops provide an informal opportunity to gather information on transportation needs and to discuss opportunities to provide more effective services. For the Skagit CPT-HSTP, we recommended a workshop to provide representatives of stakeholder organizations a forum to discuss unmet transportation needs and help evaluate the priorities for meeting these needs. Group discussion and consensus-building would supplement the individual organizations’ needs and priorities identified through the stakeholder surveys and interviews. We recommend that the workshop be conducted by mid-August to help inform the process for evaluating project applications submitted to SCOG for the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program. The meeting room at Skagit Station would be a good location for the workshop.

Table 1: Public Involvement Plan for the CPT-HSTP

Strategy	Target Populations	Major Tasks	Timeframe	KFH Role	SCOG Role
Interview Special Needs Committee Members	Organizations representing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seniors • people with disabilities • veterans • low income persons • at-risk youth • tribal members 	Develop questionnaire	July 10	x	
		Email each committee member to request telephone interview	July 11	x	
		Conduct interviews	July 11-20	x	
		Summarize responses	July 20-31	x	
Prepare and Maintain Email Distribution List of Interested Parties	Stakeholders and other interested parties	Create email list of stakeholders beyond Special Needs Committee	July 13-17		x
		Update email list	As needed		x
		Send periodic updates throughout the planning process	As needed	x	x
Develop Informational Flyer on CPT-HSTP / Consumer Comment Card	General public and populations targeted at specific outreach events	Prepare a one-page informational flyer and comment card for consumers to provide comments their transportation needs and recommendations	July 13-16	x	
		Translate flyer/ comment card into Spanish	July 16-24	x	
		Provide copies of the one-page flyer/comment card for consumers Skagit Transit and other Steering Committee members to share at community events	July 24	x	x
		Compile and summarize comments received on comment cards	August 24-31	x	x
Survey / Interviews with Other Stakeholder Organizations	Organizations representing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seniors • people with disabilities • veterans • low income persons • at-risk youth • tribal members 	Develop survey distribution list (organization, individual(s), email address, mailing address)	July 13-17	x	x
		Develop survey questionnaire	July 10-13	x	
		Set up web-based survey tool	July 16-17	x	
		Develop transmittal email/letter	July 10-13	x	
		Email survey request (U.S. Mail if email address is unavailable or message bounces back)	July 18-19	x	
		Collect survey responses / conduct interviews	July 18-August 1	primary	support
		Compile responses submitted other than by web tool	August 1-7		x
		Summarize survey responses	August 7-10	x	

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Strategy	Target Populations	Major Tasks	Timeframe	KFH Role	SCOG Role	
Community Workshop to Discuss and Weigh Needs	Organizations representing	Arrange for Skagit Station meeting room	July 13-17		x	
	• seniors	Send invitations (concurrent with stakeholder survey emails)	July 18-19	x		
	• people with disabilities	Compile planned attendee list	July 19-August 1	x		
	• veterans	Prepare workshop materials	August 2-10	x		
	• low income persons	Set up and conduct two-hour workshop	August 14-16	primary	support	
	• at-risk youth	Summarize input received at workshop	August 20-24	x		
Outreach at Common Destinations for Target Populations	• seniors	Compile list of organizations with service days/hours and locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food banks • Senior centers • American Legions • VFWs • Food banks • Community Action • DSHS • Focus group with parents of Boys & Girls Club participants (youth will not be directly interviewed) 	July 10-12	x		
	• people with disabilities		Select locations and times that could be efficiently visited during the target week (Aug. 13-17)	July 13-16	x	
	• veterans		Prepare a one-page informational flyer brief questionnaire for consumers about their transportation needs and recommendations	July 13-16	x	
	• low income persons		Contact organizations to request permission / schedule site visit / ask about translation needs	July 16-24	x	
	• parents of at-risk youth		Translate flyer/ questionnaire for consumers into Spanish	July 16-24	x	
			Arrange for in-person translation services where needed (e.g., Spanish at locations serving migrant workers, potentially Ukrainian at East County food banks)	July 24-31		x
			Visit locations / talk with consumers	August 13-17	primary	support
			Prepare summary of input	August 20-24	x	

Table 1: Public Involvement Plan for the CPT-HSTP

Strategy	Target Populations	Major Tasks	Timeframe	KFH Role	SCOG Role
Engagement with Emergency Management / First Responders	Emergency management organizations / first responders	Develop contact list (organization, individual(s), contact information)	August 6-7	x	
		Develop questionnaire and email transmittal explaining project and requesting telephone interview	August 6-7	x	
		Send email	August 8	x	
		Conduct interviews	August 9-31	x	
		Summarize responses	September 4-7	x	

Table 2: Preliminary List of Organizations to Survey

Organization Type	Organizations to Survey	
Public Transit Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skagit Transit • Community Transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Island Transit • Whatcom Transportation Authority
Private Transportation Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercy Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bellair Airporter Shuttle
Tribes and Tribal Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samish Indian Nation - Anacortes • Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe - Darrington • Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians - Arlington 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swinomish Indian Tribal Community - Swinomish Village • Upper Skagit Indian Tribe – Sedro-Woolley • North Intertribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program
Nonprofit Organizations that Serve the Target Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anacortes Aktion Club (Anacortes Kiwanis) • Boys and Girls Clubs of Skagit County • Bradford House / Skagit Adult Day Program • Catholic Community Services of Skagit County • Center for Independence: North Sound • Chinook Enterprises • Communities In Schools of Whatcom-Skagit • Community Action of Skagit County • DAV Skagit Valley #59 • East County Community Resource Center & Senior Center • Gentry House Adult Day Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodwill • Mount Vernon North Sound Behavioral Health Organization • Northwest Educational Service District #189 • Northwest Regional Council • Northwest Youth Services • Oasis Teen Shelter • Skagit & Island Council of the Blind • Sunrise Community Mental Health • Volunteers of America, Northsound 211 • Washington Vocational Services
County/State/Federal Government Programs that Serve the Target Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSHS • DVR • Skagit County Behavioral Health Program • Skagit County Developmental Disabilities Program • Skagit County Public Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skagit County Senior Programs • Skagit County Veteran Service Officer • VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic • Work First • WorkSource Skagit County
School Districts – IED Coordinator/Transition Program, McKinney Venter Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anacortes High School • Burlington-Edison High School • Concrete High School • Conway School District (is there a high school?) • La Conner High School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount Vernon High School • Mount Vernon Skagit Academy • Sedro-Woolley High School • Sedro-Woolley State Street High School

Table 2: Preliminary List of Organizations to Survey

Organization Type	Organizations to Survey	
Post-secondary and Technical Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northwest Career and Technical Academy • Skagit Valley College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSU Extension Research Center, Mount Vernon
Major Medical Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Island Hospital, Anacortes • Sea Mar Clinics in Anacortes, Concrete, Mount Vernon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skagit Valley Hospital, Mount Vernon • United General Hospital, Sedro-Woolley
Residential Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpine Ridge Retirement Apartments • Anacortes Housing Authority • Ark Adult Family Homes • Austin Manor • The Bridge Assisted Living • Cap Sante Court • Caring Hearts Adult Home • Cedar Grove Adult Home • Chandler’s Square • Country Meadows • Creekside Retirement Community • Fairmont Manor Care Center • Harmony Haven Adult Family Home • Heather Village • Heavenly Care Adult Family Home • Housing Authority of Skagit County • Joshua’s House Adult Family Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • La Conner Retirement Inn • Life Care Center of Mount Vernon (nursing home) • Life Care Center of Skagit Valley (nursing home) • Lighthouse Memory Care • Logan Creek • Mira Vista Care Center (nursing home) • Mountain Glen Retirement Center • Ovenell Home • Park Village Mobile Home Park • Prestige (nursing home) • Ridgeview Terrace Senior Apartments • Rosario Care Center (nursing home) • San Juan Assisted Living • Sedro-Woolley Housing Authority • Summerglen Apartments • Where the Heart Is
Committees and Advisory Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anacortes Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) 	

Table 3: Preliminary List of Potential Gathering Places to Visit

Type	Location
American Legion Posts	Post 13 - Anacortes Post 43 – Sedro Woolley Post 91 – Burlington Post 132 - Concrete
VFW Posts	Sedro-Woolley
Senior Centers	Anacortes Burlington Concrete Mount Vernon Sedro Woolley
Food Banks	Alger Food Bank Anacortes 100 Food Bank Anacortes Salvation Army Food Bank Burlington St Charles Catholic Church Burlington Tri-Parish Food Bank Clear Lake Community Covenant Food Bank – Love Inc Concrete Food Bank La Conner Sunrise Food Bank Lyman Food Bank Marblemount Bread of Life Food Bank Mount Vernon Community Action Agency Food Bank Mount Vernon Heartprints Food Bank Mount Vernon Skagit Gleaners Food Bank Mount Vernon Skagit Valley Neighbors in Need Sedro Woolley Hamilton Food Bank Sedro Woolley Helping Hands Food Bank Sedro Woolley Skagit Food Distribution Center
DSHS Lobby	Mount Vernon
Community Action	Mount Vernon Concrete - East County Resource Center
Focus Group with parents of Boys and Girls Clubs participants	Anacortes Burlington Mount Vernon Sedro-Woolley

Appendix D: Needs Identified During Public Involvement Activities

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Needs Identified in Interviews with Special Transportation Needs Committee Members and Other Stakeholders

The consultant team interviewed most members of the Special Transportation Needs Committee, as well as additional representatives from two of the member organizations. The needs identified through these interviews are listed below by respondent.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Skagit County

The consultant interviewed Manny Smith, Director of Operations.

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Skagit County has the capacity to serve more at-risk youth, but transportation is a barrier to many of these kids being able to participate.
- During the school year, the school districts transport kids on school buses to after school programs, but it can be a challenge for parents to get kids home if they do not have a car. (School activity bus transportation is only provided from Mount Vernon, not from the Anacortes, Burlington, or Sedro Woolley locations.)
- During the summer, when school bus transportation is not available, far fewer kids can participate in Boys and Girls Clubs programs due to lack of transportation, because parents cannot leave work to drive their kids. For example, the Boys and Girls Club in Sedro Woolley serves about 120 to 130 kids during the school year, but only 30 to 40 in the summer.
- Employees of Boys and Girls Clubs also face transportation challenges getting to and from work. In some cases more direct transit services could help. For example, making a trip from Anacortes to Mount Vernon can take a long time due to multiple transfers required.
- A new Boys and Girls Club is opening in Concrete this fall and the organization is currently recruiting an additional 16 to 20 employees to staff it. Transportation is a barrier for some potential employees who may be travelling from Sedro Woolley and Mount Vernon. Boys and Girls Clubs is exploring the possibility of some sort of employee transportation, such as vanpooling.

Center for Independence

Interviews were conducted with both Alex Hatcher-Schoenbachler, IL Supervisor, and Shawn Latham, IL Coordinator.

- Housing affordability is a major factor in driving transportation needs. Most of the affordable housing tends to be out in the rural areas, far from where people need to go for medical appointments, employment, and daily living needs. This increases the need for transportation between the rural parts of Skagit County and the Mount Vernon area.
- Transportation is needed beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service area around Skagit Transit fixed routes that is served by Paratransit. People who live outside of this area lack transportation services, especially in rural areas. An expanded Paratransit service area (beyond $\frac{3}{4}$ mile), perhaps as a pilot project, could help meet more needs.
- There are limited transportation services for people with disabilities to travel to social and recreational destinations, which are very important for quality of life.
- Potential transit users have a fear of getting stranded when using transit, particularly later in the day/evening and when transit connection times are tight. This is a barrier for many CFI participants, so CFI schedules events in the middle of the day rather than late afternoon/evening.
- The CFI helps its participants with developing personal emergency preparedness plans but is not currently involved with emergency management agencies in Skagit County. CFI would like to be at the table when emergency management agencies are planning for emergency management and response; people with disabilities have needs in emergency situations that may not be addressed in plans for the general population.
- Regional connectivity concerns – people with mobility disabilities may stay within their local county due to connectivity barriers:
 - San Juan connectivity – getting to Bellingham is particularly difficult. The ferry from Friday Harbor is often running late. Bellingham-bound riders who miss the bus from Anacortes can get stranded.
 - The bus ride from Anacortes to March Point to Mount Vernon to Bellingham requires multiple transfers and the bus schedules and ferry schedules don't always line up, resulting in a long ride.
 - More trains to Seattle are desirable – too few run for a day trip.
- Local needs for transportation in Skagit County:
 - for residents who live beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile service area for Dial-a-Ride,
 - from Concrete – some areas only served weekly,
 - during evenings for evening events,
 - on holidays (e.g., 4th of July), and
 - on weekends.
- A regional fare payment card like the Puget Sound Region's ORCA card would be helpful.
- Park and ride lot concerns include:

- Installation of security cameras at park and rides would make them feel safer for riders waiting there for a bus.
- When a bathroom is vandalized it is closed until repaired which can be a while. This can be a problem for riders needing to transfer/waiting in between buses.
- When designing park and ride lots would be good to consult with people with disabilities on design – engineering specifications don't always translate to usable.

Community Action of Skagit County

The consultant interviewed Justin Keefe, Community Resource Coordinator.

- Assistance with transportation is one of the biggest needs among Community Action's program participants. This includes many requests for out of county transportation. (The County Connector routes help meet these needs for those who can afford the fare.) The most frequent trip purposes are medical and job-related. Community Action refers those needing medical transportation to Northwest Regional Council (the Medicaid broker for Skagit County) whenever possible.
- Skagit Transit meets many program participants' needs but there are some unmet needs with Skagit County.
- Individuals who live outside of the Mount Vernon area who need to get to early work shifts may not be able to do this with current Skagit Transit schedules.
- Traveling from Sedro Woolley to Mount Vernon can take a very long time under current schedules, but Skagit Transit is planning to change this.
- There is increased need for transportation to the Swinomish Tribe's didgwalič Wellness Center in Anacortes, the only opioid treatment center in the county. The Tribe operates some transportation services to and from the center but this is limited. Individuals need to travel there from as far north as Bellingham and from Arlington to the south.
- Current transit services from the Mount Vernon area back out to Concrete and other areas of the county can end fairly early, which creates a challenge for individuals with afternoon appointments.
- Skagit Transit Dial-A-Ride (paratransit) service can be challenging for some users, particularly after a medical appointment that runs late. The pick-up scheduling window doesn't always align with the medical schedule.
- Affording the transit fare can be a challenge for low income individuals. The availability of funding for transit passes is limited and the need for transit passes exceeds available supply. An expansion of the Skagit Transit Ride Pass Grant program could help with this. Passes that are valid for inter-county services are also needed.
- Community Action program participants sometimes have difficulty understanding how to use Skagit Transit services. Low literacy and limited English proficiency can be barriers to accessing transportation services.

Mercy Transportation

Shirley Allen, owner of Mercy Transportation, shared the following needs and ideas.

- From Mercy Transportation’s perspective, the biggest need is for service that crosses county lines.
- Mercy Transportation sees the possibility for increased coordination/collaboration among organizations that provide special needs transportation services. This could help increase the availability of services which are in short supply in Skagit County and regionally. As an example, Mercy Transportation’s management mentioned a pilot project in Pinellas County, Florida which provides rider-centric services using several providers (including the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, Uber, and United Taxi) to cost-effectively meet specialized transportation needs.

Northwest Educational Service District #189

The consultant interviewed Mark Dennis, Regional Transportation Coordinator with the Northwest Educational Service District 189, which covers all school districts from Snohomish County north. Because of the mandate to provide pupil transportation, the school districts in Skagit County are believed to be meeting all of the school transportation needs of their students.

Northwest Regional Council

The consultant interviewed Alyssa Horry, Medicaid Transportation Services Supervisor.

- One unmet need identified is a way for clients traveling from Whatcom County into Anacortes to the didgwálič Wellness Center on Saturdays in time to make dosage hours. Currently, the Saturday transit schedules are such that riders transferring from the 80X Connector bus to the 40X Connector can’t make a connection to get to Anacortes in time. One potential solution is for the didgwálič Wellness Center to shift its dosage hours on Saturday; another is for the 80X to start earlier on Saturdays.
- An unmet need for some clients in the rural eastern part of the county where cellular phone coverage isn’t always available, and transit services are more limited, is a means to let the client know when a taxi ride or other transportation service is on the way. Improved cell coverage or access to an affordable landline, or a means of texting clients could help improve getting information out to riders about the arrival time of their service.
- Arranging for Medicaid transportation for middle-of-the-night hospital discharges can be a challenge.
- There are unmet medical transportation needs for low income seniors who are not Medicaid eligible. Although NWRC provides information and referral, they may not live near a Skagit Transit route.

- The Whatcom County Adult Day Health center is soon closing. Some of the Whatcom Adult Day participants will then be going to the Skagit Adult Day Health program, but this may result in inter-county transportation challenges. Although there is inter-county transit service (the 8oX Connector), individuals with dementia are unlikely to be able to travel independently on fixed route transit.
- The Veterans Administration’s Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Mount Vernon is not served by veterans-focused transportation service. There is a DAV van that departs from Bellingham and travels to the Seattle VA Medical Center. This van stops in Mount Vernon to pick up and drop off veterans who travel to Seattle, but does not serve the Community-Based Outpatient Clinic, which is a potential destination for veterans in Whatcom County.
- Among those individuals who do live near a transit route there can nonetheless be some resistance to using public transit among those who are not yet familiar with it. Often it is because they have anxieties about missing their stop. NWRC refers people to Skagit Transit’s Travel Training program but some clients refuse.
- NWRC sees a need for a regional I-5 corridor shuttle that would stop in Bellingham, Mount Vernon, Everett, and medical destinations in Seattle (including First Hill and the UW/Children’s Hospital areas). NWRC is hoping to coordinate with Hopelink in King County to develop such a service. Covering the operating costs and determining a reasonable fare are among the challenges of which NWRC is aware. Currently, riders can make this trip indirectly by riding 8oX from Bellingham to Everett, then taking a Sound Transit bus into Seattle, then transferring to a local bus to get to the medical destination. Although possible for many riders, those with medical issues may not have the capacity to make multiple transfers, and navigating the bus system in Seattle may be a challenge. Freeway stops on the direct shuttle could help keep it as an express service.

Samish Indian Nation

Nora Pederson, Planner for the Samish Indian Nation, responded to interview questions via email. The Samish Planning Department recently completed a study on the transportation needs of the Samish Indian Nation. Unmet needs for public transit or special needs transportation include:

- Transit service to Samish Indian Nation tribal facilities in and around Anacortes – Tribal members access services and attend cultural events who live in Mount Vernon, Seattle, or out of state. Many of them can get to Anacortes public transit, but have trouble getting to the Tribe’s facilities themselves. For many of the tribal facilities there is no transit service for that “last mile,” which is sometimes more than just one mile.
- Special needs transportation related to Samish direct-service programs – Samish Indian Nation runs several programs that serve special needs Native Americans and provide transportation related to their services (e.g. , the Tribe’s social services program takes clients to appointments, and their elders program takes clients to meal

sites for socializing and cultural activities). The Tribe struggles to support the transportation element of these programs, both in terms of drivers and wheelchair accessible vehicles.

- Non-emergency medical transportation.

The membership of the Samish Indian Nation is very dispersed. The Tribe does not have a reservation, and tribal members live mainly throughout Skagit, Whatcom, Snohomish, King, Thurston and Pierce counties, with some families living at an even greater distance. Because of this dispersed population, transportation is key to a functioning Samish tribal community. Lack of public transportation to tribal facilities, both that “last mile” and the regional connections, has a profound impact.

Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe

The consultant interviewed Joni Soriano, Director of Planning and Development.

- The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe has received requests to extend its DC Direct service (currently operating between Darrington and Concrete) in Snohomish County to further southwest to Arlington. An additional vehicle and additional operations funding would be needed to extend the route.
- With respect to destinations in Skagit County, the Tribe’s transportation programs and Skagit Transit are generally meeting the transportation needs of Tribal members. Ideally, the DC Direct service could be expanded to seven days a week, operating from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe is currently developing a short-range transit plan.
- In terms of demographic indicators of need, although the 2010 Census data on tribal populations is not good, updated demographic data, based on Tribal enrollment, is currently being updated and will hopefully be completed by early September. This would need to be requested in writing from the Tribe.

Skagit Transit

The following needs and related considerations were identified through interviews with three representatives of Skagit Transit: Brad Windler (providing the planning perspective), Marcy Smith (providing the grants administration perspective) and Coni Carrothers (providing the mobility outreach perspective).

Planning Perspective

- Skagit Transit is in the process of developing a strategic plan that will recommend service improvements for the next three to five years. A draft will be available (tentatively in late August) for public review and comment.

- As part of the strategic planning effort, Skagit Transit conducted a customer survey. The responses to the survey present a comprehensive picture of Skagit Transit's current riders, why they travel, customer satisfaction, what improvements they would like to see, and what types of activities they travel to, and customer satisfaction. Survey respondents indicated the following as their highest priorities for service improvements:
 - Provide local service later in the evening
 - Add more bus shelters/seating
 - Provide service to Bellingham/Everett later in the evening
 - Provide Sunday Service in more locations
 - Start local service earlier in the morning
 - Increase the frequency of the rural routes
- Skagit Transit also conducted public meetings to gather public input on the strategic plan. One of the major themes they heard was a need to increase frequencies on rural routes.
- As a result of the strategic planning process, Skagit Transit is preparing to make some service adjustments to address unmet needs. For example, Route 750, which serves Marblemount on Fridays, will be moved to Tuesdays. The schedule for Route 750 as well as Route 717 (which connects to the 750 in Concrete) will be adjusted to provide greater access to social services and medical appointments in western Skagit County for Marblemount and Concrete residents, through a longer window of time available between the first arrival and last departure of the day. A second round trip between Marblemount and Concrete will also be added to facilitate access to services in Concrete. Coordinating the two routes means that these improvements can make efficient use of resources.
- Skagit Transit would like to improve the flow of information to customers, building on its existing GPS technology with a module to provide customers with real-time bus location information and arrival times, including digital displays at passenger facilities. This would make it easier for passengers to feel confident waiting on routes that do not operate frequently, to avoid a long wait outdoors (or wondering whether or not they missed the last bus).
- Skagit Transit was formed to serve the citizens of Skagit County, as a local Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) with specific service boundaries, governed by elected officials of the local governments and funded by local taxpayers living within those boundaries. Although local transit can facilitate regional connections, regional funding would be needed to expand services regionally.
- Skagit Transit is aware of the challenges that riders of the WSDOT Ferries face in connecting with local transit and appreciates the needs of these riders. However, it would be cost-prohibitive to provide additional local transit services to meet and wait for every WSDOT ferry. For example, adding two additional fixed route buses to the system would cost an estimated \$800,000 per year, and there would likely be additional Paratransit costs to complement the expanded fixed route service.

- Expanding to serve additional rural areas of the county would likewise involve significant operating costs. Skagit Transit has considered providing demand-response type of services in new rural areas to save operating costs, but past efforts at providing route deviation service have not been well-used, and fixed route service is the agency's preferred operating mode for public transit.

Grants Administration Perspective

- Rural areas are the areas with the greatest transportation need. Skagit Transit operates more limited services in rural areas, but they are low ridership services and it is hard to sustain the cost of operating services for a small number of people when the same resources could be used to serve larger numbers of people in more densely populated areas.
- Service is needed later in the evening in the more urban areas of the county.
- Some routes do not operate every day, and some routes have mid-day gaps in their schedules. These routes are primarily in the rural areas.
- Residents of South Fidalgo Island have been vocal in requesting services. Alger and Bay View have also expressed needs. The community of Big Lake is also unserved but there have not been many requests there.
- Skagit Transit's Ride Pass Grant program is very popular, to the extent that there are more requests than there are available passes. An expansion of this program is being considered for the 2019 budget. These passes are funded for distribution to individuals who are low income or with disabilities. There has been interest from schools to apply for the passes through the Ride Pass Grant program. It would be difficult for Skagit Transit to manage school bus passes with limited staff because there are too many variables in the need for the passes to school children. The non-profit agencies that assist the schools in getting families and children to the extra-curricular activities would be in a better position to manage eligibility for bus passes for their programs, and may want to consider applying for funding themselves to purchase bus passes.
- Skagit Transit could benefit from automatic passenger counting technology, particularly for counting required for National Transit Database (NTD) reporting.
- Areas with high senior populations or low car ownership are not necessarily areas with high transportation need. The cost of housing should also be a factor. For example, Anacortes was identified as a high need area in the previous CPT-HSTP, but it is also an affluent area with a high cost of living. In contrast, there are many low-income seniors in Sedro-Woolley.

Mobility Outreach Perspective

- Skagit County is experiencing a nationwide trend of people choosing to age in place in rural areas. This results in an increased need for transportation services from rural areas, particularly to get to medical appointments in more urbanized areas.

- There are many requests for transit service in Anacortes on Sunday, for service to the ferry terminal, work, and places of worship.
- There is currently no known taxicab service in Sedro Woolley, which is a growing area.
- In the eastern part of the county, there are residents in communities along Highway 20 who are dependent on Skagit Transit to get to Mount Vernon and Burlington. Some have voiced a desire for more frequent transit service. The need for transportation services in this region is growing as housing prices in the western part of the county are pushing people out to the fringes (happening on a regional level).
- There are many farmworkers in Skagit County and not all of them live in areas served by public transit, or transit doesn't go where they need to work or when they need to go. Some farms provide their own transportation services.
- Regional transportation needs include getting Skagit County residents to Bellingham, Everett and Seattle for employment and medical care. Residents of Island and San Juan counties need to get to Skagit County for medical care. Skagit County is a regional medical destination, but Skagit residents may need to travel out of county for some services.
- Homeless people sometimes have regional transportation needs. They may use the emergency room to access medical care, and then hospital social workers don't want to send them back out on the street, so before discharging them try to find a bed in a local shelter. If local shelters are full, they may send them to shelters in Bellingham or Everett. This sometimes occurs in the middle of the night, when there is no transit service available.
- The Ride Pass Grant Program is very helpful for low income persons, but it is limited to local bus services, not on the regional 80x or 90x routes.
- There are many rural pockets of Skagit County that are without transportation, but people can drive to the closest park and ride lot to make connections.
- In general, the population in Skagit County is increasing and the transportation needs are increasing as people move farther and farther north from the very expensive Seattle metro area.

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

The consultant interviewed Keri Cleary, Planner for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, who shared the following transportation needs of tribal members:

- Transportation to and from employment and training in Bellingham (Whatcom County), the Lummi Reservation west of Bellingham, Northwest Indian College (locations in Swinomish Village and on the Lummi Reservation), Western Washington University, Bellingham Technical College, and Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon.
- More frequent service from Swinomish Village toward Anacortes.
- More service from the eastern part of Skagit County to the western part of the county.
- Transitional housing transportation to social service and legal appointments.
- Additional transportation for medical appointments.

- Additional transportation for employment.
- Additional transportation for social services.
- The Swinomish Tribe is applying for a grant to the Federal Transit Administration to conduct a feasibility study to increase transit and dial-a-ride services to and from the reservation.

Town of Concrete

The consultant interviewed Cody Hart, CRH Engineering, representing the Town of Concrete.

- Current Skagit Transit service does not operate at hours that allow residents of Concrete to commute to a full-time job in the Mount Vernon area; early/late schedules are needed to accommodate weekday work shifts from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- East of Concrete is only served one day a week; additional days of service are needed (ideally five days a week).
- High school students in Concrete who are eligible for Head Start higher educational opportunities at Skagit Valley College lack school transportation to and from the college.
- Passengers waiting for a bus in Concrete lack amenities such as a shelter.
- There is interest in Concrete in starting a circulating loop route around town to connect downtown with government services and grocery stores.
- Concrete is geographically isolated and home to many people with low incomes. Transportation needs are growing because the Town's population is growing as more people move there for affordable housing, and commute to work in western Skagit County as well as out-of-county (to Everett for example).

Volunteers of America, Northsound 211

The consultant interviewed Chris Hatch, North Sound 211 Program Manager.

- Transportation is one of the top ten needs identified, based on call center data from the five-county area served by Northsound 211 (Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom).
- Even low public transit fares are unaffordable for some people.
- While there are programs that help various specialized groups with transportation services and transportation costs, there are people who “slip through the cracks” and don't qualify for services or financial support.
- A computerized trip planner that could be used to schedule volunteer rides and provide volunteers with digital vouchers could be very helpful in meeting transportation needs.

Washington State Department of Transportation

Washington State Department of Transportation Public Transportation Community Liaison Stacy Clauson provided the following insights on Skagit County transportation needs.

- Transportation is needed to jobs, goods and services, education, and retail trade. Major employers in the region include the refineries, Skagit Regional Health, School Districts, Skagit County, Janicki Industries, area casinos, and Paccar. Access to some jobs and educational opportunities can be particularly challenging for people relying on public transit, if transportation is needed for shift work or later in the evening.
- Skagit County has a large senior population including a large rural senior population desiring to age in place.
- Skagit Transit is doing a great job, and with the resources they have available are able to serve many parts of the County, key destinations, as well as provide linkages to other public transportation providers. However, there remain underserved urban areas (e.g., need for greater frequency, and more direct service between cities, and expansion to service growing areas such as North Mount Vernon), as well as rural areas where demand is growing and more frequent service is needed (e.g., more days and increase in frequency). Regional and local service later in the evening has also been identified as a need.
- Presently, the lack of capacity within the Maintenance and Operations Facility may limit significant expansion opportunities. Plans to relocate to a new facility should provide additional needed capacity, but construction is still a couple of years out.
- In the past, Community Action identified a lack of knowledge in how to use the transit system. In recent years, Skagit Transit's mobility manager has been doing a great deal of outreach in collaboration with human service agencies.
- The transportation needs of the large farmworker population is an unknown. They may live and work along public transit routes but it may not work for their schedules. Language challenges (speakers of Spanish and other languages) present an additional barrier to hearing from them.
- Transit connections with the ferry in Anacortes can be challenging. The ferry schedules change seasonally and they can run behind schedule.
- The Samish Indian Nation is making investments in transportation. The Samish population is more dispersed than the tribes with reservations, and may be bringing people in to services from further afield for medical appointments, vocational rehabilitation services, and cultural events. Transportation for the senior population is a particular concern.
- The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community's didgwálic Wellness Center in Anacortes is a regional destination.
- The Sauk Suiattle Tribe, outside of the Skagit Transit PTBA, helps meet the gaps in southeastern Skagit County through its DC Direct public transit service.
- There is a linkage between rising housing costs and transportation needs. People who live in rural areas, where housing is more affordable, may be unable to afford

maintenance and operation of their own vehicle, and may be left without transportation options.

- In rural areas, lack of infrastructure can pose first/last mile issues, and because some areas are very rural, the distance to bus facilities may be much longer than a mile. The lack of facilities means that bus stops may be without accessible walkways or safe crossings. Further, bus stops and other transportation waiting areas lack benches and other amenities (e.g., weather protection) for older adults and individuals with disabilities.
- There can be high housing costs in eastern Skagit County, yet jobs out there tend to have lower wages.
- At the regional level, western Skagit County is a key juncture point. Many of the transportation needs are not directly related to Skagit County residents, but are related to the geographic location of Mount Vernon.

Washington Vocational Services

The consultant interviewed Julie Handy, Skagit County & ATTIC Program Manager.

- Travel training is an essential service and it is important to keep this function staffed. (Skagit Transit's travel trainer Sue Libby is excellent, and WVS partners with Skagit Transit's trainer. Several other agencies also provide travel training for clients.)
- Transportation can be a huge barrier to employment for people with disabilities. Some of Washington Vocational Services' clients qualify for Paratransit (Dial-A-Ride), but this service is not always user-friendly for them particularly since changes were implemented on July 1.
- A change implemented on July 1 is the advanced scheduling policy. The current scheduling requirement of booking the trip four days in advance and then confirming the pickup time the night before service makes it difficult for Washington Vocational Services to schedule support staff the night before to accompany clients who are unable to travel or work independently (as opposed to scheduling the pickup time further in advance).
- Trip drop-off times can be challenging for clients who cannot wait alone for long periods of time at the drop-off location. For example, a client that has a work shift starting at 11:00 a.m. scheduled to get dropped off at 9:45 a.m. is unable to wait unsupervised for 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- Paratransit (Dial-A-Ride) transportation between Anacortes and Burlington can be challenging/lengthy for riders with disabilities due to the need to transfer at March's Point.
- Some Washington Vocational Services' clients live in areas not currently served by Skagit Transit including the Big Rock area and the Fruitdale area out of Sedro Woolley. (There is an adult family home out in this area.)
- Earlier and later service transit/paratransit hours are needed for some clients' work shifts.

- The Ride Pass Grant program is helpful for providing fare-free service to clients.

Needs Identified in Stakeholder Survey Responses

Human service agency personnel and the members of the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee were invited to respond to an online stakeholders' survey. Responses were received from the following organizations as of August 23, 2018:

- Anacortes Family Center
- Chinook Enterprises
- Friendship House
- La Conner School District
- Northwest Career & Technical Academy
- Samish Indian Nation Vocational Rehabilitation
- Sea Mar Community Health Centers
- Skagit County Parent to Parent
- Skagit Transit
- Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Several questions addressed unmet transportation needs or suggestions for improvements to existing services.

In response to "Are you aware of any unmet transportation needs among your clients, or in Skagit County in general?" respondents indicated the following:

- *Not enough routes through rural areas including farms and migrant camps. Many agricultural workers do not speak, read or write in English or even Spanish and are not familiar with how buses operate. They need training and awareness in low literacy culturally appropriate formats - KSVR radio, word of mouth, bus parties.*
- *We work with families with two issues, either 1) they are not able to access public transportation from their rural residence or 2) they find public transportation cumbersome given their children with disabilities and/or complex healthcare needs. For example, many of our families have children with Autism or Sensory Processing Disorder that struggle to use public transportation as it throws their child out of sync. Some of our families also struggle with language barriers and finding the best transportation options given their work schedule or residential location.*
- *Later hours of operation for work. Lack of coverage for getting to work.*
- *Families that need to go from Fidalgo Island (Anacortes) to Mount Vernon need to take a minimum of 3 buses to get to their final destination. That becomes a struggle for those that have disabilities and/or fears or anxiety about riding buses. It's too long of a ride, complicated and overwhelming. And for those with children same it's too much. The hours are also not very convenient. To Fidalgo Island the buses run until about 7 p.m. so it limits of when families need to be back in town in order to not be stranded. Buses*

don't run at early times or weekends. So when you have single parents needing to leave early to be at their job but need to drop off kids at childcare it's a real obstacle. And if you have a parent that works weekends they have no way to get to work on Sundays.

- *There is a lack of service in the number of buses and limited time frames for service scheduled to access La Conner, Anacortes, and the Port of Skagit Business Complex. Some of the rural areas of the County such as Bow... (response was incomplete)*
- *Had one consumer that was unable to get to the bus stop on Swinomish Indian Reservation, too far for disability. Other consumers have a hard time with social phobias and PTSD.*
- *Students at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon sometimes have difficulty getting to and from La Conner.*
- *Frequent fixed route existing services, demand response services, weekend services.*

The following responses were submitted for “What transportation improvements would most benefit the people that your organization serves?”

- *Accessing rural routes more frequently. It's tricky for some to venture into the heavier populated centers when the public transportation schedule may not be frequent enough or have lengthy routes.*
- *Public transit can be improved. Longer services seven days a week and shorter and direct routes to Mount Vernon.*
- *Easier scheduling system for Dial-A-Ride services. Greater expansion of access to Dial-A-Ride services beyond the fringes of the fixed route system and into rural areas of the County.*
- *Perhaps more regular La Conner service.*
- *Increased fixed route services and carpool program between SITC and LIBC and City of Bellingham.*

Another question asked “Please describe any barriers or issues your organization experiences in providing transportation, helping clients access transportation, or improving transportation services.” Responses related to unmet needs included:

- *We don't provide transportation - we receive bus pass grants from WTA and SKAT which help our patients. However, we don't get enough and many don't understand how to use the bus system or live outside the routes.*
- *We serve several clients that require the use of Dial-A-Ride due to mobility and intellectual challenges that prevent them from safely utilizing the fixed route bus system. Many clients live outside of the very limited Dial-A-Ride service area so they essentially have extremely limited access to employment and other essential community based activities. The new scheduling system for Dial-A-Ride use is very limited and frankly unfriendly to the user. Some users are dropped off at sites much earlier than the appointed times which makes coordination with staff to be available at the site at the time of drop off difficult. We are also seeing that users are being picked up much later*

than the scheduled time which again makes service coordination difficult. There appears to be a great amount of inconsistency in the SKAT Dial-A-Ride system. Some of the clients we work with that live outside of La Conner and Anacortes and the Port of Skagit might find great job opportunities in those areas but they cannot get to those potential jobs due to a lack in an adequate number of busses scheduled to those areas. Inflexibility in accommodating required schedule changes is also an issue with Dial-A-Ride. Often when there is a scheduling error by SKAT, they are unwilling to correct the situation and our client may miss work days or community outing opportunities because of the lack of an appropriate fix or accommodation for their mistake.

- *Often a time issue for consumers and their jobs, Concrete to Mount Vernon, disability and amount of time.*
- *Sometimes overcoming the barrier of riding the public bus for the first time.*
- *Fleet management, education of existing programs and how to coordinate the services. Hours of current service not conducive to education/employment.*

Needs Identified at a Stakeholder Workshop

Human service agency personnel and the members of the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee were invited to participate in a stakeholder workshop to learn more about the CPT-HSTP and discuss transportation needs on the afternoon of August 16, 2018 at Skagit Station in Mount Vernon. In addition to SCOG planning staff and members of the consultant team, the following individuals attended:

- Andy Arvidson, Anacortes Senior Activity Center
- Brad Windler, Skagit Transit
- Coni Carrothers, Skagit Transit
- Lisa Fisher, Chinook Enterprises
- Lisette Drake, Sea Mar Community Health Centers
- Rev. Marcella Baker, La Conner United Methodist Church / Sunrise Food Bank
- Megan Goldstein, Cap Sante Court
- Nick Schmeck, Skagit Transit
- Stacy Clauson, WSDOT Public Transportation

The participants identified transportation needs, then prioritized them through a “dot democracy” exercise. Each participant was provided with three dot stickers, one representing their vote for highest priority, one for their second highest priority, and one for their third highest priority. The results of this exercise are presented in Table B-1.

In summary, the highest priority need identified by workshop participants (with six votes) was weekday evening service.

The following needs received three votes each:

- Transportation to the La Conner Food Bank

- Light-up signage at bus stops to signal driver that passenger with disability is waiting at bus stops obscured by parked cars

The following needs received two votes each:

- Expansion of Dial-A-Ride service beyond $\frac{3}{4}$ mile for employment trips
- Transportation for people aging in place in rural areas / moving there for affordability
- Helping people transitioning from driving to no longer driving learn to use public transit to get over unfamiliarity

Table B-1: Results of Identification/Prioritization of Needs

Need Identified at Workshop	Highest Priority	Second Highest Priority	Third Highest Priority
Service from rural areas/farms to get to other services	1 vote		
Transportation to the La Conner Food Bank	1 vote		2 votes
Bus stop at field(s) (for farmworkers in La Conner)			
Sunday service connecting La Conner to Mount Vernon and Anacortes to get to religious services and businesses			1 vote
Weekday evening service	2 votes	4 votes	
Lower transit fares			1 vote
Service to mental health programs provided by churches			
Public education about wheelchair accessibility at bus stops to prevent cars from parking at stops and blocking access		1 vote	
Light-up signage at bus stops to signal driver that passenger with disability is waiting at bus stops obscured by parked cars		3 votes	
Expansion of Dial-A-Ride service beyond $\frac{3}{4}$ mile for employment trips	2 votes		
Transportation to Anacortes Family Center shelter for women and children in Anacortes (the shelter has capacity if people can get there)			1 vote
Transportation for people aging in place in rural areas / moving there for affordability	1 vote		1 vote
Getting people from rural areas to medical services			1 vote
Helping people transitioning from driving to no longer driving learn to use public transit to get over unfamiliarity	1 vote		1 vote

Needs with one vote each included:

- Service from rural areas/farms to get to other services
- Sunday service connecting La Conner to Mount Vernon and Anacortes to get to religious services and businesses
- Lower transit fares
- Public education about wheelchair accessibility at bus stops to prevent cars from parking at stops and blocking access
- Transportation to Anacortes Family Center shelter for women and children in Anacortes (the shelter has capacity if people can get there)
- Getting people from rural areas to medical services

Needs Identified by Individuals Participating in Human Services Programs

Members of study team conducted outreach at the following locations during August 13-16, 2018:

- August 13: La Conner Sunrise Food Bank
- August 14: Concrete Community Meal, Concrete Food Bank
- August 15: Helping Hands Food Bank in Sedro Woolley, Tri Parish Food Bank in Burlington
- August 16: Community Action in Mount Vernon

Individuals arriving at these locations were invited to express comments about their transportation needs and current transportation services, and briefly informed about the development of the CPT-HSTP and its importance for grant funding in Skagit County. Spanish translators were present at locations where staff identified a high percentage of Spanish speaking consumers. Comments indicative of specific transportation needs are summarized below.

Geographic Coverage

- Expanded service area in Marblemount because “first mile-last mile” is a big issue. Many people can’t get to a bus stop.
- Service from Alger to the Sedro Woolley Food Bank on Weds.
- Service from Birdsvew to Concrete.
- Service from Bradshaw Road to Skagit Valley Hospital in Mount Vernon.
- Service from Burlington to Bellingham College.
- Service from Cape Horn to Concrete.
- Service from La Conner to Anacortes for medical appointments.
- Service from Limon to Sedro-Woolley/Burlington/Mount Vernon, weekday afternoons.
- Service from Sedro Woolley to Acme on weekdays. South Skagit Highway needs a route on South Acme.
- Service on Sneeoosh. There are low income residents and it is a long walk to the nearest bus stop.

Service Frequency

- More frequent service from Concrete to Down River (Sedro Woolley, Burlington, and Mount Vernon) for shopping, medical appointments, and employment, weekdays and Saturdays.
- More frequent service from Cape Horn to Burlington with fewer transfers to get to Walmart.

- More frequent service from Marblemount to Down River (Concrete, Burlington, Mount Vernon) Monday through Friday.
- Mid-day service from Shelter Bay and La Conner to Burlington for grocery shopping, ideally leaving from the Clubhouse at 10 a.m. to go to Fred Meyer and return home around 1 p.m.

Other Route and Schedule Requests

- Longer hours / evening transit service.
- Better morning connections to the 80x.
- Commuter service from Concrete to Burlington (morning/evening) and also to the I-5 corridor.
- Later weekend service on the Route 300 – ends at 5:15 pm on Saturdays/Sundays so can't go to evening activities in Burlington/Mount Vernon.
- Local service to the food banks in Hamilton, La Conner, and Sedro Woolley (so that a long wait isn't required to return home)
- More direct service (not requiring multiple transfers) between Anacortes and Burlington to get to the Fred Meyer.
- More direct service from Concrete to Seatac.
- More direct service from La Conner to Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley.
- Sunday service from Concrete to Sedro Woolley, Lake Baker to Concrete.
- Sunday service, evening, and more frequent service between Oak Harbor/Anacortes to Mount Vernon.
- Sunday transportation service so seniors can get to religious services.

Bus Stop Locations and Amenities

- A bus stop is needed at the Concrete Community Center. Not everyone can walk up the hill to the closest stop.
- Closer bus stops to the food banks in La Conner and Sedro Woolley.
- Passenger shelters or benches at Cape Horn bus stops.
- Relocate layover point on the Route 300. If Skagit Transit could move the 20-minute layover point from the former Job Bank to the new Helping Hands Food Bank, people could spend those 20 minutes at the food bank and not have a long wait to return. There is also a portable toilet at the food bank.

Other

- Ability to travel with a leashed pet dog without requiring it to be enclosed in a carrier.
- Veterans transportation from Sedro Woolley to the Seattle VA. The Sedro Woolley DAV van lost volunteer drivers and stopped operating. (DAV van service is available from Anacortes and Mount Vernon.)

- Shorter advanced reservation window for Paratransit.
- Simpler eligibility process for Paratransit.
- Shorter transfer waits in Burlington and/or security cameras at the Burlington park and ride.

Needs Identified through Outreach Interviews with Veterans Groups

SCOG personnel interviewed representatives of several veterans groups during October 2018. The needs identified through these interviews are listed below by respondent.

American Legion Memorial Post 91

SCOG staff interviewed Bob Garrison, Veteran Service Officer, and April Patterson, Finance Officer.

- There is a large population of disabled veterans in the Skagit County area, and transportation to the VA Hospital in Seattle is a major challenge.
- Many veterans residing East of Sedro-Woolley have limited to no means of reaching Seattle or downtown Mount Vernon for medical appointments.
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV) van services in Bellingham and Oak Harbor provide a crucial service for veterans to reach the VA Hospital in Seattle. Loss of the DAV service in Sedro-Woolley created more barriers for veterans in Skagit County.
- American Legion Veteran Service Offices informally provide transportation services in the form of arranging private carpools for veterans to reach their medical appointments at the VA Hospital in Seattle. The Vietnam Veterans of America also coordinate these private carpools.
- The American Legion Post 91 has an informal program where funds are used to purchase \$25 gas cards to help reimburse volunteer drivers to use their vehicles to drive veterans to the VA Hospital in Seattle for medical appointment. Recipients must already be connected to Community Action of Skagit County in order to receive a gas card.
- The American Legion Post 91 works with the Burlington Fire Department although not in a transportation-specific capacity.
- One of the largest challenges identified is in recruiting and retaining service officers and drivers for DAV van service. There is only one paid Veteran Service Officer in Skagit County. There are many restrictions to becoming a DAV driver, and drivers are unpaid volunteers. This creates barriers to the sustainability of DAV van service.
- Increased frequency of transit between Sedro-Woolley and Marblemount would help veterans in Eastern Skagit County to make connections with DAV vans stopping at Skagit Station in Mount Vernon.
- Current unmet needs could be best addressed by creating a system to pay DAV van drivers, and increase reliability and sustainability of the service.

- Ideally, DAV vans would run twice a week from Skagit to the VA Hospital in Seattle – they would depart early in the morning, and stay in Seattle all day until after 6 pm. The vans would stop throughout the county to pick up passengers.

American Legion Causland Post 13

SCOG staff interviewed Walter Garland, Veteran Service Officer.

- Skagit Transit fixed route and paratransit service works well for Fidalgo Island residents to access the Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Mount Vernon.
- Barriers exist for veterans to reach the VA Hospital in Seattle, as well as other VA medical facilities in Tacoma and Portland, Oregon.
- American Legion Post 13 does not offer formalized transportation services. However, volunteers and members will privately drive veterans to medical appointments in Seattle. Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) help provide veterans with contact information for the DAV van service; if that doesn't meet the veteran's needs, the VSO will help to find and arrange private carpool transportation to Seattle.
- The Veterans Service Offices act as a back-up for DAV van service, and rely on DAV van service to transport veterans to Seattle. The DAV service is good, but limited funding, hours of operation, and number of drivers create barriers to service.
- The DAV van drivers prefer that medical appointments be scheduled at the VA Hospital between 9 am and 12 pm, so that drivers are able to return back north to Skagit County before afternoon Seattle traffic sets in.

Skagit County, Washington Department of Veteran Affairs

SCOG staff interviewed Pete Sill, Veteran Service Officer.

- One of the largest challenges for veterans is accessing medical services at the VA Hospital in Seattle.
- DAV vans are not wheelchair accessible.
- In Skagit County, appointments to use the DAV van service must be booked at least 5 days in advance, because the demand for service is so high.
- A DAV van service based in Burlington could be beneficial to help veterans reach the VA Hospital; however, recruitment and retaining of drivers is a barrier. The Sedro-Woolley area lost the DAV van service because of a lack of drivers.
- A better transportation system would have a dedicated van that is wheelchair accessible, running reliably once a week at least. Paying DAV van drivers would help keep the service running.

Appendix E:

Prioritized Project Applications for 2019-2021 Funding under the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program

