

Skagit Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan



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DRAFT

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Prepared by 
KFH Group, Inc.
Seattle, WA | Bethesda, MD | Austin, TX

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Section 1 – Background and Overview of the Planning Process

Introduction

This report documents the 2018 Skagit Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) developed for the Skagit Council of Governments (SCOG) which is the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the Skagit region. This plan updates the Skagit portion of the 2014 Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan.

The report is organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides background information and an overview of the planning process including the stakeholder engagement and public outreach activities conducted as part of the planning process.
- Chapter 2 provides an inventory of current transportation services in the region. Particular focus is on the public transit and human service transportation providers, who were key participants in the coordinated transportation planning process.
- Chapter 3 provides an assessment of transportation needs in the region in relation to existing transit services. It includes both quantitative data (U.S. Census and American Community Survey) as well as qualitative data (input on needs from Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee members and public outreach activities).
- Chapter 4 indicates the transit technologies currently in use in the region and summarizes transportation provider involvement in regional emergency management practices.
- Chapter 5 presents project prioritization and potential strategies and possible mobility management efforts to improve transportation services in the region.



- Appendix A lists the members of the Ad Hoc Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee as of October 2018.
- Appendix B provides minutes from the meetings of the Ad Hoc Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee that were conducted during this planning process.
- Appendix C provides the public involvement plan adopted for this planning process.
- Appendix D presents the detailed input collected on qualitative transportation needs.
- Appendix E includes the prioritized list of projects submitted to SCOG and evaluated by the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee.

Background

Federal Requirement for Human Service Transportation Funding

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) that went into effect on October 1, 2012. This legislation continued the coordinated transportation planning requirements established in previous law for certain Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding for specialized transportation. Under the preceding federal transportation funding authorizing legislation, SAFETEA-LU, local funding under three FTA programs (Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317) required that projects be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. This coordinated planning requirement was designed to be a participatory process including public, private, and human service transportation providers.

Under MAP-21, the Section 5316 and Section 5317 programs were eliminated, but the coordinated planning requirement continued to apply to the Section 5310 Program (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities)

under MAP-21, as well as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act which President Obama signed into law on December 4, 2015.

Currently effective FTA guidance (FTA Circular C 9070.1G, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program Guidance and Application Instructions, issued June 6, 2014) defines a coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan as one that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities and older adults; provides strategies for meeting those local needs; and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. In total, there are four required plan elements:

- An assessment of available services that identifies current providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service;
- Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- Relative priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies/activities identified.

Coordinated Human Service Transportation Planning in Washington State

At the state level, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) requires that each RTPO identify human service transportation needs and prioritize human service transportation projects in the region for funding through WSDOT's consolidated grant application process for public transportation funds. An RTPO is formed through a voluntary association of local governments within a county or contiguous counties, and for the purpose of WSDOT's Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan, each of the RTPOs provide the local perspective for their respective regions.

Section 1 – Background and Overview of the Planning Process

Applicants for WSDOT's public transportation grant program are required to participate in the local planning process with their RTPO. This process creates and updates the region's CPT-HSTP, a document that is required by WSDOT to be updated every four years. WSDOT publishes a template with instructions for developing a CPT-HSTP. WSDOT's 2018 Guidance and Instructions for developing a CPT-HSTP was used as a guide to develop this plan.

The Local Need for an Updated Plan

An update was needed to the 2014 Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan so that transportation providers in the region could continue to be eligible for funding through WSDOT public transportation grant program. The 2014 plan was developed by the former Skagit-Island RTPO, which was dissolved in 2015. In 2016, the Island RTPO was formed. SCOG is now the RTPO for Skagit County, and in 2018, separate plans were developed for Skagit County and Island County.

Overview of the Planning Process

This CPT-HSTP was developed between June and October 2018. The process included:

- A kick-off meeting was conducted with the Ad Hoc Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee (Committee) in Mount Vernon on June 27, 2018.
- A Public Involvement Plan (Appendix A) was drafted, revised, approved by the Committee, and adopted by the SCOG Transportation Policy Board on July 18, 2018.
- Individual telephone interviews were conducted with each committee member, as well as with Skagit Transit's Mobility Coordinator so that the consultant team could gain a better understanding of each organization's unique perspective on the transportation needs and resources in the region.
- The consultant team conducted an analysis of population data related to transportation dependency to identify geographic areas with high numbers and percentages of disadvantaged persons.

- The Committee met on August 1. Proposed criteria for prioritizing project funding applications, initially drafted by the consultant, were introduced at this meeting. During August, SCOG and the consultant team revised the criteria.
- A list of approximately 70 stakeholders (primarily representing human service agencies and social service organizations) and their contact information was compiled and an online survey on transportation services and needs was developed. In late July, the consultant sent an email to each stakeholder with information on the plan, a link to the survey, and an invitation to a community stakeholder workshop on August 16.
- The consultant team contacted selected food banks, meal sites, veteran’s service organizations, and other human service programs to request permission to conduct in-person outreach with program participants from August 13-16. A flyer/comment card for use at outreach meetings was developed and translated into Spanish.
- In-person outreach was conducted at the following sites from August 13-16: La Conner Sunrise Food Bank, Concrete Community Meal at the Community Center, Concrete Food Bank, Helping Hands Food Bank in Sedro Woolley, Tri-Parish Food Bank in Burlington, and Community Action in Mount Vernon. Spanish translators were available at La Conner Sunrise Food Bank, Helping Hands Food Bank in Sedro Woolley, Tri-Parish Food Bank in Burlington, and Community Action in Mount Vernon.
- The consultant team met with representatives of the Center for Independence in Mount Vernon on Aug. 15.
- The consultant team together with SCOG conducted a stakeholder workshop at Skagit Station on Aug. 16. The workshop was attended by nine individuals representing the Anacortes Senior Activity

**Tell us about
your
transportation
needs!**



**¡Cuéntanos
sobre tus
necesidades
de transporte!**



Center, Cap Sante Court, Chinook Enterprises, La Conner United Methodist Church/Sunrise Food Bank, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Skagit Transit, and WSDOT Public Transportation.

- The inventory of existing transportation services was compiled in August and September.
- Unmet needs, identified through the preceding steps, were compiled and analyzed.
- A draft needs assessment with revised proposed prioritization criteria was provided to the Committee on August 29.
- The Committee met on September 4 and scored the prioritization criteria.
- SCOG posted the prioritization criteria and scoring for public comment on September 5 and developed a regional call for projects for human services transportation funding. The call for projects was approved by SCOG’s Transportation Policy Board at their meeting on September 19.
- Strategies for meeting the unmet needs were developed.
- The draft CPT-HSTP was prepared and sent to Committee on October 1 for their review.
- The Committee met on October 1 to review and evaluate the projects submitted for funding.

- SCOG conducted additional outreach calls with veterans' group representatives in early October. Additional information gathered on transportation needs and services was folded into the draft plan.
- On October 9, the Committee met to review the combined results of their evaluation and to recommend a prioritized project list to the SCOG Transportation Policy Board. The draft CPT-HSTP was also discussed at this meeting.
- The prioritized list of projects was sent to the SCOG Transportation Policy Board and discussed at their October 17 meeting. The draft CPT-HSTP was also presented at this meeting.
- Revisions were made to the draft CPT-HSTP based on Committee comments. The revised draft CPT-HSTP and the prioritized list of projects were posted for public comment on October 26 through November 9, 2018.
- The final Skagit CPT-HSTP and list of prioritized projects were adopted on November 21, 2018.

Section 2 – Existing Transportation Services

Introduction

This chapter of the Skagit Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan provides a summary of the existing transportation services that serve Skagit County, as well as organizations and programs that help those in need with covering the cost of transportation. The “family of transportation services” in Skagit County is provided by public transit systems, tribes, human service agencies/non-profit programs, local school districts, ferry services, long distance bus and rail providers, medical transportation providers, and other private providers such as taxis.

Public Transit Systems

Skagit Transit provides the vast majority of public transit services in Skagit County. Other public transit systems in northwest Washington make regional connections in Skagit County, including Island Transit and Whatcom Transportation Authority.

Skagit Transit

Skagit Transit provides fixed route public transit, ADA paratransit, and vanpool services.



Formerly known as SKAT, Skagit Transit was established in 1993 under RCW 36.57A, originally serving the Mount Vernon and Burlington area. Over the past 25 years, the Skagit Public Transit Benefit Area (PTBA) has grown to cover about 750 square miles, including Mount Vernon, Burlington, Anacortes, La Conner, Sedro-Woolley, Lyman, Hamilton, Concrete, and several unincorporated areas of Skagit County. Headquartered in Burlington, Skagit Transit also owns and staffs Skagit Station in Mount Vernon.

Fixed Routes

Skagit Transit operates 19 fixed bus routes, including local routes serving urban areas, routes connecting rural areas to the urban areas, and express commuter

routes connecting with other regional services. Table 1 lists Skagit Transit’s fixed route with the general service area and operating hours. The commuter routes (40X, 80X, and 90X) are also referred to as County Connectors.

Skagit Transit’s fixed routes make connections at several key facilities and transfer points in Skagit County including:

- Skagit Station, 105 E. Kincaid in downtown Mount Vernon. Skagit Station is a regional multimodal transportation hub served not only by Skagit Transit, but also by Amtrak, Greyhound, and regional Connector routes. Station amenities include Skagit Transit customer service, Greyhound customer service counter, Amtrak ticketing machine, passenger waiting area, parking, coffee shop, vending machines, and community meeting room with conference capabilities.
- Chuckanut Park and Ride, north Burlington near I-5. Washington State DOT owns the parking facility; Skagit Transit owns the bus island and transfer location and operates the parking facility.
- March’s Point Park and Ride, near Anacortes off Highway 20 at Christianson Road. This facility is owned by Skagit Transit and the land is leased through a long-term lease agreement.
- South Mount Vernon Park and Ride, Old Hwy 99 South and Hickox Road near I-5. This facility is owned by Skagit Transit.



Several smaller park and ride facilities are served by Skagit Transit in Alger, Burlington, and Sedro-Woolley.

Fares on the fixed route services are \$1.00 for local and rural routes and \$2.00

Table 2.1: Skagit Transit Fixed Routes

Route No.	Communities Served	Connections with Other Transit Services	Weekday Service	Weekend Service
40X	Mt. Vernon, Anacortes	Island Transit Route 411W to Oak Harbor, other Skagit Transit routes	6:10 a.m. to 7:40 p.m.; usually every 60 minutes	Saturdays only; 8:40 a.m. to 5:40 p.m.; usually every 60 minutes
80X	Mount Vernon, Burlington, Alger, Bellingham	Whatcom Transit Authority, WWU Shuttle, other Skagit Transit routes	6:40 a.m. to 7:05 p.m.; frequency varies (20 to 120 minutes)	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:05 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.; every 2 hours
90X	Burlington, Mount Vernon, Everett	Everett Transit, Community Transit, other Skagit Transit routes	4:45 a.m. to 8:15 p.m.; frequency varies (15 to 120 minutes)	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:00 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; every 2 hours
185	Burlington, Bow, Edison	Other Skagit Transit routes	Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 7:15 a.m. to 6:56 p.m.; frequency varies	none
195	Burlington, Bow	Other Skagit Transit routes	Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; frequency varies	none
202	Mount Vernon	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:15 a.m. to 8:40 p.m.; every 30 minutes	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:15 a.m. to 6:10 p.m.; every 30 minutes
204	Mount Vernon	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:15 a.m. to 8:45 p.m.; every 30 minutes	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.; every 30 minutes
205	Mount Vernon	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; every 30 minutes	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; every 30 minutes
206	Mount Vernon	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:35 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; every 30 minutes	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:05 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; every 30 minutes
207	Mount Vernon	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:30 a.m. to 8:33 p.m.; every 45 minutes	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:00 a.m. to 5:33 p.m.; every 45 minutes
208	Mount Vernon, Burlington	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:20 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; usually every 30 min. (60 min. before 7:15 a.m. / after 7:15 p.m.)	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.; every 30 minutes
300	Sedro-Woolley, Burlington	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:20 a.m. to 8:50 p.m.; every 60 minutes	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; every 60 minutes
305	Sedro-Woolley, Clear Lake, Mount Vernon	Other Skagit Transit routes	7:40 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; usually every 60 minutes	Saturdays, Sundays; 8:40 a.m. to 5:37 p.m.; usually every 60 minutes
409	Anacortes	Guemes Island Ferry, other Skagit Transit routes	7:25 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; usually every 30 minutes	Saturdays; 8:25 a.m. to 4:50 p.m.; usually every 30 minutes
410	Anacortes	Washi. State Ferries, Guemes Island Ferry, Island Transit Route 411, other Skagit Transit routes	6:40 a.m. to 7:40 p.m.; usually every 60 minutes	Saturdays; 8:06 a.m. to 5:35 p.m.; usually every 60 minutes
513	Anacortes, Burlington	Other Skagit Transit routes	7:10 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.; frequency varies (4.5 round trips daily)	none
615	Anacortes, La Conner, Mount Vernon	Other Skagit Transit routes	6:15 a.m. to 7:05 p.m.; frequency varies (5 round trips daily)	Saturdays; 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; every 2 hours
717	Sedro-Woolley, Lyman, Hamilton, Concrete	Other Skagit Transit routes	5:00 a.m. to 8:24 p.m.; frequency varies (6 round trips daily)	Saturdays; 8:00 to 10:31 a.m. and 3:00 to 6:31 p.m. (2 round trips)
750	Sedro-Woolley, Concrete, Marblemount	Other Skagit Transit routes	Fridays only; 8:10 to 10:16 a.m. and 2:00 to 4:06 p.m. (2 round trips)	none

for commuter (Connector) routes. Monthly passes are also available (\$25 for local routes, \$50 for commuter routes). Youth, seniors (age 65 or older), Medicare card-holders, and people with disabilities qualify for a reduced fare of one-half off of the regular fares and passes.

Through its Ride Pass Grant Program, Skagit Transit offers free one-day local bus passes to eligible non-profit organizations and government agencies that serve PTBA residents who meet income and/or disability requirements without other transportation resources. In 2018, the Skagit Transit Board of Directors approved a yearly distribution of up to 10,000 such passes.



Skagit Transit offers travel training to individuals who need assistance in learning to ride the bus. Fixed route buses are accessible to people with disabilities and can accommodate two passengers using wheelchairs. Skagit Transit buses are also equipped with bike racks that can accommodate two or three bikes at a time.

In 2017, 667,890 passenger trips were provided on Skagit Transit fixed routes.

Paratransit

Skagit Transit's Paratransit Service, formerly known as Dial-A-Ride, provides pre-scheduled shared-ride demand-response transportation for people who are unable to ride fixed route services due to their disability. There is an application process to qualify for this service that is determined by each individual's functional abilities to ride fixed route. Paratransit service is provided up to ¾ mile from local fixed routes during the same days and hours as Skagit Transit's local, non-commuter fixed routes. Service can be scheduled the day before and up to four days in advance of the day of travel. There is no set fare for Paratransit, but donations are accepted. In 2017, Skagit Transit's Paratransit service provided 63,977 passenger trips.

Vanpool Program

Skagit Transit's Vanpool Program allows groups of commuters to share the ride in a van or minivan for a shared cost. A vanpool group needs a minimum of

five individuals (up to 15) starting or ending their trip in Skagit County. A member of the vanpool group drives the vanpool. Skagit Transit provides the van, vehicle maintenance, fuel, and insurance. The vanpool group pays a \$200 monthly fee plus a mileage charge (\$0.30 per mile for a 7-passenger van and \$0.38 per mile for a 12- to 15-passenger van). In 2017, Skagit Transit's Vanpool Program provided 108,100 passenger trips. About 60% of Skagit Transit's vanpool users travel to Boeing employment in Snohomish County. Current vanpool destinations within Skagit County include the PACCAR Technical Center in Mount Vernon, Hexcel in Burlington, and Andeavor in Anacortes. The program currently has about 37 active vans.



Island Transit

The Island County Public Transportation Benefit Area, doing business as Island Transit, provides public transportation on Whidbey Island and Camano Island. Two Island Transit routes make connections in Skagit County:

- Route 411W operates from Oak Harbor on Whidbey Island, providing express service between Deception Pass to the March's Point Park and Ride in Anacortes, where it connects with Skagit Transit Route 40X to Mount Vernon. The Route 411W operates 13 round trips on weekdays (on approximately hourly headways, except for a mid-day break), first arriving at March's Point at 6:10 a.m. and departing for the last time at 7:40 p.m. On Saturdays, service is reduced to four round trips, stopping in March's Point at 9:35 a.m., 11:35 a.m., 2:35 p.m., and 4:35 p.m.
- Route 411C operates from Terry's Corner on Camano Island to Skagit Station in Mount Vernon, stopping in Conway. This route makes seven round trips on weekdays, departing Skagit Station at 6:40 a.m., 8:10 a.m., 10:40 a.m., 2:10 p.m., 4:10 p.m., 6:10 p.m., and 7:10 p.m., and five round trips on Saturdays, departing Skagit Station at 10:10 a.m., 11:10 a.m., 1:10 p.m., 2:10 p.m., and 4:10 p.m. At Skagit Station, Route 411C connects with Skagit Transit Route 40X to March's Point.

Routes 411C and 411W operate fare-free (as do most of Island Transit’s routes and paratransit).

Island Transit’s vanpool program roster currently lists a vanpool operating from Oak Harbor to Mount Vernon for 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. work shifts at Veterans Affairs (with numerous other vanpools operating to destinations in other counties).

Whatcom Transportation Authority

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) provides public transportation services throughout Whatcom County. As previously described, WTA and Skagit Transit jointly operate the Route 80X between Bellingham Station and Skagit Station, stopping at the Lincoln Creek Park and Ride, Alder Park and Ride, and Chuckanut Park and Ride en route.

Tribes

Samish Indian Nation

The Samish Indian Nation operates informal transportation services for tribal members and clients of tribal programs. Several programs serve special needs Native Americans and provide transportation related to their services. Eligibility requirements vary by program, as do service area boundaries, and times of service. These services are provided at no cost to riders, with tribal vehicles (primarily cars, SUVs, and vans), and are very minimally funded by direct service programs. For example, the Samish Indian Nation social services program takes clients to appointments, and the Elders program takes clients to meal sites for socializing and cultural activities. The Samish Indian Nation Vocational Rehabilitation program, which helps consumers overcome disability barriers to work, uses two sedans to provide a limited amount of transportation in five counties (Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom).

Headquartered near Anacortes, the membership of the Samish Indian Nation is quite 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.



The Samish Indian Nation participated in Skagit Transit’s Ride Pass Grant Program that allows the tribe to provide a small number of bus day passes to Samish clients and tribal members.

Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe

The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe is headquartered near Darrington, with tribal lands at the junction of the Sauk and Suiattle Rivers. The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe provides two different transportation services:

- Darrington - Concrete Direct Shuttle Bus (DC Direct) – This public transit service, provided by the Planning and Development Department, connects the reservation with Concrete, where riders can connect with Skagit Transit, and to Darrington, where riders can connect with Community Transit in Snohomish County. The DC Direct is a fixed route service that operates Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Each weekday, three round-trips are made to Concrete and four round-trips are made to Darrington. The service is provided using one bus that is equipped with a wheelchair lift and a bicycle rack. The DC Direct service is open to the public, and no fares are charged (donations are accepted). This service began operations in October 2016, with funding from a 2015-2017 WSDOT Consolidated Grant. A 2017-2019 WSDOT Consolidated Grant provided sustaining funding. The DC Direct service is coordinated with both Skagit Transit and Community Transit.
- Health and Social Services – The Health and Social Services Department provides transportation to Tribal members and other Native Americans to access medical and social services in Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolly in Skagit County and Everett, Arlington, and Marysville in Snohomish County. This service is funded by Tribal funds and federal funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services.



Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community is composed of approximately 900 tribal members, the majority of whom live on the Swinomish Reservation or

nearby in Skagit County. The Swinomish Tribe is headquartered in the Swinomish Village area, located on the southeast corner of the Reservation, which is on eastern Fidalgo Island. The Swinomish Tribe provides transportation services for tribal members, including:

- Transportation for elder trips,
- Transportation for youth events,
- Transportation to and from correctional facilities for detainees with the criminal justice system, serving facilities as distant as Yakima, and
- Shuttle transportation to and from the didg^wálič Wellness Center in Anacortes. The Swinomish Tribe operates the didg^wálič Wellness Center, which provides chemical dependency outpatient treatment and mental health counseling for all enrolled Native American tribal members. The didg^wálič Wellness Center is a regional medical destination as a methadone clinic among other services.

Human Service Agencies and Non-Profit Programs

American Cancer Society / Road to Recovery Program

The American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery program coordinates volunteers who drive their own vehicles to take people with cancer to cancer-related medical appointments at no cost to the patient.

Anacortes Family Center

The Anacortes Family Center (AFC) provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, affordable housing, and case management to women and families with children. AFC creates an individualized plan to help each family reach self-sufficiency, with a goal of ending their reliance on social services. As part of its comprehensive support, which includes helping adult residents find employment, AFC provides limited transportation support, including providing bus passes (participating in Skagit Transit's Ride Pass Grant Program), and occasionally paying for a taxi ride when public transportation is not operating.

Chinook Enterprises

Chinook Enterprises is a social enterprise – a non-profit agency designed to operate as a business, but with a social mission: supporting full participation in community life for people with disabilities or other barriers. Based in Mount Vernon, Chinook Enterprises provides vocational services for transitioning high school students and adults with disabilities, Community Employment Services, assembly services, and grounds maintenance services. Chinook Enterprises occasionally provides transportation to jobs or community inclusion activities when public transportation (Skagit Transit or Dial-A-Ride/Paratransit) or other transportation supports are not available, and participates in Skagit Transit's Ride Pass Grant Program.

Community Action of Skagit County

The mission of Community Action of Skagit County is to foster and advocate for self-sufficiency among low-income people in Skagit County. Established in 1979, today Community Action supports numerous programs that stabilize lives and equip people to move out of poverty, working in collaboration with the community to create ongoing pathways to prosperity. Community Action is based in Mount Vernon with additional locations in Oak Harbor, Concrete, and Sedro Woolley. Its programs include adult education, Behavioral Health Ombuds, assistance for homeless families and individuals, employment services, energy assistance, legal aid, services for seniors and people with disabilities, veterans services, supplemental nutrition for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and a food bank distribution center.

Community Action of Skagit County provides limited transportation as part of its Volunteer Chore Program for seniors and people with disabilities. This service is provided primarily by volunteers driving their own vehicles. Community Action has participated in Skagit Transit's Ride Pass Grant Program. Some of Community Action's programs also fund the purchase of daily and monthly passes for eligible participants, funded through a previous WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program cycle. Additionally, some programs can assist with gas vouchers in emergency situations.



Department of Social and Health Services / WorkFirst Transportation

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) supports transportation for needy families through the WorkFirst Transportation Initiative Pilot program. The Washington State WorkFirst program assists recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to meet their goals and provide well-being for their family. The Transportation Initiative Pilot provides enhanced transportation services and supports for WorkFirst families. The goal of this initiative is to have zero transportation issues for individuals with a WorkFirst Individual Responsibility Plan. This includes people preparing for and seeking jobs as well as individuals recovering from chemical dependency or mental health issues, all parents, and all who are in transition plan to work.



Support provided through the Transportation Initiative Pilot includes funding for vehicle repairs and fuel, assistance with reinstatement of driver's license in circumstances other than DUI, driver training, and on-demand transportation services for individuals without access to a vehicle who are unable to get to a public transit route. The Transportation Initiative Pilot supports not only work-related travel, but also travel to obtain treatment for chemical dependency or mental illness.

In Skagit County, the on-demand transportation is contracted from a private transportation provider based in King County. Trips are authorized in the local DSHS Community Service Office in Mount Vernon, and scheduled through a computerized system. Individuals are authorized for up to five rides, up to 50 miles one-way, either door-to-door to the destination, or to a transit stop. An individual's needs may be reassessed for additional rides. Currently, about 43 individuals in Skagit County are using the on-demand transportation services provided through the Transportation Initiative Pilot.

Veterans Transportation Services

Volunteer-provided transportation services for veterans include Disabled American Veterans (DAV) van service and more informal rides in private vehicles.

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation

DAV provides van transportation operated by volunteer drivers to take eligible veterans to the VA Medical Center in Seattle. Rides from Bellingham, stopping at Skagit Station in Mount Vernon at approximately 6:15-6:30 a.m., are available on Monday through Friday with one week advanced request. Rides are timed to allow for VA Medical Center appointments between 9:00 a.m. and noon. There is also a van originating in Oak Harbor that operates two days per week and stops in Anacortes and Mount Vernon en route to Seattle. The DAV vans that serve Skagit County are not wheelchair-accessible.

Other Transportation for Veterans

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 Medical Center in Seattle. American Legion Post 91 in Burlington has an informal program where funds are used to purchase \$25 gas cards to help reimburse volunteer drivers to use their vehicles or these trips. Recipients must already be connected to Community Action of Skagit County in order to receive a gas card.

The Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) also coordinate private carpools. VVA has a Service Officer in Mount Vernon.

Northwest Regional Council / Medicaid Transportation Services

The Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) is an association of county governments that has been serving people of Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom Counties since 1971. NWRC serves as Northwest Washington's Area Agency on Aging (AAA), implementing state and federal programs for seniors and people who need long-term care through such community-based care programs as Senior Information and Assistance, Congregate Meals, Meals on Wheels, Respite Care, Adult Day Services, Case Management and Family Caregiver Support. NWRC serves as the region's Medicaid transportation broker under contract to the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA).

NWRC operates a Medicaid Transportation Call Center that authorizes and arranges for non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid-eligible individuals who live in Island, San Juan, Skagit, or Whatcom counties. As the

transportation broker, NWRC is responsible for identifying the most appropriate, least costly mode of transportation to the nearest appropriate medical provider. NWRC contracts with numerous transportation providers in the region. Transportation available for Skagit County residents who are Medicaid-eligible include transit passes for public transportation, gas vouchers for use of personal vehicles, mileage reimbursement for use of personal vehicles, and tickets or vouchers for intercity bus (such as Greyhound), taxi, paratransit service, cabulance service, and ferry. Rides must be pre-authorized and pre-scheduled. There is no cost to the rider for Medicaid-eligible rides.

Individuals whose Medicaid-eligible trips can be made using fixed route public transit—those who live within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a bus route—are issued a 31-day bus pass that can be used for any trip purpose during the pass period, in addition to the medical trips.

For individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid (such as seniors), NWRC provides information on/referral to other transportation services. NWRC coordinates with numerous organizations to match those in need with appropriate transportation, including Skagit Transit, Catholic Community Services, Community Action of Skagit County, and most of the Tribes in the region. On the healthcare side, NWRC coordinates with hospitals, dialysis centers, and Swinomish Tribe’s didgwálic Wellness Center (the region’s only methadone treatment center).

Additional Skagit Transit Ride Pass Grant Program Participants

In addition to the Anacortes Family Center and Chinook Enterprises, the following organizations participated in Skagit Transit’s Ride Pass Grant Program in 2018:

- Anacortes Police Department
- Brigid Collins Family Support Center
- Catholic Community Services
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- City of Burlington and Mount Vernon Public Defender Office
- Department of Social and Health Services, Community Services Office
- Department of Social and Health Services, Division Vocational Rehabilitation

- Family Promise of Skagit Valley
- Friendship House
- Housing Authority of Skagit County
- Mount Vernon Police Department, Outreach Coordination
- Northwest Youth Services
- Northwest WorkSource Council
- Pregnancy Choices
- SeaMar Clinics
- Seattle Goodwill
- Skagit County Public Defender Office
- Skagit County Office of Assigned Council
- Skagit Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services
- Skagit Island Head Start
- Skagit Valley Family YMCA
- Skagit Valley Hospital
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- United General Hospital
- Washington State University Extension
- Washington Vocational Services

Information, Referral, Rider Education, and Advocacy

Numerous human service agencies, non-profit agencies, and public agencies in Skagit County provide information on and referral to transportation services and resources, and some organizations help their program participants learn to ride public transit.

- As previously described, Skagit Transit has a Mobility Outreach Specialist who conducts regular outreach to an extensive list of service organizations; they also have a travel trainer.
- The North Sound Transportation Alliance (NSTA), formerly known as the Farmhouse Gang, is hosted by the Whatcom Council of Governments. The NSTA is a coalition of citizens, elected officials, and professional staff of transportation agencies from Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan and northern Snohomish counties. NSTA strives to develop better ways for people to

travel in the region through these objectives: collect travel and system data to identify needs; improve regional connections and sustain and expand services; enhance mobility through sustainable, equitable, and innovative transportation solutions; and inform the public about transportation services to enhance awareness of the regional transportation network.

- The Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC) advocates for transportation service and solutions to better connect people and community in and beyond Snohomish County. SNOTRAC’s mission is advocating for improvement in transportation service and solutions through community input, coordination of resources, and strategic partnerships. SNOTRAC’s regional coalition includes representatives from Skagit Transit, the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe, and other public agencies, tribes, human service agencies, and transportation providers from King, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties. SNOTRAC’s mobility management services include information and referral to Skagit County transportation services.
- The Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTANW), a membership-based organization of non-profit, for-profit and public transportation providers, as well as Medicaid brokers, planning organizations, service agencies (such as senior centers), and other partners, focuses on specialized transportation needs throughout Washington State and the Northwest region (Washington and Oregon). CTANW is currently building RideSourceNW, an online database of transportation services, mobility managers, travel trainers, and more.

Schools

Local School Districts

Each local school district in Washington State is mandated to provide students with transportation to school, and determines how best to achieve this (such as operating own vehicles or contracting for student transportation services). In Skagit County, this is primarily achieved through the school districts operating their own buses. There are seven local school districts in Skagit County:

- Anacortes School District #103
- Burlington-Edison School District #100
- Concrete School District #011

- Conway School District #317
- La Conner School District #311
- Mount Vernon School District #320
- Sedro-Woolley School District #101

Although each local school district has a defined transportation service area, their transportation services may cross into another district’s area to accommodate homeless students (under the federal McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act) as well as to transport students needing special programs not available in their home district (such as alternative schools).

Surveys were emailed to each school district for this plan. The La Conner School District replied to the survey and thus is described as an example of one of the seven school districts in Skagit County. The La Conner School District provides preschool through high school education for about 590 students, and operates school bus transportation in western Skagit County. Approximately 90,000 student rides are provided per year with a fleet of six large buses, two small buses, two minivans, and one sedan. The La Conner School District coordinates with other school districts to transport students who are homeless or have special needs.

Northwest Educational Service District 189

Skagit County is part of the Northwest Educational Service District 189, one of nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in Washington State, which serves a region that includes 35 public school districts and several private schools in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties. ESDs serve as liaisons between local school districts and the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in Olympia. ESDs share information about OSPI programs and requirements with the local school districts, and local school districts provide information to the ESDs which they report to the state.

The Northwest Educational Service District does not provide student transportation, but rather serves as a resource for the local school districts. An example of the type of assistance that may be provided is helping a school district to develop its local plan for the local district’s Transportation Vehicle Fund. This fund is allocated to local school districts to purchase school buses. School

districts are reimbursed for the base cost of each bus over the useful life of the vehicle, and at the end of the vehicle’s life (typically 13 years for large buses and 8 years for small buses), the school district has resources to purchase a replacement bus.

Northwest Career & Technical Academy

The Northwest Career and Technical Academy (NCTA) is a consortium of six Skagit County school districts (Anacortes, Burlington-Edison, Concrete, Mount Vernon, La Conner and Sedro-Woolley), two Whatcom County school districts (Bellingham, and Meridian), and Skagit Valley College. NCTA provides professional technical training for approximately 400 students, including juniors and seniors in high school and some college students. The main campus is in Mount Vernon, with programs also provided in Anacortes, Sedro-Woolley, and Bellingham. In addition to information and referral to transit services, NCTA provides bus passes to students, but does not operate its own transportation.



Ferry Service

Washington State Ferries

The Washington State Ferries connects Anacortes with the San Juan Islands and Vancouver Island (BC). During the summer of 2018 (June 24 through September 29), ferry sailings departed from Anacortes daily between 4:10 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. (11:00 p.m. on Fridays), and arrived at Anacortes between 7:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight every day of the week. The time span in between sailings from Anacortes currently ranges from 10 minutes to two hours. Washington State Ferries’ schedules change seasonally (four times per year) with a new schedule taking effect September 30, 2018.

Guemes Island Ferry

Skagit County Public Works operates the Guemes Island Ferry between Anacortes and Guemes Island. This small ferry transports vehicles and walk-on passengers. During the 2018 peak season (May 20 through September 30), sailings typically depart Anacortes every 30 to 45 minutes, Monday through Thursday from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from 6:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., and Sundays from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Peak round trip fares for passengers are \$5.00 for regular passengers; \$3.00 for seniors (65+), youth (6-17 years), and passengers with disabilities; and free for children up to age 5. Round trip fares for vehicles, including the driver, start at \$9.00. Multi-ride tickets are available.

Long Distance Bus and Rail Providers

Amtrak Cascades

The Amtrak Cascades service provides high-speed passenger rail between Vancouver, B.C., and Eugene, Oregon. The Washington segment of Amtrak Cascades includes stops in Bellingham, Mount Vernon, Stanwood, Everett, Edmonds, Seattle, and six other stations south of Seattle. Two round trips per day are made between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. A third round trip can be made from Seattle to Bellingham via Amtrak Thruway bus. Amtrak contracts with MTR Western to operate connecting Thruway bus schedules as part of the Cascades service between Bellingham and Seattle. MTR Western does not sell separate tickets on these schedules—the service is dedicated to Amtrak passengers.

In Mount Vernon, Amtrak Cascades trains and Thruway buses stop at Skagit Station. The current schedule includes the following departures from Mount Vernon:

- Southbound: 9:03 a.m., 5:40 p.m. (Thruway bus), and 8:13 p.m.
- Northbound: 9:22 a.m., 1:45 p.m. (Thruway bus), and 8:35 p.m.



One-way coach fares for service between Mount Vernon and Seattle (King Street Station) range from \$17 to \$31. Between Mount Vernon and Bellingham, fares range from \$11 to \$20. A ten percent discount is available to passengers ages 65 and older. The service is funded by ticket fares and the state Departments of Transportation in both Washington and Oregon.

Greyhound

Greyhound Lines operates intercity bus transportation along the I-5 corridor, stopping at Skagit Station in Mount Vernon, under Timetable 601: Vancouver, B.C. – Seattle – Portland, Oregon. Intermediate stops in Skagit County include Bellingham, Mount Vernon, and Everett. Current departure times from Mount Vernon are:

- Southbound: 8:25 a.m., 2:30 p.m., and 4:20 p.m.
- Northbound: 4:30 p.m., 7:20 p.m., and 11:35 p.m.

For service between Mount Vernon and Seattle, one-way fares range from \$15 to \$25. Between Mount Vernon and Bellingham, fares range from \$12 to \$24. Passengers ages 62 and older are eligible for a discount fare.

Bellair Airporter

Bellair Charters and Airporter is a charter and tour bus company that operates regularly scheduled airport shuttle service along the I-5 and I-90 corridors to Sea-Tac Airport. The Western Washington Airporter operates along the I-5 corridor north of Seattle, offering eleven round trips per day from Sea-Tac to Marysville, Stanwood, Burlington, Bellingham, Ferndale, Birch Bay, and Lynden, with reservation-only service to Blaine and the Alaska Ferry Terminal in Bellingham. The Burlington stop is at 844 South Alder.

As a potential local service in Skagit County, the Western Washington Airporter also operates a “spur” route connecting Anacortes to the I-5 corridor, with a transfer available in Burlington. The Anacortes spur originates at Old Salts Deli in Anacortes and stops at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal, Shell Station at 1312 Commercial in downtown Anacortes, the Shell Station at 12515 Christianson Road (at March’s Point) (by reservation only), Anacortes Marina (by reservation only), Cap Sante Marina (by reservation only), La Conner Whitney Shell (by

reservation only) before connecting with southbound route in Burlington. The Anacortes spur also makes 11 round trips daily.

One-way fares range from \$5.00 to \$55.00, depending upon trip origin and destination. A trip from Anacortes to La Conner is \$5.00 and from Anacortes to Burlington is \$10.00. From La Conner to Burlington, the fare is \$7.50. From Burlington to Bellingham, the fare is \$8.75, and Burlington to Seattle is \$37.00 one-way. For many of the pick-up points on trips originating from Anacortes, prepaid 24-hour advance reservation is required.

Medical Transportation Providers

Mercy Transportation

Based in Everett, Mercy Transportation has been in operation since 1998 and provides supported mobility transportation throughout western Washington, from the Canadian border to South Seattle. Mercy Transportation specializes in transporting people with disabilities and elderly people. Door-to-door services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Mercy Transportation is a non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) provider of Medicaid transportation services brokered by the Northwest Regional Council (Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom counties) and Hopelink (King and Snohomish counties), and also serves passengers funded by Department of Health and Social Services programs, other human service programs, private insurance, and private payment. Rates are based on mileage (\$3.50 per mile) with a minimum of five miles, and a pick-up fee (\$15 for ambulatory passengers and \$25 for passengers who use wheelchairs). Mercy Transportation prides itself on providing reliable, safe, timely, and comfortable transportation operated by well-trained professional drivers. The company operates a fleet of sedans and lift-equipped vans equipped with state-of-the-art digital dispatching technology. All of Mercy Transportation’s vans have been converted to bi-fuel propane to reduce their carbon footprint.

Care-E-Me Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Based in Skagit County, Care-E-Me provides non-emergency medical transportation serving the Skagit Valley and beyond, including the San Juan Islands, with a fleet of five vehicles. In addition to medical transportation, Care-E-Me also

offers service for other trip purposes. Service is available on a door-to-door and door-through-door basis. Regular hours of operation are 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, with prescheduled service available 4 hours a day, seven days a week. Fares are based on a pick-up charge plus a mileage charge. For wheelchair-accessible service, the pick-up fee is \$35.00, plus \$3.75 per mile, with a \$50.00 minimum. For car service, the pick-up fee is \$15.00 in Mount Vernon (\$20 outside of Mount Vernon), plus \$3.25 per mile, with a \$50.00 minimum. There are additional charges for service on holidays or after hours, waiting time, hospital discharges, and wheelchair trunk storage. Care-E-Me offers reduced/flat rates for long distance travel and a 15% discount for active or retired military and police force. Care-E-Me is family owned and operated and committed to the safety and comfort of their passengers.

Cascade Ambulance Service, Inc.

Cascade Ambulance Service, Inc., provides emergency and non-emergency medical transportation. Based in Whatcom County, Cascade Ambulance serves Skagit and Island counties. Professional services are available to individuals who use wheelchairs, and includes not only transportation but also personal care assistance. Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Private In-Home Care Services Offering Transportation

There are number of individuals and small businesses that provide transportation services among the services they offer to clients (which include in-home care—medical and non-medical, housekeeping, meal preparation). One such service is Beck & Call Concierge Service based in La Conner. The Island Hospital Community Health Resource Center (<https://www.islandhospital.org/resource-center/>) publishes a patient caregivers list with names and contact information.

Other Providers

Taxis

Four taxi companies operate in Skagit County:

- A Cab for You, based in Anacortes
- Mert's Taxi, based in Anacortes

- Quick Cabs, based in Mount Vernon
- Yellow Cab, based in Bellingham

Transportation Network Companies

Transportation network companies are ride-hailing services that match individual drivers operating their own personal vehicles for payment with people seeking rides, through a smartphone technology interface. Lyft and Uber appear to offer service in at least western Skagit County as part of their Bellingham service areas, although the availability of drivers may be limited.

Section 3 – Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis

Introduction

Needs for rural and specialized transportation services in Skagit County were identified through the following activities:

- Review of demographics and travel patterns, including:
 - o General population data
 - o Profile of population groups with transit dependency
- Common service locations for Paratransit trips identified by Skagit Transit
- Public involvement activities that included:
 - o Interviews with special transportation needs committee members
 - o Stakeholder survey
 - o Stakeholder workshop
 - o Inviting comments from individuals participating in human services programs

This section of the Skagit Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan presents the findings related to transportation needs from each of the above activities, and concludes with a summary of unmet needs.

Review of Demographics and Travel Patterns

This section provides an analysis of current and future population trends in Skagit County for this planning effort, as well as an analysis of the demographics of population groups that often depend on transportation options beyond an automobile. Data sources for this analysis include the 2010 U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

This demographic analysis, coupled with input from regional stakeholders and others through the outreach activities, provide a broad transportation needs assessment. This assessment can then be used to develop strategies, projects

and services to meet identified needs and expand mobility and to generate recommendations to improve coordination within the region.

Population Analysis

This section examines the current population and population density in Skagit County, and discusses population projections for the region.

Total Population

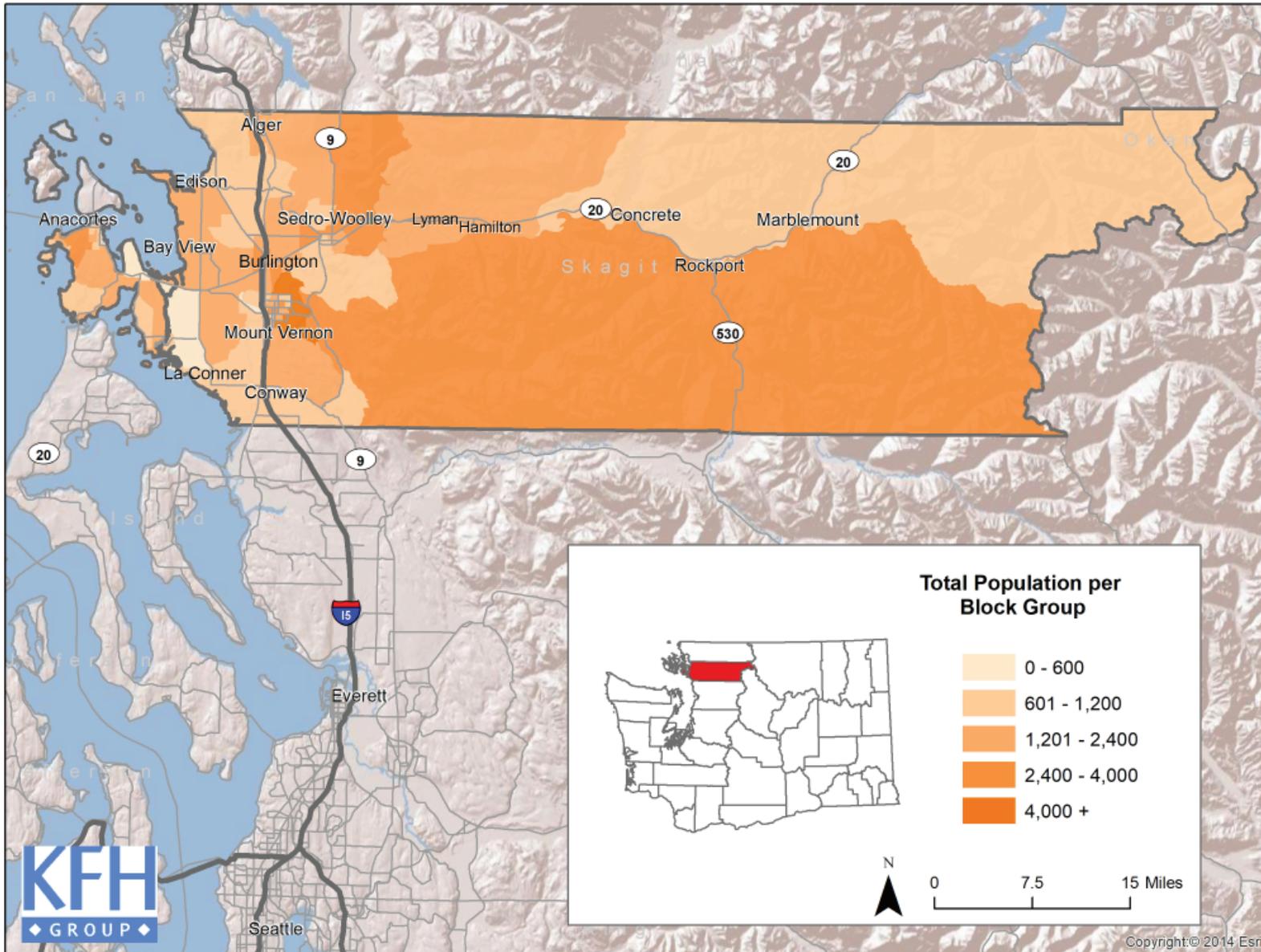
Table 3-1 shows the U.S. Census population counts for Skagit County from 1990 to 2010. During this timeframe, Skagit County experienced a substantial 45.42% growth rate. Many major cities and towns saw substantial growth as well. Mount Vernon saw the largest percent growth (71.73%) followed by Sedro-Woolley (66.06%). Concrete was the only major city in the study area that saw a decline in population. During this timeframe, Concrete has seen a slight population decline of 4.73% despite the fact that between the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census the town grew by 7.84%.

Table 3-1: Historical Populations

Area	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	1990-2000 % Change	2000-2010 % Change	1990-2010 % Change
Skagit County	80,457	103,475	117,004	28.61%	13.07%	45.42%
Mount Vernon	18,496	26,817	31,764	44.99%	18.45%	71.73%
Anacortes	11,628	14,589	15,771	25.46%	8.10%	35.63%
Sedro-Woolley	6,668	8,922	11,073	33.80%	24.11%	66.06%
Burlington	4,825	6,893	8,407	42.86%	21.96%	74.24%
La Conner	619	778	891	25.69%	14.52%	43.94%
Concrete	740	798	705	7.84%	-11.65%	-4.73%
Lyman	275	409	438	48.73%	7.09%	59.27%
Hamilton	228	309	301	35.53%	-2.59%	32.02%

Source: U.S. Census

Figure 3-1: 2010 Census Population by Block Group



Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Figure 3-1 illustrates the county’s total population at the census block group level. This map depicts higher overall population in the areas in Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley and the larger geographic block groups in the rural southern portion of the county. To supplement this map, a population density analysis will be shown later in this technical memorandum.

Table 3-2 features recent population estimates from the ACS. The data shows that since 2010 the county has been growing steadily. Skagit County has grown by 4.30% during this timeframe. The fastest growing city is Mount Vernon with a growth rate of 8.90% from 2010 to 2016. Concrete has shown the slowest growth rate with a 2.70% increase during this timeframe.

Table 3-2: Recent Population Trends

Area	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2010-2016 % Change
Skagit County	117,004	117,768	118,032	118,745	120,325	121,846	122,037	4.30%
Mount Vernon	31,764	32,073	32,281	32,731	33,405	33,967	34,590	8.90%
Anacortes	15,771	15,856	15,882	15,956	16,160	16,837	16,681	5.77%
Sedro-Woolley	11,073	11,106	11,086	11,085	11,197	11,285	11,476	3.64%
Burlington	8,407	8,454	8,449	8,461	8,534	8,628	8,768	4.29%
La Conner	891	897	899	903	913	922	936	5.05%
Concrete	705	709	707	706	711	715	724	2.70%

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey

Population Density

One of the most important factors in determining the most appropriate transportation mode for a community is population density. Population density is often used as an indicator of the type of public transit services that are feasible within a study area. Typically an area with a density of 1,000 persons per square mile will be able to sustain some form of daily fixed route transit service. An area with a population density below 1,000 persons per square mile may be a better candidate for some form of fixed schedule or demand response services.

Figure 3-2 shows the region’s population density at the census block group level. Not surprisingly the most densely populated areas are along the I-5 corridor in Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley. Anacortes also shows block groups with higher densities. The remainder of the county has low population densities and is defined by its rural nature.

Population Forecast

Future forecasts for the region all anticipate low population growth. Population trends in Skagit County arc toward sustained growth for the foreseeable future. We reviewed a number of forecasts, including county estimates. For the purposes of this study we used the State of Washington, Office of Financial Management, State Population Forecast. The trends from Table 3-2 show a steady increase throughout the county particularly in Mount Vernon. Analyses from other efforts confirm the population trend in the region as well as future projections. The region is expected to experience a 17% growth rate during the period from 2020 to 2040. During that same timeframe, the State of Washington is expected to grow from 7 million in population to 7.9 million, an increase of 12%. Even though Skagit County is predominantly rural in geography it is expected to grow at a more rapid rate than the state. Table 3-3 provides the forecasted population growth for Skagit County out to 2040.

Table 3-3: Population Forecasts

Area	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Skagit County	118,117	122,207	127,387	132,275	138,164

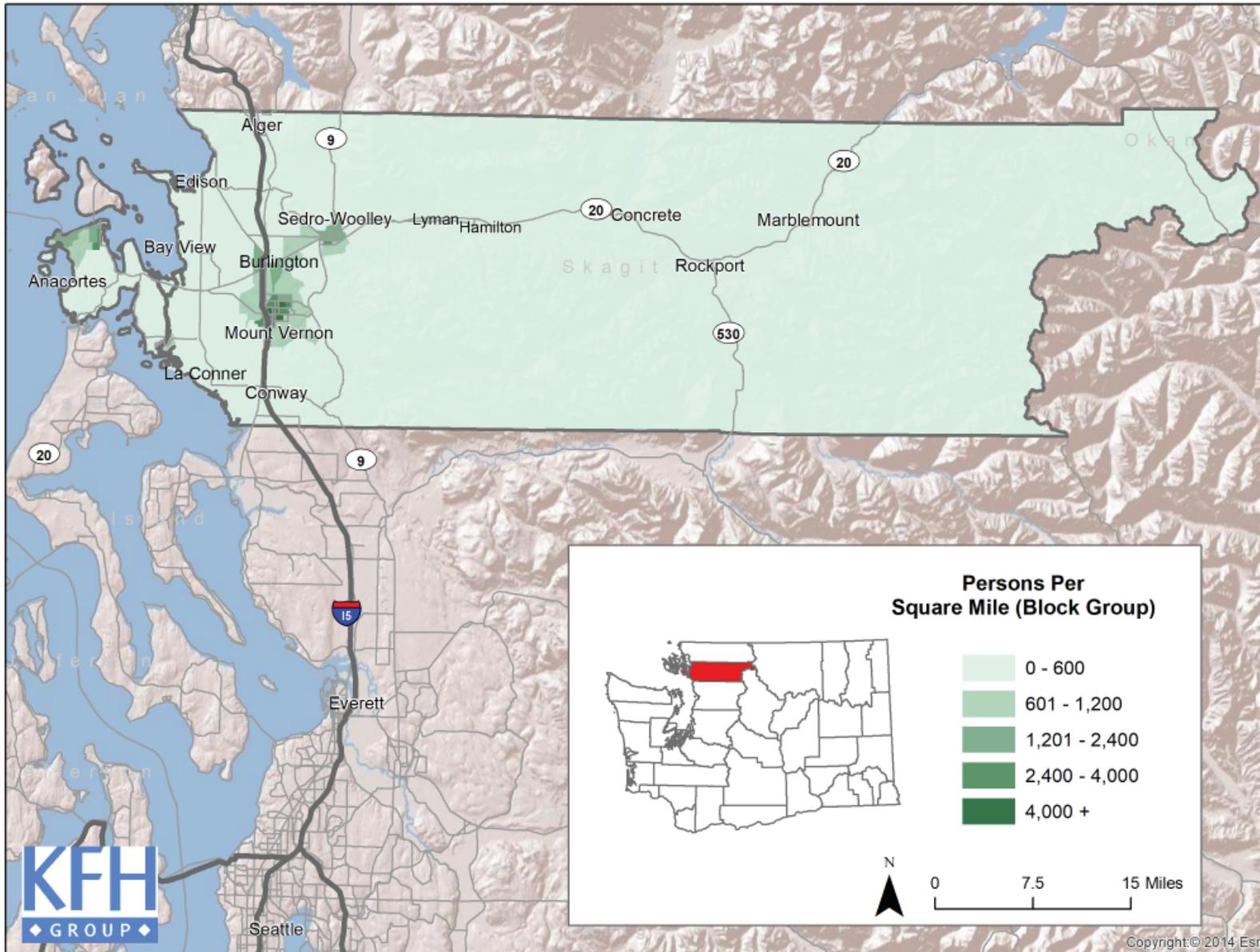
Source: State of Washington, Office of Financial Management. State Population Forecast, November 2017

Transit Dependent Populations

Public transportation needs are defined in part by identifying the relative size and location of those segments within the general population that are most likely to be dependent on transit services. This includes individuals who may not have access to a personal vehicle or are unable to drive themselves due to age or income status.

The results of this demographic analysis highlight those geographic areas of the service area with the greatest need for transportation. This county is

Figure 3-2: Skagit County Persons per Square Mile by Block Group



Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

particularly rural in nature and will have a different demographic makeup than that of the State of Washington. This analysis will examine the average percentage of the transit dependent population in the region compared to the state, however it is important to note that outside of the I-5 corridor the state is mostly rural and the larger metropolitan areas can skew averages.

For the purpose of developing a relative process of ranking socioeconomic need, block groups are classified relative to the county using a five-tiered scale of “very low” to “very high.” A block group classified as “very low” can still have a significant number of potentially transit dependent persons as “very low” means below the county’s average. At the other end of the spectrum, “very high” means greater than twice the county’s average. The exact specifications for each score are summarized in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: Relative Ranking Definitions for Transit Dependent Populations

Amount of Vulnerable Persons or Households	Score
Less than and equal to the service area’s average	Very Low
Above the average and up to 1.33 times the average	Low
Above 1.33 times the average and up to 1.67 times the average	Moderate
Above 1.67 times the average and up to two times the average	High
Above two times the average	Very High

Transit Dependence Index

The need for public transportation is often derived by recognizing the size and location of segments of the population most dependent on transit services. Transit dependency can be a result of many factors such as: no access to a personal vehicle, a disability that prevents a person from operating a personal vehicle, age, and income. Establishing the location of transit dependent populations aids in the evaluation of the current population while identifying potential gaps in transit services. While the study area is rural, its distribution of transit dependent populations is in line with the state average. In Washington the average percentage of residents per block group displaying characteristics of transit dependency is 9.70% and in Skagit County it is 9.06%. The Transit Dependence Index (TDI) is an aggregate measure displaying relative density of transit dependent populations. Six factors make up the TDI calculation

including: population, people with disabilities, autoless households, elderly populations (ages 65 and over), youth populations (ages 10 to 17), and below poverty populations.

In addition to population density, the factors above represent specific socio-economic characteristics of Skagit County residents. For each factor, individual block groups were classified according to the percentage of the vulnerable population relative to the county average. The factors were then put into the TDI equation to determine the relative transit dependence of each block group.

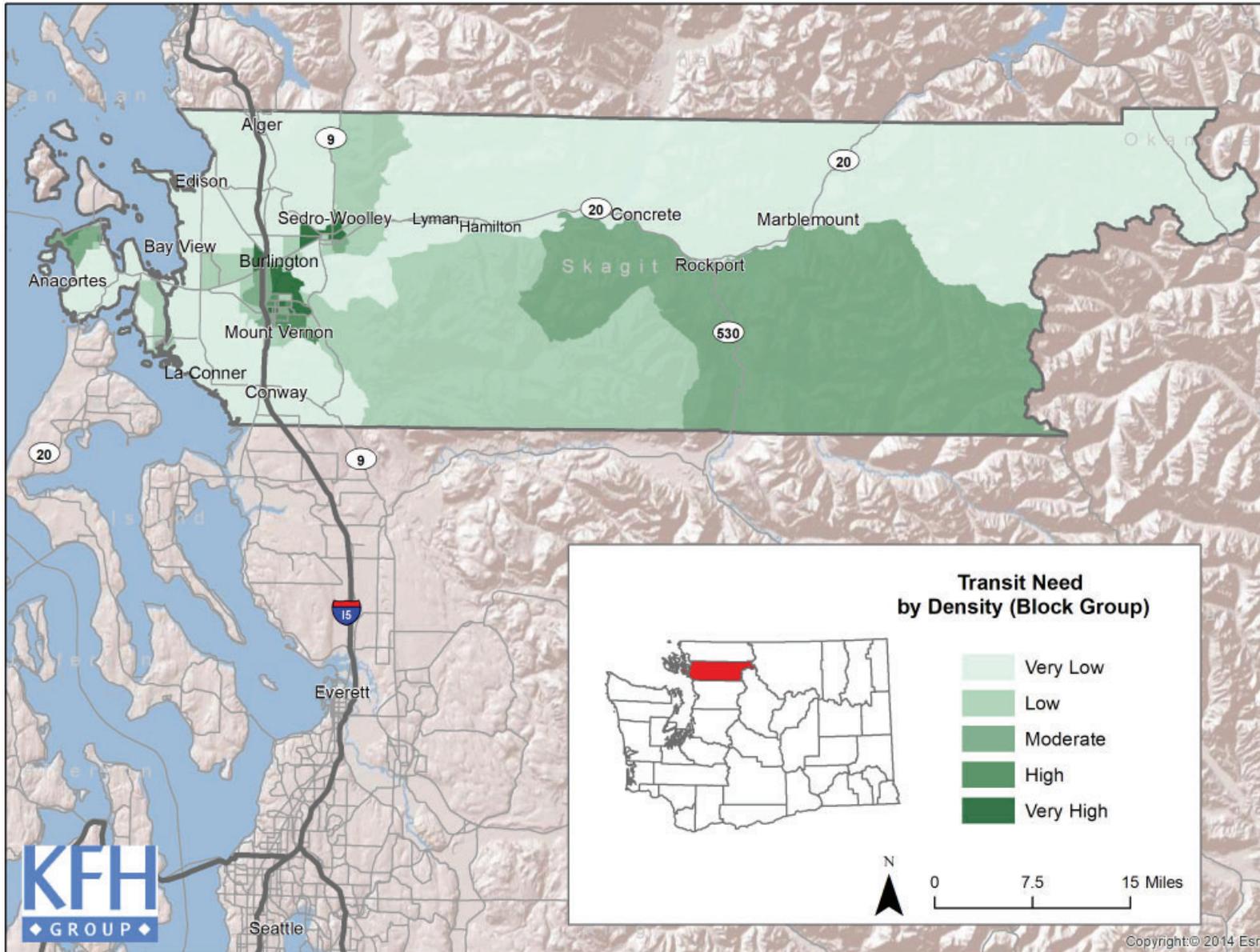
The relative classification system utilizes averages in ranking populations. For example, areas with less than the average transit dependent population fall into the “very low” classification, where areas that are more than twice the average will be classified as “very high.” The classifications “low, moderate, and high” all fall between the average and twice the average. These classifications are divided into thirds.

Figure 3-3 displays the TDI rankings by population density for the county. According to the TDI, the region has moderate needs. However, due to the vagaries of this index, very low populations do not score as high in the needs. Compensating for this, the study team understands that while the numbers of people are low, the percentage that are high need residents is very high.

The Transit Dependence Index Percent (TDIP) provides a supplemental analysis to the TDI measure. It is similar to the TDI measure however it excludes the population density factor. The TDIP for each block group in the study area was calculated based on autoless households, elderly populations, youth populations, persons with disabilities, and below poverty populations.

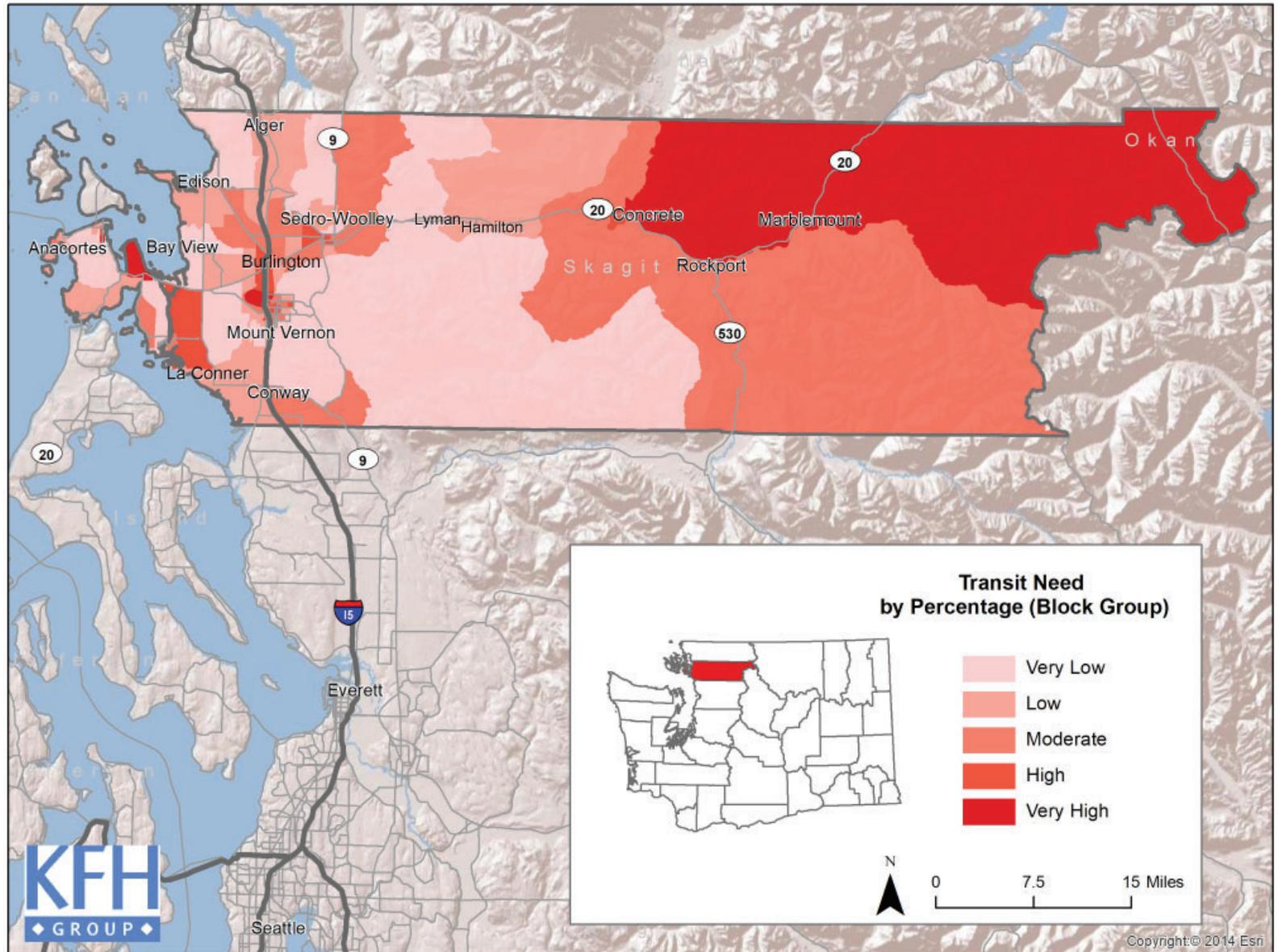
By removing the population density factor the TDIP measures the degree of vulnerability. It represents the percentage of the population within the block group with the above socioeconomic characteristics, and it follows the TDI’s five-tiered categorization of very low to very high. However, it does not highlight the block groups that are likely to have higher concentrations of vulnerable populations only because of their population density. Figure 3-4 shows transit need based on the percentage. According to the TDIP the areas around Mount Vernon, Bay View, Concrete, and Marblemount have high percentages of residents with transit dependent characteristics.

Figure 3-3: Transit Dependence Index by Density



Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Figure 3-4: Transit Dependence Index Percentage



Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Senior Adult Population

One of the socioeconomic groups analyzed by the TDI and TDIP indices is the senior adult population, which consists of individuals ages 65 and older. Persons in this age group may begin to decrease their use of a personal vehicle and rely more heavily on public transit. Figure 3-5 shows the relative percentage of seniors in the study area. Mount Vernon, Anacortes, Concrete, Rockport and Marblemount have block groups with very high percentages of seniors. This is consistent with many rural areas in America where populations in non-urbanized areas are seeing a trend of rapid aging in the demographic makeup of their communities.

Individuals with Disabilities

Figure 3-6 illustrates individuals with disabilities in the study area. The American Community Survey was used to obtain data for the disabled population. Persons who have disabilities that prevent them from owning or make it more difficult to own and operate a personal vehicle often rely on public transit for their transportation needs. Areas in the county with high or very high percentages of individuals with disabilities are in the eastern portions of Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, Concrete, Rockport, and Marblemount.

Zero Car Households

Households without at least one personal vehicle are more likely to depend on the mobility offered by public transit. Although autoless households are reflected in both the TDI and TDIP measures, displaying this segment of the population separately is important since most land uses in the study area are at distances too far for non-motorized travel. Figure 3-7 displays the relative percentage of autoless households. Areas with high percentages of households without vehicles per census block group include the I-5 corridor near Mount Vernon and the block groups south of the State Highway 20 corridor near Concrete, Rockport and Marblemount.

Youth Population

The youth population is often used as an identifier of transit dependent populations. Persons ages 10 to 17 either cannot drive or are just beginning to drive and often do not have a personal automobile accessible to them. For

this population, public transit is often the means that offers mobility. Figure 3-8 illustrates the percentage of youth populations relative to the study area. Areas around Mount Vernon and Sedro-Woolley have the census block groups with the highest youth population percentage.

Below Poverty Population

A group that is not only important regarding transit dependency but also has Title VI implications are those individuals who earn less than the federal poverty level. This segment of the population may find it a financial burden to own and maintain a personal vehicle, thus relying on public transit as their primary means of transportation. Figure 3-9 depicts the relative percentage of households living below the poverty level. Block groups in Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, Burlington, Edison, and areas south of the State Highway 20 corridor near Concrete, Rockport and Marblemount have the highest percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line in Skagit County.

Limited-English Proficiency

In addition to providing public transportation for a diversity of demographic groups, it is also important to serve and disseminate information to those of different linguistic backgrounds.

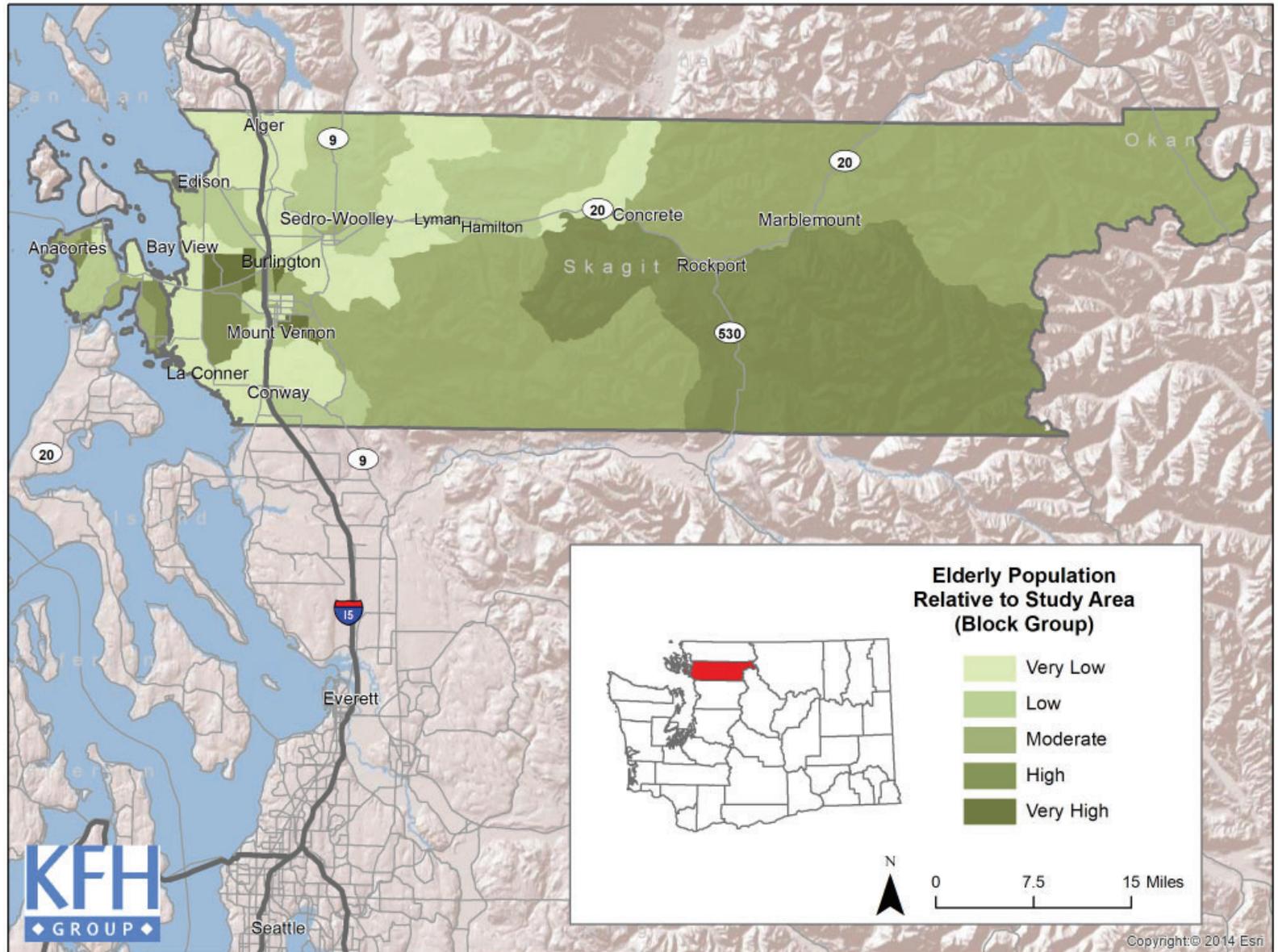
As shown in Table 3-5 residents of Skagit County predominately speak English. Of those that speak other languages in the home, 75% speak English very well or well. The most common language spoken other than English is Spanish. Through the outreach effort the project team was made aware of pockets of Ukrainian speaking residents and small pockets of residents that speak languages indigenous to northern and central Mexico, including Mazatacan languages.

Table 3-5: Limited English Proficiency

County	Skagit	
5 years and up	113,040	
Languages Spoken	Number	Percent
English	94,883	83.94%
Speak Non-English	18,157	16.06%
Spanish	14,183	12.55%
Indo-European languages	2,025	1.79%
Asian/Pacific Island languages	1,394	1.23%
Other	555	0.49%
Ability to Speak English:	Number	Percent
"Very Well" or "Well"	13,700	75.45%
"Not Well" or "Not at All"	4,457	24.55%

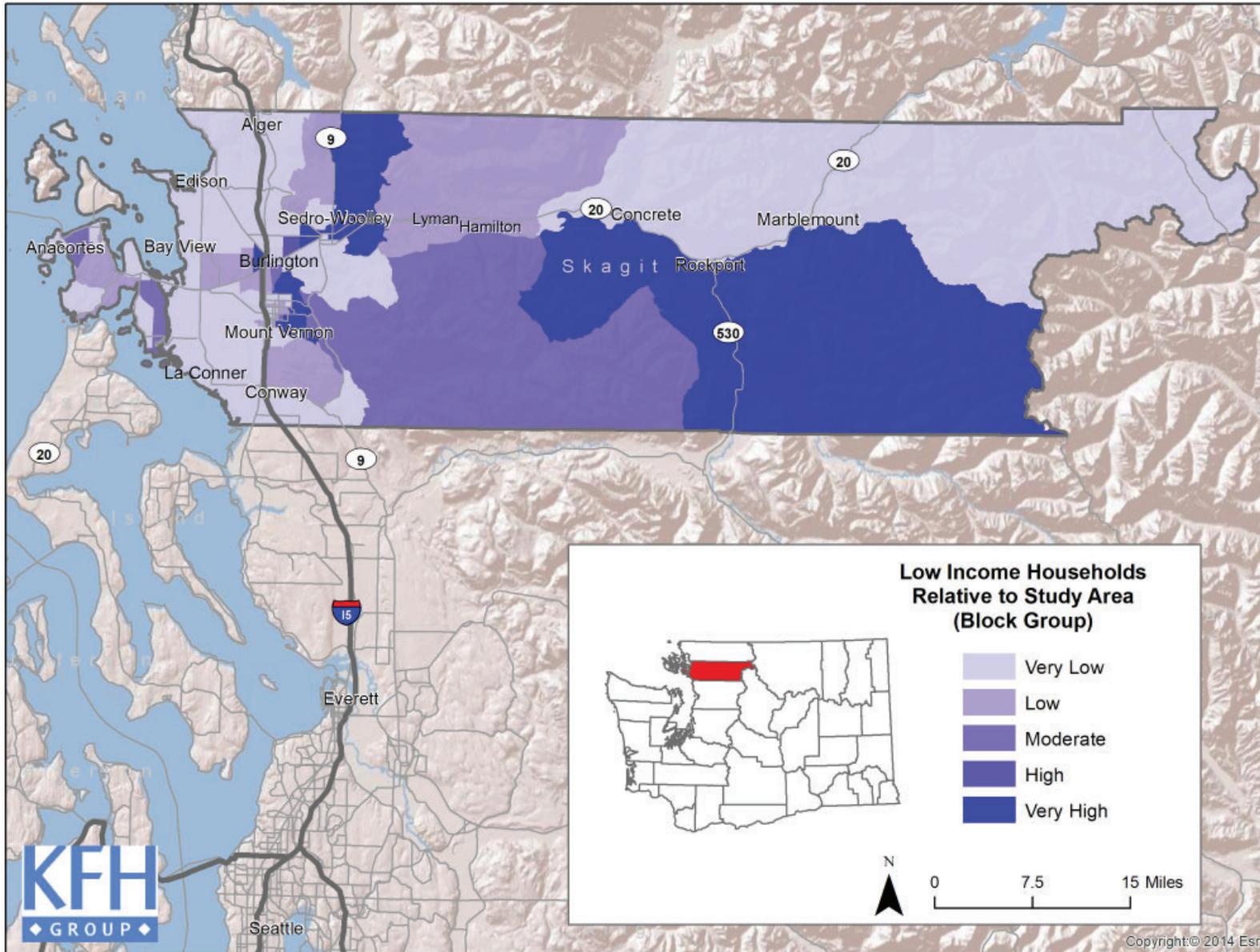
Source: American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2013-2017), Table B16004

Figure 3-5: Percentage of the Senior Adult Population (Ages 65 and Older)



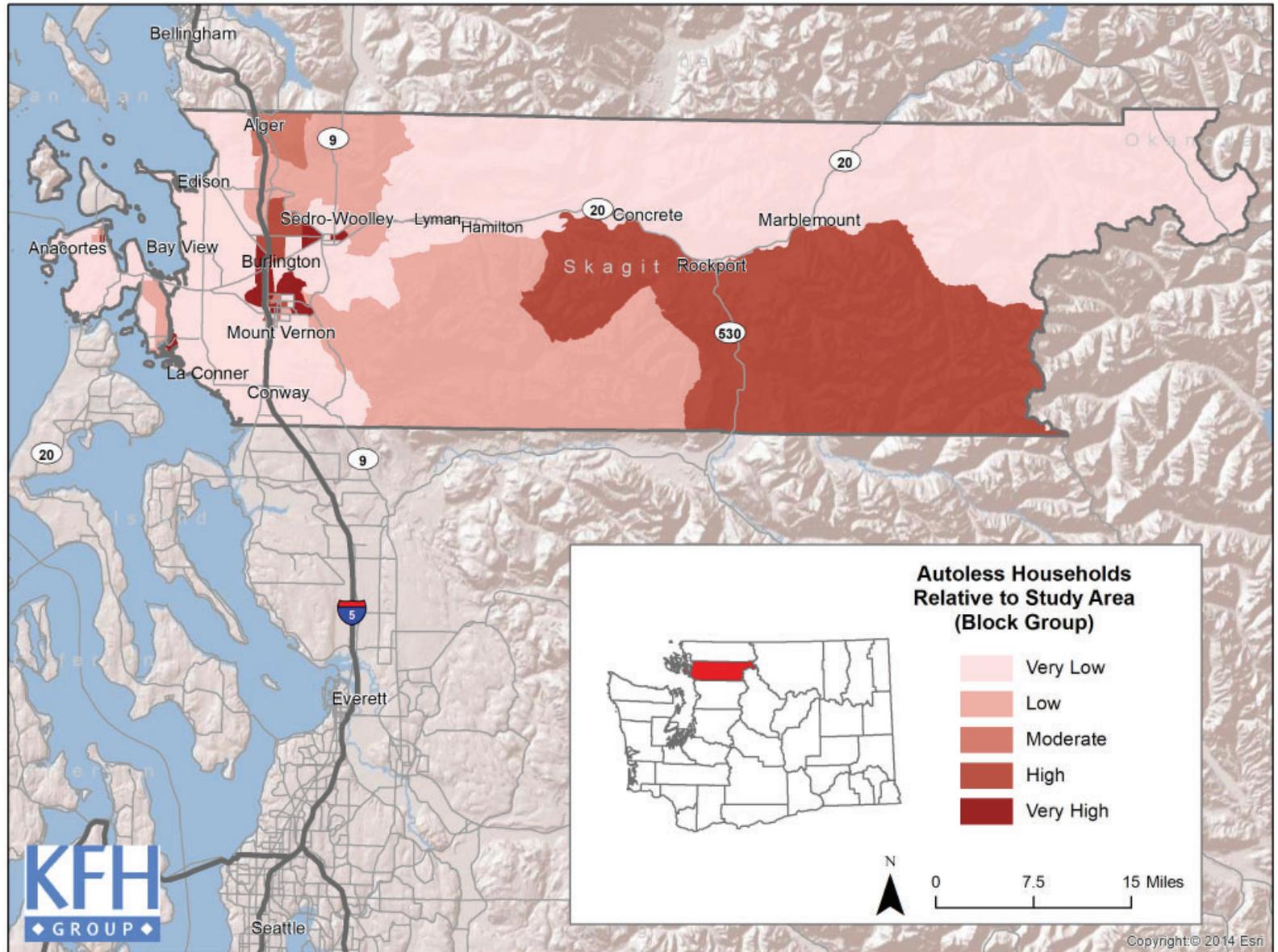
Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Figure 3-6: Relative Percentage of Individuals with Disabilities



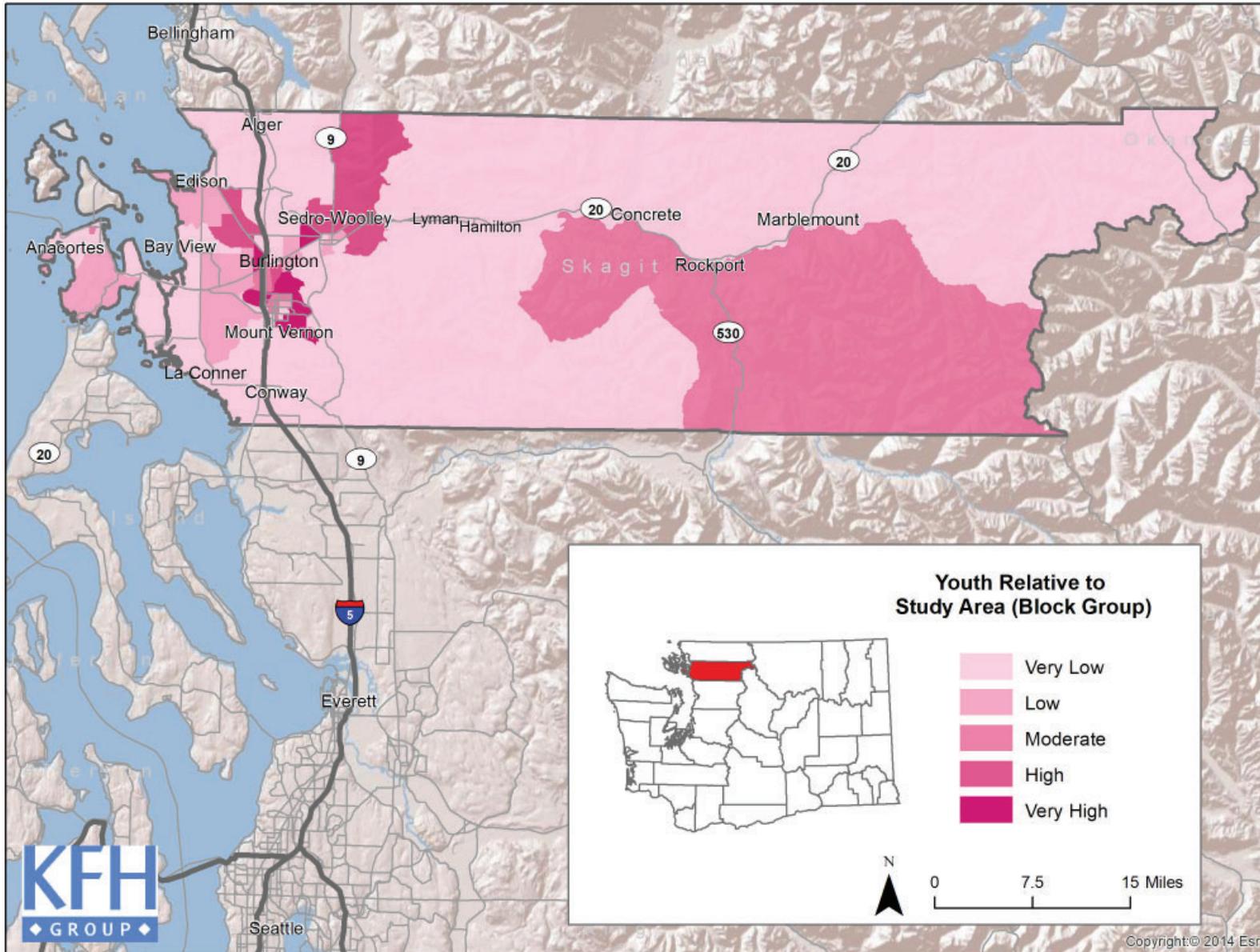
Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Figure 3-7: Relative Percentage of Zero Car Household Distribution



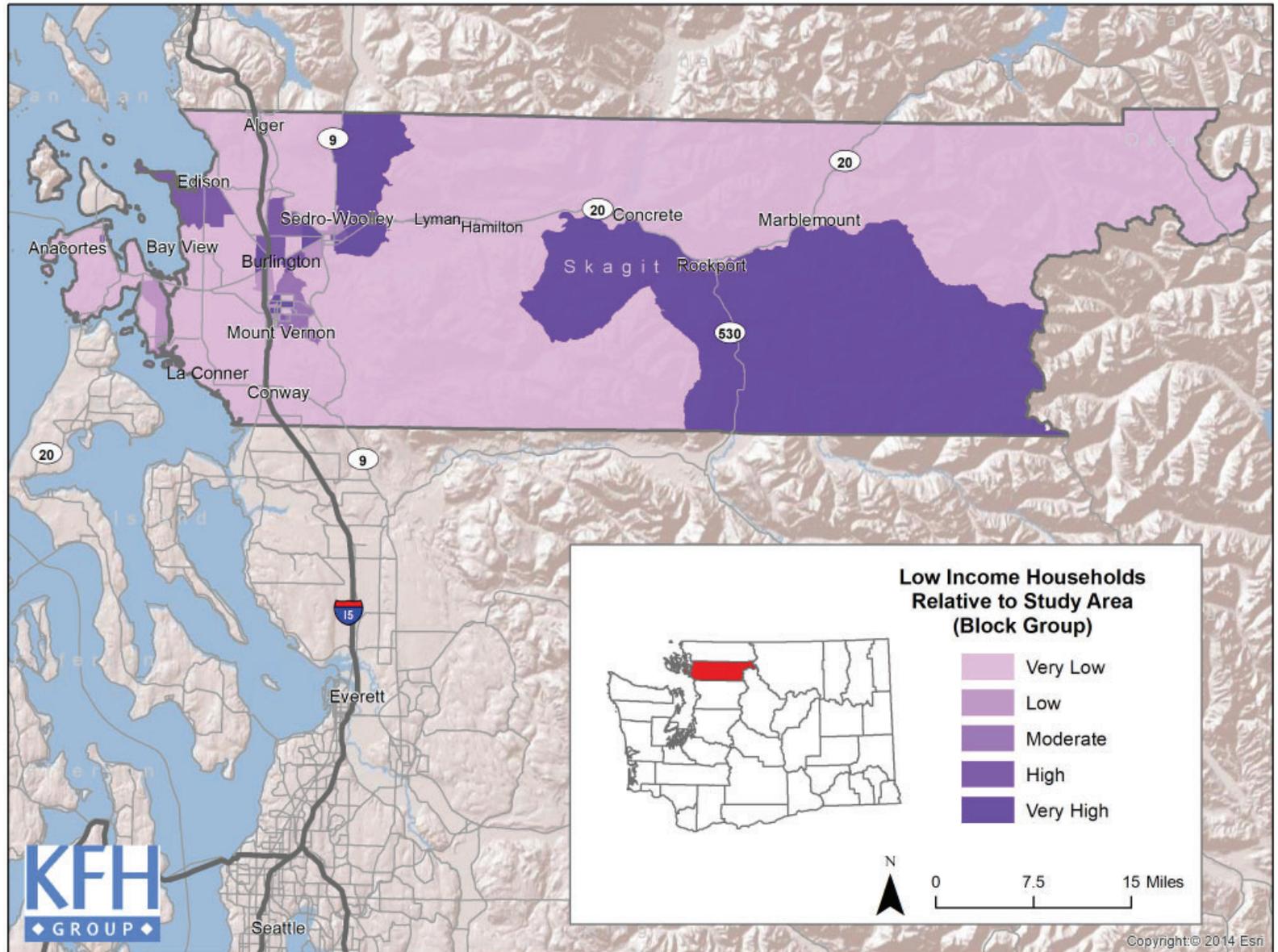
Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Figure 3-8: Relative Percentage of the Youth Population (Ages 10 to 17)



Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Figure 3-9: Relative Percentage of Individuals Living Below the Poverty Level



Created: 7/30/2018. Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-year estimates.

Employment Travel Patterns

It is beneficial to account for the commuting patterns of residents intra- and inter-regionally. Table 3-6 presents the results of the Census Bureau’s Journey to Work data which provides location of employment (in-county vs. out-of-county and in-state vs. out-of-state) and means of transportation to work. Residents in the study area typically work in their county of residence. A majority of residents drive alone to work. Slightly more than one percent of Skagit County residents use transit for commuting. Next to the personal automobile, carpooling/vanpooling is the most common commute type at 10.44 percent.

Table 3-6: Journey to Work Patterns

County	Skagit	
Workers 16 Years and Older	51,906	
Location of Employment	Number	Percent
In State of Residence	51,478	99.18%
In County of Residence	40,734	78.48%
Outside County of Residence	10,744	20.70%
Outside State of Residence	428	0.82%
Means of Transportation to Work	Number	Percent
Car, Truck, or Van - drove alone	40,719	78.45%
Car, Truck, or Van - carpooled	5,417	10.44%
Public Transportation	544	1.05%
Walked	1,359	2.62%
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, other	954	1.84%
Worked at Home	2,913	5.61%

Source: American Community Survey, Five-Year Estimates (2013-2017), Table B08130

Demographic and Land Use Needs Summary

The Skagit region has several major geographic areas: the I-5 corridor, the North Puget Sound and islands, the farmland of the Skagit Valley, and the Cascade Mountains in the easternmost part of the county. Skagit County is also contiguous to several Native American tribal lands which are not differentiated by the U.S. Census Block Groups. Each of the communities in the Skagit region show transportation needs, many of which are indicative of small urban and rural areas throughout the State of Washington and the country. Comparatively the study area is not a demographic outlier in the state, yet it is defined by

a high level of need due to the demographic makeup. The study area is defined by location in between vast stretches of open spaces with communities that have large percentages of populations that display transit dependent characteristics. This presents a particular challenge to service providers and planners. The need for expanded transportation service is apparent yet there are many operational, jurisdictional, and geographical challenges to overcome in meeting these needs.



This analysis is supplemented with qualitative input from the public outreach efforts as part of this plan as well as an assessment of current available transportation services and resources. This data along with the demographic and land use analysis informed the subsequent phases of this project including the identification of high priority projects to meet the needs of residents in Skagit County.

Common Origins and Destinations of Paratransit Passengers

Skagit Transit provided data on the most frequent paratransit trip origins and destinations, for the 12-month period dated August 1, 2017 through July 31, 2018. Presented in Table 3-7, the service locations are grouped by type, including residential locations (including housing for low income and senior populations), transit stations (where passengers may be transferring to or from other transit services as part of their journey for that trip), health care destinations, and other common types of destinations. Collectively, more than 5,200 trips were made to eight senior apartment complexes in Mount Vernon during this 12-month period. The individual residential locations generating the highest numbers of rides include Vintage at Mount Vernon (4,399 trips), Mira Vista Care Center in Mount Vernon (3,467 trips), and Life Care Center in Sedro Woolley (3,465 trips). Travel to dialysis in Mount Vernon is the most frequent travel destination on paratransit at 8,339 trips during the 12-month period, with Chinook Enterprises in Mount Vernon (4,576 trips) as the second most popular destination. Other frequent destinations include Compass Mental Health (2,435 trips), Fred Meyer (2,247 trips), Walmart (2,220 trips), the YMCA (2,206 trips), and Skagit Regional Medical Center (2,181 trips).

Table 3-7: Frequent Skagit Transit Paratransit Trip Origins and Destinations, August 2017 through July 2018

Locations Served	Number of Passenger Trips
Residential Locations	
Senior Apartment Complexes in Mount Vernon – 8 locations	5,254
Vintage at Mount Vernon	4,399
Mira Vista Care Center in Mount Vernon	3,467
Life Care Center in Sedro Woolley	3,465
Senior Apt Complexes in Burlington - 3 Locations	2,413
Apartments - Low Income in Mount Vernon	1,982
Ovenell's Group Home in Burlington	1,840
Adult Day Care in Burlington	1,349
Life Care Center Mount Vernon	1,292
Trailer Courts in Sedro Woolley - 3 Locations	1,250
Creekside Retirement in Burlington	1,160
Colonial Park in Mount Vernon	1,130
Group Homes in Burlington	963
Group Homes in Mount Vernon	916
Prestige Care of Burlington	861
The Bridge in Mount Vernon	796
Mountain Glen in Mount Vernon	636
Olympic Apartments in Mount Vernon	587
Mountain View Mobile Park in Mount Vernon	461
Cedargrove Adult Family Home in Burlington	447
Hillsvie Apartments in Sedro Woolley	430
Fircrest Apartments in Mount Vernon	400
Villa Kathleen Apartments in Burlington	400
Transit Facilities	
Skagit Station	2,457
Chuckanut Park and Ride	1,627

Table 3-7, continued

Locations Served	Number of Passenger Trips
Medical Destinations	
Dialysis in Mount Vernon	8,338
Skagit Regional Medical Center in Mount Vernon	2,181
Skagit Wound Healing Institute in Mount Vernon	1,105
Sunrise Services in Mount Vernon	1,077
Peace Health UGH in Sedro Woolley	803
Dialysis in Anacortes	694
Skagit Valley Hospital in Mount Vernon	571
Cascade Davita Dialysis in Burlington	554
UGH PT in Sedro Woolley	427
Cascadia Eye in Mount Vernon	415
Other Destinations	
Chinook Enterprises in Mount Vernon (All Associated)	4,576
Compass Mental in Health Mount Vernon	2,435
Fred Meyer in Burlington	2,247
Walmart in Mount Vernon	2,220
YMCA in Mount Vernon	2,206
Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon	1,858
Church Services in Mount Vernon	1,737
Senior Center in Mount Vernon	1,267
Senior Center in Anacortes	1,254
Safeway in Mount Vernon	1,096
Riverside Health Club in Mount Vernon	922
Senior Center in Sedro Woolley	750
Senior Center in Burlington	733
Skyline Area in Anacortes	593
Community Action in Mount Vernon	430

Source: Skagit Transit

Summary of Unmet Needs Identified During Public Involvement Activities



Detailed comments provided by stakeholder representatives and members of the public during the public outreach efforts are provided in Appendix D. The consultant team learned that Skagit Transit is doing an excellent job meeting many of the transportation needs of Skagit County residents. Given Skagit Transit’s specific PBTA service area and constrained funding, it is not possible for the transit agency to meet all of the needs of county residents and inter-county travelers.

Themes that emerged from the sources of information on unmet transportation needs in Skagit County include:

- Additional services are needed in rural areas – this includes:
 - Expanded fixed routes and/or Dial-A-Ride service beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile corridor around the fixed routes. There are pockets of high needs residents who live further than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from a fixed route.
 - More frequent routed service to La Conner, Concrete, and Marblemount.
 - East county/up river residents would like to take transit to medical appointments, shopping, and food banks without having a long wait to return home.
 - Service to Marblemount is currently operated one day per week.
 - Service from Concrete that is timed so that Concrete residents can commute to full-time jobs in the Mount Vernon area and make regional connections.
 - Additional services connecting residential areas of Tribal members to Anacortes and Tribal services.
 - “First-mile/last-mile” connections for rural residents who live beyond walking distance to transit routes.

- Expanded days and hours of fixed route services, including
 - Weekday evening service
 - Sunday service to Anacortes, La Conner, and other areas
- Regional connectivity, particularly for those traveling from the eastern part of the county who need to access jobs and essential services, as well as those traveling to and from (or through) Anacortes.
- More direct routing to reduce the number of transfers required and ride times, such as direct service from Anacortes to Mount Vernon and from Mount Vernon to Sedro-Woolley.
- Ride Pass Grant Program type of support for Connector bus routes.
- Medical transportation for low income individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid or Paratransit and do not live along a Skagit Transit route.
- Veterans transportation is very limited and not wheelchair-accessible. Recruiting and retaining volunteer drivers is a barrier.
- Generally increasing needs as the population increases, and people move out into the rural areas where housing prices are lower (but services and jobs are farther away).
- Increased availability of information on current transit services, such as through real-time technology to identify bus location and arrival times.
- Transportation for farmworkers, although the extent of the need is not known. Outreach to farmworkers can be challenging due to low literacy levels among farmworkers who do not speak English and may not even speak Spanish.



Importantly, it should be noted that while there are many unmet transportation needs in the Skagit region, Skagit Transit is doing an excellent job meeting many of the needs within their budget.

Section 4 – Technology and Emergency Management Considerations

Introduction

This chapter of the Skagit Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan summarizes the intelligent transportation systems (ITS) technologies used by the transportation providers in Skagit County. It also summarizes the current arrangements with local emergency management agencies.

ITS Technologies

SCOG adopted the Skagit MPO ITS Architecture in December 2011. If funding becomes available, SCOG plans to update this ITS architecture in 2019 to reflect changes in technology and expansion of the planning area boundaries since 2011. Skagit Transit was included in the 2011 ITS architecture.

Skagit Transit uses TripsSpark technology, including global positioning system (GPS) tracking of vehicles. Skagit Transit uses interactive voice response (IVR) telephone technology and makes automated phone calls that provide night-before reminder calls to paratransit riders. Skagit Transit would like to improve the flow of real-time information made available to customers, and is hoping to purchase the TripSpark MyRide module to provide digital displays at key stops and on their website indicating upcoming bus arrival times.

The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe's transportation services currently rely on cell phones and hand-held two-way radios, without a dispatch station. There are no near-term plans to implement ITS technology.

The Swinomish Tribe will consider the need for ITS technology following development of its transit feasibility study. ITS could be a component to any new or supplemental transit services that arise from a feasibility study.

Mercy Transportation vehicles are equipped with technology that includes real time GPS tracking, digital dispatch for enhanced driver communications, and an on-board vehicle monitoring system.

Although Northwest Regional Council does not have ITS or plans for ITS (due to HIPAA regulations they still use fax technology), they see potential for ITS technology for Medicaid providers for consistency. Many of the non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) operators are small and unable to afford such technology themselves.

Collaboration with Emergency Management Agencies

Skagit Transit has a defined role in two emergency management plans. The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan developed by the Skagit County Department of Emergency Management identifies Skagit Transit as an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) member. The plan calls for Skagit Transit to support transportation coordination efforts including the movement of persons with special needs, including in the case of evacuation. In this role, Skagit Transit acts as a support agency with guidance from other agencies at the EOC. The plan also identifies Skagit Transit as a resource to help provide a damage assessment throughout the county. The specifics of this coordination are clearly laid out in an interlocal agreement signed in September 2007 between Skagit Transit and Skagit County. The second plan, developed by the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program includes emergency closure of I-5 and other major highways. In the long-term, increased transit service or new transit service provided by Skagit Transit was identified as a response strategy.

The Samish Indian Nation is working on building its capabilities in emergency management in partnership with local jurisdictions.

The Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe has a Department of Public Safety that is responsible for emergency management on the Reservation. The tribe's transportation services are not currently included in agreements with Skagit County emergency management agencies or first responders.



The Swinomish Tribe has its own Emergency Management Department which coordinates with local fire districts and the Skagit Department of Emergency Management. SITC has its own police department that has an interagency agreement with Skagit County Sheriff's Department.

Mercy Transportation is registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Northwest Regional Council is an association of county governments for Island, San Juan, Skagit, and Whatcom counties and serves as an important support agency during an emergent event or disaster in the service area. Northwest Regional Council has an Emergency Response Plan that includes maintenance of services to high-risk clients and notification to local emergency management responders (e.g. police, fire, city emergency management, public health) when concerns for the safety of individual clients arise. Northwest Regional Council is a member of COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disasters) in both Whatcom and Skagit counties and works with first responder organizations and the American Red Cross to coordinate services needed in the community.

Northsound 211, a provider of information and referral to transportation and other services, is a key source of information and referral to services during and following emergencies in the Skagit region and the larger North Sound area.

The Skagit Emergency Management Department Director was notified about the CPT-HSTP.

Section 5 – Potential Strategies and Projects

Introduction

This chapter of the Skagit Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan presents strategies that could potentially meet the needs for transportation services identified among the target populations for this plan. The Washington State CPT-HSTP guidance calls for the development of broadly identified strategies, along with a list of prioritized projects, to meet the identified gaps in service. The projects are prioritized regionally, and applications for funding under WSDOT's Consolidated Grant Program are evaluated at the regional level based on regionally-established criteria.

The Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee established project priority criteria on September 4, 2018 which were approved by SCOG's Transportation Policy Board on September 19, 2018. These criteria are presented in Table 5-1.

The potential strategies presented in this chapter were developed based on the following inputs:

- Outreach meetings and surveys conducted during August 2018,
- Individual meetings with the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee members,
- A review of existing services,
- Assessment of transportation needs and gaps in services,
- Project priority criteria established by Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee members,
- Strategies in the 2013 Washington Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan and 2014 Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan, and
- The consultant team's familiarity with best practices in coordinated human service transportation and experience with developing coordinated transportation plans in many other rural and small urban areas of the country.

Strategies for Sustaining Existing Services

Sustaining current services that are effectively and efficiently meeting transportation needs is a critical strategy for ensuring that needs continue to be met. Sustaining services requires not only operating funding, but also funding to support the vehicles needed to deliver safe and reliable service. Maintenance of equipment needed to operate the service, and replacement of equipment when it reaches the end of its useful life are essential to sustaining services.

Potential activities/projects to sustain existing services include:

- Fund operations of existing service.
- Maintain and/or replace bus fleet to ensure a state of good repair.
- Maintain and build adequate capital reserves to fund fleet replacement.
- Conduct planning and support tasks necessary to maintain service.



Table 5-1: Criteria for Prioritizing Skagit Projects for Funding under the Washington State DOT Consolidated Grant Program

Categories	#	Criteria	Evaluation Instructions	Weights
Project Type	1	Continues/preserves an existing transportation service or program; expands/improves an existing transportation service or program; or creates a new transportation service or program	Determine how well the project type proposed meets criterion and score application for that project type	10
Needs Addressed By Project	2	Fills need(s) identified in planning process for coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan	Refer to needs assessment for coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan	14
	3	Serves special needs populations and/or areas of high transit dependence	Refer to maps of persons with disabilities, seniors, youth, households without vehicles, low-income populations, minority populations and transit dependency needs index	15
	4	Serves local needs, includes trips entirely within Skagit County and local tribal lands	Evaluate the application on how well it proposes to address local needs	13
	5	Serves regional needs, including connections to Skagit County from other counties	Evaluate the application on how well it proposes to address regional needs	11
Efficiency and Effectiveness of Project	6	Estimated number of individuals served or passenger trips by transportation service or program	Evaluate the application using estimated number of individuals served or passenger trips	7
	7	Financial sustainability of project, resulting cost savings from project, leveraging of other funding sources and volunteer support	Evaluate the application using this cost related criterion	9
	8	Coordinate and/or collaborate with other organizations, locally and/or regionally	Evaluate the application based on documented coordination and/or collaboration with other organizations	9
	9	Utilizes innovative programs, processes and tools that improve efficiency and/or effectiveness	Score the application based on the service or programs proposed innovation - could be technological or other innovation	6
Other Benefits of Project	10	Incorporates environmentally sustainable practices and/or emergency management elements	Determine if the project incorporates any environmentally sustainable practices and/or emergency management elements	6

Strategies for Expanding Existing Services

Expansions to existing services can help meet identified transportation needs that the current services do not quite address. Each of these activities would require additional operating funding for incremental expansion costs. Increasing frequencies would require additional vehicles. Increasing geographic coverage of service would also likely require additional vehicles. Expanding services and fleet sizes would also increase future costs to sustain service.

Potential activities/projects to expand existing services include:

- Increase geographic coverage of service (expand existing routes or paratransit area).
- Increase span of service (for example, start earlier in the morning and/or end later in the day to meet more work trip needs, or operate one or both weekend days).
- Increase frequency of service (operate routes more frequently during the current span of service).



Strategies for Creating New Services

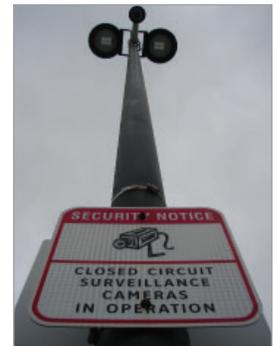
For some types of needs, creating new transportation services may be the preferred approach. Unless volunteers are used, new services are likely to require significant operating funding as well as additional vehicles. Potential activities/projects to create new services include:

- Implement new volunteer driver program to meet specific geographic or trip purpose needs in region.
- Implement new transit routes to provide expanded geographic coverage.
- Provide additional demand-response services for people with disabilities (beyond the ADA paratransit service area that spans ¼ mile from fixed-route service area) and potentially others needing specialized service.
- Provide demand-response services for the general public in areas with low population density, potentially serving different areas on different days of the week.
- Provide flexible route services for the general public in areas with low population density, potentially serving different areas on different days of the week.

Strategies for Enhancing Services

Enhancements to existing services, expanded or new services, can help meet more transportation needs by making services easier to use. Strategies in this category could involve improved access to information, use of technology, and enhanced passenger amenities. Potential activities/projects to enhance existing services include:

- Improve schedule integration between systems to facilitate regional connections.
- Improve rider information using real-time information systems.



- Improve rider information and trip planning tools.
- Improve driver and rider safety through security investments on buses and at stops.

Strategies for Facilitating Access to Services

In addition to the potential enhancements that could make transportation services easier to use, there are also other means of facilitating access to service for those who need extra assistance. Potential activities/projects to facilitate access to services include:

- Increase knowledge of available transportation options to targeted users, agencies, groups, communities who support special needs populations groups, and the general public, through sustained mobility management and outreach.
- Improve user knowledge of how to ride Skagit Transit fixed route and paratransit through travel training and sustaining the existing program.
- Reduce financial barriers to access by sustaining the Ride Pass Grant Program (and potentially expanding through additional passes and/or Connector passes).
- Expand access to taxi services and other private transportation operators through a voucher program to subsidize rides for taxi trips or trips provided by private operators.
- Add new bus stops at new community destinations opened along existing routes.
- Construct bus shelters at high-needs stops.
- Work with local jurisdictions to restrict and enforce on-street parking at bus stops, or consider constructing curb extensions.



- Improve rider visibility with technology at bus stops to signal the driver that passengers are waiting.
- Implement marketing campaign targeting specific audiences and routes.
- Use technology to expand marketing efforts, including the use of email messaging, social media, and/or a regional transportation website.
- Establish a one-stop transportation traveler call center that provides information on all travel modes in the region.
- Implement a guaranteed ride home program using taxis or private providers to enable transit customers to get home quickly in case of unexpected emergencies or missing the last bus home.



Strategies for Coordinating Services, Support Functions, and Planning

Coordination can help make effective use of limited resources, so that more needs can be met. Coordination of public transit and human service transportation can be approached numerous ways: through coordinated planning (such as the efforts of the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee), ongoing information sharing, shared transportation services (Skagit Transit already provides a great deal of coordinated human service transportation in the context of the general public services), shared support functions such as vehicle maintenance or driver training, and funding partnerships. The following are some potential coordination strategies and activities that could build on current coordination efforts in Skagit County and beyond.

- Establish a centralized point of access that provides information on available transportation options in the region.
- Develop of a ride-share matching database that could be used to effectively match potential drivers with people who need rides.

- Host periodic (annual or quarterly) meetings between transit providers and human services providers.
- Work with communities in high needs areas to identify gaps and the best methods to meet these needs.
- Cooperatively operate or fund cross-jurisdictional service.
- Coordinate county and city public works investments in transportation infrastructure to support access to and from transit service.
- Pursue opportunities to help offset individual transportation costs, including private industry partnerships (i.e., retailers or medical centers), employer subsidized transit pass programs, and pass or voucher programs.

Strategies for Promoting Environmental Sustainability

Incorporating environmentally sustainable practices can include activities such as:

- Reduce fleet emissions through increased fleet efficiency and/or alternative fuel source vehicles.
- Reduce single occupant commuters through local and regional transit services timed for worker schedules to encourage transit use.
- Encourage siting of human services and housing for special needs populations near existing fixed-route transit service.
- Facilitate use of fixed route transit over paratransit when feasible.

Priorities for Implementation

The Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee reviewed this list of potential strategies, discussed at their meeting on October 9, 2018, and were asked to rank the strategies as low, medium, or high priority for implementation. The results of this ranking exercise are presented in Table 5-2.



The specific list of projects that the SCOG Transportation Policy Board has prioritized for WSDOT Consolidated Grant funding is attached as Appendix E.

Ongoing Coordination

Coordination is required at the planning level, but should not stop with the completion of the planning process. Although the current WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program application cycle was necessarily a focus in the development of this plan, the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee could continue working together in some capacity to share information, identify emerging needs and opportunities, further the coordination efforts among stakeholders, and proactively prepare for the next WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program application cycle (2021-2023) and the 2022 update to this plan.

Table 5-2: Potential Strategies to Meet Transportation Needs in Skagit Region

Strategy Categories	#		Implementation Priority		
			High	Medium	Low
Sustain Existing Services	1	Fund operations of existing service	X		
	2	Maintain and/or replace bus fleet to ensure a state of good repair	X		
	3	Maintain and build adequate capital reserves to fund fleet replacement	X		
	4	Conduct planning and support tasks necessary to maintain service		X	
Expand Existing Services	1	Increase geographic coverage of service (expand existing routes or paratransit area)	X		
	2	Increase span of service (for example, start earlier in the morning and/or end later in the day to meet more work trip needs, or operate one or both weekend days)	X		
	3	Increase frequency of service (operate routes more frequently during the current span of service)	X		
Create New Services	1	Implement new volunteer driver program to meet specific geographic or trip purpose needs in region			X
	2	Implement new transit routes to provide expanded geographic coverage		X	
	3	Provide additional demand-response services for people with disabilities (beyond the ADA paratransit service area that spans ¼ mile from fixed-route service area) and potentially others needing specialized service		X	
	4	Provide demand-response services for the general public in areas with low population density, potentially serving different areas on different days of the week		X	
	5	Provide flexible route services for the general public in areas with low population density, potentially serving different areas on different days of the week		X	
Enhance Services	1	Improve schedule integration between systems to facilitate regional connections		X	
	2	Improve rider information using real-time information systems		X	
	3	Improve rider information and trip planning tools			X
	4	Improve driver and rider safety through security investments on buses and at stops			X

Table 5-2, continued

Strategy Categories	#		Implementation Priority		
			High	Medium	Low
Facilitate Access to Services	1	Increase knowledge of available transportation options to targeted users, agencies, groups, communities who support special needs populations groups, and the general public, through sustained mobility management and outreach		X	
	2	Improve user knowledge of how to ride Skagit Transit fixed route and paratransit through travel training and sustaining the existing program		X	
	3	Reduce financial barriers to access by sustaining the Ride Pass Grant Program (and potentially expanding through additional passes and/or Connector passes)	X		
	4	Expand access to taxi services and other private transportation operators through a voucher program to subsidize rides for taxi trips or trips provided by private operators		X	
	5	Add new bus stops at new community destinations opened along existing routes	X		
	6	Construct bus shelters at high-needs stops	X		
	7	Work with local jurisdictions to restrict and enforce on-street parking at bus stops, or consider constructing curb extensions			X
	8	Improve rider visibility with technology at bus stops to signal the driver that passengers are waiting		X	
	9	Implement marketing campaign targeting specific audiences and routes	X		
	10	Use technology to expand marketing efforts, including the use of email messaging, social media, and/or a regional transportation website		X	
	11	Establish a one-stop transportation traveler call center that provides information on all travel modes in the region		X	
	12	Implement a guaranteed ride home program using taxis or private providers to enable transit customers to get home quickly in case of unexpected emergencies or missing the last bus home			X

Table 5-2, continued

Strategy Categories	#		Implementation Priority		
			High	Medium	Low
Expand Existing Services	1	Establish a centralized point of access that provides information on available transportation options in the region		X	
	2	Develop of a ride-share matching database that could be used to effectively match potential drivers with people who need rides			X
	3	Host periodic (annual or quarterly) meetings between transit providers and human services providers	X		
	4	Work with communities in high needs areas to identify gaps and the best methods to meet these needs		X	
	5	Cooperatively operate or fund cross-jurisdictional service		X	
	6	Coordinate county and city public works investments in transportation infrastructure to support access to and from transit service			X
	7	Pursue opportunities to help offset individual transportation costs, including private industry partnerships (i.e., retailers or medical centers), employer subsidized transit pass programs, and pass or voucher programs			X
Create New Services	1	Reduce fleet emissions through increased fleet efficiency and/or alternative fuel source vehicles			X
	2	Reduce single occupant commuters through local and regional transit services timed for worker schedules to encourage transit use		X	
	3	Encourage siting of human services and housing for special needs populations near existing fixed-route transit service		X	
	4	Facilitate use of fixed route transit over paratransit when feasible		X	

Ongoing Coordination Group

SCOG could change the committee from an ad hoc to a standing committee, meeting perhaps quarterly or semi-annually, or more frequently when necessary. SCOG or another stakeholder organization or government might alternatively consider establishing an ongoing special needs transportation coordinating committee.

Members of the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee participate on other transportation coordination groups, such as the North Sound Transportation Alliance and SNOTRAC, and this could be another approach for continuing discussions among members of the Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee.

Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee members, or other representatives of their respective organizations, could also apply to serve on the Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee, or attend as a member of the public. The Skagit Transit Community Advisory Committee serves in an advisory role to the Skagit Transit Board of Directors and meets monthly to discuss transit issues, and the public is welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Other organizations and governments, beyond those formally appointed by the SCOG Transportation Policy Board to the ad hoc Skagit Special Needs Transportation Committee, may be interested in participating in an ongoing coordination effort. SCOG has begun to compile a contact list of stakeholders who have expressed interest in the CPT-HSTP, and this would be a good foundation for potentially expanding the reach of ongoing efforts.

Coordinated Planning

In regularly sharing information on transportation needs and planning efforts, participating stakeholders can more collaboratively work toward meeting needs and dovetailing services and supports when feasible. In preparation for future public participation and outreach activities related to planning efforts, working collaboratively to conduct these activities among overlapping planning efforts could expand the reach of the outreach, and potentially streamline (rather than duplicate) efforts to reach the same groups of people at different times.

Creating new transportation services without collaborating with existing providers could result in potential service duplication or services that do not effectively connect. When the organization or government seeking to establish new services is new to public transit services or FTA/WSDOT-funded special transportation services, they may not be aware of the myriad requirements that come with such a grant and complexities with planning and operating a transportation service, and could benefit from the wisdom of experienced transportation operators and FTA/WSDOT grantees.

Coordinating to Leverage Funding

When new funding opportunities emerge, an ongoing working group of stakeholders in the Skagit region could be better positioned to leverage such funds if they are already talking on a regular basis.

An example of such a funding opportunity is the FTA Access and Mobility Partnership Grant program, for which applications are due November 13, 2018. The FTA Access and Mobility Partnership Grants seek to improve access to public transportation by building partnerships among health, transportation and other service providers. This program provides competitive funding to support innovative projects for the transportation disadvantaged that will improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation services. In 2018, there are two funding opportunities under the initiative: the Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility (ICAM) Pilot Program and Human Services Coordination Research (HSCR) grants. Eligible applicants for ICAM Pilot Program grants include states, tribes, and designated or direct recipients of FTA funding. Eligible applicants for HSCR grants include state and local governmental entities, providers of public transportation, private organizations, and non-profit organizations.



Other potential sources of funding to support collaborative special transportation initiatives include the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), from which SNOTRAC was recently awarded 2018 support to conduct regional mobility meetings to give mobility management practitioners from all industry sectors the opportunity to network and learn together. Earlier in 2018, NCMM (with funding from FTA), awarded Health Care Access Design Challenge grants to assist seven community teams across the U.S. in designing ready-to-launch health care transportation solutions.

Title VI Considerations

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Specifically, the Federal transit laws, 49 U.S.C. 5332(b), provide that “no person in the United States shall on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or age be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any project, program or activity funded in whole or in part through financial assistance under this Act.” In accepting any amount of Federal funding, such as a Section 5310 or Section 5311 grant, an organization is required to comply with Title VI for all of the organization’s programs and activities.

SCOG’s Title VI Policy Statement is attached as Exhibit 5-1 (in English) and Exhibit 5-2 (in Spanish).

As described in Section 1 and Appendix C, the outreach conducted as part of the development of this plan included Spanish-language translation at food bank and human service sites that are frequented by Spanish-speaking individuals, and the flyer/comment card used in outreach was translated into Spanish.



TITLE VI | NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Skagit Council of Government (SCOG) hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the agency to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, Executive Order 13166 on limited English proficiency, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which SCOG receives federal financial assistance.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with SCOG. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with SCOG's Title VI Coordinator within 180 calendar days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Title VI Complaint Forms may be obtained from SCOG at no cost and are available on SCOG's website.

A Title VI complaint may be filed with any of the following offices:

- Skagit Council of Governments
Attn: Title VI Coordinator
315 South Third Street, Suite 100
Mt. Vernon, Washington 98273
Phone: (360) 416-7871
- Washington State Department of Transportation
Public Transportation Division
Attn: Title VI Coordinator
PO Box 47387
Olympia, WA 98504
- Washington State Department of Transportation
Office of Equal Opportunity, Title VI Program
PO Box 47314
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 705-7082
- Federal Highway Administration
Washington State Division Office
711 Capitol Way South, Suite 501
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 534-9325
- Federal Transit Administration Office of Civil Rights
Attn: Title VI Program Coordinator
East Building, 5th Floor – TCR
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590
- United States Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Coordination and Review Section – NWB
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC, 205



NOTIFICACIÓN PÚBLICA DEL TÍTULO VI

Por medio de la presente, el SCOG notifica de manera pública que la política del organismo es garantizar el pleno cumplimiento del Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, la Ley de Recuperación de Derechos Civiles de 1987, el Decreto Presidencial 12898 sobre Justicia Ambiental, el Decreto Presidencial 13166 sobre Dominio Limitado del Idioma Inglés, así como los estatutos y reglamentos relacionados en todos los programas y actividades. De acuerdo con lo estipulado en el Título VI, ningún individuo de los Estados Unidos de América deberá, con fundamento en su raza, color, sexo o nacionalidad, ser excluido de participar en, que se le nieguen los beneficios de, o ser víctima de discriminación en virtud de cualquier programa o actividad por el cual el SCOG reciba fondos federales.

Toda persona que se considere agraviada por una práctica discriminatoria e ilícita en virtud del Título VI tiene derecho a presentar una denuncia formal ante el SCOG. Cualquier denuncia de este tipo debe presentarse por escrito ante el coordinador del Título VI del SCOG en un periodo de 180 días naturales a partir de la fecha de la presunta discriminación. El SCOG pone a disposición del público los formularios de denuncia del Título VI de manera gratuita en su página web.

Una denuncia del Título VI puede presentarse ante cualquiera de las siguientes oficinas:

- Consejo de Gobiernos de Skagit
A la atención de: Coordinador del Título VI
315 South Third Street, Suite 100
Mt. Vernon, Washington 98273
Teléfono: (360) 416-7871
- Departamento de Transporte del Estado de Washington
División de Transporte Público
A la atención de: Coordinador del Título VI
PO Box 47387
Olympia, WA 98504
- Departamento de Transporte del Estado de Washington
Oficina para Igualdad de Oportunidades, Programa del Título VI
PO Box 47314
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 705-70
- Administración Federal de Carreteras
Oficina de la División del Estado de Washington
Administración Federal de Carreteras
Oficina de la División del Estado de Washington
711 Capitol Way South, suite 501
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 534-9325
- Administración Federal de Transporte
Oficina de Derechos Civiles
A la atención de: Equipo de denuncias
Ala Este, quinto piso-TCR
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
- Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos
División de Derechos Civiles
Sección federal de coordinación y cumplimiento-NWB
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC, 20530