



Section 3
Relationship to Other Plans

Section 3: Relationship to Other Plans

Skagit 2045 is a document that is built upon the priorities and objectives established in local plans and the Washington Transportation Plan. Regional transportation planning provides a unified blueprint to ensure that the efforts of all affected jurisdictions are coordinated, and that the individual parts of the regional transportation system function as a whole. This Plan is also built upon the efforts outlined in the Skagit 2040 plan, as it established regional transportation projects and strategies that have been completed, are underway or are no longer a priority.

Land use and transportation are forever interrelated, as decisions made in one realm affect the other, and vice versa. Thus, while history and current commitments provide the initial basis for Skagit 2045, the Plan also must consider future land uses and growth patterns. Skagit 2045 needs to match transportation resources to prioritize existing deficiencies, as well as serve forecast growth and support economic development in the Skagit region.

Understanding the broad regional travel characteristics also assists in developing the Plan. In 2008, the Whatcom Council of Governments and Skagit Council of Governments undertook a survey of travel characteristics of residents in Whatcom, Skagit and Island counties. The survey provides insights on socioeconomic factors that affect travel in the Skagit region and beyond. A summary of findings related to trip rates, travel patterns and use of alternative modes is summarized in this section.

Skagit 2045 also incorporates key strategies from the coordinated public transit – human services transportation plan (CPT-HSTP) for the Skagit region. The CPT-HSTP addresses transportation issues for special needs populations, including seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals.

Regional Land Use Growth

While the history of the Skagit region establishes the background for the Plan, forecast growth patterns also affect priorities, with forecast population and employment growth affecting transportation needs throughout the region and connections outside the region.

Local population dynamics are highly influenced by an area's employment climate. Generally, population growth is based primarily on immigration, driven by people moving into an area in search of, or taking, new jobs. In large part, population growth depends on how favorable an area's employment opportunities are in relation to other areas. Stated simply, people follow jobs and in turn create demand for local goods and services, such as housing. While natural increases and decreases in population growth have an effect, due to births and deaths, these trends tend to be steady influences on population dynamics, unlike the swings associated with people moving into and out of an area.

Historical Population Growth

Exhibit 3-1 shows historical population change in Skagit County and urban growth areas (UGAs) within the Skagit region. According to the Washington state Office of Financial Management (OFM), estimate population in Skagit County grew by nearly 28,000 people from 2000 to 2020, an increase of 27 percent at an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 1.4%.

The UGAs with the most growth between 2000 and 2020 were Mount Vernon, which grew by over 9,700 people at an AAGR of 1.7%. For the other cities' UGAs: Sedro-Woolley grew by over 2,800 people at an AAGR of 1.4%; Burlington grew by over 2,800 people at an AAGR of 1.7%; and Anacortes grew by over 3,200 people with an AAGR of 1.1%.

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All other UGAs grew by less than 500 people, with Hamilton losing population during this timeframe.

71.4% of overall population growth in Skagit County has been located in urban growth areas over the 20-year period, with the remaining 28.6% outside of urban growth areas. **Exhibit 3-2** shows the historical change in the share of Skagit County population from 2000 to 2020. The distribution of population within the Skagit region has been shifting into UGAs over the last 20 years. However, the percentage share of growth outside of urban growth areas has been increasing since this analysis was last conducted in 2015.

A study done by the consulting firm BERK in 2014, using a different methodology than OFM uses for its population estimates, indicated that the population growth inside Skagit region UGAs from 2000–2010 was 79%, with 21% growth in non-UGA areas.

While methodological approaches and timeframes vary for estimating population growth, the two sources reviewed for Skagit 2045 were relatively close, with 71–79% of population growth going into UGAs within the last 10 to 20 years. This range of growth approaches the guidance in Countywide Planning Policy 1.2 for the Skagit region, which targets 80% of planned population growth to cities’ and towns’ incorporated areas, municipal unincorporated urban growth areas, and non-municipal urban growth areas (such as Bayview Ridge and Swinomish UGAs) over a 20-year period.

Skagit County UGAs are displayed in **Exhibit 3-3**. The exhibit shows the municipal urban growth areas of the four cities (Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley) and the four towns (Concrete, Hamilton, La Conner, Lyman), as well as the two non-municipal urban growth areas (Bayview Ridge, Swinomish).

Exhibit 3-1

Skagit County Population Inside and Outside Urban Growth Areas

	2000	2020	Average Annual Growth Rate
Total inside UGAs	68,417	88,021	1.4%
Total outside UGAs	34,562	42,429	1.1%
Total County	102,979	130,450	1.3%

Exhibit 3-2

Percent of Skagit County Population Inside and Outside Urban Growth Areas

	2000	2020	Change in County Share
Total inside UGAs	66.4%	67.5%	1.1%
Total outside UGAs	33.6%	32.5%	-0.9%

Source for Exhibit 3-1 and 3-2: Washington Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimate Program

Note: The population estimates are for all urban growth areas in Skagit County, including city limits and any unincorporated areas within the municipal UGAs, and non-municipal UGAs.



Public Art in La Conner

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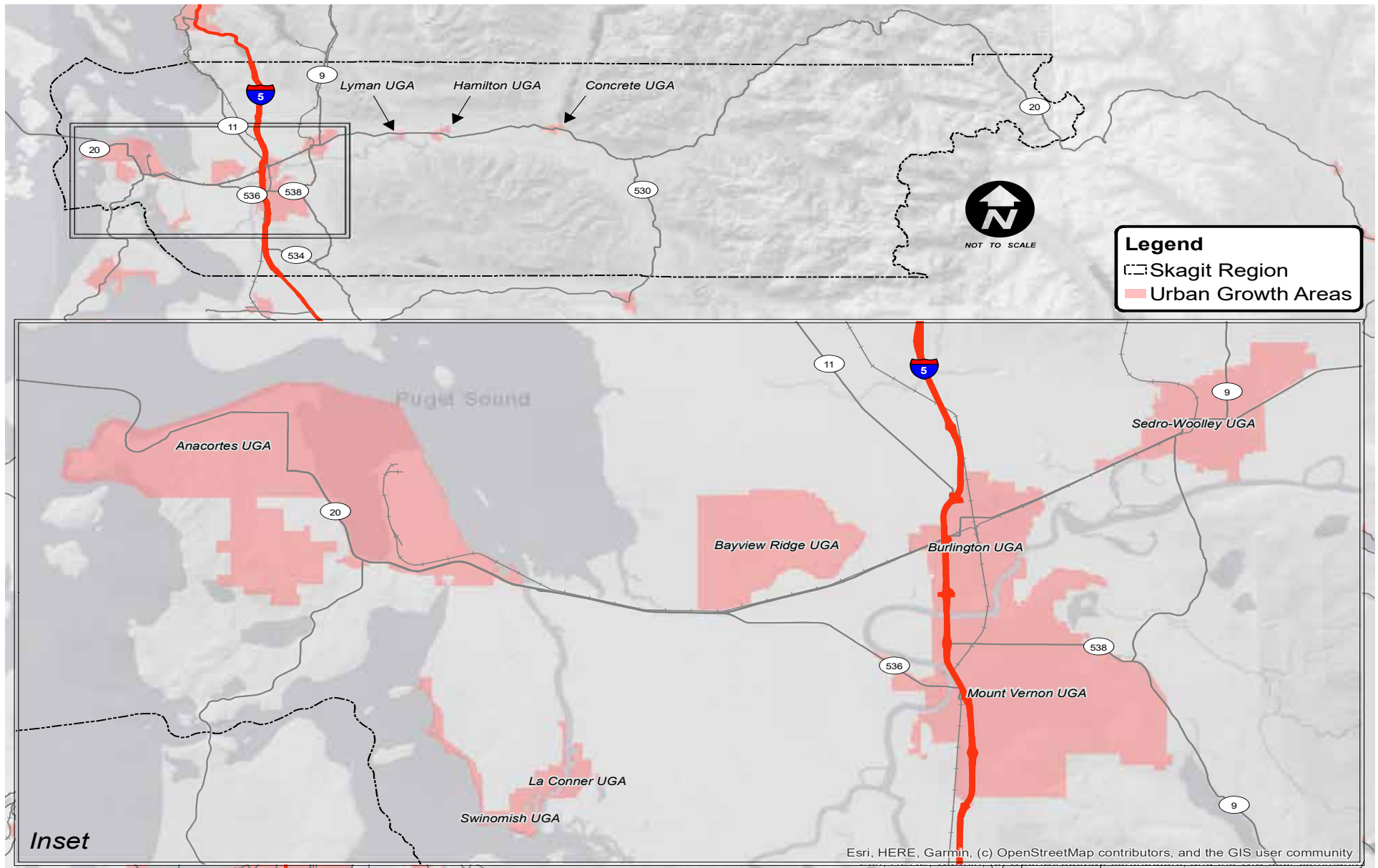


Exhibit 3-3 Skagit County Urban Growth Areas

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Regional Population Growth by Urban Growth Area

The charts in **Exhibit 3-4** reflect forecast population growth organized by urban growth area. While these forecasts may exceed the growth that is expected in local jurisdictions' comprehensive plans, which plan for a horizon year of 2036, the overall trends are consistent with the expected growth rates across the Skagit region and have been coordinated with local comprehensive plan updates processes.

Population in the Skagit region is forecast to grow by over 46,000 by 2045. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.3%.

Regional Population Growth

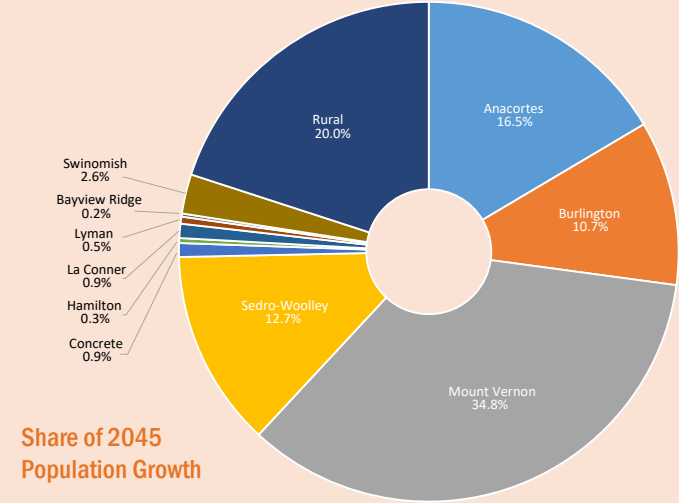
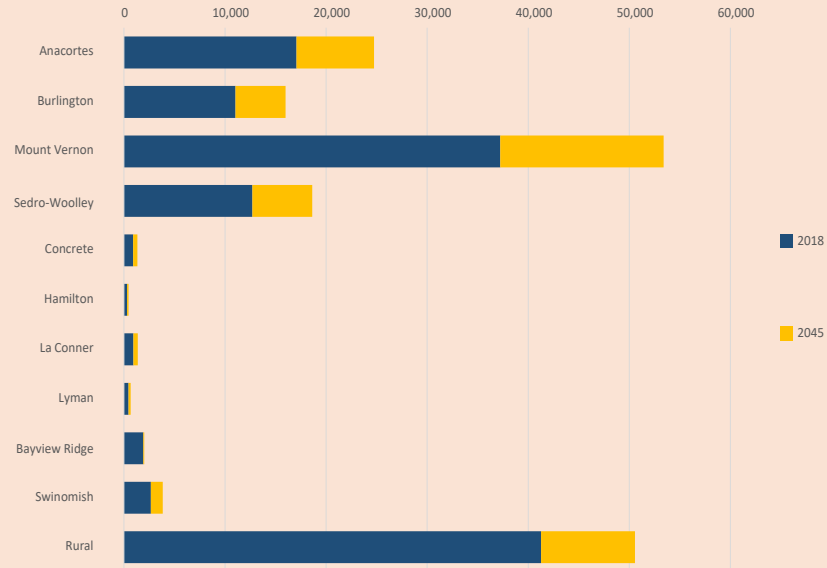
From 2018–2045, more than 46,000 people are expected to be added to the Skagit region.

Overall, this represents an average annual growth rate of 1.3% for the Skagit region. 80% of this growth is forecast to occur within urban growth areas consistent with Countywide Planning Policies.

The increased population growth forecast for the Skagit region will add more travel to the regional arterials and state highways in and around the cities of Mount Vernon, Burlington and Sedro-Woolley. This will result in the need for adding capacity and upgrading existing roads to current urban standards, or utilizing efficiency strategies identified in Skagit 2045, such as, maximizing existing capacity through operational improvements, reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing mode share for automotive travel.

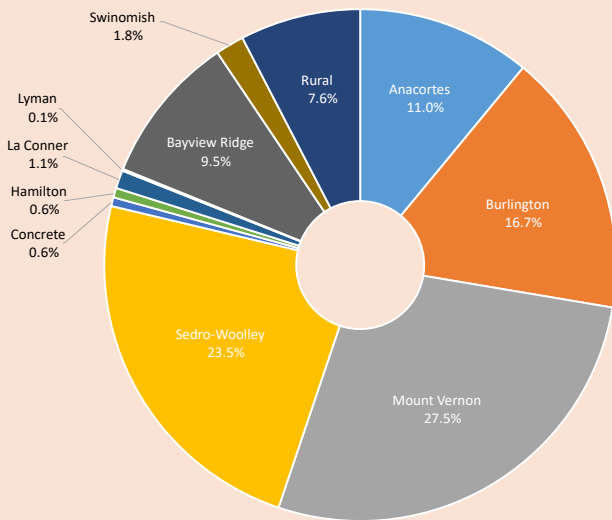
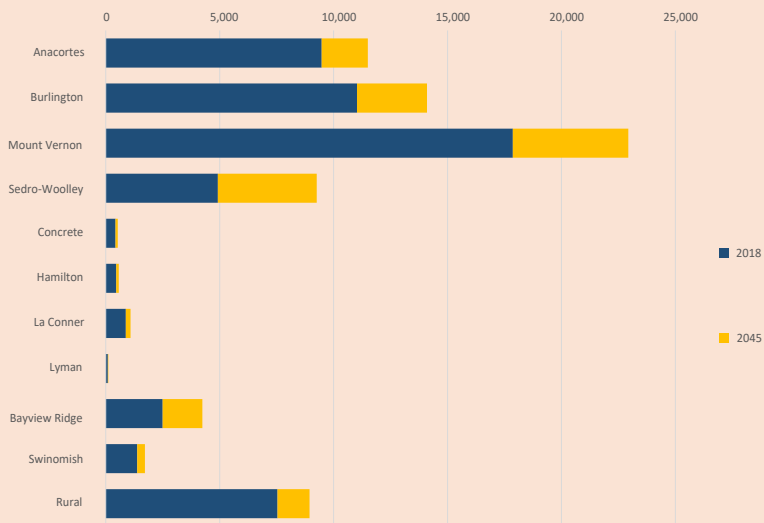
The population growth forecast used in Skagit 2045 is consistent with Countywide Planning Policy 1.2, which directs 80% of planned population growth to cities' and towns' incorporated areas, municipal unincorporated urban growth areas, and non-municipal urban growth areas (such as Bayview Ridge and Swinomish UGAs) over the next 20 years.

Exhibit 3-4
Regional Population Growth by Urban Growth Area, 2018–2045



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Exhibit 3-5
Regional Employment Growth by Urban Growth Area (employees), 2018–2045



Share of 2045 Employment Growth

Regional Employment Growth by Urban Growth Area

The charts in **Exhibit 3-5** reflect forecast employment growth for the Skagit region and, like population, are also organized by urban growth area. Over 18,000 new employees are expected to be added to the Skagit region out to 2045. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.2%.

Employment growth is forecast to remain closely tied with population growth in the Skagit region. The ratio of jobs to population is expected to decrease slightly in the future from .45 in 2018 to .43 in 2045.

Exhibit 3-6 shows the employment growth by category from 2018–2045 and **Exhibit 3-7** shows the relative change in employment and population by UGA in the Skagit region.

Regional Employment Growth

Over 18,000 new employees are expected to be added to the Skagit region out to 2045. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.2%.

The 1.2% forecast growth rate is slightly lower than the 1.5% annual growth rate forecast in Skagit 2040.

Exhibit 3-6 Regional Employment Growth by Category, 2018–2045

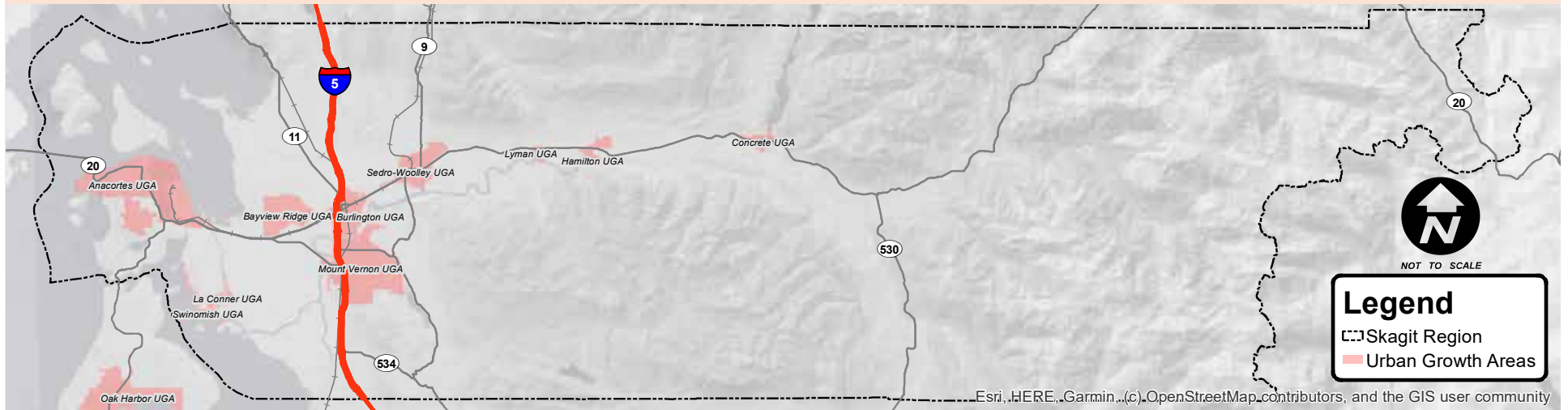


2018 Employment by Category

2018–2045 Employment Growth by Category

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Exhibit 3-7 Regional Employment and Population Growth, 2018–2045



Urban Growth Areas	Employment			Population		
	2018	2045	% Change	2018	2045	% Change
Anacortes	9,477	11,501	21%	17,078	24,739	45%
Burlington	11,028	14,101	28%	11,042	15,991	45%
Mount Vernon	17,864	22,935	28%	37,230	53,390	43%
Sedro-Woolley	4,921	9,259	88%	12,709	18,629	47%
Concrete	427	530	24%	911	1,327	46%
Hamilton	*	571	24%	307	455	48%
La Conner	879	1,090	24%	940	1,368	45%
Lyman	*	111	23%	455	666	46%
Bayview Ridge	2,498	4,240	70%	1,923	2,017	5%
Swinomish	1,384	1,717	24%	2,660	3,845	45%
Rural	7,541	8,944	19%	41,265	50,558	23%
Total	56,569	74,999	33%	126,520	172,984	37%

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Regional Travel Patterns

In 2008, NuStats conducted a comprehensive study of travel behavior in Whatcom, Skagit, and Island counties called the 2008 North Sound Travel Survey. The survey covered households throughout the three counties, including the urbanized area around Mount Vernon, Burlington, and Sedro-Woolley; cities and towns outside of the urbanized area; and unincorporated areas of Skagit County. The survey was conducted to assist with understanding the socioeconomic factors that affect travel, which in turn are applied in updating the regional travel demand forecasting model. The resulting survey data and model outputs provide a technical basis for defining transportation improvement needs.

The results of the survey provide information on regional travel patterns which affect the need for transportation improvements. Key survey results are summarized below.

Household Characteristics and Trip Rates

The number of people in a household affects the number and types of trips generated. A higher number of people in a household does not directly result in a higher number of trips generated per day. This is due to differences in income levels, the ages of household members, the number of vehicles, the number of licensed drivers and other factors. The following summarizes the household and trip characteristics for Skagit and Island counties, which were paired for the study:

- Vehicle trip rates averaged 7.0 trips per household. Vehicle trips are trips made by individuals in a household driving a vehicle, and a vehicle trip rate is the number of vehicle trips per household;
- Households reported an average of 2.3 persons per household

and 2.3 vehicles per household;

- Certain demographic characteristics were positively associated with higher rates of travel. These were household income, number of vehicles, number of workers in household and number of students. Of these, the number of students had the greatest impact on trip rates;
- Households reported an average of 1.3 workers per household. Households with no workers reported making 5.0 trips per day, while those with three or more workers reported making 14.2 trips per day;
- Households reported an average of 0.4 students per household. Households with no students reported 6.4 trips per day, while those with three or more students reported 18.2 trips per day;
- On average, females made more trips than males. The female trip rate was 3.7, while males averaged 3.4 trips per day;
- Persons aged 45 to 54 years had the highest person trip rate (4.1 trips per day) among all age categories;
- Employed persons, either part-time or full-time, reported making an average of 4.0 trips per day, compared to 3.1 trips for unemployed persons 16 years or older. Students took 3.2 trips per day;
- Most households (63.5%) reported making between one and ten trips within a 24-hour period. Only 9.1% reported making zero trips, while 22.5% of surveyed households made between 11 and 20 trips, and 4.9% made more than 20 trips per day;
- For Skagit County, approximately one third of all trip purposes (32.5%) were recorded as “personal activities at home”. Work accounted for the next most frequent reason for travel (14.3%), followed by shopping (12.5%) and personal business (8.7%); and

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- Overall Average Vehicle Occupancy for Skagit and Island counties was 1.6 persons per vehicle.

Exhibit 3-8 compares where the households and places of work are located for employed respondents of the Skagit region. The vast majority of workers do not cross county lines to get to their places of work. The exhibit also compares shopping trips., with greater than 95% of Skagit County resident shopping trips stayed within the county.

Travel Mode

As shown in Exhibit 3-9, based on the NuStats survey:

- Over two thirds (69%) of all trips were made by an automobile driver, and approximately 20% were made by an automobile passenger;
- Transit trips in Skagit County comprised under 1% of total trips;
- Ferry trips were under 1% in Skagit County of total trips; and
- Non-motorized trips accounted for over 6% of total trips in Skagit County. The rate of walking trips was approximately 10 times higher than bicycle trips.



Airplanes at Skagit Regional Airport

Exhibit 3-8 Cross-County Travel

County Lives In	Travels To			
	Whatcom	Skagit	Island	Out of Area
Travel for Work				
Skagit	3.3%	83.9%	2.3%	10.5%
Travel for Shopping				
Skagit	1.3%	95.5%	0.5%	2.7%

Exhibit 3-9 Travel Mode

Travel Mode	Skagit County
Walk	5.8%
Bicycle	0.6%
Drive Auto	69.1%
Passenger Auto	19.6%
Transit	0.3%
School Bus	3.5%
Taxi/Shuttle	0.2%
Motorcycle/Scooter	0.3%
Ferry	0.4%
Vanpool	0.1%
Other Mode	0.1%
Total	100.0%

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Other Transportation Planning Efforts

Skagit 2045 builds upon and supports the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), statewide modal plans, and local government comprehensive plans. The following summarizes how the Plan relates to these plans and implementation programs.

Washington Transportation Plan

The Washington Transportation Plan 2040 and Beyond, which was completed in 2018, provides the umbrella for all metropolitan and regional transportation plans across Washington state. The WTP includes two phases. The first phase is the “policy plan” adopted by the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) and the second phase is the “implementation plan” completed by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). WSTC prepares the policy plan as one of their duties under Washington state law (RCW 47.01.071), while WSDOT prepares the implementation plan to meet both requirements of a long-range statewide transportation plan under federal law (Title 23 USC 135) and a statewide multimodal transportation plan under Washington state law (RCW 47.06.040). Modal plans are also prepared by WSDOT in conjunction with this umbrella plan. These modal plan are detailed in Section 5, along with descriptions of each modal system and anticipated investments over the next 25 years.

Consistent with statewide transportation system policy goals, the WTP sets forth the following six policy goals, in no particular order, for future investments in the transportation system:

1. Economic Vitality;
2. Preservation;
3. Safety;
4. Mobility;
5. Environmental; and
6. Stewardship.

“Washington’s transportation system safely connects people and communities, fostering commerce, operating seamlessly across boundaries, and providing travel options to achieve an environmentally and financially sustainable system.”
-WTP Vision

The regional priorities in Skagit 2045 align with these transportation system policy goals. The process for establishing regional priorities and identifying improvement projects within the fiscally constrained Plan, support and are consistent with these WTP objectives.

Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Skagit 2045 supports the Washington state’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan (Target Zero), in the goal of eliminating all roadway fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. The Skagit Council of Governments agrees to plan and program projects to help Washington state meet federal

performance targets for roadway safety, which include statewide targets for the following performance measures:

1. Number of fatalities;
2. Fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled;
3. Number of serious injuries;
4. Serious injuries per 100 million vehicle miles traveled; and

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5. Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries.

Appendix H, the Baseline System Performance Report, describes the performance of the Skagit regional transportation system for each of these performance measures.

Transportation Concurrency Requirements and Level-of-service Standards

Under Washington state law, required concurrency outcomes ensure transportation facilities and strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies within six years (RCW 36.70A.070). The purpose of concurrency is to assure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development are adequate to serve the development at the time it is available for occupancy and use, without decreasing service levels below locally established minimums. Concurrency ensures consistency in development approval and that development of adequate public facilities are completed in a timely manner – it also prevents development that is inconsistent with the public facilities necessary to support the development (WAC 365-196-840).

Local governments may adjust their transportation level-of-service standards for their local transportation system, which can have a direct impact on concurrency determinations. Consistent with Washington state law, level-of-service standards for the state highway and ferry systems are set by WSDOT for all Highways of Statewide Significance (RCW 47.06.140), and by Skagit 2045 for all other state routes (RCW 47.80.030). WSDOT establishes level-of-service standards for Highways of Statewide Significance in consultation with local governments, consistent with RCW 47.06.140. Concurrency requirements do not

apply to the state highway and ferry system in the Skagit region.

Established levels of service for all state highway and ferry routes is included in **Appendix G**.

Local Government Transportation Plans

As required by the Washington state Growth Management Act, local governments prepare and update their comprehensive plans, including transportation elements. The transportation elements set community priorities and improvement strategies to address existing and future transportation needs. These elements primarily focus on arterials and collector streets within each local government’s jurisdiction; however, needs in designated urban growth areas and connecting routes in other jurisdictions are also described in the elements.

Local transportation elements were reviewed to identify potential transportation projects for Skagit 2045. The planning process for Skagit 2045 combined projects from WSDOT, Skagit Transit and local jurisdictions with strategies to create the recommended framework for the Plan (see Section 4), based on the Skagit region’s priorities and policies.

Skagit 2045’s fiscally constrained project list incorporates all regionally significant projects that are proposed for the regional transportation system. The Plan provides a financial analysis showing how all these projects and strategies can be implemented. Only priority projects, based on



Washington State Ferry at Anacortes Ferry Terminal

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the Skagit region's criteria and project-level evaluation, are included in the fiscally constrained project list. Skagit 2045 also identifies an illustrative list of projects for the regional transportation system, should additional funding become available outside of what is reasonably anticipated in the Plan.

Skagit 2045 also is consistent with land use plans and forecasts from the local comprehensive plans. This process provides consistency between the local land use plans and the regional transportation system needs. Population, household and employment forecasts utilized in Skagit 2045 were coordinated with local agencies' forecasts used for comprehensive plan update processes, with most being completed in 2016. The planning horizons for local comprehensive plans is 2036, which is 20 years from when they were supposed to be adopted in 2016. Skagit 2045 has a planning horizon of 2045, with this long-term distance between local comprehensive plans (2036) and Skagit 2045 (2045) accounting for higher levels of population and employment forecast than in local plans.

Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan

Federal law requires communities to prepare a coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan (CPT-HSTP) to be eligible for certain federal funding programs, especially through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). CPT-HSTPs serve as unified, comprehensive strategies that identify transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and low-income populations. The Washington State Department of Transportation is the designated recipient for many FTA funding programs aimed at achieving coordinated human services transportation in Washington state, and WSDOT is responsible for allocating federal funding through these programs. Consistent with Washington state and federal law, WSDOT requires that human

services transportation projects/strategies be prioritized at a regional level and derived from a locally developed CPT-HSTP.

The CPT-HSTP for Skagit County was updated in 2018 through the coordination of the Skagit Council of Governments, Skagit Transit, private non-profits, Indian tribal governments and other stakeholders. CPT-HSTP recommendations were organized as coordination initiatives to better reflect the breadth and depth of strategies to achieve a fully coordinated system organized by policies, programs and projects. The CPT-HSTP identifies the following categories of strategies:

1. Sustain Existing Services;
2. Expand Existing Services;
3. Create New Services;
4. Enhance Services;
5. Facilitate Access to Services;
6. Coordinate Services, Support Functions, and Planning; and
7. Promote Environmental Sustainability.

Each of these categories has one or more prioritized activity associated with it to assist with achieving the strategy. In addition to strategies and activities, the CPT-HSTP identified several options for continuing coordination and implementation following the plan update in 2018. These three coordination and implementation options are:

1. Establish an ongoing coordination group with regular meetings;
2. Coordinate planning and public outreach activities among partners when applicable; and

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3. Coordinate to leverage funding among a working group of stakeholders.

The CPT-HSTP reflects the needs of special needs populations and human services transportation delivery in the Skagit region. Skagit 2045 identifies how these services fit as part of the overall regional transportation system.

Other Related Planning Efforts

Skagit 2045 supports regional planning efforts which intersect with transportation related issues, including recovery plans for Chinook and steelhead. These plans guides recovery efforts in the Skagit River watershed and in Puget Sound.

Chinook salmon and steelhead recovery in Puget Sound is led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration through the West Coast Region of their National Marine Fisheries Service, in partnership with many other organizations. Tribal partners in the Skagit region include: Samish Indian Nation; Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe; Swinomish Indian Tribal Community; and Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. Many other federal, state, local and private partners are also partnering to restore health salmon runs.

Puget Sound Chinook Recovery: Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan

Chinook salmon are listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, a chapter of the Recovery Plan for Puget Sound Chinook Salmon, calls for Washington state and local road owners to ensure construction of future fish-passage structures that follow a set of performance measures to ensure high-quality habitat connectivity.

Where roadways cross waterways, culverts were historically installed to guide and control stream flows. These culverts inadvertently

barred native fish and other wildlife species from a continuous path of travel up and down streams. These fish-passage barriers have been identified as a constraint to Chinook and other salmon species recovery.

The recovery plan calls upon government entities to remove fish-passage barriers and replace them with structures which meet performance measures. Performance measures include:

- Hydrology – allowance for a range of water flows;
- Sediment Transport and Deposition – allow sediment to be transported downstream, rather than accumulating upstream in watersheds;
- Woody Debris Transport and Storage – allow for the transport and storage of wood of the size appropriate for the watershed and location in question;
- Alluvial Fan Processes – roadway crossing structures must not disrupt natural alluvial fan processes such as sediment and large woody debris movement, channel creation, and more;
- Floodplain Processes – allow for hydrologic connections to off-channel and side channel habitats;
- Habitat Connectivity – provide the appropriate level of habitat connectivity at roadway crossings;
- Tidal Influence – allow for the full natural extent of tidal influence; and
- Fish Passage – provide for the passage of native fishes, particularly anadromous salmonids, at all life stages.

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Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery

Steelhead are listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Recovery Plan for Puget Sound Steelhead provides guidance for protection and recovery of Puget Sound steelhead. Primary pressures contributing to the decline and listing of Puget Sound steelhead are identified in the recovery plan as:

- Fish passage barriers at road crossings;
- Dams, including fish passage and flood control;
- Floodplain impairments, including agriculture;
- Residential, commercial, industrial development (including impervious runoff);
- Timber harvest management;
- Water withdrawals and altered flows;
- Ecological and genetic interactions between hatchery- and natural-origin fish;
- Harvest pressures (including selective harvest) on natural-origin fish; and
- Juvenile mortality in estuary and marine waters of Puget Sound.