



28 June 2013

**RE: Employment Access and Coordinated Human-services Transportation Needs Assessment**

Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) is pleased to publish the *2013 Employment Access and Coordinated Human-services Transportation (EACH) Needs Assessment*. This report offers insight and data that have not previously been available to help our community understand the extent of transportation barriers faced by people with special needs in Whatcom County.

Until now, Whatcom County social service agencies have not had accurate data to show the degree of transportation as a human services issue. With the Needs Assessment survey data, we now know that one in four social service clients was unable to reach services due to transportation barriers in the past year. Transportation barriers that affect medical care or job training to this degree can have larger social costs that decision makers will be better able to consider given this wider context.

Encouraging walking and biking, building sidewalks and operating buses are all helpful in improving mobility for special needs populations, but the degree of investment varies significantly and each of those initiatives may or may not work for every person. This Needs Assessment can be useful to policymakers in determining how transportation investments intended for those with special needs can be “right-sized” to maximize their benefit while improving cost efficiency.

The report also documents successful transportation approaches currently in use. For example, bicycles are shown to be a low cost transportation solution for people making trips shorter than five miles and that they work well for more people with special needs than expected. Recognizing solutions and increasing access to them where appropriate may provide opportunities to reduce costs for the transportation system as a whole.

WCOG is honored to be a partner with innovative and dedicated social service agencies and we look forward to utilizing the data in this Needs Assessment to continue to build transportation solutions.

Ellen Barton  
EACH Program Manager



FINAL REPORT

# Whatcom Council of Governments Transportation Needs Assessment

May 2013



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) conducted research and outreach to more fully understand existing transportation services and unmet needs for transportation among people who have disabilities or other barriers to providing their own transportation. The goal of the project is to clarify coordinated transportation strategies and priorities and to inform future planning. Ultimately the information collected should help WCOG to advocate for specific transportation recommendations based on evidence from and opinions of community members.

The research consisted of four projects:

1. A county-wide survey of 401 residents
2. In-person surveys of 406 clients of those organizations
3. An online survey of 31 human service organizations
4. Key informant interviews with twelve human service organizations and transportation providers that serve special needs populations in Whatcom County

This report compiles the findings from all these research efforts in detail.

In the research we explored four main modes of transportation available to most people in Whatcom County: driving cars, riding the bus, riding bikes and walking. While driving is by far the most common mode of transportation, cars don't always provide the best fit for the traveler on every trip. In some cases using a bicycle, bus or walking are more affordable and equally or more convenient. By exploring the use and barriers to using all forms of transportation we hoped to clarify the best role for each mode among various subgroups in the population. Since cars dominate the landscape, findings that indicate exceptions to that rule will be highlighted.

### **COUNTY-WIDE SURVEY**

Whatcom County residents hold varied opinions about how funding should be spent on transportation. Only a quarter preferred that spending go to car-related improvements. The balance of responses was evenly divided among non-car alternatives (bus, bike or walk). People living outside of Bellingham showed a slightly stronger preference for increasing road capacity while younger people and people living in single person households were likely to prefer funding go to alternatives (bus, bike or walk).

One of the biggest barriers to driving a car is the cost of gas (58% considered it a problem; 30% said that problem actually kept them from driving). However 85% of

respondents said they use a car *most of the time* or *every time* they needed to go somewhere.

Cars were by far the most frequently used form of transportation. This was followed by walking, with 53% walking at least some of the time. Biking and bus riding are very similar to each other in their distribution with about a third of the population using them some of the time or more often.

The number one reason people cite for not taking the bus more often are service issues (the schedule, the route or how long it takes). People said they don't ride their bikes more often because of the weather and terrain in Whatcom County, and because they live too far away from the destinations they need to reach. They also talked about health issues that impair their ability to ride, and a lack of infrastructure like bike trails and lanes. Respondents said that the distance between destinations creates a barrier to walking more often and would like to walk more if destinations were closer.

Most bike riders were confident in their abilities to share the road with cars but had concerns that drivers did not know how to share the road with bikes. Not surprisingly, drivers have confidence in themselves but less confidence in the bicyclists.

About half the respondents have taken at least one trip without a car in the past month. Among those who had not taken any trips without their car, about a third would like to walk, bike or bus more often.

Over half of respondents said that they would like to reduce their reliance on cars and use other forms of transportation more often. Primary reasons for this are improving health and fitness, environmental concerns, and cost savings.

### ***Human Services Client Survey***

Less than half of the 406 clients of human service organizations we interviewed drove a car they owned to the location that day (45%). Other car use included coming in a car that was borrowed from someone else (7%), and some who carpooled with others (20%). Among the 28% who came without a car:

- 14% said they walked (a median distance of half a mile)
- 14% took the bus, primarily the fixed route service
- Many used multiple modes, including bicycles

The large majority of respondents (72%) said they lived within 5 miles of the agency – a distance ideal for biking and busing if service is available. Those who traveled more than ten miles almost always used a car. Those who were coming less than a mile were as likely to walk as to drive.

### Barriers

Transportation barriers affected 25% of clients surveyed, who said they were unable to get to that particular human service agency at least once in the past year; 17% said this happened three or more times. Respondents who lived outside of Bellingham were more likely to have been unable to reach the agency at least once in the past year due to transportation. Respondents who reported that they have someone in the household with a health condition were also more likely to have experienced a transportation barrier.

### Driving

Thirty-nine percent of respondents said that they do not own a car. Respondents who identified themselves as disabled were less likely to own a car (52%).

When asked to identify problems they had faced in using a car for transportation, 53% said that the cost of gas kept them from driving in the past year. Thirty-nine percent said that the cost of car repairs kept them from driving in the past year. People with someone in their household who has a health condition were more likely (than those without someone in the household with a condition) to say that a cost-related factor had kept them from driving.

### Riding the bus

Just over one-quarter of respondents said that in the past year they used the bus *every time* or *most of the times* that they needed to go someplace. Forty-four percent (44%) said they *never* or *almost never* took the bus. Respondents who get disability payments were more likely to say they take the bus *mostly* or *every time* (35%).

Clients who said they use the bus only *some of the time*, *rarely*, or *never* were asked to share what keeps them from using the bus more often. Preference for using a car topped the list (33%), followed by problems with the bus schedule (27%). Fifteen percent (15%) said that the ride takes too long, and a similar portion said there was no service in their area.

About two-thirds of all respondents said they think it is *very easy* to get information about how to use the bus. Slightly less than half (44%) said that they *really liked riding* the bus, and only 15% said that they *disliked* riding the bus.

### Riding a bicycle

Nearly half (47%) of the respondents surveyed said that they own a bicycle. When asked how often they use a bike to get places, most (74%) said *rarely* or *never*.

One-third said that not having a bike is what kept them from using a bike to get places, and one-quarter discussed a physical or mental disability. Other reasons included the weather (14%) and concerns about safety (10%).

Respondents were asked for suggestions about things that would help them ride a bike more often. Fifteen percent mentioned more bike lanes and trails. Eleven percent said that personal improvements in their health might help them ride a bike more.

### Walking

One-third of respondents said that they were regular walkers, that they walked *most of the time* or *every time* that they needed to get someplace. When asked about their ability to walk a mile or more, 15% of respondents said they were not capable of walking this far (or for about 20 minutes).

Clients who said they walk only *some of the time*, *rarely*, or *never* were asked what keeps them from walking more often when they need to get places. Over one-third said that a physical or mental disability or limitation keeps them from walking more often, and one-quarter (24%) said that the distances they need to go are too far. About one in five (19%) mentioned the weather.

Respondents were asked to make suggestions of things that could help them walk more often; improved physical health, sidewalks trails and benches, living closer to services and better weather topped the list.

Walking and biking tended to be more common among people who had one or more of these characteristics:

- Male
- Under the age of 40
- Living alone
- Have no kids in the house
- Have no identified persistent health/emotional conditions in the household

- No disability benefits in the household

Knowing these characteristics can be helpful when designing outreach and behavior change campaigns. Outreach materials should be reviewed by people from these subgroups and designed so that they recognize themselves in the program messaging. Also, channels chosen to reach these subgroups should be appropriate for their demographic characteristics.

### ***Community and Clients compared***

Community members and clients differed substantially in demographic characteristics and transportation experiences. Human service agency clients were less likely to own cars and more likely to use other forms of transportation. Health problems and disabilities were prevalent and prevent somewhat more clients from being able to walk or bike ride than the general population. However, financial barriers were also evident, especially with regard to bike ownership and the cost of operating and maintaining a car. Clients were somewhat less likely to mention safety and infrastructure barriers, but more likely to mention personal health as a barrier.

### ***Human Service Agency Survey***

Human service agencies believe that transportation issues pose a serious problem to their current clients' ability to access their services. They also believe that there are substantial numbers who are not being served at all because of transportation.

Agencies are sharing some of the burden. Half of the agencies surveyed are providing some form of transportation, in addition to information and coaching around transportation and providing some subsidies, typically in the form of bus tokens.

Typically, agencies estimate that transportation is less than 3% of their overall budget. Medicaid transport comprises the vast majority of the human service transportation story. Aside from Medicaid transportation, the majority of trips that are provided by human service agencies happen with youth and in busses.

Aside from Medicaid transport, the next largest public provider was school districts, which are responsible for about half of the publicly-provided transportation miles travelled in Whatcom County. At six million miles, their driving constitutes about 5% of all miles estimated to be driven by public and private vehicles in Whatcom County.

## DISCUSSION

People with special needs including low income, disabled, elderly and the very young, have much to contend with in meeting their own needs. Inadequate income tops the list of culprits in producing these challenges, with car ownership being relatively low and the cost of operating and maintaining a car a high hurdle to reach for many of them.

Public transportation for these vulnerable residents takes the form of school buses, transit services, specialized transit and Medicaid-funded transportation. More than six million miles were traveled last year by vehicles providing publicly-funded services in Whatcom County. Nevertheless, one in four clients of human service agencies was unable to reach services due to transportation barriers in the past year.

Fixed routes, service times and proscriptive service conditions (such as requiring several days' notice for pick up or requiring trips be used only for medical services) all contribute barriers people experience in using public transportation options. These people need more flexible service options from transit and beyond that will enable them to get to places they need to go from the places they live when they need to be there.

Human service agencies provided very little support, if any, for the transportation needs of their clients. While access to services is vital, often these organizations must focus on their core services and cannot also support access via transportation subsidies or services. The relevant tie-in for human service agencies is that helping their clients reduce the cost per mile used for travel can free up resources for their clients' other needs such as food, housing, education and medical care.

People with special needs were familiar with and using alternatives to cars at a substantially higher rate than the broader community. They were more willing to walk, bike or bus to their locations if they were able to do so. In particular, younger folks (under 40), males, single folks, and those with the lowest incomes were disproportionately represented among those using non-car methods for getting where they needed to go.

Walking is the most accessible means of getting from place to place, and it was often used by the broader community as well. Barriers to walking included infrastructure and distance. To alleviate these barriers, attention to urban planning so more people can live within walking distance of essential services is important. These living spaces need to be affordable for the very low income and built to make walking easy and safe.

Bicycling was unique in that bike use is not as cost prohibitive as car use, so clients with bikes used them at an equal rate compared to those in the broader community. The key discrepancy was that bike ownership is much less prevalent among human services clients and in fact, bike ownership is the primary barrier to riding a bike for these residents.

A substantial portion of people in the broader community were interested in driving less often to get where they needed to go. Motivations for getting out of their cars included improving their health, saving money and doing less harm to the natural environment. Any work done to remove barriers to walking, busing and biking will likely produce a response from a broad array of residents. Women were particularly likely to express an interest in driving less. Promoting non-car trips by noting that half of Whatcom County residents biked, walked or rode a bus in the past month can help create new norms about non-car trips.

One challenge frequently met by low income residents was the difficulty of getting to services from outlying areas. Bus services can be very limited or non-existent, and car ownership is often out of reach for many of them. Still, they choose to live in outlying areas because of the relatively lower rents charged. Given the costs of car ownership and driving, there should be a clearer calculus about the tradeoffs between lower rent and living close to key services. Using existing tools, like walk scores for homes and neighborhoods, could be valuable for communicating these tradeoffs. Developing a cost of transportation calculator for low-income residents would also be helpful.

For example, if someone is looking to rent a one-bedroom apartment that is eight miles from a center of employment, healthcare and human services, the cost of a round trip every day in a car would be approximately \$9.00.<sup>1</sup> Over the course of a month that would cost the renter \$279 on average in fuel, repairs, maintenance and insurance. If a one-bedroom apartment in the city cost \$660/month,<sup>2</sup> the rent on the more remote apartment would have to be \$381/month for the renter to break even on car costs over time.

Other costs and savings would need to be accounted for to be perfectly accurate, but this sort of calculation could help lower-income residents choose more accessible locations. Rent subsidies that promote living in more centralized areas could also turn into a savings overall when considering the costs of road maintenance and the consequences of people being unable to access vital human and health services.

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<sup>1</sup> Using 16 miles round trip and \$.56.5/mile IRS mileage reimbursement rate for businesses. Actual costs for people with special needs may be higher if their vehicles are less efficient or more often needing repairs.

<sup>2</sup> Average rent for 98225 zip code according to [average-rent.findthedata.org](http://average-rent.findthedata.org).





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## INTRODUCTION

The Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) conducted research and outreach to more fully understand existing transportation services and unmet needs for transportation among people who have disabilities or other barriers to providing their own transportation. The goal of the project is to clarify coordinated transportation strategies and priorities and to inform future planning. Ultimately the information collected should help WCOG to advocate for specific transportation recommendations based on evidence from and opinions of community members. WCOG would like to better understand barriers to use of a variety of modes – bicycles, walking and transit – as well as people’s perceptions of the benefits of using something other than a car for some of their trips.

WCOG contracted with Applied Research Northwest to conduct the research, starting with an initial phase of key informant interviews with human service organizations and transportation providers that serve special needs populations in Whatcom County (findings reported in January 2013). This was followed by an online survey of human service organizations as well as in-person surveys of clients of those organizations (findings reported in March 2013). Findings from these reports informed a county-wide survey of residents in April 2013. This report compiles the findings from all these research efforts in detail as well as summarizing and synthesizing them.

In the research we explored four main modes of transportation available to most people in Whatcom County: driving cars, riding the bus, riding bikes and walking. While driving is by far the most common mode of transportation, cars don’t always provide the best fit for the traveler on every trip. In some cases using a bicycle, bus or walking are more affordable and equally or more convenient. By exploring the use and barriers to using all forms of transportation we hoped to clarify the best role for each mode among various subgroups in the population. Since cars dominate the landscape, findings that indicate exceptions to that rule will be highlighted.

## COUNTY-WIDE SURVEY OF RESIDENTS

Four hundred residents from Whatcom County were contacted by phone in April of 2013 to complete a twelve-minute survey asking about their transportation experiences and preferences. Respondents were split evenly between Bellingham city residents and those in other locations around the county. A supplement of cell phone numbers was also included. See Appendix A for call dispositions and demographics of the sample.

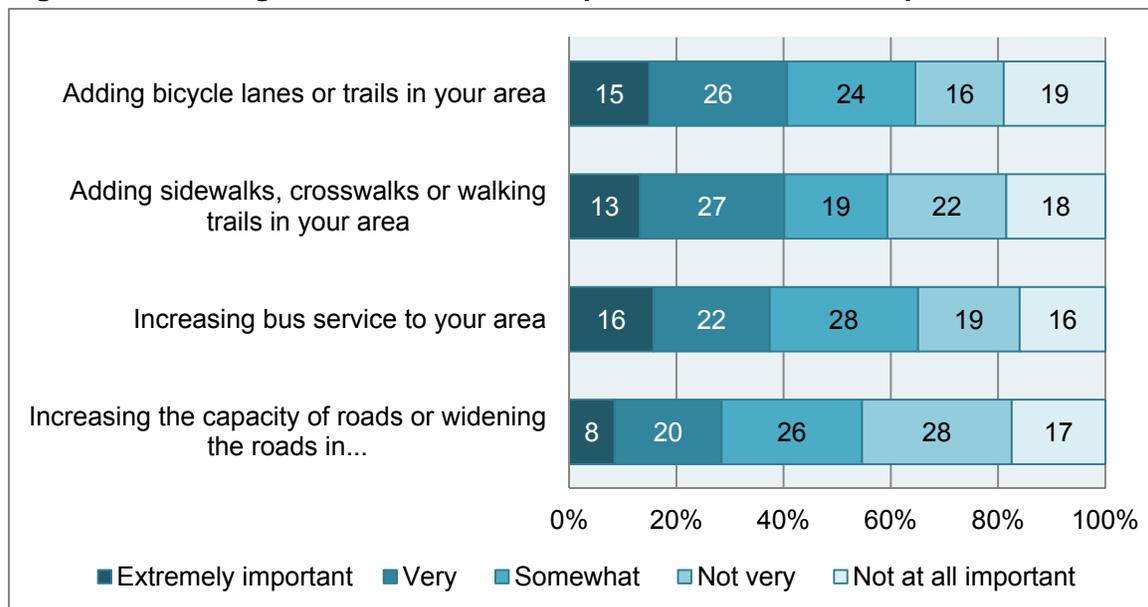
### FINDINGS

This section summarizes how the respondents answered each item. Analyses of particular segments of the population are included where relevant.

#### Transportation funding preferences

Respondents were instructed to consider ways that transportation funding can support infrastructure other than maintaining roads. They were asked to rate the importance of each of four different possible priorities: bike lanes, sidewalks and walking trails, bus service, and road capacity. Figure 1 (below) shows the distribution of importance ratings, sorted by the proportion who rated the priority as *very* or *extremely important*. Forty-one percent said that adding bike lanes or trails was *very* or *extremely important*. A similar proportion (40%) considered adding sidewalks to be this important, followed by increasing bus service (38%). There was little differentiation on any of these items, with the exception of increasing road capacity, which had lower importance ratings.

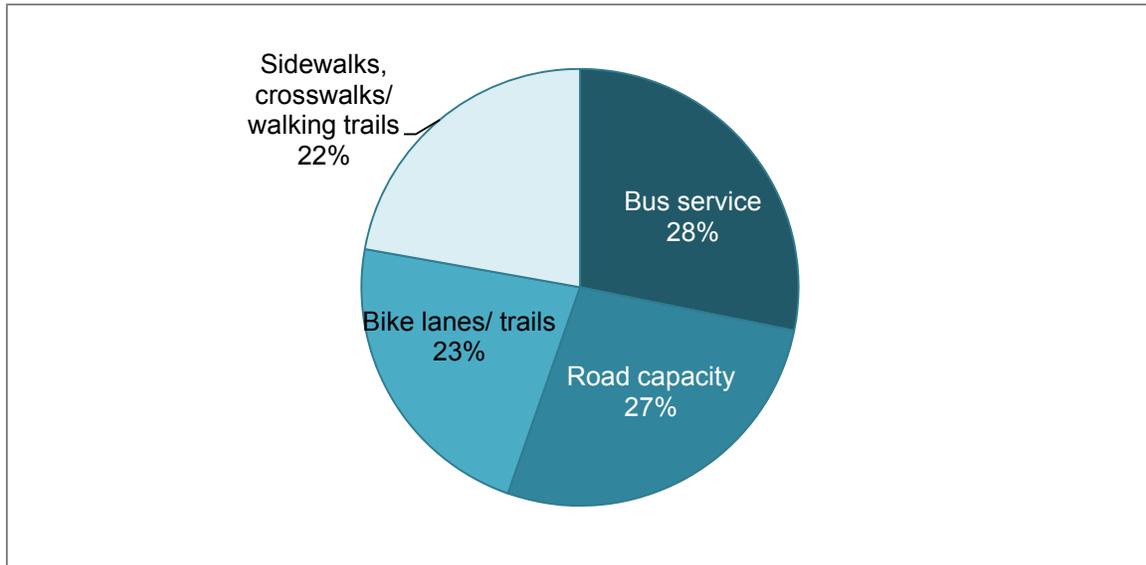
**Figure 1. If funding was available, how important would it be to spend it on...**



(n=401)

When asked to select only one from among the four priorities for funding, the preferences were fairly evenly split between the four areas with bus service and road capacity ranked highest (28% and 27% respectively).

**Figure 2. If funding was available, which of those four things would you prefer that it was spent on?**



(n=401)

While the overall population was fairly evenly split on their top preference, certain segments of the population showed a slightly stronger preference.

For example, residents outside of Bellingham ranked increasing road capacity as a top preference (32%) while Bellingham residents ranked it last (23%). Other segments that showed a slightly stronger preference for widening roads included households with two people, males, and people aged 40 and over.

College graduates were more likely to rank bike trails first (31%) compared to respondents without a four-year degree (16%).

Respondents under 40 were more likely to prefer that money should go into sidewalks, crosswalks and walking trails (29%) when compared to those aged 40-64 where it was ranked last (17%).

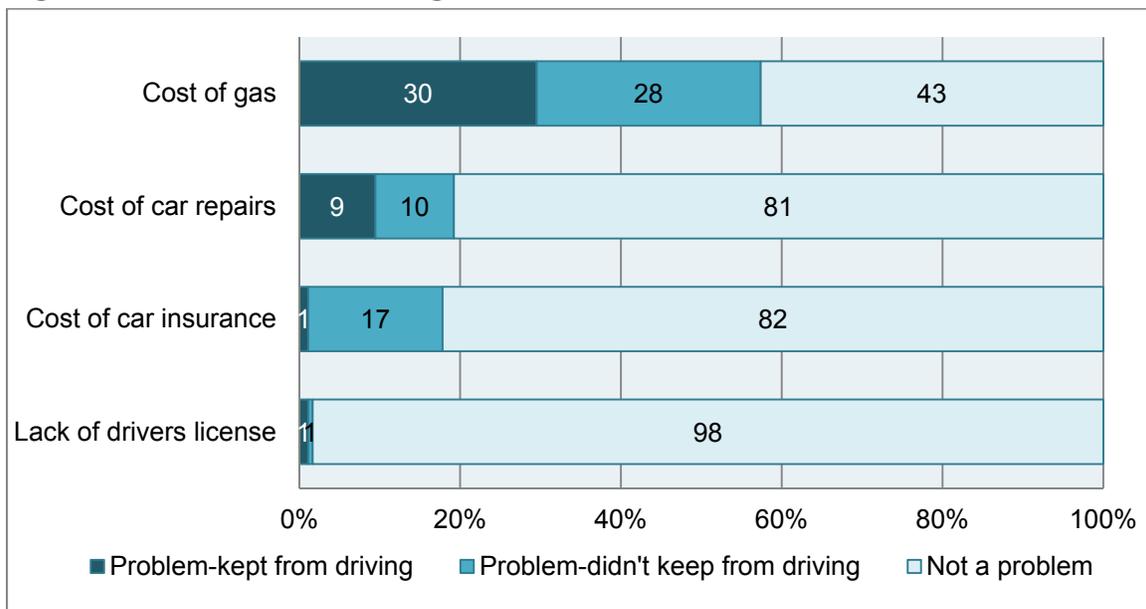
In a multivariate analysis combining all these factors, younger age and being single were the strongest predictors of choosing something other than increasing road capacity as the top priority.

## Cars

The vast majority of respondents said they own a car (90%). This was more likely among those who live outside of Bellingham (96%), have a four year degree (95%), have three or more people in the household (95%), have kids (97%), and earn more than \$2500/month (93%).

Car owners were asked to identify whether they have had problems with the cost of gas, car repairs, insurance or a lack of driver's license in the past year. They were also asked to consider whether that problem kept them from driving at all. Figure 3 (below) shows that the most common problem cited was the cost of gas. Among the 58% who said that was a problem for them about half (30% overall) said it kept them from driving at some point in the past year. Nine percent said that the cost of car repairs kept them from driving. Nine percent said that the cost of car repairs kept them from driving.

**Figure 3. Problems with owning a car**

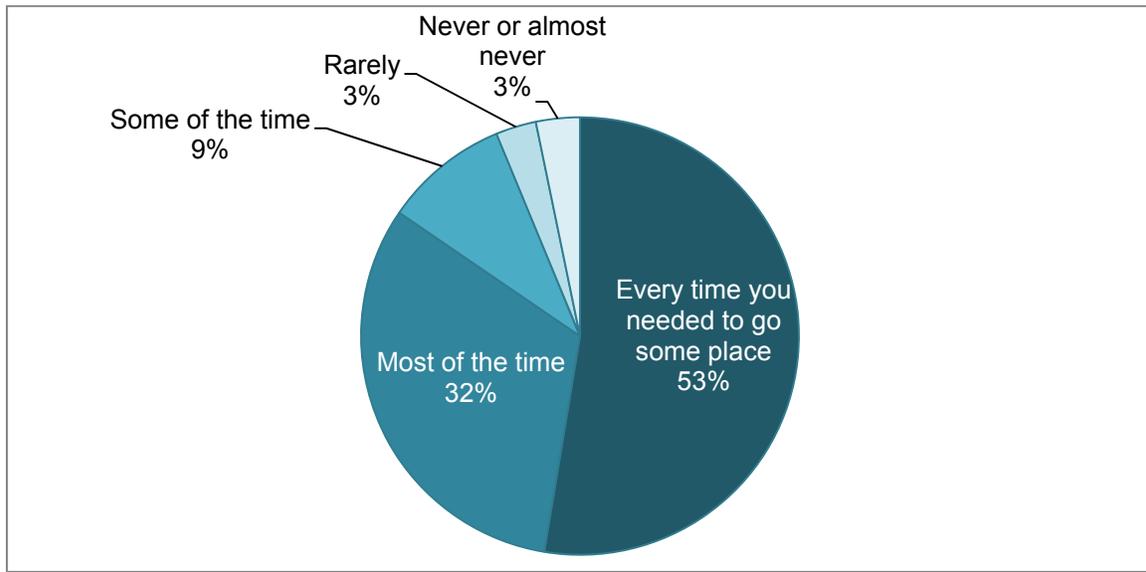


(n=359)

Income was the strongest predictor of whether these problems were a factor. Households with more people, with kids, with less education and respondents over age 65 were the segments most likely to say that they faced a problem with the costs associated with driving (gas, repairs or insurance). Respondents with a monthly income under \$2500 were especially likely to mention these problems, plus they were the most likely group to say that these problems actually kept them from driving in the past year.

Modes of transportation were explored throughout the survey. A substantial portion (41%) said that they used a car to get places they need to go only *some of the time* or *most of the time* when they need to go someplace. Six percent said they *rarely* or *never drive*. About half (53%) used a car *every time*.

**Figure 4. In the past year, how often did you use a car - that is your car or anyone else's car - to get to places that you needed to go?**



(n=401)

Analysis found that respondents who lived outside of Bellingham's city limits were more likely to say they use a car *every time* (62% compared to 43% of those who lived inside Bellingham). Single person households were the most likely segment to say they *rarely* or *never* use a car (13% compared to 6% in the population overall).

*Every time* car use is slightly more prevalent among those:

- Over 65 (58%),
- Who make more than \$6,000 a month (59%), and
- Who don't have a college degree (58%)

Although a majority of the people with these characteristics used a car *every time*, a large portion (41%-42%) used other forms of transportation as well.

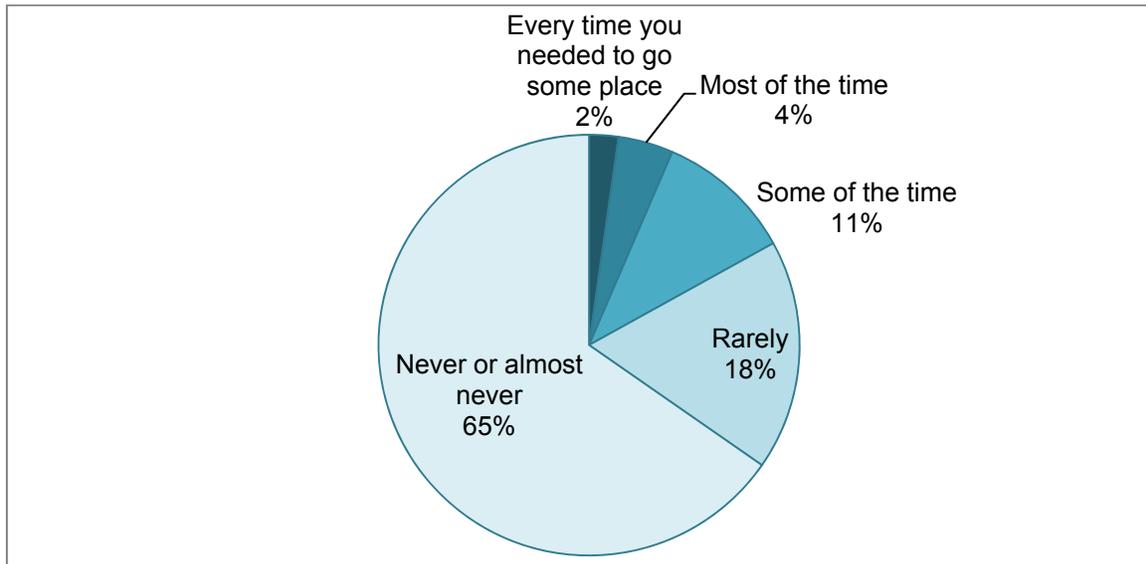
In a multivariate analysis combining all these factors, the strongest predictors of using a car less often were living in Bellingham and being lower income (\$2500/month or less).



### Riding the bus

Approximately two-thirds of respondents (65%) said they *never or almost never* take the bus. Seventeen percent (17%) said they ride the bus at least *some of the time*.

**Figure 5. In the past year, how often did you use the bus to get to places you needed to go?**



(n=401)

Analysis found that Bellingham residents were more likely to take the bus at least *some of the time* (24% vs. 10% of those living outside of the city limits). Households with children were likely to say they *rarely or never* use the bus (95%).

Low income respondents (less than \$2,500 a month) were the most likely income grouping to take the bus at least *some of the time* (25%). This is significantly higher than those bringing home between \$2,500 and \$6,000 (11%). Respondents bringing home more than \$6,000 fell in between with 17% riding the bus at least *some of the time*.

Multivariate analysis showed that the characteristics which best predicted bus use were Bellingham residence, being under 40 and having lower incomes.

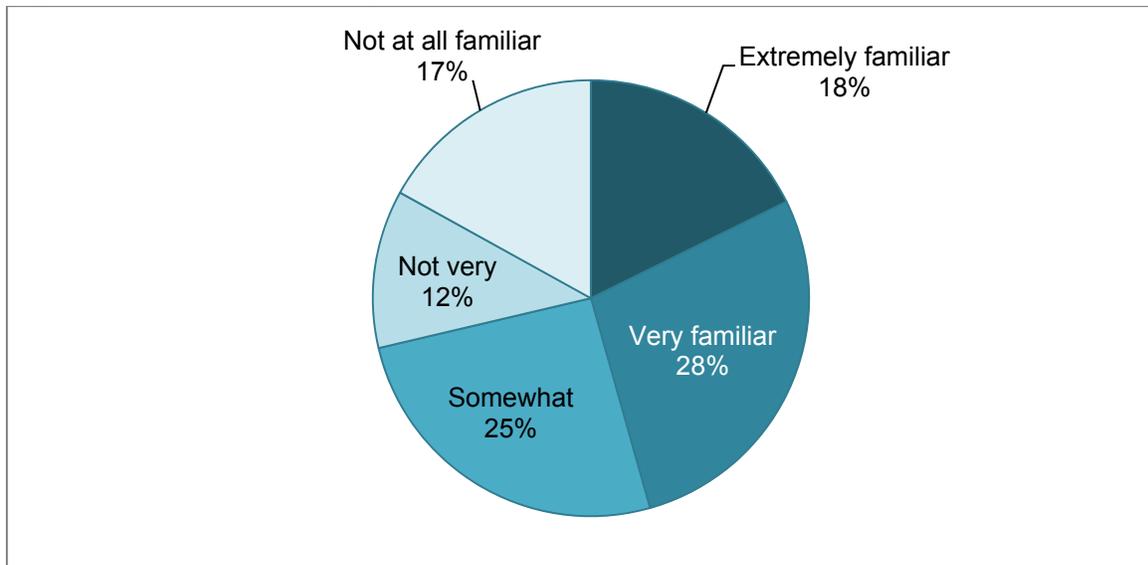
Respondents who said they ride the bus *some of the time*, *rarely* or *never* were asked to describe what keeps them from using the bus more often. Table 1 (below) shows the response categories. Service issues dominated the responses with just over half mentioning something about the schedule, route or how long it takes to use the bus. Just over one-third said they don't use the bus because they prefer to use a car. Five percent made a comment that indicated they don't take the bus because they are unfamiliar with or don't know about the bus or bus system.

<b>Table 1. What keeps you from using the bus more often?</b>		
	n	%
Service issues: schedule or route doesn't go where or when needed, takes too long	206	55
Prefer to use car	136	36
Needs to travel with children, carry equipment or bulky items	23	6
Prefer to walk or ride a bike	21	6
Unfamiliar / confusing - doesn't know much about the bus or bus system	19	5
A personal physical, emotional or mental health reason	12	3
Don't like the other people on the bus	7	2
Other	18	5

(n=375)

When asked directly about familiarity with how to ride the bus, nearly half (46%) said they were *very* or *extremely familiar* with riding the bus.

**Figure 6. How familiar are you with how to ride the bus?**



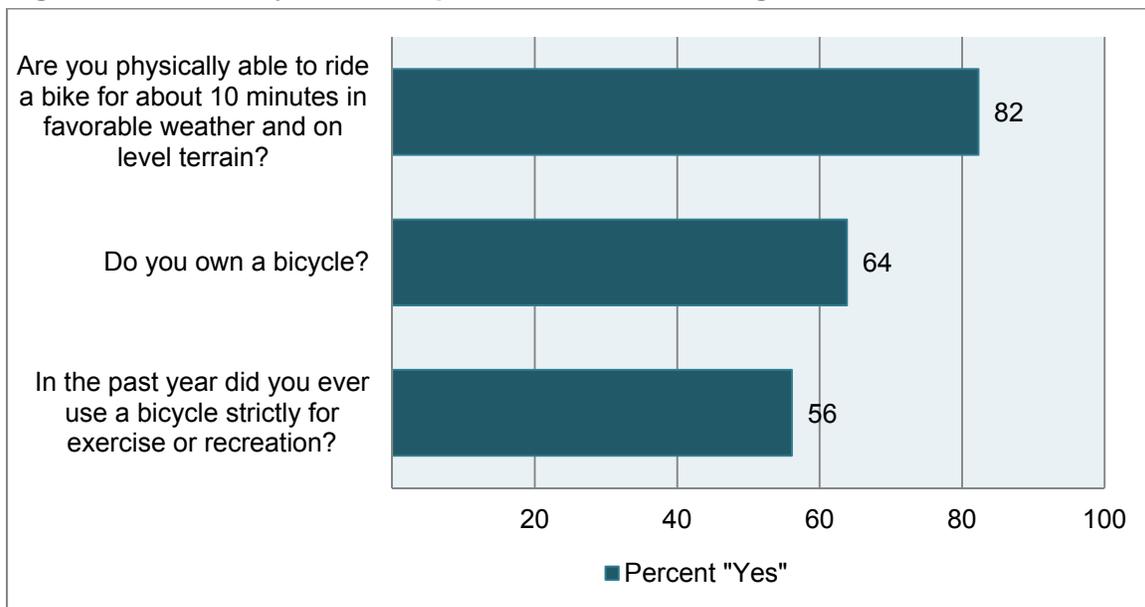
(n=401)

Not surprisingly, the people who ride the bus with greater frequency were more likely to be familiar with how to ride. Other segments that indicated greater familiarity were residents living within the Bellingham city limits, college graduates, and people under 40.

### **Bicycle use**

Trips under five miles are optimal for bike riding. Most respondents (82%) said that they are physically able to ride a bike. A slightly smaller proportion said they own a bike (64%) and slightly less (56%) have used a bike in the past year for exercise or recreation.

**Figure 7. Bike ability, ownership, and recreational usage**



(n=401)

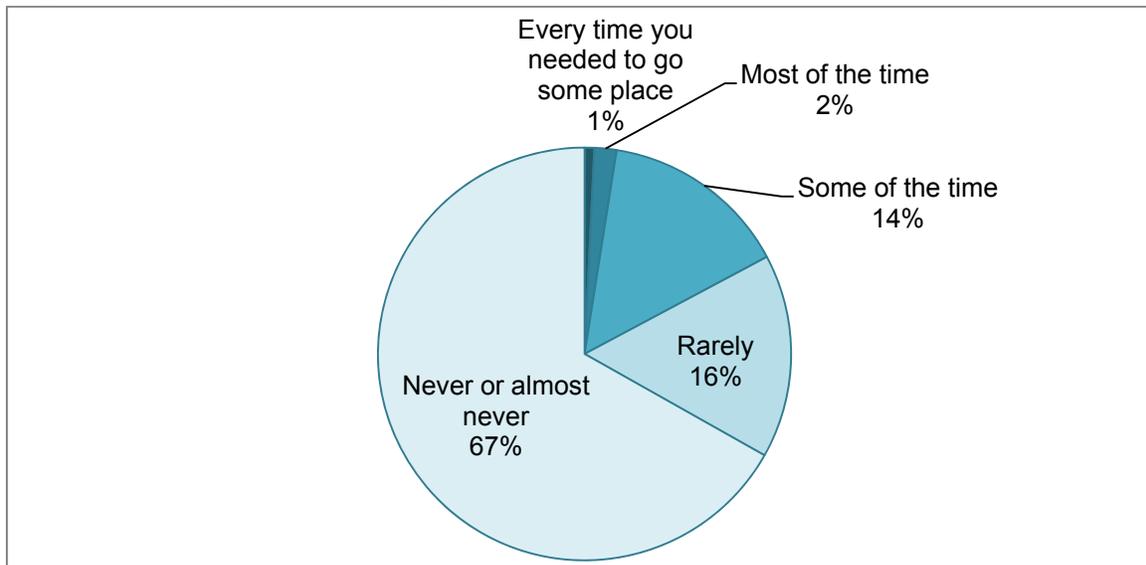
Males, households with children, respondents bringing in between \$2,500 and \$6,000 a month, and respondents under 40 were the segments most likely to say they are physically capable of riding a bike, and to have used a bike for exercise or recreation in the past year.

Respondents who live in the city of Bellingham were more likely than those outside of the city limits to be capable of riding and to use a bike for recreation, but they are no more likely to own a bike.

College graduates were more likely than those without a college degree to own a bike; but they were not significantly more likely to say they were capable of riding or using a bike for exercise.

Respondents were asked about how often they use a bike for transportation. Almost one in five (17%) said they used a bike *some of the time* or more often for transportation in the past year. Nearly two-thirds (67%) used a bike *never* or *almost never*. Because bike riding requires very little public resources, encouraging bicycling as a mode of transportation can be very cost effective for short trips. Shifting as little as 3-5% of car trips to a bike or walking (if feasible) can result in substantial savings in road maintenance and capacity. If Whatcom County residents make an average of three trips a day in a car and, according to the Federal Highway Administration, 20% of car trips are less than one mile, shifting just one short trip a week to walking or bicycling would have a beneficial impact on transportation infrastructure.

**Figure 8. In the past year, how often did you use a bike for transportation, that is to get to places you needed to go?**



(n=401)

Respondents in the city of Bellingham were more likely to say that they rode a bike for transportation at least some of the time in the past year (22% vs. 13% outside of Bellingham). Other segments with higher rates of bike use for transportation in the past year were college graduates (23%) and respondents under the age of 40 (26%). Multivariate analysis showed that males also were more likely to ride more often.

Respondents who said they rode a bike *some of the time, rarely* or *never* were asked to describe what keeps them from riding a bike more often. Table 2 (below) shows that one of the most common complaints had to do with weather and terrain. An identical proportion mentioned living too far from destinations where they need to go. Other top mentions were physical concerns (disability and health problems) and a lack of infrastructure (not enough safe routes).

<b>Table 2. What keeps you from riding a bike more often</b>		
	n	%
Nature: Bad weather, bad terrain (e.g. hills)	91	23
Proximity: Live too far away	88	23
Physical concerns: Fitness level, injury, disability, health problem	85	22
Lack of Infrastructure: not safe to ride on the roads, not enough bike lanes, narrow roads, lack of bike paths, bike racks	82	21
I don't want to / don't like bicycling / it's just not how I get around	71	18
Not enough motivation or time, Don't want to go alone	29	7
Need a bike: Can't afford one, need better access to shared bike	19	5
Need Equipment: Helmets, tire pump, seat cushions, different style of bike, kid trailer/seat, tires, safety lights, bike locks	11	3
Lack of knowledge/education: Don't know what to do, how to get places, need information of some kind	4	1
Need Maintenance, repairs	3	1
Other	30	8

(n=391)

All respondents were asked to comment on what would help them ride a bike more often for transportation. Table 3 (below) shows that the top request was improved infrastructure such as increased number of bike lanes, wider roads, secure bike racks and lockers, etc.

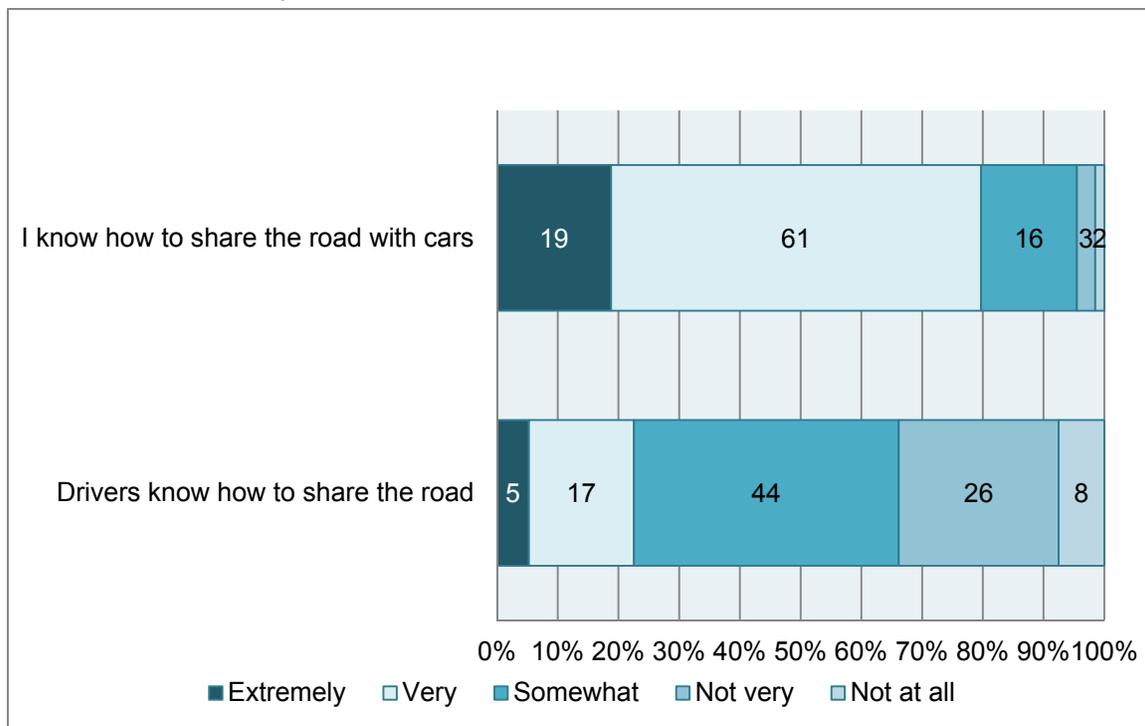
<b>Table 3. What would help you ride a bike more often to get places you need to go?</b>		
	n	%
Infrastructure: Better / safer bike lanes, wider roads, more bike paths, more bike racks (for parking and on buses), secure bike racks, community bike share/rental	103	26
Proximity: Live closer to where I need to go	59	15
Better physical condition/be healthier or stronger	51	13
Having a bike or access to shared bike	20	5
Motivation, Planning for it, having a bike buddy	20	5
Equipment: Helmets, tire pump, seat cushions, different style bike, kid trailer/seat, tires, safety lights, bike locks	19	5
Bike Education / information: About maintenance, riding safety, journey planning	11	3
Maintenance, repairs (subsidized or not)	7	2
Not applicable: I don't want to / don't like bicycling	112	28
Other	45	11

(n=401)

### Confidence in bikes on the road

Because safety is a common concern for people riding bikes, respondents who had ever used a bike for transportation in the past year were asked about their confidence that cars drivers know how to share the road with them as well as their confidence that they know how to share the road with cars. Figure 9 (below) shows that bicyclists expressed greater confidence in their own knowledge of how to share the road than that of drivers. Eighty percent of people who used a bicycle said they were *very* or *extremely confident* about how to share the road with cars, but only 23% felt this confident that drivers know how to share the road with bikes.

**Figure 9. Confidence of people who use bicycles that cars (drivers) know how to share the road safely**



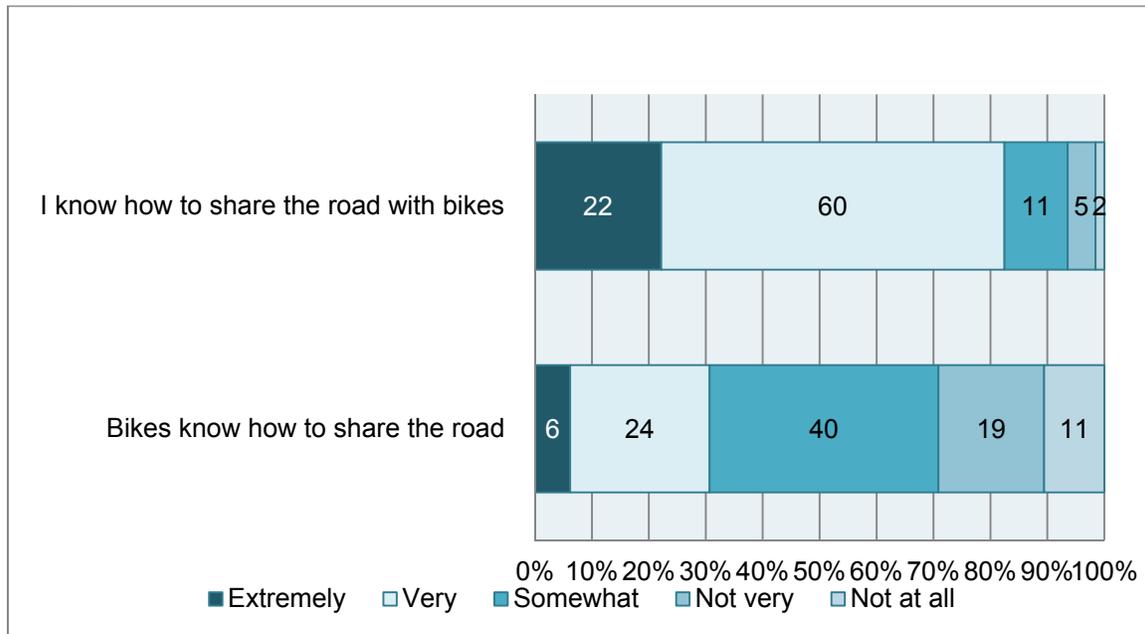
(n=133)

Males were more confident than females in both the drivers of cars on the road and their own knowledge of how to share the road.

Bicyclists aged 65 and over were less confident about how to share the road with cars safely.

Respondents who have used a car for transportation in the past year were asked to rate their confidence that bicyclists know how to share the road, along with their confidence in themselves as a driver sharing the road with bikes. As might be predicted, drivers were more likely to have confidence in themselves than in the bicyclists. Eighty-two percent said they are *very* or *extremely confident* in their knowledge of how to share the road with bikes, but only 30% said they are this confident that the bicyclists know how to share the road with cars.

**Figure 10. Driver confidence that people riding bikes know how to share the road safely.**



(n=388)

Analysis found that confidence in bicyclists knowing how to share the road was related to the frequency of using a bike for transportation. Respondents who had ever used a bike for transportation in the past year – even just one time – were more likely to have confidence in the people riding bikes on the road when the respondent was driving. Bicycling for recreation did not show the same effect; respondents who had biked for recreation but not transportation in the past year were no more confident that people who ride bikes on the road can share the road safely compared to people who had not biked in the past year at all. This suggests that increasing bike use even a small amount may improve safety and understanding of road safety.

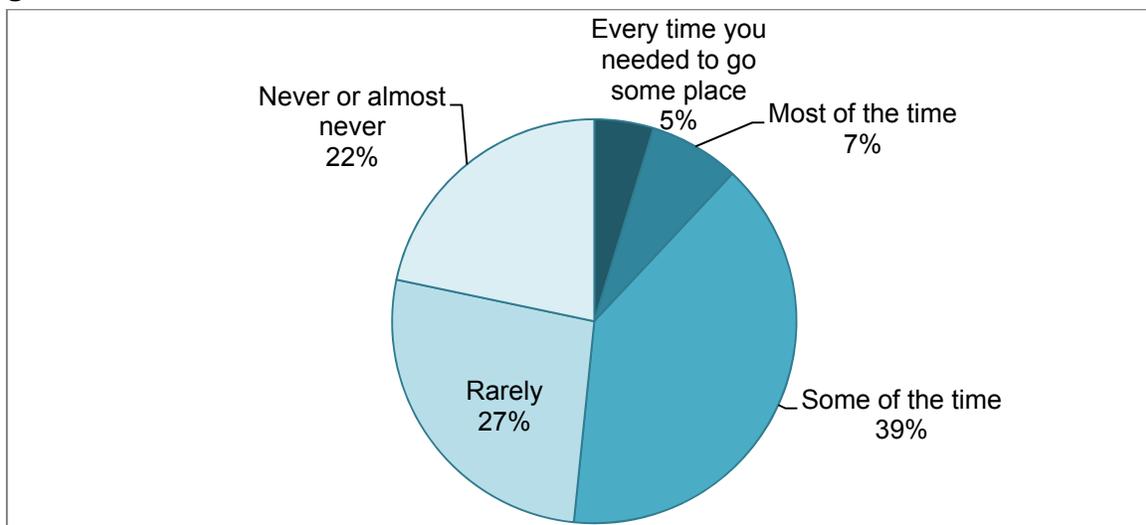
Figures 9 and 10 are nearly identical and suggest that people tend to be more confident of their own behavior than they are of others' behavior.

## Walking

Trips less than one mile are optimal for walking because it takes less time to walk than to wait for the bus. Walking feasibility is affected by physical ability and the presence or absence of sidewalks. The vast majority (91%) said they are capable of walking a mile or more or for about 20 minutes. Respondents age 65 and over were less likely to say they are capable of walking this far (84%). Respondents on the lower and higher ends of the income spectrum were also less likely to be capable of walking.

When asked how often they walk to get places they need to go, just over half (51%) said they walk at least *some of the time*. Research shows<sup>3</sup> that on average, 28% of all trips taken are less than a mile and 91% of respondents said they were able to walk at least a mile. As many as 18% of trips could be walked, provided adequate infrastructure and weather conditions, as well as time.

**Figure 11. In the past year, how often did you walk to get to places you needed to go?**



(n=401)

Bellingham residents were more likely to say they ever walked to get places in the past year (83% vs. 74% of those living outside of Bellingham). Respondents with children and people under the age of 40 were more likely to say that they have walked to get places in the last year (when compared to their counterparts). In multivariate analysis, younger age is the most powerful predictor of walking more often to get places.

<sup>3</sup> NHTS 2009, FHWA Office of Policy, National Highway Traffic Safety 2009 Household Travel Survey, Federal Highway Administration.

When asked what keeps them from walking more often, the most frequent answer had to do with how far the respondent needed to travel and how long it would take to walk (59%). Sixteen percent mentioned something about weather and 14% talked about health or fitness issues.

<b>Table 4. What keeps you from walking more often to get places you need to go?</b>		
	n	%
Proximity: Too far, takes too long	235	59
Weather	66	16
Health issues: Can't walk, fitness level	57	14
Infrastructure: Need more trails, sidewalks, routes, unsafe	41	10
Motivation: Don't plan it, choose it	39	10
Equipment: Need shoes, rain jackets	4	1
Other	42	10

(n=401)

When asked for suggestions about what would help them walk more often, 43% mentioned living closer to places they need to go and services being co-located to allow for walking between locations. Fifteen percent mentioned improved health. A similar portion mentioned improved infrastructure (14%).

<b>Table 5. What would help you walk more often when you need to get places?</b>		
	n	%
Proximity: Live closer to stores / services, stores located close together	173	43
Improved health, injury healing, better fitness level	62	15
Infrastructure: More trails, sidewalks, routes, improved safety, benches, maps, signs	57	14
Motivation: Better planning, walking buddy, pet	56	14
Equipment: Subsidy for shoes, rain jackets	14	3
Other	84	21

(n=401)

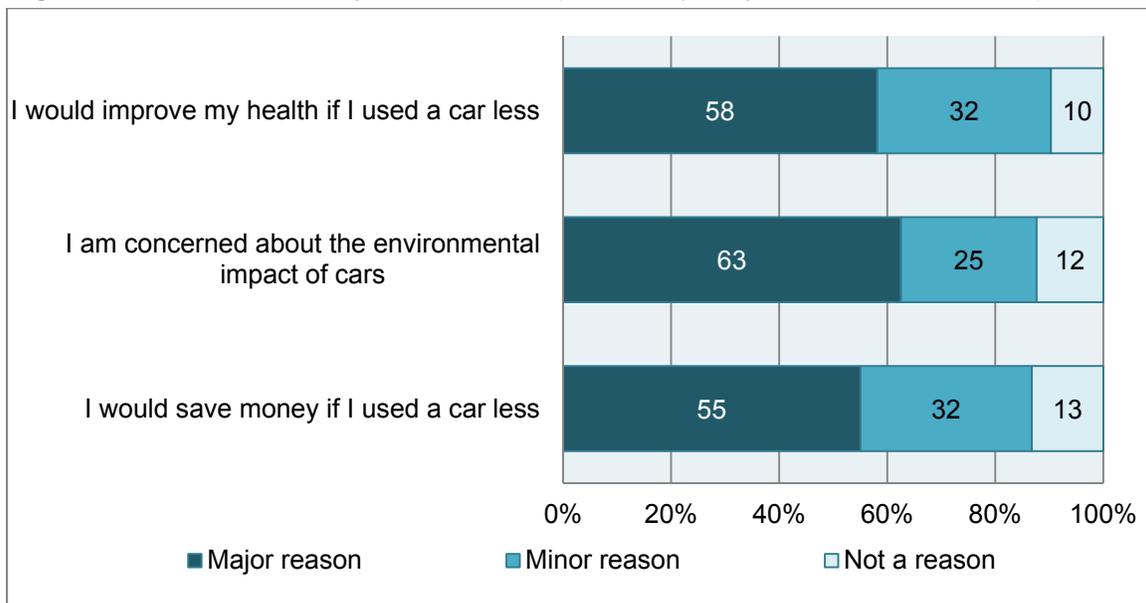
### Motivation to reduce reliance on cars

Respondents were asked about their interest in reducing their reliance on cars. Over half (57%) agreed that they would like to use other forms of transportation like walking, biking or riding the bus more often. Bellingham residents and respondents under 40 were more likely than their counterparts to feel this way (64% and 70% respectively).

### Reasons for reducing reliance on cars

Those respondents who said they would like to use cars less often were asked to consider three different motives for using a car less: personal health, the environment, and cost. Respondents were asked to say if each reason was a *major reason*, a *minor reason*, or *not a reason* that they are motivated to use a car less. Figure 12 (below) shows that 90% of those who want to rely on cars less consider their health a reason. Respondents were slightly more likely to cite concerns about the environment as a *major reason* (63%).

**Figure 12. Reasons to rely on cars less (sorted by major and minor reason)**



(n=227)

### Reason: Environmental impact

Bellingham residents who said they want to rely on cars less were more likely to consider the environmental impact a *major reason*; respondents outside the city limits were more likely to call it a *minor reason* (but 88% of both groups considered this a reason).

College graduates were more likely to consider environmental impact to be a reason to drive less (73%). Respondents without a college degree were more likely to say this was not a reason for them (18%).

### Reason: Cost

Respondents who want to rely on cars less and live outside the city limits were more likely to say that cost is a *major reason* (70%). Twenty percent of Bellingham residents said that cost was not really a reason for them.

College graduates and respondents who did not finish college were equally likely to call cost a *major reason* for driving less, but college grads were slightly more likely to call it a *minor reason* and respondents without a degree were more likely to say it is *not a reason*.

Households with three or more people and households with kids were more likely to call cost a *major reason* to use a car less, as were respondents under 40. Respondents 65 and older were the most likely age group to say that cost was *not a reason* (19%).

### Reason: Health

Two-thirds of the women who said they want to rely on cars less said that the potential for improved health was a *major reason* (66% compared to 50% of men).

### Other reasons

When asked if there were any other reasons, 31% of those who want to use cars less offered another reason. The vast majority were reiterating very specific examples that fall under the categories of environment, health and money (above). Examples include the price of gas, pollution or the cost of roads. Other reasons that were mentioned:

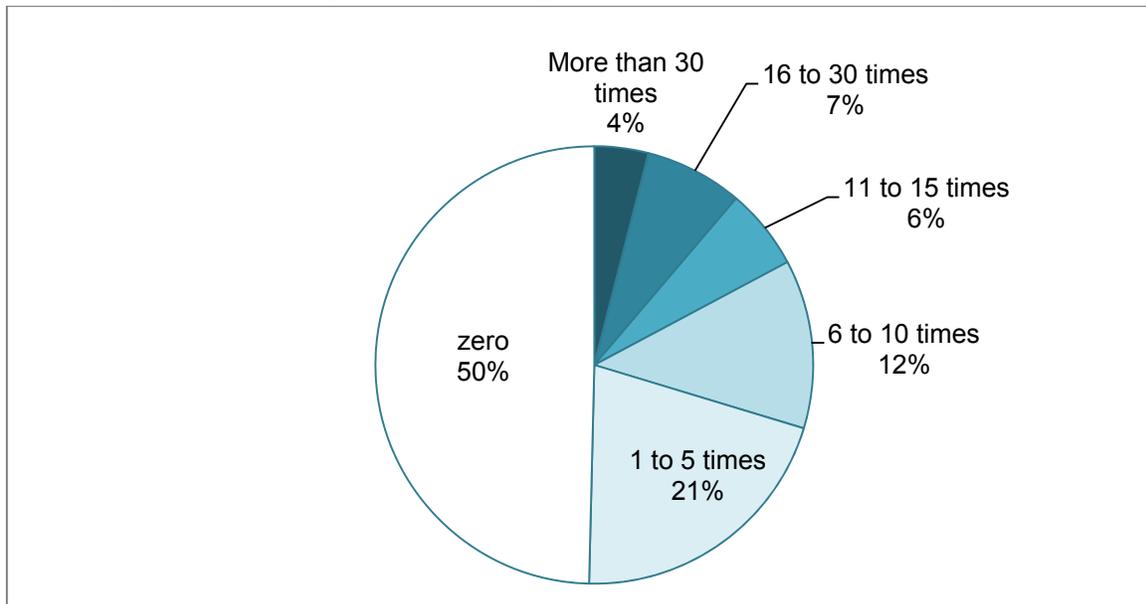
- Political reasons (not wanting to support the auto or oil industry)
- Safety (avoid car accidents)
- Reduce traffic and congestion
- It's fun or feels good "*I feel happier when biking or walking than when I am driving.*"
- Community engagement - Getting out of the car helps people connect with the community, either through sharing a bus ride or having an increased opportunity to interact with neighbors

### Recent experience choosing alternatives to driving

Half of the respondents said that at least once in the past month they have chosen to make a trip without a car. The average number of trips taken without a car was 6.78.

Figure 13 (below) shows that 17% said they took the bus, walked or rode a bike to get somewhere more than 10 times.

**Figure 13. In the last month, how many times did you take the bus, walk or ride a bike to get somewhere you needed to go?**



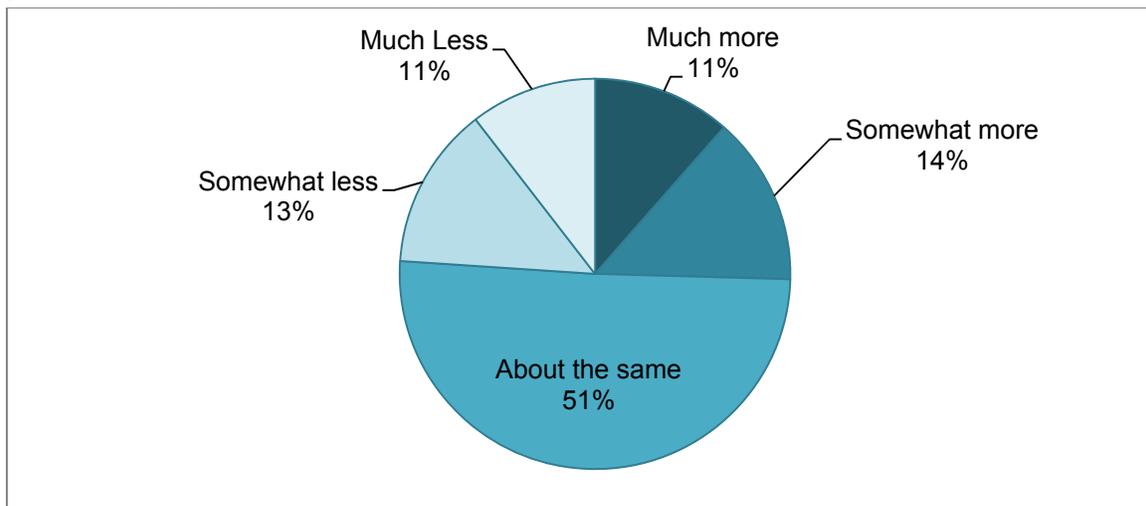
(n=401)

Respondents from within the city limits, college graduates and people under 40 were more likely to have taken a trip without a car than their counterparts. Frequency of trips was slightly higher among Bellingham residents, meaning that among those who did take a trip without a car, residents of Bellingham were slightly more likely to have done this more than 10 times (In Bellingham, the average was 8, while in the rest of Whatcom County the average was 5.6).

### Perception of what is “typical” for alternative transportation choices

Respondents were asked to consider whether their reliance on a car to get around is typical. They were asked to think about whether their frequency of taking trips without a car was *more*, *less* or *about the same* as other people in their area. About half of the people think that they are similar to other people in their area regarding using transportation other than cars. One quarter think that they take trips without a car more often, and one-quarter think that they do this less often than others in their area.

**Figure 14. Do you think that is more, less, or about the same as other people in your area? (Trips without a car)**

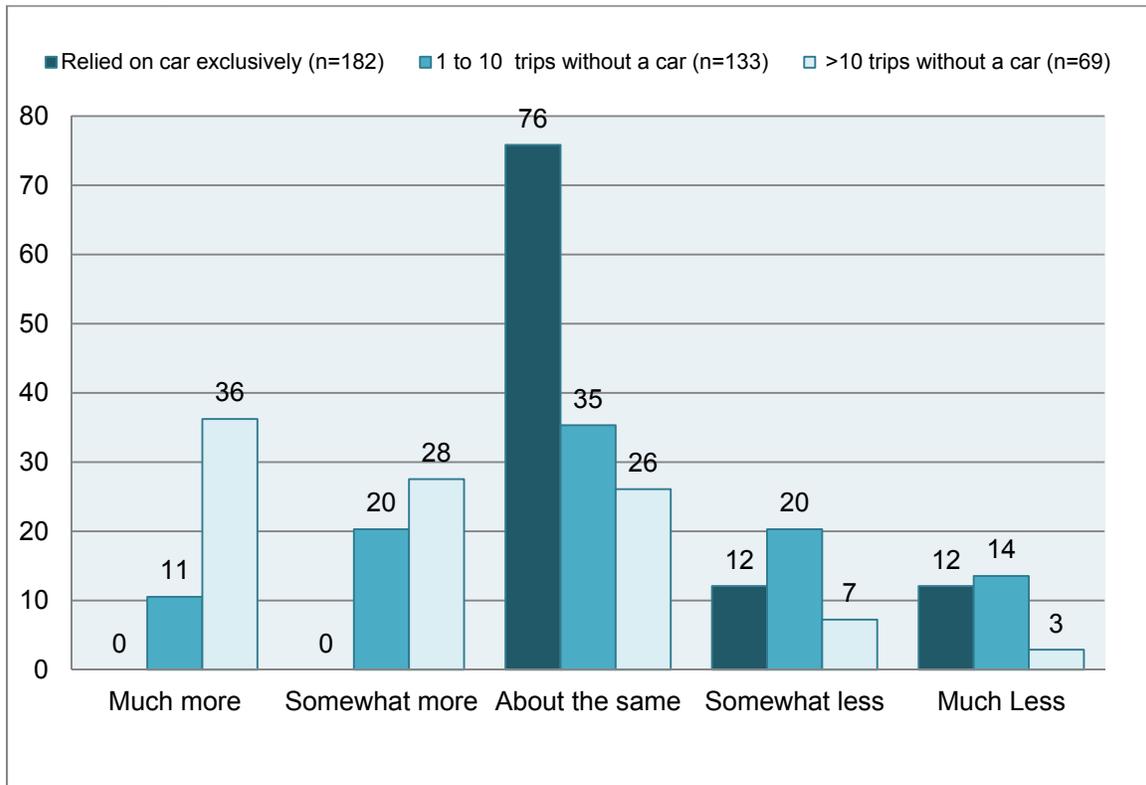


(n=401)

Figure 15 (below) shows three segments of respondents: those who relied on a car exclusively, those who took 1 to 10 trips without a car, and those who took more than 10 trips without a car in the last month. Respondents who relied on a car exclusively tended to think that they are similar to people who live in their area (76%, though only 50% of respondents actually relied on cars exclusively). In some cases they thought their use of alternatives to driving was less common than the use of others (24%).

Respondents who had the highest rates of using alternative transportation choices (10 or more trips in a month) were most likely to recognize that they are doing this more than people in the area (64%). However about one-quarter of those who frequently chose an alternative method said they think they are the same as other people near them - a perception that their choices are typical.

**Figure 15. Comparison of personal transportation choices to peers by frequency of choosing alternatives to car**



Note: 17 cases said they did not take any trips without a car and that this was more than others like them. These cases were held out of this part of the analysis.

Overall, people who don't drive exclusively have an accurate perception of their own behavior relative to others. Table 6 (below) shows the average number of trips taken without a car and the respondents' perception of whether their behavior is typical of others. Those who averaged more trips believed they took more trips than others.

However, almost half of the respondents always made trips by car. These respondents may be overestimating how common that is.

**Table 6. Perception of personal behavior compared to others: non-car trips**

	<u>N</u>	<u>Average number of trips without a car</u>
Much Less	42	2.69
Somewhat less	54	4.56
About the same	202	5.00
Somewhat more	55	10.56
Much more	46	16.43

Respondents who lived outside the city limits were more likely to say they are making choices like the people around them. People in Bellingham were more likely to say they take either more or less trips than their peers. However, it was the people who rely exclusively on cars that drive this distinction.

Among those who use alternative transportation, people with less education (HS or less) don't think they take more trips than others like them.

The value of this analysis is that trips without a car are common. Promoting taking one trip each month without a car to those who drive everywhere could move considerable numbers of people into using other forms of transportation.

### Reduced reliance on cars and trips made

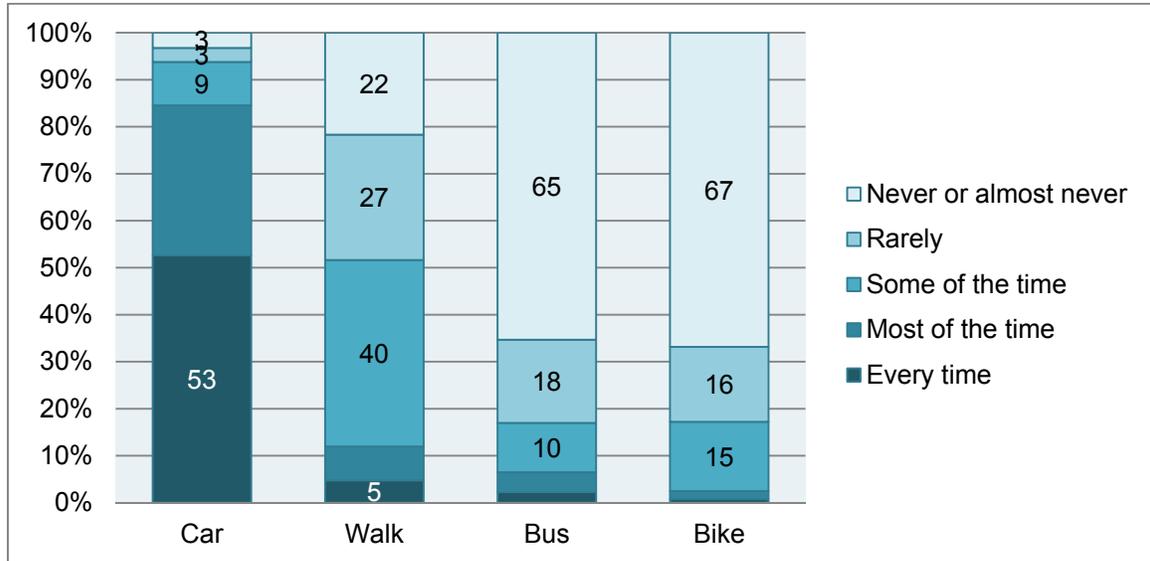
Among those who had not taken any trips outside of their car in the past month, 35% said they would like to do so more often. These folks tend to be in the 40-64 age group.

### Summary of key findings:

- There was ample support for varied investments in transportation; county residents were equally supportive of bicycle, walking, bus, and road improvements.
- Car ownership was common and use of cars extensive, especially for residents outside of Bellingham. Although there were barriers to using cars (cost of gas, repairs, etc.) they do not frequently prevent people from driving.
- Walking, busing and biking were also common modes, though walking was by far the most common among the three (see figure 16). Further analysis showed that people who biked were also likely to use the bus.
- Barriers to biking and walking tended to be weather and distance, though infrastructure and safety were also concerns.
- People tended to have concerns about those using other modes of transportation (e.g. bike riders were untrusting of drivers and vice versa)

- Many people who used multiple modes of transportation said they would like to use their cars less often. Among those who only drove, 35% also wanted to use their cars less often.

**Figure 16. Modes of transportation compared.**



(n=401) Note: 2% of respondents rode the bus *every time* and 1% of respondents used a bike *every time*.

## **HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY CLIENT SURVEY**

The human service agency client survey was conducted with five to ten minute in-person interviews at the point of service at various Whatcom County human service locations during February 2013. The interviews included approximately 40 questions that asked clients about how far they traveled and what mode of transportation they used to reach the agency where they were interviewed, what kinds of transportation challenges they have faced reaching that site in the past, and general questions about usage and barriers for four modes of transportation: car, bus, bike and walk.

Just over half (55%) of the interviews were conducted at locations in the Bellingham city limits and the remainders were conducted at various locations around the county. About half were conducted at food banks across the county. A total of 406 interviews were conducted.

### **FINDINGS**

This section summarizes how the respondents answered each item. Analyses of particular segments of the population are included where relevant.

### **Respondent characteristics**

Table 1 (below) shows a summary of respondent characteristics. Approximately half were female, 15% were age 65 or older, 10% were Hispanic and just under one-third (31%) had children in the household. One-quarter (24%) had a veteran in the household – slightly higher than the countywide average of 18%; 38% said someone in the household was receiving disability benefits.

<b>Table 1 Respondent characteristics</b>		
	n	%
<b>Residence location</b>		
Within Bellingham city limits	187	46
<b>Education</b>		
High school diploma/GED/or less	177	44
College degree or more	65	16
Currently a student	60	15
<b>Household composition</b>		
Three or less people in household	297	73
Children in the household	127	31
<b>Disabilities</b>		
Physical, mental, or emotional condition in the household	216	53
Disability benefits in household	150	38
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	216	53
<b>Age</b>		
Age <40	140	35
Age 65+	60	15
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>		
White	318	78
Hispanic	40	10
Native American/Alaskan Native	31	8
<b>Language typically spoken at home</b>		
English	361	89
Spanish	23	6
<b>Veteran</b>		
Veteran in household	98	24
<b>Income</b>		
Average estimated monthly household income <\$1,500	294	74

n=406

### **Mode of travel**

The mode of travel to the location of the interview is considered to be a representation of the typical mode of travel respondents used to reach human services. Although 65% of respondents came to the human service organization by car on that day, only 45% came in a car they owned. Another 20% carpooled with others, and 7% came in a car they'd borrowed.

About one in seven (14%) said they walked (a median distance of half a mile). Another one in seven took the bus, primarily the fixed route service (78% of bus riders; 9% of respondents overall).

	n	%
Drove myself in a car I own	184	45
Was driven by someone else/was a passenger in a car	81	20
Walked	55	14
Bus	55	14
Drove myself in someone else's car	27	7
Bicycle	7	2
Other	2	0

n=406; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

Some segments were more likely to use a car than others. For example, respondents with more education (something more than high school, including some vocational school or college) were more likely to say that they came in a car, either their own or someone else's (78% compared to 64% with a high school diploma or less). Among those in the general population, higher education tended to produce fewer car trips (see page 5). However, there is a likely interplay between education and income thresholds among human service agency clients.

Other groups who were significantly more likely to use a car (than their counterparts):

- Multi-person households
- Females
- Households with kids
- Respondents aged 40+
- Respondents bringing home \$2,000 a month or more

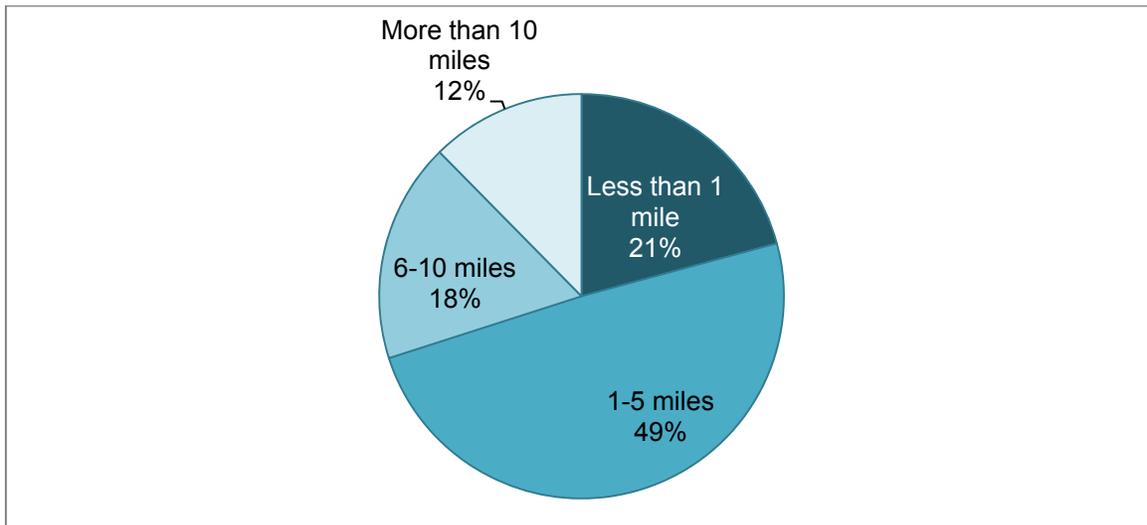
Respondents bringing home less than \$2,000 a month or more were more likely to take the bus than respondents with higher monthly income.

### ***Distance traveled***

Respondents were asked how close they live to the agency where they were interviewed. Most (72%) said they live within 5 miles and the majority (86%) came to the agency from their home that day.

Figure 1 (below) shows that 70% said they traveled 5 miles or less to reach the service location, regardless of whether it was from their home or another location. Twelve percent traveled more than 10 miles.

**Figure 1. Distance traveled to reach location**

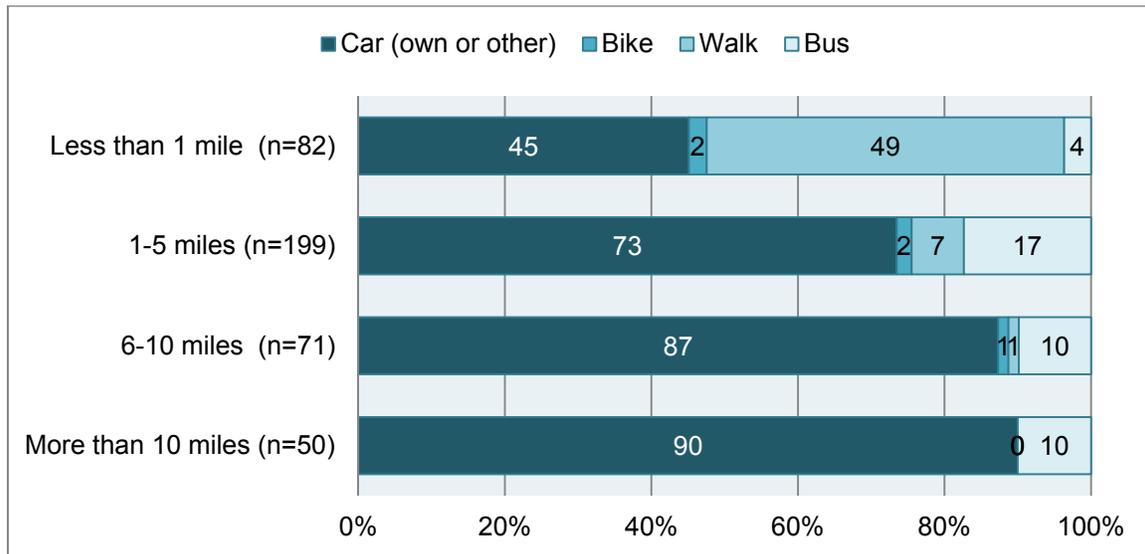


n=404

Households with more than one person were more likely to say they traveled farther, unless the household included children.

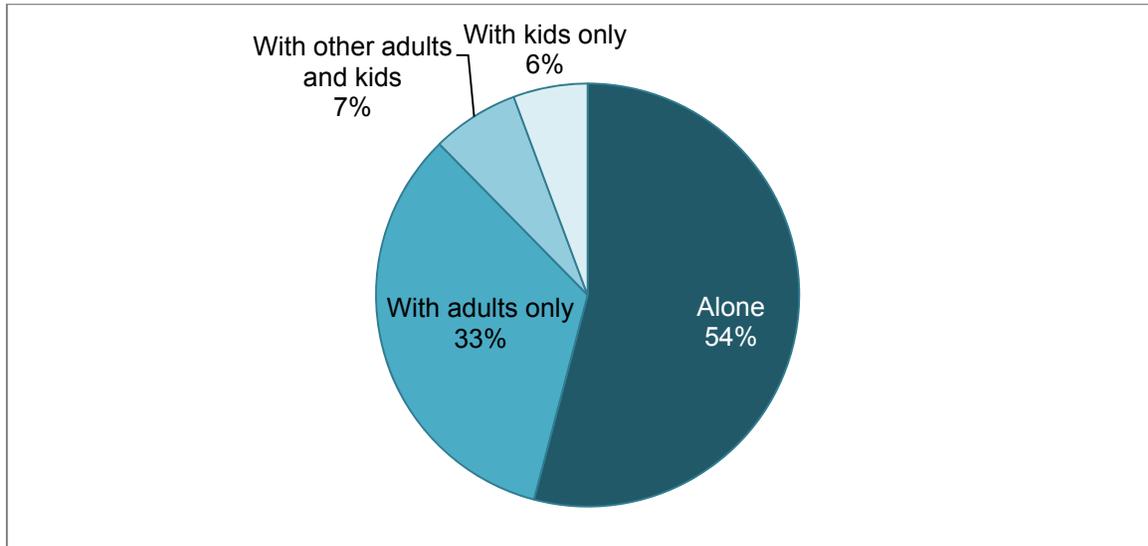
The mode of transportation varied with the distance traveled. Figure 2 (below) shows that 90% of those who traveled more than ten miles used a car; the balance took a bus and none walked or used a bike. Those who were coming less than a mile were as likely (or slightly more likely) to walk than drive. Since trips less than five miles (73% of the trips described here) are optimal for bicycling, and those under one mile for walking, human service agencies may be able to better support their clients by encouraging bicycling and walking these shorter distances. Since car use is expensive, saving resources for other needs could be encouraged.

**Figure 2. Distance traveled to reach location by mode of travel**



Respondents were asked about whether they had anyone accompanying them to the location of the interview. Just over half (54%) came alone, but the remainder had someone with them. Figure 3 (below) shows that 13% had children in their company.

**Figure 3. Did anyone come with you? Adults? Children?**



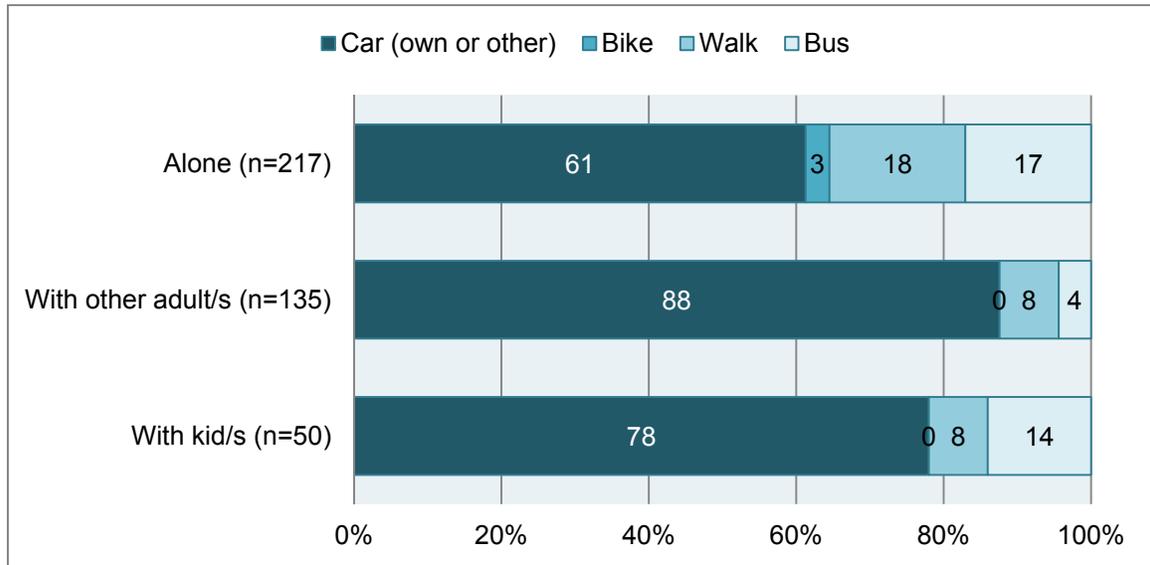
n=406

Not surprisingly, people who live alone were more likely to come alone; people with kids in the household were more likely to come with kids. Females were more likely to come with kids (18% vs. 5% of males). Males were more likely to be alone (61% vs. 48% of females). Age was also significantly correlated with companionship; the older the participant the more likely they were to be alone. Those under 40 were the most likely to bring kids.

Respondents of European descent (identifying ethnicity as white) were more likely to come alone and respondents of other ethnicities were more likely to come with kids.

The mode of transportation varied slightly with the configuration of traveling companions. Figure 4 (below) shows a greater variety of transportation modes among those who traveled alone. Solo travelers were the most likely to use biking and walking as options. Clients with children were more likely to use a car than those traveling alone, though two or more adults together were the most likely to drive (88%).

**Figure 4. Travel companions by mode of travel**

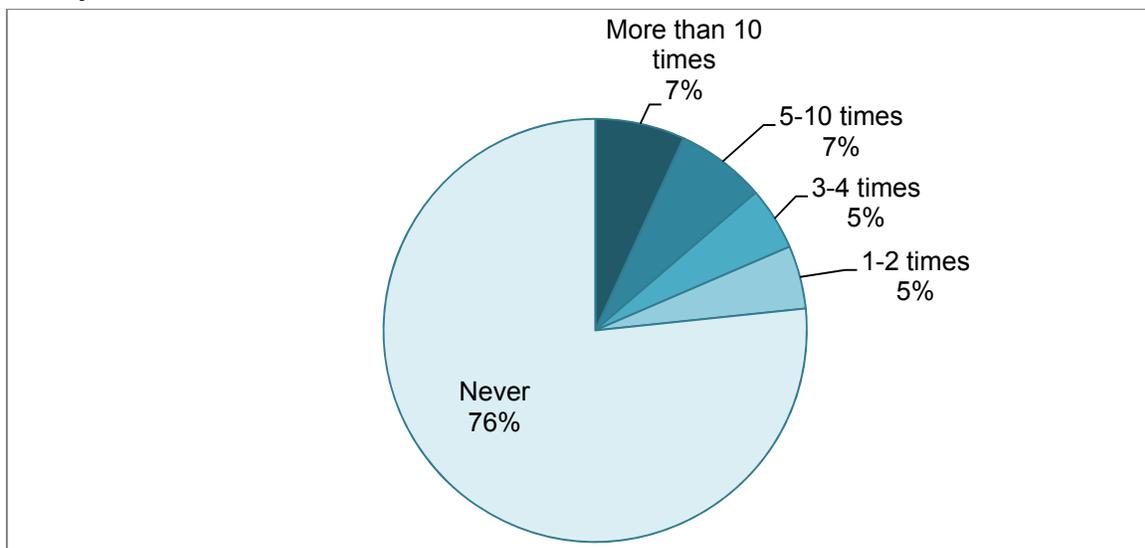


### **Difficulty reaching human service agency**

Clients who are unable to access social services because of transportation barriers may experience mild or severe consequences. For example, one agency key informant talked about the problem of clients being able to keep follow up appointments for critical diagnoses. In some cases, these diagnoses are for mental or physical illnesses that result in long-term or dire consequences if not treated reliably. The issues of time and timing may be even more sensitive if the client is a developing child. Without proper treatment, certain problems could lead to long-run learning or health challenges.

Clients were asked to estimate how many times they were unable to reach the agency due to issues of transportation in the past year. Figure 5 (below) shows that 25% of clients surveyed were unable to get to that particular human service agency because of transportation at least once in the past year; 17% said this happened three or more times.

**Figure 5. Number of times clients tried to get to agency but were unable due to transportation**



n=403

Analysis found that respondents who live outside of Bellingham were more likely to have been unable to reach the agency where they were interviewed at least once in the past year due to transportation (29% vs. 20% who live in the city limits).

Respondents who reported that they have someone in the household with a health condition were more likely to say that they were unable to reach that location at least once in the past year due to transportation. Similarly respondents who collect disability

payments were more likely to have transportation problems (32% vs. 21% of those who are not on disability).

Respondents who had experienced difficulties due to transportation were asked to talk about what kinds of transportation problems they had. Table 3 (below) shows that the issues were varied with the most frequent problems being missed bus or bus scheduling issues, lack of gas money, or not having a car or a ride.

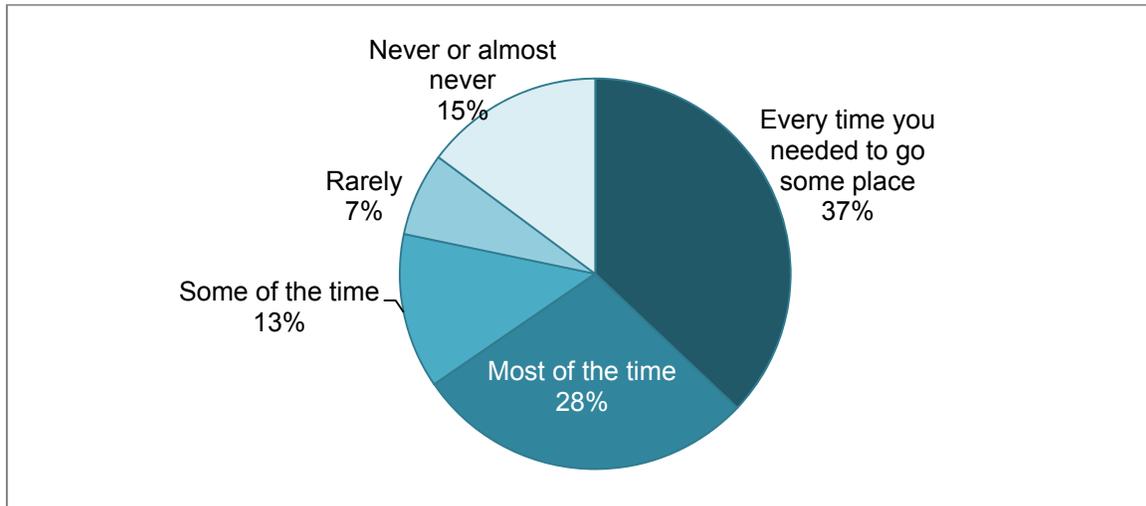
<b>Table 3. What kind of transportation problems kept you from coming here?</b>		
	n	%
Bus - missed, schedule issues	20	19
No gas/money for gas	18	17
No car, no ride from others	18	17
Car - broken down	16	15
Disability	13	12
Bus - no pass or fare money	10	9
Weather	10	9
No license	4	4
Other	19	18

n=106; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

### Driving a car

Respondents were asked a series of questions about using a car. Sixty-one percent said that they own a car. A similar proportion (65%) said that they use a car (theirs or someone else's) *every time* or *most of the time* that they need to get someplace.

**Figure 6. In the past year, how often did you use a car (yours or anyone else's) to get to places that you needed to go? Would you say...**



n=405

The following were more likely than their counterparts to say they have a car. Respondents with...

- More education (something more than a high school diploma)
- Another person in the household
- Kids in the household
- Income over \$2,000 a month

Age was also correlated with having a car. Respondents over 40 (68%) were more likely than younger respondents to have a car and those over 65 were even more likely to have a car (75%).

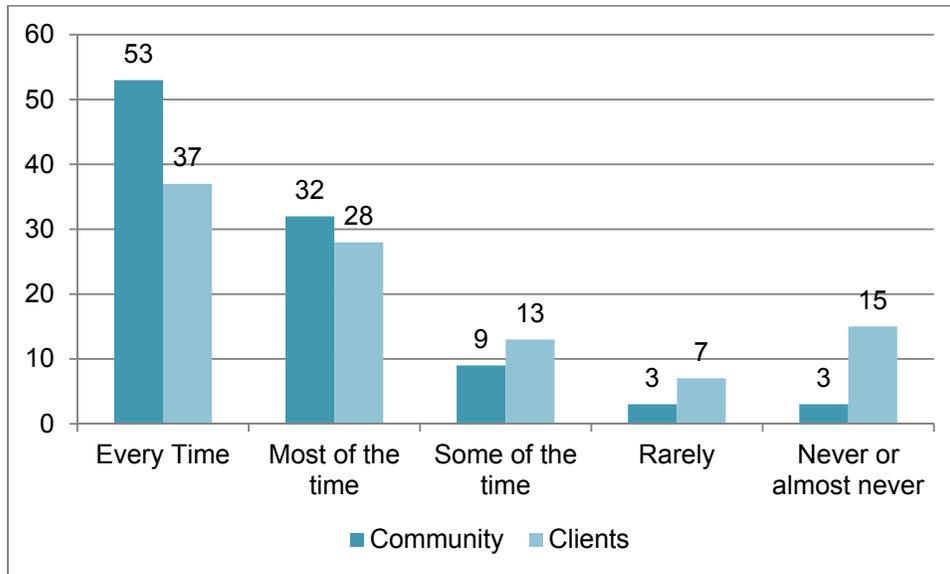
Respondents on disability were less likely to own a car (52%)

Analysis looked to see which segments were especially likely to say they use a car most of the time or every time they go someplace. Households with more than one person, households with kids were more likely than single person households or households without kids to say they use a car most or every time. Females were also more likely than males to use cars most or every time.

Respondents with income over \$2,000 a month were more likely to use a car most or every time compared to those with smaller incomes (83% vs. 60%).

Human Services clients drove less often than members of the broader community reported driving.

**Figure 6b. Driving frequency of Whatcom County residents vs. Human Services clients.**

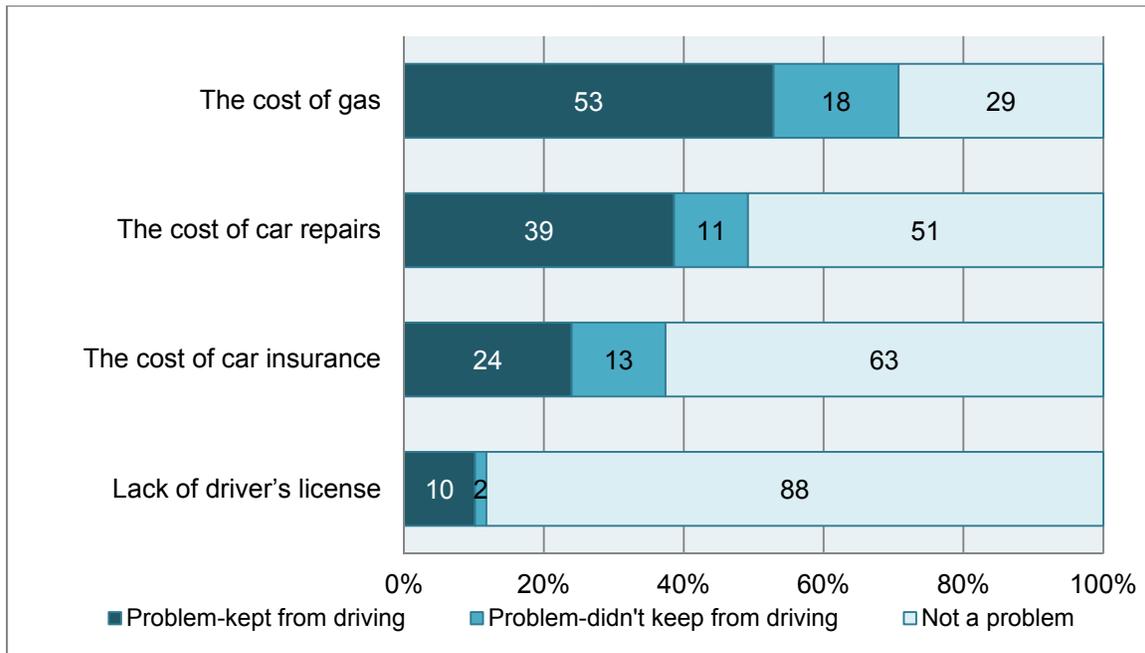


N=401 Community members and 406 Clients

### Barriers to using a car

When asked to identify problems they had faced in using a car for transportation, the most prevalent problem for car owners was the cost of gas (71% considered it a problem), followed by the cost of car repairs (49%). Although the cost of gas was considered a problem by 71% of car owners, a smaller proportion (53%) said that the cost of gas kept them from driving at any given time. Thirty-nine percent of car owners said that the cost of car repairs kept them from driving in the past year.

**Figure 7. Have any of the following been a problem for you in the past year? Which of those, if any, kept you from using your car at any point in the past year?**



n=246 car owners

Analysis looked to see if any specific demographics were especially likely to say that a particular problem kept them from driving. People with someone in their household who has a health condition were more likely (than those without someone in the household with a condition) to say that the cost of gas, the cost of repairs and the cost of insurance kept them from driving.

People under 65 were more likely than those 65 and over to say that the cost of insurance and gas kept them from driving.

Respondents who have an income under \$2000 a month were more likely to say the cost of insurance kept them from driving compared to those with more income.

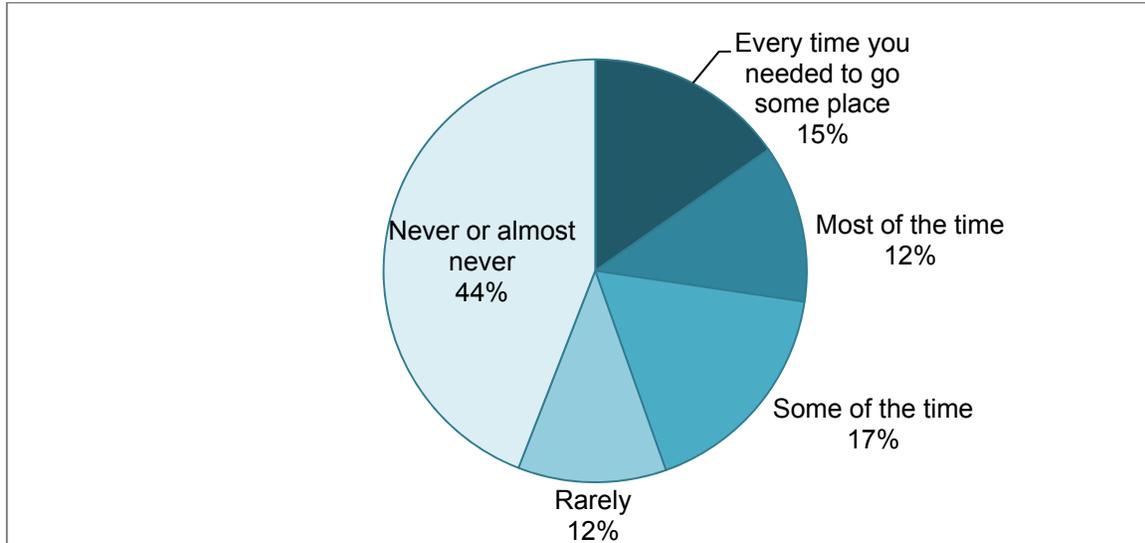
Respondents were asked to describe any other problems that kept them from using a car. The most prevalent comments included:

- Health issues (like an injured ankle, anxiety disorder, vision problems and non-specific medical problems that interfered with transportation)
- Elaboration on car repairs already discussed in Figure 7
- The weather
- Scheduling problems with sharing a car
- General lack of money

### **Riding the bus**

Trips of 2-10 miles are ideal for bus riding as they tend to be fairly efficient and may not require the passenger to transfer to another bus, thus saving time. Clients were asked how often they use the bus. A majority (56%) had some recent experience riding the bus. Just over one-quarter (27%) said that in the past year they used the bus *every time* or *most of the times* that they needed to go someplace. Forty-four percent (44%) said they *never* or *almost never* took the bus.

**Figure 8. In the past year, how often did you use the bus to get places you needed to go?**



n=406

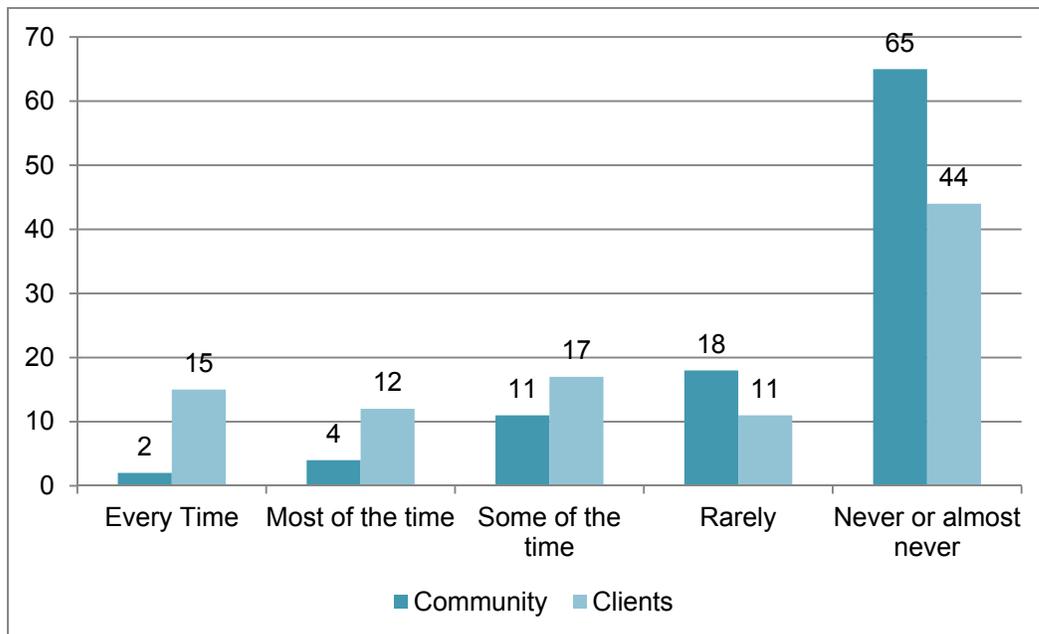
People who live alone are more likely to ride the bus with more frequency (39% ride it most or every time compared to 23% who live with others). Similarly, people with kids in the household are less likely to take the bus most or every time (17%).

Respondents who reported having a disability were more likely to say they take the bus *most or every time* (35%). Males are also more likely to regularly take the bus (34%) compared to females (21%).

Respondents with an income under \$2,000 were more likely to take the bus than those with incomes of \$2,000 a month or higher (30% vs. 17%).

Human Services clients reported a significantly higher frequency of bus use than did members of the broader community (see figure 8b).

**Figure 8b. Bus use frequency of Whatcom County residents vs. Human Services clients.**



N=401 community members and 406 Human Services Clients

### Barriers to using the bus

Clients who said they use the bus only *some of the time*, *rarely*, or *never* were asked to share what keeps them from using the bus more often. Table 4 (below) shows a wide range of reasons that respondents say keeps them from using the bus more often, with service and schedule problems topping the list (54%), followed by a preference for using a car (33%).

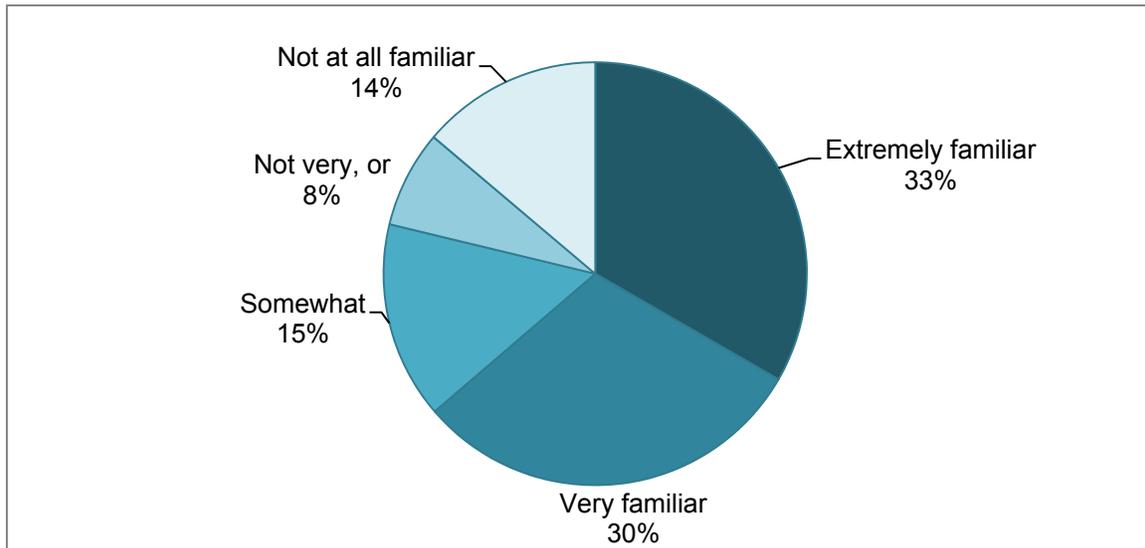
<b>Table 4. What keeps you from using the bus more often?</b>		
	n	%
Schedule or service: Bus times or days don't work for me, takes too long, no service where I am going to/coming from, bus to bus transfers are a hassle	162	54
Prefer to use car	97	33
No bus stop close to home	31	11
The cost of bus fare	29	10
A physical or mental disability	28	9
Unfamiliarity	17	6
Kids	13	4
Prefer to walk or ride a bike	11	4
Don't like the other people on the bus	7	2
Need to carry bulky items	7	2
Other	51	17

n=295; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

### Familiarity with the bus

Clients were asked about their familiarity with riding the bus. About two thirds (63%) said that they were *very* or *extremely familiar* with how to ride the bus. Figure 9 (below) shows that over one in five (22%) were *not very* or *not at all familiar*.

**Figure 9. How familiar are you with how to ride the bus? Would you say you are...**



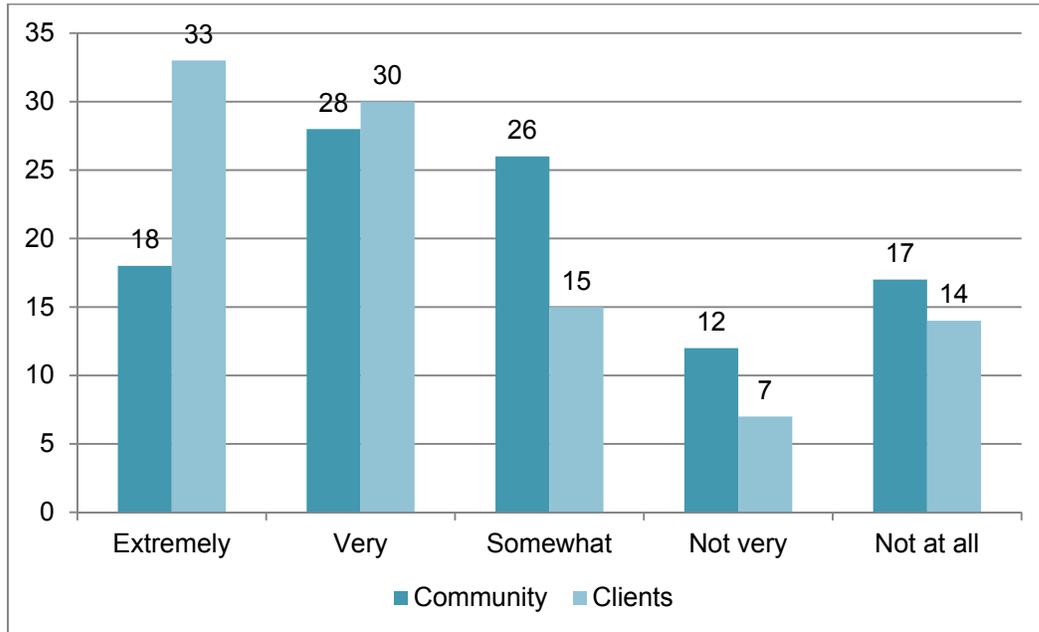
n=405

Not surprisingly, respondents who said that they ride the bus *most* or *all of the time* were more likely to say that they were familiar with riding the bus (compared to those who ride less often). Also:

- Respondents with kids in the household were less likely to be very or extremely familiar (55% vs. 68% of households without kids).
- 71% of males vs. 58% of females said they were very or extremely familiar.
- Age was negatively correlated with familiarity with just half of those over 65 saying they are extremely or very familiar (71% of those under 40).
- Respondents with lower incomes (under \$2000 a month) were more familiar (68% vs. 52%).

Human services clients were much more familiar with how to ride the bus than were members of the broader community (see figure 9b).

**Figure 9b. Familiarity with riding the bus: Community versus Human Services clients**

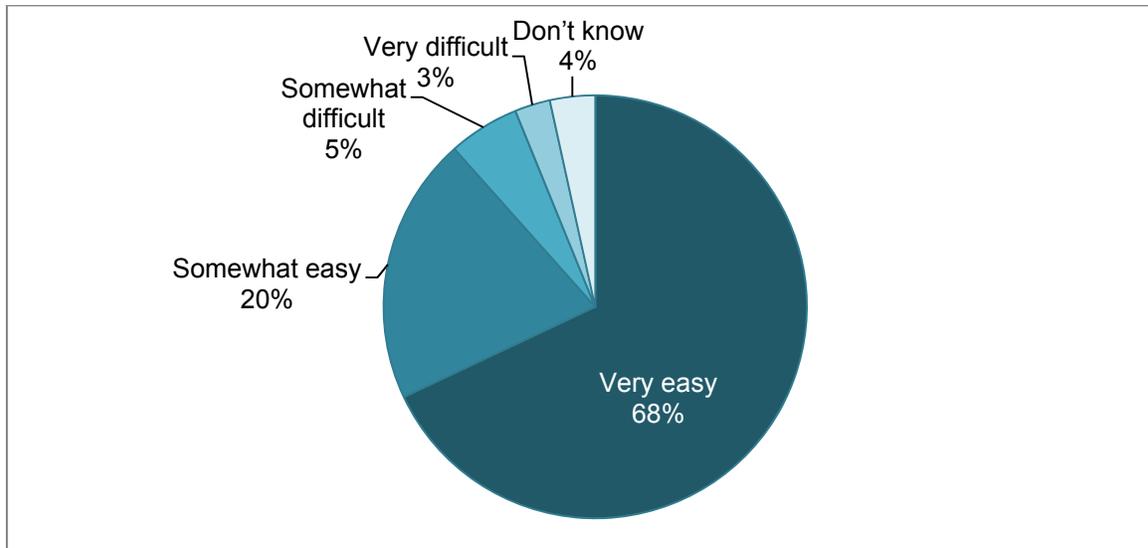


N=401 community members and 406 Human services clients

### Ease of getting information about the bus

About two-thirds said they think it is *very easy* to get information about how to use the bus. Only 8% thought it would be *very* or *somewhat difficult*, while 4% didn't know what to expect.

**Figure 10. If you needed information about how to use the bus, how easy or difficult do you think it would be to get that information? Would you say it would be...**



n=406

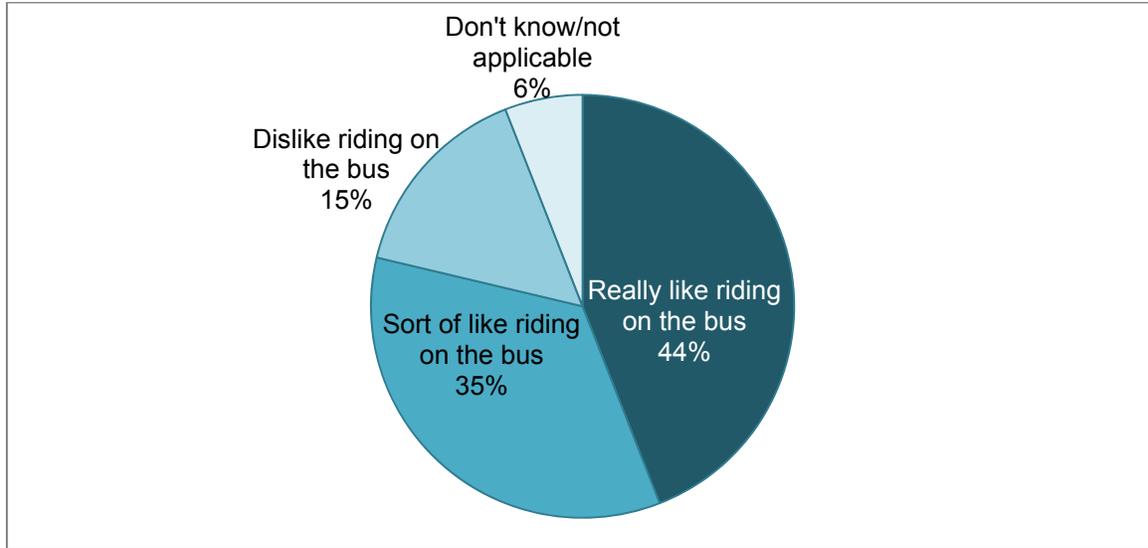
Analysis found that respondents who said that they ride the bus *most* or *all of the time* were more likely to say that getting information would be *very easy*.

Respondents of European descent (indicating ethnicity as “white”) were more likely to think this would be very or somewhat easy (94% vs. 85% of people indicating other ethnicities).

### Feelings about riding the bus

Clients were asked how they feel about riding the bus. They were instructed to disregard issues of schedule and route in their assessment. Figure 11 (below) shows that slightly less than half (44%) said that they *really liked riding* on the bus, and another 35% said they *sort of like riding*. Only 15% said that they *disliked riding* the bus. Only 15% said that they *disliked riding* the bus. Only 15% said that they *disliked riding* the bus.

**Figure 11. We would like to know how you feel about riding the bus aside from the schedule and the route. Would you say...**



n=404

Analysis found that respondents who ride the bus with greater frequency were more likely to say they *really like riding the bus*; similarly those with greater familiarity with the bus were more likely to *really like riding the bus*. Additionally, people who live inside Bellingham were more likely to *really like riding the bus*; those who live outside of Bellingham were more likely to say they *dislike* the bus.

Those who said that they only *sort of like* or *disliked* the bus were asked what they don't like about the bus. Table 5 (below) shows that the most frequent theme had to do with other people on the bus, followed by how crowded and loud it can get. Only three people mentioned cleanliness, though the cleanliness of other riders was mentioned by several more.

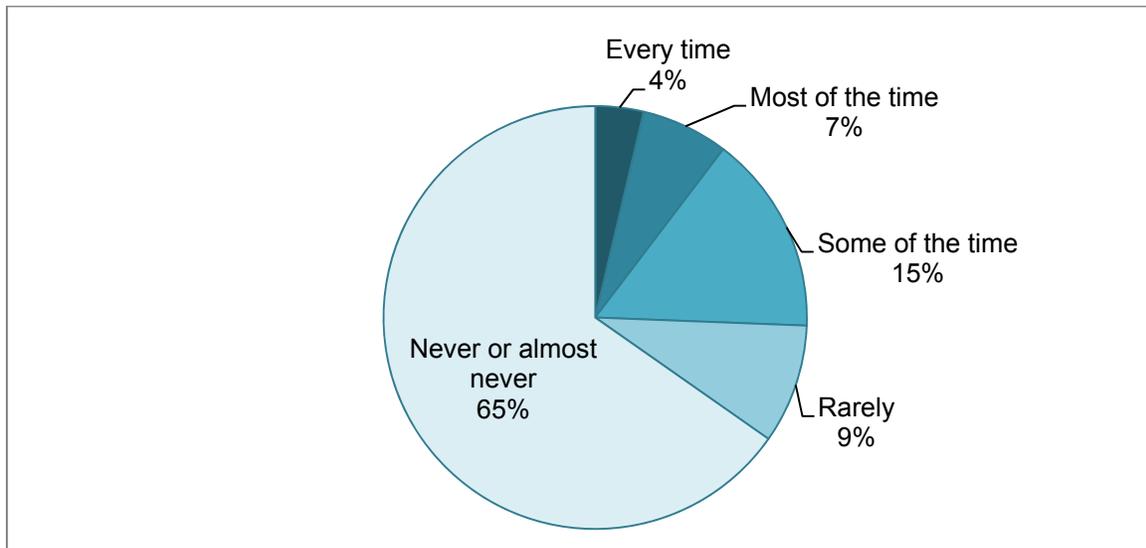
<b>Table 5. What don't you like about the bus?</b>		
	n	%
The other people on the bus (e.g. unpleasant, scary, rude)	66	33
Crowded, loud	31	15
Rider mental/physical issues	24	12
It takes too long/transfers/stops	23	11
Schedule	15	7
Don't know, nothing, no comment other than schedule/route	14	7
Waiting for it	12	6
Inconvenient; less convenient than other methods	6	3
Driver unpleasant, not enforcing rules	5	2
Safety	4	2
Unclean	3	1
Other	36	18

n=201; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

### Riding a bicycle

Trips of up to five miles are optimal for bike rides if weather, safe infrastructure and terrain permit it. Nearly half (47%) of the respondents surveyed said that they own a bicycle. When asked how often they use a bike to get places, half (50%) of those who own bikes said *some of the time* or more often. For those without bikes, only 5% rode them as often.

**Figure 12. In the past year, how often did you use a bike to get places you needed to go?**



n=406

Human services clients were much less likely to own a bike than people in the broader population (47% versus 64% respectively), but among those who own bikes, use of the bike for transportation is much higher than in the broader population. Among those who have a bike and no car, 65% used their bikes *some of the time* or more often to get places they needed to go (compared to 54% in the broader population, though only 4% of respondents had a bike a no car). For Human Service clients who owned both a bike and a car, 45% still opted to use their bikes *some of the time* or more often to get around (22% of the broader population did the same).

Analysis looked to see which demographic characteristics were associated with using a bike. The following segments were more likely (than their counterparts) to say they rode a bike *some of the time*, *most of the time* or *every time*:

- Male
- Under the age of 40
- Live alone

- Have no kids in the house
- Have no identified persistent health/emotional conditions in the household
- No disability benefits in the household

Knowing these characteristics can be helpful when designing outreach and behavior change campaigns. Outreach materials should be reviewed by people from these subgroups and designed so that they recognize themselves in the program messaging. Also, channels chosen to reach these subgroups should be appropriate for their demographic characteristics.

### Barriers to using a bike

Clients who said they use a bike only *some of the time, rarely, or never* were asked to share what keeps them from using a bike more often. Their responses are tabulated in Table 6 below. Thirty-nine percent (39%) said that not having a bike is what keeps them from using a bike to get places. About one-quarter (26%) discussed a physical or mental disability. Other reasons included distance and terrain (20%), the weather (14%) and concerns about safety (9%).

**Table 6. What keeps you from using a bike more often?**

	n	%
Don't have a bike, can't afford a bike, bike was stolen	143	39
A physical or mental disability	93	26
Too far to ride (distance), takes too long, hills/terrain	76	20
The weather	50	14
Safety, traffic	35	9
Needs repairs	26	7
It isn't a part of their culture/lifestyle	22	6
Need to travel with children	17	5
Don't know how to ride a bike, don't know the logistics of using a bike for transportation (rules of the road, bike safety, how to secure a bike, etc.)	19	5
Motivation/ Willpower	13	4
Hills/terrain	11	3
Uses a car	9	2
Need to transport belongings, groceries or equipment with them	7	2
Need to travel with other individuals/companions	5	1
Some other reason	34	9

n=364; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

### Suggestions to help encourage bike riding

Respondents were asked for suggestions about things that would help them ride a bike more often. Many of their suggestions were the inverse of what keeps them from riding a bike. The most frequent comment was that if they had a bike, they might ride it more often (25%). The remaining suggestions were widely varied. Twenty-one percent (21%) mentioned more bike lanes and trails. Eleven percent (11%) said that personal improvements in their health might help them ride a bike more.

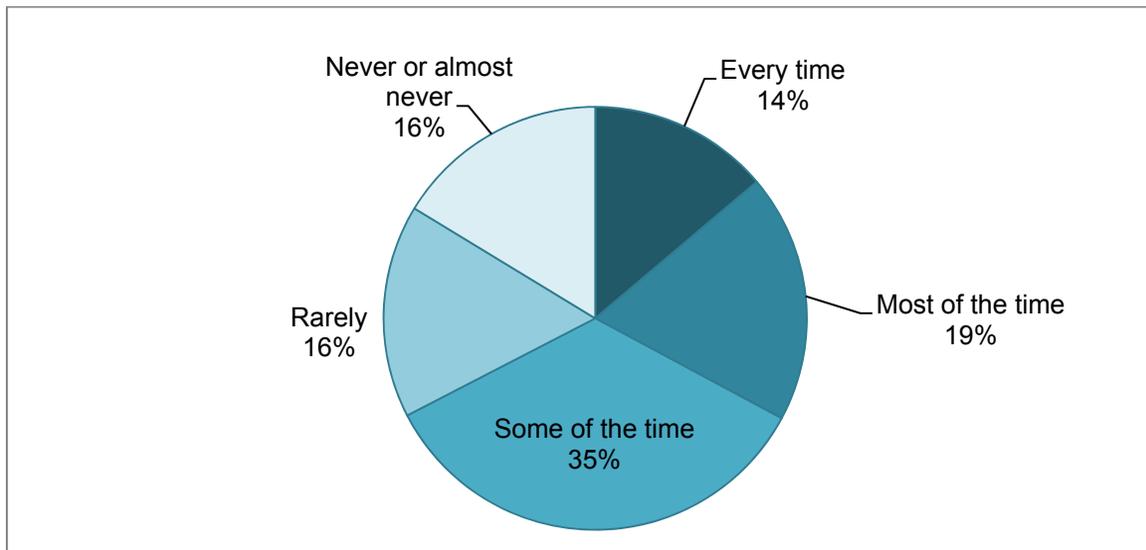
<b>Table 7. Do you have any suggestions for things that would help you ride a bike more often?</b>		
	n	%
Get a bike	60	25
More bike lanes/trails, Safer biking conditions (e.g. wider shoulder, bike lanes),	50	21
Personal physical/health improvement	28	11
Get repairs done on bike	18	7
Get specialized bike/equipment (e.g. recumbent, child carrier, softer seat, helmet, basket, lights, trailer)	15	6
Improved weather	10	4
Personal motivation	9	4
Get a 3-wheeler	6	2
More secure storage/locking options	5	2
A bike share program	4	2
Money/Assistance	4	2
Live closer to work or town	4	2
Education, instruction	4	2
Someone to ride with	4	2
Other/Miscellaneous	36	15

n=244; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

## Walk

Two-thirds of respondents said that they walked *some of the time* or more often when they needed to get someplace. This is a higher frequency than in the broader population where 51% walked as often.

**Figure 13. In the past year, how often did you walk to get to places you needed to go?**



n=405

People who live alone and in households without kids were more likely to say they walk *every time* or *most of the time* (compared to those who live with other adults or kids).

When asked about their ability to walk a mile or more, 85% of respondents said they were capable of walking this far (or for about 20 minutes). This is similar to but lower than the estimate of 91% in the broader population who reported being able to walk that distance.

## Barriers to walking

Clients who said they walk only *some of the time*, *rarely*, or *never* were asked what keeps them from walking more often when they need to get places. Over one-third said that a physical or mental disability or limitation keeps them from walking more often and one-quarter (24%) said that the distances they need to go are too far. About one in five (19%) mentioned the weather.

**Table 8. What keeps you from walking more often when you need to get places?**

	n	%
A physical or mental disability	97	36
Too far to walk (distance)	65	24
The weather	52	19
Takes too long	47	17
Uses a car	29	11
Safety, traffic	22	8
It isn't a part of their culture/lifestyle	14	5
Motivation/Willpower	13	5
Uses a bike/bus	12	4
Need to travel with children	9	3
Need to transport belongings, groceries or equipment with them	7	3
Hills/terrain	7	3
Some other reason	26	10

n=364; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

### Suggestions to help encourage walking

Respondents were asked to make suggestions of things that could help them walk more often; just under half (45%) offered suggestions. These were tallied and are presented in Table 9 below. Although respondents personal physical condition was top of mind (22%), equally so were the conditions under which they were walking.

**Table 9. Do you have any suggestions for things that would help you ride a bike more often?**

	n	%
Physical improvement	41	22
Safer conditions: crosswalks, signals, trails, lights, wider shoulders sidewalks, benches	41	22
Live closer to services	24	13
Weather	23	13
Gear (e.g. cane, shoes, carts)	14	8
Motivation	12	7
Companion to walk with	11	6
Other/Miscellaneous	24	13

n=183; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

A few people mentioned some of the challenges they've run into walking:

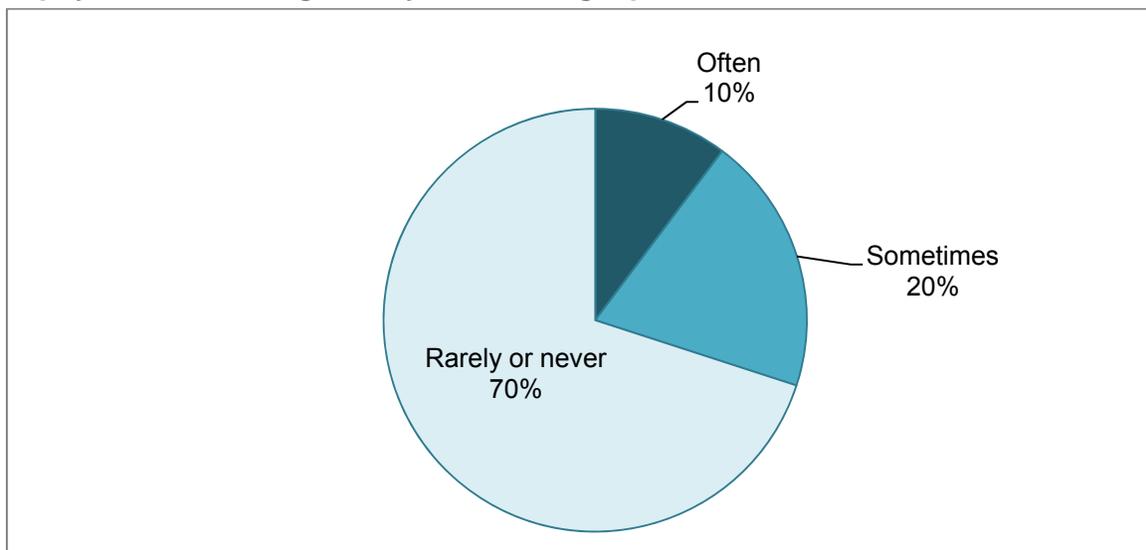
*"Being a pedestrian is very scary, lots of near misses. Cars are reluctant to stop when you press the button."*

“Street lights, bike lanes to walk in, got to get into ditch now if two cars come at same time.”

“More sidewalks, especially around shopping centers. End up walking in bike lanes, on lawns.”

Respondents were asked specifically about how often a lack of trails, sidewalk or benches kept them from walking to get to places they need to go. Nearly a third (30%) said that this was *sometimes* or *often* a barrier.

**Figure 14. How much, if at all, has a lack of trails, sidewalks or benches to rest kept you from walking when you need to get places?**



n=400

Respondents who said that there was someone in their household with a persistent health condition were more likely to say this happens (either often or sometimes). Females also were more likely than males to say that these barriers have kept them from walking.

### Summary of key findings:

Human service clients who live in Whatcom County differ substantially from Whatcom County residents overall. Demographically, they are less educated, live in larger households and are younger. Senior citizens are actually under represented among people with special needs, though their needs may be more intensive due to their age. They are less often white and more often Spanish speaking. Their incomes are very low, with 62% earning less than \$1,500/month.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 10. Client and Community demographics compared**

	Clients	Community
	%	%
<b>Residence location</b>		
Within Bellingham city limits	46	50
<b>Education</b>		
High school diploma/GED/or less	44	21
College degree or more	16	43
<b>Household composition</b>		
Three or less people in household	73	100
Children in the household	31	28
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	53	50
<b>Age</b>		
Age <40	35	25
Age 65+	15	30
<b>Race and ethnicity</b>		
White	78	89
Hispanic	10	2
Native American/Alaskan Native	8	3
<b>Language typically spoken at home</b>		
English	89	96
Spanish	6	0.5
Russian or Ukrainian	2	1
<b>Income</b>		
Average estimated monthly household income <\$1,500	62	12

<sup>4</sup> Health and Human Services poverty guidelines put a single-person household at \$930 per month. Two people would be \$1,260.

They also differ in their experiences of transportation (see Table 11). Many of the differences appear to be associated with lower income and the prevalence of health or disability.

- Car ownership was much less common among the clients interviewed (likely due to income), and they were more likely to be impeded in driving due to costs (41% compared to 29% of the broader community). Both factors likely combine to produce less reliance on cars for transportation.
- Clients were somewhat less likely to be able to ride a bike and less likely to own bikes. But if they had a bike, they were likely to ride it more often than those in the broader community. It may be that if bike ownership were not a barrier more clients would use this as a means of transportation. They were less likely to note proximity or safety issues as a barrier – clearly a by-product of the larger issue of not having a bike to ride.
- Fewer clients were able to walk rather short distances, but were more apt to use walking to get around than were community members more broadly. They were less likely to mention issues of proximity and safety or infrastructure, though this still affected almost half of those interviewed.
- Bus use is also more prevalent among human services clients. They were more likely to report service issues being a barrier, perhaps due both to more frequent use as well as using the buses for different, more varied purposes than the broader community.

**Table 11. Clients and Community transportation experiences compared**

	County-wide	Human Services Clients	Difference
<b>Cars</b>			
Car Ownership	90%	61%	-29%
Used a car most of the time or more	85%	65%	-20%
Unable to drive due to cost of gas, repairs or insurance	29%	41%	12%
<b>Bikes</b>			
Unable to ride a bike	18%	26%	8%
Bike Ownership	64%	47%	-17%
Used a bike never or almost never	67%	65%	-2%
Barriers: Proximity issues + Safety/infrastructure	44%	27%	-17%
<b>Walking</b>			
Walked never or almost never	22%	16%	-6%
Unable to walk a mile	9%	15%	6%
Barriers: Proximity issues + safety/infrastructure	69%	49%	-20%
<b>Bus</b>			
Used a bus never or almost never	65%	44%	-21%
Barriers: Service issues	55%	65%	10%
Extremely or very familiar with the bus	46%	63%	17%

## HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION SURVEY

ARN conducted a survey of human service organizations to further understand those agency's perceptions of transportation as a barrier to their clients and to find out what the agencies provide in terms of transportation services and subsidies and at what cost. Information was also collected from local school districts and transportation agencies to provide a more comprehensive picture of what transportation is offered in Whatcom County.

### METHODS

The survey was conducted online with a supplement of phone calls and emails to gather relevant data from human service agencies, school districts and transportation providers. The survey contained 29 questions and was available online between February 12 and March 9, 2013. A total of 40 agencies and organizations completed the survey.

### Contributing organizations

#### Human Service Agencies:

Bellingham Food Bank  
Bellingham Goodwill Job Training and Education Center  
Bellingham Housing Authority  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Whatcom County, Ferndale  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Whatcom County, Blaine  
Brigid Collins Family Support Center  
Cascade Vocational Services  
Catholic Community Services  
Disabled American Veterans Bellingham Chapter 19  
Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services  
Lydia Place  
Lynden Boys & Girls Club  
Max Higbee Center  
Northwest Regional Council (Medicaid Transportation Brokerage)  
Northwest Youth Services  
Opportunity Council Community Services  
Opportunity Council Early Learning and Family Services  
Rainbow Recovery Center  
Readiness to Learn, Bellingham Schools  
Readiness to Learn, Blaine Schools

Readiness to Learn, Meridian Schools  
Readiness to Learn, Mt. Baker Schools  
Readiness to Learn, Nooksack Schools  
Sean Humphrey House  
Sun Community Service  
Whatcom Center for Early Learning  
Whatcom Counseling & Psychiatric Clinic  
Whatcom Love In the Name of Christ  
Whatcom Skagit Housing

#### School Districts

Bellingham  
Blaine  
Ferndale  
Lynden\*  
Meridian  
Mount Baker  
Nooksack Valley

#### Transportation Providers

Lummi  
WTA

\*Did not provide data; estimates were calculated based on the other districts and figures available online

Readiness to Learn, Ferndale Schools  
Readiness to Learn, Lynden Schools

## FINDINGS

This section of the report is divided into four parts.

- Part one describes some unique service providers,
- Part two describes the findings from the survey of human service agencies (without schools and transit),
- Part three describes School District and Transit Providers, and
- Part four gives cost comparisons.

Transportation providers and school district findings are reported separately from human service agencies.

### *Part 1: Unique Service Providers*

The human service agencies that participated in this survey offer programs that cover a very wide range of human services. Examples include a food bank, vocational training, afterschool programming, and housing and homeless services, just to name a few. Two service areas merit note because of their unique and significant role in the landscape of transportation for special needs: Medicaid Transport and Readiness to Learn.

#### **Medicaid Transport**

The Northwest Regional Council (contracted by the Health Care Authority) operates a Medicaid transportation brokerage. This service provides Medicaid clients with transportation to medical appointments.

Medicaid eligible clients call the brokerage at least two business days prior to their appointment and the brokerage arranges the transportation. The brokerage seeks to arrange the most appropriate, least costly method of transportation to the “nearest provider of type”. This includes bus passes, reimbursement for gas, and vouchers for taxi rides among other options. The brokerage is also responsible for verification of appointments; this entails contacting the provider prior to the appointment to verify the time and afterward to verify that the client showed up.

#### **Readiness to Learn**

Readiness to Learn (RTL) is a state administered early intervention drop-out prevention program that operates in all seven Whatcom County school districts. The programs provide resources and support services to students who are significantly at-risk for non-academic reasons. Examples of such services include case management, health services, food, clothing and assistance with meeting basic needs, which includes transportation.

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act children are guaranteed (among other things) the right to attend their home school if their family loses their housing. RTL coordinates the transportation for students who have been displaced in order to keep them in their home school. For example, if a family from the Meridian School District loses their housing and is temporarily housed in Bellingham, RTL would coordinate with the Meridian and Bellingham school districts to get the student to their school of origin. This could mean covering gas money or hiring a taxi, or in some cases an extra run of a district vehicle or school bus.

## ***Part two: Human Services Agencies***

### ***Populations served***

Human service agencies were asked to describe the types of people they served. Most (97%) said they typically serve low income clients. Table 1 (below) shows that homeless people and youth are two other large client groups (each served by 68% of agencies surveyed). About half (52%) of the agencies surveyed said they serve some clients with physical disabilities, and slightly more (61%) serve people with mental or developmental disabilities.

<b>Table 1. Which of these populations typically use your services?</b>		
	n	%
Low income	30	97
Homeless	21	68
Children/Youth	21	68
Have a mental or developmental disability	19	61
Have a physical disability	16	52
Have serious health issues	15	48
Seniors	10	32
Veterans	8	26
Some other group	5	16

n=31; multiple responses possible

### Access to services

Because of the study's focus on transportation barriers for people with special needs, the survey asked how clients of the human service agencies accessed their services. Most agencies said that clients access their services by coming to their facility (81%). Nearly half (42%) said that they deliver some element of services to the clients at home; most of these agencies also deliver services in another way as well (only one indicated that services were exclusively delivered to the home). One-third of agencies only identified one method of access and approximately another third identified two methods of access with the remaining third reaching clients through three or four different ways.

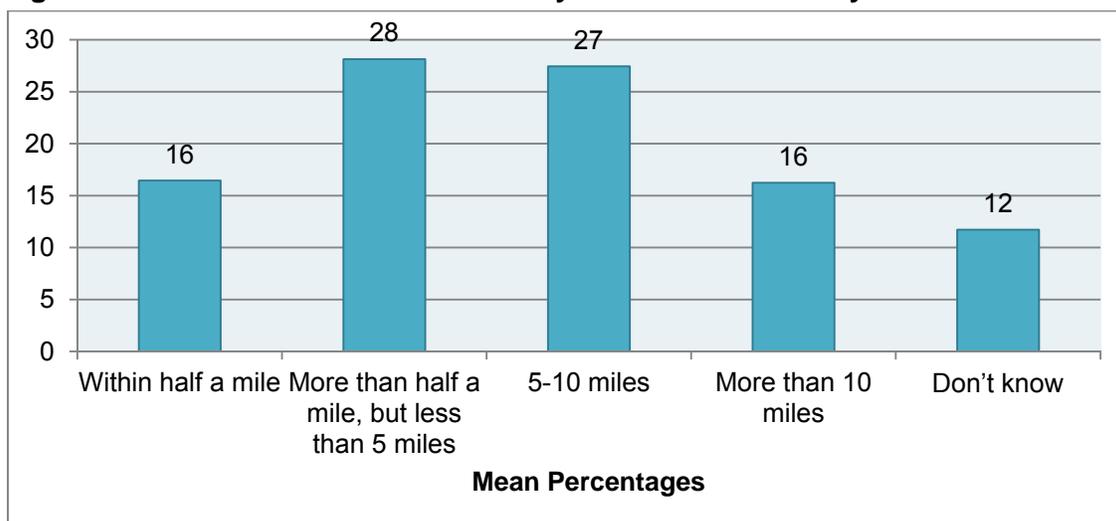
**Table 2. Which of these describes how your clients access your organization?**

	n	%
Our clients receive services at our facility/facilities	25	81
We deliver our services at another location or facility	14	45
We deliver services to our clients at their home	13	42
Primarily informational / referral /advocacy /coordination of services	7	23
We deliver services at various locations using a mobile facility	3	10
Transportation is our primary service (not at a specific location)	3	10

n=31; multiple responses possible

Agencies were asked to estimate how far their clients live from the agency facility where they receive services. Figure 1 (below) shows that agencies estimated, on average, that 16% of clients live within half a mile. They estimated an identical proportion live over 10 miles away. Recall that distances less than one mile are optimal for walking, and 1-5 miles are optimal for biking.

**Figure 1. How far clients live from facility /facilities where they receive services**



n=29 (two agencies did not provide services at a facility)

**Magnitude of the transportation barrier in service utilization**

Respondents were asked to think about the clients they currently serve and how problematic transportation issues are for their clients' ability to fully utilize services. On average, agencies estimated that half of their clients experienced transportation as a *major barrier* to accessing services.

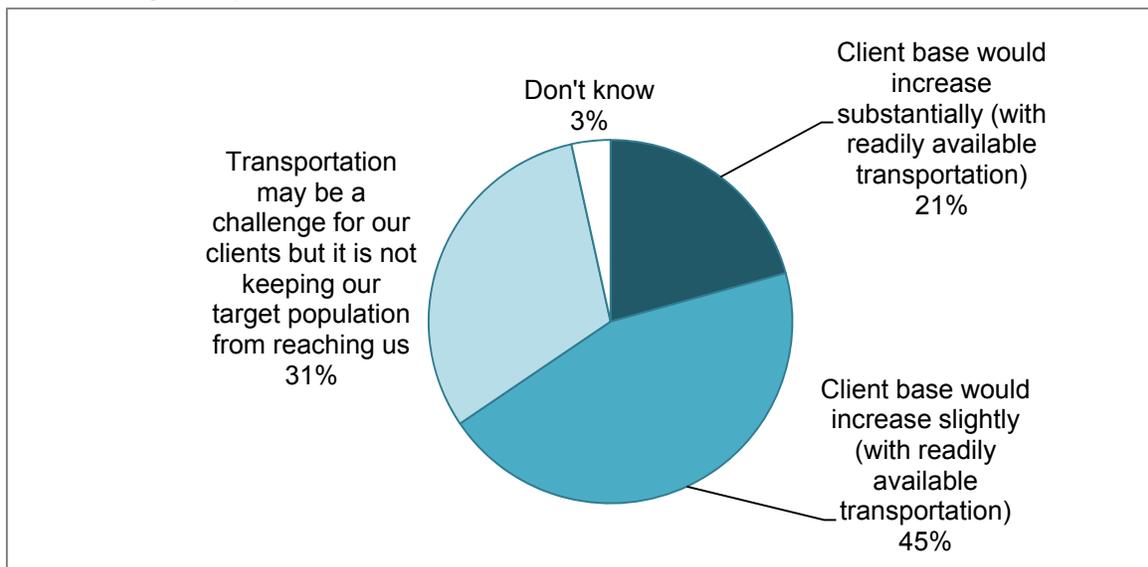
**Table 3. For what proportion of your current clients would you say that transportation is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not really a barrier?**

	mean	median
Major barrier	47.9	50
Minor barrier	23.4	25
Not really a barrier	22.4	10
Don't know	6.2	

n=29

Respondents were also asked to consider the effect of transportation barriers on the larger population that might be eligible to use their services. One-fifth of respondents said that their client base would *increase substantially* if transportation was readily available; another 45% said that their client base would *increase slightly*.

**Figure 2. Are there people living in Whatcom County who are likely eligible for and would benefit from your services but do not use your services because they are unable to get to your facilities?**



n=29

Two vocational service organizations commented on how transportation barriers affect their clients:

*“We have had people drop out of services due to transportation concerns. There are also many people living in more remote locations that I believe would access services and employment if there were more options for transportation.”*

- Cascade Vocational Services

*“Many of our potential students have no way to enroll in classes or services because they must come in person and do not have transportation to enroll and initiate services.”*

- Bellingham Goodwill Job Training and Education Center

### **Transportation services and subsidies**

Respondents identified which kinds of transportation related services and subsidies their organization provided in the past year. Table 4 (below) shows that 68% of agencies surveyed *provided information about transportation services* to their clients. A slightly smaller proportion (58%) said they provided *bus tokens or money for the bus*.

Nearly half of the agencies surveyed (45%) provided *rides in a vehicle owned by their organization*. Ten of those 14 agencies serve youth exclusively (the Readiness to Learn programs and the Boys & Girls Clubs).

Only two of the agencies said that they don't supply any transportation service or subsidy.

**Table 4. Which of the following kinds of transportation or related services and subsidies did your organization provide to your clients in 2012?**

	n	%
Information about transportation services	21	68
Bus tokens/coupons/money for bus trips (single ride or more limited than a monthly bus pass)	18	58
Coaching and training about how to use transportation services	18	58
Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by your own organization	14	45
Monthly bus passes	14	45
Rides in an employee or volunteer's personal car	13	42
Cash/vouchers/reimbursement for gas	13	42
Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by another organization, company, or partnering agency	7	23
Cash/vouchers/reimbursement for car repairs	5	16
Money for parking	4	13
Some other transportation service or subsidy	1	3
None of these	2	6

n=31

Agencies were asked to estimate the number of clients that received these services and subsidies. On average the agencies estimated that they provided services and subsidies to 261 clients, 46% of their total client base.

### **Agency transportation costs**

Agencies were asked how much they spent on transportation services or subsidies. Table 5 (below) shows how many agencies provided each particular service, plus the number who provided data about the cost of that service, and the total amount spent by those agencies on that service in that one year period. These services are ranked by the total cost. School district transportation was considered separately.

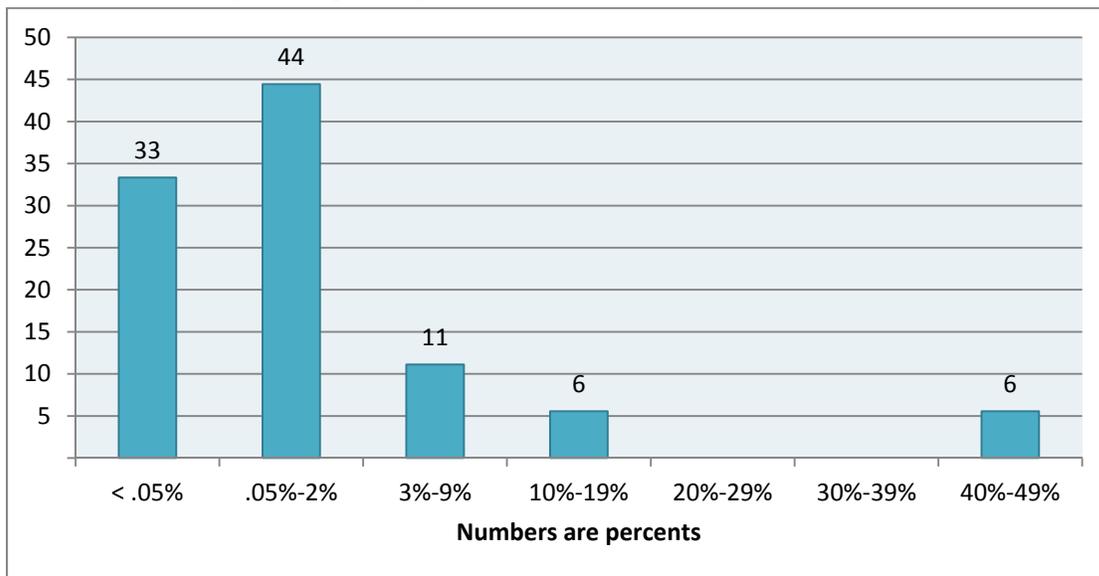
Agencies spent the most on rides owned by another organization. This was primarily due to Medicaid Transport. While the most frequent service/subsidy was bus tokens, this was among the least expensive of the services provided compared to rides, cash for gas, and monthly bus passes. This is due in part to the fact that WTA donates a limited number of bus tokens to Whatcom County agencies each year, so while it may be a frequent subsidy an agency provides, it doesn't necessarily come out of the agency budget.

<b>Table 5. How much did your agency spend on this service/subsidy for clients living in Whatcom County in that one year period</b>			
	Count of agencies that provided service or subsidy	Count of agencies providing cost data of that service or subsidy	Total Cost
Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by another organization, company, or partnering agency	7	4	\$1,314,909
Cash/vouchers/reimbursement for gas	5	7	\$ 266,707
Monthly bus passes	14	7	\$ 139,771
Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by your own organization	14	6	\$ 43,290
Rides in an employee or volunteer's personal car	13	8	\$ 17,303
Cash/vouchers/reimbursement for car repairs	13	4	\$ 3,030
Bus tokens/coupons/money for bus trips	18	11	\$ 2,221
Money for parking	4	3	\$ 914
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>\$1,788,145</b>

\*note: the cost of providing services and subsidies may include staff time and administrative processes required to manage the services.

Agencies were asked how much those costs represent of their overall budget. Figure 3 (below) shows that most organizations said that the amount they spend on transportation is less than two percent (67%). One organization spent 40% of their budget on transportation (Medicaid Transport).

**Figure 3. What proportion did that represent of your total operating budget for Whatcom County during that year?**



n=18

### Other transportation related costs

Agencies were also asked to consider the costs associated with any transportation used to deliver services to clients at home, through mobile services, or at a second facility. Eleven agencies provided totals for this, amounting to \$139,805.

Four agencies said that they rely on volunteers to provide some transportation services or subsidies, ranging from one volunteer up to 19. They estimated a total of 3,180 hours of time spent providing services or subsidies. Using the national value of volunteer time<sup>5</sup> analysis estimates an additional value of \$70,405.20.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time)

### Total transportation related costs

Table 6 (below) shows that the estimated total cost of transportation services to human service clients in Whatcom County approaches two million dollars.

<b>Table 6. Estimated total human service transportation costs</b>	
Direct costs of transporting human service clients	\$1,788,145
Costs associated with delivering services to clients at home, mobile services, and/or services at another facility	\$139,805
Volunteer time associated with transportation	\$70,405
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,998,355</b>

### Agency mileage

Agencies were asked how many miles they traveled to transport clients, either in their own vehicle or a vehicle operated by another organization, volunteer or employee vehicles, or through mobile or home visits. All together 18 agencies reported some sort of mileage, totaling just over one million miles in 2012. The vast majority of these miles came from agencies transporting clients through another organization (primarily Medicaid transport).

<b>Table 7. Miles traveled in 2012</b>		
	n	Total miles
Agency owned vehicles	9	61,952
Vehicles owned and operated by another organization	5	906,500
Employee or volunteer vehicles	9	18,050
Staff miles in delivering services (home visits, mobile services, or services at another facility)	3	34,530
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1,021,032</b>

n=18

### Fleet information

Eight of the 31 responding agencies said the organization owned at least one vehicle (as noted above, school districts were analyzed separately). Table 8 (below) shows that these are primarily automobiles and vans that carry 8 to 15 adults.

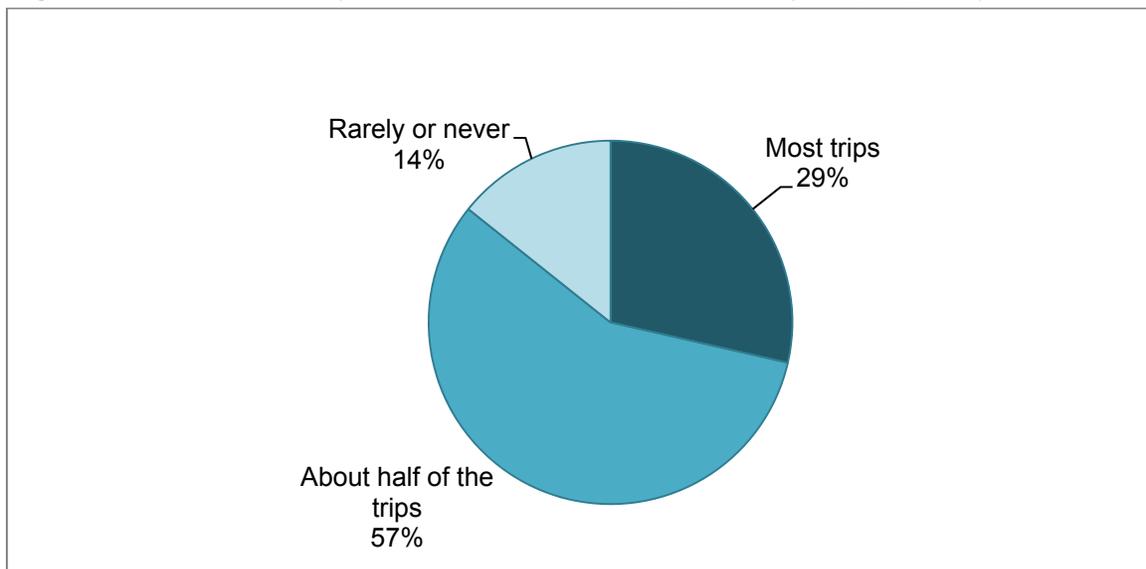
<b>Table 8. How many vehicles owned and operated</b>		
	# of organizations	# of vehicles
Vehicles with capacity for more than 25 people	0	0
Vans or other large vehicles with a capacity of 8-15 adults)	6	8
Minibus or van with a capacity of 16-25 people	1	1
Automobiles (sedans, station wagons, SUVs) with a capacity of 4-6 adults, including driver	4	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 8 (above) does not include the Readiness to Learn programs at each of the districts because the buses are not dedicated to the Readiness to Learn programs.

### Capacity

Agencies were asked to estimate how often their vehicles run at full (or nearly full) capacity. Figure 4 (below) shows that 29% of the agencies who operate their own vehicles said that they are running at full capacity on most trips.

**Figure 4. How often do your vehicles run at full (or nearly full) capacity?**



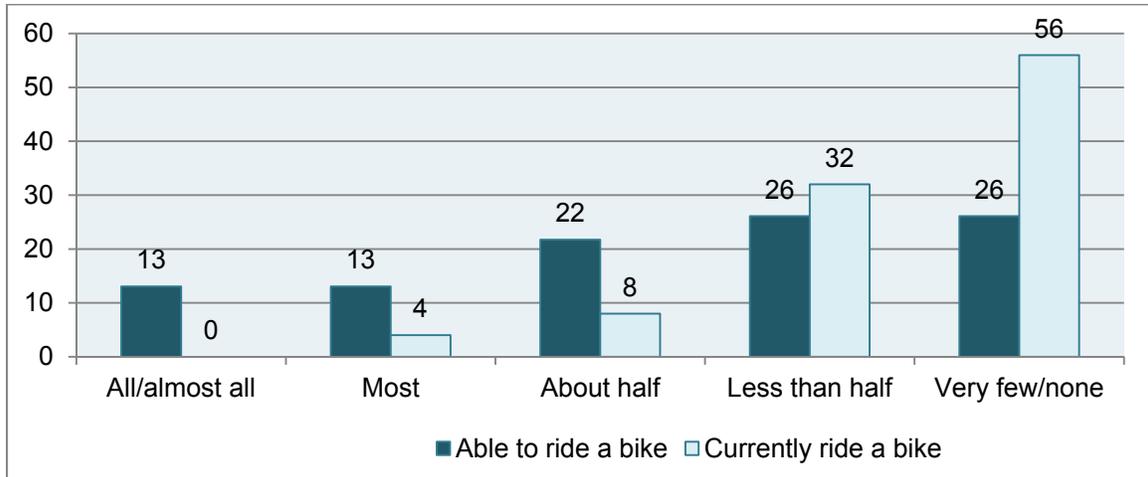
n=7

Among the 7 organizations who operate their own vehicles, just over half (4) said it is a goal for their organization to run the vehicles at full or nearly full capacity.

**Non-motor transport**

Respondents were asked to estimate how many of their clients currently ride a bike or walk to get to some of the places they need to go. They were also asked to estimate how many have the capability of walking or riding a bike. Figure 5 (below) shows that 26% of the agencies said that *most* or *all* of their clients are capable of riding a bike; 4% said *most* of their clients currently ride a bike to get some of the places they need to go.

**Figure 5. Biking capabilities and prevalence**

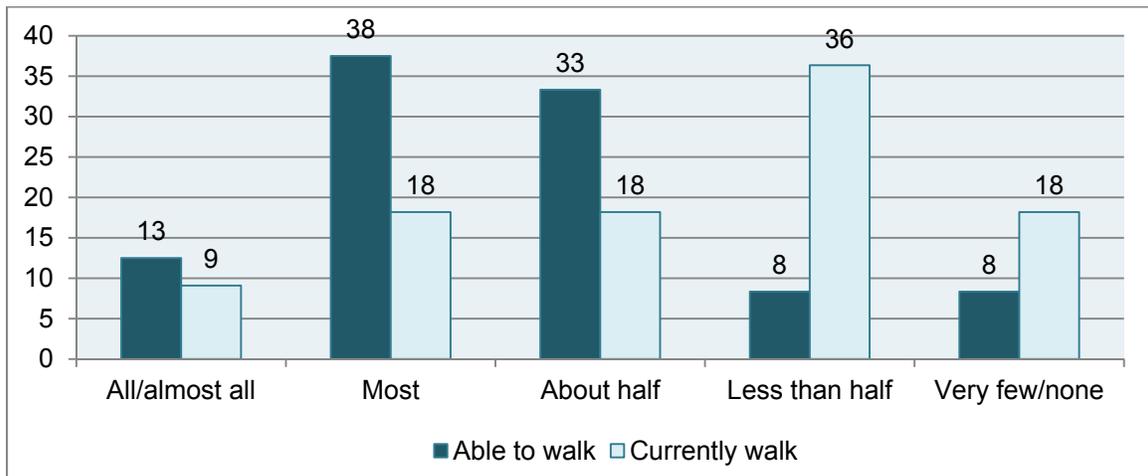


n=23

Note: Roughly 25% said they *didn't know* and are not included in the graphic

Just over half (51%) of agencies said that *most* or *all* of their clients are capable of using walking as a method to get places; 27% said that *most* or *all* do walk to get some of the places they need to go.

**Figure 6. Walking capabilities and prevalence**



n=22

Note: Roughly 25% said they *didn't know* and are not included in the graphic

### **Part three: School district transportation**

Six of the seven Whatcom County school districts provided figures regarding their transportation resources; estimates were calculated on the remaining district's behalf. When totaled together, it is estimated that 11,311 youth received transportation services in 2012, which is approximately 44% of all students enrolled in the districts. The districts have a total of 230 vehicles that travelled 2.7 million miles in the 2011-2012 school year. That service cost was just over ten million dollars, which was an average of 5% of the overall school districts' combined budgets.

**Table 9. Whatcom County School District Transportation**

Number of students served	11,311
Student enrollment	26,587
Proportion of enrolled students	44%
Number of miles travelled by district vehicles	2,748,550
Cost of service	\$ 10,206,611
Proportion of operating budget	5%
Number of vehicles	230

Note: Mean scores of the six reporting districts were used to estimate the remaining district's figures

### **Public transportation**

Figures from public transportation were combined in Table 10. WTA and Lummi transit traveled nearly 2.7 million miles at the cost of nearly 15.5 million dollars.

**Table 10. Whatcom County Public Transportation (WTA and Lummi)**

Trips/fares	5,173,469
Estimated number of riders	28,478*
Vehicle miles traveled	2,670,982
Cost for Services	\$ 15,415,000
Number of vehicles in use	76

\*estimated number of riders may include duplication

**Part four: Total miles traveled and dollars spent**

Analysis totaled the number of miles and the costs reported by transit, school districts and human service agencies. Figure 7 (below) shows that nearly half (43%) of the total miles traveled was reported by school districts (chart data shown in thousands). Medicaid transport provided 13% of the miles (and 6% of transportation dollars).

**Figure 7. Proportion of total miles and costs by transportation provider**

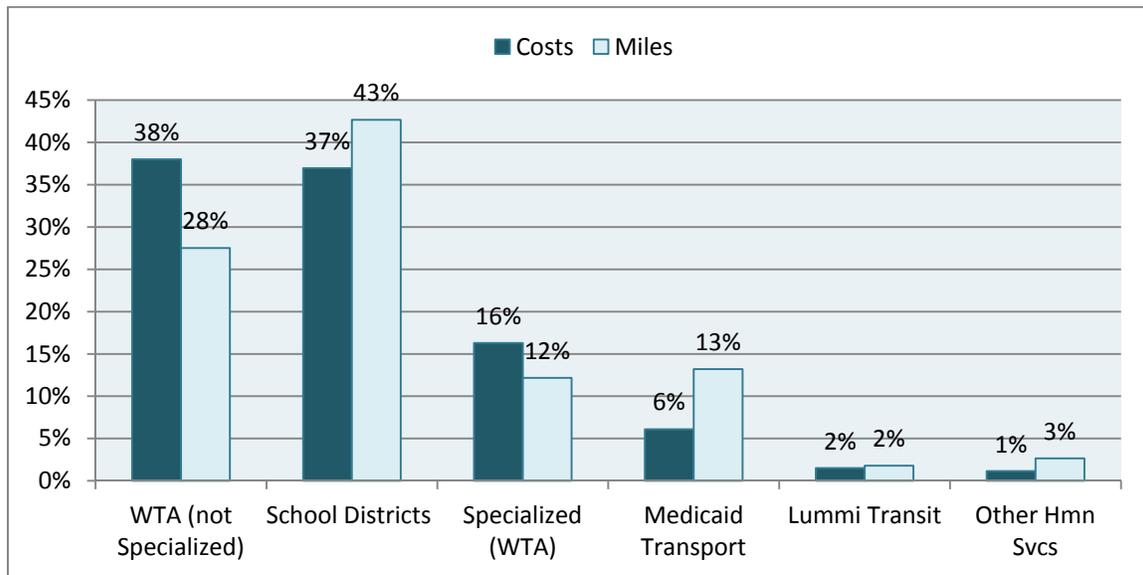
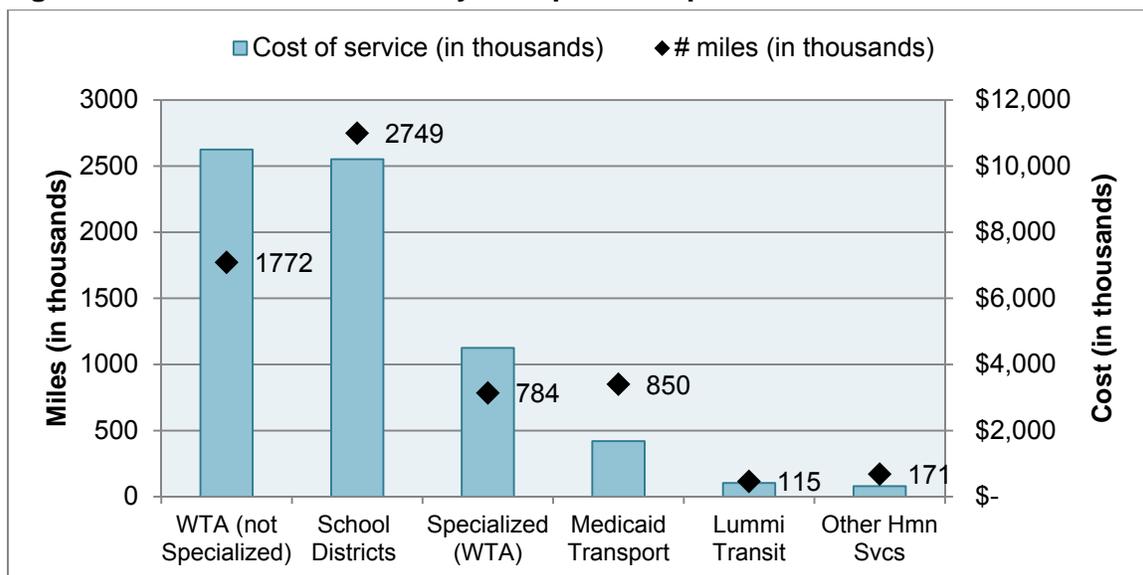


Figure 8 (below) shows the same data as Figure 7 but it displays the actual cost against the actual miles traveled.

**Figure 8. Total miles and costs by transportation provider**



**Summary of key findings:**

- Human service agencies believe that transportation issues pose a serious problem to their current clients' ability to access their services. They also believe that there are substantial numbers who are not being served at all because of transportation.
- Agencies are sharing some of the burden. Half of the agencies surveyed are providing some form of transportation, in addition to information and coaching around transportation and providing some subsidies, typically in the form of bus tokens.
- Typically, agencies estimate that transportation is less than 3% of their overall budget.
- Medicaid transit comprises the vast majority of the human service transportation story.
- Aside from Medicaid transit, the majority of trips that are provided by human service agencies happen with youth and in busses.
- Aside from Medicaid transport, the next largest public provider was school districts, which are responsible for about six million miles, or about half of the publicly-provided transportation miles travelled in Whatcom County.

## DISCUSSION

People with special needs including low income, disabled, elderly and the very young, have much to contend with in meeting their own needs. Inadequate income tops the list of culprits in producing these challenges, with car ownership being relatively low and the cost of operating and maintaining a car a high hurdle to reach for many of them.

Public transportation for these vulnerable residents takes the form of school buses, transit services, specialized transit and Medicaid-funded transportation. More than six million miles were traveled last year by vehicles providing publicly-funded services in Whatcom County. Nevertheless, one in four clients of human service agencies was unable to reach services due to transportation barriers in the past year.

Fixed routes, service times and proscriptive service conditions (such as requiring several days' notice for pick up or requiring trips be used only for medical services) all contribute barriers people experience in using public transportation options. These populations need more flexible services that will enable them to get to places they need to go from the places they live when they need to be there.

Human service agencies provided very little if any support for the transportation needs of their clients. While access to services is vital, often these organizations must focus on their core services and cannot also support access via transportation subsidies or services.

These high-need populations are familiar with and using alternatives to cars at a substantially higher rate than the broader community. They are more willing to walk, bike or bus to their locations if they are able to do so. In particular, younger folks (under 40), males, single folks, and those with the lowest incomes were disproportionately represented among those using non-car methods for getting where they needed to go.

Walking is the most accessible means of getting from place to place when destinations are within one mile, and it was often used by the broader community as well. Barriers to walking included infrastructure and distance. To alleviate these barriers, attention to urban planning so more people can live within walking distance of essential services is important. These living spaces need to be affordable for the very low income and built to make walking easy and safe.

Bicycling was unique in that bike use is not as cost prohibitive as car use, so clients with bikes used them at an equal rate compared to those in the broader community. The key

discrepancy was that bike ownership is much less prevalent among human services clients and in fact, bike ownership is the primary barrier to riding a bike for these residents.

A substantial portion of people in the broader community were interested in driving less often to get where they needed to go. Motivations for getting out of their cars included improving their health, saving money and doing less harm to the natural environment. Any work done to remove barriers to walking, busing and biking will likely produce a response from a broad array of residents. Women were particularly likely to express an interest in driving less. Promoting non-car trips by noting that half of Whatcom County residents biked, walked or rode a bus in the past month can help create new norms about non-car trips.

One challenge frequently met by low income residents was the difficulty of getting to services from outlying areas. Bus services can be very limited or non-existent, and car ownership is often out of reach for many of them. Still, they choose to live in outlying areas because of the relatively lower rents charged. Given the costs of car ownership and driving, there should be a clearer calculus about the tradeoffs between lower rent and living close to key services. Using existing tools like walk scores for homes and neighborhoods could be valuable for communicating these tradeoffs. Developing a cost of transportation calculator for low-income residents would also be helpful.

For example, if someone is looking to rent a one-bedroom apartment that is eight miles from a center of employment, healthcare and human services, the cost of a round trip every day in a car would be approximately \$9.00.<sup>6</sup> Over the course of a month that would cost the renter \$279 on average in fuel, repairs, maintenance and insurance. If a one-bedroom apartment in the city cost \$660/month,<sup>7</sup> the rent on the more remote apartment would have to be \$381/month for the renter to break even on car costs over time.

Other costs and savings would need to be accounted for to be perfectly accurate, but this sort of calculation could help lower-income residents choose more accessible locations. Rent subsidies that promote living in more centralized areas could also turn into a savings overall when considering the costs of road maintenance and the consequences of people being unable to access vital human and health services.

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<sup>6</sup> Using 16 miles round trip and \$.56.5/mile IRS mileage reimbursement rate for businesses. Actual costs for people with special needs may be higher if their vehicles are less efficient or more often needing repairs.

<sup>7</sup> Average rent for 98225 zip code according to [average-rent.findthedata.org](http://average-rent.findthedata.org).



## APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY SURVEY CALL SUMMARY

<b>Table A1. Call disposition summary</b>			
	TOTAL	LANDLINE SAMPLE	WIRELESS SAMPLE
<b>TOTAL SAMPLE</b>	<b>11,808</b>	<b>10,365</b>	<b>1,443</b>
UNRESOLVED (no answer, busy, callback)	6,984	5,908	1,076
BAD NUMBER	2,362	2,135	227
COMPLETES	401	349	52
REFUSALS	643	735	64
Response rate (completes/(total-bad numbers))	4%	4%	4%
INCIDENCE	74.10%	73.40%	79.10%

<b>Table 1. Community Survey demographics</b>		
	n	%
<b>Residence location</b>		
Within Bellingham city limits	200	50
<b>Education</b>		
High school diploma/GED/or less	84	21
Some college, no degree	146	36
College degree or more	171	43
<b>Household composition</b>		
Single person	92	23
Two people	171	43
Three or more people	138	34
Children in the household	114	28
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	199	50
<b>Age</b>		
Age <40	100	25
Age 65+	122	30
<b>Race and ethnicity*</b>		
White	357	89
Hispanic	10	2
Native American/Alaskan Native	14	3

Other	21	5
Refused	10	3
Language typically spoken at home		
English	384	96
Spanish	2	0.5
Average estimated monthly household income		
<\$1,500	47	12
\$1,500-2,500	63	16
\$2,500-\$6,000	149	38
>\$6,000	73	18
Unknown	69	17

\*multiple responses. Rounding errors may produce columns with more than 100%

## APPENDIX B: KEY INFORMANT STUDY - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Full report available under separate cover.

### *Population*

Ten of the twelve interviews were with human service agencies and the remaining two were with transportation agencies that recognize special needs populations as a significant portion of their customers. The human service agencies that were interviewed serve a broad and diverse portion of Whatcom County residents. Six of the ten agencies serve their clients primarily because they are low income. Three specifically serve children, two have seniors as a focus, and one serves only veterans, but even these who have a designated population overlap substantially with the category of low income.

### *Transportation as a barrier to human services*

Several interviews mentioned that populations with special needs are often living with more than one challenge, primarily disabilities, mental health, and low income. Several interviews mentioned that these most vulnerable populations are people living in crisis and chaos with complicated and sometimes competing needs. Unfortunately, while some human service offerings are critical to improving outcomes they are also often a secondary priority and therefore more likely to be skipped when transportation is a challenge.

### *Driving*

Interviews revealed that the biggest barrier that special needs populations face regarding driving is the cost. In addition to the costs of maintaining and insuring the vehicle, gas is expensive. There are also some niche groups who can't drive due to cognitive limitations, disabilities and legal reasons which prevent them from having a driver's license.

### *Bus*

Public transportation works well for those who live close to services, which are mostly located in central Bellingham. Interviews revealed that the challenges get greater and greater the farther the population lives from Bellingham. These individuals struggle with the cost of the bus fare, the schedule, inconvenient routes, the locations of bus stops being too far from their homes, and the length of time it takes to travel the distance from outlying areas to their destinations.

Several informants pointed out that many of the populations with special needs don't live in Bellingham where the bulk of the social services exist. They tend to live where the rent is lower, which means outlying areas where transportation challenges are the most complicated.

WTA's Specialized Transit is very supportive of clients; service agencies are thankful for that alternative to fixed route services. However, it is still a challenge to work with the scheduling limitations and it doesn't serve those populations who live outside of the service areas.

### ***Bike***

Informants provided mixed reviews about bicycles as a solution to special needs populations' transportation difficulties. While some communicated an enthusiasm for this affordable alternative, most reported that biking is just not a practical solution for many. The primary reasons cited were that families travel as a group with children, many clients are not physically or mentally capable of using a bike for transportation, the distance is too far, and that it just isn't a part of the culture or lifestyle.

Several interviewers did note that the few clients that they are aware of that use a bike for transportation tend to be able bodied males, often traveling solo.

### ***Transportation and subsidies***

Six of the twelve agencies interviewed own or contract vehicles to provide transportation; this is a major component of their services. These include public transportation, taxis, three agencies that provide rides to access healthcare services for eligible riders, and one transports displaced students to school. Two more provide some form of transportation, but it is fairly minimal in the scope of what they offer (rides in staff vehicles).

Five of the twelve agencies regularly provide some sort of transportation subsidy to their clients (typically bus tokens, passes or gas vouchers). Some of these are agencies that apply for tokens from WTA so the cost is not absorbed by their own agency but by WTA. Some agencies purchase tokens and passes out of their own budget to distribute. Several organizations commented on how tokens are in demand; there are not enough "free" tokens to go around to all who need them.

Several agencies mentioned bringing services to the client instead of having the client travel to reach the services. In some cases these were strategic changes to their service delivery with the intention of overcoming the transportation barrier; in other cases

the motivator did not involve transportation issues, but in either case agencies mentioned that this can be a successful approach to reaching special needs populations.

## APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

Screen for age, sex and Bellingham resident/non-Bellingham resident first.

We are talking to people today about transportation in Whatcom County.

1. What is the zip code of your home?

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98220 Acme       | <input type="checkbox"/> 98240 Custer       | <input type="checkbox"/> 98247 Nooksack                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98226 Bakerview  | <input type="checkbox"/> 98244 Deming       | <input type="checkbox"/> 98276 Nooksack                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98225 Bellingham | <input type="checkbox"/> 98247 Everson      | <input type="checkbox"/> 98244 Nooksack Indian Reservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98226 Bellingham | <input type="checkbox"/> 98276 Everson      | <input type="checkbox"/> 98248 Pleasant Valley             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98227 Bellingham | <input type="checkbox"/> 98225 Fairhaven    | <input type="checkbox"/> 98281 Point Roberts               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98228 Bellingham | <input type="checkbox"/> 98248 Ferndale     | <input type="checkbox"/> 98220 Saxon                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98229 Bellingham | <input type="checkbox"/> 98244 Glacier      | <input type="checkbox"/> 98226 Silver Beach                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98230 Birch Bay  | <input type="checkbox"/> 98244 Kendall      | <input type="checkbox"/> 98247 Strandell                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98230 Blaine     | <input type="checkbox"/> 98262 Lummi Island | <input type="checkbox"/> 98295 Sumas                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98231 Blaine     | <input type="checkbox"/> 98264 Lynden       | <input type="checkbox"/> 98247 Van Buren                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98225 Chuckanut  | <input type="checkbox"/> 98266 Maple Falls  | <input type="checkbox"/> 98244 Welcome                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 98295 Clearbrook | <input type="checkbox"/> 98225 Marietta     |  |

2. Although most transportation funding goes to maintaining roads, some transportation funding can be put towards infrastructure other than roads. If funding were available, how important would it be to spend it on [randomize order of presentation a-d]

- Increasing the capacity of roads or widening the roads in your area?
- Adding bicycle lanes or trails in your area,
- Adding sidewalks, crosswalks or walking trails in your area,
- Increasing bus service to your area?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

3. If funding were available, which of those four things would you prefer that it was spent on:  
[SELECT ONE]
- Increasing the capacity of roads or widening the roads in your area
  - Adding bicycle lanes or trails in your area,
  - Adding sidewalks, crosswalks or walking trails in your area,
  - Increasing bus service to your area?

### Cars

---

4. Do you currently own a car?

- Yes
- No

(If Yes to Q4) I'm going to read you a list of problems people sometimes have with their cars. For each one please tell me if you have had that problem in the past year. The first one is...

5. The cost of car insurance. Was that a problem for you in the past year?

- Yes
- No

6. (if yes) Did it keep you from driving at all in the past year?

- Yes
- No

7. What about a lack of driver's license. Was that a problem for you in the past year?

- Yes
- No

8. (if yes) Did it keep you from driving at all in the past year?

- Yes
- No

9. What about the cost of gas. Was that a problem for you in the past year?

- Yes
- No

10. (if yes) Did it keep you from driving at all in the past year? [Interviewer note: If they said they drove less, or changed their route – did anything that put less miles on their car because of the cost of gas, choose "Yes" for this question]

- Yes
- No

11. What about the cost of car repairs. Was that a problem for you in the past year?
- Yes
  - No
12. (if yes) Did it keep you from driving at all in the past year?
- Yes
  - No
13. (ALL) In the past year, how often did you use a car – that is your car or anyone else’s car - to get places that you needed to go? Would you say you used a car...
- Every time you needed to go some place
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Rarely, or
  - Never or almost never

---

**Bus**

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14. In the past year, how often did you use the bus to get places you needed to go? (Interviewer note: Any bus for any purpose, including WTA, Bellair, Charter bus, etc.)
- Every time you needed to go some place
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Rarely
  - Never or almost never
15. (If less than Most of the time) What keeps you from using the bus more often? [DON'T READ LIST, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY] (Interviewer note: If they say it is not convenient, probe for why)
- Prefer to use car
  - Service issues: schedule or route doesn't go where or when needed, takes too long
  - Don't like the other people on the bus (drivers or passengers, for any reason)
  - A personal physical, emotional or mental health reason
  - Unfamiliar/confusing – doesn't know much about the bus or bus system
  - Needs to travel with children, carry equipment or bulky items
  - Prefer to walk or ride a bike
  - Other (specify)

16. How familiar are you with how to ride the bus? Would you say you are...

- Extremely familiar
- Very familiar
- Somewhat
- Not very, or
- Not at all familiar

---

**Bike**

17. I have some questions about bicycles. Are you physically able to ride a bike for about 10 minutes in favorable weather and on level terrain?

- Yes
- No

18. In the past year did you ever use a bicycle strictly for exercise or recreation?

- Yes
- No

19. In the past year, how often did you use a bike for transportation, that is to get to places you needed to go? Would you say...

- Every time you needed to go some place
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

20. Do you own a bicycle?

- Yes
- No

21. [ask If rode a bike less than “most of the time” to get places Q19] What keeps you from riding a bike more often to get where you need to go?

- Lack of Infrastructure: not safe to ride on the roads, not enough safe bike lanes, narrow roads, lack of bike paths, bike racks (for parking and on buses), secure bike racks
- Physical concerns: Fitness level, injury, disability, health problem
- Nature: Bad weather, bad terrain (e.g. hills)
- Proximity: Live too far away
- Need a bike: Can't afford one, need better access to shared bike
- Not enough Motivation or Time, Don't want to go alone
- Lack of knowledge/education: Don't know what to do, how to get places, need information of some kind
- Need Equipment: Helmets, tire pump, seat cushions, different style bike, kid trailer/seat, tires, safety lights, bike locks
- Need Maintenance, repairs (subsidized or not)
- I don't want to/don't like bicycling/it's just not how I get around
- Other Some other reason\_\_\_\_\_

22. [Ask of all] What would help you ride a bike more often to get places you need to go? [DO NOT READ, PROBE FOR BEST FIT, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY, If respondent says “Better weather” or anything related to changing the weather, do not record, but ask “What else would help you ride a bike more often?”]

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure: Better/safer bike lanes, wider roads, more bike paths, more bike racks (for parking and on buses), secure bike racks, community bike share/rental | <input type="checkbox"/> Better physical condition/be healthier or stronger   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bike Education/information: About maintenance, riding safety, journey planning  | <input type="checkbox"/> Proximity: Live closer to where I need to go         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment: Helmets, tire pump, seat cushions, different style bike, kid trailer/seat, tires, safety lights, bike locks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Having a bike or access to shared bike               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance, repairs (subsidized or not)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Motivation, Planning for it, having a Bike buddy     |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPLICABLE: I don't want to/don't like bicycling |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Some other reason (Specify)                    |

23. (Skip if never used a bike to get around q19) When you bike ride on roads with car traffic how confident do you feel that drivers can share the road with you safely?

- Extremely confident
- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident

24. (Skip if never used a bike to get around q19) When you bike ride on roads with car traffic how confident do you feel that you know how to share the road with cars safely?

- Extremely confident
- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident

25. (Skip if never used a car to get around q13) When you are driving and you see a bicyclist on the road, how confident do you feel that the bicyclist knows how to share the road with you safely?

- Extremely confident
- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident

26. (Skip if never used a car to get around q13) When you are driving and you see a bicyclist on the road, how confident do you feel that you know how to share the road with bikes safely?

- Extremely confident
- Very confident
- Somewhat confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident

**Walk**

---

27. Next I have some questions about walking. Are you physically able to walk a mile or more – that is, for about 20 minutes, or to make two, 10-minute walking trips? Y / N

28. In the past year, how often did you walk to get places you needed to go?

- Every time you needed to go some place
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

29. What keeps you from walking more often to get places you need to go?

- Infrastructure: Need More trails, sidewalks, routes, unsafe,
- Health issues: Can't walk, fitness level
- Equipment: Need shoes, rain jackets
- Proximity: too far, takes too long
- Motivation: don't plan it, choose it
- Weather
- Other (Specify)

30. What would help you walk more often when you need to get places? [DO NOT READ, PROBE FOR BEST FIT, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY If respondent says "Better weather" or anything related to changing the weather, do not record, but ask "What else would help you walk more often?"]

- Infrastructure: More trails, sidewalks, routes, improved safety BENCHES, MAPS, SIGNS
- Improved health, injury healing, better fitness level
- Equipment: Subsidy for shoes, rain jackets
- Proximity: Live closer to stores/services, stores located close together
- Motivation: better planning, Walking buddy, pet
- Other (Specify)

---

31. Some people say that they would like to use a car less often and use other forms of transportation, like walking, biking or riding the bus more often. Is that true for you?

- Yes
- No

(If yes) I'm going to read you three reasons that people say they would like to use a car less often. For each reason, please tell me if it is a major reason, a minor reason or not a reason you would like to rely on cars less often. The first one is...*randomize order*

32. I am concerned about the environmental impact of cars

33. I would save money if I used a car less

34. I would improve my health if I used a car less

35. Are there any other major reasons you would like to rely on cars less?

Yes → specify

No

36. In the last month, have you made any trips without a car? In other words, has there been a time in the last month that you took the bus, walked or rode a bike to get somewhere you needed to go?

Yes

No

37. (If Yes) In the last month, how many times did you take the bus, walk or ride a bike to get somewhere you needed to go? \_\_\_\_\_ times [Interviewer note: This is for any reason, any trip of any distance, even if they wouldn't have used a car to do it]

*Programming note – if they say “no” to question 36, impute a zero for question 37 – ask 38 of everyone.*

38. So you made \_\_\_ trips without a car in the last month. Do you think that is more, less, or about the same as other people in your area? [Interviewer note: clarify for “somewhat” and “much” if they choose “more” or “less.” If they want to know what is meant by area, “neighborhood where you live” is an okay clarification]

Much more

Somewhat more

About the same

Somewhat less

Much Less

I just have a few more questions so we can describe the people who responded to our survey.

39. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

Less than high school diploma

Two-year degree

High school graduate

Four-year degree

GED or high school equivalency

Graduate degree (MS, MA, PhD, JD, MD, etc.)

Vocational or trade school

Some college (or still in college)

40. Including yourself, how many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_
41. (if more than 1) Are any of those people children under the age of 18? Y / N
42. Your sex? \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_Female \_\_\_Transgender
43. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD
44. Which best describes your race and ethnicity? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
- African American or Black
  - Asian
  - Caucasian or White
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Native American or Alaskan Native
  - Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander
  - Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
45. What language do you usually speak in your home? (CHECK ONLY ONE)
- English
  - Spanish
  - Russian or Ukrainian
  - Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
46. In the last 12 months, was your average estimated total MONTHLY household income from all sources
- Less than \$1500
  - Between \$1500 and \$2500
  - Between \$2500 and \$4,000
  - Between \$4,000 and \$6,000
  - More than \$6,000

## HUMAN SERVICES CLIENT SURVEY

For interviewer:

- I just want you to know that your participation in this is voluntary and you don't have to answer any question you don't want to
- All your answers are anonymous – we won't collect any identifying information from you like your name or address
- We're not going to share your answers with anyone else. Your answers will be grouped together with all the others' responses so no one will know what you said.
- Your participation won't have any effect on your treatment or services here.

Interviewer Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

47. How did you get to < Service Location> today? (Select all that apply)

- Drove myself in a car I own
- Drove myself in someone else's car
- Was driven by someone else/was a passenger in someone else's car
- Bicycle
- Walked ⇒ b. How far? (Estimate in miles) \_\_\_\_\_
- Taxi ⇒c. Did you have to pay for it yourself? Y / N ⇒ d. (If No) Medicaid? Y / N
- Bus ⇒e. Specialized / Fixed / Flex / Safety net
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

48. How close do you live to this service agency?

- Within 1 mile       1-5 miles       6-10 miles       More than 10 miles

49. Is that...

- In the Bellingham city limits?       Outside of Bellingham

50. Did you come here from your home today? Y / N

51. (If No) How far did you travel to get here today? (Estimate in miles) \_\_\_\_\_

- Less than 1 mile
- 1-5 miles
- 6-10 miles
- More than 10 miles

52. Did anyone come with you? Y / N ⇒ b. #Children \_\_\_\_\_ c. #Adults \_\_\_\_\_

### Getting to this location

---

53. In the past year, has there ever been a time that you tried to get here but were unable to? Y / N

54. (If Yes) How many times did that happen in the last year because of transportation?  
(number of times)\_\_\_\_\_

55. What kind of transportation problems kept you from coming here?

### Cars

---

56. Do you currently own a car? Y / N

57. (If Yes) :

Have any of the following been a problem for you in the past year? (Read all and select all that apply)

Which of those, if any, kept you from using your car at any point in the past year?

	Problem	Kept from driving
The cost of car insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of driver's license	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The cost of gas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The cost of car repairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

58. Did you have any other problems that kept you from using your car?

59. In the past year, how often did you use a car (yours or anyone else's) to get places that you needed to go? Would you say...

- Every time you needed to go some place
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

**Bus**

---

60. In the past year, how often did you use the bus to get places you needed to go?
- Every time you needed to go some place
  - Most of the time
  - Some of the time
  - Rarely
  - Never or almost never
61. (If less than Most of the time) What keeps you from using the bus more often? (Don't read aloud, select all that apply)
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to use car                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Bus times or days don't work for me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No service where I am going to/coming from | <input type="checkbox"/> It takes too long                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No bus stop close to home                  | <input type="checkbox"/> The cost of bus fare                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A physical or mental disability            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                         |
62. How familiar are you with how to ride the bus? Would you say you are...
- Extremely familiar
  - Very familiar
  - Somewhat
  - Not very, or
  - Not at all familiar
63. If you needed information about how to use the bus, how easy or difficult do you think it would be to get that information? Would you say it would be...
- Very easy
  - Somewhat easy
  - Somewhat difficult
  - Very difficult
  - Don't know
64. We would like to know how you feel about riding the bus aside from the schedule and the route. Would you say....
- you really like riding on the bus
  - you sort of like riding on the bus
  - you dislike riding on the bus

65. (if “sort of” or “dislike”) What don’t you like about it?

### **Bike**

---

66. In the past year, how often did you use a bike to get places you needed to go?

- Every time you needed to go some place
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

67. Do you own a bicycle? Y / N

68. (If sometimes/rarely/never to Q20) What keeps you from using a bike more often?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Takes too long   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don’t know the logistics of using a bike for transportation (rules of the road, bike safety, how to secure a bike, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too far to ride (distance)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> A physical or mental disability  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to travel with children                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> It isn’t a part of their culture/lifestyle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to travel with other individuals/companions               | <input type="checkbox"/> The weather  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to transport belongings, groceries or equipment with them | <input type="checkbox"/> The traffic  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hills/terrain  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can’t afford a bike  | <input type="checkbox"/> Some other reason: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don’t have a bike  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don’t know how to ride a bike                                  |   |

69. Do you have any suggestions for things that would help you ride a bike more often?

### **Walk**

---

70. In the past year, how often did you walk to get places you needed to go?

- Every time you needed to go some place
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never or almost never

71. (If sometimes/rarely/never to Q24) Are you able to walk a mile or more – that is, for about 20 minutes, or to make two, 10-minute walking trips? Y / N

72. (If sometimes/rarely/never to Q24) What keeps you from walking more often when you need to get places? (Don't read aloud, select all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Takes too long   | <input type="checkbox"/> A physical or mental disability            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too far to walk (distance)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> It isn't a part of their culture/lifestyle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to travel with children                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> The weather                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to travel with other individuals/companions               | <input type="checkbox"/> The traffic                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to transport belongings, groceries or equipment with them | <input type="checkbox"/> Hills/terrain                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Some other reason: _____                   |

73. Do you have any suggestions for things that would help you walk more often when you need to get places?

74. How much, if at all, has a lack of trails, sidewalks or benches kept you from walking when you need to get places?

- Often                       Sometimes                       Rarely or never

### Demographics

---

75. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school diploma      | <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year degree                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate               | <input type="checkbox"/> Four-year degree                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GED or high school equivalency     | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate degree (MS, MA, PhD, JD, MD, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational or trade school         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college (or still in college) |  |

76. Including yourself, how many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

77. (if more than 1) Are any of those people children under the age of 18? Y / N

78. Do you, or does anyone in your household, have a physical, mental, or emotional condition that has lasted 6 months or more? Y / N

79. Do you, or does anyone in your household, receive disability benefits? Y / N

80. Are you a student? Y / N

81. Your sex? \_\_\_ Male    \_\_\_Female    \_\_\_Transgender

82. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD

83. Which best describes your race and ethnicity? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American or Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American or Alaskan Native  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian or White        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino        | (Specify) _____   |

84. What language do you usually speak in your home? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Russian or Ukrainian |  |

85. Have you or anyone in your home served in the military?

- |                              |                             |                                     |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|

86. In the last 12 months, what was your average estimated total MONTHLY household income from all sources?

- Under \$500
- \$500-\$999
- \$1000-1499
- \$1500-1999
- \$2000-2499
- \$2500-2999
- \$3000-3499
- \$3500-3999
- \$4000 or more
- Don't know

## HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY SURVEY

Thank you for your participation in this online survey. As you know from our letter, the purpose of this project is to learn what people with special needs in Whatcom County need for transportation and what is currently available to them. Even if your organization doesn't offer any transportation services or subsidies, please take a few minutes to run through the survey and provide us with your input. We are hopeful that the results will help to advocate for your client population and our community in general.

We think you might find it helpful to review the survey questions in advance, especially if your agency offers transportation services. Examples of the kinds of data we are asking for include the types of transportation services and subsidies you offered last year, the number of clients who received those services and subsidies plus the associated mileage and costs.

Please click [here](#) to preview the survey; some organizations may find it helpful to print it out and consider your responses in advance as you may need to consult within your organization to provide the answers. Your final survey answers need to be submitted in one sitting. If you start and decide to come back later you will need to start again from the beginning.

If you have any questions, please call or email for assistance. You can reach us at 647-6067 and also at [arn@arnorthwest.com](mailto:arn@arnorthwest.com).

- Your agency or organization
- Your name and role in the organization:
- The best way to reach you if we have clarifying questions:

### Your Organization

For the purposes of our research we are talking about populations with special needs as "those individuals who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves".

1. Our organization serves:
  - Whatcom County only
  - Whatcom County plus other service areas, please list: \_\_\_\_\_

---

[Instruction for agencies serving more than Whatcom County] Throughout this survey, please respond to these questions for Whatcom County services only.

## Your Clients

2. Which of these populations typically use your services? (Select all that apply)

- Low income
- Homeless
- Have a physical disability
- Have serious health issues
- Have a mental or developmental disability
- Seniors
- Children/Youth
- Veterans
- Some other group, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which of these describes how your clients access your organization? (Select all that apply)

- Our clients receive services at our facility/facilities
- We deliver services to our clients at their home
- We deliver services at various locations using a mobile facility
- We deliver our services at another location or facility, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Transportation is our primary service (not at a specific location)
- We are primarily informational / referral / advocacy / coordination of services (service provided via phone, etc., not face to face)
- None of these, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

4. [if clients receive services at agency facility or another facility] We would like to know how far your clients live from your facility /facilities where they receive services. Approximately what proportion of your clients lives... (please enter the percent for each category)

- Within half a mile \_\_\_\_\_
- More than half a mile, but less than 5 miles \_\_\_\_\_
- 5-10 miles \_\_\_\_\_
- More than 10 miles \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Note: the totals should sum to 100%

- 
5. Think about the clients you currently serve and how problematic transportation issues are for their ability to fully utilize your services. For what proportion of your current clients would you say that transportation is a major barrier, a minor barrier, or not really a barrier? (please enter the percent for each category)
- Major barrier \_\_\_\_\_
  - Minor barrier \_\_\_\_\_
  - Not really a barrier \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't know \_\_\_\_\_

Note: the totals should sum to 100%

- 
6. [\[if clients receive services at agency facility or another facility in Q3\]](#) We have asked about transportation as a barrier to your current clients. We are also wondering about potential clients-- Are there people living in Whatcom County who are likely eligible for and would benefit from your services but do not use your services because they are unable to get to your facilities? Which of the following best describes the magnitude of this issue for your agency:
- Yes – our client base would increase substantially if transportation was readily available for anyone who wanted to use our services
  - Yes – our client base would increase slightly if transportation was readily available for anyone who wanted to use our services
  - No – transportation may be a challenge for our clients but it is not keeping our target population from reaching us
  - Don't know
7. Comment:

## Transportation services and subsidies offered

8. Which of the following kinds of transportation or related services and subsidies did your organization provide to your clients in 2012?

Note: if your organization uses a different calendar, please use the most recent completed fiscal year?

- Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by your own organization
- Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by another organization, company, or partnering agency
- Rides in an employee or volunteer's personal car
- Cash/vouchers/reimbursement for gas
- Cash/vouchers/reimbursement for car repairs
- Money for parking
- Monthly bus passes
- Bus tokens/coupons/money for bus trips (single ride or more limited than a monthly bus pass)
- Information about transportation services
- Coaching and training about how to use transportation services
- Some other transportation service or subsidy, please describe:
- None of these
- Don't know

Comments or clarifications:

## Client Use of Transportation Services

9. How many clients received transportation services or subsidies (like the ones you identified in question #8) through your organization in 2012 (or the last completed fiscal year)? If you don't know, please provide your best estimate and indicate in the comments if you need to clarify.

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of clients

10. [\[if more than 0\]](#) Approximately what proportion does that represent among all the clients that your organization serves?

\_\_\_\_\_ Percent of clients served

11. [\[if more than 0\]](#) For what kinds of destinations do your clients use your transportation services and/or subsidies?

- Our facility
- Other human service agency facilities
- Shopping
- Work
- Social events
- Medical appointments
- Home
- Other destinations, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

---

## Mileage

We would like to know how many miles your organization traveled.

12. [\[If "Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by our own organization" in Q8\]](#) How many miles did your agency owned vehicles travel to transport clients in 2012? If more than one vehicle, add the mileage to total one sum. If you don't know, please provide your best estimate and indicate in the comments if you need to clarify.

Enter number of miles: \_\_\_\_\_

13. [\[If "Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by another organization" in Q8\]](#) How many miles did your agency travel to transport clients in vehicles owned and operated by another organization in 2012? If more than one vehicle, add the mileage to total one sum. If you don't know, please provide your best estimate and indicate in the comments if you need to clarify.

Enter number of miles: \_\_\_\_\_

14. [If "Rides in a vehicle(s) owned by an employee or volunteer" in Q8] How many miles did your agency travel to transport clients in employee or volunteer vehicles in 2012? If more than one vehicle, add the mileage to total one sum. If you don't know, please provide your best estimate and indicate in the comments if you need to clarify.

Enter number of miles: \_\_\_\_\_

15. [If home visits, mobile services, or delivering services at another facility in Q3] How many miles did your staff drive in delivering services (home visits, mobile services, or services at another facility)? If you don't know, please provide your best estimate and indicate in the comments if you need to clarify.

Enter number of miles: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments or clarifications:

---

### **Cost/value of services provided**

16. [For each one selected in Q8, follow up with a and b below]

- a. You said that in 2012 (or the last completed fiscal year) your agency provided <insert each service selected in Q8>. How much did your agency spend on this service/subsidy for clients living in Whatcom County in that one year period? If you don't know, please provide your best estimate and indicate in the comments if you need to clarify. Enter dollar amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If the cost was donated to you from another organization, please don't include the value of that service

*[This note will show up for those serving more than Whatcom County in Q1] Please be sure that you are providing the dollar amount for Whatcom County clients only.*

Please use this space to comment or clarify your response as needed:

17. According to your responses, your agency spent <insert total dollar amount> on transportation and transportation subsidies for clients living in Whatcom County during that one year period. What proportion did that represent of your total operating budget for Whatcom County during that year? If you don't know, please provide your best guess.

*[This note will show up for those serving more than Whatcom County in Q1] Please consider the operating budget that serves Whatcom County clients only; If your service area is larger you can estimate the portion that serves Whatcom County based on what portion of your client base is from Whatcom County*

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### Mobile/delivered service cost

18. [If selected in Q3] You indicated that you deliver services to your clients at home, mobile services, and/or services at another facility. We would like to include the transportation component of these efforts. Please provide an estimate of the transportation costs for these services (mileage paid for private vehicle use or gas and vehicle maintenance if you use organization-owned vehicles to deliver these services). Enter dollar amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Note: Please don't include the costs of staff time associated with this transportation.

Comments or clarifications:

### Other costs

19. Are there any substantial costs for your organization related to transportation that we didn't mention?
- 

### Volunteers

20. Did any of the transportation services or subsidies you provided to your clients rely on volunteers?

- Yes  
 No

21. [if Yes] How many volunteers helped provide transportation services or subsidies in 2012 (or the last completed fiscal year)?

\_\_\_Volunteers

22. [if Yes] How many total volunteers hours were donated toward providing transportation services or subsidies in 2012 (or the last completed fiscal year)?

\_\_\_Volunteer hours

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### Fleet information

23. [If "Rides in a vehicle owned and operated by our own organization" in Q8] You said that in 2012 your agency provided rides in a vehicle owned and operated by your organization. How many of your vehicles, if any, are....

- a. Automobiles (sedans, station wagons, SUVs) with a capacity of 4-6 adults, including driver \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Vans or other large vehicles with a capacity of 8-15 adults, including driver) \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Minibus or van with a capacity of 16-25 people \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Vehicles with capacity for more than 25 people \_\_\_\_\_

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24. How often do your vehicles run at full (or nearly full) capacity?

- Every trip
- Most trips
- About half of the trips
- Less than half of the trips
- Rarely or never

25. Is it a goal for your organization to run the vehicles at full (or nearly full) capacity?

- Yes
- No

Comment:

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### **Bike riding**

26. How many of your clients currently ride a bike to get some of the places they need to go?

- All/almost all
- Most
- About half
- Less than half
- Very few/none
- Don't know

27. Whether they ride a bike or not, how many of your clients would be physically able to ride a bike for one mile in daylight on level terrain?

- All/almost all
- Most
- About half
- Less than half
- Very few/none
- Don't know

## Walking

28. How many of your clients currently walk a distance of a half a mile or more to get some of the places they need to go?
- All/almost all
  - Most
  - About half
  - Less than half
  - Very few/none
  - Don't know
29. How many of your clients are physically and cognitively able to walk a distance of a mile (to walk for about 20 minutes)?
- All/almost all
  - Most
  - About half
  - Less than half
  - Very few/none
  - Don't know
- 

Do you have any other comments or feedback you would like to tell us about that wasn't covered in the survey?

If you are interested in receiving email about the results of this study, please enter your email address to indicate you would like contact: \_\_\_\_\_

## END

Thank you for your assistance with this important project!

## TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER/SCHOOL DISTRICT SURVEY

### *Schools: Seven public school districts*

We will use the phone and email to gather the following data from each county school district:

1. How many students received transportation services in the 2011-2012 school year?
2. Approximately what proportion does that represent among all your students served?
3. How many miles did your vehicles travel in the 2011-2012 school year?
4. How much did it cost to provide that service?

5. What proportion did that represent of your total operating budget? (Total district budget)
6. How many vehicles were used?
7. Were these all standard school buses? If not, what else and what capacity?
8. We are aware of the Readiness to Learn program that sometimes provide transportation for individual students that need it to get to their home school. Are the miles and costs associated with that transportation included in your figures?
9. What are the miles and transportation costs associated with the Readiness to Learn program?

***Transportation Providers: WTA Specialized, WTA (all services other than Specialized-broken out by category if possible, i.e. Fixed, Safety Net, etc.), Lummi Transit, Yellow Cab***

We will use the phone and email to gather the following data (in some cases they will be estimates):

1. How many trips/legs/fares in 2012?
2. How many riders (unduplicated count or estimate) received transportation services in 2012?
3. How many miles did your vehicles travel in 2012?
4. How much did it cost to provide that service?
5. (For yellow cab only) Do you know or could you estimate the number of rides, riders, miles and/or costs associated with transporting riders on behalf of human service organizations? (i.e. the fares that are contracted through human service agencies)
6. How many vehicles were used?
7. Count of how many of each category of vehicle (e.g. car, van, bus).
8. Capacity?