Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan

2026 Update

For Whatcom Transportation Policy Board adoption Jan. 20, 2027

whatcom council of governments

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Información de la Ley sobre Esta dounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA)

Este material puede ser disponible en formato alternativo enviando un correo electrónico a Whatcom Council of Governments al espanol@wcog.org o llamando al número gratuito 360-676-6974. Las personas sordas o con dificultades auditivas pueden solicitarlo llamando a Washington State Relay al 833-6399 TTY/877-833-6398

1. Introduction

Every four years, the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) updates the region's Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). The plan assesses existing transportation options for people with special transportation needs, identifies gaps in the current system, and develops strategies to address those gaps.

Washington state law defines people with special transportation needs as "persons, including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation."[1]

This plan uses a broader term, "priority populations," which includes youth, senior adults, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and people with Limited English Proficiency.

Human services transportation serves people with special transportation needs — individuals who are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation because of a disability, income status, or age.

The challenges that transportation-disadvantaged people face are serious and affect many aspects of their lives. Getting to and from work on time, attending school, doctors' appointments, picking up groceries and prescriptions, meeting with friends and assistance providers – these are all basic transportation needs that can be an overwhelming obstacle for priority populations.

This plan hopes to address those obstacles by establishing projects that meet clearly defined goals and strategies that result in an improved transportation system for everyone.

In addition to the HSTP goals and strategies (in Chapter 7), the 2026 HSTP was developed concurrently with Whatcom Transport 2050: The 20-Year Regional & Metropolitan Transportation Plan, which forecasts transportation demand over the next 24 years and presents strategies to meet that demand in alignment with regional transportation goals. The goals from this plan have been incorporated here to highlight the region's most pressing needs. Correspondingly, this HSTP offers insights to be included in the larger regional planning effort.

The WA State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) also uses this plan to ensure funding requests to the state's Consolidated Grant program meet the region's special transportation priorities.

[1] *RCW 81.66.010: https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=81.66.010*

About the Regional Transportation Planning Organization

WCOG is the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Whatcom County, a Washington State designation created in 1990 as part of Washington's Growth Management Act. RTPOs work with WA State to develop regional transportation plans, maintain regional transportation improvement programs (TIPs), and support local planning efforts.

WCOG is also the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Whatcom County. This is a federal designation as part of 23 U.S. Code 134 for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000. With this designation, WCOG has access to federal transportation funding and is also required to follow a federally prescribed transportation planning process.

The 2026 HSTP update process

This final version of WCOG's HSTP includes comments submitted during the public comment period. This version will be submitted to WSDOT by December 1, 2026 and, upon approval, will go to the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board for adoption on January 20, 2027.

2. Definitions

The following terms and abbreviations are used in this plan:

ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CTAG	Whatcom Community Transportation Advisory Group
FPL	Federal Poverty Level
HSTP	Human Services Transportation Plan
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
POC	Person or People of Color
Priority Populations	Youth, senior adults, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and people with Limited English Proficiency
RTPO	Regional Transportation Planning Organization
RTS	2025 Whatcom Regional Transportation Study
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TNC	Transportation Network Company (i.e. Uber/Lyft)
TTAG	Transportation Technical Advisory Group
WCOG	Whatcom Council of Governments
WSDOT	WA State Department of Transportation
WTA	Whatcom Transportation Authority
WUEM	Whatcom Unified Emergency Management
WWU	Western Washington University

3. Outreach and public engagement

To better understand the successes, challenges, and needs faced by individuals with special transportation needs in Whatcom, WCOG developed a public engagement strategy using multiple inputs to gather feedback from a broad spectrum of community members. One-on-one interviews, group presentations, public events, and the collection of survey data were used to showcase successes and identify gaps in the regional transportation network, and to inform the plan's goals, strategies, and priorities.

Interviews

WCOG conducted interviews with staff of organizations that work daily with individuals with special transportation needs, as well as those individuals themselves to learn about their lived experience navigating transportation challenges.

Advisory groups

WCOG staff made presentations on the HSTP and provided opportunities for feedback with Whatcom's **Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG)**, and the **Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG)**.

CTAG is a forum for community input to decision making about transportation planning, construction, and operations. CTAG is jointly administered by WCOG and the Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA). CTAG membership is open to anyone age 16 or older who lives, works, or owns a business located in Whatcom County. In 2025 there were 53 members of CTAG, including seniors and individuals with disabilities. A report of CTAG participation by race is included in WCOG's annual Title VI reporting.

TTAG is an advisory group made up of engineers and planners from Whatcom's jurisdictions, primarily from public works divisions. They meet monthly to discuss regional transportation planning issues and make recommendations to the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board. A list of TTAG participants is available on WCOG's website.

Feedback was received from individuals at CTAG and TTAG through subsequent one-on-one discussions with those agencies and community members.

Community-based organizations

At the beginning of 2026 WCOG reached out to 77 agencies and community-based organizations (CBOs) requesting an opportunity to interview staff and volunteers. While these individuals may or may not have special transportation needs themselves, they work daily with clients and community members who have special transportation needs. A full list of agencies contacted is available as Appendix A: Outreach contact list.

Of the initial request for interviews, 40 agencies responded. Of those agencies, 18 completed one-on-one interviews with WCOG staff via Zoom or in person. In most cases these interviews provided generalized observations relating to the CBOs clientele. CBO

staff also suggested further outreach opportunities. Questions posed to CBOs are listed in Appendix B: Community-Based Organization interview questions.

Participating organizations

- Aging Well Whatcom
- Airow Project
- Bellingham School District
- Blaine-Birch Bay Parks & Recreation District #2
- Cascade Connections
- City of Bellingham
- City of Ferndale
- Community First Whatcom
- Ferndale Food Bank
- Foothills Food Bank
- Opportunity Council
- Road2Home
- The Raven
- WA Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS)
- Western Washington University
- Whatcom County Public Works
- Whatcom Family Community Network
- Whatcom Transportation Authority

Responses and issues raised are included in Chapter 6: Assessment of strengths and gaps.

Key informant interviews

Based on CBO feedback and their assistance with outreach, WCOG conducted key informant interviews with 18 individuals who experience transportation challenges due to age, income, or disability. A list of questions asked during key informant interviews are listed in Appendix C: Key informant interview questions. Most of these occurred at established gatherings of stakeholders: the Board Meeting of the United Blind of Whatcom County, and the Cascade Connections Advocacy Committee. Three interviews were conducted outside of these meetings.

94% of interviewees had a disability, and 33% were seniors. Responses and issues raised are included in Chapter 6: Assessment of strengths and gaps.

Tribal consultation

WCOG interviewed Lummi Transit staff to gather transportation-related feedback related to the tribe. Feedback has been included in findings in Chapter 6: Assessment of strengths and gaps.

Nooksack Tribe was contacted via an initial email and follow-up with Nooksack's representative on WCOG's Transportation Policy Board. Subsequent contact was requested with the assistance of WSDOT's Tribal Liaison. No feedback was provided.

Public events

WCOG sought to gather feedback through a series of public meetings and outreach efforts.

Community events

WCOG staff visited Bellingham Senior Activity Center (3/25/26), the Lynden Community Senior Center (4/10/26), and the East Whatcom Wellness Fair (5/16/26) to speak with individuals onsite about their transportation challenges. Staff spoke with approximately 25 individuals.

About 50% of those who shared feedback drive cars or carpool with family; 18% use paratransit; 21% use fixed route service; and 11% also wall/roll. Those who use paratransit all said they used the service five days a week.

In Lynden, a brief presentation was made to approximately 40 seniors gathered for lunch. Most responses were collected through paper copies of the survey, with a few comments one-on-one.

At the East Whatcom Wellness Fair, staff spoke with close to 100 attendees over the course of the event. 46 individuals took the survey. While income data was not collected, the event itself was marketed to low-income community members. Respondent age and race/ethnicity data is recorded below under survey results.

Virtual open house

WCOG developed an online open house that provided members of the public with information about the HSTP and ways to submit input either by survey, email, phone, or mail.

The open house was advertised in the local newspaper both online and in print and added to WCOG's website home page. It will remain active through the development of this draft.

Public meetings

Public meetings were held on **Wednesday, September 30** at **11am and 6pm** at the Whatcom Council of Governments office, 314 E. Champion St., Bellingham, WA 98225. Individuals could also participate virtually. Two members of the public attended, and three letters were submitted within the open comment period (attached as Appendix G: Written Comments Submitted on the Draft HSTP).

Survey data

In addition to data provided by CBOs and stakeholder agencies, WCOG gathered feedback through three regional surveys.

HSTP transportation needs questionnaire

A short questionnaire was developed in both print and online formats to ask members of the public about their transportation patterns, needs, and what gaps exist. The survey was shared at public events, made available online through the virtual open house and WCOG's website, and advertised in the regional paper in both print and digital formats. The link was also sent to CBOs along with a request to share it with their own contact lists and outreach (newsletters, emails, etc.)

The survey was designed in coordination with Skagit Council of Governments, Island RTPO, and San Juan County Council, who are also updating their HSTPs, with the idea that a combined set of data may provide insight to trends in the five-county region and to better understand transportation gaps for trips across county borders.

While sample sizes are too low to be a statistically significant dataset, results provide additional feedback that can inform transportation system improvements. A copy of the survey and responses are available in Appendix D: HSTP Transportation Needs Survey.

The demographics of respondents is shown in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1: HSTP survey respondent demographics

Age	#	%
25-34	2	8%
35-44	2	8%
55-64	2	8%
65-74	5	21%
75-84	8	33%
85+	5	21%
Total	*24*	

Race	#	%
White	22	88%
Hispanic/Latino	2	8%
Black/African American	1	4%
Total	*25*	

City	#	%
Lynden	10	50%
Bellingham	7	35%
Ferndale	2	10%
Maple Falls	1	5%
Total	*20*	

East Whatcom transportation survey

A special survey was distributed at the 5th Annual East Whatcom Wellness Fair held May 16, 2026, in Maple Falls. This event was coordinated by the East Whatcom Health Services Coalition and Opportunity Council and included over 200 participants from East Whatcom County communities. Over fifty responses were collected. The responses are discussed in Chapter 6: Assessment of strengths and gaps. A copy of the survey and responses are available in Appendix E: East Whatcom Transportation Survey. Demographics of the survey respondents are shown in Figure 3-2.

Note: Additional surveys were distributed mid-August; those results have not yet been incorporated into the results below.

Figure 3-2: East Whatcom survey respondent demographics

Age	#	%
13-17	2	6%
18-24	3	8%
25-34	4	11%
35-44	5	14%
45-54	5	14%
55-64	5	14%
65-74	7	19%
75-84	5	14%
Total	*36*	

Race Ethnicity	#	%
White	22	63%
American Indian/Alaska Native	6	11%
Hispanic/Latino	3	9%
African American/Black	2	6%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	6%
Other	1	3%
Total	*35*	3%

Community	#	%
Kendall	12	40%
Maple Falls	9	30%
Deming	3	10%
Ferndale	2	7%
Everson	2	7%
Sumas	1	3%
Acme	1	3%
Total	*30*	

2025 Whatcom Regional Transportation Study (RTS)

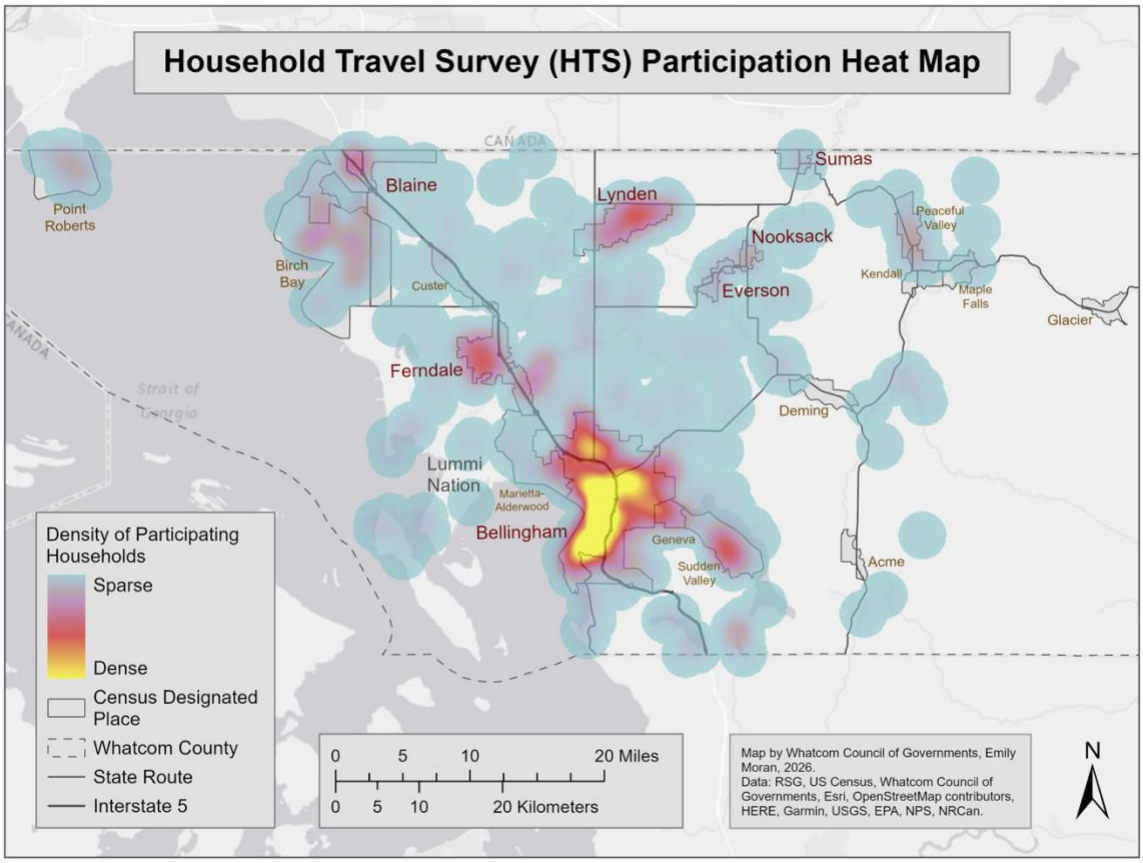
In the fall of 2025 WCOG conducted a regional household travel survey to identify travel patterns and collect data that will be used to update the region's transportation model. Questions were included in the study specific to the HSTP. Nearly 1,200 respondents participated in the study. Demographics of survey respondents are shown in Figure 3-3. Figure 3-4 shows where survey respondents live (by Census block).

Figure 3-3: Regional Transportation Study respondent demographics

Age	%
<5	8%
5-16	17%
16-17	5%
18-24	17%
25-34	21%
35-44	25%
45-54	18%
55-64	22%
65-74	24%
75-84	11%
85+	2%

Race/Ethnicity	%
White	74%
Hispanic/Latino	6%
Asian	5%
Two or more/Other	2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%
African American/Black	1%
No answer	11%

Figure 3-4: RTS participation heat map



HSTP and Consolidated Grants Advisory Committee

The HSTP and Consolidated Grants Advisory Committee provides further guidance to the HSTP. These individuals have been recruited from CBOs, partner agencies, and from participants in key informant interviews.

The Advisory Committee provides feedback in the creation of the plan's goals and strategies; reviews and adds comments to the draft HSTP; and will play a crucial role in scoring project applications to WSDOT's Consolidated Grants program that come from organizations based in Whatcom County. A list of participants can be found in Appendix F: HSTP and Consolidated Grants Advisory Committee Members.

Engagement gaps

Despite best efforts WCOG staff were unable to reach Nooksack Tribe for feedback.

Given the locations attended, youth feedback is missing from survey responses.

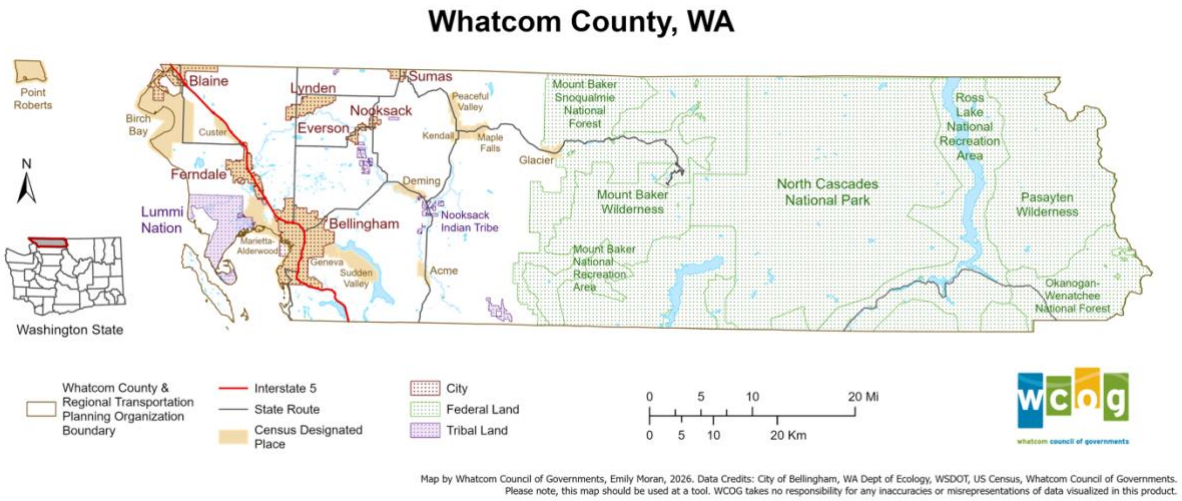
And feedback specifically from Blaine, Ferndale, Nooksack, Everson, and Sumas communities was minimal.

A follow-up outreach effort will take place mid-September to seek feedback specifically from these under-represented communities.

4. Regional context

Whatcom County is 2,504 square miles, the majority of which is federal land (see Figure 4-1). There are 7 incorporated cities (Bellingham, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas), 2 tribal governments (Lummi Nation, Nooksack Indian Tribe), and Whatcom County government. There are also 12 census-designated places in Whatcom County (Acme, Birch Bay, Custer, Deming, Geneva, Glacier, Kendall, Maple Falls, Marietta-Alderwood, Peaceful Valley, Point Roberts, and Sudden Valley).

Figure 4-1: Map of Whatcom County



The following demographic profile summarizes the demographic and financial characteristics of Whatcom households and individuals. These data help illustrate the count and share of priority populations within our region.

Unless otherwise noted, data comes from the U.S. Census American Community Survey's 2024 5-Year Estimates.

Population by jurisdiction

In 2026 Whatcom's estimated population is 242,250, with 39% of the population living in unincorporated areas of the region (Figure 4-2).[2]

[2] *April 1, 2026, Population of Cities, Towns, and Counties Used for Allocation of Selected State Revenues Office of Financial Management, Forecasting and Research Division,* https://ofm.wa.gov/data-research/population-demographics/estimates/april-1-official/

Figure 4-2: Whatcom population by jurisdiction

City	Population	%
Bellingham	99,030	41%
Blaine	6,775	3%
Everson	3,320	1%
Ferndale	17,240	7%
Lynden	17,220	7%
Nooksack	1,895	1%
Sumas	1,835	1%
Incorporated Total	147,315	61%
Unincorporated Total	94,935	39%
Total Whatcom Population	**242,250**	

Population by age

A little over a third of Whatcom's population (37%) may have special transportation needs due to age. As shown in Figure 4-3, 19% of the population are youth aged 17 and under and 19% are seniors aged 65 and older[3].

Figure 4-3: Population by age

Age	#	%
Under 5 years	10,525	5%
5 to 9 years	12,509	5%
10 to 14 years	12,115	5%
15 to 17 years	7,594	3%
18 and 19 years	7,498	3%
20 years	4,810	2%
21 years	4,709	2%
22 to 24 years	12,952	6%
25 to 29 years	16,204	7%
30 to 34 years	15,832	7%
35 to 39 years	15,545	7%
40 to 44 years	14,192	6%
45 to 49 years	12,716	6%
50 to 54 years	12,990	6%
55 to 59 years	13,015	6%

Age	#	%
60 and 61 years	5,867	3%
62 to 64 years	7,862	3%
65 and 66 years	5,520	2%
67 to 69 years	8,471	4%
70 to 74 years	12,462	5%
75 to 79 years	8,386	4%
80 to 84 years	4,742	2%
85 years and over	3,987	2%
Total	*230,503*	
17 and under	42,743	19%
65 and older	43,568	19%
Total	*86,311*	*37%*

Comparing population to numbers from the 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Figure 4-4) shows that the senior population (65 and over) grew by 14,223

[3] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Sex by Age." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B01001, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B01001?q=b01001&g=050XX00US53073&moe=false*

(49%), nearly half as many seniors in eight years. Comparatively, youth aged 17 and under grew by only 671 people (2%)[4].

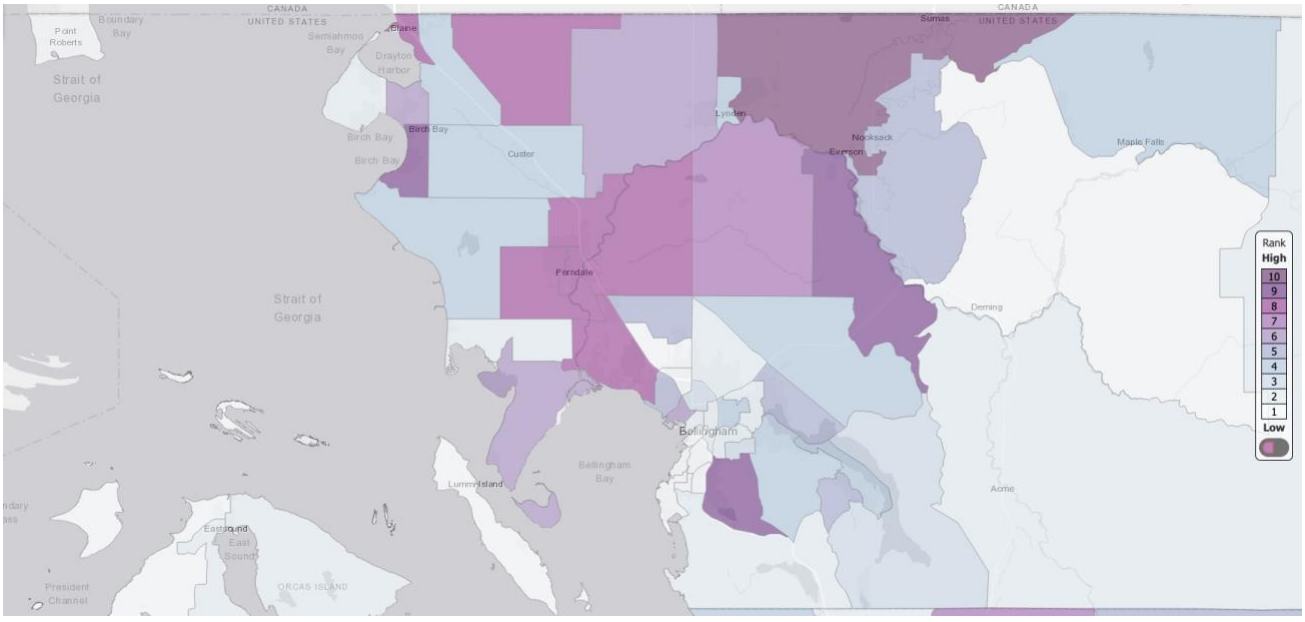
In 2014 there were more youth than seniors (21% vs. 14%) but by 2024 these two groups are equal (19% and 19%), meaning that the senior population went from being two-thirds the size of the youth population to matching it. This growth in the region's aging population will increase demand for special transportation services specific to health care and senior services, including demand for paratransit.

Figure 4-4: Changes in age group percentages, 2014 to 2024

	2016		2024	
	#	%	#	%
17 and under	42,072	21%	42,743	19%
65 and older	29,345	14%	43,568	19%
Total	*71,417*	*35%*	*86,311*	*37%*
Total population	*204,855*		*230,503*	

Whatcom residents under the age of 18 are more likely to live outside Bellingham, based on data from the WA State Department of Health Information By Location tool and shown in Figure 4-5. Unless otherwise specified, all maps in this chapter of the plan originate from this dataset.

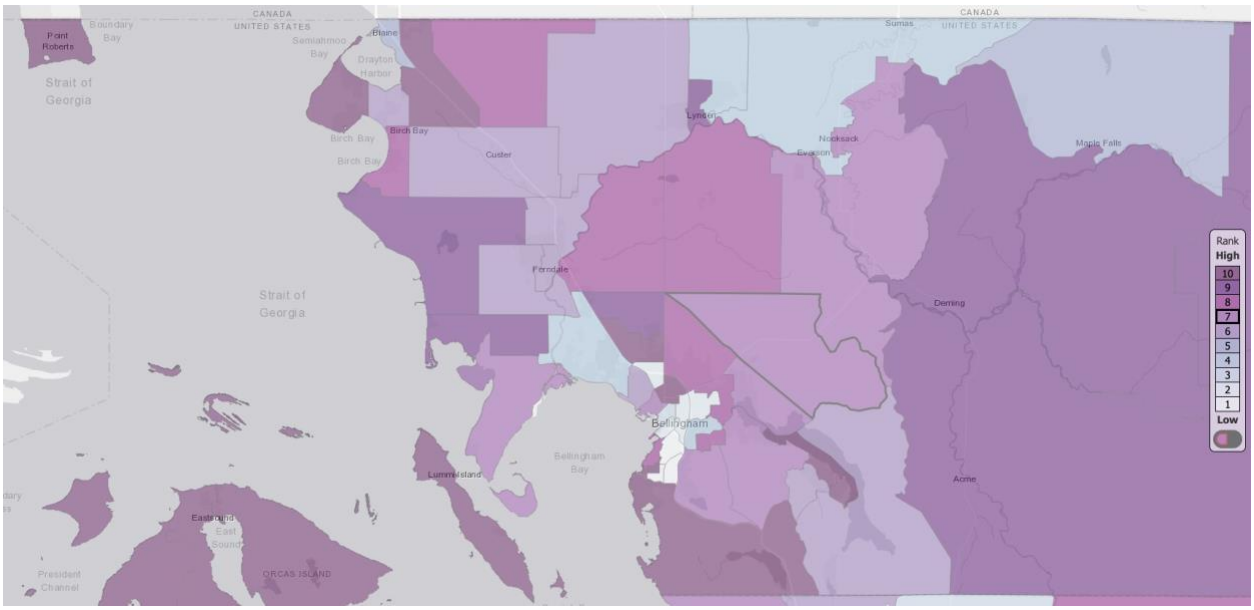
Figure 4-5: Population under 18 years of age by Census Tract



[4] *U.S. Census Bureau. "SEX BY AGE." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B01001, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2014.B01001?q=b01001&g=050XX00US53073&moe=false*

Figure 4-6 shows that residents aged 65 and over, however are more evenly distributed across areas of Whatcom County.

Figure 4-6: Population aged 65 and older by Census Tract



Population by income

The total minimum cost of owning and using a vehicle in Washington State is $6,155 a year[5]. Given the expense of having a personal vehicle, low-income households are more likely to rely on public transportation options.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services develops an annual poverty line threshold table (Figure 4-7). This is used to define "low income" as individuals in households with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line (FPL)[6].

Figure 4-7: 2026 Annual federal poverty line (FPL) thresholds for the 48 contiguous states

Household size	50%	100%	150%	200%
1	$7,980	$15,960	$23,940	$31,920
2	$10,820	$21,640	$32,460	$43,280
3	$13,660	$27,320	$40,980	$54,640
4	$16,500	$33,000	$49,500	$66,000

[5] *Whatcom Smart Trips: Cost of Driving at Age 16.*
[6] *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. 2026 Poverty Guidelines: 48 Contiguous States.* https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines

Figure 4-8 shows that over a quarter of Whatcom residents, 26%, are considered low-income.[7] 6% of Whatcom residents live in "deep poverty," defined as having an income under 50% FPL.

Figure 4-8: Ratio of annual income to poverty level

Poverty Line	#	%
Under .50	14,304	6%
.50 to .99	14,734	7%
1.00 to 1.24	6,958	3%
1.25 to 1.49	7,670	3%
1.50 to 1.84	10,330	5%
1.85 to 1.99	4,992	2%
2.00 and over	166,407	74%
Total	*225,395*	

As seen in Figure 4-9, Whatcom has a higher poverty rate than Washington State as a whole – 3 percentage points higher under 100% FPL and nearly 5 points higher under 200% FPL.

Figure 4-9: Percentage of population by poverty line threshold and region

Region	Under 100%	100-199%	Under 200%
Whatcom	13%	13%	26%
Washington	10%	12%	22%
United States	12%	16%	28%

Another measure of economic stability is looking at the number of households that are ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. These households may earn more than the FPL but still do not bring in enough money to afford basic living expenses like housing, food, childcare, health care, and technology. The ALICE threshold is based on cost of living by county.

Figure 4-10 illustrates a minimum household survival budget to live and work in Whatcom. This does not include savings for emergencies or future goals like college or retirement. In 2024, household costs in every county in Washington were well above the FPL of $15,060 for a single adult and $33,000 for a family of four[8].

[7] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table C17002, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.C17002?q=c17002&g=050XX00US53073*

[8] *United for ALICE. https://www.unitedforalice.org/the-cost-of-basics/washington*

Figure 4-10: Household survival budget, Whatcom County, 2024

	Single Adult	One Adult One Child	One Adult One Childcare	Two Adults	Two Adults Two Children	Two Adults Two Childcare	Single Senior	Two Seniors
Housing	$1,379	$1,437	$1,437	$1,437	$1,728	$1,728	$1,379	$1,437
Child Care	$0	$539	$1,437	$0	$1,078	$3,168	$0	$0
Food	$578	$978	$877	$1,060	$1,777	$1,568	$532	$976
Transportation	$375	$467	$467	$550	$820	$820	$313	$426
Health Care	$162	$424	$424	$424	$778	$778	$489	$979
Technology	$95	$95	$95	$129	$129	$129	$95	$129
Miscellaneous	$259	$394	$474	$360	$631	$819	$281	$395
Taxes	$394	$388	$561	$456	$600	$1,007	$442	$688
Monthly Total	*$3,242*	*$4,722*	*$5,772*	*$4,416*	*$7,541*	*$10,017*	*$3,531*	*$5,030*
ANNUAL TOTAL	*$38,904*	*$56,664*	*$69,264*	*$52,992*	*$90,492*	*$120,204*	*$42,372*	*$60,360*
Hourly Wage	*$19.45*	*$28.33*	*$34.63*	*$26.50*	*$45.25*	*$60.10*	*$21.19*	*$30.18*

39% of Whatcom households live at the ALICE threshold or below. Figure 4-11 shows the number and percentage of households living at the FPL as well as at or below the ALICE threshold broken out by Census County Division[9].

Figure 4-11: Number of households at poverty level and ALICE level

Census County Division	Households	Poverty	%	ALICE	%
Bellingham	53,992	8,289	15%	16,390	30%
Blaine	9,314	864	9%	2,525	27%
East Whatcom	3,505	519	15%	1,344	38%
Ferndale	13,650	1,231	9%	3,041	22%
Lummi Island	458	26	6%	120	26%
Lummi Reservation	1,851	173	9%	583	31%
Lynden	7,204	628	9%	1,456	20%
Point Roberts	743	117	16%	193	26%
Sumas	3,304	246	7%	967	29%

As illustrated in the Figure 4-12 chart and the Figure 4-13 map, a disproportionate number of households in East Whatcom (53%) live at or below the ALICE threshold.

[9] *United for ALICE.* *https://www.unitedforalice.org/county-reports/washington#:~:text=%2470%2C296-,%2486%2C940,-%2433%2C996*

Figure 4-12: Percentage of households at poverty level and at ALICE level

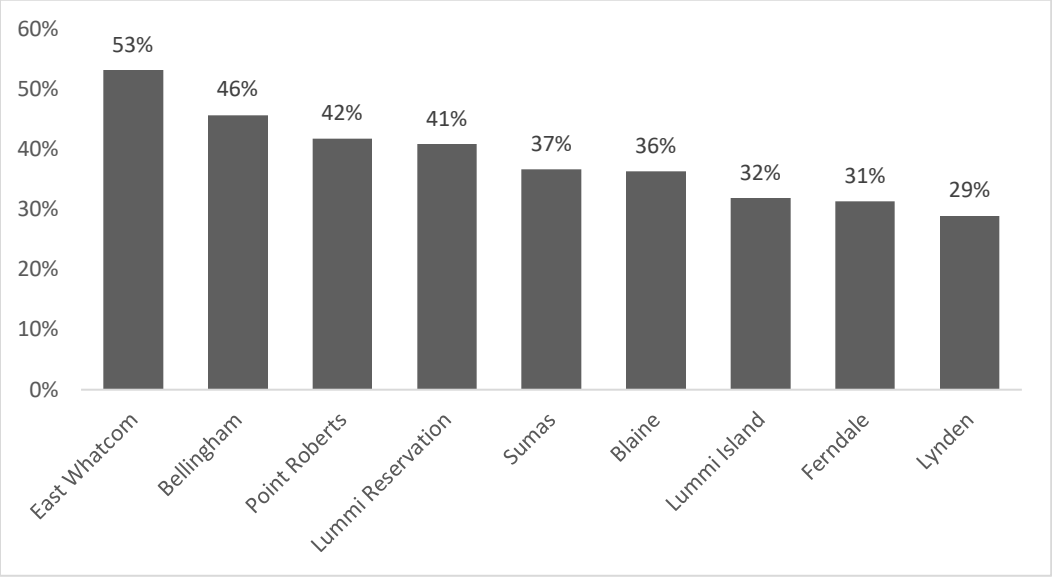
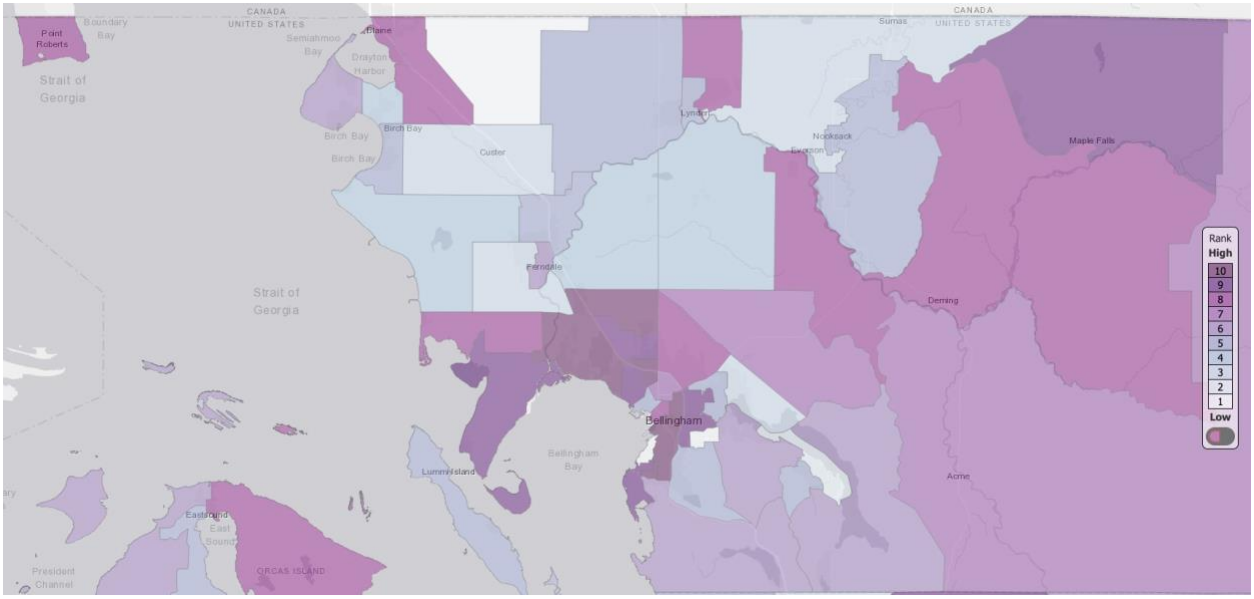


Figure 4-13: Percentage of population at poverty level by Census Tract



Population with disabilities

People with disabilities may face additional challenges getting around independently. In Whatcom, 14% of the population has a disability (see Figure 4-14). This rate is notably higher among seniors: 30% of individuals aged 65 and older have a disability[10].

Figure 4-14: Whatcom population with a disability, by age

	With a disability	No disability	% with a disability
17 and under	2,446	40,241	6%
18 to 64	17,434	125,958	14%
65 and over	12,801	30,006	30%
Total	*32,681*	*196,205*	*14%*

Many individuals have more than one type of disability. The most common is cognitive difficulty, affecting 48% of those with a disability[11] as shown in Figure 4-15.

Figure 4-15: Prevalence of disability

Difficulty	#	%
Hearing	9,281	28%
Vision	5,032	15%
Cognitive	15,834	48%
Ambulatory	12,557	38%
Self-care	5,074	16%
Independent living	10,761	33%
Total population with a disability	*32,681*	

While seniors are most likely to have a disability, working-age adults with disabilities are more likely to be living in poverty. Figure 4-16 shows that 24% of those aged 18 to 64 with a disability live below the FPL, compared to just 8% of seniors with disabilities and 4% of children with disabilities[12]. This suggests working-age adults with disabilities face compounding barriers — likely tied to employment access — that aren't offset by safety nets (Social Security, Medicare) available to seniors.

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[10] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Sex by Age by Disability Status." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B18101, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B18101?q=b18101&g=050XX00US53073*

[11] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Disability Characteristics." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1810, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S1810?q=S1810:+Disability+Characteristics&g=050XX00US53073&moe=false*

[12] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Age by Disability Status by Poverty Status." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B18130, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2024.B18130?q=B18130:+Age+by+Disability+Status+by+Poverty+Status&g=050XX00US53073&moe=false*

Figure 4-16: Count and share of low income individuals with disabilities by age

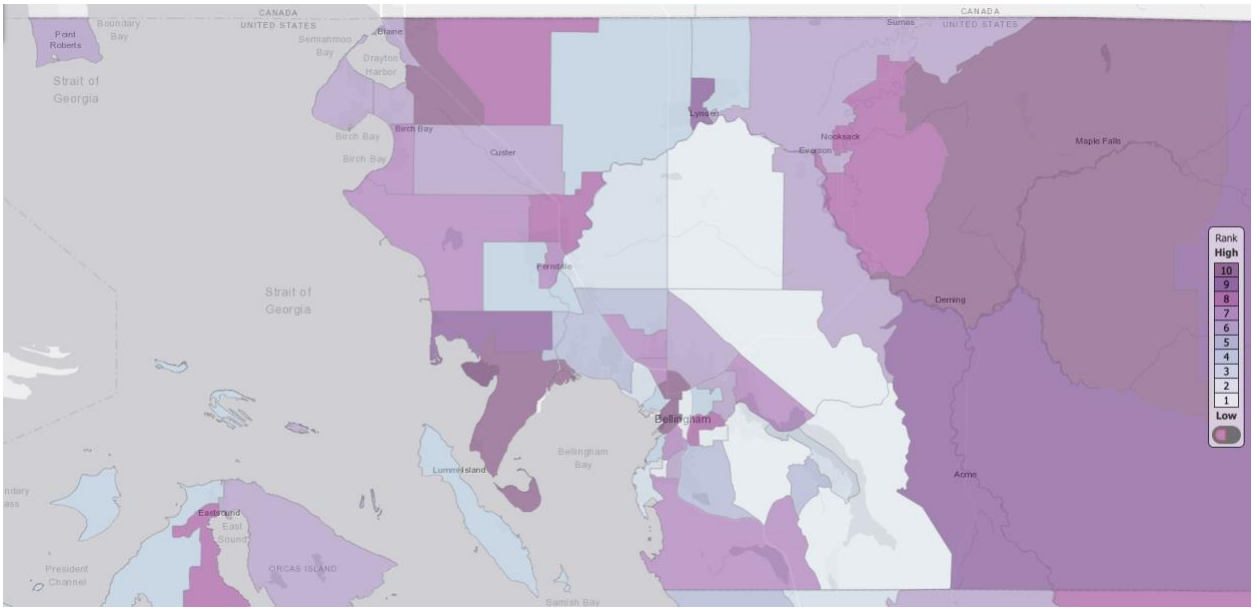
Note: Data for this table is from the ACS 2024 1-Year Estimates.

	Total	With a disability		With a disability & below poverty line	
17 and under	41,294	2,896	7%	114	4%
18 to 64	143,294	16,850	12%	3,994	24%
65 and over	45,241	14,814	33%	1,212	8%
Total	*229,829*	*34,560*	*15%*	*5,320*	*15%*

These data show the connection between income and mobility and strengthen the case for providing affordable and accessible transportation options to priority populations.

And while many destinations for people with disabilities are in Bellingham, individuals with disabilities live throughout the county as seen in Figure 4-17.

Figure 4-17: Individuals with disabilities by Census Tract



Population by race

Though not classified as a demographic with special transportation needs, People of Color (POC) have historically faced disproportionate barriers to transportation access.

Figure 4-18 shows Whatcom's population by race. Whatcom is predominantly white (76%), with nearly a quarter of the population identifying a different race or ethnicity[13].

[13] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B03002,*

Figure 4-18: Race as a percent of total population

Race	#	%
White	174,501	76%
Hispanic/Latino	24,461	11%
Two or more races	14,396	6%
Asian	10,036	4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3,609	2%
Black/African American	2,118	1%
Other	879	0.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	503	0.2%
Total	*230,503*	

This percentage of POC has grown substantially, from 19% a decade prior (2014) to 24% in 2024 (see Figure 4-19)[14]. POC residents accounted for 65% of all growth in Whatcom's population – the POC population increased 42% vs. 13% growth regionally.

Given that Whatcom's population is aging, the share of youth of color has decreased from 14% of the population to 7% of the population, even though the actual number of youth of color has increased.

Figure 4-19: Population changes for POC by age

People of color	2024	% Pop.	2014	% Pop.
17 and under	15,592	7%	12,441	14%
18 to 64	35,482	23%	24,733	53%
65 and over	4,928	5%	2,168	13%
Total	*56,002*	*24%*	*39,342*	*19%*
Total population	*230,503*		*204,855*	

Like individuals with disabilities, POC may face compounding barriers leading to economic insecurities. In Whatcom, Black, Hispanic/Latino, and "Other"-identifying residents face poverty at roughly 1.5x the rate of White residents (Figure 4-20)[15].

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https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B03002?q=B03002:+Hispanic+or+Latino+Origin+by+Race&g=050XX00US53073&moe=false

[14] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Sex by Age (White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino)." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Tables B01001 and B01001H, for 2014 and 2014* https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B01001H?q=b01001h&g=050XX00US53073

[15] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1701,* https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2024.S1701?q=S1701:+Poverty+Status+in+the+Past+12+Months&g=050XX00US53073&moe=false

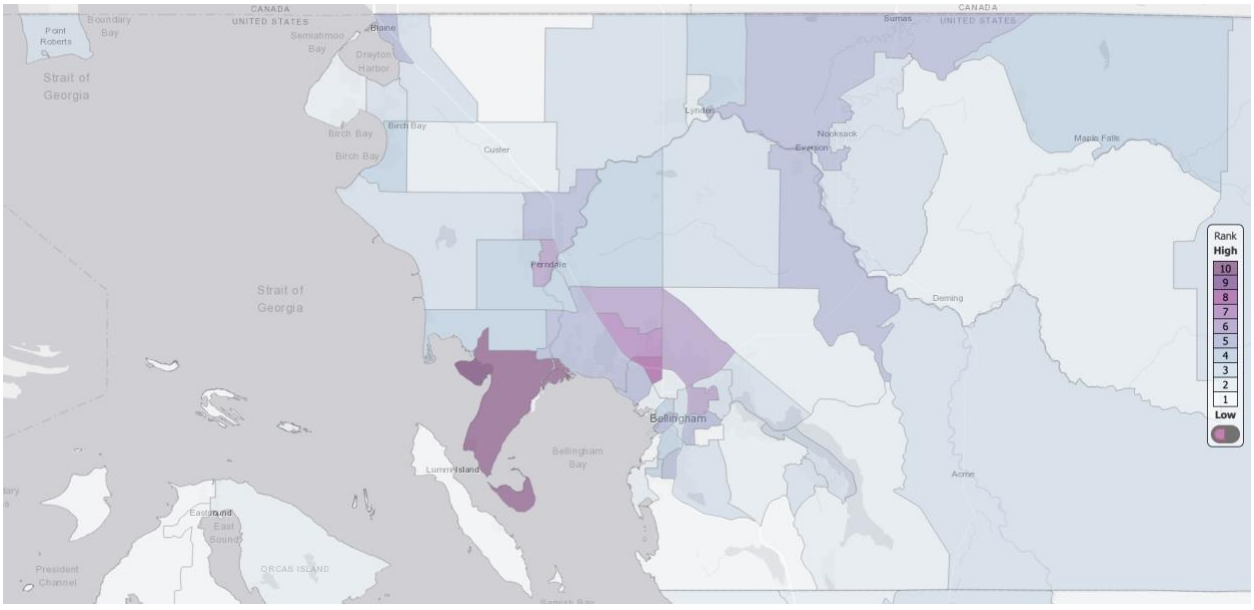
Figure 4-20: Poverty statistics by race

Race	Total	Below Poverty Level	% Below
White	176,200	21,651	12%
Black/African American	1,993	355	18%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3,983	574	14%
Asian	9,869	1,195	12%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	554	26	5%
Other	10,265	2,005	20%
Two or more races	22,531	3,232	14%
Hispanic/Latino	24,016	4,342	18%
*Total Population**	*225,395*	*29,038*	*13%*

**Individuals may identify with more than one race*

Many POC in Whatcom County live in and around Bellingham and the Lummi Reservation (Figure 4-21).

Figure 4-21: People of Color by Census Tract



Population by Limited English Proficiency

People who do not speak English as their primary language and who report speaking English less than “very well” are said to have Limited English Proficiency(LEP). LEP individuals face language barriers that impact every facet of living in Whatcom.

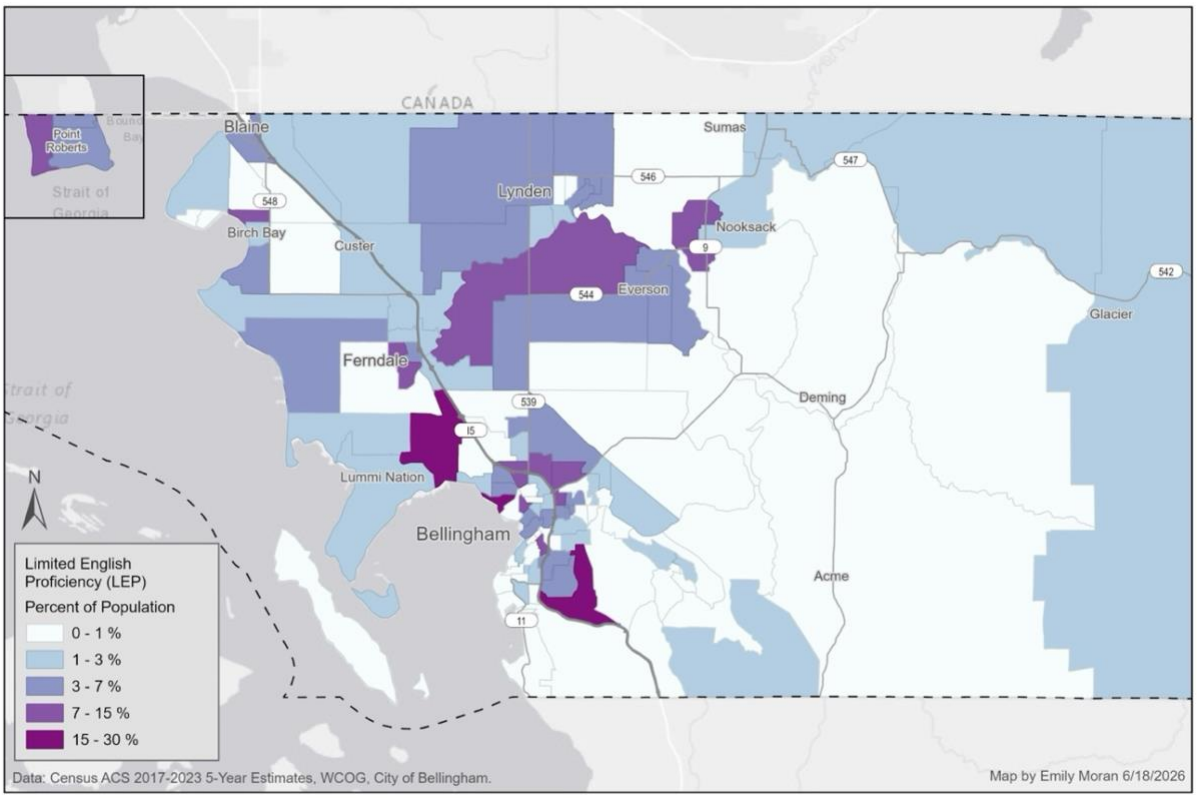
As shown in Figure 4-22, LEP individuals make up 4% of Whatcom's total population. Spanish is the most widely spoken language other than English, with over 2% of the LEP population[16].

Figure 4-22: Population of LEP individuals by language spoken at home

Language	# LEP	%
Spanish	4,581	2.1%
Other	2,201	1.0%
Indo-European languages	959	0.4%
Russian & Slavic languages	971	0.4%
Total	*8,712*	*4.0%*
Total population	*219,978*	

LEP individuals live in many regions of Whatcom County, not just Bellingham. Figure 4-23 shows the percentage of limited English speakers as a percent of population.

Figure 4-23: Map of LEP by percent of population



[16] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Language Spoken at Home for the Population 5 Years and Over." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table C16001, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.C16001?q=c16001&g=050XX00US53073*

Motor vehicles per household

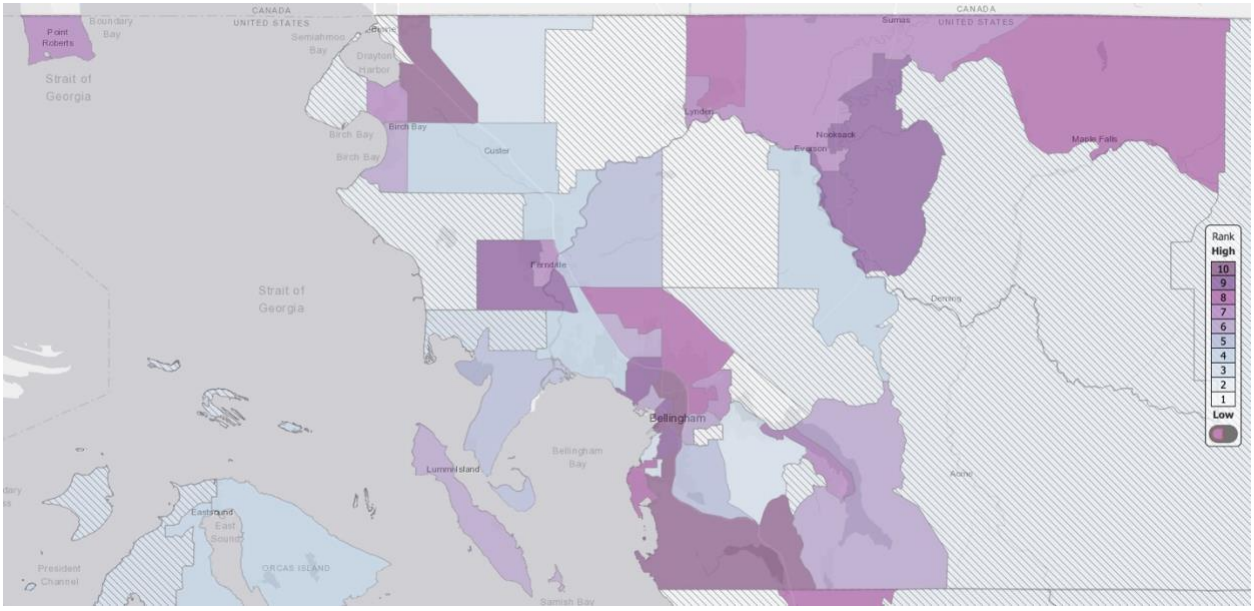
Most households in Whatcom have access to at least one motor vehicle (Figure 4-24). Only 6% of households do not report owning a vehicle; 28% report owning three or more[17].

Figure 4-24: Count of motor vehicles by household

# Vehicles	Households	%
No vehicle	5,991	6%
1 vehicle	27,850	30%
2 vehicles	33,684	36%
3 vehicles	17,066	18%
4+ vehicles	9,430	10%
Total	*94,021*	

Many of those with no vehicle live outside of urban centers, impacting access to transit (Figure 4-25).

Figure 4-25: Percentage of households with no vehicle by Census Tract



[17] *U.S. Census Bureau. "Household Size by Vehicles Available." American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B08201, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B08201?q=b08201&g=050XX00US53073&moe=false.*

Common origins and destinations

People with special transportation needs live in and travel to the same places as everyone else: employment sites, childcare facilities, schools, medical services, commercial areas, recreation areas, and more. Some priority populations may travel more frequently to sites with specific services such as vocational training, medical and rehabilitation centers, senior and assisted living centers, residential shelters, and agency offices.

Identifying common origins and destinations can help evaluate if transit services meet the needs of priority populations and may help scope future transportation system improvements. Although the term *trip origins* in transportation planning typically refers to the starting point of any trip, for the purposes of this plan, *trip origins* will more narrowly refer to where priority populations live.

Regional Transportation Study insights

WCOG's 2025 Regional Transportation Study (RTS)[18] provides insights into general travel patterns including origins and destinations.

The data below represent trips made on a typical weekday. Note that "Home" has been excluded from these tables, as these charts define "destinations" based on the trip location or purpose, regardless of the trip's point of origin.

The top two trip generators in Whatcom County are work (24%) and shopping (17%) as shown in Figure 4-26. Note that "escort" refers to a trip where someone was dropped off.

Figure 4-26: Trip purposes

Trip Purpose	
Work/work-related	24%
Shopping	17%
Escort	13%
School/school-related	10%
Errand	9%
Exercise	8%
Meal	7%
Social/recreational	6%
Overnight	5%
Other	2%

Destination percentages match regional population centers. Figure 4-27 has destinations outside of Whatcom County in bold.

[18] *Information from the RTS is not yet available online but details about the study can be found at: https://wcog.org/household-travel-study*

Figure 4-27: Trip destinations

Destinations	
Bellingham	50%
Other Whatcom	15%
Lynden	10%
Ferndale	7%
Blaine	3%
Birch Bay	3%
Geneva	2%
Sudden Valley	2%
Skagit County	**2%**
Other	1%
Nooksack	1%
Marietta-Alderwood	1%
Canada	**1%**
Everson	1%
Point Roberts	1%
Snohomish County	**1%**
King County	**1%**

Figure 4-28 illustrates the location where people travel by trip purpose. Bellingham is the predominant destination for all trip purposes, with Lynden being the second-most common destination. Roughly half of all work, school, and social or recreational trips are Bellingham bound. Lynden is the second-most common destination. Other trip purposes are more Bellingham-centric, with two-thirds of all shopping, errands, and meal trips destined for Bellingham. This pattern changes with overnight travel, with geographically diverse destinations. 23% of overnight trips are to locations outside of Whatcom County.

Figure 4-28: Location by trip purpose

Work, work-related	
Bellingham	56.1%
Other Whatcom	15.3%
Lynden	8.3%
Skagit County	5.8%
Ferndale	5.5%
Blaine	3.1%
Marietta-Alderwood	1.5%
Other	1.4%
Nooksack	1.0%
Birch Bay	0.7%
Point Roberts	0.5%
Canada	0.5%
Everson	0.3%
Geneva	0.3%

School, school-related	
Bellingham	55.8%
Lynden	10.6%
Blaine	9.9%
Other Whatcom	7.8%
Ferndale	7.7%
Geneva	5.0%
Marietta-Alderwood	1.2%
Nooksack	1.1%
Canada	0.8%
Birch Bay	0.2%

Shopping, errands, meals	
Bellingham	67.7%
Lynden	12.5%
Other Whatcom	6.2%
Ferndale	5.9%
Blaine	2.8%
Skagit County	1.5%
Canada	1.2%
Everson	1.1%
Birch Bay	1.0%
Other	0.3%

Exercise	
Bellingham	64.1%
Lynden	14.1%
Other Whatcom	9.4%
Ferndale	2.7%
Everson	2.6%
Sudden Valley	2.0%
Geneva	1.2%
Other	1.0%
Blaine	0.9%
Skagit County	0.9%
Marietta-Alderwood	0.5%
Birch Bay	0.3%
Point Roberts	0.2%
Canada	0.2%

Social, recreational	
Bellingham	51.4%
Other Whatcom	18.4%
Ferndale	8.1%
Canada	6.2%
Everson	5.4%
Skagit County	4.6%
Lynden	3.9%
Birch Bay	1.0%
Other	0.5%
Marietta-Alderwood	0.3%
Blaine	0.2%

Overnight	
Bellingham	34.7%
Other Whatcom	19.1%
Lynden	12.9%
Birch Bay	8.9%
Point Roberts	7.9%
Canada	5.6%
Ferndale	3.7%
Skagit County	3.6%
Other	1.4%
Marietta-Alderwood	0.7%
Sudden Valley	0.6%
Blaine	0.6%
Geneva	0.3%

When looking at trip patterns for those with a disability, most of the trip purpose destinations are the same as those with no disability. This is not the case for work trips, however, as shown in Figure 4-29: only two destinations are reported for work-related trips, Bellingham and Skagit County. While it is important to remember that the smaller the sample set becomes, the less accurate the data, it does point to a trend worth noting when it comes to accessibility for working individuals with disabilities.

An overview of the number of trips by purpose and destination on a weekday is shown in Figure 4-29.

Figure 4-29: Count of trips by purpose and destination

	Work	Work-related	School	School-related	Escort	Shopping	Meal	Social/recreatio..	Errand	Overnight	Other	Exercise	Travel
Acme			0	0	0							19	
Bellingham	45,322	17,282	19,008	5,578	26,115	43,571	17,414	16,996	27,926	4,826	2,104	20,379	279
Birch Bay	2,350	77	1,828	5	1,814	3,947	1,307	1,302	384	1,946	22	107	
Blaine	1,851	36	2,890	5	3,104	551	2,134	57	330	14	50	364	
Canada	448	98	43		726	31	826	493	455	630	125	132	142
Custer	557	93	436	5	527	5	10	5	47		958		
Deming	18	0			0	0		0	17		17		
Everson	1,299	189	87		117	624	5	535	36	9	0	4	
Ferndale	8,828	940	4,469	5	6,904	4,863	3,357	3,573	3,885	1,497	48	2,221	0
Geneva	39	98	3,157	0	4,412	641	104	7	167	34	23	2,827	
Glacier					121					0	0	0	
Kendall	7	0	21		0	14	0	26	0	0		0	
King County	71	829	18	0	157	618	378	179	383	196	0	8	0
Lynden	8,372	1,058	3,237	415	7,728	10,312	6,587	5,181	8,411	354	1,853	5,732	
Maple Falls		22			17	0	17	17	0			0	
Marietta-Alderwood	1,671	792	636		606	1,501	379	468	1,230	252	159	304	
Nooksack	1,577	105	447		1,594	666	5	1,572	60	2,370	33	526	
Other	36	103	0		65	167	116	96	37	415	1,089	302	31
Other Whatcom	18,414	3,911	7,207	542	15,054	17,501	6,899	3,374	4,066	3,420	1,608	7,383	558
Peaceful Valley	54	5	21		17	38	0	5		14		0	
Point Roberts	568	32			11	268	34	25	185	1,627		69	
Skagit County	787	2,839		0	462	1,297	609	429	89	361	32	93	
Snohomish County	25	214	50		599	39	99	126	140	53	2,072	5	0
Sudden Valley	6,368	44	408	0	627	2,618	124	22	215	123	567	1,681	
Sumas	23	18	21	0	19	539	0	0	126	0		0	

Additional insights may be available after data from the study is incorporated into Whatcom's Travel Demand Model.

Transit data

WTA's 2025 Fixed Route Passenger Survey[19] collected 2,750 surveys from riders between October 2 and October 18 in 2025. Collectively, the demographics show that WTA serves a predominantly young, low-income population that relies on public transit to access education, work, and daily necessities.

Responses showed that 57% of surveyed riders started their journey at a residence, followed by 22% who originated from a college or other school. Most riders accessed the bus by walking (79%) and walked less than 5 minutes (73%).

43% of respondents said their most common destination was college or another school, reflecting the strong student presence in the WTA system. 29% said their destination was home, and 12% indicated they were traveling to work or to a work-related location. Like

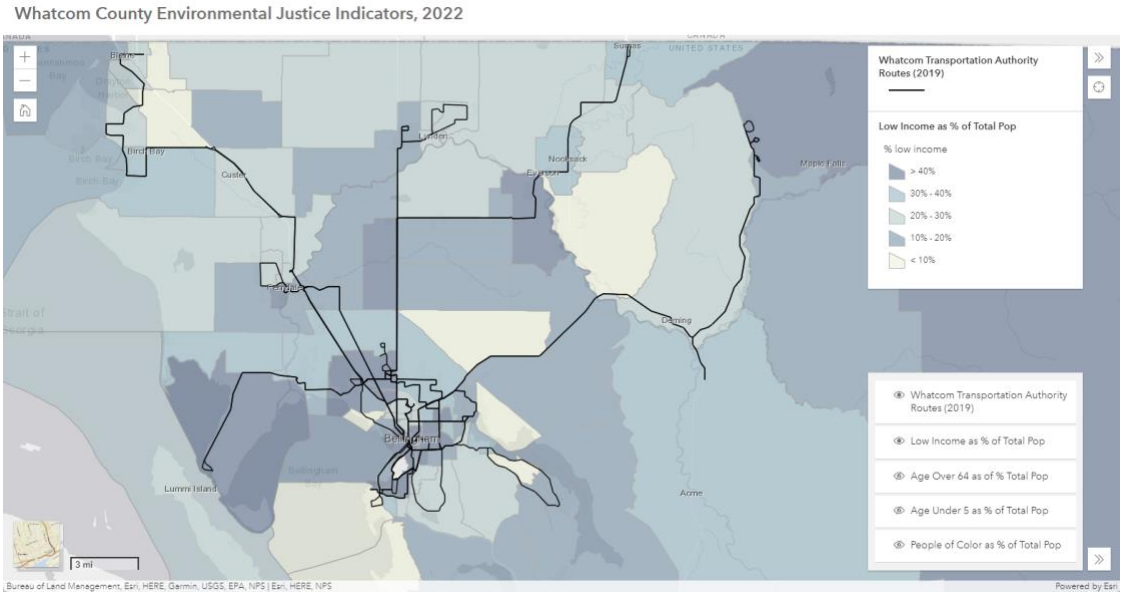
[19] *Whatcom Transportation Authority, 2025 WTA Fixed Route Passenger Survey, December 2025*

the origins, most riders walked from the bus stop to their destination (86%) and 74% walked less than 5 minutes.

Specific to Lynden and the Lynden Hop service that operated between June 2021 and June 2024, 30% of riders had a shopping destination, followed by a destination for work or volunteering (22%)[20].

Figures 4-30 to 4-32 illustrate how WTA fixed routes connect to regions of priority populations (as a percentage of total population). *Note: these maps will be updated as part of Transport 2050: Whatcom's Regional & Metropolitan Transportation Plan*.

Figure 4-30: Public transportation priority populations, low income



[20] *Whatcom Transportation Authority. Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) Grant: Serving a Small City with Vans on Demand Final Report, June 2023;* https://learn.sharedusemobilitycenter.org/casestudy/the-lynden-hops-legacy-lessons-learned-from-operating-microtransit-in-house/

Figure 4-31: Public transportation priority populations, over 64

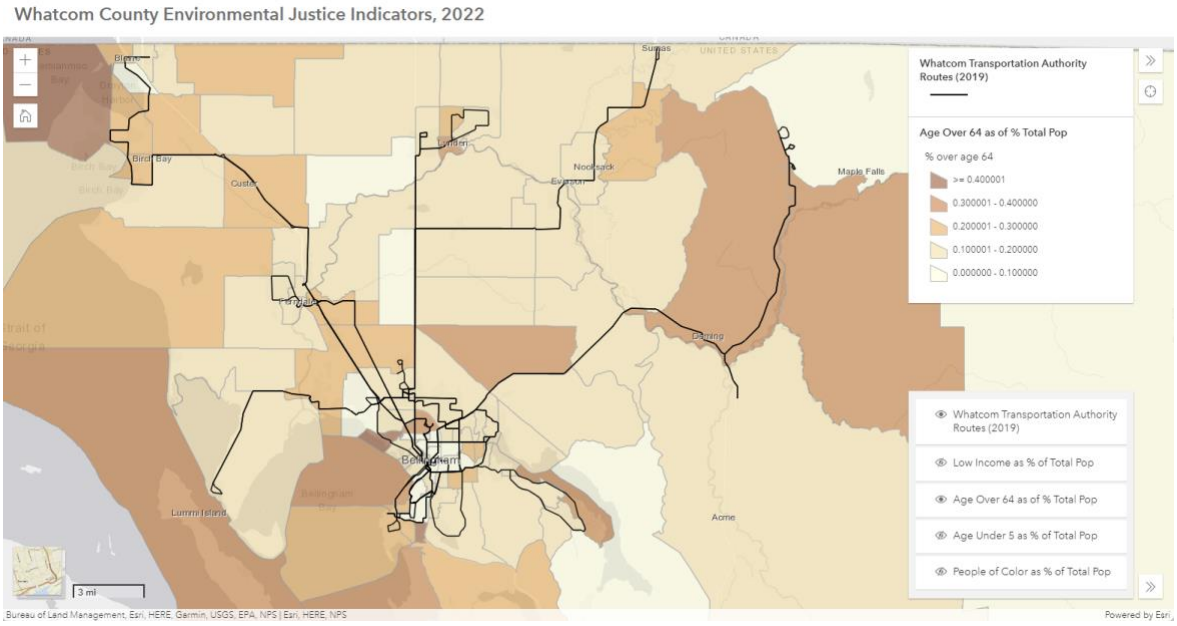
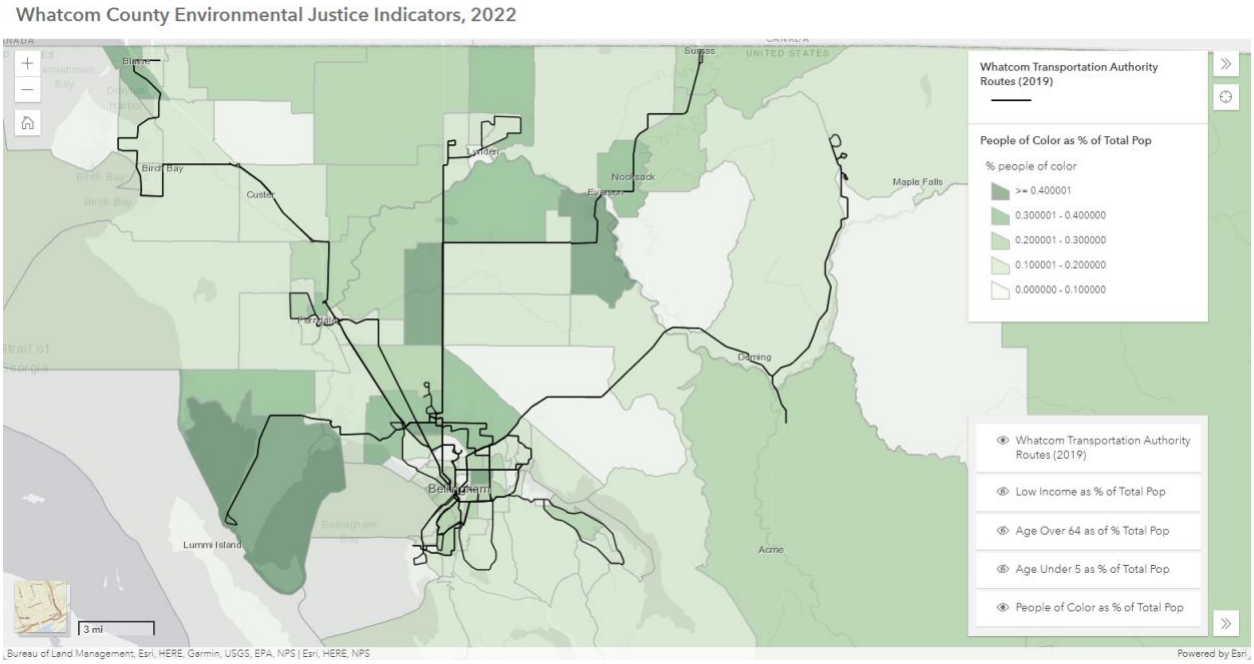


Figure 4-32: Public transportation priority populations, people of color

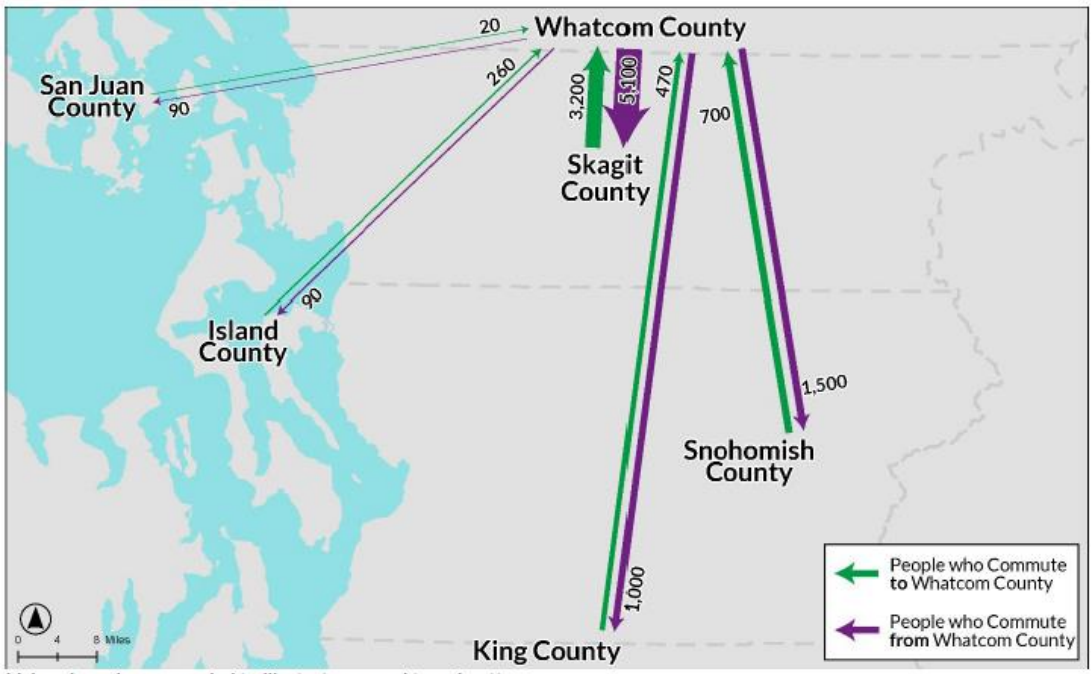


Travel trends outside of Whatcom

WTA's 80x route is run in partnership with Skagit Transit to connect Mount Vernon and Bellingham. In 2025 the 80x had 21,152 boardings, a 21% drop from 2024 numbers. Skagit Transit reports 45,333 annual ridership on the 80x for 2023 (no newer data was provided).

Skagit Transit's 2025 Long Range Transit Plan[21] shows that 5,147 Whatcom residents commute to Skagit County for work; another 2,737 Whatcom residents commute to other counties. This is reflected in the 2025 Northwest Washington Regional Transit Study[22] map of Whatcom County commute patterns, shown in Figure 4-33.

Figure 4-33: Whatcom County commute travel patterns



Values have been rounded to illustrate general travel patterns.

[21] *Skagit Transit. Skagit Transit Long Range Transit Plan, June 2025: https://www.skagittransit.org/lrtp/*
[22] *North Sound Transportation Alliance. Northwest Washington Regional Transit Study, April 2025: https://wcog.org/library/2025-nsta-northwest-washington-regional-transit-study*

5. Existing transportation services

A full analysis of Whatcom's transportation system is underway as part of the Transport 2050: Whatcom's Regional & Metropolitan Plan development. The following assessment considers available transportation services specifically from the perspective of those with special transportation needs.

WTA Transit and paratransit

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) provides public transportation services throughout Whatcom County. These services include fixed route, American Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit, zone service, and a rideshare program.

WTA is a Public Transportation Benefit Area Corporation (PTBA), meaning they receive funding through sales tax revenues (currently at 0.6 percent). WTA is also funded by fares and grants.

WTA has five primary facilities: Bellingham Station on Railroad Avenue and Magnolia in downtown Bellingham; Cordata Station off Cordata Parkway in north Bellingham; Ferndale Station off I-5; Lynden Station off Main Street; and a maintenance, operations and administration building in Bellingham's Bakerview industrial area.

Fixed route bus service

WTA provides bus service along 30 fixed routes to connect all incorporated communities in Whatcom as well as most small, unincorporated places (link to WTA's fixed route map). Four of these routes are "Go-Lines" that provide 15-minute service along high-frequency corridors in Bellingham.

WTA operates fixed route bus service:

- Weekdays in most areas from 6:00am to 7:30pm
- Saturdays in many areas from 9:00am to 6:30pm
- Sundays in many areas from 8:00am to 9:50pm
- Late night service in a few areas on weekdays and Sundays up to 11:00pm.

Fixed routes connect major multi-modal facilities including Skagit Transit, Amtrak Cascades rail service, Lummi Nation Transit, Lummi Island Ferry, Bellingham International Airport, regional bus carriers (Greyhound, Flixbus, and Sea-Tac Airporter Shuttle), and area schools.

Each year WTA distributes up to 50,000 sets of free 6-ride tickets to social and health service agencies that service low-income clients and people with disabilities. In 2026, 90 agencies received 6-ride tickets.

Flex routes

Three WTA fixed routes offer "flex" areas where passengers can arrange in advance to have the bus deviate from its normal route to pick up the passenger. These serve areas

with no ADA paratransit service: Route 71x (Everson/Nooksack/Sumas), Route 72x (Kendall via Mt. Baker Highway), and Route 75 (Blaine/Birch Bay).

Link to WTA's flex service map

ADA paratransit service

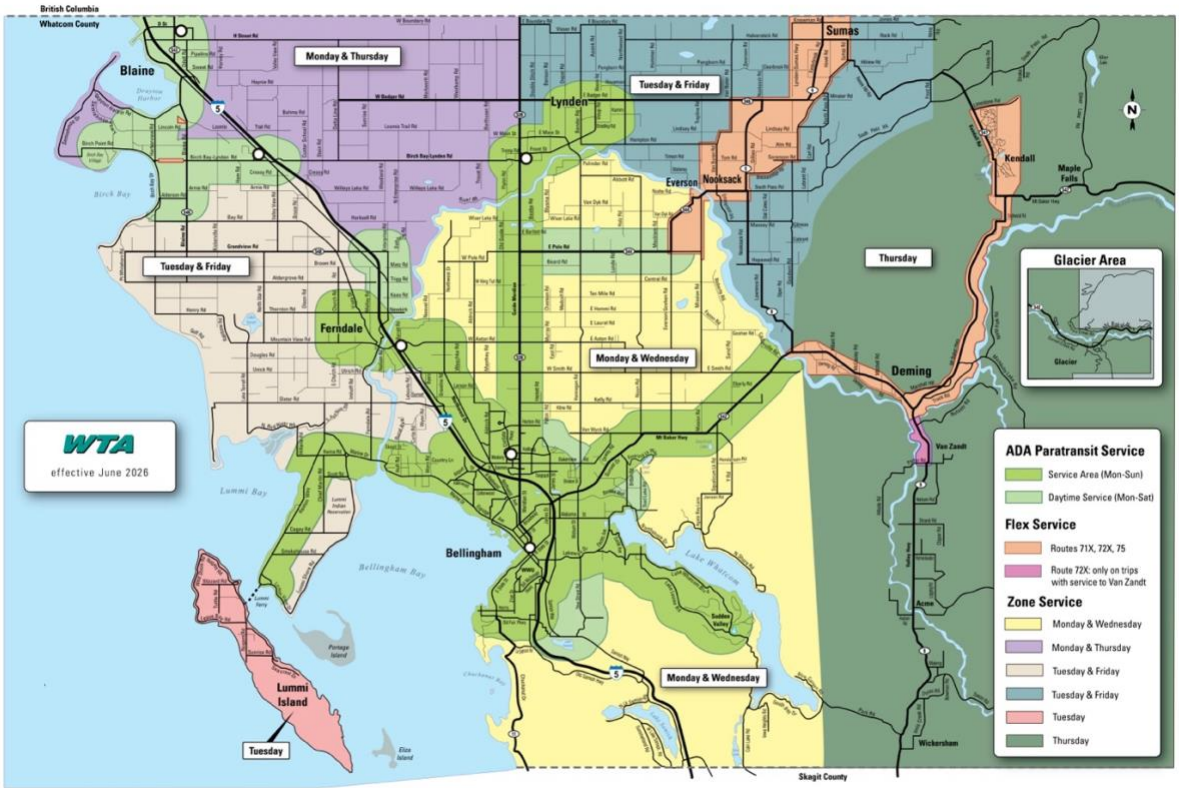
WTA paratransit service provides door-to-door transportation to riders whose disability prevents them from riding the fixed route bus system. Paratransit's service area is within ¾ mile of all fixed routes except for Flex routes and the 80x regional service route. Paratransit hours mirror WTA's fixed route hours. Figure 5-1 shows the boundaries of paratransit service.

Paratransit rides are booked in advance and can be used for any type of trip, but all riders must qualify for paratransit service beforehand.

Zone service

For those areas in the county that are not served by fixed route, WTA provides limited zone service. Figure 5-1 color codes which days WTA serves each rural region in Whatcom County. Unlike paratransit there are no eligibility restrictions for zone service, but advance reservations are required.

Figure 5-1: WTA's paratransit and zone service map



Rideshare

WTA's rideshare program has 11 vans that are used by groups of people for the purpose of commuting to and from a worksite. WTA owns the vehicle and the rideshare group pays a fare, based on distance, and assign a trained driver amongst themselves.

WTA's rideshare program had over 31,000 boardings in 2025.

Collaboration with local emergency management agencies

WTA has collaborated with Whatcom Unified Emergency Management (WUEM) on several exercises, and they have conducted trainings for WTA staff as well. WTA's Safety Director is a member of the Local Emergency Management Committee. And WTA will be participating in the Bellingham Airport Annual Disaster Drill in September.

Lummi Nation Transit

Lummi Nation Transit provides four fixed routes to serve Lummi Reservation members. In addition to stops within the reservation, Lummi Transit also stops in Ferndale and Bellingham and has connections with WTA stops. Three routes operate Monday through Friday, with one route operating daily.

Their fixed route service provides direct links to elder housing, low-income housing, health and behavioral clinics, grocery stores, fitness centers, and schools. This includes routes specifically to more affordable grocery and outlet stores in Bellingham including Grocery Outlet, WinCo, Haggen, Walgreens, and Rite Aid.

Localized community run transportation

The Raven Community Shuttle provides on-demand transportation to medical appointments, grocery trips, and social purposes to residents of Point Roberts. It uses a 6-passenger van that operates twice weekly (Tuesdays and Thursdays). On Fridays it operates a local community service. The service is provided by Point Roberts Circle of Care in coordination with WTA, who provided the van and maintenance.

Anyone can use the service, either one-way or round-trip, to anywhere within Whatcom County. Trips must be schedule by 6:00pm the night before. They primarily serve senior residents, low-income individuals, and those who no longer drive.

Non-emergency medical transportation

American Cancer Society Road to Recovery

The American Cancer Society Road to Recovery program provides free rides to cancer-related medical appointments. Their services are nationwide.

Catholic Community Services

Catholic Community Services of Western Washington provide a variety of services, including transportation, to seniors and people with disabilities.

didgʷálič Wellness Center

The didgʷálič Wellness Center is a Swinomish Indian Tribal Community's substance-use treatment clinic. While their main site is in Anacortes (Skagit County), they have two mobile medical units, one of which operates in Bellingham. They provide free transportation to their Anacortes clinic and rides to the mobile unit.

Disabled American Veterans Van

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Bellingham Chapter 19 has a van service provided by volunteer drivers to take veterans to their health appointments at the Seattle Veterans Administration Hospital.

Nooksack Tribe Community Health Services

The Nooksack Tribe's Medical Clinic Community Health and Community Nurse Services program includes prevention, wellness, and outreach services, and this includes medical visit transportation. Services are limited to Nooksack Tribe members only.

Medicaid transportation

Northwest Regional Council operates as a transportation broker under contract with WA State Health Care Authority to provide non-emergency medical transportation for eligible Medicaid recipients. Transportation options include transit, taxi service, mileage reimbursement, and gas vouchers. They also provide after-hours transportation service for those discharged from the hospital emergency room when no bus service is available. In 2024 they provided 10,133 reimbursable trips.

Volunteer Chore Program

The Volunteer Center of Whatcom County's Volunteer Chore Program provides volunteers to help seniors and adults with functional disabilities remain independent in their own homes. This includes providing transportation to essential medical appointments. This service is limited to clients who lack access to transportation from friends or family members and operates on a referral basis.

School transportation

Whatcom County's eight public school districts are required to provide transportation for all students who live more than one mile from their school. This transportation is for regularly scheduled classes as well as extracurricular activities and sporting events.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act requires school districts to also provide transportation to students currently living outside of the district due to circumstances that include being a family in transition, foster care, and other factors. For

some students, school districts contract with taxi services and other transportation providers to provide a means for the student to get to school on time.

Passenger rail

WSDOT, the Oregon Department of Transportation, and Amtrak jointly fund the Amtrak Cascades passenger rail service which operates between Eugene, OR and Vancouver, BC in Canada. Between Bellingham and Seattle, the service stops at Mt. Vernon, Stanwood, Everett, and Edmonds. In addition to two daily round-trip services by rail, Amtrak Cascades also provides twice daily intercity bus service stopping at the same rail stations.

Ferry service

Lummi Island Ferry

The Whatcom Chief car ferry is operated by Whatcom County Public Works and provides transportation between Lummi Island and the Lummi Reservation. There are multiple trips per day. Fares are discounted for drivers with special transportation needs, and children under the age of 19 and Lummi Nation tribal members ride fare-free.

Alaska Marine Highway System

Alaska's Marine Highway System is a multi-day public ferry service that connects 35 port communities in Alaska with the system's southern terminus in Bellingham. The ferry arrives and departs Bellingham every Friday from the Fairhaven Rail Station.

Private transportation options

In addition to the services listed above that are provided or subsidized by government funding, other options exist that are provided by private sector companies.

Air travel

The Bellingham International Airport (BLI) is owned and operated by the Port of Bellingham and offers commercial flights as well as private and charter flight options. 475,000 passengers arrived or departed from the airport in 2025[23].

Alaska Airlines/Horizon Air provide nonstop daily service to Seattle-Tacoma (SEA) and to Portland (OR).

Allegiant Air has weekly routes to Las Vegas (NV) and Phoenix (AZ).

[23] *Bureau of Transportation Statistics – Airports; https://www.transtats.bts.gov/airports.asp?20=E&Nv42146=OYV&Nv42146_anzr=Oryyv0tunz,%20jN:%20Oryyv0tunz%20V06r40n6v10ny&pn44vr4=SNPgf*

San Juan Airlines offers small commuter flights to Bellingham, San Juan Island (Friday Harbor and Roche Harbor), Orcas Island (Eastsound), Lopez Island, Blakely Island, Anacortes, and Point Roberts. They also provide charter flights.

Greyhound/Flixbus

Greyhound and Flixbus provide bus service to and from Bellingham. Flixbus picks up passengers from Western Washington University and has several runs daily to two locations in Seattle. Greyhound has a vast network of stations across the U.S. and picks up/drops off passengers at the Fairhaven rail station. Greyhound also provides cross-border bus service to Vancouver B.C.

CAR E ME

CAR E ME is a privately owned non-emergency medical transportation provider with a fleet of wheelchair accessible vans operating in Whatcom, Skagit, and San Juan Islands. They offer transportation for any purpose.

Bellair Charters/Airporter Shuttle

Bellair Charter's Airporter Shuttle bus service makes several daily trips from Ferndale to Sea-Tac airport with stops in between (Two stops in Bellingham, Burlington, Stanwood, Marysville, Paine Field in Everett, and the Seattle Convention Center). Individuals may also transfer at the Burlington station to their Highway 20 westbound service between Anacortes, Swinomish, and La Conner. Bellair Charters also provides transportation to Seattle sporting events.

Quick Shuttle

Quick Shuttle is a scheduled bus service connecting Sea-Tac in Seattle and downtown Vancouver, BC with stops along the way including Bellingham International Airport. The service runs several times a day. Due to cabotage rules, passengers picked up in the U.S. must go to Canada; passengers picked up in Canada must go to the U.S. (i.e. a passenger boarding in Seattle cannot get off the bus in Bellingham).

Taxis and transportation network companies

Whatcom has over a dozen licensed taxi companies. Some are primarily limo/town-car services rather than metered taxis.

Transportation network companies (TNC) facilitate ride-hailing or ridesharing service between private individuals. Both Uber and Lyft operate within Whatcom.

Mobility management

Mobility management programs help people navigate existing transportation options, working across modes and services to make connections easier to understand.

Mobility management services typically include trip planning assistance and a single point of contact to help individuals figure out which transportation service fits their need;

information and education about transportation options in the region and how to best use them; and coordination among transportation providers to help match schedules and resources.

WTA Travel Training

WTA's Travel Training program provides route planning and one-on-one coaching that helps teens, seniors, and people with disabilities confidently ride fixed route bus service throughout the county.

Whatcom Smart Trips Youth & Senior Travel Training

WCOG's Whatcom Smart Trips Program's travel training efforts focus on increasing knowledge and use of fixed route bus service amongst youth and seniors. This program partners with middle schools across the county to teach every 7th grader how to use fixed route transit. They also provide annual summer camps to help youth successfully navigate WTA's transit system and how to bike safely. The program also works with senior centers and other non-profits to provide guided bus trips that demonstrate the convenience of using the bus system to get to desired destinations.

6. Assessment of strengths and gaps

The previous chapter provided an inventory of transportation options for individuals in Whatcom. This chapter looks at how well these systems work for priority populations. The information has been gathered from public engagement efforts and interviews.

Coordinated transportation achievements

While the focus of this plan is on what changes need to be made, it is equally important to call out the regional successes. The options listed in Chapter 5 are an essential part of the solution to accessible transportation for everyone. Without these programs and services, the challenges priority populations face in getting where they need to go would be much greater.

Below are some of the aspects of Whatcom's transportation network that were called out in the public engagement effort.

> *"The best part of the transportation system? The freedom. There's no way I can get to all the places I get to so conveniently and smoothly without that transportation setup."*

WTA fixed route is a valued service

Public transportation allows individuals with mobility devices a way to be independent.

- In Bellingham transit stations and many stops are accessible, and many destinations in Bellingham are possible to get to via transit.
- Access around Lynden was praised, as was access to Blaine and Birch Bay (although infrequent).
- At Western Washington University (WWU), 86% of students self-report using WTA service at least three or more times a week. And Western's Star Light Shuttle offers on-demand transportation for students after WTA buses cease service for the day.
- WTA's bus passes provided to non-profits are valuable and used.
- Bus service to food banks is scheduled well and used by many food bank clients.

> *"I get on the bus and I am free."*

Appreciation for paratransit

Almost every paratransit rider spoken with in the outreach process expressed gratitude for the service, from the kindness of the drivers to the convenience it provides.

- The system's advanced call system that provides a five-minute warning for pickup was mentioned specifically as being a huge benefit.
- ADA transportation options are available across WWU's campus, with each dorm having a bus stop (although some are more accessible than others).

"I've been in a wheelchair half my life. I am passionate about my volunteer work, and transit is the fuel – without it I wouldn't be nearly as happy as I am."

Increased availability of taxi services in the county

Post-COVID in 2022, Northwest Regional Council struggled to find drivers capable of safely transporting clients to their medical appointments. Now there are more options available (although many come up from the Seattle metro area and are unfamiliar with local locations).

Community efforts and non-profit programs fill in needs

- The Opportunity Council's Volunteer Center operates the CHORE Program, which matches volunteers with individuals over the age of 60 and/or with a disability. They help provide rides to appointments or the grocery store. They served 170 clients last year and had around 60-72 active volunteers.
- The Bellingham, Ferndale and Foothills Food Banks collaborate to provide delivery to residents who have transportation challenges, serving about 50 homes in Ferndale, 60 households in Bellingham, and 42 households in the Foothills. They also provide food drop sites at low-income apartment complexes, the early learning center, and other locations to make it easier for families when getting to the food bank is a challenge.
- Informal carpooling networks have emerged in the Foothills as a community-based solution, focused especially eon food bank delivery days. And there is interest in establishing a more formal carpooling arrangement.

Local jurisdictions are addressing ADA accessibility issues

- Whatcom County Public Works has an ADA compliance process and an annual ADA barrier removal program that includes a GIS-based inventory of accessibility barriers in the public right-of-way. They also have a web page for reporting ADA barriers. They dedicate funds every year for removing as many barriers as they can within the budget, and they have applied for transit access improvements out of WTA's fund to address the more than $5 million in improvements needed.

- The City of Bellingham manages ADA accessibility concerns related to city buildings, facilities, roadways, and interchanges. When a solution is simple they can fix it promptly. Projects requiring major upgrades are added to the city's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Separated bicycle lanes in Bellingham have been an important improvement for those who bike with mobility issues, because recumbent bikes can be hard for drivers to see.

Transportation system gaps

The lack of a personal vehicle was the most reported obstacle for getting to where people need to go. But service challenges and other issues were called out by those who responded to questions.

Infrequent county transit service

- Those living within the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area may face many challenges that include the cost of owning and maintaining vehicles, limited bus routes, and difficulties in coordinating transportation care and job shifts with transit schedules. WTA vanpool requirements limit the ability to establish rideshare service. A cycle of poverty and joblessness results from inadequate transportation options.
- Ferndale has southbound service only once an hour. The downtown loop route leaves accessibility issues for some neighborhoods. Not including the Blaine express, bus trips south from Ferndale have long travel times with multiple stops and transfers needed for many destinations.
- Seniors in Birch Bay and Blaine note a lack of regular service between the senior center and downtown, and a lack of Sunday service. Some noted they can only get out of the house and to stores and doctors with the help of volunteers.
- Workers at Silver Reef Hotel and Casino that live outside the area face difficulties getting home after late shifts.
- To go from Ferndale to Lynden riders must go to Bellingham and then head north again.
- There is no fixed-route service for the Britton Road annexed area.

Concerns over fare increases

- Even with fares capped monthly, the cost may prove too much for many Whatcom residents who live in poverty. For those using fixed routes, the fare increase may be too much to use transit as much as before.
- The number of free bus passes provided to human services agencies do not meet demand.

Priority populations may struggle with new farebox technology

- For seniors and those with mental disabilities, electronic fare systems may present intimidating challenges since it requires the use of technology.

- Formerly popular methods of paying for fares are less complicated. Cash has no fare cap and individuals must use a payment station to add cash to a Gold Card.

ADA accessibility issues create barriers

- The list of known ADA non-compliant infrastructure gaps is long, and there isn't enough funding to fix it all.
- Some ADA "compliant" facilities may check off a box for being accessible but actually don't work for someone with a wheelchair or who is visually impaired.
- Roundabouts are difficult to navigate for pedestrians with sight impairments.
- Many parks are inaccessible.
- Fixed-route buses often have only enough space for two mobility devices.

"The most frustrating thing is when everything is accessible – maybe it's clunky, maybe it takes longer – but [the trip] cannot be completed because you cannot cross from one side of the road to the other."

The region lacks reliable and affordable regional transportation options

- Many WWU students have vehicles on campus just so they can go home on weekends. If there was more frequent regional service to the greater Puget Sound that might negate the need to bring a vehicle up for that purpose only.
- Many Medicaid clients needing to go to other counties for medical appointments would be able to use a regional transit option if available. Since there isn't one that works for appointment schedules, most must be transported by taxi.

Recreational areas are hard to reach

- Larrabee State Park is inaccessible without a personal vehicle, and Mt. Baker's ski area is a logistical challenge that requires personal vehicles.
- Some bus stops are along busy roads that make it unsafe for those with mobility devices.
- There are safety concerns regarding pedestrians and cyclists in and around Birch Bay and Blaine, where county roads have minimal shoulders and no sidewalk.

"I live in Lynden and primarily utilize paratransit for transportation, means I could spend 3 hours on the bus to do an activity that is 20 minutes away from my house. It just doesn't make sense."

Specialized transport for seniors and those with disabilities require trained drivers and equipment

- While WTA's paratransit service provides door-to-door assistance, Lummi Transit is unable to provide this as their drivers are not trained to safely move individuals with mobility challenges.
- Local services like The Raven need vehicles with better accessibility features.
- The ramps on the new fixed-route buses require a flat surface, otherwise they don't work. The paratransit vehicles at least have a manual option.
- There is a lack of ADA accessible taxi service options.
- Uber and Lyft have a notification box that informs drivers that the person they are picking up has a disability. Even though it is against the law to discriminate against picking up individuals with a disability, many drivers drive off without picking up a person once they see their mobility device or service dog.

Volunteer ride programs underserve rural populations

The CHORE program's reimbursement rate is low, discouraging volunteers from driving longer distances. And there is a lack of volunteers willing to travel outside Whatcom County.

"If you could prioritize one gap to fix to improve the mobility of you/your clients, what would it be?"

Throughout the public engagement process, every person was asked the same question: if you could prioritize one gap to fix that would improve the mobility of you/your clients, what would it be?

Responses have been grouped by theme. Note that comments were received through public engagement and have not been independently verified for accuracy.

Transit-related elements

- Reduce the wide pickup window in paratransit to make it easier for work schedules.
- Provide fare-free transit service.
- Offer training on etiquette working with individuals with disabilities.
- Develop some sort of subscription service for paratransit riders with predictable, daily ride requirements (i.e. to work).
- Extend paratransit hours because individuals with disabilities that live outside Bellingham can't participate in social activities and gatherings that occur past 4 PM.
- Increase transit frequency and stops in Ferndale.
- Improve rural transit service frequency.

New connection services

- Create a localized shuttle service to connect Columbia Valley communities to essential services such as laundromats, grocery stores, and pharmacies.
- Develop hyper-local transportation services that fulfill basic needs, i.e. a shuttle circling between the senior housing facilities in Bellingham, the pharmacy, and the grocery store.
- Provide a regular shuttle service to various locations for low-income individuals – to the Way Station, food bank, the courthouse, etc.
- Create a shuttle service providing access to grocery stores, medical complexes, and parks for those with disabilities.
- Expand or create a paratransit-like service for those who need the assistance but do not qualify for paratransit.

Regional connectivity

- Develop a better way to connect to Richmond BC/SkyTrain via bus, and a way to connect Bellingham to Lynnwood light rail.
- Create a reliable regional transportation option that connects Bellingham and Vancouver, BC and Bellingham and Seattle.
- Increase trail connectivity more broadly through the region with a focus on Birch Bay with its growing population.

Other

- Provide more vanpool and carpool options for employees and students at WWU.
- Fund additional staffing for Lummi Transit to meet growing demand.

7. Strategies to address gaps

What have we learned from the data and the feedback?

It's no surprise that lacking access to a personal vehicle presents major obstacles for individuals to get to where they need to go. With an aging population, the costs of owning a vehicle increasing every year, and the population growth in small cities and unincorporated areas, the need for *useful* transportation alternatives to personal cars is greater than ever.

This is reflected in the region's comprehensive plans. The transportation elements of every jurisdictional comprehensive plan include goals to improve multimodal level of service. Active transportation and transit are key components of the transportation strategies of the cities and small towns, as well as the County.

We know that the transportation options currently available fulfill much of what our community needs. We also know that there are gaps in accessibility to address.

The biggest gaps are outside of Bellingham. There are noted instances of ADA inaccessibility within Bellingham city limits, and bus schedules that don't meet everyone's needs. But it is outside of the city that most transportation gaps were reported, both connections between smaller cities and the rural communities that are seeing notable growths in population.

Cost is a barrier to transportation. This extends beyond the cost of owning a vehicle. While WTA's fare increase will hopefully be a minimal impact for the majority of its riders, many among Whatcom's priority populations have expressed concerns about the impact on their lives. The costs to travel outside of Whatcom are significant. And, when there is no transit option for someone on a schedule, taxi or ride hailing services are too expensive.

For those with disabilities, transportation is time-consuming. The window of paratransit pick-ups and drop-offs continues to challenge paratransit riders trying to hold down a job. Errands that are simple for some may be an all-day proposition with multiple transit transfers for someone with a disability.

Transportation has a role in the cycle of poverty. The 2024 East Whatcom Food Landscape Assessment showed how transportation and the high cost of groceries are the primary reasons why community members cannot access healthy food (60% of respondents)[24].The most affordable food and shopping locations are hard to get to for those outside of Bellingham, meaning more of their income is being spent on higher-cost options. Those that can't get to a job based on transit schedules lose those jobs and lose the ability to save for other transportation options.

While considering strategies to address these issues, it is important to keep in mind the regional transportation goals established in the current regional/metropolitan

[24] *Foothills Food Bank, 2024 East Whatcom County Food Landscape Assessment: https://www.foothillsfoodbank.org/_files/ugd/33877c_e3fa0fd444a04d5c9a2f1e64e3a2e3f4.pdf*

transportation plan that will be carried forward in the new Transport 2050: Whatcom's Regional & Metropolitan Transportation Plan. More specifically, **Goal 6: Access, equity, and economic opportunity** - The region's transportation system should work for all people; should acknowledge and reduce barriers related to age (seniors and youth), income, and physical ability; and should connect people to resources, services, and opportunities critical to economic success (especially education and employment).

HSTP goals and strategies

The HSTP & Consolidated Grants Advisory Committee has developed a set of goals and strategies that guide this planning effort:

Goal 1: Maintain and improve existing transportation services.

Strategy 1.1 - Continue existing transportation service levels to ensure no new gaps are created.

Strategy 1.2 - Maintain and expand education and training programs to help community members use the existing transportation system.

Goal 2: Improve connections to and between rural communities.

Strategy 2.1 - Develop a transportation service between East Whatcom communities, Whatcom's smaller cities, and Bellingham.

Strategy 2.2 - Improve transportation frequency, connectivity, and multimodal options between all of the Whatcom region, including Lummi Nation, rural communities, towns, and cities.

Goal 3: Improve transportation system usability and access for everyone regardless of age, income, or disability.

Strategy 3.1 - Ensure services are safe, convenient, and usable (at or above the level for standard service) for those with special transportation needs.

Strategy 3.2 - Provide reduced-cost or fare-free options.

Strategy 3.3 - Build, maintain, and improve infrastructure to more safely serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders, with a focus on reducing barriers for those with disabilities.

Goal 4: Improve multimodal connections to common destinations outside of Whatcom County.

Strategy 4.1 - Develop affordable and accessible transportation connection between Whatcom County and the light rail service in the Puget Sound.

Strategy 4.2 - Develop ways to improve transportation connections between Whatcom County, Lower Mainland British Columbia, and neighboring counties.

8. Regional priorities for implementation

Using these goals and strategies, this HSTP has identified priority projects for funding and implementation in our region.

Existing projects

These are programs and services already being provided that need continuing funding.

Maintain existing transit service levels

Reducing transit and paratransit options that currently exist at WTA and Lummi Transit would lead to further gaps. As a baseline, it is important to keep the solutions that are working funded and functional. **Strategy 1.1, Strategy 2.2**

Maintain existing mobility management and travel training programs

Mobility management programs operating in Whatcom have increased the understanding, usability, and functionality of regional transit. WTA and WCOG offer different types of training and assistance and help those who might otherwise struggle to use fixed-route service find a method of getting where they need to go as easily as possible. **Strategy 1.2**

Proposed projects

These are projects new to 2026 that address specific gaps and align with this plan's goals and strategies.

Demand response shuttle service for East Whatcom

A proposed project for a new ADA-accessible rural transportation service for East Whatcom would combine scheduled regional connectors with flexible, reservation-based service to connect rural communities with health care, grocery stores, work sites, youth and community activities, Sumas and Lynden services, and the existing WTA network without duplicating existing transit. **Strategy 2.1**

ADA improvements in Whatcom County

Whatcom County wants to improve transit stops in unincorporated regions to ADA standards. This project will fund necessary improvements. **Strategy 3.3**

Future projects

These future projects are currently in the planning stage, but they are possible ways to meet HSTP goals that are not being addressed by an existing or proposed project.

Link light rail connector

A private carrier company could be contracted to connect Whatcom County (Ferndale park and ride and Bellingham's Fairhaven rail station?) to the Link light rail station in Lynnwood. Ideally, this service would offer multiple departures throughout the day. **Strategy 4.1**

B.C. light rail connector

A private carrier company could be contracted to connect the region with the B.C. SkyTrain's southernmost station in Richmond B.C. **Strategy 4.2**

9. Appendices

Appendix A: Outreach contact list

Initial contact list

Organization	Category
Aging Well Whatcom	Elderly Services
Airow Project	Disability Services
ARC of Whatcom County	Low-Income Services
Bellingham City Council	Transportation Planning
Bellingham Food Bank	Low-Income Services
Bellingham Housing Authority	Low-Income Services
Bellingham School District	Education
Bellingham Senior Activity Center	Elderly Services
Bellingham Technical College	Education
Bellingham Veterans Center	Disability Services
Blaine City Council	Transportation Planning
Blaine Public Works	Transportation Planning
Blaine School District	Education
Blaine-Birch Bay Park & Recreations District 2	Disability Services
Braille Transcriber, Whatcom Community College	Disability Services
Cascade Connections	Disability Services
Catholic Community Services	Disability Services
Center for Independence	Disability Services
Center for Independence Washington	Disability Services
City of Bellingham	Transportation Planning
City of Bellingham ADA Coordinator	Disability Services
City of Blaine	Transportation Planning
City of Everson	Transportation Planning
City of Everson	Transportation Planning
City of Ferndale	Transportation Planning
City of Lynden	Transportation Planning
City of Nooksack	Transportation Planning
City of Sumas	Transportation Planning
DSHS	Low-Income Services
DSHS Social Services	Health Services
Elder Service Committee	Elderly Services

Ferndale Food Bank	Low-Income Services
Ferndale School District	Education
Ferndale Senior Center	Elderly Services
Futures NW	Low-Income Services
Lake Whatcom Water & Sewer Dist.	Transportation Planning
Lighthouse Mission	Low-Income Services
Lummi Indian Business Council	Tribal
Lummi Transit	Transit Agency
Lydia Place	Low-Income Services
Max Higbee Center	Disability Services
Medicaid Transportation Services, NW Regional Council	Health Services
Mercy Housing NW	Elderly Services
Mt Baker School District	Education
Nooksack Indian Tribe	Tribal
Nooksack Valley School District	Education
North Sound ACH	Health Services
Northwest Spinal Injury Network	Disability Services
NW Youth Services	Youth Services
Office of Emergency Management	Transportation Planning
Opportunity Council	Low-Income Services
Point Roberts Taxpayers Association	Government
Port of Bellingham	Transportation Planning
Road2Home	Low-Income Services
Sehome Planning and Engineering	Transportation Planning
St. Pauls Alms Ministry	Low-Income Services
Sterling Senior Housing	Elderly Services
Sun Community Service	Low-Income Services
United Blind of Whatcom County	Disability Services
Unity Care	Health Services
Vintage at Bellingham	Elderly Services
WA Dept of Youth & Family Services	Youth Services
Washington Traffic Safety Commission - Region 11	Transportation Planning
Western Washington University	Transportation Planning
Whatcom Center for Early Learning	Youth Services
Whatcom Community College	Education
Whatcom Council on Aging	Elderly Services
Whatcom County	Transportation Planning
Whatcom County Community Health	Health Services
Whatcom County Council	Transportation Planning

Whatcom County Public Works	Transportation Planning
Whatcom Health & Community Services	Low-Income Services
Whatcom Racial Equity Commission	Low-Income Services
Whatcom Transportation Authority	Transit Agency
Whatcom YWCA	Low-Income Services
Willows/Retirement Communities	Elderly Services
Work Opportunities	Disability Services
YMCA	Low-Income Services
Youth Action Board	Youth Services

Interviewed agencies

Aging Well Whatcom
Airow Project
Bellingham School District
Bellingham Senior Activity Center
Blaine-Birch Bay Park & Recreations District 2
Cascade Connections
Chuckanut Health Foundation
City of Bellingham ADA Coordinator
City of Ferndale
Community First Whatcom
Ferndale Food Bank
Foothills Food Bank
Lummi Transit
Lynden Community Center (Director)
Max Higbee Center
Medicaid Transportation Services, NW Regional Council
Opportunity Council
Point Roberts The Raven
Road2Home
United Blind of Whatcom County
Washington Traffic Safety Commission - Region 11
Western Washington University
Whatcom County
Whatcom Family & Community Network
Whatcom Transportation Authority

Appendix B: Community-Based Organization interview questions

One-on-one interviews were unique for each CBO given the organization's mission. That said, a set of questions was asked of all those we spoke with.

1. Talk about the community members you serve.
2. What transportation services does your agency work with or provide?
3. Which of those are working well?
4. What has prevented your clients from making the trips they need?
5. Do they have transportation needs beyond Whatcom County?
6. If you could prioritize one gap to fix to improve the mobility of your clients, what would it be?

Appendix C: Key informant interview questions

Like the CBO interviews, these longer discussions were unique to each individual/group of individuals, but these are the questions that were asked when relevant.

1. How many motor vehicles in working condition are available in your household (cars, trucks, motorcycles, RVs, etc.)?
2. What methods (modes) of transportation do you use, and how often do you use them?
3. What are the easiest trips for you to make?
4. What are the hardest trips? Can you tell me why they are difficult?
5. Are there any specific destinations that you find especially challenging to reach?
6. How often do you travel outside of Whatcom County?
7. In the past month have you had to reschedule an appointment because of a problem with transportation?
8. What are some of the reasons you were unable to make a trip you wanted in the past month?
9. If you could prioritize one thing to change to make your ability to get around easier, what would it be?
10. Origins/Destinations: Can you tell me your primary origins and destinations in a week? How often do you travel to these locations?
11. How do you get your groceries/medical supplies/laundry?
12. If there was a transportation service that would benefit you, what would that look like?
13. Optional: Age, Race/ethnicity

Appendix D: HSTP Transportation Needs Survey

English language version:

WHATCOM HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

whatcom council of governments

Human services transportation serves people with special transportation needs — individuals who are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation because of a disability, income status, or age.

Every four years the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) updated our region's Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). The HSTP identifies transportation gaps for people with special transportation needs, and it informs the WA State Department of Transportation of our regional priorities and funding needsæ.

We need to hear from you. How do you get around Whatcom? What's working well? What isn't? Your feedback will be used to develop recommendations to improve access and mobility, safety, and the user experience for everyone in our community.





TAKE THE SURVEY: ⟶

Please take this brief survey to provide feedback on how to improve transportation options for everyone in Whatcom County. You can fill out the survey on this form and hand it to WCOG staff, or take the survey online at wcog.org/hstp or by using the QR code on this page. You can also email us at participate@wcog.org to give us your input!

TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

1. What methods of transportation do you use, and how often do you use them?

	Every day	A few times a week	A few times a month	A few times a year	Rarely/ Never
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transit (bus, ferry)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Carpool ONLY with household members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bicycle/scooter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taxi/Uber/Lyft	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ask for rides from friends/family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. How often do you travel outside of Whatcom County?

- ◯ Daily
- ◯ A few times a week
- ◯ A few times a month
- ◯ A few times a year
- ◯ Rarely/never

3. In the past 30 days did you miss, cancel, or reschedule an appointment because of a problem with transportation?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

4. Which of the following, if any, prevented you from making a trip you wanted to make in the past month? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Not applicable/no issues
- ☐ No accessibility for a mobility device (e.g. wheelchair, walker)
- ☐ No available working vehicle
- ☐ No transit (bus) available to get to destination on time
- ☐ Cost of transit was too high
- ☐ Travel time was too long
- ☐ No safe walking or biking route
- ☐ Cost of vehicle trip was too high
- ☐ Weather conditions prevented travel
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Please provide your home zip code:

6. If you could prioritize one thing to change to make your ability to get around easier, what would it be?

7. How many motor vehicles in working condition are available in your household? (including cars, trucks, motorcycles, RVs, etc.)

Note: The following questions are optional.

8. What is your age?

- ○ 13-17
- ○ 18-24
- ○ 25-34
- ○ 35-44
- ○ 45-54
- ○ 55-64
- ○ 65-74
- ○ 75-84
- ○ 85 or older

9. What is your race/ethnicity?
(Select all that apply)

- ☐ African American or Black
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other

10. If you would like copies of the plan, please provide your email:

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS?

Please write down any other comments or questions you have on the next page. →

Thank you!

For more information, please visit: www.wcog.org/hstp
or scan the QR code:

Or contact:
Melissa Fanucci, Principal Planner
Whatcom Council of Governments
(360) 685-8385
melissa@wcog.org

Spanish language version:

PLAN DE TRANSPORTE PARA SERVICIOS HUMANOS DE WHATCOM

whatcom council of governments

El transporte de servicios humanos atiende a personas con necesidades especiales de transporte: individuos que no pueden desplazarse por sus propios medios ni costearse el transporte debido a una discapacidad, su nivel de ingresos o su edad.

Cada cuatro años, el Consejo de Gobiernos de Whatcom (WCOG), una agencia regional de planificación del transporte, elabora un Plan de Transporte para Servicios Humanos, el cual evalúa las opciones de transporte existentes, identifica las deficiencias en el sistema de transporte y desarrolla estrategias para mejorar dichas deficiencias. Este plan informa al Departamento de Transporte del Estado de Washington sobre nuestras prioridades regionales, lo que les ayuda a determinar la clasificación de las solicitudes de financiamiento de proyectos.

Necesitamos saber qué piensas. ¿Cómo te mueves en Whatcom? ¿Qué funciona bien? ¿Qué no funciona? Tus comentarios serán utilizados para elaborar recomendaciones para mejorar el acceso y la movilidad, la seguridad y la experiencia del usuario para todos los miembros de nuestra comunidad.





PARTICIPA EN LA ENCUESTA: ⟶

Por favor, completa esta breve encuesta para darnos tu opinión sobre cómo mejorar las opciones de transporte para todos los residentes del condado de Whatcom. Puedes completar la encuesta en este formulario y entregarla al personal de WCOG, o también realizarla en línea en wcog.org/hstp-espanol o mediante el código QR de esta página. ¡También puedes enviarnos tus comentarios por correo electrónico a participate@wcog.org !

ENCUESTA DE TRANSPORTE

1. ¿Qué medios de transporte utilizas y con qué frecuencia?

	Todos los días	Unas veces a la semana	Unas veces al mes	Unas veces al año	Casi nunca/ nunca
Manejo solo en mi auto	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transporte público (autobús, ferry)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transporte adaptado	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comparto el mismo auto ÚNICAMENTE con miembros del hogar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comparto el mismo auto con otras personas que no viven en el mismo hogar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bicicleta/patín	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Camino	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taxi/Uber/Lyft	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pido prestado un vehículo a amigos o familiares.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pido a mis amigos o familiares que me lleven.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Viajes a través de un programa de conductores voluntarios.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. ¿Con qué frecuencia viajas fuera del condado de Whatcom?

- ◯ Diario
- ◯ Unas cuantas veces a la semana
- ◯ Unas cuantas veces al mes
- ◯ Unas cuantas veces al año
- ◯ Rara vez/nunca

3. En los últimos 30 días, ¿faltaste, cancelaste o reprogramaste una cita debido a un problema de transporte?

- ◯ Sí
- ◯ No

4. ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones, si alguna, te impidió realizar un viaje que deseabas hacer el mes pasado? (Selecciona todas las que correspondan)

- ☐ No aplica / sin problemas
- ☐ No hay acceso para aparatos de movilidad (por ejemplo, sillas de ruedas, andadores).
- ☐ No hay vehículos en funcionamiento disponibles.
- ☐ No hay transporte público (autobús) disponible para llegar al destino a tiempo.
- ☐ El costo del transporte era demasiado alto.
- ☐ El tiempo de viaje fue demasiado largo.
- ☐ No hay ruta segura para caminar o andar en bicicleta.
- ☐ El costo del viaje en vehículo fue demasiado alto.
- ☐ Las condiciones climáticas impidieron el viaje.
- ☐ Otro: _____

5. Por favor, comparte tu código postal:

6. Si pudieras priorizar un cambio para facilitar tu movilidad ¿cuál sería?

7. ¿Cuántos vehículos motorizados en buen estado de funcionamiento hay en tu hogar? (incluyendo automóviles, camionetas, motocicletas, casas rodantes, etc.)

Nota: Las siguientes preguntas son opcionales.

8. ¿Cuál es tu edad?

- ◯ 13-17
- ◯ 18-24
- ◯ 25-34
- ◯ 35-44
- ◯ 45-54
- ◯ 55-64
- ◯ 65-74
- ◯ 75-84
- ◯ 85 o más

9. ¿Cuál es tu raza/etnicidad?
(Selecciona todas las opciones que correspondan)

- ☐ Afroamericano o negro
- ☐ Indígena americano o nativo de Alaska
- ☐ Asiático
- ☐ Hispano, latino o español
- ☐ Nativo hawaiano u otro isleño del Pacífico
- ☐ Blanco
- ☐ Otra

10. Si deseas recibir copias del plan, por favor comparte tu correo electrónico:

¿COMENTARIOS ADICIONALES?

Por favor, escribe cualquier otro comentario o pregunta que tengas en la página siguiente. →

¡Gracias!

Para obtener más información,
visite: www.wcog.org/hstp

También puedes contactar a:
Melissa Fanucci, Principal Planner
Whatcom Council of Governments
(360) 685-8385
melissa@wcog.org

Appendix E: East Whatcom Transportation Survey

English language version:

WHERE DO YOU NEED TO GO?

We want to know what kind of transit or ride service would be the most beneficial for people in East Whatcom. Please answer the questions below. THANK YOU!

whatcom council of governments

Would you use a community ride service for shopping?

○ NO ○ YES If YES, answer the questions below:

Where would you need to go? _____

Which days would you use it?

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

What time of day would you usually need a ride?

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Would you use a community ride service for health appointments?

○ NO ○ YES If YES, answer the questions below:

Where would you need to go? _____

Which days would you use it?

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

What time of day would you usually need a ride?

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Would you use a community ride service for work or school?

○ NO ○ YES If YES, answer the questions below:

Where would you need to go? _____

Which days would you use it?

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

What time of day would you usually need a ride?

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Would you use a community ride service to visit friends or family?

○ NO ○ YES If YES, answer the questions below:

Where would you need to go? _____

Which days would you use it?

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

What time of day would you usually need a ride?

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Continues next page →

Would you use a community ride service for recreation?

○ NO ○ YES If YES, answer the questions below:

Where would you need to go? _____

Which days would you use it?

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

What time of day would you usually need a ride?

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Would you use a community ride service for errands?

○ NO ○ YES If YES, answer the questions below:

Where would you need to go? _____

Which days would you use it?

☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

What time of day would you usually need a ride?

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Are there other reasons you might use a community ride service?

Please describe: _____

Other comments?

OPTIONAL INFO

Where do you live?

☐ Acme
☐ Columbia Valley
☐ Deming
☐ Glacier
☐ Glenhaven
☐ Kendall
☐ Maple Falls
☐ Nugent's Corner
☐ Rome/Goshen
☐ VanZandt
☐ Wickersham
☐ Other: _____

What is your age?

○ 13-17
○ 18-24
○ 25-34
○ 35-44
○ 45-54
○ 55-64
○ 65-74
○ 75-84
○ 85 or older

What is your race/ethnicity?

(Select all that apply)

☐ African American or Black
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian
☐ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
☐ White
☐ Other: _____

If you provide your email address we will use it only if we have a follow-up question:

THANK YOU!

Spanish language version:

¿A DÓNDE TIENES QUE IR?

Queremos saber qué tipo de transporte o servicio de transporte sería el más beneficioso para la gente de East Whatcom. Por favor, responde a las preguntas aparecen a continuación. ¡GRACIAS!

whatcom council of governments

¿Utilizarías un servicio de transporte comunitario para ir de compras?

○ NO ○ Sí En caso afirmativo, responde las siguientes preguntas:

¿Adónde necesitarías ir? _____

¿Qué días utilizarías el servicio?

☐ Lunes ☐ Martes ☐ Miércoles ☐ Jueves ☐ Viernes ☐ Sábado ☐ Domingo

¿En qué momento del día utilizarías el servicio típicamente?

☐ En la mañana ☐ En la tarde ☐ En la noche

¿Utilizarías un servicio de transporte comunitario para citas médicas?

○ NO ○ Sí En caso afirmativo, responde las siguientes preguntas:

¿Adónde necesitarías ir? _____

¿Qué días utilizarías el servicio?

☐ Lunes ☐ Martes ☐ Miércoles ☐ Jueves ☐ Viernes ☐ Sábado ☐ Domingo

¿En qué momento del día utilizarías el servicio típicamente?

☐ En la mañana ☐ En la tarde ☐ En la noche

¿Utilizarías un servicio de transporte comunitario para ir al trabajo o a la escuela?

○ NO ○ Sí En caso afirmativo, responde las siguientes preguntas:

¿Adónde necesitarías ir? _____

¿Qué días utilizarías el servicio?

☐ Lunes ☐ Martes ☐ Miércoles ☐ Jueves ☐ Viernes ☐ Sábado ☐ Domingo

¿En qué momento del día utilizarías el servicio típicamente?

☐ En la mañana ☐ En la tarde ☐ En la noche

¿Utilizarías un servicio de transporte comunitario para visitar a amigos o a familiares?

○ NO ○ Sí En caso afirmativo, responde las siguientes preguntas:

¿Adónde necesitarías ir? _____

¿Qué días utilizarías el servicio?

☐ Lunes ☐ Martes ☐ Miércoles ☐ Jueves ☐ Viernes ☐ Sábado ☐ Domingo

¿En qué momento del día utilizarías el servicio típicamente?

☐ En la mañana ☐ En la tarde ☐ En la noche

Continúa en la página siguiente →

¿Utilizarías un servicio de transporte comunitario con fines recreativos?

○ NO ○ Sí En caso afirmativo, responda las siguientes preguntas:

¿Adónde necesitarías ir? _____

¿Qué días lo usarías?

☐ Lunes ☐ Martes ☐ Miércoles ☐ Jueves ☐ Viernes ☐ Sábado ☐ Domingo

¿A qué hora del día suele necesitar un viaje?

☐ Mañana ☐ Tarde ☐ Noche

¿Utilizarías un servicio de transporte comunitario para hacer mandados?

○ NO ○ Sí En caso afirmativo, responda las siguientes preguntas:

¿Adónde necesitarías ir? _____

¿Qué días lo usarías?

☐ Lunes ☐ Martes ☐ Miércoles ☐ Jueves ☐ Viernes ☐ Sábado ☐ Domingo

¿A qué hora del día suele necesitar un viaje?

☐ Mañana ☐ Tarde ☐ Noche

¿Existen otras razones por las que podrías utilizar un servicio de transporte comunitario?

Favor de describir: _____

Otros comentarios:

INFORMACIÓN OPCIONAL

¿Dónde vives?

☐ Acme
☐ Columbia Valley
☐ Deming
☐ Glacier
☐ Glenhaven
☐ Kendall
☐ Maple Falls
☐ Nugent's Corner
☐ Rome/Goshen
☐ VanZandt
☐ Wickersham
☐ Otro lugar: _____

¿Cuál es tu edad?

○ 13-17
○ 18-24
○ 25-34
○ 35-44
○ 45-54
○ 55-64
○ 65-74
○ 75-84
○ 85 o más

¿Cuál es tu raza/etnia?

(Selecciona todas las opciones que correspondan)

☐ Afroamericano o negro
☐ Indígena americano o nativo de Alaska
☐ Asiático
☐ Hispano, latino o español
☐ Nativo hawaiano u otro isleño del Pacífico
☐ Blanco
☐ Otro: _____

Si proporcionas tu correo electrónico, lo utilizaremos únicamente si tenemos alguna pregunta de seguimiento:

¡GRACIAS!

Appendix F: HSTP and Consolidated Grants Advisory Committee Members

- Connie Alvarez, Lummi Nation Transit
- Jason Ardt, Whatcom County Public Works
- Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority
- Allison de la Bruere, Aging Well Whatcom
- Kat DeNicola, National Federation of the Blind
- Heather Lindsay, Blaine – Birch Bay Parks & Recreation District #2
- Eukia LeMaster, Community First Whatcom
- Kristina Michele, Chuckanut Health Foundation

Appendix G: Written Comments Submitted on the Draft HSTP

The following pages contain written comments submitted during the public review period for the draft HSTP.

Public Comment on the Draft 2026 Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan

Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2

Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2 (BBBPRD2) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft 2026 Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan.

Transportation Access for an Aging Population

Transportation can be a significant barrier for older adults who no longer drive, limit their driving, or live on fixed or limited incomes. In North Whatcom, residents often need to travel to Bellingham or other communities for medical care, shopping, services, recreation, and other needs.

The draft HSTP recognizes the significant growth of Whatcom County's senior population and identifies infrequent service in Blaine and Birch Bay. It also notes that some seniors rely on volunteers to reach stores and medical appointments.

For older adults, simply having a transit route available does not necessarily mean transportation is practical. Frequency, travel time, transfers, hours and days of service, and the ability to safely reach a transit stop all matter. BBBPRD2 encourages greater emphasis on improving transportation frequency, efficiency, and connectivity within Blaine and Birch Bay and between North Whatcom, Bellingham, and other Whatcom County communities.

The District also encourages WCOG to consider whether broader geographic and income data may mask pockets of lower-income and fixed-income households within Blaine and Birch Bay. Where possible, localized data and community input should be considered when evaluating transportation needs so that residents experiencing the greatest barriers are accurately represented.

Supporting Community-Based Transportation

BBBPRD2 encourages the HSTP to recognize and support nonprofits, public agencies, and community organizations that can help fill transportation gaps.

Organizations that already have vehicles and transportation programs may be able to supplement traditional transit by providing access to destinations or activities that are difficult to reach through fixed-route service. BBBPRD2's bus is one example, providing transportation for field trips, recreation and social activities, community outings, and trips to Bellingham and other destinations.

The District encourages WCOG to explore partnerships, coordination, and funding opportunities that help qualified community organizations use existing transportation resources to serve older adults and other priority populations.

A Safe Blaine–Birch Bay Path

BBBPRD2 strongly encourages development of a **safe, accessible pedestrian and multi-use path connecting Blaine and Birch Bay** as a regional transportation priority.

Currently, there is no continuous safe pedestrian connection between these neighboring communities. The draft HSTP identifies safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists in Blaine and Birch Bay, including county roads with minimal shoulders and no sidewalks. It also notes that separated bicycle lanes in Bellingham have been an important improvement for people who bike with mobility issues. This demonstrates the value that safe, separated infrastructure can provide.

A Blaine–Birch Bay path is more than a recreational amenity; it is transportation infrastructure. A safe connection would provide another mobility option, support healthy aging, and connect residents to services, recreation, activities, and one another.

Moving Forward

For older adults, transportation barriers can become **social barriers**. When someone cannot safely drive, walk, bike, or access practical transportation, they may lose more than access to appointments and groceries. They can also lose access to friends, activities, community meals, recreation, volunteering, and the everyday interactions that keep people connected to their community. Improving mobility is therefore also an important part of reducing social isolation and supporting healthy aging.

BBBPRD2 encourages the final HSTP to prioritize:

1. **Improved transit frequency, efficiency, and connectivity** for Blaine and Birch Bay;
2. **Support for community-based transportation providers**, including partnerships and funding opportunities that allow organizations to help fill transportation gaps; and
3. **Development of a safe, accessible pedestrian and multi-use path connecting Blaine and Birch Bay.**

These priorities are interconnected. For an aging population, transportation is not simply about reaching a destination. It provides access to **health care, food, services, recreation, relationships, independence, and community.** A strong transportation system should give older adults more than a way to get somewhere—it should give them the ability to remain connected, independent, and engaged in the communities they call home.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and for considering these priorities as the 2026 Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan is finalized.

Blaine-Birch Bay Park and Recreation District 2

Recreation Northwest Trails Coalition

October 7, 2026

Re: Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan Public Comment

Dear Melissa,

Thank you for facilitating today's public meeting regarding the draft 2026 Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan. On behalf of the Recreation Northwest Trails Coalition, I want to express our appreciation for the Council's work in identifying the gaps and needs facing individuals with special transportation requirements across Whatcom County.

The mission of the Recreation Northwest Trails Coalition is to champion interconnected regional trails as active transportation networks across Whatcom County. While human services transportation plans often focus on vehicular and specialized transit services, our coalition urges the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) to recognize that safe, accessible pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal paths are foundational pillars of mobility justice.

The draft plan addresses core demographics who cannot drive or purchase vehicle transportation due to physical or mental disabilities, age (youth and older adults), and income status.

For young people and lower-income residents, dependence on automobile ownership or strict bus schedules can severely restrict access to schools, employment, grocery stores, and community services. Low-stress, off-road shared-use paths offer a zero-cost, safe, and self-directed route to daily destinations, granting non-drivers full agency over their personal mobility.

Accessible active transportation corridors—built with paved surfaces, smooth grades, adequate lighting, tactile paving, and audible cues—provide individuals with disabilities and older adults a dignified, reliable alternative for micromobility (mobility scooters, electric tricycles, wheelchair transit, and adaptive bikes). Physical connection to outdoor spaces fosters essential health benefits, reduces isolation, and encourages broader social inclusion.

Active transportation infrastructure enhances the reach of fixed-route transit systems. Ensuring safe pedestrian and multi-modal paths directly connect to bus stops and transfer hubs creates a seamless network for those relying entirely on public transit.

To fulfill the mobility justice goals of the HSTP, Recreation Northwest Trails Coalition strongly urges the inclusion and prioritization of two visionary regional trail corridors:

Recreation Northwest Trails Coalition

- **Bay to Baker Trail:** A regional trail connecting outlying rural population centers between Bellingham and Glacier. Expanding paved, universally accessible, and lit multi-modal segments along this alignment establishes a direct active transportation lifeline across rural Whatcom County.
- **Salish Coast Trail:** A regional north-south corridor connecting Skagit County, Chuckanut, Bellingham, Lummi Nation, Ferndale, Birch Bay, and Blaine. Developing this continuous path connects communities to regional transit hubs and essential services.

To formally embed multi-modal mobility justice into the HSTP framework, we recommend including the following language in the final plan strategy updates:

Strategy 2.3 (Under Goal 2: Rural Connections): *"Develop a multimodal active transportation network connecting Whatcom's smaller population centers to each other and to Bellingham, utilizing on-road protected micromobility lanes and off-road shared-use paths."*

Strategy 3.3 (Infrastructure Improvements): *"Build, maintain, and improve safe, low-stress pedestrian, bicycle, and micromobility facilities that connect directly to transit stops and hubs."*

Thank you for your dedicated leadership on this plan and for working to make Whatcom County a safer, healthier, and more connected community for residents of all ages, incomes, and physical abilities.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Nelson
Chief Operating Officer
Recreation Northwest Trails Coalition

Walk & Roll Bellingham

7.October 2026
Re: Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan Public Comment

Dear Melissa,

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the draft Whatcom Human Services Transportation Plan. We are pleased to see a plan that prioritizes those who cannot drive due to medical, legal and economic reasons – they comprise a significant part of Whatcom County's population.

Walk & Roll Bellingham's focus is advocating for a safe and comfortable transportation network for people outside of cars.

Many people in the demographics identified by the draft plan who cannot drive are able to transport themselves under their own power or with the assistance of a micromobility device (mobility scooter, electric tricycle, electric bicycle, regular bike, etc). Making sure these people can travel independently without relying on costly transit services, or without being constrained by operational hours of transit service is critical.

The proliferation of electric mobility devices such as e-bikes has significantly increased the radius people are able to travel efficiently away from home without a car.

Providing strategies to develop a network of on-road protected lanes and off-road paths for this group would expand their transportation options and independence significantly.

We recommend an additional strategy under Goal 2: Improve connections to and between rural communities — that would support independent transportation between communities.

Existing Strategies:

Strategy 2.1 - Develop a transportation service between East Whatcom communities, Whatcom's smaller cities, and Bellingham.

Strategy 2.2 - Improve connectivity between Lummi Nation and Whatcom County towns and cities.

Recommended Additional Strategy
Strategy 2.3 – Develop a multimodal transportation network that connects Whatcom's smaller population centers to each other and to Bellingham, including a combination of on-road protected micromobility lanes and off-road shared use paths that are usable by people of all ages and abilities. Consider lighting, tactile paving, audible crossings and other features that support disabled users.

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Strategy 3.3 addresses non-drivers who can walk and cycle, which is great. We would recommend adding language that ensures provisions (or even prioritizes) walking and cycling infrastructure that connects to transit, expanding their transportation options. Walking and cycling facilities that don't connect to transit could be considered under Strategy 2.3.

Existing Strategy 3.3 - Build, maintain, and improve infrastructure to more safely serve pedestrians and bicyclists, with a focus on those with disabilities.

Recommended Strategy 3.3 – Build, maintain and improve safe, low-stress pedestrian, bicycle and micromobility facilities that connect to transit stops and stations. Consider lighting, tactile paving, audible crossings and other features that support disabled users.

It appears that the future projects section is visionary. If there is room for two additional visionary projects (that actually have some completed segments), we would recommend adding:

- **Bay to Baker Trail** – A regional trail connecting outlying population centers between Bellingham and Glacier. Whatcom County Parks and Recreation has already begun planning portions of this project. Paving, lighting and features that support disabled users could be incorporated, as well as routing near transit stops. Strategies 2.3 & 3.3

- **Salish Coast Trail** – A regional north-south trail from Skagit County to Blaine, connecting the communities of Chuckanut, Bellingham, Lummi, Ferndale, Birch Bay and Blaine. Paving, lighting and features that support disabled users could be incorporated, as well as routing near transit stops. Strategies 2.3 & 3.3.

Thank you for considering these recommendations and for working to make Whatcom County a place where people of all ages and abilities can get where they need to go safely and efficiently!

Sincerely,

Walk & Roll Bellingham
Board members:
Jamin Agosti, Malcolm Duncan-Graves, James Fonte, Thain Maurer, Sonja Max, Robin Thomas, Laura Weiss,