

Employment Access and Coordinated Human Services (EACH)

Transportation Plan for Whatcom County



whatcom council of governments

Whatcom Council of Governments
Whatcom County, Washington

This plan represents the culmination of months of work and dedication by professionals, community volunteers, and advocates. Special thanks are owed to all of those who participated in the development of this plan.

This plan was adopted by the
Whatcom Transportation Policy Board on October 8, 2014
And amended on October 12, 2016

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Acknowledgements

In January 2014, Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) received a grant from Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop a coordinated transportation plan for special needs residents. WSDOT requires that each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) update their Human Services Transportation Plan every four years. Agencies or groups wishing to receive funding through the WSDOT consolidated grant program must both be a part of the plan update and must have their project listed in the plan. The Employment Access and Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan meets WSDOTs Human Service Plan requirements.

WCOG convened a stakeholder group composed of local and regional human services agencies and transportation providers advised and assisted in writing the EACH Plan. A complete list of the groups invited to participate is included in the appendix.

WCOG consulted with two standing committees that advise the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board: the Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) and the Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG). Members of these groups reviewed and assisted in refining the EACH plan.

Community Transportation Advisory Group Members include:

Voting Members as Appointed by Named Jurisdiction		
Whatcom County	Members Appointed by WCOG Policy Board	City of Lynden
Kathy Berg	Terry Terry	Barry Unema
Dave Pros	Arthur Reber	
	Julie Kroontje	
	Carole MacDonald	
Technical Advisors – Non Voting		
Whatcom Transportation Authority	City of Bellingham Public Works/ TTAG Rep	Whatcom County Health Department
Maureen McCarthy	Chris Comeau	Melissa Morin
Whatcom Council of Governments	Whatcom Council of Governments	Whatcom County Public Works
Mary Anderson	Hugh Conroy	Gary Davis

Table 1: Citizen’s Transportation Advisory Group Members

The Transportation Technical Advisory Committee includes staff members of the following agencies and jurisdictions. Participants generally represent the Public Works Engineering and Planning Departments of these jurisdictions.

City of Bellingham
City of Blaine
City of Everson
City of Ferndale
City of Lynden
City of Sumas
City of Nooksack
Whatcom County
Lummi Nation
Nooksack Indian Tribe
Whatcom Transportation Authority
Port of Bellingham
Washington State Department of Transportation
Whatcom Council of Governments

CTAG and TTAG advise the Whatcom Transportation Policy Board (WTPB) on transportation issues and priorities. The WTPB Board is composed of elected officials from each of the member jurisdictions in Whatcom County. One role of the Policy Board is the adoption of the *Whatcom Transportation Plan* in fulfillment of federal and state requirements. The 2014 update of the EACH Plan was presented to the WTPB Policy Board in October 2014 for adoption.

Introduction

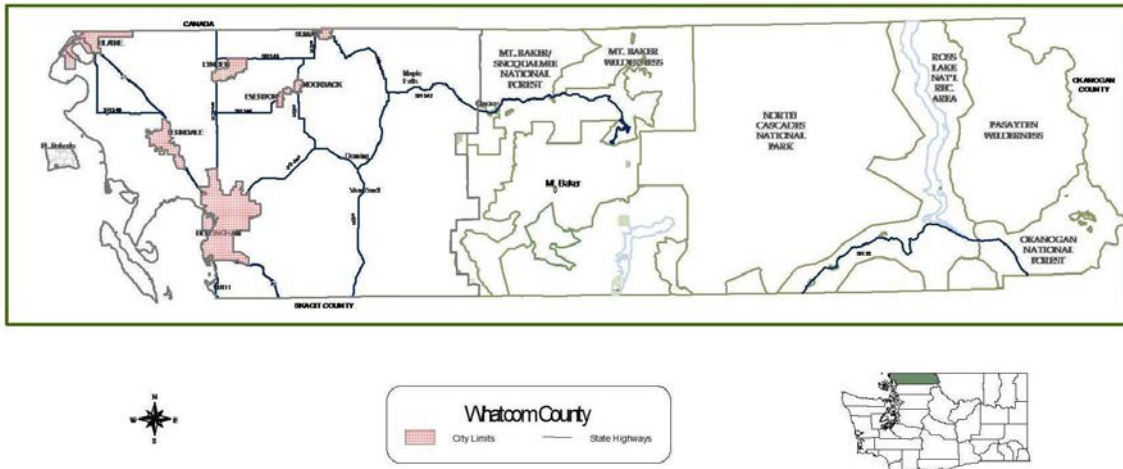
Coordinated Transportation

In the broadest sense, everyone in Whatcom County benefits when transportation planning and implementation is done in a coordinated way: coordination of transportation services can result in less duplication of service and better stewardship of public funds. The EACH Plan focuses on improving coordination among the agencies and organizations providing transportation for community members who do not drive due to age, income or disability reasons. The EACH stakeholder group, including representatives from a wide variety of agencies serving special needs populations, prepared the EACH Plan.

Whatcom County Demographics

Whatcom County is located in Northwest Washington; it is bordered by Canada to the North, Skagit County to the South, the Salish Sea to the West and Okanogan County to the East. Approximately 75 percent of Whatcom County is national forest land and is uninhabitable. There are seven cities and two tribes in Whatcom County. This plan also looks at two Census Designated Places (CDP) which are both Urban Growth Areas (UGA).

Figure 1: Map of Whatcom County



The population of Whatcom County in 2010 was 201,140; age and gender breakouts are shown in Table 2 below. Figure 2 shows the total percentage of residents under age 16 and over age 65 by jurisdiction. In Whatcom County, 31.6% of the population falls into those age cohorts.

Total Population	201,140	Percent of Total Population
Male	99,635	49.54
Female	101,505	50.46
Under 18	42,205	20.98
18 and over	158,935	79.02
20-24	20,277	10.08
25-34	26,169	13.01
35-49	37,527	18.66
50-64	39,931	19.85
65 and over	26,640	13.24

Table 2: Population and demographic information for Whatcom County Data from US Census.

Jurisdiction	Population
City of Bellingham	80,885
City of Lynden	11,951
City of Ferndale	11,415
Birch Bay CDP	8,415
Lummi Reservation	4,731
City of Blaine	4,684
City of Everson	2,481
Nooksack Indian Tribe	2,080
City of Nooksack	1,338
City of Sumas	1,307

Table 3: Population by Jurisdiction in Whatcom County

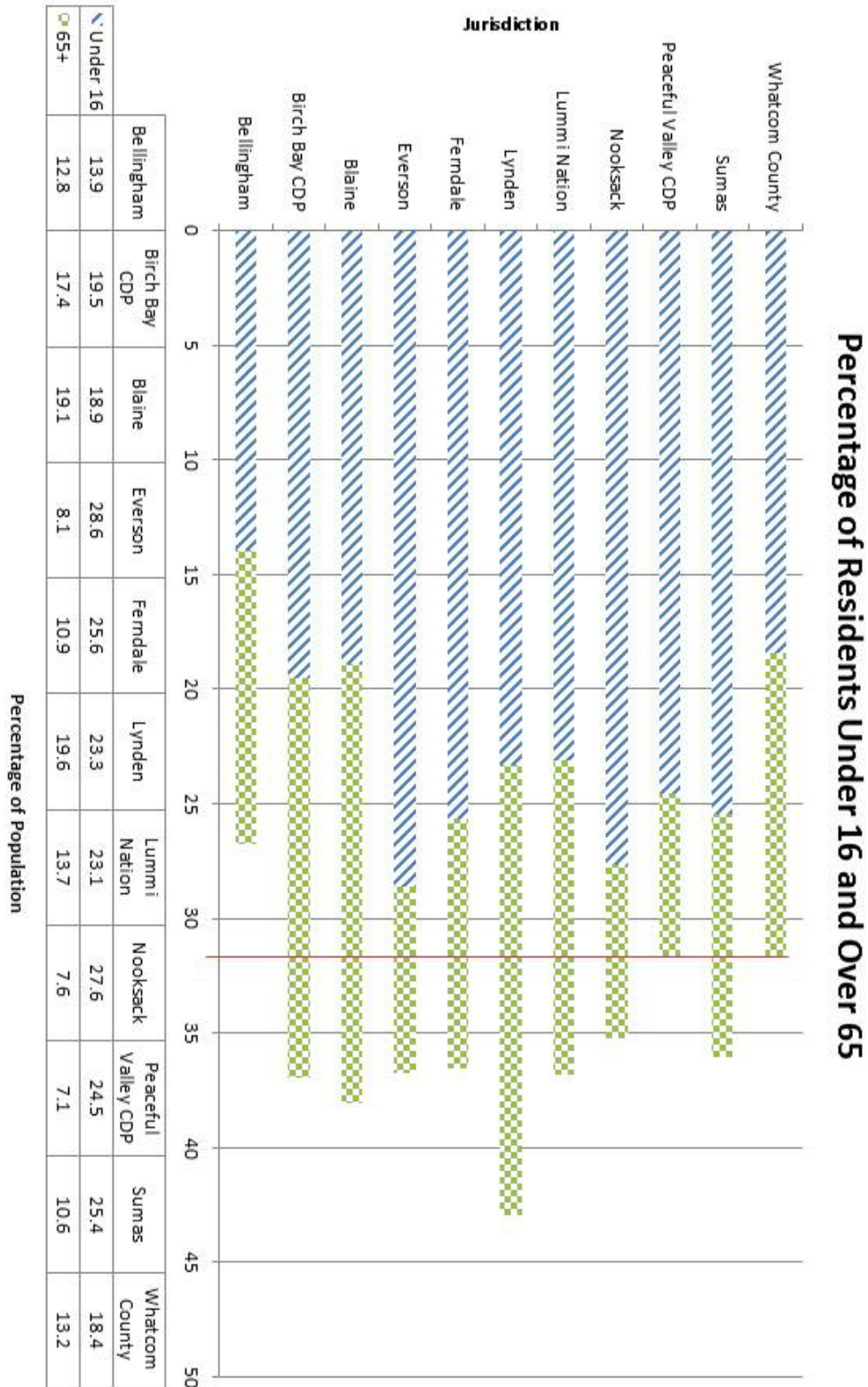


Figure 2: Percentage of Residents Under 16 and over 65 years old. Data from the 2010 Census.

	Percent of Whatcom County	Percent of WA State
Veteran Status	7.8%	12.5%
Income Below Poverty Level	15.8%	20.0%
Disability Status	16%	18.2%
Households with No Vehicle	6.8%	6.5%
Population Older than 65	13.2%	12.7%

Table 4: Special needs population demographics. Data from the 2012 Washington State Human Services Transportation Plan and the US Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

Economy

The following has occurred since the 2010 update of the EACH Plan:

- Unemployment rates have decreased since the last EACH update:
 - 2010: 9.0%
 - 2011: 8.5%
 - 2012: 7.5%
 - 2013: 6.9%
- Foreclosures decreased: the first quarter of 2014 saw 64 foreclosure filings, compared to 266 in the first quarter of 2013.
- In 2013 the Bellingham Food Bank distributed over three million pounds of food.
 - 15% - 20% of all families in Bellingham use the food bank at least once a year
 - 1,000 Bellingham households utilize the Food Bank each week
 - 50% of food bank recipients are children or senior citizens
 - 70% of Bellingham Food Bank Clients own a car
- Percentage of Whatcom County residents who received WA State DSHS Basic Food Program assistance increased each year:
 - July 2009 – June 2010: 18.7%
 - July 2010 – June 2011: 20.4%
 - July 2011 – June 2012: 21.2%

Public transportation ridership:

- Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) fixed route ridership increased by 5.3% from 2010 - 2013

Transportation and Health

In recent years public health research has emphasized that the built environment and the transportation network affect people’s health. Access to sidewalks, trails and parks is directly correlated with active transportation and physical activity rates. Additionally, a lack of transportation choices can have detrimental impacts on a person’s health by inhibiting their ability to access essential services, such as grocery stores or medical care.

Whatcom County Health Department staff has become an advocate for healthier transportation options, especially for vulnerable populations.

In Whatcom County, 57.6% of adults are overweight or obese, and 16% report getting no regular physical activity¹. Among Whatcom County youth, 23% are overweight or obese and nearly half (48%) do not meet guidelines for regular physical activity². Approximately one-fourth of Whatcom County residents (50,884 people)³ have limited food access*, but this varies by location.

¹ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Whatcom County 2011-12.

² Healthy Youth Survey, 2012. www.askhys.net.

³ Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Updates Estimates of Distances to Supermarkets Using 2010 Data. USDA, 2012. Accessed from <http://maps.communitycommons.org>

* "Limited food access" is defined as living more than 1 mile from a supermarket or large grocery store in an urban area, or more than 10 miles from a supermarket or large grocery store in a rural area. This distance is measured "as the crow flies" and does not account for roadway connectivity, multimodal connectivity or commute patterns.

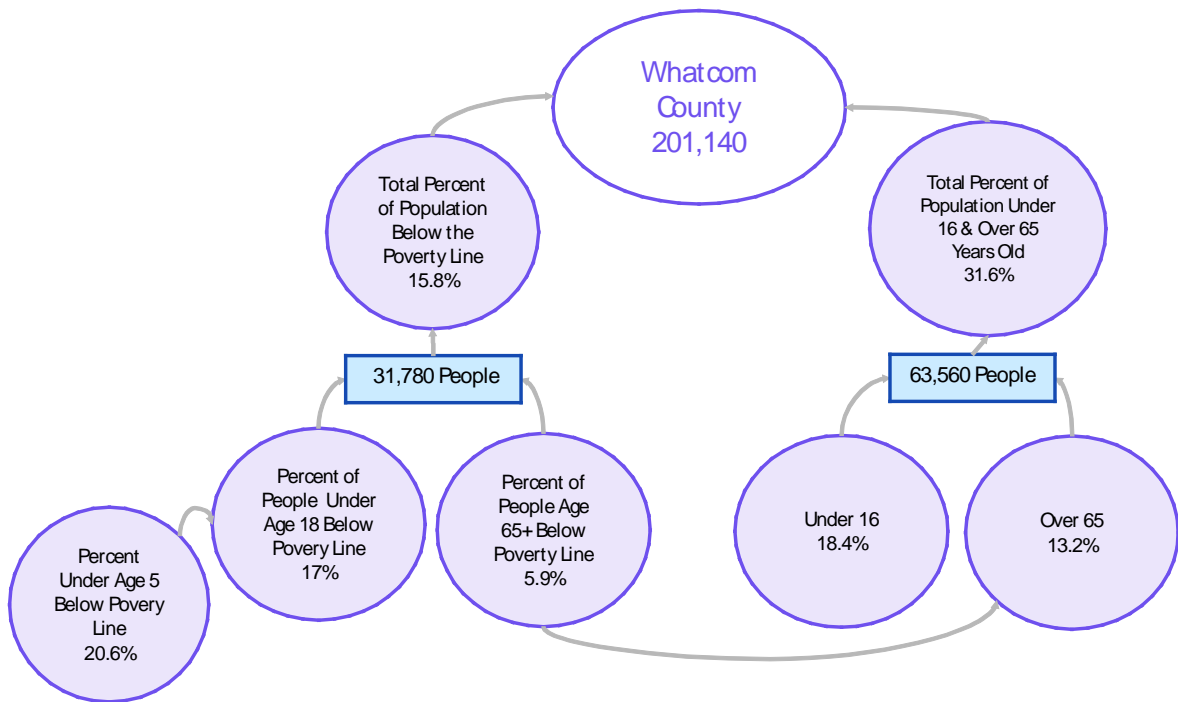


Figure 3: Percentages of Special Needs Residents in Whatcom County. Data from the US Census

Free and Reduced Lunch Whatcom County

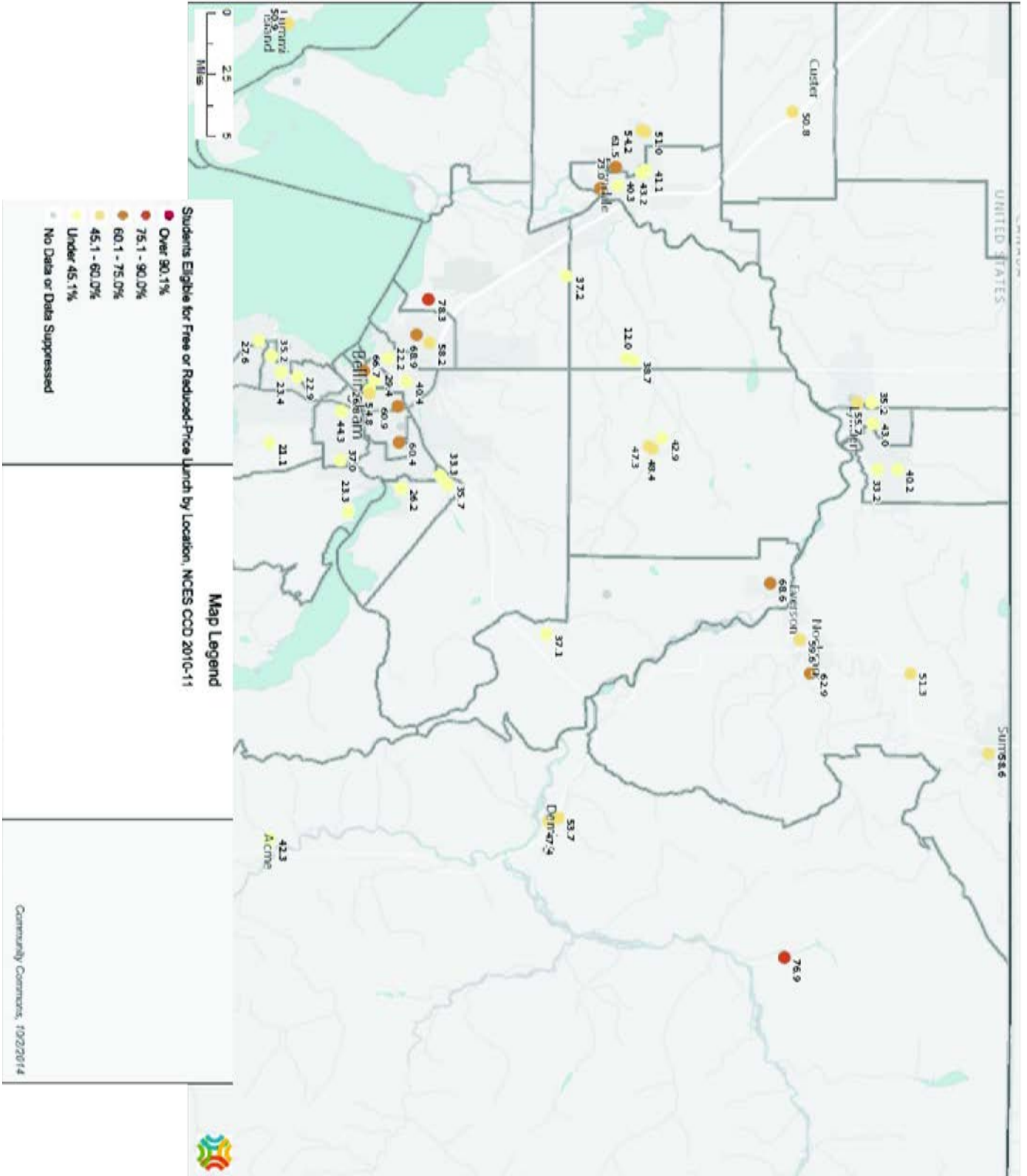


Figure 4: Free and Reduced Lunch percentages at Whatcom County Public Schools. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics and Common Core of Data.

Chapter 1

Participation and Outreach

Who provides transportation planning and assistance?

Members of the community who are deemed as underserved by the transportation system are those for whom age, income, or disability prevents them from transporting themselves without assistance.. Planning for transportation that works for these populations is a task shared by planners and human services agencies.

Transportation planning in Whatcom County is carried out by several agencies:

- City and County planning and public works departments
- Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
- Lummi Nation
- Nooksack Indian Tribe
- Whatcom Council of Governments
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Port of Bellingham

The following agencies and programs provide transportation assistance to the regions special needs population:

Northwest Regional Council	Medicaid Brokerage: transportation vouchers or subsidies to medical appointments for those eligible
School Districts	School Bus Walk Route Maps
Retirement Residences	Wheelchair vans for scheduled outings
Head Start	Mini-bus transportation for eligible children
Youth Daycares	Vans or mini buses to transport school children from school to daycare facility
Places of worship	Mini-vans for seniors, members with disabilities or others who cannot drive.
Meals on Wheels	Home delivered meals Congregate meal distribution
Mt. Baker Ski Area	Shuttle bus for seasonal employees Shuttle bus for Middle and High School students
Disabled Veterans Association (DAV)	Medical shuttle to Veterans Administration Hospital in Seattle
Domestic Violence Shelters	Volunteer drivers, as requested (volunteers must pass a security screening process)

Whatcom Volunteer CHORE program	Volunteer drivers for seniors Delivery of food from Food Bank
Various church alms programs	Small cash donations to pay for vehicle fuel or bus fare
Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access	Mobile medical care services
Sterling Drive Church “Sterling Bike Works”	Bicycle repair for low-income children and children of farm workers
Whatcom Smart Trips and The Hub	Bicycles and bike education for low- income adults and children

Table 5: Agencies that provide transportation services

Human service agencies such as hospitals and food banks do not often allocate funds or resources to transportation planning. Some offer case-by-case transportation advice to clients, as requested.

Emergency Management

Whatcom County Department of Emergency Management plans for and coordinates response for emergencies throughout Whatcom County and all its cities except Bellingham. The Bellingham Department of Emergency Management coordinates emergency response within city limits and publishes the City of Bellingham Emergency Management Plan. Both Whatcom and Bellingham emergency plans acknowledge the need for coordination of transportation during emergencies and both have established agreements with WTA for emergency use of transit vehicles and drivers, if needed.

Chapter 2

EACH Stakeholder Group Formation

WCOG began to form its advisory group for the EACH Plan by asking:

- What types of people need access to employment and education?
- What are the demographics of people who need access to medical care and other human services?
- Where the organizations are located that serves\ these populations?
- What services could help meet unfilled transportation needs?

Organizations that work with people who need transportation assistance include employers, schools, hospitals, and more. The 2014 stakeholder group was made up of representatives from human services agencies contacted through e-mail, telephone, outreach meetings, presentations, and website postings. Other groups, such as employers, public works engineers, planners, and pedestrian advocates, were invited and kept informed through e-mail, telephone and announcements at area meetings. The EACH stakeholder meetings took place in Bellingham at the WCOG office. Stakeholders who wished to participate but could not attend meetings were invited to meet with the EACH coordinator one-on-one.

The 2014 EACH update process addressed the EACH goal of involving a wide variety of transportation and human services providers. Participation was encouraged through presentations to the following groups:

- Community Resource Network monthly meetings (Bellingham area Opportunity Council meeting of representatives from shelters, food banks, alms ministries, financial literacy programs, transition housing, disabled services, and others)
- Family to Family Committee
- Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment quarterly meeting
- Whatcom County Coalition to end Homelessness meeting
- Senior Living Fair
- Transportation Technical Advisory Group
- Citizen's Transportation Advisory Group

The following groups were invited to participate in the 2014 EACH Plan update:

Human Services Agencies

Aging and Disabilities Services Administration
ARC of Whatcom County
Bellingham Food Bank
Bellingham /Whatcom County Housing Authority
Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Whatcom County
Cascade Vocational Services
Catholic Community Services
Child Protective Services
Department of Social and Health Services

Early Learning and Family Services Northwest
Interfaith Coalition (Clinic, Housing)
Kulshan Community Land Trust
Lighthouse Mission Ministries
Lions' Club
Nooksack Indian Tribe Health Services
Northwest Regional Council (Area Agency on Aging)
Opportunity Council
Rebound of Whatcom County
St. Joseph Hospital
SeaMar Health Clinic
Spinal Cord Injury Support Group
Visiting Angels
Whatcom Alliance for Healthcare Access
Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities
Whatcom Community and Family Network
Whatcom Council on Aging
Whatcom/Skagit Housing (Rural Self-help Homes)
YMCA (childcare, etc.)
YWCA (transition housing, etc.)

Schools

Bellingham School District
Mount Baker School District
Readiness to Learn Consortium
Western Washington University

Transportation Providers

BellAir Charters
Cascade Ambulance Service, Inc.
Love, INC (volunteer drivers)
Lummi Transit Service
Northwest Regional Council (Medicaid Brokerage Transport)
Rural Metro (Medical Transport)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Medical Transport
Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA)
Whatcom Volunteer Center CHORE program
Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT)
Yellow Cab of Whatcom County

Jurisdictions or Departments

Bellingham Emergency Management
City of Bellingham public works/Transportation Options Department
City of Bellingham Consolidated Plan for Human Services (Community Development Department)

Lummi Nation
Nooksack Indian Tribe
Whatcom County Public Works Engineering
Whatcom County Health Department
Whatcom County Department of Emergency Management

Employers and Employer Groups

Bellingham/Whatcom Chamber of Commerce
Farm Friends/Farmworker Groups
Mt. Baker Chamber of Commerce
Workforce Development Council/WorkSource



Image 1: Students wait to board a WTA bus.
Photo courtesy of WTA. Gabriel Boone Photography

Chapter 3

Vision of Coordinated Transportation

EACH stakeholders agreed on the following vision statement for the work of the group:

“A barrier-free transportation system that helps people with special needs in Whatcom County to carry out daily trips in a convenient and cost effective way.”

The EACH stakeholders agreed to use the definition of special needs populations given by the Revised Code of Washington 47.06b: “Those people, including their attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation.”

Mission of Coordinated Transportation:

“To coordinate services, resources, and investments to ensure Whatcom County’s transportation systems serve people of all abilities in a comprehensive and convenient way.”

Goals of Coordinated Transportation:

The group agreed on the following goals, listed in priority order:

1. **Increase Connectivity:** The transportation system is multi-modal and serves major origins and destinations of special needs travelers.
2. **Safe and Comfortable:** The transportation system is safe, accessible and comfortable for special needs travelers.
3. **Clear and Understandable:** All social service organizations and their participants understand and benefit from a simple and effective system of coordinated transportation.
4. **Fairness in Funding:** Public investments are equitably distributed among projects and services that improve transportation conditions for people of all ages, income levels and mobility levels.

Strategies to Support Coordinated Transportation Goals:

1. **Increase Connectivity** by reducing gaps in the public transportation system.
2. Increase **Safety and Comfort** through education, enforcement and engineering projects.
3. Ensure that special needs clients know how to safely use the transportation system and that they are aware of what transportation options are available to them in a **Clear and Understandable** way.

Chapter 4

People with Special Needs

People with special needs have a wide range of abilities and transportation needs. This chapter describes some strengths and challenges of population groups and how coordinated transportation can serve them. Some people with special needs have different transportation experiences than the general public.

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

Table 6: Clients and Community transportation experiences compared
Data from WCOG 2013 Needs Assessment see Chapter 5 for detailed data acquisition information.

Elders/Seniors

Advanced age does not, in and of itself, correspond to a need for transportation assistance. Many people over 65 years of age maintain active lifestyles and continue to walk, drive, or use the bus as they have throughout life. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 13 percent of Whatcom County residents are over the age of 65, a rate slightly higher than the statewide average of 12 percent. The senior population is rising more quickly as the baby boomers age; by 2020 nearly 18 percent of Whatcom County's population will be 65 or older, and by 2030 the percentage will be over 20 percent.

	Census	OFM Projections					
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Percent of Whatcom County Population	13.24%	15.44%	17.93%	19.87%	21.26%	21.62%	21.63%

Table 7: Population projections for residents 65 or older. Data from the Bellingham Consolidated Plan

Age	City of Bellingham		Whatcom County (outside Bellingham)		Washington State
	# of people	% of pop	# of people	% of pop	% of pop
Over 60	14,659	18%	24,317	20%	18%
Over 70	7,470	9%	10,410	9%	8%
Over 80	3,712	5%	3,697	3%	3%

Table 8: Elderly population, City of Bellingham, Whatcom County and Washington State. Data from the Bellingham Consolidated Plan

Estimate	With a disability	
	Estimated Number of People	% of those 65 and over
Population 65 years and over: 9,439	3,648	38.6%
With a hearing difficulty	1,790	19.0%
With a vision difficulty	701	7.4%
With a cognitive difficulty	788	8.3%
With an ambulatory difficulty	1,873	19.8%
With a self-care difficulty	700	17.%
With an independent living difficulty	1,514	16.0%

Table 9: Persons 65 + by disability characteristics, City of Bellingham
Data from the Bellingham Consolidated Plan (Source 2008-2010 American Community Survey)

As people of retirement age advance in years their ability to transport themselves tends to decline. Many seniors suffer from common illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, and medications for such diseases can impair one's ability to drive. Depending on physical abilities, elderly people may change transportation habits gradually. For example, a 70-year-old may choose to limit driving at night or on high speed roadways or in poor weather, rather than quit driving altogether.

Transportation helps older adults maintain social engagement, a key to maintaining mental health and vitality. The proximity of the senior's home to community activities and services becomes part of the transportation equation: a home far from stores, bus stops and community centers exacerbates isolation and the mental health risks associated with isolation.

Some human services can be provided in the senior's home rather than requiring the elderly person to travel. However, providing in-home services should be balanced with the

need for outside social interaction. Transportation options are vital to ensure elderly citizens are able to age in place. In Whatcom County 80% of senior citizens live in their own home, while 20% live in assisted living homes. A retirement homes costs on average \$100,000 a year, compared to in home care at \$15,000 per year. When a senior citizen no longer drives, they may lose access to socialization as well as to food and other vital needs. Using public transit can be scary for seniors which is why transit training programs are successful and important to offer before a person loses their ability to drive. To increase the number of seniors on buses it is also important to have lights and benches at bus stops.

People with Disabilities

People who have sustained a long-term or permanent injury may need transportation assistance to reach vocational training and rehabilitation locations. People with disabilities that affect their ability to navigate the bus system on their own are eligible for Specialized Transportation service. Disabled riders who need assistance may be accompanied by a care-giver on the Specialized Transit bus. There are many different kinds of disability. Facilities vary greatly in the ways they address transportation needs for different disabilities.

Rural Residents

Rural areas are characterized by farms, forests, or open spaces with few houses. The cost of building or operating transportation facilities in low density areas is high relative to the small number of people using those facilities. One example of this is rural road design standards in Whatcom County: the cost to build sidewalks and shoulders is generally too high to justify for most rural roads. Transit is another example: the cost per rider for WTA bus routes in rural areas is two to three times higher than for urban locations.

Rural residents with special needs present the challenge of how to allocate transportation budgets fairly. The higher cost of providing public services to people in rural areas results in limitations on the availability of that service. Rural levels of service are lower than urban levels of service for transportation, enforcement, parks, and other public amenities.

Human services are essential for the health of rural residents with special needs. Seniors with special needs in rural areas may have lived there all their lives. The trauma of moving from a family home can exacerbate health problems for elderly people. The Meals on Wheels program is an example of a human services program with a substantial transportation component. Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers deliver prepared food to the homes of people aged 60+ who are homebound and unable to shop for and prepare their own meals. "Congregate" meals are offered at community centers in rural areas so that people can eat together and benefit from social interactions.

Veterans

As reported in the Whatcom Prosperity Project nearly three in four veterans reported some form of disability and the median monthly income for single veterans was \$674. Unique transportation needs for veterans includes being able to access the VA clinics in Mount Vernon and Seattle.

Native American Rural Residents

Lummi Nation

The Lummi Reservation consists of 13,000 acres. It is eight miles west of the City of Bellingham and has a population of 4,700 Residents, about 53% of whom are registered tribal members. The unemployment rate on the reservation is 8.5%, compared to a 5.9% unemployment rate county-wide. There are 1,637 households on the reservation and the median household income is \$48,832. In the past 12 months 13.9% of the population had an income below the poverty line.

About 23% of the reservation is zoned for residential use and tribal member homes are located along the roadways or clustered at historic centers and in tribal housing enclaves. Non-Lummi residential properties are concentrated at Sandy Point and along the eastern peninsula shoreline.

In 2006, Lummi Nation Transportation/Planning Department, in cooperation with the Whatcom Transit Authority, established a fixed route bus route on the Lummi Reservation. The route provides Lummi residents with access to major employment sites such as the Silver Reef Casino, the Tribal Center, and Northwest Indian College. Lummi Transit serves parts of the reservation where the WTA bus does not provide service and links residents to the clinic and service centers. On-demand service is available on weekends. To meet increased demand, in 2012 Lummi Transit expanded service hours on weekends and added a second bus run to the previously unserved Red River neighborhood and Ferndale.

Nooksack Indian Tribe

The Nooksack Tribal Administration is located near Deming, Washington. The Nooksack Indian Tribe has no reservation but holds trust lands in the Mt. Baker foothills area in Whatcom County. Because the tribal lands are scattered around the County and down into Mt. Vernon, transportation for tribal members from their homes to the tribal center, clinic and other services can be a challenge.

The Nooksack Tribe recently completed a transit feasibility study for the eastern part of Whatcom County. This study determined the need for expand service on current routes, and what areas transit should expand in. The Nooksack Tribe has contracted with WTA to add service to the 72X twice a day, and may be establishing a route that services the tribal housing sites and government services from Van Zandt into Everson. This new route and additional service will allow people greater access to goods and services provide to the community by the Tribe.

People with Low Income

People whose annual household income is at or near the poverty line qualify for some types of public assistance to meet basic needs. The poverty line is an income level lower than the amount needed to pay for basic services such as food, housing, transportation, and medical care. Each year, the federal Department of Health and Human Services calculates and sets a poverty income level, taking into account current economic conditions.

The Federal Poverty Level in 2013 was \$23,550 for a family of four and \$11,490 for an individual. In Whatcom County 15.8% of the population or 31,780 people are below the poverty line. The table below shows poverty information for each jurisdiction. In every City besides Bellingham the percentage of children below the poverty line is higher than the general population. Most jurisdictions also have a higher percentage of children under the age of 5 living in poverty, compared to the general population. The percentage of people aged 65+ living in poverty varies greatly by jurisdiction. For example, in Birch Bay 1.1% of seniors live in poverty compared to 15.1% in Everson.

	Bellingham	Birch Bay CDP	Blaine	Everson	Ferndale	Lummi Nation	Lynden	Nooksack	Peaceful Valley CDP	Sumas	Whatcom County
Percentage of Population Below the Poverty Line	22.6	12.2	10.8	14.5	18.9	17.9	7.9	12.3	21.2	6.2	15.8
Percentage of People Under 18 Below the Poverty Level	17.9	25.3	12.9	18.6	29.2	25.8	11.1	16.8	31.9	6.2	17
Percentage of People Under 5 below the poverty level	18.4	27.3	47.2	40.8	29.2	44.5	11.6	19.3	34.4	13.3	20.6
People 65+ Below the Poverty Level	7.3	1.1	11.2	15.1	1.5	11.7	7.9	9.6	10.7	6.5	5.9

Table 10: Percentages of the population below the poverty line by jurisdiction. Numbers in bold indicate that jurisdiction has a higher percentage than Whatcom County as a whole. Data from the 2010 US Census.

The HUD rounded FY 2013 median family income was \$69,800 for Bellingham, WA. The income qualification for a Section 8 housing voucher is that a household must earn 30 percent of an area median income or less. To qualify for low income housing a household must earn 80 percent of an area median income or less.

Services for individuals or families living on a low income may include:

- debit cards for purchasing of food (Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, formerly called food stamps)
- free or reduced price medical or dental care
- vocational training
- community voice mail
- free or reduced price child care or early learning programs
- transit passes or fare tokens
- reduced priced rent

The goal of human services for people with low income is to assist them with skills, training, and support necessary for securing employment and stable, adequate income. Services address the circumstances that contribute to low income.

The cost of transportation to a medical appointment can be affected by factors unrelated to the medical care and unrelated to transportation. For example, a single parent with

three toddlers cannot leave the toddlers unattended while going to the doctor. A taxi trip to a Medicaid appointment, if paid for by Medicaid Brokerage, cannot transport people other than the patient in that taxi, per federal policy. If the parent cannot afford childcare for the toddlers, the parent may have to skip needed treatments.

When it is not possible for the parent to bring children along, the cost of paying for a sitter becomes part of the transportation equation. A trip that takes a longer time increases the cost of childcare (for example, paratransit or bus routes with low frequency service). Multiple bus transfers can be physically taxing when traveling with supplies, children, and strollers.

CPS Clients

A parent who has had their children removed by Child Protective Services will be required to meet certain requirements set by CPS to be reunited with their children. The two major destinations that parents frequent include the CPS Ellis Street location and Catholic Community Services to take random urine analyses and participate in substance abuse services. Visitations with their children usually start off at the CPS office then may be moved to a public location such as a park or the Bellis Fair Mall play area. In addition, there are often other community locations they must go to such as Brigid Collins, Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric, SeaMar, Peacehealth or the court house downtown. For parents who must take random UAs they are required to call in at 8am to see if they must take the test that day. If the parent lives in rural Whatcom County getting into town on short notice may be difficult and some clients miss appointments due to lack of transportation. The Bellingham CPS office has noted that lack of transportation is a barrier to the reunification of families.

Case Study:

A drug user had his children taken away by CPS. This single dad, now in recovery and drug free lives in the Kendall area, about 25 miles and an hour bus ride from Bellingham. He is low income and does not own a car. He is taking the necessary steps to get his children back. One of the requirements is to come into Bellingham for appointments at the CPS office. Once in town he waits in the lobby of the CPS office for 4 hours until the next bus leaves for Kendall.

Homeless Residents

According to the 2014 Whatcom County Annual Report on Homelessness at any point in time at least 553 people in Whatcom County are homeless. The point in time survey is a snap shop look at homeless residents of Whatcom County. Homeless people ages ranged from under one year to 72 years. The median age of all homeless people was 33 years and 50% of all homeless persons were female. Since 2008 the total number of homeless persons has decreased by 35%, the number of homeless families has also decreased by 19% in the same time period (2008 – 2014).

Point in Time survey respondents were asked if they or members of their household had a disabling condition, the following numbers are self-reported and may be low estimates:

Mental Illness	33%
Physically (permanent)	22%
Chronic Illness	18%
Substance Abuse Disorder	12%
Developmental	12%

Table 11: Disabling conditions of those experiencing homelessness

Methadone Patients

The nearest methadone clinic is located in Arlington on the Stillaguamish Indian Reservation, approximately 46 miles from Bellingham. The Nooksack Indian Tribe operates a daily shuttles for Tribal members. Medicaid recipients who are eligible for transportation assistance from the NWRC are shuttled from their houses to the downtown Bellingham Station where they take the 80x County Connector to the Skagit Station in Mt. Vernon. From the Skagit Station they take a shuttle bus to the Stillaguamish Methadone Clinic. Clients must do this daily – the entire round trip may take up to five hours.

Children

“Youth” conjures up images of health and energy, but many youngsters fit the definition of people with special needs in transportation: since most children cannot provide for their own transportation due to age. In Whatcom County 18.4% of the population is under the age of 16 and thus are not legally permitted to drive. Children need to travel to many of the same destinations as adults: shops, events, special classes, sports practice, friends’ houses, jobs, and more.

School bus service provides some assistance for school children during the school year for attendance during regular school hours. But after school activities are not part of the school bus service schedule. Students and their families benefit from access to the school grounds during evening, summer, weekends, and other times when regular classes are not in session. Coordinated transportation planning should include provision for safe routes to walk or bike within one mile of each school. Where traffic hazards exist within the one-mile radius, human services transportation should address the hazards with a goal to facilitate walking or cycling to school (rather than hazard bussing as an open-ended solution). For students living outside the one-mile walk radius, school bus transportation is part of the range of human services transportation modes.



Image 2: Students ride the bus. Image courtesy of WTA. Gabriel Boone Photography.

Chapter 5

2013 Transportation Needs Assessment Report

In 2013 WCOG contracted with Applied Research Northwest, LLC to conduct research and outreach to more fully understand existing transportation services and unmet transportation needs for people with special needs. The full report “Whatcom Council of Governments Transportation Needs Assessment (May 2013)” is available to view on the Whatcom Council of Government’s website (www.wcog.org) or via request made to WCOG at 360-676-6974 or mary@wcog.org.

The data acquisition portion of the research consisted of four projects:

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

Some findings of interest in the Transportation Needs Assessment are shown below.

- 64% of respondents do not live in the City of Bellingham, however only 12% of clients trips were over 10 miles.
- 24% of people with special needs reported being unable to get to services due to transportation barriers at least once during the last year, 19% said this happened three or more times in the last year.
- 45% of the human services clients used a car they owned to get to the human service provider the day they were interviewed.
 - 7% borrowed a car
 - 20% carpooled
 - 14% walked
 - 14% took the bus
- 39% of respondents said they do not own a car
- 52% of those that self-identified as having a disability do not own a car.

Staff of human service organizations over estimated how much of a barrier transportation was for their clients. When asked “For what portion of current clients would you say that transportation is a major barrier, a minor barrier or not really a barrier” staff estimated that transportation was not really a barrier for 22.4% of their clients. When interviewed, 76% of the clients answered “never” when asked the number of times they tried to get to the agency but were unable due to transportation. However, 24% of the clients were unable to get to the agency at least one time in the last year.

Number of times client tried to get to agency but were unable due to transportation

- More than 10 times: 7%
- 5-10 times: 7%
- 3-4 times: 5%
- 1-2 times: 5%
- Never: 76%

Bus

In the last year, how often did you use the bus to get places you needed to go? (n=406)

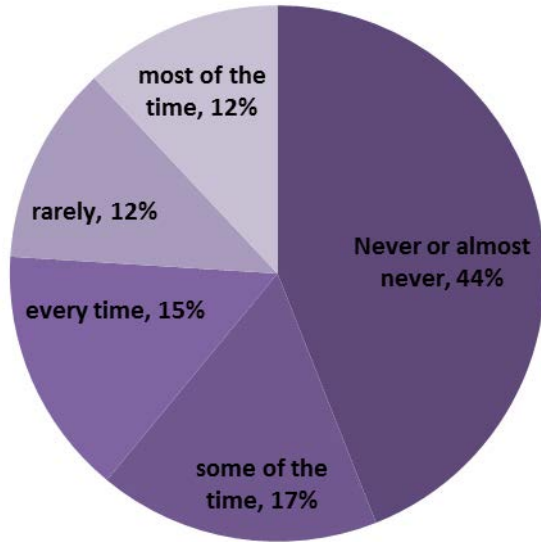


Figure 5: How often human service clients used the bus for trips in the last year. Data from the WCOG Needs Assessment.

Of the 73% who use the bus some of the time, rarely or never, the reasons they shared for not using the bus are shown in Table 12.

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

Table 12: Reasons given for not taking the bus. n=295; Responses may total more than 100% due to multiple response options

- 12% of trips to service providers were farther than 10 miles.
- 85% of human service clients reported being capable of walking 1 mile.

- Transportation expenditures represent about 3% of agency budgets; Human service agencies estimate that their case loads would increase substantially if transportation was not a barrier for clients.

Agency transportation costs

- Agencies were asked how much they spent on transportation services or subsidies. Table 5 shows how many agencies provided each particular service, plus the number who provided data about the cost of that service, and the total amount spent by those agencies on that service in that one year period. These services are ranked by the total cost. School district transportation was considered separately.
- Agencies spent the most on rides provided by another organization. This was primarily due to Medicaid Transport. While the most frequent service/subsidy was bus tokens, this was among the least expensive of the services provided compared to rides, cash for gas, and monthly bus passes. This is due in part to the fact that WTA donates a limited number of bus tokens to Whatcom County agencies each year, so while it may be a frequent subsidy an agency provides, it doesn't necessarily come out of the agency budget.

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

Table 13: Amount agencies spent on transportation.

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

Total transportation related costs

Table 13 shows that the estimated total cost of transportation services to human service clients in Whatcom County approaches two million dollars.

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

Table 14: Estimated total human services transportation costs

Agency mileage

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

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

Table 15: Miles traveled by human service agencies in 2010. n=18

Fleet information

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

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

Table 16: Number of vehicles human service agencies own and operate. This does not include the Readiness to Learn programs at each of the districts because the buses are not dedicated to the Readiness to Learn programs.

School district transportation

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

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

Table 17: School District Transportation

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

Total miles traveled and dollars spent

Analysis totaled the number of miles and the costs reported by transit, school districts and human service agencies. Figure 5 shows that nearly half (43%) of the total miles traveled was reported by school districts (chart data shown in thousands). Medicaid transport provided 13% of the miles (and 6% of transportation dollars).

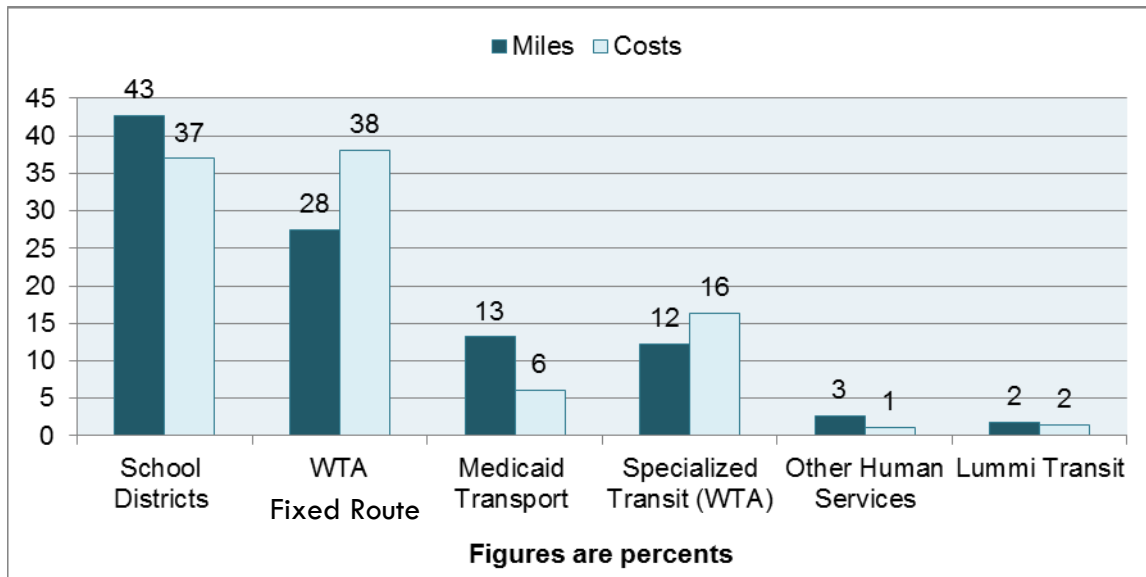


Figure 6: Proportion of total miles and costs by transportation provider

Summary

Residents with special needs live throughout Whatcom County, often in dispersed locations. Clusters of low income housing and senior assisted living centers can be identified, but an equally large proportion of people with special needs live independently. School children, elderly non-drivers, and job-seekers are some examples of people whose homes could be far from service providers but who need access to school, medical appointments, employment, or training. Transportation assistance to and from dispersed rural areas may require site-specific solutions, but some overall policies that coordinate transportation planning generally will help special needs populations.

Common Origination Points

Below are some of the areas or towns where EACH stakeholders identified potential clusters of residences meeting the definition of special needs transportation users.

Peaceful Valley/Kendall is a Census Designated Place and an Urban Growth Area, located north of Kendall Elementary School on Kendall Road - State Route 547. Peaceful Valley is home to 3,889 residents, the unemployment rate is 5% and the median household income is \$42,222. Approximately 29% of households with children under the age of 18 were below the poverty line and 28% of residents received food stamps in the last 12 months. 20% of residents received social security income and 100% of Kendall Elementary Students qualified for free or reduced lunch during the 2013-2014 school year. The middle and high schools are located in Deming, about 10 miles away. Children’s Administration observed that there was a higher rate of removal and a lower reunification rate in the Kendall area, compared to the rest of Whatcom County. This is due in part, to a lack of transportation to and from this area. There are approximately 180 jobs in the area.

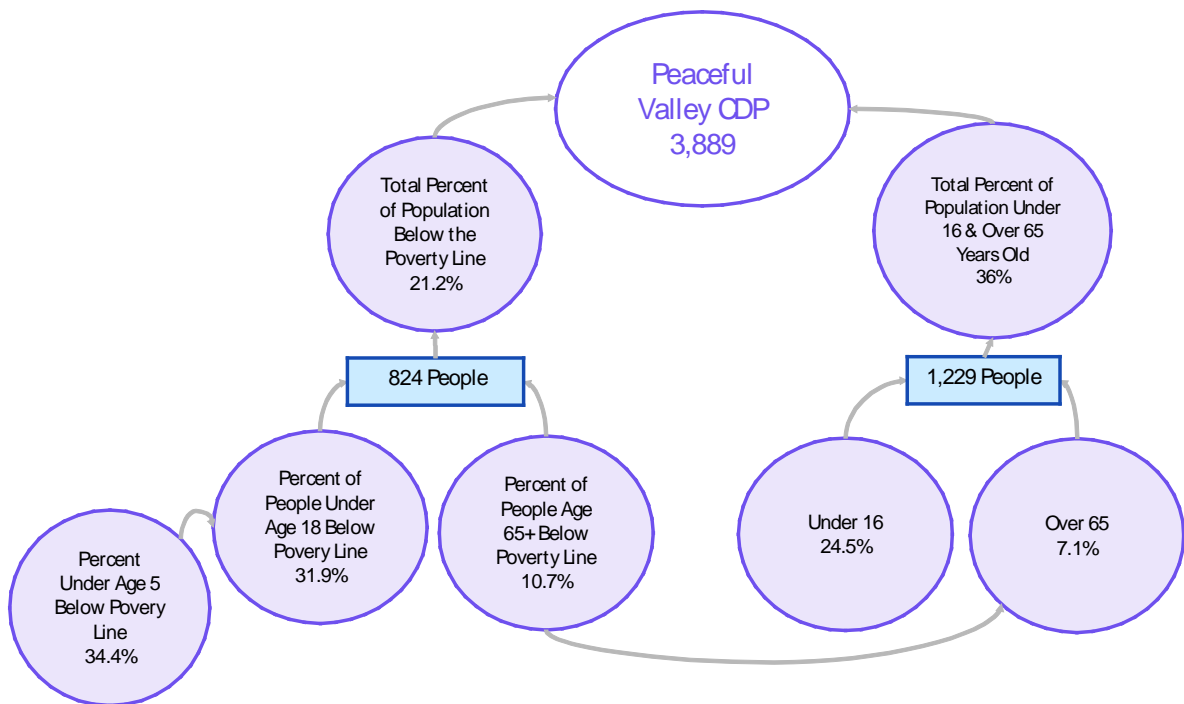
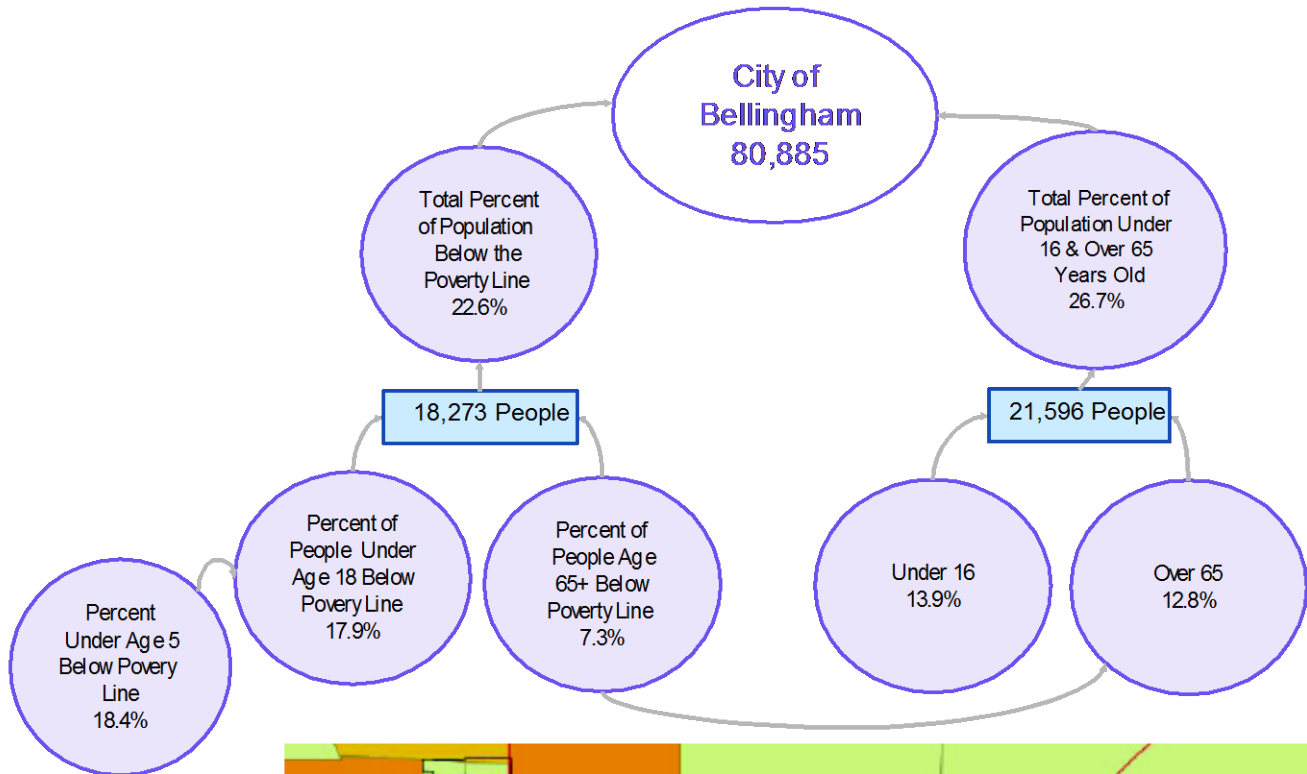


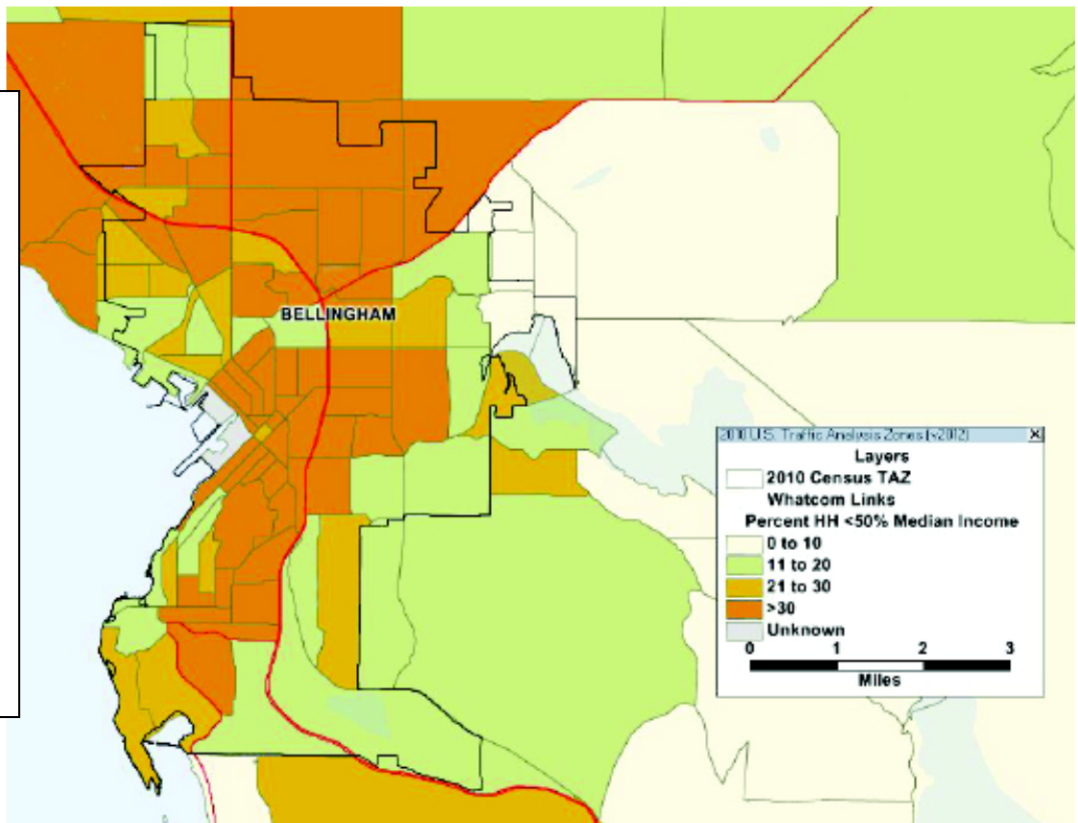
Figure 7: Percentages of special needs residents in the Peaceful Valley Census Designated Place. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 10.7% of those age 65 or over are below the poverty line. Data Source: US Census.

The *City of Bellingham* is the largest city in Whatcom County with a population of 80,885. It is the largest employment center for the County and provides a large variety of human services for residents throughout the county, including a large regional hospital, university, and community and technical college. The Lighthouse Mission is an example of an emergency shelter offered in Bellingham that is not available in other parts of Whatcom County. More than 30 regular daily bus routes serve Bellingham area along with daily passenger rail, airline flights, regional Airporter shuttle service, Greyhound and Bolt Bus, regional and local ferries, and taxi service. See appendix 7 for a map of Bellingham that shows median household income at the census track level.

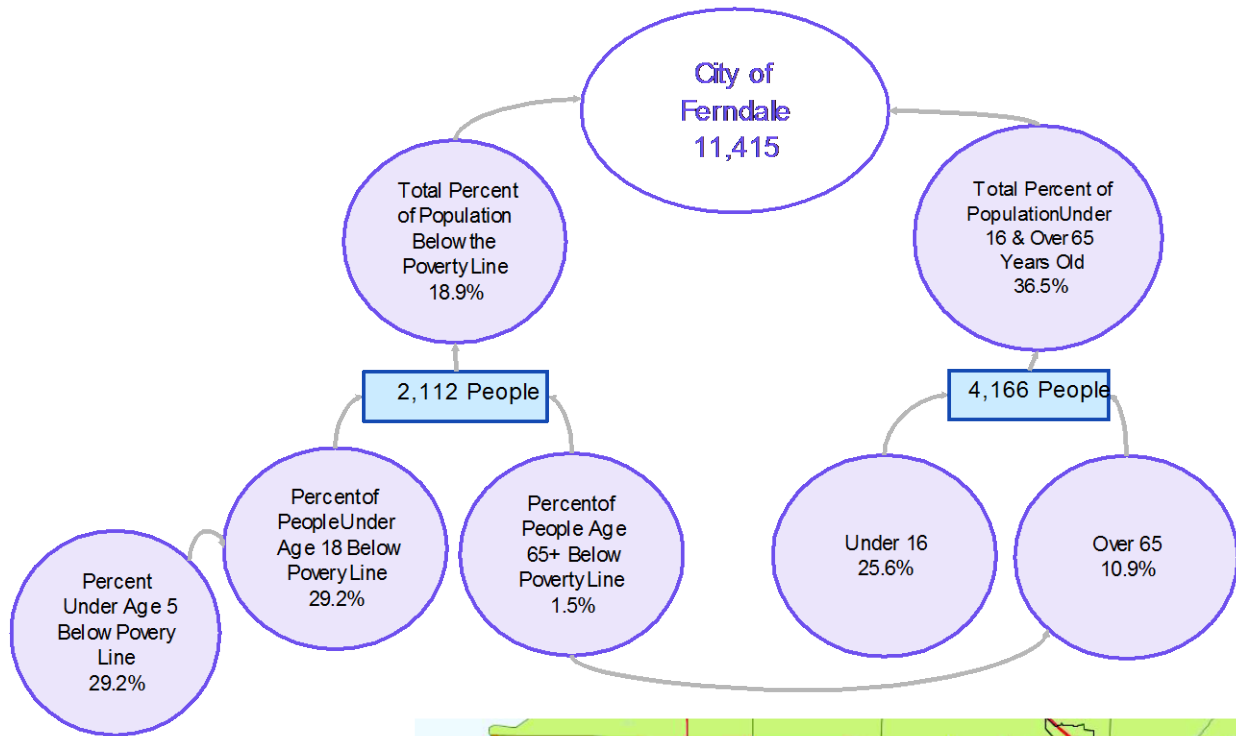


Top Figure 8: Percentages of special needs residents in the City of Bellingham. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 7.3% of those age 65 or over are below the poverty line.

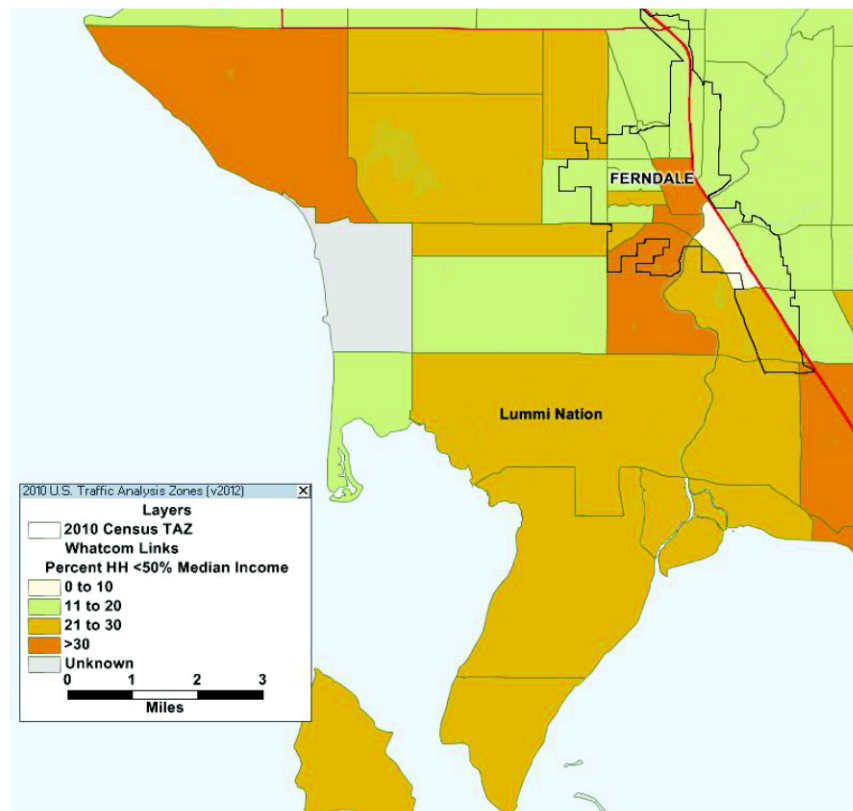
Right: Figure 9: Map of households in Bellingham that are under 50% of the median income. Data Source: US Census



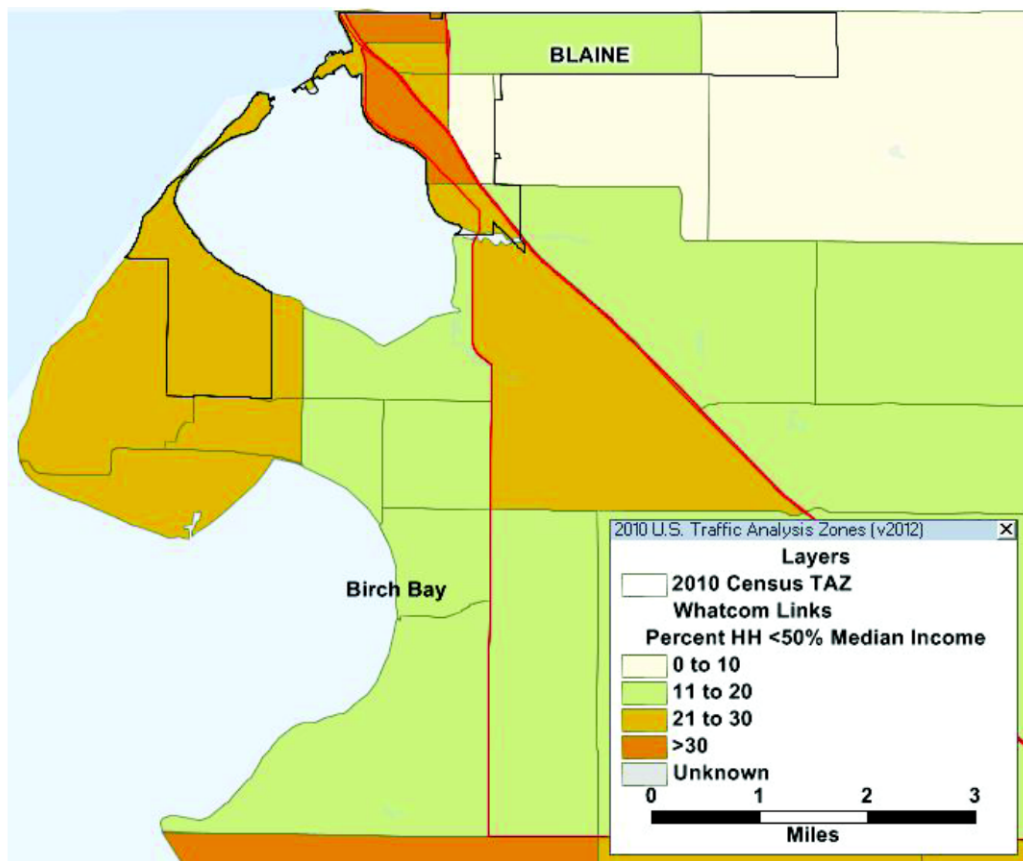
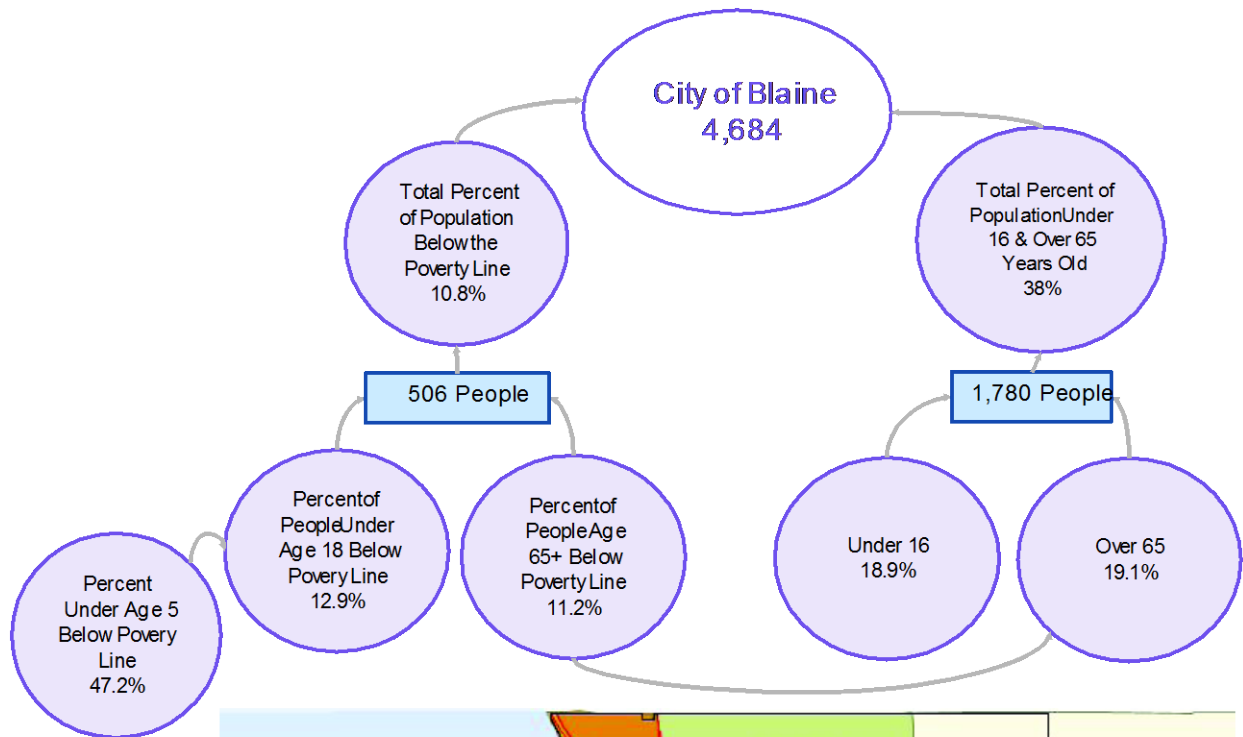
The *City of Ferndale* is located 7 miles northwest of Bellingham and has a population of 11,415. It is an employment, commerce, and service center for the area. Two regular daily bus routes serve travelers going to Bellingham or Blaine, and one of the routes offers a local circulator route. Ferndale is the residence for many employees of the Cherry Point Industrial area located 10 miles west of the city. Human services available in Ferndale include retirement and assisted living housing, a Senior Activity Center, and several schools and childcare facilities.



Top Figure 10: Percentages of special needs residents in the City of Ferndale. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 29.2% of people under 18 are below the poverty line.
Right: Figure 11: Map of households in Ferndale that are under 50% of the median income. Data Source: US Census

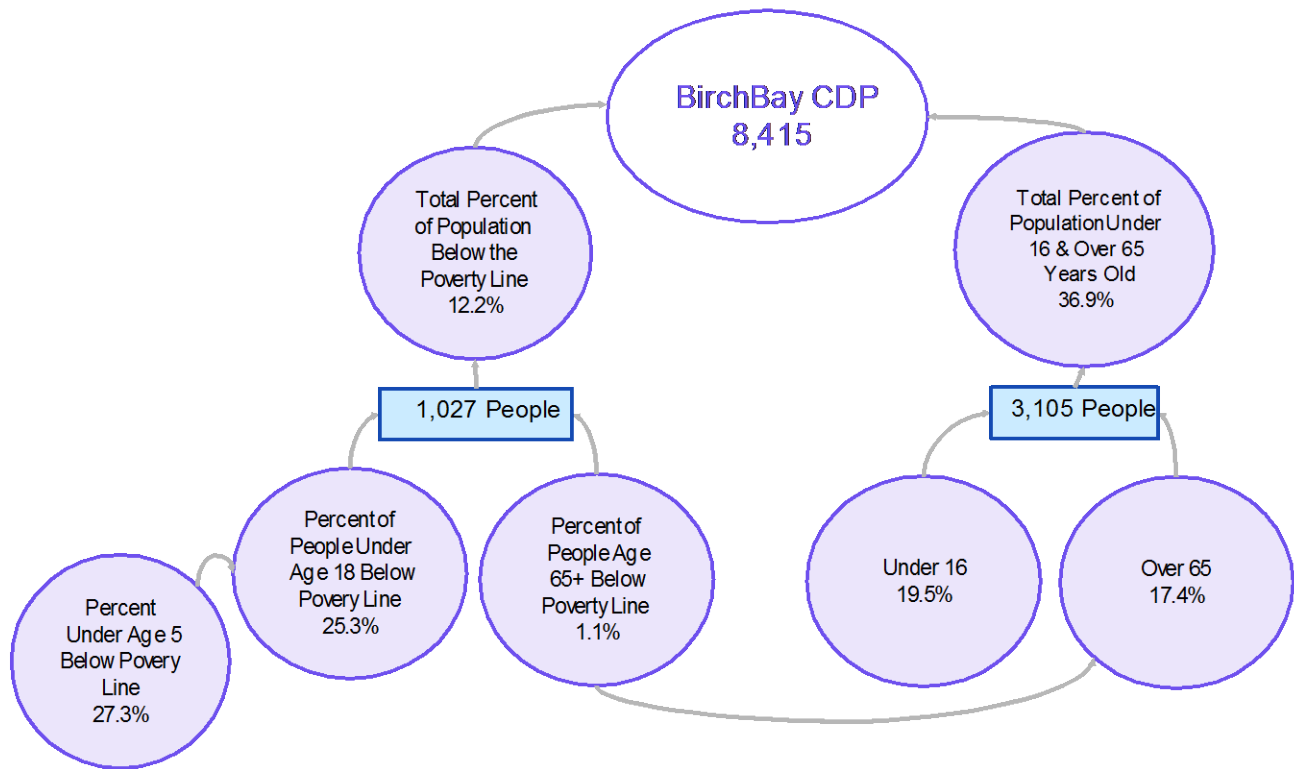


The *City of Blaine* is located at the northwest corner of Whatcom County at the border with Canada and it has a population of 4,684. The Blaine School District serves students in primary through high school. There are grocery stores, restaurants and other shops located in Blaine. Regular daily bus routes serve travelers to Birch Bay, Ferndale, and Bellingham.



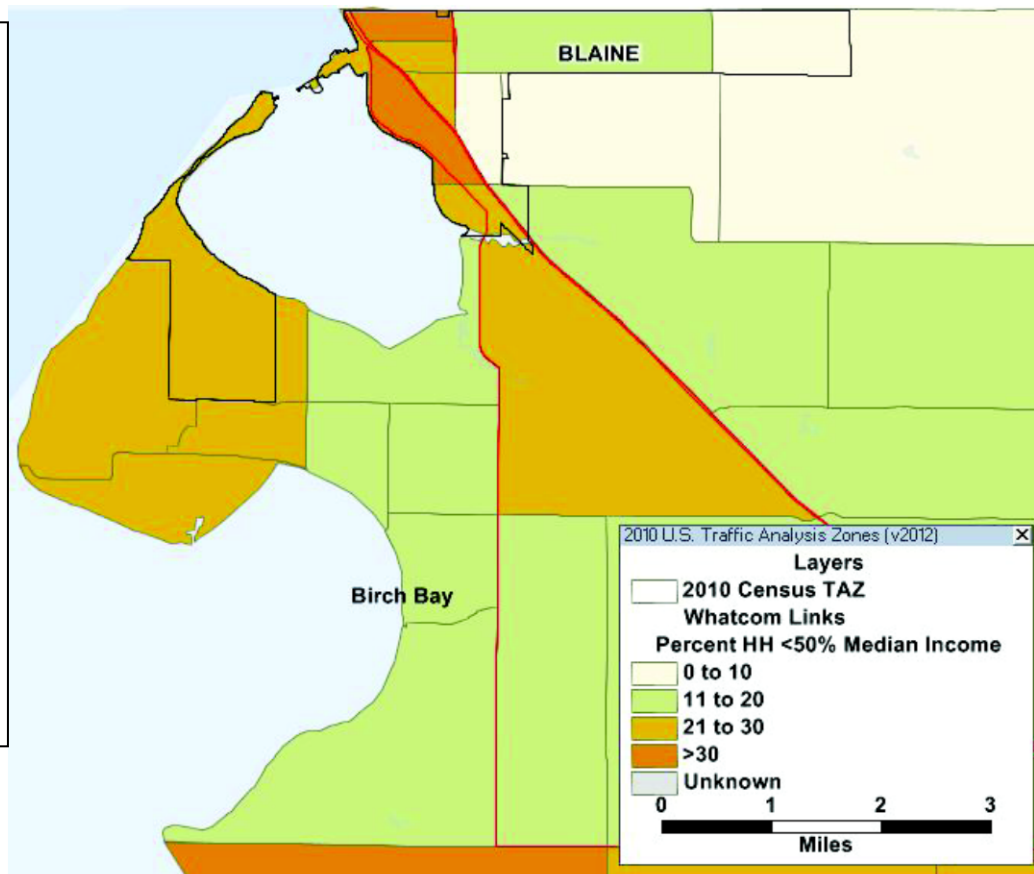
Top Figure 12: Percentages of special needs residents in the City of Blaine. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 12.9% of people under 18 are below the poverty line.
Right: Figure 13: Map of households in Blaine that are under 50% of the median income.
 Data Source: US Census

Birch Bay CDP is an unincorporated urban growth area located about 5 miles south of the City of Blaine with a population of 8,413. Children that live in Birch Bay attend the school in Blaine. WTA has two routes that serve the area. Services available here include a grocery store, restaurants and other small shops.

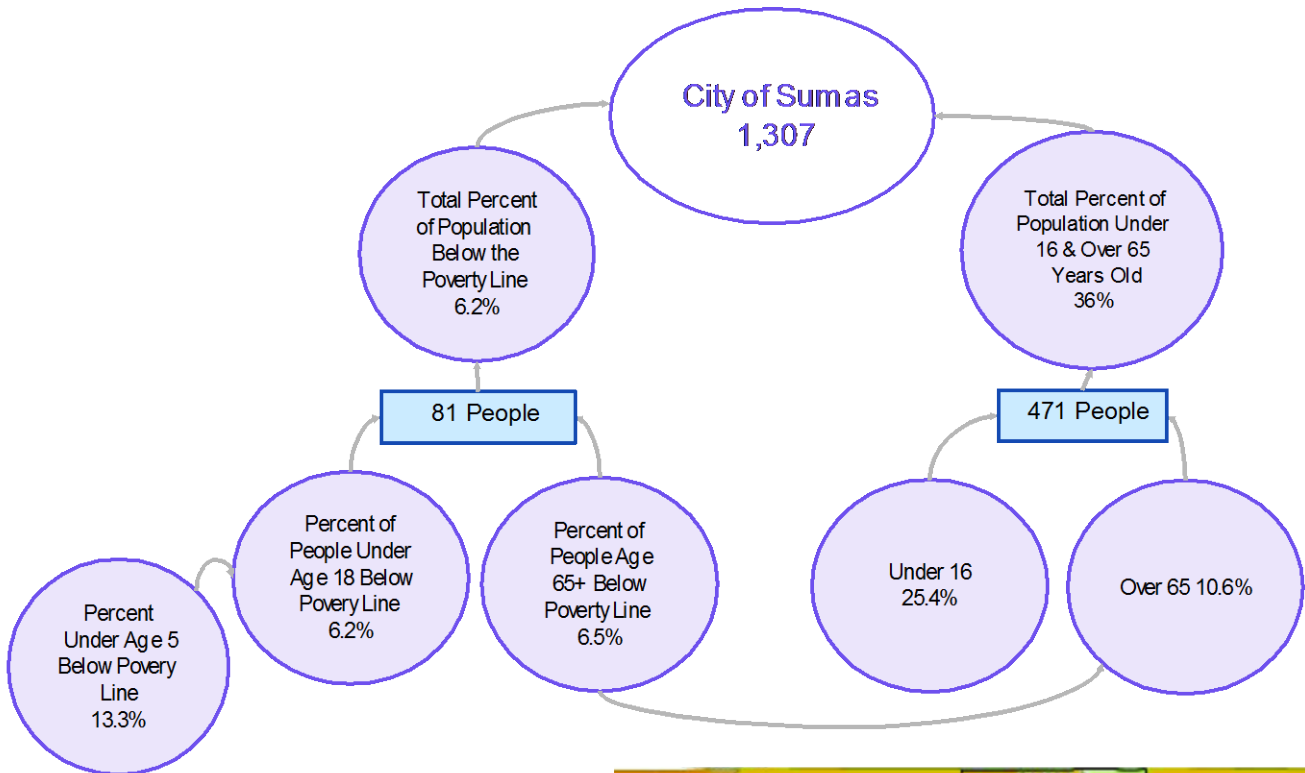


Top Figure 14: Percentages of special needs residents in Birch Bay Census Designated Place. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 25.3% of people under 18 are below the poverty line.

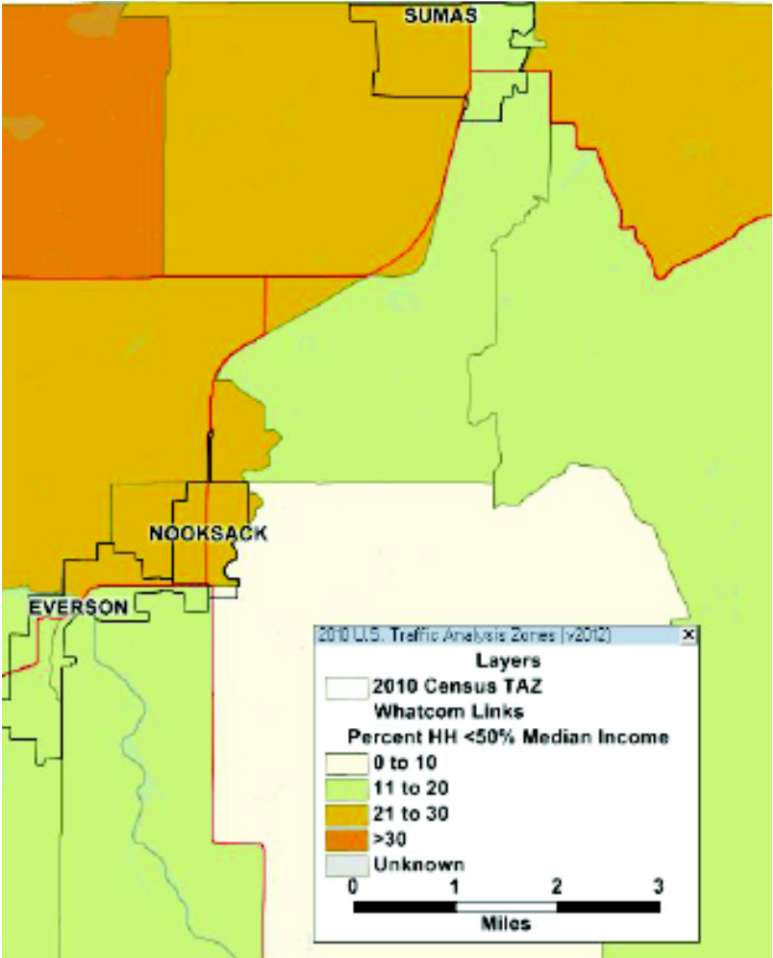
Right: Figure 15: Map of households in Birch Bay that are under 50% of the median income. Data Source: US Census



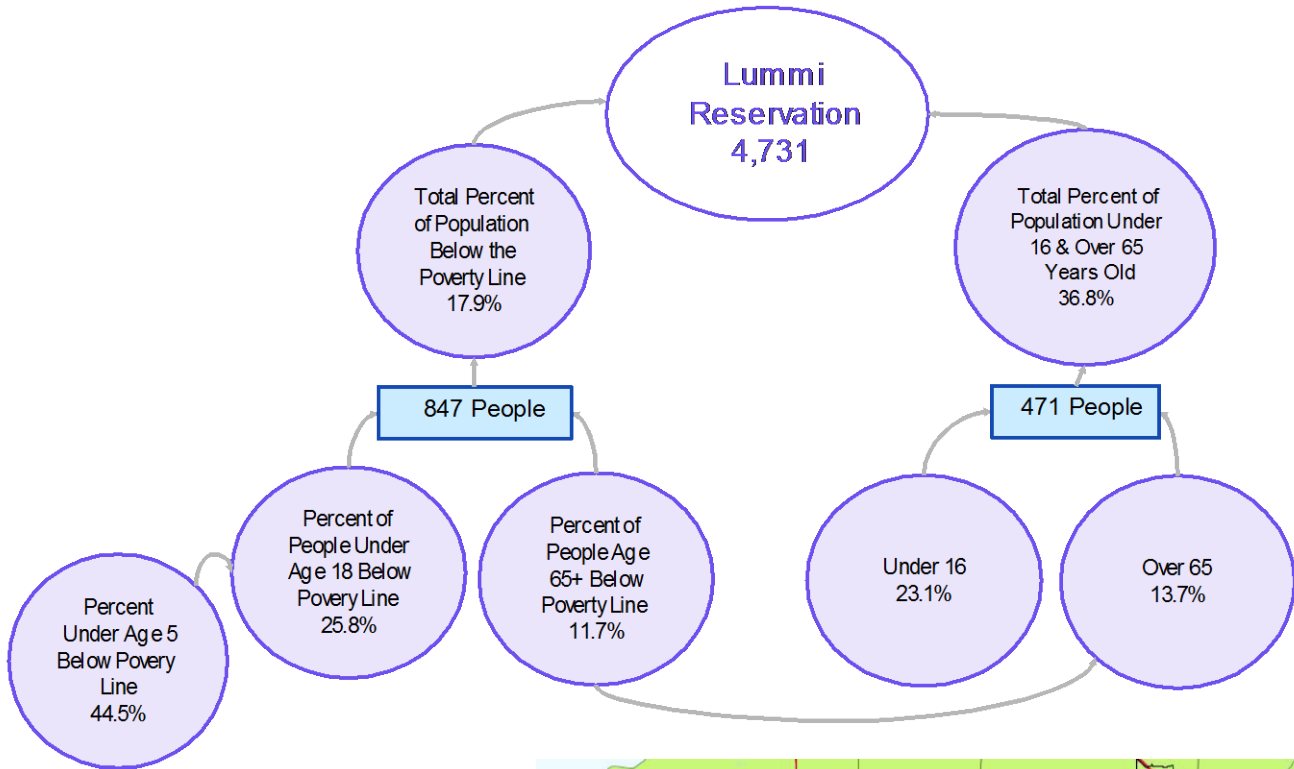
The City of Sumas is located on the border of Canada and has a Port of Entry where Highway 9 terminates. It is 24 miles northeast of Bellingham. The population is 1,307. Sumas has a grocery store, restaurants and gas stations. It is served by a WTA fixed route, with flex service available for some trips.



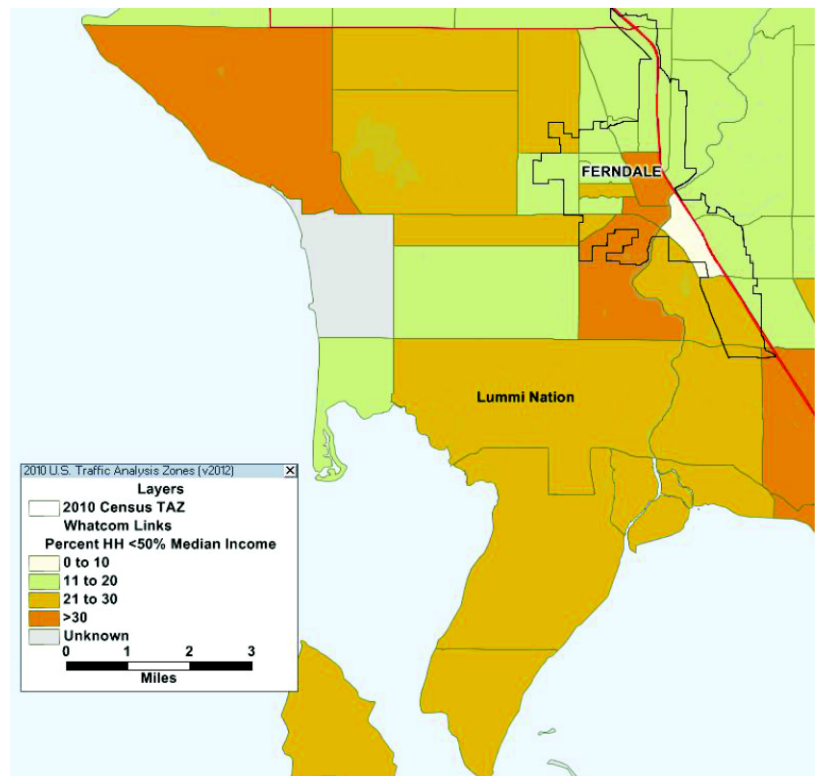
Top Figure 16: Percentages of special needs residents in the City of Sumas. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 6.2% of people under 18 are below the poverty line.
Right: Figure 17: Map of households in Sumas that are under 50% of the median income.
 Data Source: US Census



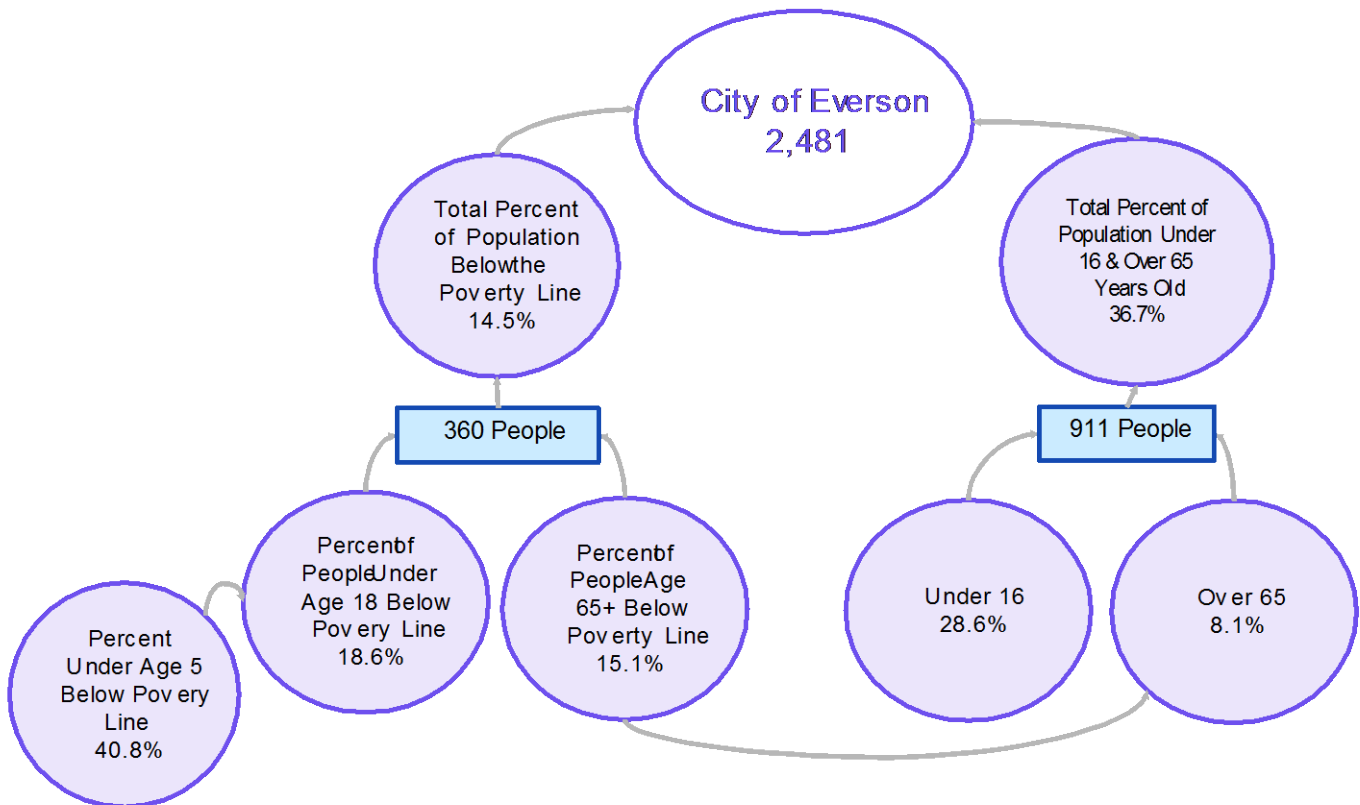
The *Lummi Reservation*, located 8 miles west of Bellingham and 6 miles south of Ferndale has a population of 4,731. Facilities and employers on the Lummi Reservation include the Silver Reef Casino, Northwest Indian College, the Lummi Nation School, elder housing, farms, and tribal government offices. Regular daily WTA and Lummi Transit bus routes serve travelers on the reservation to get to services and jobs on the reservation.



Top Figure 18: Percentages of special needs residents on the Lummi Reservation. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 25.8% of people under 18 are below the poverty line. **Right: Figure 19:** Map of households on the Lummi Reservation that are under 50% of the median income. Data Source: US Census



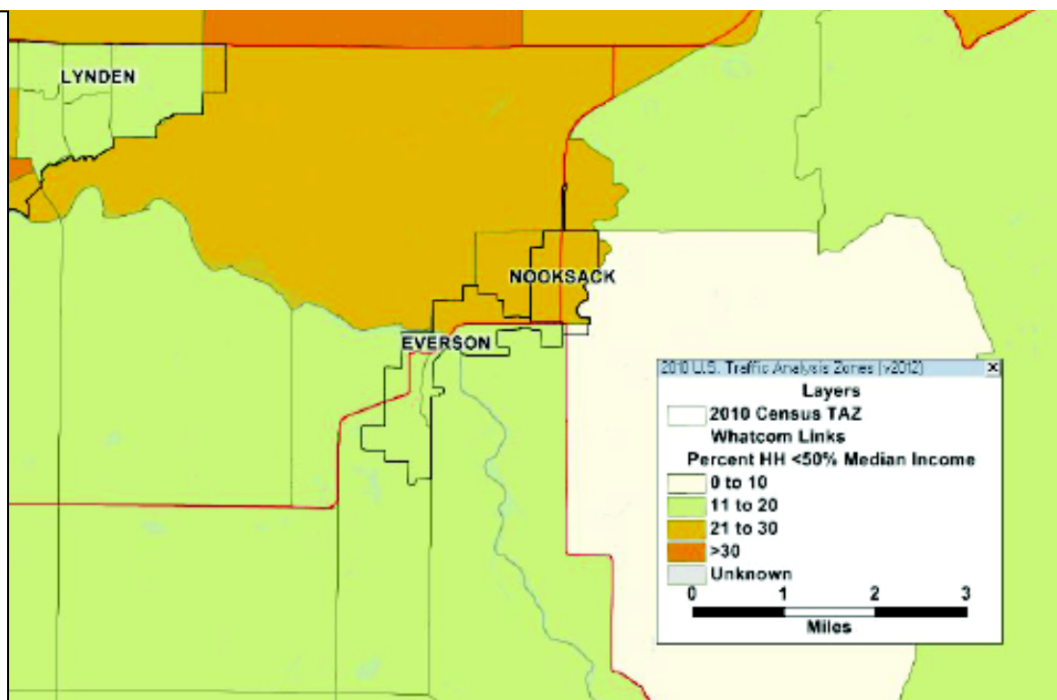
The City of Everson is located 16 miles northeast of Bellingham and has a population of 2,481. It is a small employment and service center for the surrounding rural unincorporated area where agriculture is a leading employer. There are medical and dental offices, a library, an elementary, middle and high school and a full-service grocery store. Rural residents and visitors with private transportation can access services in Everson from Sumas, Kendall and villages in the foothills. It is served by a WTA fixed route, with flex service available for some trips.



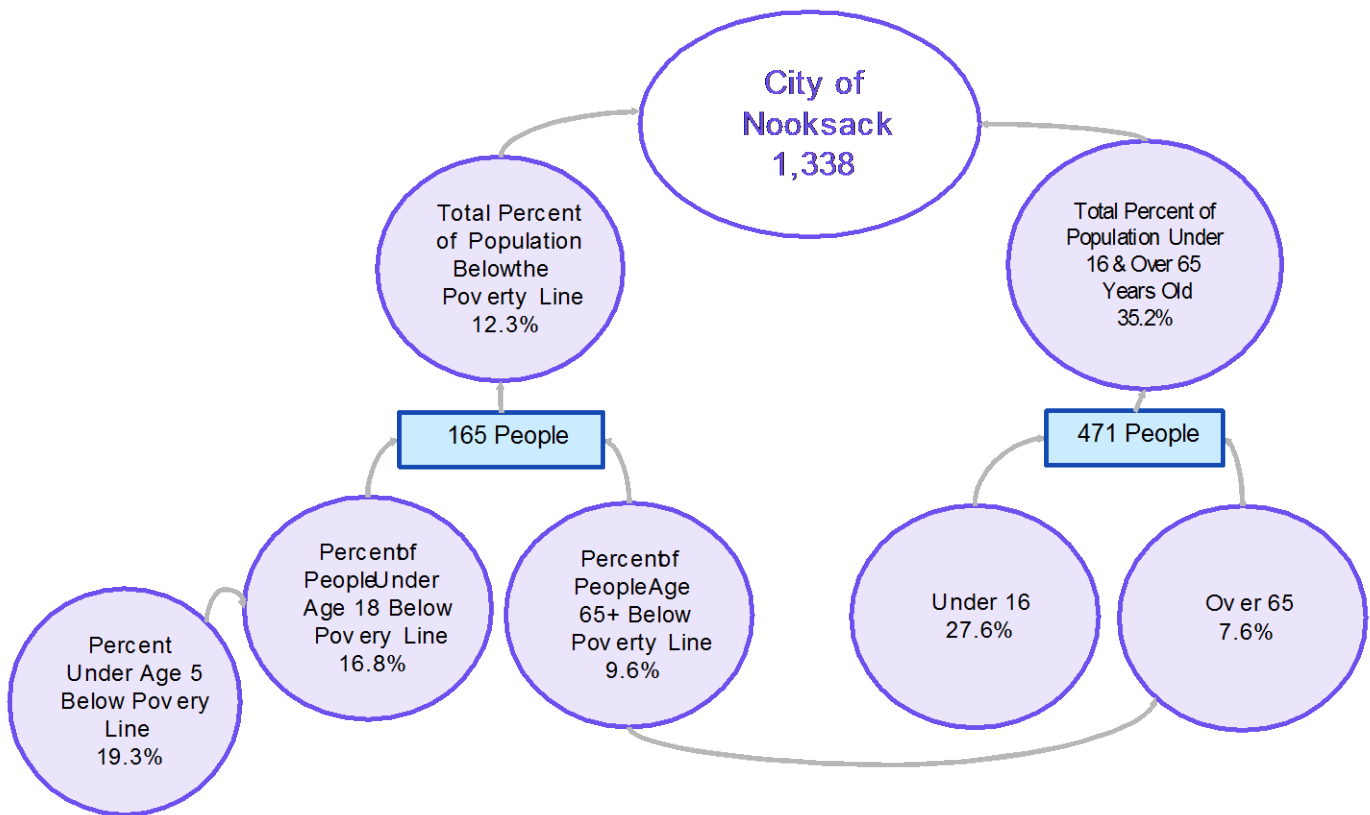
Top Figure 20:

Percentages of special needs residents in the City of Everson. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 15.1% of people aged 65 or over are below the poverty line.

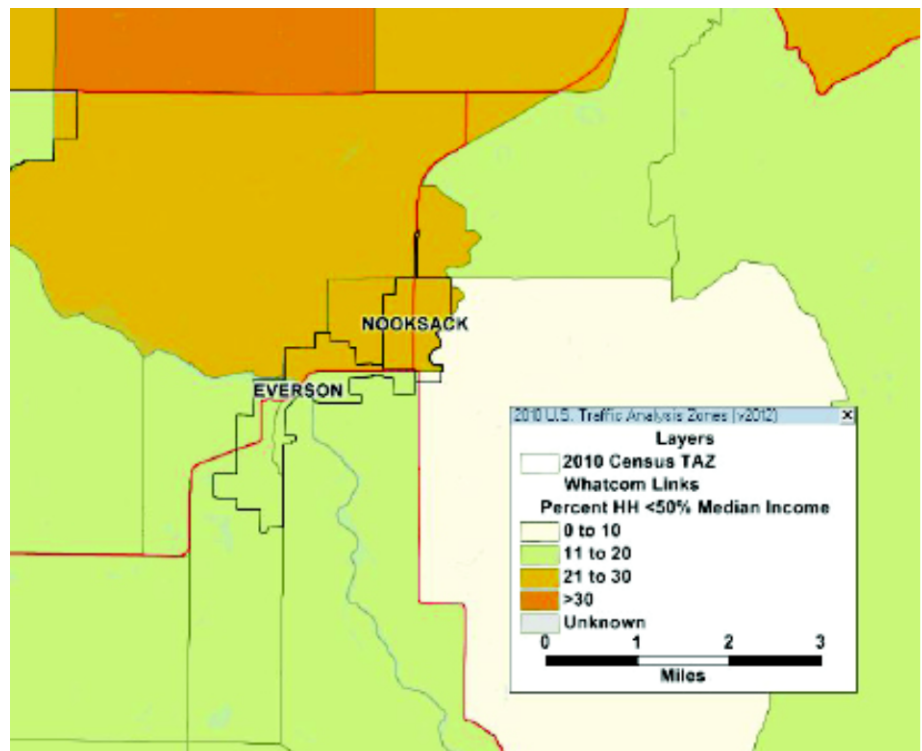
Right: **Figure 21:** Map of households in Everson that are under 50% of the median income. Data Source: US Census



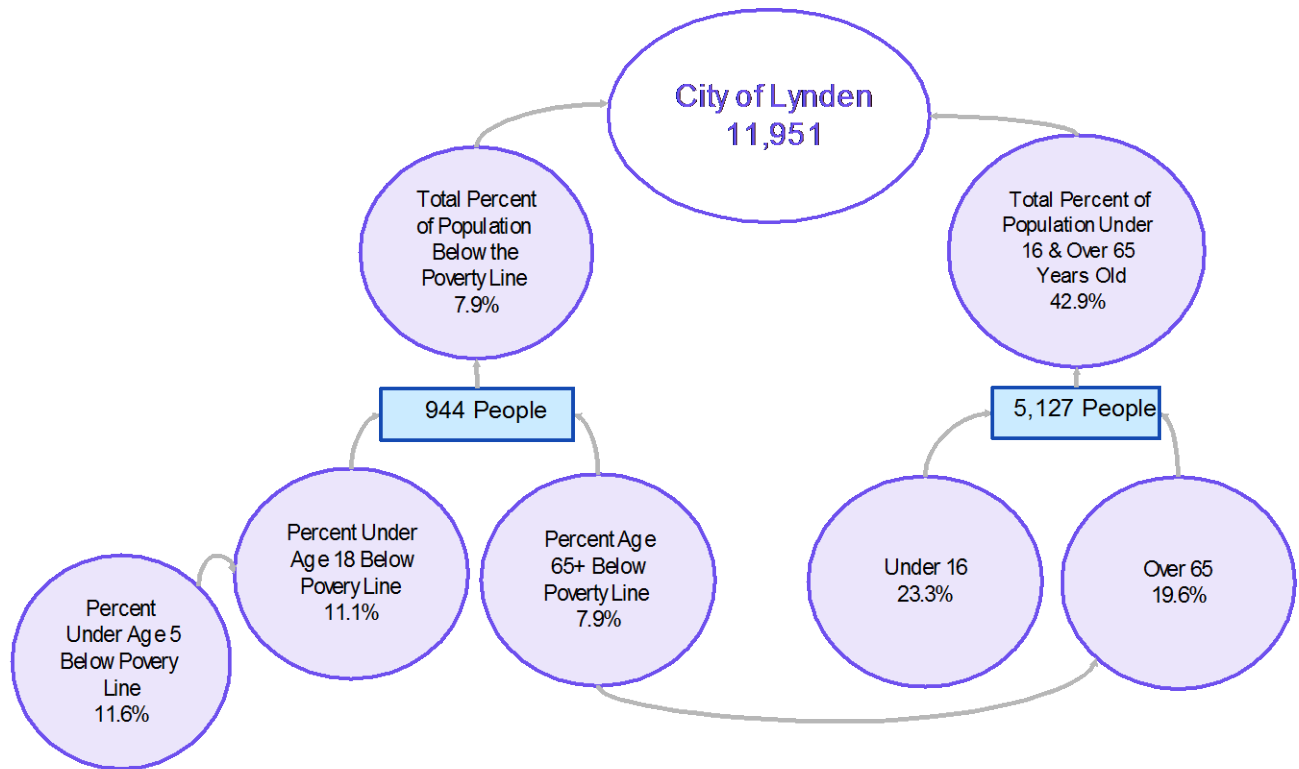
The City of Nooksack is located 17.5 miles northeast of Bellingham bordering the town of Everson. Nooksack has a population of 1,338. Services found here include an elementary school, coffee shops and restaurants. Children in Nooksack attend Nooksack Valley Middle and High Schools, located in Everson. It is served by a WTA fixed route, with flex service available for some trips.



Top **Figure 22:** Percentages of special needs residents in the City of Nooksack. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 16.8% of people under 18 are below the poverty line. Right: **Figure 23:** Map of households in Nooksack that are under 50% of the median income. Data Source: US Census



The City of Lynden is located 15 miles north of Bellingham and has a population of approximately 11,951, making it the second largest city in Whatcom County. It is a commercial and service center for a large farming area in unincorporated northwestern Whatcom County. Regular bus service carries travelers going to Bellingham and on a circulator route within Lynden. Access to Lynden's medical, dental, educational and employment services is geographically closer than Bellingham for residents in the rural areas and small cities to the north and east of Lynden. There are 5,801 jobs in the Lynden area.



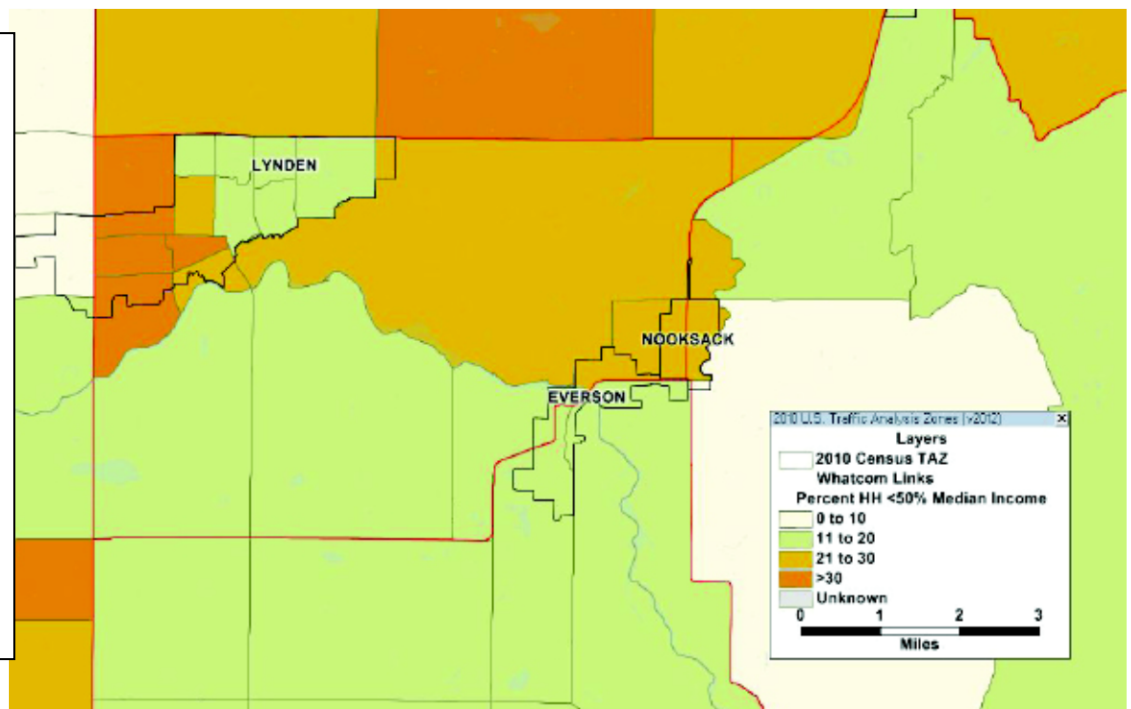
Top **Figure 24:**

Percentages of special needs residents in the City of Lynden. Poverty percentages are shown for each age group, i.e. 11.1% of people under 18 are below the poverty line.

Right: **Figure 25:**

Map of households in Lynden that are under 50% of the median income.

Data Source: US Census



Deming is a Census Designated Place located along the Mount Baker Highway – state route 542; it has a population of 353. The median household income is \$44,519 and 26.1% of residents are below the poverty line. Services offered in Deming include a public library, gas station, restaurants, and Mount Baker Middle & High Schools. Nooksack Indian Tribe offices are located in Deming as in the Nooksack River Casino. There are 775 jobs in the Deming area.

Nooksack Indian Tribe. Registered tribal members live on lands dispersed throughout eastern Whatcom County foothills. The tribal offices, social services, and Nooksack Head Start are located in Deming, along with the Nooksack River Casino off Highway 542. A dental clinic and educational programs are located on Mission Road, outside of Everson.

Maple Falls is a Census Designated Place located along the State Route 542 the Mount Baker Highway. It is three miles east of the junction with State Route 547 (Kendall Road) it has a population of 324. The median household income is \$29,216. Safety Net bus service is available one day per week by reservation. The closest social services are in Sumas or Everson, 20 or 30 miles west, respectively.

Glacier is a Census Designated Place located along the Mount Baker Highway with a population of 211 and a median household income of \$41,250. It is the closest community to the Mt. Baker Ski Area. The community has a small grocery store, coffee shops, restaurants and ski and snowboard shops. The closest social services are in Sumas or Everson. Safety Net bus service is available one day per week by reservation.

Bellingham Farm Worker Housing. Sterling Meadows is a housing development located in the northwest area of Bellingham to serve low income people who work on the farms in Whatcom County.

Nursing Homes, Public Housing, Adult Family Homes and Senior Low Income Housing Units are located across Whatcom County; however the majority of these housing types are located in Bellingham.

	Nursing, Convalescent or Retirement	Senior Low Income	Adult Family Homes	Public Housing	HUD Housing Vouchers	Affordable Housing	Total Facilities
Bellingham	21	10	9	9	12	22	83
Lynden	5	0	9	0	0	1	15
Ferndale	3	0	7	0	0	1	11
Blaine	1	0	3	3	0	1	8
Sumas	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Everson	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Custer	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Nooksack	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<i>Total</i>	30	10	31	12	12	27	122
<i>% within .25 miles of a bus stop</i>	87%	100%	52%	100%	100%	100%	

Table 18: Housing Facilities by type and jurisdiction

Chapter 7

Common Destinations

Residents with special needs travel to the same spectrum of sites that the general population visits: employment sites, childcare facilities, schools, medical services, commercial areas, recreation areas and more. Some residents with special needs travel more frequently to sites that offer specific types of services:

- Vocational training
- Medical and rehabilitation centers
- Senior and assisted living activity centers
- Residential shelters
- Human services appointments (e.g., DSHS, Case Managers, etc.)

The majority of these sites are clustered in the Bellingham area. For special needs residents in the small cities and rural areas, transportation to Bellingham may be cost prohibitive. People traveling to work during late night hours or on weekends have few public transportation options available.

According to data from the Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA) all of Whatcom County providers of mental health services that accept Medicaid, Medicare or are free are located in the City of Bellingham.

The following list describes some of the destinations accessed by people with special needs:

Senior Centers: Located in Bellingham, Blaine, Everson, Lynden, Sumas, Point Roberts, Deming and Ferndale.

Senior Nutrition Sites: Hot meals served in a group setting at noon on days listed.

Bellingham Senior Center- Monday - Friday

Blaine Senior Center - Monday - Friday

Everson Senior Center- Monday and Friday

Ferndale Senior Center - Monday - Friday

Lynden Community Center - Monday - Friday

Point Roberts Senior Activity Center- Wednesday and Friday

Sumas Senior Center – Monday and Friday

Welcome Deming Senior Activity Center - Thursday

Department of Social and Health Services, Bellingham Office: The DSHS office offers programs to assist people with low income. People come to the DSHS office to apply for cash or food assistance, medical assistance, in-home and nursing-home care for elderly people, and treatment programs for substance misuse. The office is located in a shopping mall area in north Bellingham, about ¼ mile from the Cordata bus terminal.

Social Security Administration is located in Bellingham along a major arterial with bus service every 15 minutes.

WorkSource: Located in downtown Bellingham on a WTA fixed route WorkSource offers resume help, training, education and job search assistance. Services include free use of computers, copiers, phones, faxes, job referral and placement, referral to training and other community services, and access to Unemployment Insurance.

Bellingham Housing Authority: Local government agency that serves approximately 3,000 homes and over 7,000 residents in Whatcom County. Clients served include low income families, elderly people, people with disabilities and working families in need of affordable housing. Clients may receive rental assistance in the form of low income public housing or a section 8 voucher. They are located in downtown Bellingham near a WTA Go line with service every 15 minutes.

Interfaith, SeaMar and Planned Parenthood Health Clinics: These clinics offer sliding-scale medical services to people with low income. A range of preventative, diagnostic, and educational services are available in addition to medical care. Interfaith and Planned Parenthood clinics are located in downtown Bellingham, within three blocks of the WTA terminal, and within walking distance of two shelters, three subsidized housing complexes, a senior center, the food bank, and two day-use drop-in centers for people without homes. SeaMar Health Clinic is located in North Bellingham, near the Cordata Bus Station.

Alcohol and Drug Treatment Agencies (State Certified): There are 12 State Certified Drug and Alcohol treatment facilities located in Whatcom County. Of those, eight are located in the City of Bellingham, one on the Lummi Reservation, one in Everson (Nooksack Reservation), one in Ferndale and one in Blaine. Four of the eight locations in Bellingham are administered by the County and accept Medical Coupons. The clinics on the Lummi and Nooksack Reservations are Tribally administered and also accept medical coupons.

WIC Clinics: Women Infant Children (WIC) is a program that provides nutrition counseling and food vouchers for low income pregnant women and children up to the age of five. Clinics are located at the downtown Bellingham Health Department office, the SeaMar Health Clinic in the Cordata neighborhood of Bellingham, at the EWRRRC and the Nooksack Indian Tribe.

Lighthouse Mission and other shelters: Drop-in centers offering temporary shelter and once-a-day meals to people without homes. The Lighthouse Mission is located in downtown Bellingham and it offers shelter for men in need. Agape House, Dorothy Place, the YWCA, and Lydia Place offer temporary shelter for women and children without homes.

Hot Meals are served across the county on various days of the week. Most meals are served at dinner time and are in Bellingham. Apart from the hot meals served at noon at the senior centers throughout Whatcom County, most meals are served at dinner time and are in Bellingham.

Lighthouse Mission
910 W Holly, Bellingham

Maple Alley Café
2117 Walnut St., Bellingham

Little Cheerful
133 E. Holly, Bellingham

Loaves & Fishes Hot Meal
110 Flora St., Bellingham

C.A.S.T.
1111 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham

Maple Alley Inn Lunch
2750 McLeod Rd., Bellingham

Shuksan Middle School
2713 Alderwood Avenue,
Bellingham

Church on the Street
901 Holly St., Bellingham

Blaine Community Meal
763 G Street, Bellingham

Nooksack Food Bank
204 N. Washington, Nooksack

Food Not Bombs
Corner of Cornwall and Magnolia

Salt on the Street Dinner
1815 Cornwall Ave, Bellingham

Ferndale Community Meal Program
2034 Washington St., Ferndale
Saturday Sun Rise
Railroad behind Public Market,
Bellingham

Food Not Bombs
Railroad St. & Holly St., Bellingham

Bellingham Community Meal
2116 Cornwall Ave, Bellingham

Southside Community Meal
1720 Harris Ave., Bellingham

Seeds of Hope
8251 Kendall Road, Maple Falls

Meals on Wheels
Home delivered meals to
homebound seniors.
360-746-6480

Food Banks are located across the county; each bank is open on specified days and during specified hours. Some have bus service, but not all. Stakeholders have recognized the fact that there are families who are unable to travel to a food bank and thus are not able to utilize that service.

Bellingham Food Bank
1824 Ellis St.
Mon, Wed. & Fri: 12:30 - 3:00 PM,
Wed: 5:00 -7:00 PM

Blaine Food Bank
500 'C' St.
Tues & Fri: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM,
Wed 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Christ the King
5373 Guide Meridian
Tues: 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Nooksack Valley Food Bank
Everson Presbyterian Church
204 N. Washington Thurs: 10:00 AM -
2:00 PM

Ferndale Food Bank
1671 Main St
Mon, Wed, & Sat: 9:00 - 11:00 AM

Food Lifeline Mobile Pantry

Mobile Pantry at the EWRRRC 8251
Kendall Rd.
Every 2nd Saturday of the month
11:30 - 12:30PM

Foothills Food Bank
St. Peter's Church, 6210 Mt. Baker Hwy
Tues: 9:00 -11:30 AM

Hope House
207 Kentucky St.
Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9:00 - 11:30 AM,
Fri: 12:00 - 3:30 PM

Lord's Table: River of Life Church
4037 Valley Hwy. Van Zandt
2nd & 4th Sat of the month
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Lummi Food Bank
2830 Kwina Rd.
Fri: 12:30 PM
not open 1st Fri. of the month.

Lynden Project Hope Food Bank

205 S. BC Ave. # 05
Mon, Wed & Fri: 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Nooksack Tribal Food Bank
4971 Deming Rd, Deming
1st Fri of the month 12:00 – Until
Supplies Last
Salvation Army
2912 Northwest Ave.
Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri.
9:30 AM – 11:30 AM, 12- 3PM
Southside Food Bank (Hillcrest Chapel)
1400 Larrabee Ave.
1st and 3rd Thurs of the month
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
St. Joseph's Outreach
5781 Hendrickson St., Ferndale
Sept – June Thurs: 10:00 - 11:00 AM,
July 10th and 24th, August 7th and 28th
10:00 -11:00 AM
Sumas Food Bank
415 Cherry St.
Valley Community Church
Thursday 12:00 - 3:00 PM

Brigid Collins: located in downtown Bellingham provides a wide range of services, from healing and justice at two nationally accredited Children's Advocacy Centers to parenting education and support through parenting programs like Incredible Years and Parent Child Interaction Therapy. Group therapy is offered for children and adolescents who are victims of sexual abuse. They offer case management and therapeutic support to struggling families at various stages within the cycle of abuse and neglect.

Opportunity Council: The Opportunity Council is a private, non-profit Community Action Agency serving homeless and low-income families and individuals. Their goal is to help people learn to become self-sufficient. They offer a broad scope of services that range from addressing immediate and crisis-oriented needs (food, emergency shelter, eviction-prevention) to longer-term programs that promote self-sufficiency in our community (early childhood education, home weatherization). The Bellingham office is located on Cornwall Ave and does not have direct transit service, it is about five blocks away from the downtown WTA Station and three blocks from the Red Go Line.

East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

In September 2011 the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRRC) opened. This facility, owned by Whatcom County is located on Kendall Road in Maple Falls and is managed by the Opportunity Council. There is space for preschool, community meetings, a community garden and a basic needs resource area. Summer Children's programs are run at the facility and a Health Care In Person Assister is available on site Tuesday – Friday to assist residents in applying for national health coverage. Services offered at this clinic that may otherwise warrant transportation into town include a fax, a notary, free phone use, free printing of ten pages per day, free computer and wifi use and a mobile food pantry. Clients can get help applying for SSI, SSDI, EBT and head start. Future proposed additional services include a gymnasium, a wood bank, proposed medical and dental facility and possibly a Boys and Girls Club.

The EWRRRC is served by WTA Route 72X and has service six times per weekday and three times on Saturday. The facility is located on a rural state route with no sidewalks and little to no shoulder on sections of the roadway.

Northwest Youth Services is located in downtown Bellingham along a WTA Go line. They serve runaway, homeless, throw-away, abused, neglected and other at-risk youth and young adults. They offer housing, vocational opportunities, detour outreach services and diversion opportunities. Youth housing applications increased 10.1% between 2011 and 2012. Housing application numbers were at 204 in 2009 and increased to 602 in 2012.

Goodwill Jobs Training Center: The center offers free classes in computer programs, job search skills, language proficiency, and high school graduation equivalency degree (GED) preparation. The center is located in a shopping mall northeast of Bellingham, about ¼ mile from a high-frequency bus line. The center is located about one mile from a child care center.

Mt. Baker Ski Area Located in the National Forest at the end of State Route 542, the ski area (in winter) and the recreational camping and trails (in other seasons) are a major destination in Whatcom County. Daily visitors to the Ski Area and the National Forest hiking and camping areas are estimated to be more than 4,000 on high traffic days, summer or winter. Employees at the ski area are seasonal and receive incomes that are generally too low to support daily private car travel from areas with affordable housing. The Ski area business subsidizes a shuttle van for select employees during the winter season. Not all employees are eligible to take the shuttle.

Rural Industrial Jobs Food processing plants are located outside Blaine and Lynden; a major employment center with oil refineries, an aluminum smelter, and shipping terminals is located south of Birch Bay at Cherry Point. Public transportation to these remote sites is not available.

Farms and Agricultural Processors: Rural and widely spaced by definition, farms in Whatcom County are a major industry and provide employment to many farm workers. Transportation to and from farms is a challenge for those farm workers with low incomes. Affordable housing for farm workers is located in north Bellingham. Some farms assist in providing transportation. Farm workers sometimes have jobs at more than one farm, necessitating miles of travel during the day to access different work sites.

Chapter 8

Existing Transportation Services

Public roads, transit buses, private shuttles, ferries and rail are some of the transportation services that serve all residents of Whatcom County, including people with special needs. Paratransit (also called Specialized Transportation), Medicaid brokerage transport services, volunteer driver programs, special event vans, and school buses are examples of services that specifically assist people with special needs. This chapter describes the main types of public and private transportation services available.

Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is the County's public transportation provider, operating a variety of bus and van services.

Fixed Route Bus Service: WTA operates 30 routes served by large, conventional buses, serving regular stops on a published schedule. These routes serve specific corridors and stops are marked by posted signs. The fare is \$1.00 per ride for the general public and \$0.50 for those with a reduced fare card or over 65 years of age. Children under 8 years of age and seniors over 75 may ride free of charge.

Specialized Transportation Minibus Service: Minibuses offer door-to-door service for people who qualify through an eligibility process. The service is available within a 3/4 mile area of the fixed route corridors during regular service hours.

Flex Routes: Specific rural routes (for example, 71X and 72X) offer the option for a passenger to request the bus to deviate slightly from the established route, within a designated zone. This service helps people to use the regular bus, and helps those with mobility impairments who can't otherwise get to the bus stop. When no one has pre-requested a deviation to the route, the bus travels as a Fixed Route bus.

Safety Net Service: In areas of the County not served by other WTA services, the Safety Net offers a minimum service on designated days of the week. The service is available to all residents by calling and requesting a ride. Pick-up and drop-off is door-to-door, however timing requires a "window" of up to two hours within which the ride could arrive.

Van-pool Service: For groups coming from and going to a similar destination, Van Pools offer a subscription service using volunteer drivers. WTA supplies and maintains the van. The service is self-sustaining with nearly the entire cost paid for by the subscribing users.

County Connector Bus: Fixed-route bus between Skagit and Whatcom Counties. Service is provided through a partnership between the two agencies and is currently funded by a state grant.

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Boardings				
Fixed Route	4,720,951	4,686,695	4,934,530	4,986,650
Specialized	174,616	175,469	179,344	184,793
Vanpool	99,217	88,625	93,204	85,439
Passenger Miles				
Fixed Route	14,876,111	15,344,966	15,874,735	15,833,752
Specialized	962,142	984,716	1,004,799	1,051,477
Vanpool	4,016,121	3,920,390	4,094,311	3,698,700
Passenger Miles per Boarding				
Fixed Route	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.2
Specialized	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.7
Vanpool	40.5	44.2	43.9	43.3

Table 19: WTA ridership numbers 2010-2013

	2010	2013	Difference
Boardings			
Fixed Route	4,720,951	4,986,650	5.33%
Specialized	174,616	184,793	5.51%
Vanpool	99,217	85,439	-16.13%
Passenger Miles			
Fixed Route	14,876,111	15,833,752	6.05%
Specialized	962,142	1,051,477	8.50%
Vanpool	4,016,121	3,698,700	-8.58%
Passenger Miles per Boarding			
Fixed Route	3.2	3.2	0.00%
Specialized	5.5	5.7	3.51%
Vanpool	40.5	43.3	6.47%

Table 20: Four year comparison of boardings, passenger miles and passenger miles/boarding

	2003	2013	Difference
Boardings			
Fixed Route	2,795,274	4,986,650	78%
Specialized	139,770	184,793	32%
Vanpool	42,565	85,439	101%
Revenue Hours			
Fixed Route	89,419	130,117	46%
Specialized	42,713	60,431	41%
Vanpool	4,530	12,435	175%

Table 21: WTA ten year comparison of boardings and revenue hours

2013 BUS FARES	Regular Fare	<u>Reduced Fare</u>
Cash Fare on Fixed Route Route 80X cash fare: \$1.00 if getting on AND off within Whatcom County; \$1.00 if getting on AND off within Skagit County; and \$2.00 if traveling <u>between</u> counties.	\$1.00	\$.50 OR \$1.00 for travel between Whatcom and Skagit County
Cash Fare on Specialized Transportation	\$1.00	No discount available
Monthly Pass	\$25	<u>\$13</u>
Tokens (sold in packages of 20 only)	\$20	\$20
Quarterly Pass	\$70	<u>\$35</u>
Monthly Student Pass	\$15	
Quarterly Student Pass	\$40	
WWU Student Pass	Approximately \$18/academic quarter	
Children under eight and adults over 75	Free	

Table 22: WTA 2013 Bus Fares

How to Obtain a Reduced Fare Card

At least one of the following is needed to qualify for a Reduced Fare Card:

- Valid Medicare Card
- Proof of Social Security Income (SSI) Eligibility
- Valid Veteran's Affairs (VA) Identification, with at least 40% disability
- 65 years of age and older
- Other disabilities may also qualify.

A Reduced Fare Card, or a Medicare Card, can be presented on fixed route or flex buses to receive a 50% cash fare discount. There is no cash fare discount on Specialized Transportation or Safety Net Service.

A Reduced Fare Card, or a Medicare Card, can be presented at the point of purchase to receive a discount on a monthly or quarterly bus pass. Reduced fare bus passes can be used on all WTA buses—fixed routes, flex buses, Specialized Transportation or Safety Net service.

	Boardings per Weekday	% of Operating Expenses	Cost to WTA per Ride	WA State Average Cost per Ride
Fixed Route	17,000	70%	\$2.80	\$4.51
Specialized	640	29%	\$35.92	\$35.95
Vanpool	400	1%	\$2.51	\$3.64

Table 23: Cost Comparisons for WTA services

As seen in the table above, the cost to WTA to give a person one ride on Specialized Transit is \$35.92, compared to a ride on a Fixed Route Transit bus at a cost of \$2.80 per person. Fixed Route service is much more cost effective for the agency than Specialized Transit. Programs that educate people with special needs on how to use Fixed Route service have been successful in Whatcom County and may reduce reliance on Specialized Transit.

New Ways to Pay Fares in 2014

WTA’s board has approved some changes to the fare structure which will take place in fall 2014. The change which may have the biggest positive impact on special needs clients is the introduction of a day pass. The pass will cost \$3 and will be good from the time swiped until midnight. Currently the regular bus fare is \$1 per boarding and no transfers are given.

A day pass is something that stakeholders have identified as a desired need. It can cost up to \$6 per person to take the bus to and from a doctor’s appointment or other destination due to the number of transfers needed. A client catches the bus near their home and pays \$1, transfers at the Bellingham Station and pays another \$1, transfers again at the Cordata Station for \$1, then does the reverse trip home for \$3. If they have any kids over the age of eight with them, the client will pay \$6 per kid as well. A day pass will cut the cost of the trip in half.

Lummi Nation Transit provides fare-free transit service from 6:10 am to 8:55 pm 7 days a week 363 days a year (not on Thanksgiving & Christmas) around the reservation. This serves residential neighborhoods at the southern end of the reservation by connecting them to government offices, stores, schools, clinics, WTA stops, and employment centers. Lummi Transit also provides fare-free transit service from 11:00am to 6:09pm 5 days a week (Monday-Friday) that connects residential neighborhoods on the reservation to additional services that can be found in the City of Ferndale, WTA Ferndale Station as well as government offices, stores, schools, clinics, WTA stops, and employment centers on the reservation. See Appendix 2 for route map.

Lummi Transit is able to provide these fixed route services using the following buses:

Bus #	Year	Total Seats
1	2007	16 + 1(ADA) + driver = 18
2	2007	16 + 1(ADA) + driver = 18
3	2007	12 + 1(ADA) + driver = 14
4	2012	23 + 2(ADA) + driver = 26
5	2014	23 + 2(ADA) + driver = 26
6	2014	23 + 2(ADA) + driver = 26

Table 24: Lummi Transit fleet information

Ridership increased from 2010 to 2011, decreased from 2011 to 2012 and increased slightly from 2012 to 2013.

Year	Ridership
2010	55,370
2011	67,778
2012	59,595
2013	59,762

Table 25: Lummi Transit ridership information 2010-2014

Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) is the Medicaid Brokerage in Whatcom, Skagit, Island and San Juan Counties. They report that transportation is about 26% of the total NWRC 2014 budget and that 75% of the costs are spent on contracted client services. NWRC saw a 10% increase in Medicaid transportation trips between the first six months of 2013 and the first six months of 2014.

As shown in the table below, fixed route bus service is the most cost effective way to transport the client to a medical appointment. A cabulance is a non-ambulatory ride while a taxi is an ambulatory ride. If the client does not live on a bus line then they are provided a taxi. A fixed route bus ride costs the agency \$1.54 compared to a taxi ride which costs \$62.06.

MODE	TRIPS	COST	AVERAGE COST PER TRIP
PUBLIC BUS-FIXED ROUTE	5,310	\$8,168.00	\$1.54
GAS VOUCHER CLIENT	2,391	\$26,555.33	\$11.11
AMBULATORY RIDE	2,239	\$86,268.61	\$38.53
PUBLIC BUS (PARATRANSIT)	511	\$806.00	\$1.58
NON-AMBULATORY RIDE	268	\$16,632.95	\$62.06
MILEAGE C.A.V.	205	\$2,157.89	\$10.53
FERRY	165	\$2,211.35	\$13.40
VOLUNTEER AGENCY	93	\$6,014.46	\$64.67
ANCILLARY COSTS (PHARMACY MAILING)	0	\$24.00	\$3.00

Table 26: MAY 2014 Transportation Modes and Expenditures for NWRC Clients in Whatcom, Skagit Island and San Juan Counties

Amtrak Regularly scheduled regional passenger rail service connecting cities in the state, nationally, and internationally. Rail service is supplemented by Thru-way Bus coach services. Bellingham on-offs refers to the number of people getting on, or off the train at the Bellingham Amtrak station.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total Ridership	838,251	848,000	836,000	807,000
Bellingham On-Offs	62,562	58,283	60,000	56,700

Table 27: Amtrak annual ridership information for 2010-2013

Whatcom Chief Ferry Regularly scheduled daily ferry service connecting Lummi Reservation and Lummi Island. Operated by Whatcom County Public Works, the ferry transports motor vehicles, and walking and bicycling passengers.

Private Transportation Businesses offering transit or shuttle services:

Airporter Shuttle/BellAir Charters: Daily scheduled bus service connecting to SeaTac Airport and intermediate points. The Shuttle serves Blaine (by reservation only); Birch Bay, Lynden, Ferndale and Bellingham, providing 11 roundtrips each day. Charter and contracted services are also provided by special arrangement. Within Whatcom County, the Bellair Baker Shuttle offers service to the Ski area on a seasonal basis.

Bolt Bus: Travels non-stop between Bellingham and Seattle and Bellingham and Vancouver, Canada five times per day departing from WTA'S Cordata Station. Fares are as low as \$1 per ticket when booked in advance.

Taxi and Limousine Services: Individual car and van service customized for each trip; some social services provide taxi vouchers or arrange taxi transportation for eligible medical patients where applicable public transportation services are not available.

Yellow Cab / Yellow Van Service (the Company) is a full service transportation company that has been serving the Whatcom Skagit area for more than 20 years. The Company offers taxi, van, and wheelchair accessible van service.

Intercity Bus: Regularly scheduled regional bus service connecting to major cities is provided by the Greyhound company and by Quick Shuttle. Until the 1970s, this type of carrier was required to serve cities within and between counties.

Private Charter Coach: Several private corporations, such as Hesselgrave, casinos, and tour companies offer contracted service for events, charters or to serve client companies.

San Juan Cruises: Provides seasonal passenger-only ferry service from Bellingham to San Juan Island County. (Also called "San Juan Commuter").

Charter Airlines: Charter flights can be arranged to and from Bellingham International Airport. Island Air is based in Friday Harbor, San Juan County. St. Joseph Hospital reports a significant number of residents of San Juan County who travel to Bellingham for medical care.

Other services:

School Bus Services: Each of Whatcom County's eight public school districts provide bus service to bring students to and from regularly scheduled classes. Some schools offer additional bus service to serve students participating in extra-curricular activities. School Districts are required to provide bus service outside of their district to homeless students who have been relocated to a shelter far from their "home" school. This pupil transportation need has increased in recent years and has created additional costs. Where possible, School Districts have collaborated with each other to share the transportation responsibilities for homeless students.

Private Schools: Of the 28 private schools in Whatcom County, only five provide bus or van shuttle services. Lynden Christian School is the largest with over 1,000 students, providing daily transportation with a fleet of ten buses. Private schools offer specialized programs or instructional methods that can result in students traveling several miles each way.

Event/Community Group bus or van service: Many places of worship, summer camps, and assisted living residences operate van or bus service to assist members to attend weekly services and events. Some of these van services are operated on a volunteer basis and others are operated by employee drivers. Some hotels and casinos operate charter or shuttle services. Rental companies offer mini-vans and shuttle buses to organizations with appropriate insurance for operating such vehicles.

VFW VA Hospital Shuttle: The local Veterans' group offers a week-day shuttle service for Seattle-area hospital appointments for veterans. The van is purchased through fundraising by VFW volunteers, and is not wheel-chair accessible. Insurance and maintenance are paid for by the Veterans Administration, the drivers are unpaid volunteers. Veterans' medical care and access was identified as a priority statewide in 2009.

Gasoline Vouchers: The Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) Medicaid Services Coordinator provide vouchers to purchase automobile fuel so clients can access medical appointments.

Delivery Services: DSHS and other agencies send staff to remote site offices on a regular basis to serve residents who cannot access the Bellingham office. Some vendors offer delivery of materials or purchases for a fee, or if a minimum order value is reached. Two grocery stores and two specialty food delivery services offer home delivery of groceries for a fee. Whatcom Volunteer Center "CHORE" program and the non-profit Love, INC., offer volunteer drivers for transportation or for delivery for people with special needs.

RideMatch Service: Internet-based car-pool match service for commute trips. Individuals register and make contacts for sharing commute trips or for special events. The website "Craig's List" offers an informal ride-share program and Western Washington University students can access a ride-share program at through the university website.

Medical Transport: Private non-emergency ambulance services such as Cascade Ambulance Service and Rural Metro transport people to local or distant hospitals and medical centers.

Car Share or Rental Services: Private rental businesses offer short term use of motor vehicles for those who cannot afford to or choose not to own a car. Car Share services such as Zipcar operate on a membership basis with fees based on hourly use. In 2013 Zipcar started operations in Whatcom County. As of 2014 all cars are located on WWU's campus; students, staff and community members are able to open accounts.

Mobility Management: Special needs populations benefit from community-wide education programs and marketing to increase awareness of transportation options. Whatcom Smart Trips educates people of all ability levels through marketing and promotion of walking, taking the bus, sharing a ride, and bicycling to reduce car trips. Participants benefit from the message that walking, bicycling, riding the bus, and sharing rides is a popular and positive way for everyone to travel, not just those with special needs. Discounts, prizes, reduced-rate bus passes, emergency ride home, and other incentives inspire community members to use the variety of transportation available.

Low Income Children's Bicycle Transportation: A non-profit bicycle shop located in a low-income neighborhood teaches children bicycle riding skills and maintenance through hands-on, supervised instruction. The children may earn a bicycle through work and by paying a modest sum. Supervised bicycle rides teach bicycle traffic skills and an understanding of bike and trail routes for transportation.

Chapter 9

Transportation Needs & Gaps

EACH Stakeholders identified the following non-prioritize transportation needs and gaps in 2014 and 2016.

Transit Service Needs and Gaps
Early morning bus service for shifts starting at 6 am or 7am, especially at the hospital
The Opportunity Council on Cornwall Avenue is not directly on a bus line, they have limited parking and some clients can't walk the few blocks to the nearest bus stop
Buses can't get up some large hills when we have inclement weather, which makes the service unreliable during winter months
Improved connections between rural communities, without requiring a transfer in Bellingham
Improve access to shopping and medical facilities for seniors
Lummi Transit has a long headway of one and half hours (1.5 hours)
Using 80x county connector to get to VA Clinic is doable, however, it has complications. After arriving in Mt. Vernon you must transfer to another bus and Whatcom County agencies don't have free ride coupons for Skagit Transit
Current VA bus leaves Bellingham early in the morning to head to Seattle and can't drop Veterans off at Mt. Vernon clinic because the clinic isn't open yet
People aren't able to access food banks and other essential services because of lack of vehicles and lack of bus service; no transit or pedestrian access to Deming Food Bank
Mobility Related Needs and Gaps
People with mobility impairments aren't able to stand in the food bank line – which could be up to a ninety-minute wait. Adding in the time to wait for Specialized Transportation the trip can take up to five hours
Capital Facility Needs and Gaps
Improve comfort and safety at bus stops by adding shelters, benches and lighting
Safe pedestrian access to bus stops is lacking, in some areas
Lack of secure, indoor waiting areas for seniors and vulnerable people, waiting to make transportation connections
Bike lanes and better bike access to and on Lakeway, especially to Fred Meyers
Bike lanes and better bike access on Meridian Street
Free or low cost bicycles for low income adults and Veterans
Better bicycle facilities in rural areas, especially in Urban Growth Areas and on the Lummi Reservation
Lack of a safe non-motorized connection between Blaine and Birch Bay

No safe non-motorized access to East Whatcom Regional Resource Center on SR 547/Kendall Road
Maintain both WTA and Lummi Transit's fleet and facilities in a state of good repair
Income Related Needs and Gaps
Must be very low income to utilize Veteran transportation services, thus not all Veterans can take advantage of the service.
Coordinated process or approach needed regarding relicensing for low income residents
Better way to get ID back when you owe fines (low income people can't afford to pay fines, and they aren't able to have an ID because it was taken away due to fines)
Low income clients cannot afford a monthly bus pass
Staff who work with homeless youth aren't able to connect youth who reside outside of downtown Bellingham to services due to lack of vehicle
User Knowledge Related Needs and Gaps
Some seniors and others with mobility impairments don't know that paratransit exists and aren't able to access essential services
Bicycle education on how to share the trails with pedestrians needed
Better education for transit drivers on how to properly secure wheelchairs
There isn't a group or one place for human service agency staff to easily access the wide variety of transportation information available for their clients
Educate seniors looking to relocate on how transportation access affects quality of life as they age
Teach able bodied paratransit riders how to ride the Fixed Route system
More information and education about transportation options that exist, is needed
Better promotions and education about alternatives to driving aimed towards seniors
Taking transit to and within neighboring counties is possible, however most people don't know how to do it
Other Needs and Gaps
Some people are taking risks leaving kids at home because of lack of vehicle ownership and the bus schedule timing
Therapy animals and regular pets on WTA requested – so people can ride the bus to the park to walk their dog
Email based bus pass purchases and other more advanced technology solutions in addition to just plastic bus passes, requested

WTA updated their Strategic Plan in 2016, from that process they identified many service changes, some of which address needs and gaps identified by EACH stakeholders.

Needs and gaps identified in 2014 that will be addressed through the 2016 WTA Strategic Plan Update include:

- The last bus to Kendall leaves downtown at 5:45 – many food service workers and others need a later bus: [In spring 2017 WTA plans to add a route that will leave the downtown Bellingham Station at 6:40 pm](#)
- Better bus access to Regency Park Apartments – a low income apartment complex. There is a relatively steep hill on Fraser Street which residents must walk up to access the nearest bus stop, it is also hard for residents in wheelchairs to get up the hill: [In spring 2017 WTA plans to add one route per hour to serve Regency Park Apartments](#)
- Only one bus per hour goes to Compass Health – a clinic that serves mental health clients. The clinic is located on McLeod near Squalicum High School: [In spring 2017 WTA plans to have two buses per hour serve Compass Health](#)

A detailed list of projects addressing these gaps is listed in priority order in the Priority Project List, Chapter 11.

Duplications of service that were identified include the following:

- Veterans Medical shuttle (daily to Seattle) and Lummi Nation medical shuttle (daily to Everett) and volunteer drivers (periodically driving seniors to Seattle area medical specialists)
- Daily or weekly delivery of Meals-on-Wheels to rural locations; Bellingham Food Bank delivers to rural food bank locations; Whatcom CHORE program delivers food to some residents who can't access the Food Bank
- School bus service in some cases travels similar routes and times as the public bus
- Duplicated transportation provided by separate vehicles for different patients from and to identical locations at the same time, a situation created by policies of different funding organizations that prohibit combining trips
- The Nooksack Indian Tribe shuttles Tribal Members to the Skagit Station where they connect with a shuttle to the Stillaguamish Methadone Clinic. NWRC uses a vanpool to pick clients up to then connect with the 80X to Mount Vernon, where they also connect with the shuttle to the clinic

Technology

The following map shows transit availability in relation to origins and destinations. Origins and destinations that are not within a quarter mile of a transit stop have an x through them. Fixed Route, Flex and Safety Net service is shown. For a complete list of origins and destinations see Appendix 5.

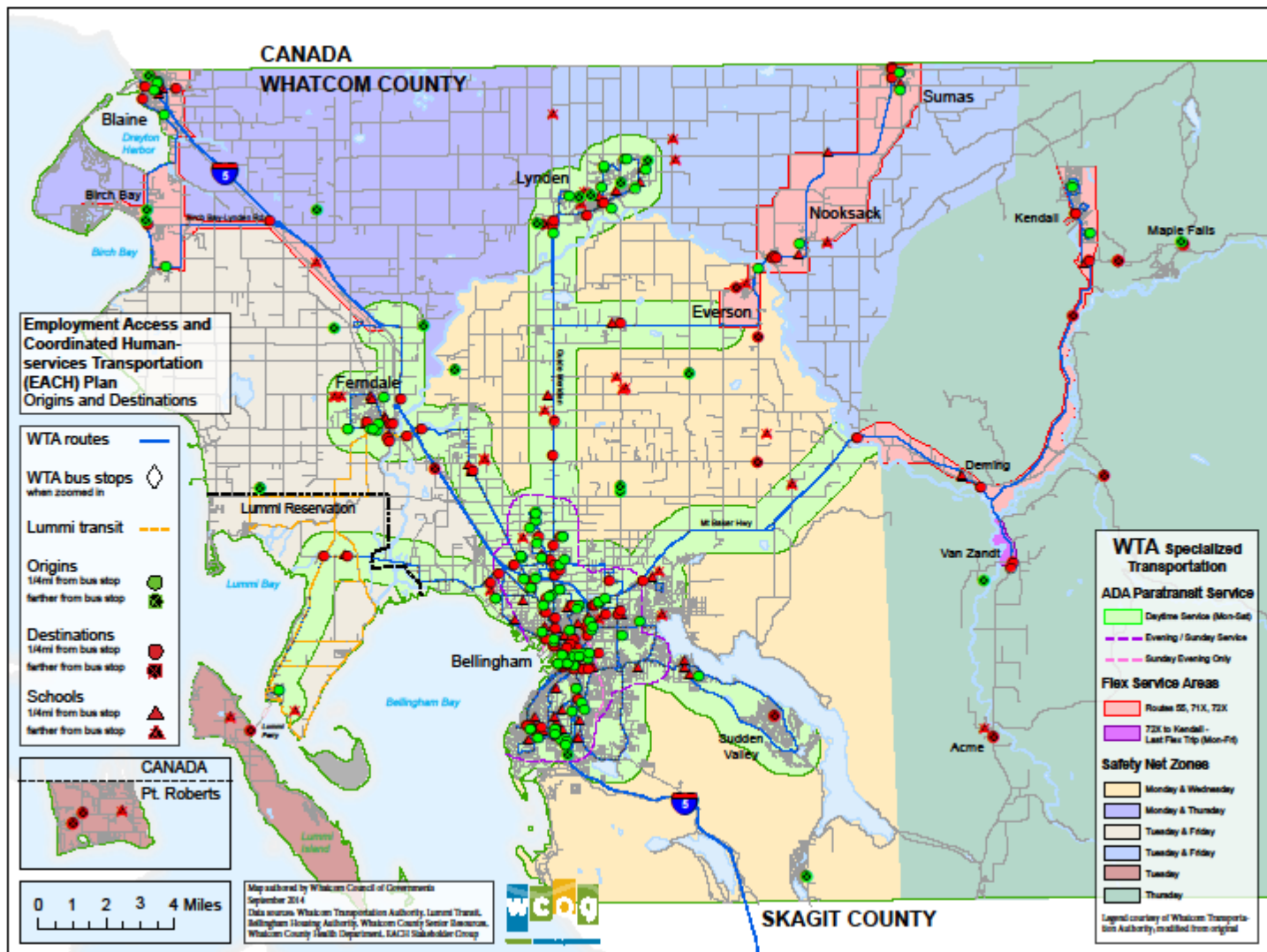


Figure 26: Origins and Destinations proximity to Transit Stops. For a high resolution digital copy of this map please contact the WCOG at 360-676-6974 or Mary@WCOG.org.

Chapter 10

Recommendations for Action

Improvements to coordinated transportation fill gaps in the human services transportation system or reduce the duplication of service and increase cost efficiency. As described in Chapter 3, improvements focus on three priority areas:

- **Increase Connectivity** by reducing gaps in the public transportation system.
- Increase **Safety and Comfort** through education, enforcement and engineering projects.
- Ensure that special needs clients know how to safely use the transportation system and that they are aware of what transportation options are available to them in a **Clear and Understandable** way.

Stakeholders developed a project list that includes actions to address each emphasis area. Key recommendations are listed below, categorized according to the three emphasis areas. Some projects address more than one category. The prioritized project list may be found in Chapter 11.

I. **Increase Connectivity**

- Maintain funding for Lummi Transit and Nooksack Tribal Transit Programs
- Develop transportation services to connect Kendall area residents to the EWRRRC and the Deming Food Bank.
- Develop a program to provide low cost or free bicycles to special needs clients
- Provide free WTA Day Passes to human service agencies (WTA is currently doing this)
- Provide more and better transportation options to Veterans who need to access the VA hospital and clinics.
- Pilot a rural to rural flex route
- Inventory ADA and pedestrian access to bus stops and develop a prioritize project list
- Install bus shelters and lights at bus stops
 - Inventory existing facilities as they relate to where special needs clients live

II. **Safety and Comfort**

- Provide bicycle safety education to special needs clients
- Provide transit education to teach special needs clients how to ride the bus
- Work with local jurisdictions as they update their Comprehensive Plans to ensure they include projects that will benefit special needs clients

III. **Clear and Understandable**

- Create a Transportation Coalition
 - Compile, maintain and update transportation related information and make that information available to human service agencies and their clients

- Work with the Area Agency on Aging to educate Senior Citizens about transportation options available to them.
 - Offer Senior Bus Trips to teach seniors how to ride Fixed Route buses.
 - Educate seniors about how housing location and transportation options are related
- Teach Middle School students how to ride fixed route buses

Chapter 11

Coordinated Transportation Project Priorities

The goals described in Chapter 3 form the basis for evaluating and ranking priorities.

Strategies to Support Coordinated Transportation Goals:

1. **Increase Connectivity** by reducing gaps in the public transportation system.
2. Increase **Safety and Comfort** through education, enforcement and engineering projects.
3. Ensure that special needs clients know how to safely use the transportation system and that they are aware of what transportation options are available to them in a **Clear and Understandable** way.

Twelve stakeholders reviewed all the projects and ranked them according to the following criteria. Each project could score a maximum of 100 points. The stakeholder scores were added together for a final score with a maximum point value of 1,200 (12 stakeholders x 100 points). Projects were then ranked numerically, the top three projects earned an A designation, the next earned a B designation.

Scoring Criteria	Possible Score	Score Given
Preserve Existing Services: restore or maintain levels of service, equipment, vehicles, etc.	17	
Expand Services to Underserved Areas or to Underserved People: address transportation needs and gaps as identified in the EACH plan Chapter 9 page 58 - 59 and/or serve users who do not drive due to age, income or disability reasons, expand services in rural areas.	15	
Improve Local and Regional Connections: make it easier for users to access transportation locally and throughout the region.	10	
Increase User Knowledge: help target users to understand their transportation options, with multiple types of media, through materials and outreach that are clear, understandable and in various languages.	10	
Improve Safety: increase safety and comfort for all users and operators through driver training, technology and equipment, sensitivity training, etc.	13	
Improve Provider-User Coordination: improve communications and coordination between transit service providers, human services providers, non-profits, NGOs and users, locally and throughout the region.	10	
Promote Innovation: improve efficiency or reduce environmental impacts through innovative programs, processes, tools or with technology.	10	
Leverage Resources: make the most of funding opportunities and partnerships.	5	
Improve Health and Wellness: Improve health and wellness through increased transportation access to health care, recreation, employment and education; decrease social isolation by increasing transportation options.	10	
Total	100	

Table 28: Project Ranking Criteria

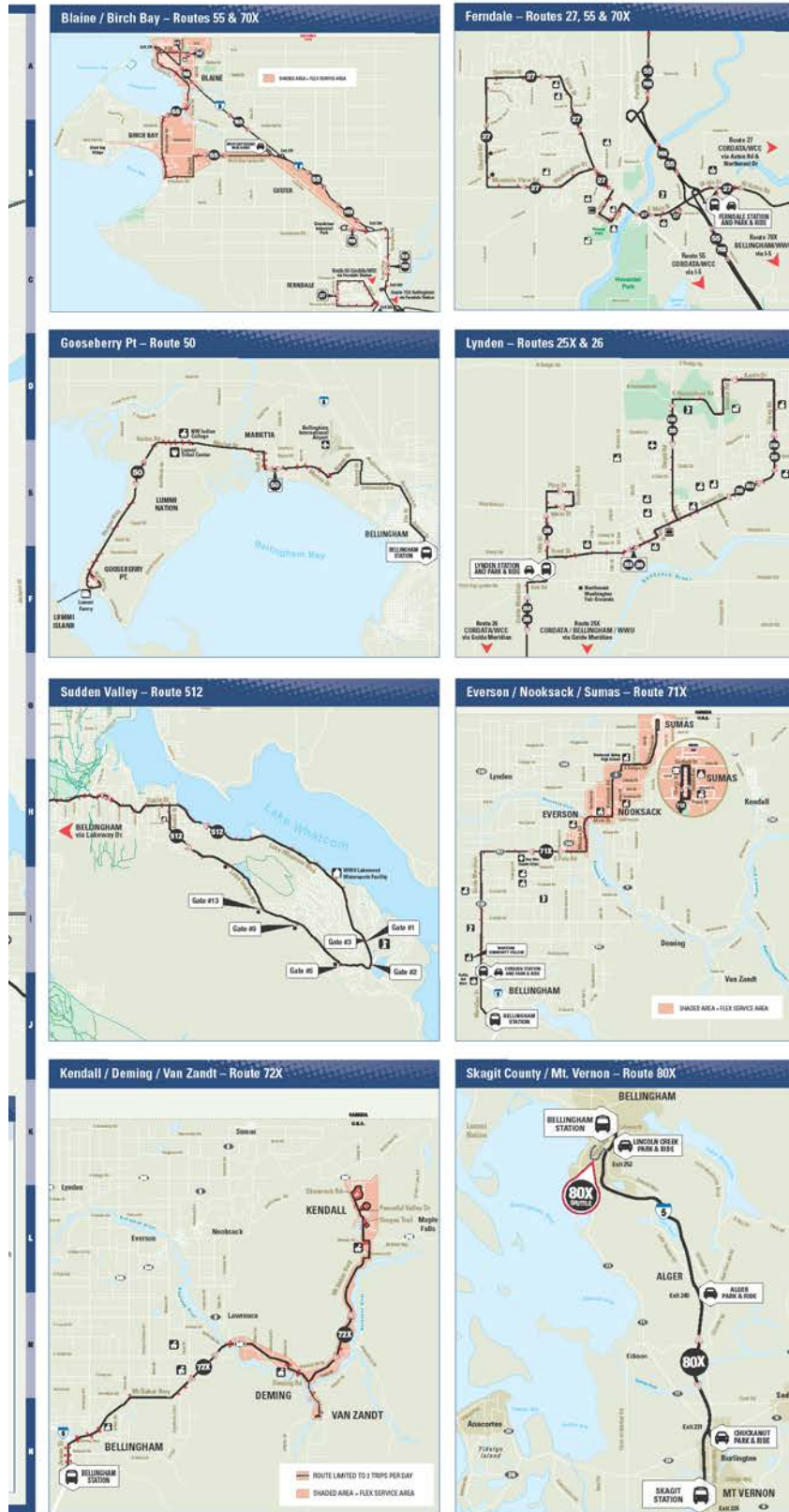
	Project Scope	Cost Estimate	Lead Agency	Total Project Score	Project Rank
Mobility Management II	Maintain mobility management grant which provides transit education to youth and seniors.	\$164,200	Whatcom Council of Governments	937	A
Lummi Transit Operation	Maintain Lummi Transit's two (2) fixed routes services on the Lummi Reservation.	\$200,000	Lummi Nation	925	A
Connecting Communities in Rural Whatcom County	Connect the communities of Everson, Nooksack, Lynden and Blaine/Birch Bay with accessible route-deviated service for the general public.	\$868,984	Whatcom Transportation Authority	860	A
Whatcom OpenSidewalks; Consolidating, Standardizing and Maintaining Bellingham Sidewalk Data	Create AccessMapBellingham a map allowing open shared access to users for individualized, ability-based trip planning for pedestrian and sidewalk	\$50,000	University of Washington	745	B
The following three projects were ranked in 2014 by stakeholders and remain a priority for future funding					
Eastern Whatcom County Community Connector	Add a route from Van Zandt to Everson.	\$280,280	Nooksack Indian Tribe		B
Eastern Whatcom County Community Connector Vehicle Purchase (Capital)	Vehicle purchase for the Eastern Whatcom County Community Connector route.	\$240,000	Nooksack Indian Tribe		B
Expanded 72x Service	Add two weekday runs and one Saturday run to Kendall on the 72x.	\$230,840	Nooksack Indian Tribe		C

Table 29: Project List

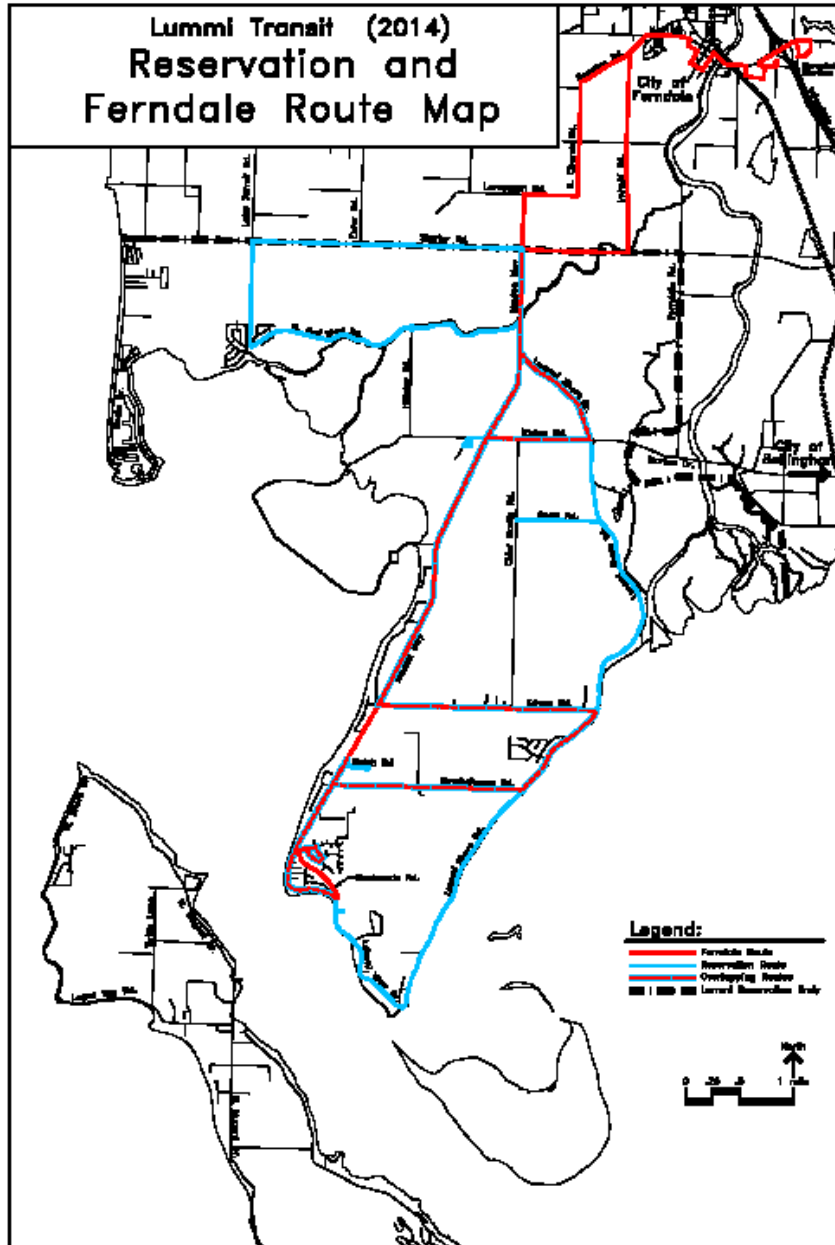
Appendix 1:

Map of WTA Service Area and Routes 2014

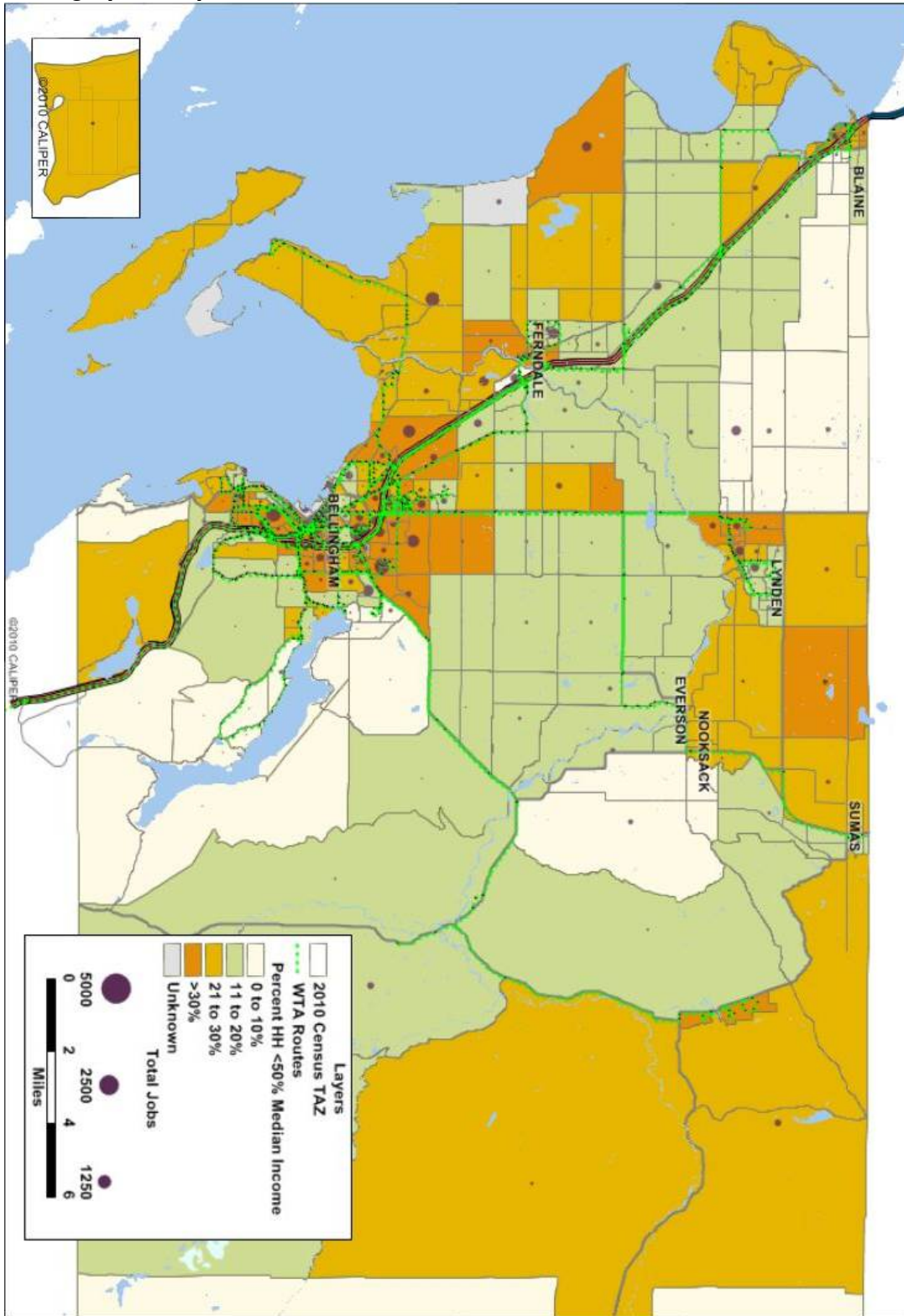




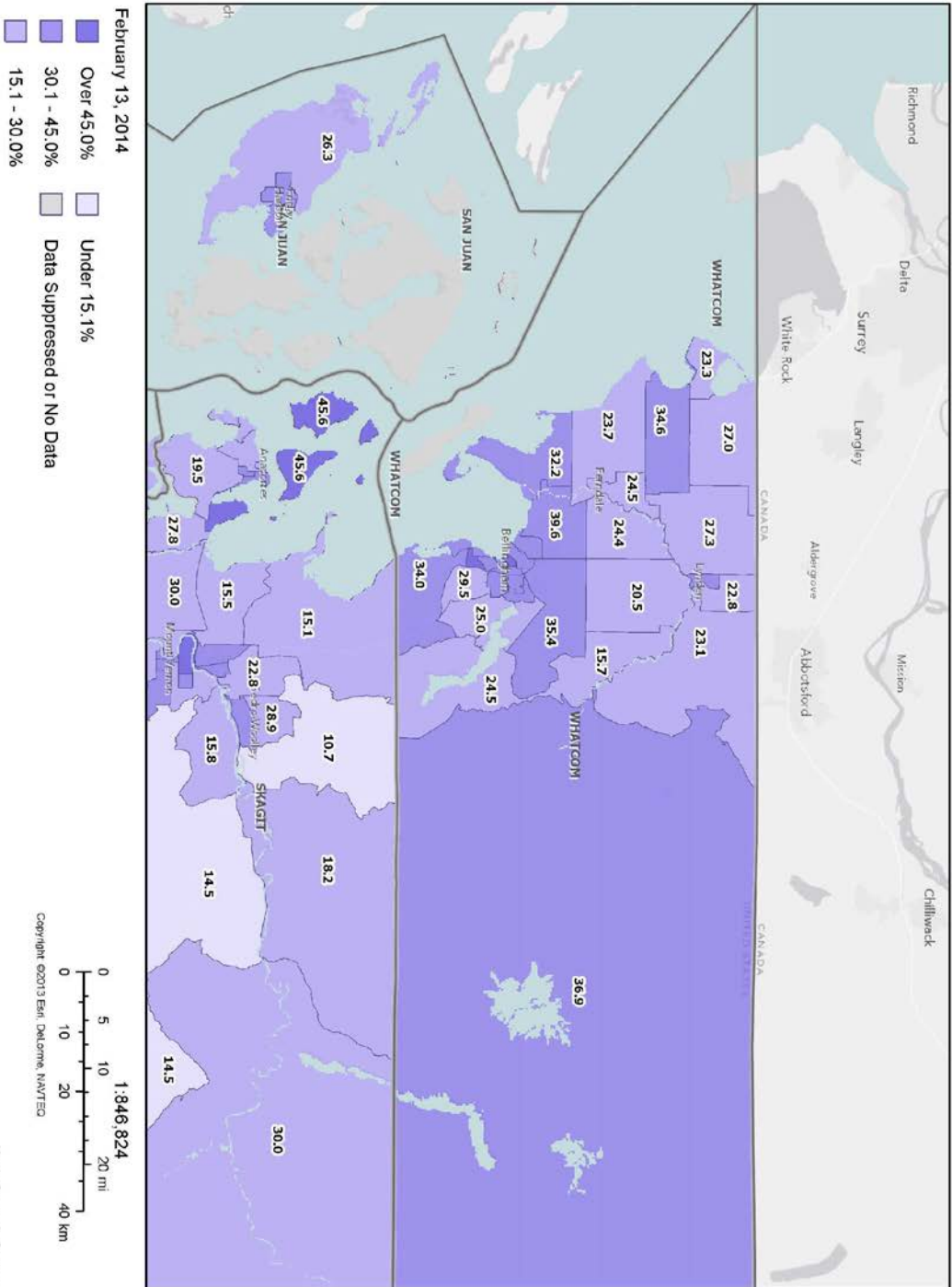
Appendix 2:
Lummi Transit Map



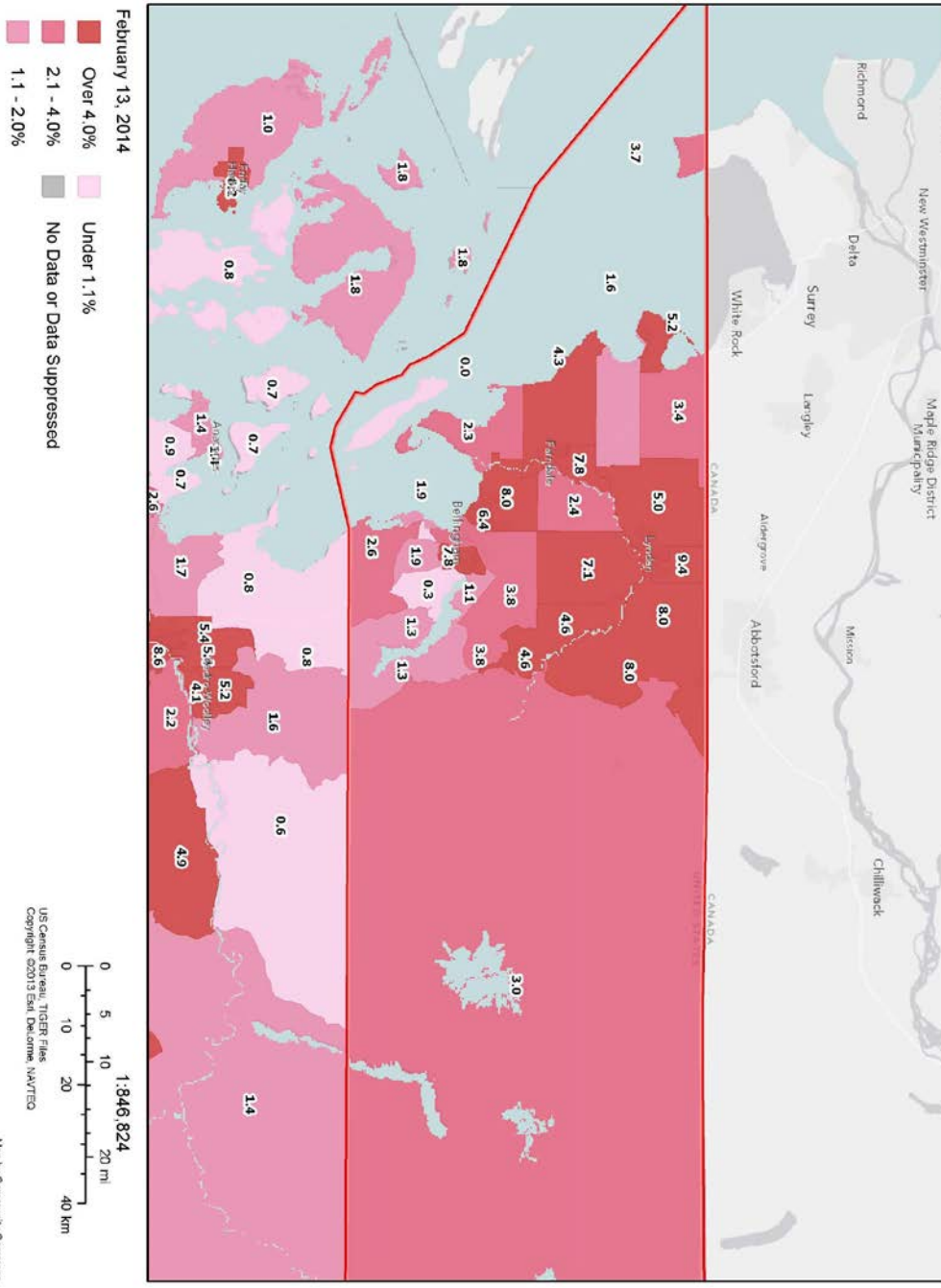
Appendix 3:
Demographic Maps:



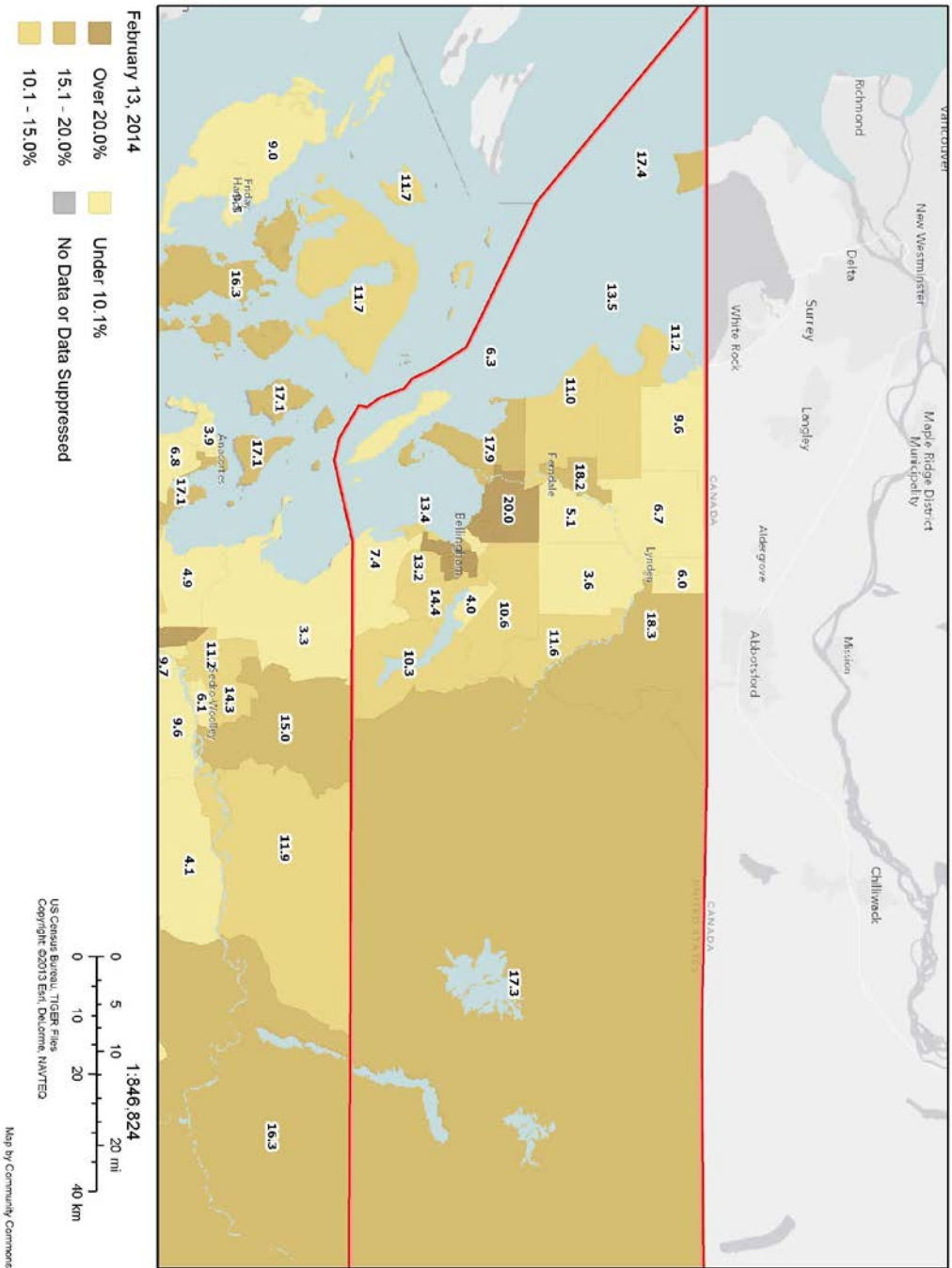
Households with One Vehicle, Percent by Tract, Whatcom County, EPA SLD 2010



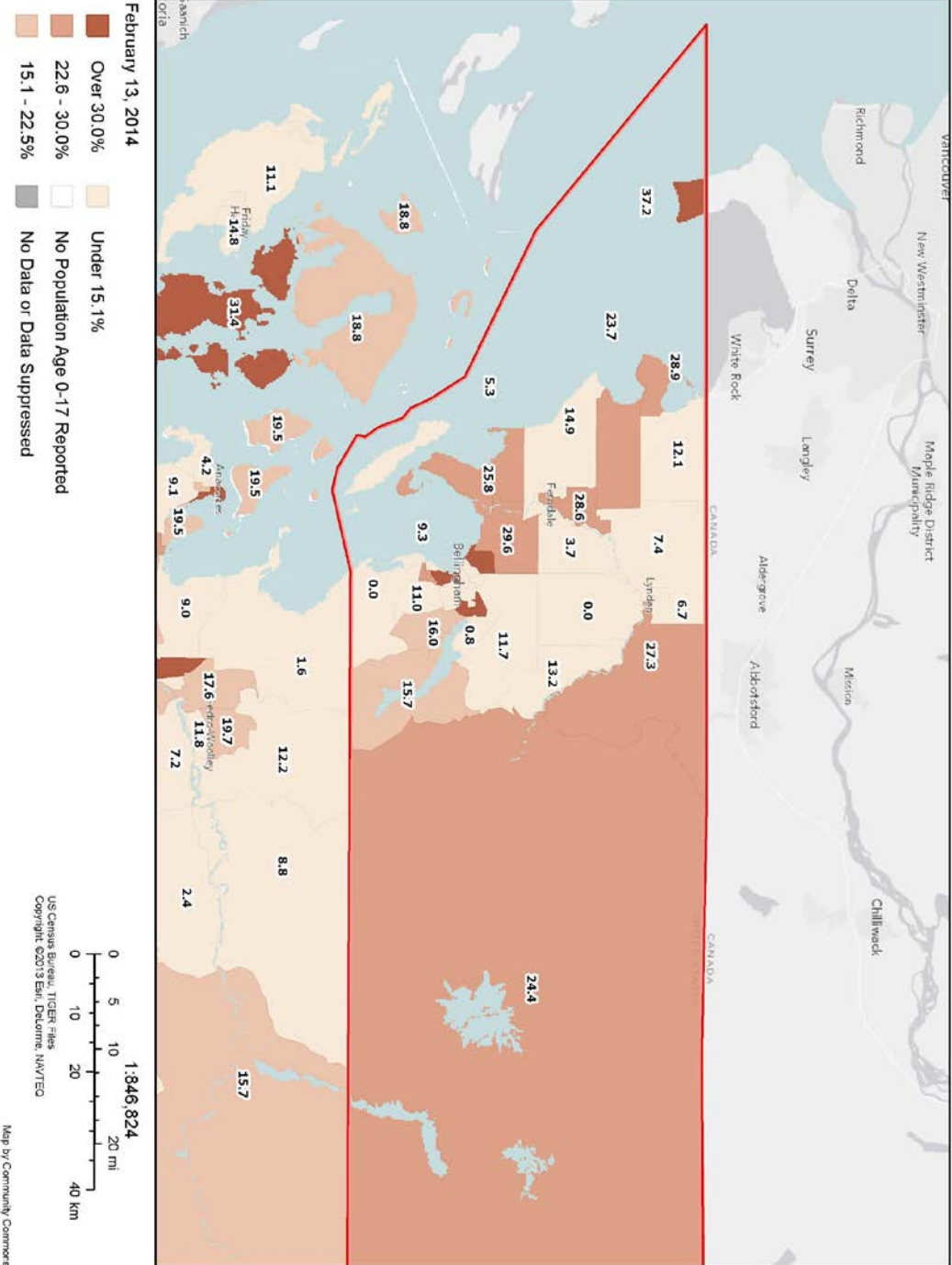
Population with Limited English Proficiency, Percent by Tract, Whatcom County, ACS 2007-11



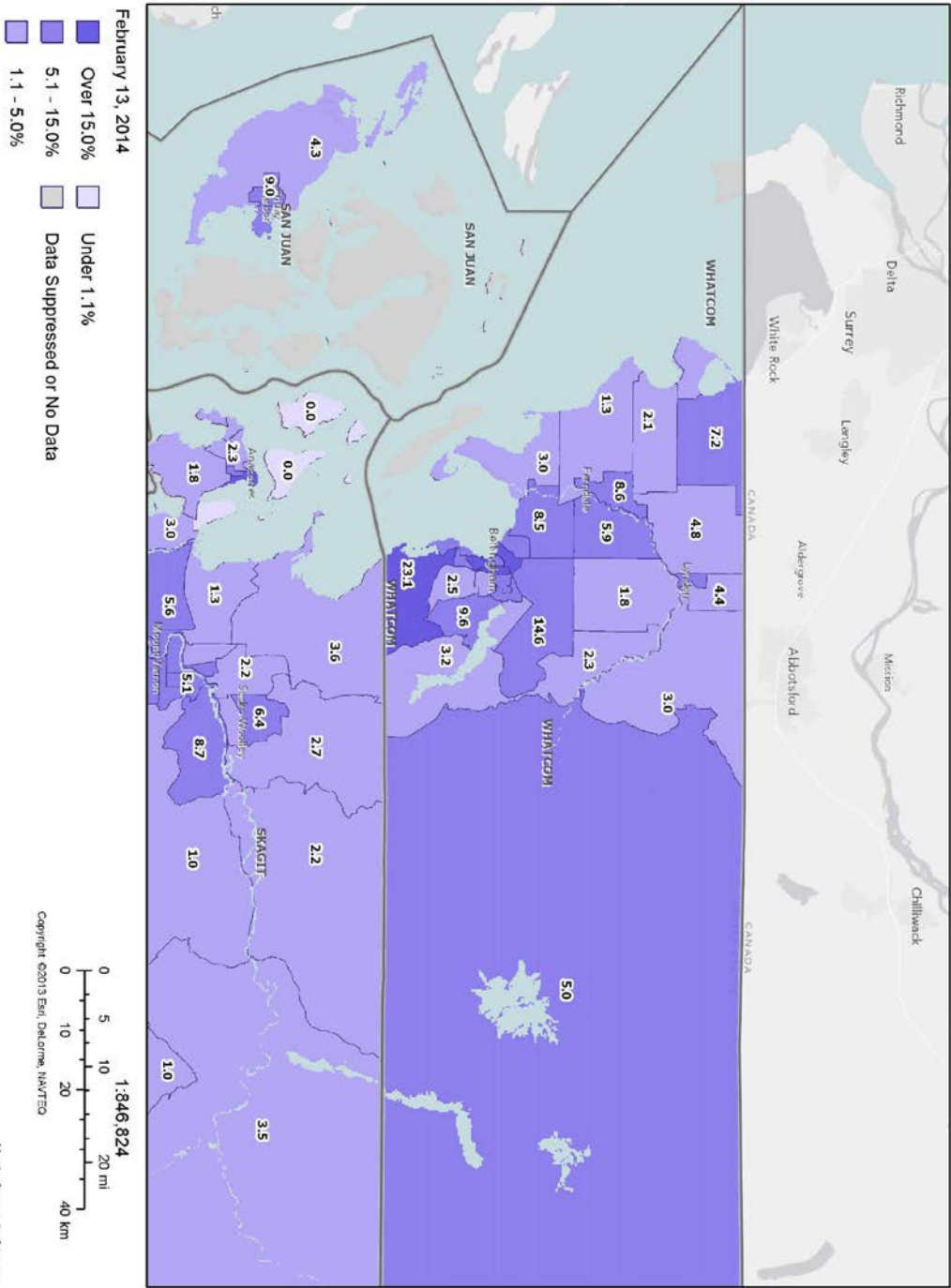
Population Below the Poverty Level (100% FPL), Percent by Tract, Whatcom County, ACS 2008-12



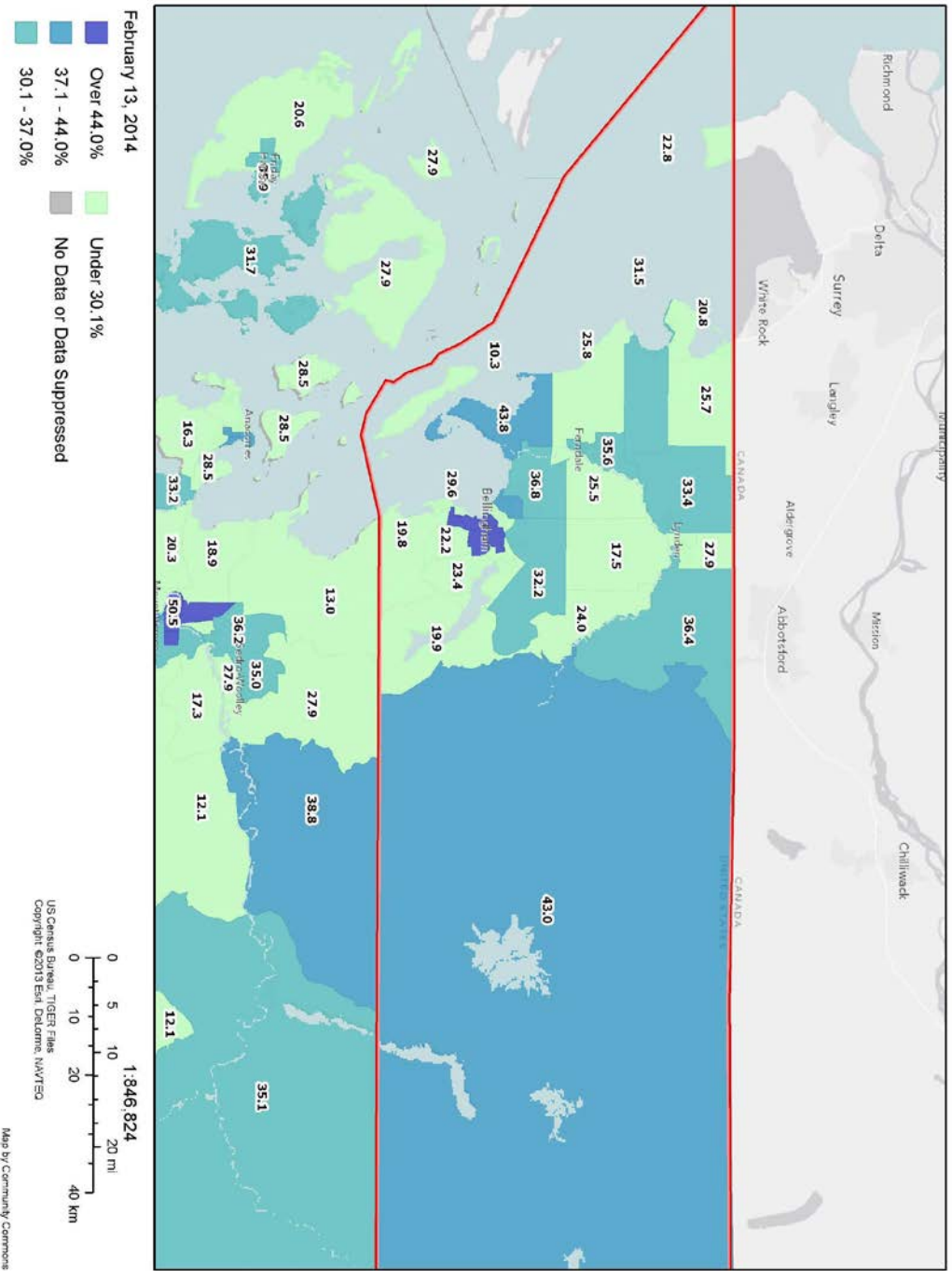
Population Below the Poverty Level (Age 0-17), by Tract, Whatcom County, ACS 2008-12



Households with No Vehicle, Percent by Tract, Whatcom County, EPA SLD 2010



Population Below 200% Poverty Level, Percent by Tract, Whatcom County, ACS 2007-11



Appendix 4: WHATCOM COUNTY STATE CERTIFIED ALCOHOL/DRUG TREATMENT AGENCIES

<p>BELAIR CLINIC 1030 North State Street Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: 360.676.4485 Fax: 360.714.1294 info@belairclinic.com Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessment, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient</p>	<p>LUMMI CARE ** 2530 Kwina Road, Bldg. A Bellingham, WA 98226 Phone: 360.384.2330 Fax: 360.384.3218 www.lummi-nsn.org Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient, Opiate Dependency Treatment</p>
<p>BRIDGES TREATMENT AND RECOVERY 1221 Fraser Street, Suite E-1 Bellingham, WA 98229 Phone: 360.714.8180 Fax: 360.715.2915 www.bridgestreatment.com Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessments, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient</p>	<p>NOOKSACK TRIBE'S GENESIS II ** 6750 Mission Road Everson, WA 98247 Phone: 360.966.7704 Fax: 360.966.4225 www.nooksacktribe.org Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessment, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient</p>
<p>BRIDGES TREATMENT AND RECOVERY 6044 Portal Way, Ste. 103 Ferndale, WA 98248 Phone: 360.393.4218 Fax: 360.393.4579 www.bridgestreatment.com Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessments, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient</p>	<p>SEAMAR – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER * 3350 Airport Drive Bellingham, WA 98226 Phone: 360.734.5458 Fax: 360.734.5298 www.seamarchc.org Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessment, Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient Child care.</p>
<p>CCS RECOVERY CENTER * 515 Lakeway Drive Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: 360.676.2187 Fax: 360.676.2162 www.ccs.org Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessment, Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient</p>	<p>SEAMAR VISIONS FEMALE YOUTH TREATMENT CENTER 1603 East Illinois Street Bellingham, WA 98226 Phone: 360.647.4266 Fax: 360.788.7181 www.seamarchc.org Services: Youth Intensive Inpatient and Recovery House for Youth and Adolescent Girls</p>
<p>COMPASS HEALTH WHATCOM * 3645 E. McLeod Road Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: 360.676.2220 Fax: 360.676.7750 www.compasshealth.org Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessment, Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient</p>	<p>WATERFRONT COUNSELING IN BLAINE 228 Cherry Street Blaine, WA 98230 Phone: 360.332.1000 Fax: www.LighthouseRecoverycentre.com Services: Alcohol/Drug Information School, DUI Assessments, Intensive Outpatient, Outpatient</p>
<p>CONTACT COUNSELING 1118 Finnegan Way, Ste. 103 Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: 360.671.3277 Fax: 360.733.9499 www.contactcounseling.com</p>	<p>WHATCOM COMMUNITY DETOX * Division of Pioneer Human Services 2030 Division Street Bellingham, WA 98226 Phone: 360.676.2020 ext. 5 Fax:</p>

Services: DUI Assessments	360.734.2106 www.pioneerhumanservices.org
Services: Sub Acute Detox	
* County Administered – Medical Coupons Accepted	
** Tribally Administered – Medical Coupons Accepted	

Appendix 5:

Reference Documents

HUD FY 2013 Median Family Income Documentation System.

http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il2013/2013MedCalc.odn?inputname=METRO13380M13380*Bellingham,+WA+MSA&selection_type=hmfa&year=2013&wherefrom=mfi&incpath=C:\huduser\wwwMain\datasets\il\il2012\

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Washington State Department of Transportation. *Washington Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan*. July 2013

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Appendix 6: Origins and Destinations from Figure 2

Origins:

Public Housing

Lincoln Square (elderly)
Washington Square (elderly)
Chuckanut Square (elderly)
Parkway Homes
Falls Park Homes
Texas Meadows
Hillside Homes
Trailside
The Birches
BayCrest Homes
Bay Townhouses
SeaMist Townhouses

Nursing, Convalescent, Retirement

Alderwood Park	Nursing Home
Bellingham Health Care & Rehab	Nursing Home
Columbia Place	Nursing Home
Silverado Senior Living	Senior Living
Emeritus at Bellingham	Senior Living & Nursing Home
Emeritus at Fairhaven	Senior Living & Nursing Home
Evergreen N. Cascade Health & Rehab	Nursing Home
Hamilton Senior Living	Senior Living
Highgate House Senior Living	Senior Living
Highland Care Clinic	Nursing Home
Leopold	Senior Living
Mt. Baker Care Center	Nursing Home
Orchard Park	Senior Living & Nursing Home
Parkway Chateau	Senior Living
Rosewood Villa	Senior Living
Spring Creek	Senior Living & Nursing Home
St. Francis Extended	Nursing Home
Shuksan Healthcare	Nursing Home
Summit Place @ Mt Baker	Senior Living
The Willows	Senior Living
Woodway Inn	Senior Living & Nursing Home
Lynden	
Bryce Park	Senior Living
Christian Healthcare	Nursing Home

Garden Greens	Senior Living
Lynden Manor	Senior Living & Nursing Home
Meadow Greens	Senior Living & Nursing Home
Blaine	
Staffholt Good Samaritan	Nursing Home
Ferndale	
Correll Commons Retirement	Senior Living
Grace Retirement Home	Nursing Home
Louisa House	Nursing Home

HUD Housing Vouchers

- City Gate
- Deer Run Terrace
- Kateri Court
- Laube Hotel
- Laurel Village
- Meadow Wood I
- Meadow Wood II
- Orleans Place
- Varsity Village
- Varsity Village Extension
- Walton Place I
- Walton Place II

Affordable Housing

- Birchwood Manor
- Bridge Creek II
- Cascade Meadows
- Catherine May
- Deer Run Terrace
- Harborview Apartments
- Heather Commons
- Heather Commons II
- Laube Hotel
- Laurel Village
- Meadow Wood II
- Meadow Wood Townhomes
- Oakland Apartments
- Orleans Place
- Pacific Rim North
- Prince Court Apartments
- The Birches
- Varsity Village

Varsity Village Extension
Walton I
Walton II
Willow Creek
Fernview Apartments
Everson Meadows
River House
Seabreeze Townhouses
Sumas Square
Creekside Meadows

Adult Family Homes

A NEW LIFE AFH I
ALABAMA HILL ADULT FAMILY HOME
ARCADIA ADULT FAMILY HOME LLC
BIRCHWOOD ADULT FAMILY HOME
SAVANNAH ROSE
SEAN HUMPHREY HOUSE
SWEET GOLDEN YEARS INCORPORATED
TAYLOR TOWN HOME
VINING VILLA INC
GARDEN PATH
JULIES BAYVIEW INC
WHATCOM COUNTY ELDERCARE AFH
LLC
VINYARD HAVEN ADULT FAMILY HOME
A LOVING HEART ADULT FAMILY HOME
GRACE ADULT FAMILY HOME LLC
LA CASA DE ESPERANZA
LEE MANOR
MOUNTAIN VIEW GROUP HOME
PEACEFUL VILLA ADULT FAMILY HOME
ROSE CIRCLE AFH
THE MALLOY PLACE 2
AMONG FRIENDS
G Path Inc
GLORIOUS AFH
LAKESIDE GARDENS ON WISER LAKE
LYNDEN ADULT FAMILY HOME
MAPLE PARK ADULT FAMILY HOME
PINE STREET HOME
SAGEWOOD

Twin Arbors Adult Family Home LLC
NOOKSACK YOUNG AT HEART

Senior Low Income Housing

Birchwood Manor
Catherine May
Chuckanut Square
Deer Run Terrace
Deer Run Terrace
Hamilton Place
Lincoln Square
Sterling Senior
Washington Square
Woodrose Apartments

Destinations:

Food Banks

Bellingham Food Bank
Blaine Food Bank
Christ the King
Nooksack Valley Food Bank
Ferndale Food Bank
Food Lifeline Mobile Pantry
Foothills Food Bank
Hope House
Lord's Table: River of Life Church
Lummi Food Bank
Lynden Project Hope Food Bank
Nooksack Tribal Food Bank
Salvation Army
Southside Food Bank (Hillcrest Chapel)
St. Joseph's Outreach
Sumas Food Bank

Hot Meals Served

Lighthouse Mission
Little Cheerful
Maple Alley Café
Loaves & Fishes Hot Meal
C.A.S.T.
Maple Alley Inn Lunch
Shuksan Middle School

Church on the Street
Blaine Community Meal
Nooksack Food Bank
Food Not Bombs
Salt on the Street Dinner
Ferndale Community Meal Program
Saturday Sun Rise
Food Not Bombs
Bellingham Community Meal
Southside Community Meal
Seeds of Hope

Drug and Alcohol Treatment Clinics

Belair Clinic
Bridges Treatment And Recovery
Bridges Treatment And Recovery
Ccs Recovery Center
Compass Health Whatcom
Contact Counseling
Lummi Care
Nooksack Indian Tribe's Genesis II
Seamar – Behavioral Health Center
Seamar Visions Female Youth Treatment Center
Waterfront Counseling In Blaine
Whatcom Community Detox

Senior Centers

Bellingham
Blaine
Everson
Lynden
Sumas
Point Roberts
Deming
Ferndale

Human Service Agencies

Bellingham Housing Authority
Brigid Collins
CPS Office
DSHS

EWRRRC
Goodwill Job Training
Interfaith Health Clinic
Opportunity Council
PeaceHealth St Joeseeph
Hospital Medical Center
Planned Parenthood
SeaMar Health Clinic
Social Security Administration
WIC office
Worksource

Libraries

Bellingham Central
Barkley
Fairhaven
Blaine
Bookmobile
Deming
Everson
Ferndale
Island
Lynden
North Fork
Point Roberts
South Whatcom
Sumas

Grocery Stores

Acme General Store
Abarrotes La Gloria
Albertson's #416
Asia Oriental Market
Bellingham Grocery Outlet
Bellingham Farmers Market
Fairhaven Farmers Market
Community Food Co-Op
Community Food Coop - Cordata
Costco Wholesale #19
Fred Meyer - Bakerview
Fred Meyer - Lakeway

Haggen #11 - Meridian
Haggen #43 - Sehome
Haggen #53 - Barkley
Haggen - Fairhaven
K-Mart
Safeway - Bellingham
Terra
Trader Joe's #151
Wal Mart Store - #2450
West Coast Grocers
Winco Foods Store
Youngstocks
Bay Center Market
Cost Cutter - Blaine
Market at Birch Bay
Everybody's Store
Dodson's IGA
Everson Red Apple
Video La Gloria
Cost Cutter - Ferndale
Haggen #63 - Ferndale
Graham's Store
Community Market on Hannegan
Food Pavilion - Lynden
Green Barn
Safeway - Lynden
Crossroads Grocery & Video
Maple Fuels Wash-A-Ton
Pt Roberts Marketplace
Bromley's Market
Cherry Street Market

Mental Health Facilities

Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric Clinic
Whatcom Counseling Rainbow Recovery Center
CCS Recovery Center
Interfaith Community Health Center Behavioral Medicine
SeaMar Community Health Center Behavioral Medicine
Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance
PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center Behavioral Health

Schools

Bellingham School District

Blaine School District

Ferndale School District

Lynden School District

Meridian School District

Mt Baker School District

Nooksack School District

Western Washington University

Whatcom Community College

Bellingham Technical College

Northwest Indian College

Private Schools in Bellingham, Lynden,

Appendix 7: City of Bellingham Median Household Income



City of
Bellingham
WASHINGTON

Median Household Income
American Community Survey

