



# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

---

The Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTA-NW) and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to complete a Technical Assistance project. The plan specifically focuses on evaluating the existing transit service provided by the Mt. Si Senior Center of North Bend, Washington with an emphasis on developing suggestions for how Mt. Si may expand its service to better serve the residents of the Snoqualmie Valley Region of Washington. The Snoqualmie Valley includes the following communities:

- North Bend
- Snoqualmie
- Carnation
- Duvall
- Monroe

This Technical Memorandum #1 presents a summary of the existing conditions related to transportation services and how those services are delivered. The report includes a description of the region as well as a review of existing transportation resources available to residents in the area. The report focuses on transportation for the general public, elderly, and disabled. For some residents, this service is their only link to work, shopping, health care facilities, and other necessary services.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This project is comprised of two main elements. The first element is an assessment of the current service provided by Mt. Si Senior Center. The second focus of this study will be to develop procedures and recommendations on how Mt. Si might expand its existing service. There are two distinct service areas in the region. The Upper Snoqualmie Valley (which contains the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie, and the unincorporated community of Fall City) and the Lower Valley

## *Introduction*

(which includes the cities of Carnation, Duvall, and Monroe). The Snoqualmie Valley is also the ancestral home of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe which is a federally-recognized Native America Nation. The Upper Valley is experiencing extensive growth and is transforming from a rural area to a suburban area. The Lower Valley is experiencing some growth but is still predominantly rural in nature. LSC will take a comprehensive look at both types of distinct levels of need and service to meet those needs.

Mt. Si Senior Center originally began to operate transit service so that it could get seniors to its senior lunch program. As the service progressed, the Mt. Si Community Shuttle began to provide demand-response service to seniors and the disabled to other locations in the Snoqualmie Valley. In 2003, the center decided to begin providing trips for the general public and has experienced great success and greatly increased ridership. In 2007, the Mt. Si Community Shuttle decided to change its name to Snoqualmie Valley Transportation (SVT) and received a grant from CTA-NW to develop a plan to expand service.

A new requirement of SAFETEA-LU—the current federal transportation funding bill—is that projects for the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 program, the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC), and the New Freedom program must be derived from a local Human Services-Transit Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. This new requirement is consistent with other efforts at the federal level to coordinate transportation services, such as the United We Ride program and the President's Executive Order on transportation coordination. Mt. Si Senior Center, with assistance from King County Metro (METRO), has made great strides in coordinating human service transportation in the region. Mt. Si has developed a central dispatch and reservation center that coordinates trips with Senior Services of King County, the only other human services transportation provider in the Snoqualmie Valley. METRO has provided Mt. Si with a computer and Trapeze reservation and dispatching software to help coordinate trips as well as four body-on-chassis transit vehicles.

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

Chapter II presents the Mission Statement and Goals and Objectives for this study. The Planning Team developed the Goals and Objectives and presented them to the Steering Committee for approval. The Goals and Objectives will guide the Planning Team in the development of this plan and will serve as guidance to Snoqualmie Valley Transportation in the provision of transit service to the community.

Chapter III reviews the existing transit service provided by SVT, including the SVT service area, current operating cost and revenues, fleet and facility description, ridership, performance measures, and coordination activities.

Chapter IV presents an assessment of the current SVT service. This includes the development of service indicators; scheduling; passenger eligibility; a management review; administrative, operational, and maintenance procedures; and a transit needs assessment.

Chapter V analyzes the Key Person Interviews conducted by the Planning Team. Each person interviewed was asked 12 identical questions. Answers to these questions are summarized in this chapter and serve as public input into the plan.

After review and revision by the Steering Committee, these chapters will be incorporated into the final plan.

## **STUDY APPROACH**

As in many areas across the United States, residents are taking a closer look at transportation services and are seeking to find the most effective means of providing those services. The Snoqualmie Valley is a relatively large area with pockets of population scattered throughout the area. The two main communities of North Bend and Snoqualmie represent regional transit destinations for residents. While the more rural areas may have minimal services, they do represent destinations in their own respect. Some of the smaller communities have medical services available, some shopping, and additional services which do not require travel to these larger urban areas. A key element in the plan will be to clearly evaluate the

## *Introduction*

unmet transportation needs of local residents and provide an analysis of the current gaps, both geographic and in terms of service provision.

The current effort focuses on the feasibility of providing a more coordinated general public transportation system to meet the community's needs. One important step toward providing an integrated community-wide transportation system is involving key players such as the local decision-makers and leaders, and agencies which have a need for increased transportation services. Individuals from each key stakeholder department or agency serve as members of the local Steering Committee for this planning process.

LSC will prepare the following specific elements which will require approval from the Steering Committee before moving ahead:

- Project Goals and Objectives.
- Assessment of existing transit services.
- Recommendations for increased or modified transit service.
- Formal adoption of the Final Report as the blueprint for implementing expanded public transit for the region.

## **Project Team**

An initial “kick-off meeting” was held in Snoqualmie at the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe administrative offices. The meeting was held in the afternoon on November 1, 2007. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders in the area—representatives of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe, CTA-NW, the City of Snoqualmie, and the manager of SVT. The group met to discuss the project goals, priorities, and a time line for completion of the final study. The local Steering Committee was formed from the group attending the kick-off meeting and a representative from King County Metro and will review all documents and products throughout the course of this project. The first Steering Committee meeting was held on December 12, 2007 in Snoqualmie.

There are existing resources in the area provided by both general public transportation providers and human services agencies which provide transportation services for their clients. The existing resources represent a significant investment

and provide some of the resources necessary to implement an expanded general public coordinated transportation system.

## **SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

During the November “kick-off meeting,” the LSC team briefed the stakeholders on the study process to be undertaken over the four-month period. The key stakeholders involved with transportation services were identified. Major issues and concerns regarding public transportation were discussed. Following are summaries of the major issues:

- There is significant need for service for elderly, disabled, and low-income workers.
- There is a major need for access to medical facilities (e.g., dialysis).
- Groceries and pharmacy access is needed.
- There is a need to provide transit service to the new casino being constructed by the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe.
- There is a need to include the City of Monroe as part of the service area even though it is in an adjacent county.
- Consider placing bicycle racks on the transit buses.
- A transit needs assessment should be performed for the City of Snoqualmie so that they know the transit need for their community and the area.
- A local Medicaid transit provider is needed and should be SVT.
- Currently there may not be enough capacity, especially for peak service times.
- Need broad participation by all communities.
- Businesses should be approached for financial support.
- Look at express commuter service to Seattle.

## **VISION FOR PLAN**

In developing a transportation system, it is necessary to recognize the goals and objectives of transportation in the community as this determines the direction to be taken in the study. The goals provide the specific direction for the development of appropriate strategies and implementation. The Steering Committee has developed a mission statement and Goals and Objectives for SVT which are discussed in Chapter II.