



# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

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The Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTA-NW) and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), on behalf of the Senior Services of Snohomish County (SSSC), contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to complete a Technical Assistance project. The plan focuses on the existing Transportation Assistance Program (TAP) provided by the Senior Services of Snohomish County, with an emphasis on determining the transit needs of the community, developing suggestions for how SSSC may expand its service, providing technology recommendations, and identifying potential partnerships for coordinated transportation services to better serve the residents of the Snohomish County area. This report is the first interim report produced as part of the Technical Assistance project.



This first interim report 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 the residents of the area. The report focuses on transportation for the elderly and disabled population followed by the general public. For some residents, TAP is their only link to work, shopping, social purposes, health care facilities, and access to other transportation services such as DART and Community Transit.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to provide an assessment of the current TAP service provided by Senior Services of Snohomish County, assess the transit needs in the community, and to develop recommendations on how the SSSC might expand its existing service over the next five years. The study area is essentially the Snohomish County excluding the areas served by Community Transit, DART, and

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Everett Transit. Identifying transportation needs within a community is an important factor for coordinating and creating an efficient public transportation.

The inception of this study was a result of a technical grant from the CTA-NW. This study can ultimately be used by the SSSC to develop a transportation system within the TAP service area with links to major destinations within the boundaries of Snohomish County. The information from the preferred plan can be used to meet Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) requirements of Federal Transit Administration grant funds for operating funds.

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

Chapter II reviews the existing transit service provided by SSSC, with emphasis on the TAP program, the program's current operating cost and revenues, fleet information, ridership, and performance measures. This chapter also includes transportation providers that operate within the Snohomish County area.

Chapter III provides the transit needs assessment for the study area.



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

## **STUDY APPROACH**

As in many regions, Senior Services of Snohomish County is taking a closer look at transportation services and is seeking to find the most effective means of providing those services. The study area is a relatively large area with pockets of population scattered throughout the area. A key element in the plan will be to clearly evaluate the unmet transportation needs of residents and to 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 public transit service to meet the community's needs. One important step toward providing an integrated community-wide transportation system is involving key players such as human service agencies, other transportation providers, and

agencies which have a need for increased transportation services. Individuals from each key stakeholder agency will serve as members of the Steering Committee for this planning process.

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

- Assessment of existing transit services.
- Assessment of transportation needs within the community.
- Recommendations for increased or modified transit service.
- Final plan for implementing expanded public transit services for the region.

## Project Team

An initial “kick-off meeting” was held in Mukilteo on December 7, 2007. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders—the Transportation Director and the Transportation Supervisor (Transportation Assistance Program) for the Senior Services of Snohomish County, CTA-NW, Snohomish County Special Needs Transportation Coalition (SNOTRAC) Mobility Coordinator—who have transportation concerns for the community. This project team met to discuss existing transit issues, the project goals and priorities, existing data resources, deliverables, and meeting dates. The local Steering Committee was formed from the group attending the kick-off meeting and other local stakeholders were discussed who would be critical in completing the transit study for the area.

## Stakeholder Meetings

The group of local stakeholders identified by the project team included the following organizations for the Snohomish County study area:



- SNOTRAC – a diverse group of partners from human service agencies, transit agencies, people with special transportation needs.
- Catholic Community Services
- Stillaguamish and Tulalip Tribes

These groups represent organizations that provide transportation services and those that may have a specific transportation need. As part of the process to

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identify local transportation issues, these stakeholders will be contacted to provide input for the transit study.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders**

Throughout the planning process, involvement of key stakeholders is key to the success of the transit plan for the community. At critical points during the process, stakeholder meetings will be announced and held where participation is openly welcomed and appreciated.

Two meetings are scheduled for February through April 2008. The meetings offer concerned agencies an opportunity to provide public input regarding transportation issues that should be addressed as part of the transit plan. These agencies will be asked to comment on the existing needs and future transit services in Snohomish County through an in-person interview or through a phone interview to be scheduled in February 2008. The stakeholders will also be given the opportunity to state which services and other alternatives they think are necessary to address the identified issues.

### **SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES**

During the December “kick-off meeting,” the LSC team briefed the Steering Committee on the study process to be undertaken over the five-month period. Some of the issues and concerns regarding public transportation were discussed as follows:

- Need for scheduling and dispatching software for the TAP program.
- Need for transportation services in rural areas within the Snohomish County study area primarily for the elderly and disabled followed by youth, veterans, single parents, people who cannot drive, Medicaid clients, and low-income persons.
- Need to provide transportation for the elderly and disabled to **medical appointments**—at Mount Lake, Everett Medical Center, Smokey Point (Arlington and Marysville), Monroe, Lynwood (specially for tumor and cancer treatment hospitals); **work**—at Sherwood for developmentally disabled persons, Lynwood, and Village Community Services (VCS) at Arlington; **shopping**—at Alderwood located in Lynwood and in Everett; **grocery shopping**—at Safeway in Smokey Point and Fred Meyers in Arlington; **social purposes; recreation; access to other transportation services** such as the DART service area; and **social services**—at Disability Resource Connection in Everett and Washington Vocational Services (WVS) in Mount Lake Terrace.

- Need to minimize the ten-day advance reservation to a five-day advance reservation.
- Need to reach a zero denial rate.
- The needs of Darrington should be considered. Though Community Transit provides a commuter route to Darrington, more service is needed to and from Darrington.
- Need for public education and outreach in the use of TAP program. Many passengers think the service is only for senior citizens.
- Need for coordination of transportation services.
- Need for prioritizing public transportation needs.
- The large distances and limited resources have put a strain on the amount of service provided.
- While many areas of Snohomish County are served by public and private transportation agencies, the eastern portion of the county remains unserved.

## **VISION FOR TAP PROGRAM**

As part of the initial meeting held in Mukilteo, LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.—in coordination with the Steering Committee—has developed general project goals that will guide the planning process throughout the course of the study. 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.

### **Project Goals**

The following presents the paraphrased goals for the study and ultimately for services in the area.

- There should be a needs assessment of the study area.
- Participation from agencies that provide transportation services and those agencies that have a need for transportation is a key element.
- Study should identify opportunities for coordination.
- Services should be evaluated in terms of cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

## **TAP PUBLIC TRANSIT VISION**

In developing a transit plan, it is necessary to recognize the goals and objectives of transportation in the community as this determines the direction to be taken

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in the plan. The goals and objectives, along with corresponding performance standards, provide the specific direction for implementation.

Transit issues were identified through meeting with the Steering Committee. Based on these transit issues, draft goals and objectives were developed. The goals will be finalized and used to develop and evaluate the transit alternatives, projects, and programs for the next five years (short term).

The planning process for transit services within the study area consists of a mission statement, a set of four action goals, and the objectives for each goal. The goals and objectives are included in this report to support the future transit plans for the study area. The existing mission statement, goals, and objectives typically form a hierarchical structure with the mission statement being the most general. Goals support the achievement of the mission, and objectives support the goals.

### Mission Statement

The mission statement establishes the overall direction of an agency and enumerates the most generalized set of actions to be achieved by that agency. The mission statement for the TAP program provided by the Senior Services of Snohomish County is:

#### Mission Statement

The mission of the TAP program is to provide quality transit service to the residents of Snohomish County by increasing the mobility and access for all residents in the TAP service area and by linking transportation throughout the region.

### Goals and Objectives

For planning purposes, a goal is defined as a purpose or need that should be attained to address a transportation issue. An objective is a specific method or activity that is designed to achieve an identified goal. The goals and objectives are very important parts of developing the transit plan as they set the overall direction. The goals and objectives must reflect the values and desires of the community.

Based on the issues and concerns discussed during the December 2007 meeting as well as the existing and future transportation needs, the following draft goals and objectives were developed. The goals and objectives are meant to pertain specifically to the operation of the TAP program provided by the Senior Services of Snohomish County in its role as a rural transportation program that helps link residents to other transportation providers such as DART, Everett Paratransit, or ACCESS.

## Goals

The primary mission of TAP is to provide quality transit service to Snohomish County residents. In order to fulfill this mission, a number of goals were identified to guide the future development of rural transportation for the region.

### Goal #1: Develop a Transit Service that Aids in the Community's Economic Development

**Objective 1.a:** Create opportunities through improved access to employment, job training, and education.

**Objective 1.b:** Improve transportation linkages by developing transit service, thereby allowing individuals to access employment and services more easily within the study area.

**Objective 1.c:** Improve the transit service to increase the mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

**Objective 1.d:** Improve the transit service in order to allow all of the study area's residents to access medical, work, social, shopping/grocery shopping, recreational, and access to social services. This service will be designed to cater first to seniors, disabled individuals, and low-income households—and then to the general public.

### Goal #2: Create Financial Sustainability of the Transit Service

**Objective 2.a:** Seek out and apply for state and federal grants which may be available for transit service capital or operating support.

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**Objective 2.b:** Examine the possibilities of leveraging existing funding from other agencies to be used as local match.

### Goal #3: Coordinate and Integrate the Transit Service With the Existing Human Service Agencies/Programs

**Objective 3.a:** The transit service should be discussed with the existing human services transportation providers at a stakeholder or a SNOTRAC meeting on a quarterly basis.

**Objective 3.b:** The human service agencies should train their clients to use the transit service and could provide funding to pay for the transit service provided to their clients.

**Objective 3.c:** The transit service should coordinate with the human service agencies/programs in order to improve the standard of living for the region's seniors. The transit service should increase the mobility and access of seniors to senior centers, medical, employment, shopping, and recreational events.

**Objective 3.d:** Increased marketing of the transit service should be implemented to inform the public of the service. This should be done by using all forms of media.

### Goal #4: Create Cost-Effective and Cost-Efficient Service

**Objective 4.a:** The TAP program should achieve a productivity level of three passengers per hour by the year 2013.

**Objective 4.b:** The transit service should have costs per revenue-mile, revenue-hour, and passengers equal to the similar transit systems. The costs should be reviewed and updated annually by comparing the TAP program to other transit services.