



Samish Indian Nation

## Tribal Transit Plan

December 2014

WHPacific



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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The following is a list of individuals that contributed to the development of this Transit Plan through their participation in meetings, interviews, focus group discussions and/or the transit survey. The list is partially reliant on attendee and sign-in sheets distributed at the various meetings – therefore, participants that did not sign-in may not be listed below (though their input was appreciated equally).

Leslie Eastwood, Tribal Administrator, Samish Tribe  
Edie Hill, Director of Health and Human Services  
Stefanie Jones, Director of Head Start, Samish Tribe  
Adam Lorio, Education Program Manager, Samish Tribe  
Dana Matthews, Housing Director  
Carolyn St. James, Samish Indian Tribe  
Eunice Thomas  
Samara Thomas  
Sally Barrett  
Julie Pederson  
Charlotte Auclair  
Becky Bendixen  
George Adams  
Larry Thomas Jr.  
Carolyn Chase, Skagit Transit  
Troy Fair, Skagit Transit  
Robert Gummere, Skagit Transit  
Mark Hamilton, Skagit Council of Governments  
Liz Theaker, Skagit Council of Governments  
Karin Cross, Island Transit  
Bob Clay, Island Transit  
Libby Grage, City of Anacortes

**SECTION I: STUDY INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY**

**IA. Introduction**

In the spring of 2014, WHPacific, Inc. was contracted by the Samish Indian Tribe to develop a Tribal Transit Plan for the Anacortes area. The purpose of this plan was to create a plan for improved transit services that would support current needs and future goals of the Samish Tribe. WHPacific worked with the Samish Tribe to conduct a community-based process intended to develop a vision for public transportation improvements within the Anacortes area.

A tribal transit planning study is an important first step to developing a tribally-operated transit service or pursuing successful partnerships with regional transit providers. The study identifies community-wide transit goals based on a clear understanding of the Tribe's transit needs, deficiencies, resources and opportunities. Expanding local transit options would provide Samish Tribal members of all ages with new economic, social, educational and recreational opportunities. Such services would also allow non-Tribal members to access Tribal destinations, creating new opportunities for economic development.

**IB. Planning Methodology**

The Samish Tribal Transit Study was conducted from May - December 2014, using a multi-pronged approach that considered current resources, partnership opportunities and community goals. The project's planning team worked to document the Samish Tribe's current transit resources and deficiencies, and develop a vision for transit services based on best practices, community needs, and development goals. Information was gathered through the following activities:

- Community Survey:** Community needs were assessed based on a transit questionnaire distributed through the Tribe's newsletter in May 2014. Approximately 52 surveys were sent to Samish residents of zip code 98221. Additional surveys were distributed to Social and Family Services clients and Head Start / ELC families. Approximately 17 completed (general) surveys were received, as well as an additional 11 surveys from Head Start / ELC families. The response rate for the general survey was 33%.
- Community Meeting:** A community meeting was held at 12:30 p.m. on September 10, 2014 at the Samish Tribal Administration Building. The meeting was scheduled to follow the weekly Elders Luncheon, to encourage their participation. The Tribe sent an invitational flyer to every local Samish member. Approximately 10 participants attended the meeting. The hour-long meeting included a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the purpose and background of the study, existing transit resources, and preliminary findings on unmet



**Figure 1: Samish Transit Study Community Meeting**

needs. Participants were then asked to respond to a series of discussion questions regarding local transit needs.

- **Interviews of Program Representatives:** Program representatives were identified and interviewed regarding their thoughts on various transit options. Interviews were conducted in the summer of 2014. Certain representatives were targeted based on their ability to speak on behalf of key user groups, including elders, students, and health center patients. Interviews included:
  - Edie Hill, Director of Health and Human Services
  - Stefanie Jones, Director of Head Start, Samish Tribe
  - Adam Lorio, Education Program Manager, Samish Tribe
  - Dana Matthews, Housing Director
- **Demographic Analysis:** Secondary data sources were consulted to determine the demographic makeup of the Tribal community.
- **Tribal Documents:** Tribally published documents were consulted regarding current and future development plans.
- **Discussions with Regional Transit Providers:** Representatives with Skagit Transit and Island Transit were consulted during the project to obtain ridership data, as well as information on routes serving the Reservation. Carolyn St. James with the Samish Tribe and Elisa Warner with WHPacific met with Mark Hamilton with the Skagit Council of Governments to discuss their update of the Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan, as well as the process for submitting and prioritizing regional (Skagit/Island) transit projects for submittal under the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program. Contact was made with the City of Anacortes regarding emerging transit issues in their 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update.

## IC. Mission and Goals

**Mission:** To provide improved transit options in and near Anacortes to enhance the social, health, educational, recreational and employment opportunities of Samish members.

### Goals:

- Ensure that every Samish-owned facility is accessible via some form of transit.
- Improve access to Tribal services, facilities and events.
- Ensure that lack of transportation is not a barrier to accessing employment, educational, and recreational opportunities among Samish members.
- Work with regional transit providers to educate Samish members on existing public transportation services.
- Support the health and well-being of Samish elders and members with physical limitations through expanded medical transport options.
- Increase the usability of transit connecting Anacortes to neighboring cities.
- Ensure that the Samish Tribe is included as an active partner in future regional and local transit planning activities.

**SECTION II: DEMOGRAPHIC / SERVICE AREA ASSESSMENT**

**IIA. Background on Samish Tribe**

The Samish Indian Nation is a descendent entity of the Samish Tribe, a signatory to the Point Elliot Treaty of 1885. A string of clerical errors and miscommunications led to loss of Samish Indian Nation’s federal recognition, after which the Tribe worked tirelessly for 27 years expending resources and energy before regaining its federal recognition in April, 1996. The Samish Indian Nation traditional territory stretches over a seven-county region of Northwest Washington that ranges from the San Juan Islands to the tops of the Cascades.

The Samish Indian Nation is governed by a seven (7) member Tribal Council elected to oversee the welfare and resources of the Tribe, including its constitution, economic development, policies, legislation, enrollment, and justice. A General Council maintains active participation in both the governance responsibilities and cultural gatherings of the Tribe. The Samish are currently working with state and federal agencies on several grants to protect the environment and preserve natural and cultural resources, as well as creating a sound economic base for Tribal members. The Samish Tribe is committed to reestablishing homelands, strengthening tribal culture, demonstrating traditional stewardship of cultural and natural resources, and being a contributing force in the economic base of the region.



Figure 2: Samish Indian Nation Sign

**IIB. Tribal Land**

The Samish Indian Nation owns several properties, both in Trust and fee simple, around the City of Anacortes and within Skagit County. These properties include the Administration complex, Health and Human Services, the Longhouse, Fidalgo Bay RV Resort and historical grounds. Additionally, there are undeveloped parcels and historical grounds in the surrounding areas of Skagit County. The properties owned by the Samish Indian Nation are not contiguous.

The Samish Indian Nation does not currently have a defined Land Use Plan, but does have improvement plans for existing developed areas and several undeveloped parcels. The undeveloped properties include the North and South Campbell Lake properties and the March's Point property. Development plans for these areas, although not finalized, could consist of a mixture of housing, commercial space, cultural space and casino/resort space. Samish-owned properties include:

- 78 acres in trust near Campbell Lake, just off of State Highway 20
- Samish Administration Complex (includes four parcels on 1.02 acres)
- Samish Longhouse (two parcels on 0.52 acres)
- Agricultural Land along Thomas Creek (45.7 acres)
- 46 acres adjacent to Campbell Lake
- 3.57 acres of oyster beds on Mud Bay (Lopez Island)
- Fidalgo Bay Resort (65.62 acres - Samish-owned, but includes a street and trail owned by City of Anacortes)
- Huckleberry Island (granted to Samish by State of Washington with provision that it be open for public use)
- Samish Health and Human Services building / property
- 15 acres along State Highway 20 near Thompson Road

### **IIC. Demographic Analysis of Anacortes Area**

Demographic analysis of a community is an important component of transit planning. Population growth can be an indicator of increased future demand for transit. Furthermore, understanding the characteristics of a service population is useful in estimating the demand for transit service. Certain groups – such as elders, youth and low-income residents – are more likely to utilize public transportation than others. Areas with a high percentage of these types of residents may have a strong need for transit service.





Figure 3: Historic Downtown Anacortes

### Population

The Samish Indian Nation has a total membership of over 1,650. Approximately 551 Samish members live in the ten-county area of Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clallam, and Jefferson Counties. This encompasses the Tribe's community health services area.

Approximately 52 Samish members live in the Anacortes zip code of 98221 (Table 1). The City of Anacortes has a population of approximately 16,000 residents, and is the second-largest city in Skagit County.<sup>1</sup> Anacortes' population grew by 15 percent from 2000-2010.<sup>2</sup> The Anacortes Chamber of Commerce reports that approximately One (1) million people travel through Anacortes each year to access the nearby Washington State Ferry Terminal.<sup>3</sup>

Anacortes has a larger-than-average percentage of senior residents. Whereas 23.7% of Washington residents are 55+, approximately 35.7% of Anacortes residents are over 55 years.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Anacortes Chamber of Commerce Website.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, Community Profile: Anacortes, WA

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Table 1: Characteristics of Samish Nation Population (May 2014)

Samish Nation Population as of May 7, 2014 <sup>5</sup>	
Total Tribal members any age and anywhere	1,655
Total US residents	1,387
Total Canadian residents	169
Total New Zealand residents	3
Total 18 years of age and older	1,207
Total 18 years of age and older in the US	991
Total 18 years of age and older in Canada	119
Total 18 years of age and older in New Zealand	2
Total 17 years of age and younger	448
Total 17 years of age and younger in the US	383
Total 17 years of age and younger in Canada	42
Total 17 years of age and younger in New Zealand	1
Current members whose place of residence is unknown and who appear in no categories	94
Total in Anacortes Zip Code 98221	52
Total in a 5-County area (Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan, Snohomish Counties) 18 and older (Numbers used for the BIA Service Area)	266
Total in the 5-County area 17 years of age and younger	101
Total in a 10-County area (Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan, Snohomish, King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clallam, Jefferson Counties) (Numbers used for the CHS Service Area)	551
Total in the 10-County area 17 years of age and younger	181
Total members in Washington State	653
Members Ages 16 to 60	1,034
Members Ages 60 and over (Tribal Elder)	258

**Employment**

The largest employment sector in Anacortes is manufacturing, consisting of 1,769 jobs (approximately 24% of all employment positions). Anacortes includes two oil refineries – a major economic driver and employment provider for the area. Island Hospital is the largest employer for the Anacortes community, supplying over 500 jobs. Two (2) large food processing plants are also



Figure 4: Island Hospital is one of the largest employers in Anacortes

located in Anacortes. Marine trades are also a major source of employment for the city.<sup>6</sup> The Samish Tribe contributes to the local economy by employing 44 full-time staff members and three (3) part-time staff plus nine (9) full-time and two (2) seasonal employees at the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort.

Employment Sector	No. of Firms	No. of Jobs
Manufacturing	39	1769
A&E, Accommodation, Food Services	69	917
Retail	81	893
Health Care and Social Services	52	885
Education	5	691
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Mgmt.	133	643
Construction	86	471
Transportation and Warehousing	18	356
Information / Admin Services	111	329
Public Administration	4	259
Wholesale	23	57
Fishing, Agriculture, Forestry, Mining	8	40
Utilities	2	7
TOTAL:	631	7316

Table 2: Anacortes Employment Sectors (2005). Anacortes Community Profile

Skagit County has the second highest unemployment rate of all Washington counties (Figure 6). Some Skagit County residents must commute to distant workplaces in neighboring counties in order to find employment. However, the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce reports that the city is “a net importer of employees regionally,” with approximately 60 percent of local jobs filled by commuting workers from outside areas.”<sup>7</sup>

Median household income tends to be lower near the downtown areas of Anacortes, and higher in the more rural areas south of the commercial sector (Figure 7). The areas where the main Tribal facilities are located have a median income level in the range of \$20,000 - \$50,000. Residential and rural areas south of downtown have a median household income of \$70,000-\$85,000. The Tribe’s Campbell Lake property is located in a higher-income area of \$60,000 - \$70,000.



Figure 5: Commercial Street

<sup>6</sup> Source: Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, Community Profile: Anacortes, WA

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

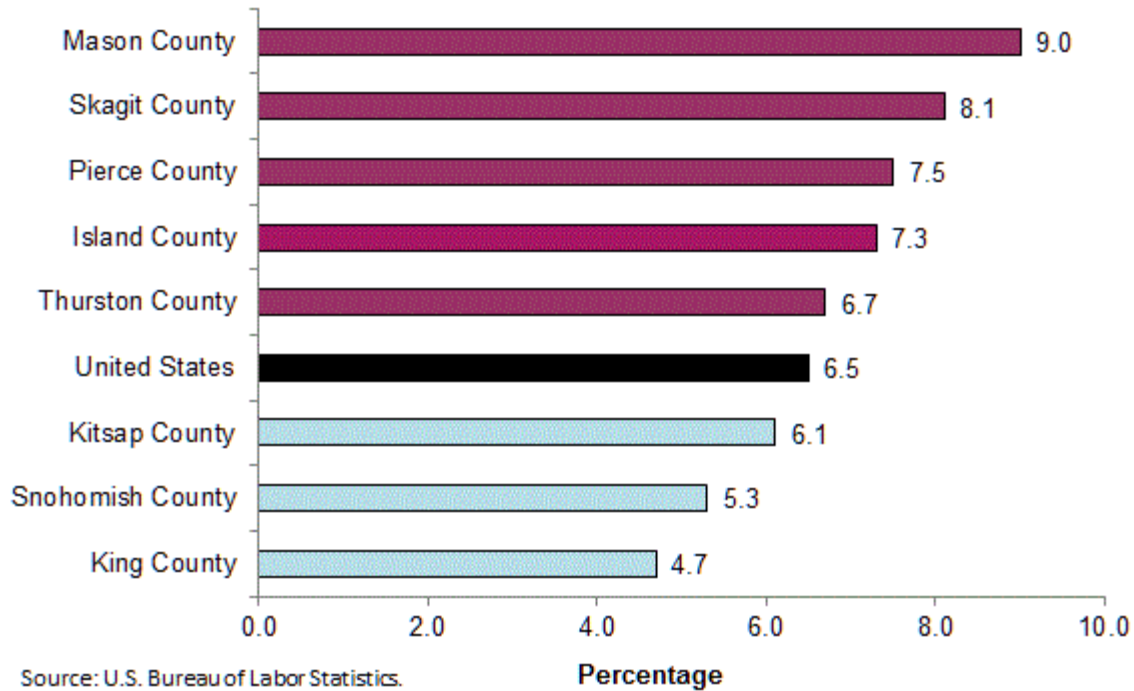


Figure 6: Unemployment Rate by County, December 2013 (Source: US Census Website)

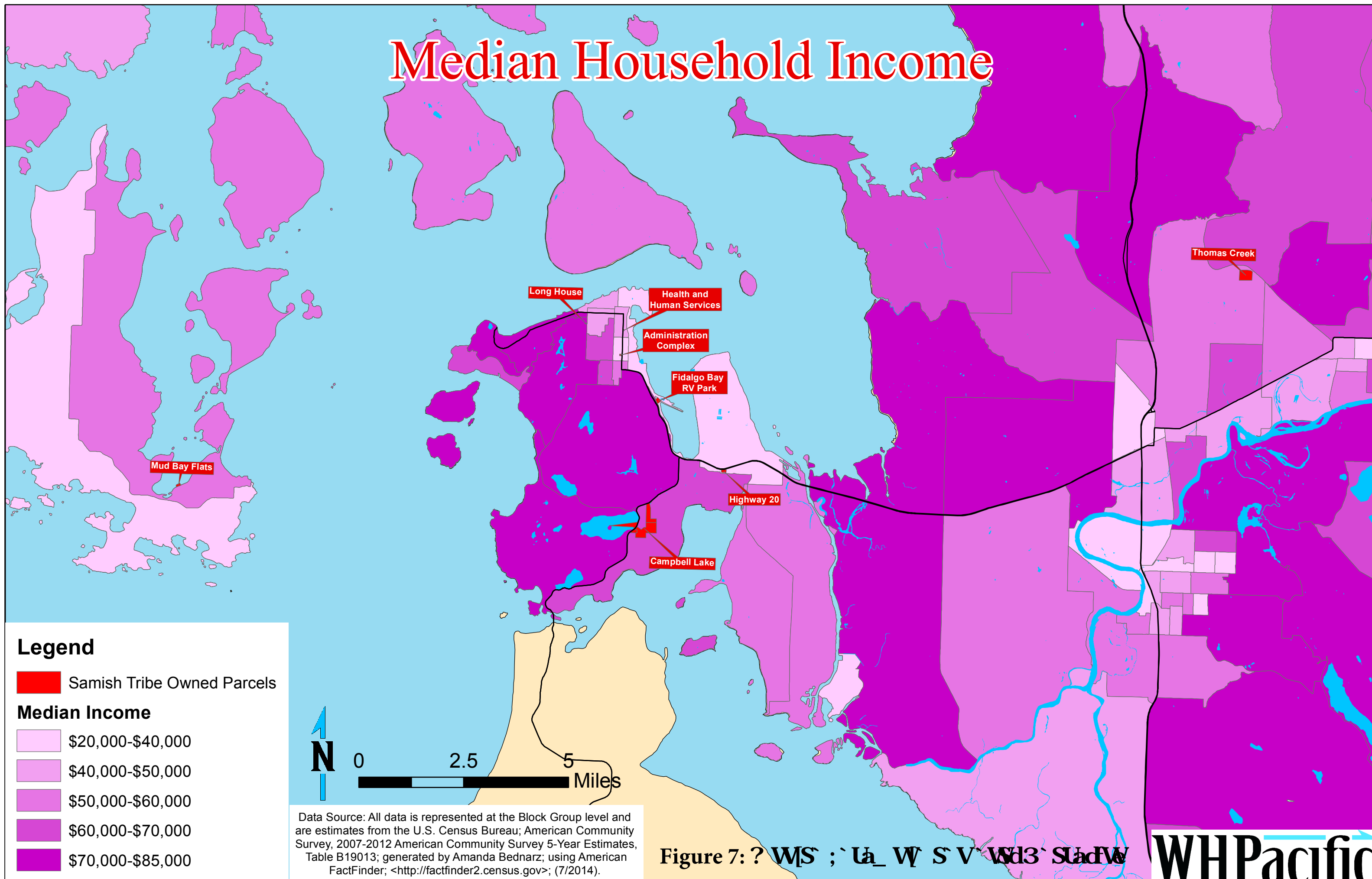
**City of Anacortes**

The City of Anacortes is currently updating their 2016 Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the plan is to “define how Anacortes should best accommodate forecasted household and job growth, provide services, open space and recreational opportunities.”<sup>8</sup> The plan will also encompass a Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as several other planning documents. Public involvement in the planning process will continue over the next couple years, providing the Tribe with an opportunity to help shape future municipal priorities and goals. Discussions to date have included transit-related topics, as well as transportation infrastructure and traffic improvements.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For information on the 2016 Anacortes Comprehensive Plan Update, including ways to participate in the process, please visit [http://www.cityofanacortes.org/comprehensive\\_plan\\_development\\_2016.php#VG589FXTmUk](http://www.cityofanacortes.org/comprehensive_plan_development_2016.php#VG589FXTmUk).

<sup>9</sup> In August 2014, an intern for the City of Anacortes, Sarah Idczak, prepared a white paper entitled, “Public Transportation Options in Anacortes,” suggesting two (2) new transit routes that would improve service to residential neighborhoods. The paper proposed a set of transit-related questions that could be included in the City of Anacortes Comprehensive Plan Update survey.

# Median Household Income

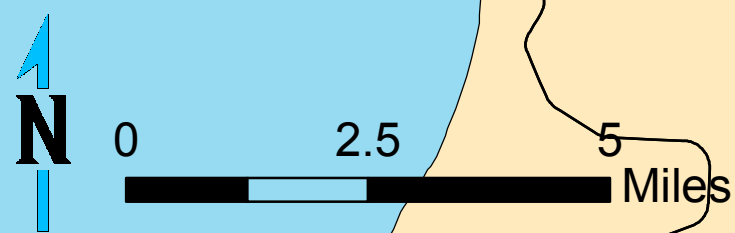


## Legend

■ Samish Tribe Owned Parcels

## Median Income

- \$20,000-\$40,000
- \$40,000-\$50,000
- \$50,000-\$60,000
- \$60,000-\$70,000
- \$70,000-\$85,000



Data Source: All data is represented at the Block Group level and are estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2007-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19013; generated by Amanda Bednarz; using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>; (7/2014).

Figure 7: Median Household Income by Block Group on Samish Tribe Land

## **IID. Commuting Characteristics in Anacortes**

Work commute times for Anacortes residents average 10-15 minutes. An area of the city that borders the Longhouse has a slightly higher commute time average of 15-25 minutes. The northeast portion of the city (including the area around the Samish Health and Human Services building and the Fidalgo Bay RV Resort) has an average commute time of only 5-10 minutes.

In the areas of Anacortes underserved by transit (south of downtown and west of Highway 20), less than 1% of residents ride public transit to work. Most Anacortes residents commute to work via a private vehicle, traveling alone. The use of transit for work commuting purposes is slightly higher in the northern portion of the city (1-3%). Commuting via transit is even more common near the Tribe's Campbell Lake and Highway 20 properties (approximately 3-5%).

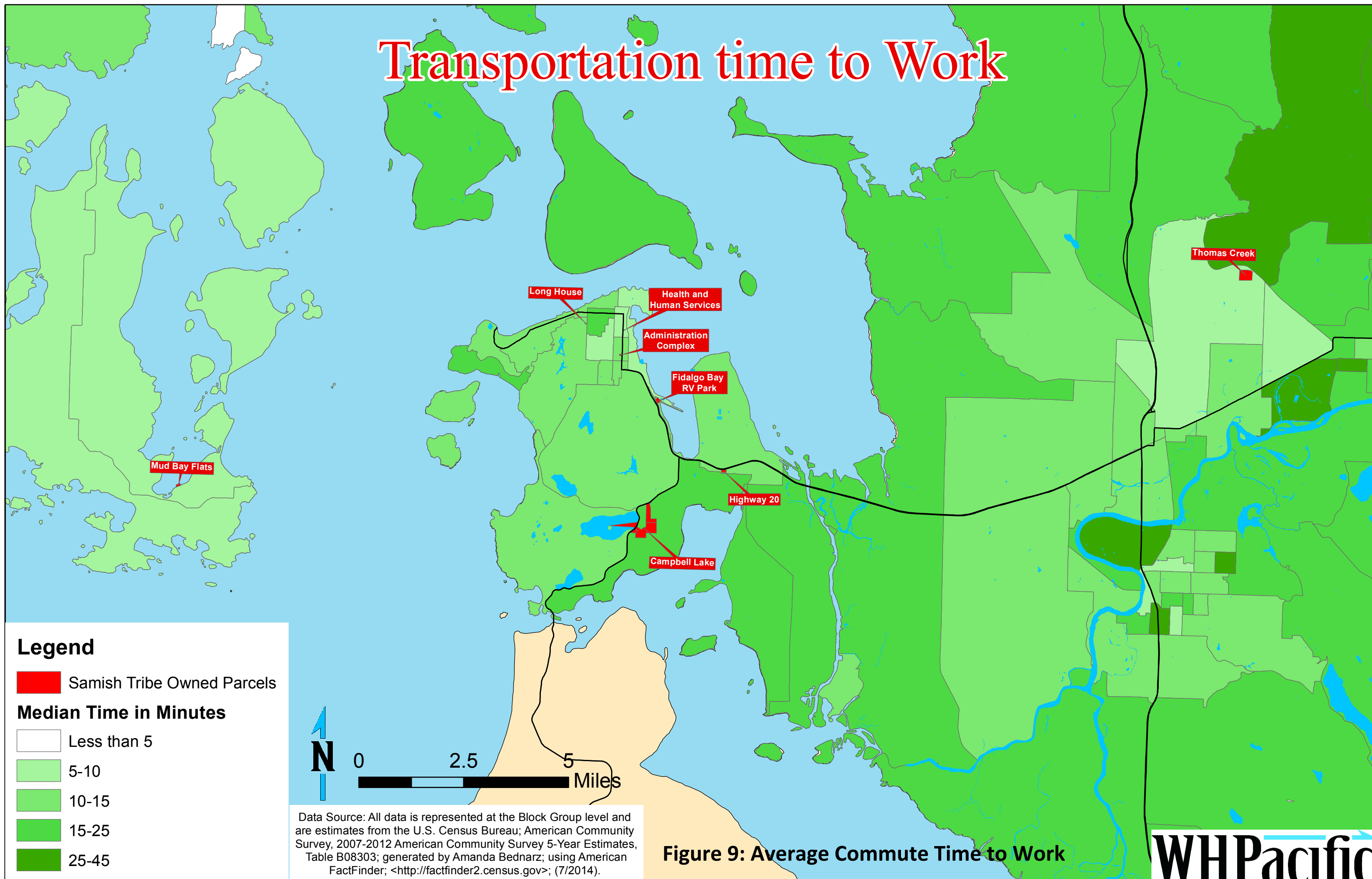
Carpool rates range from 0-20% within the City of Anacortes. Carpool rates are lower in northern Anacortes (0-10%) than southern Anacortes (10-20%). The area north of the Tribe's Highway 20 property has a higher carpool rate of approximately 20-30%. However, most Anacortes residents drive alone to work.

Interestingly, a higher percentage of southern Anacortes residents bike to work (5-7%) than those living near downtown Anacortes (1-3%). However, a higher percentage (7%+) of downtown residents walk to work.



**Figure 8: Skagit Transit Bus Parked at Mt. Vernon Station**






# Transportation time to Work

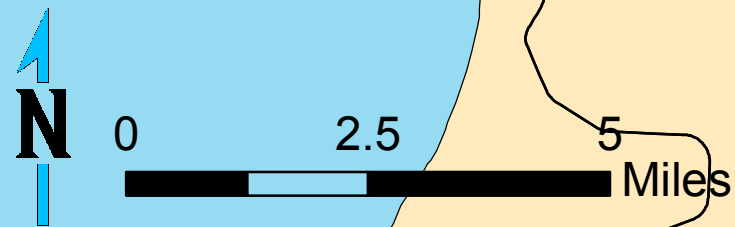


## Legend

 Samish Tribe Owned Parcels

## Median Time in Minutes

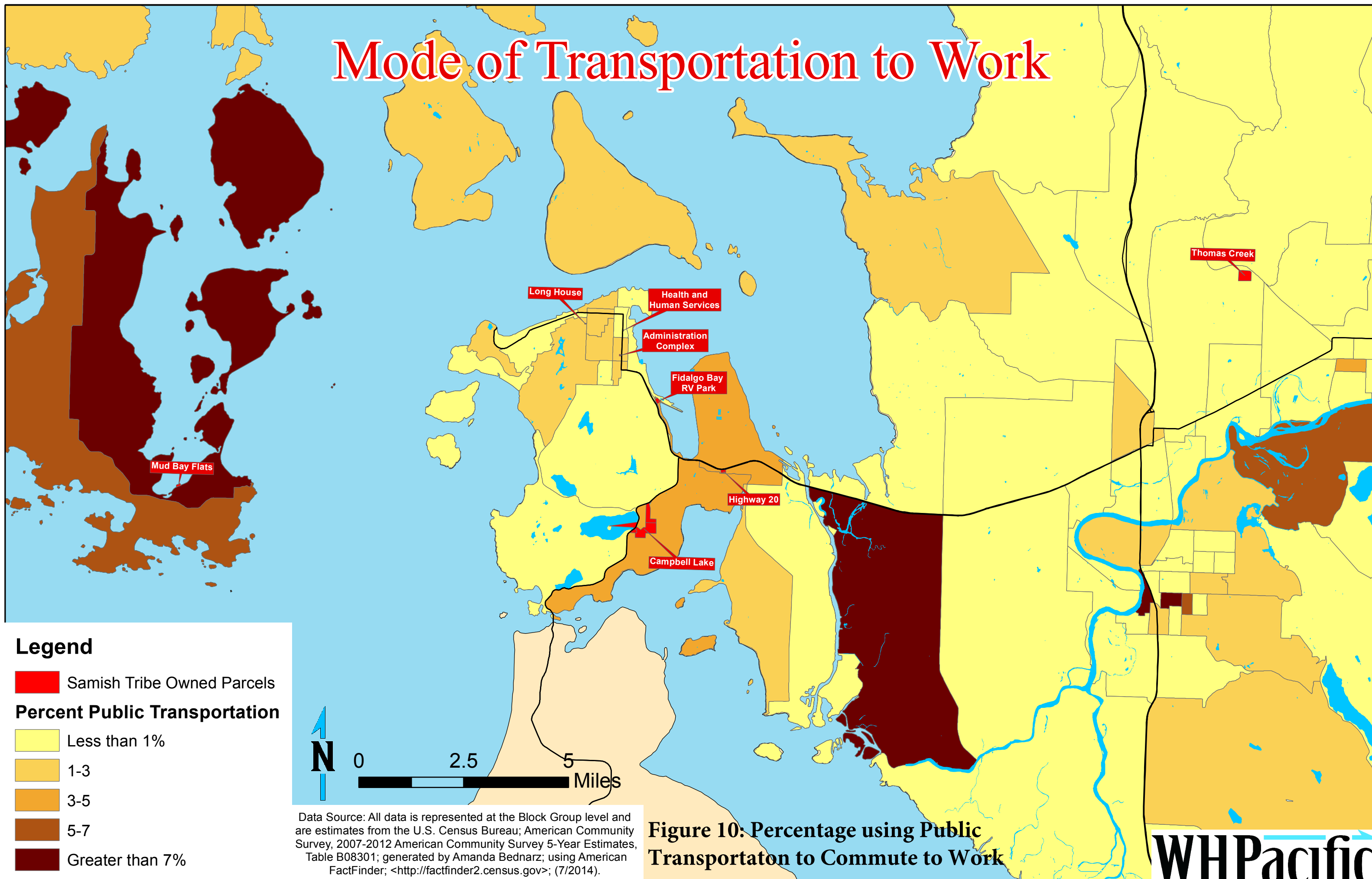
-  Less than 5
-  5-10
-  10-15
-  15-25
-  25-45



Data Source: All data is represented at the Block Group level and are estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2007-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B08303; generated by Amanda Bednarz; using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>; (7/2014).

Figure 9: Average Commute Time to Work

# Mode of Transportation to Work

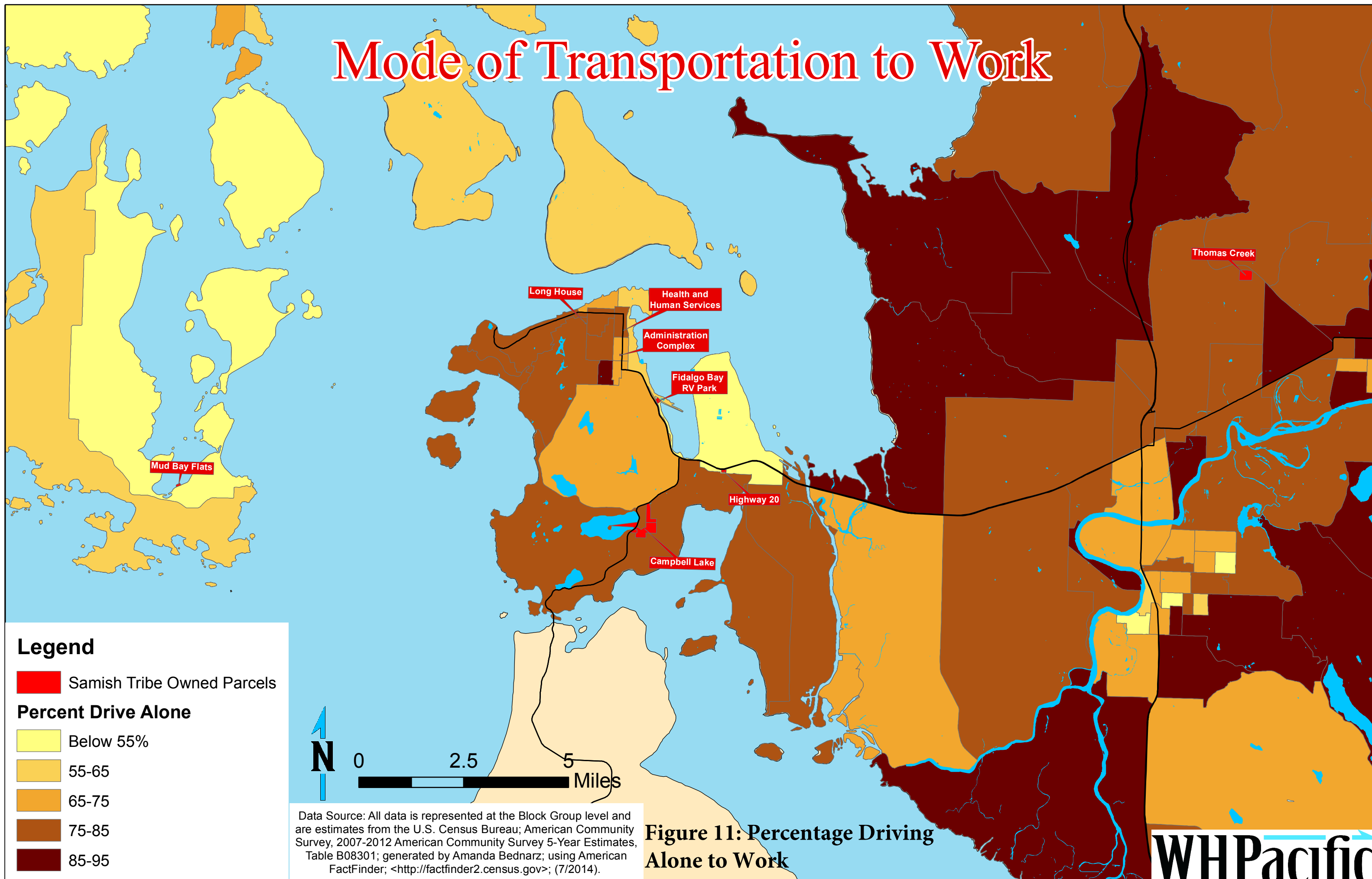


Data Source: All data is represented at the Block Group level and are estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2007-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B08301; generated by Amanda Bednarz; using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>; (7/2014).

**Figure 10: Percentage using Public Transportation to Commute to Work**

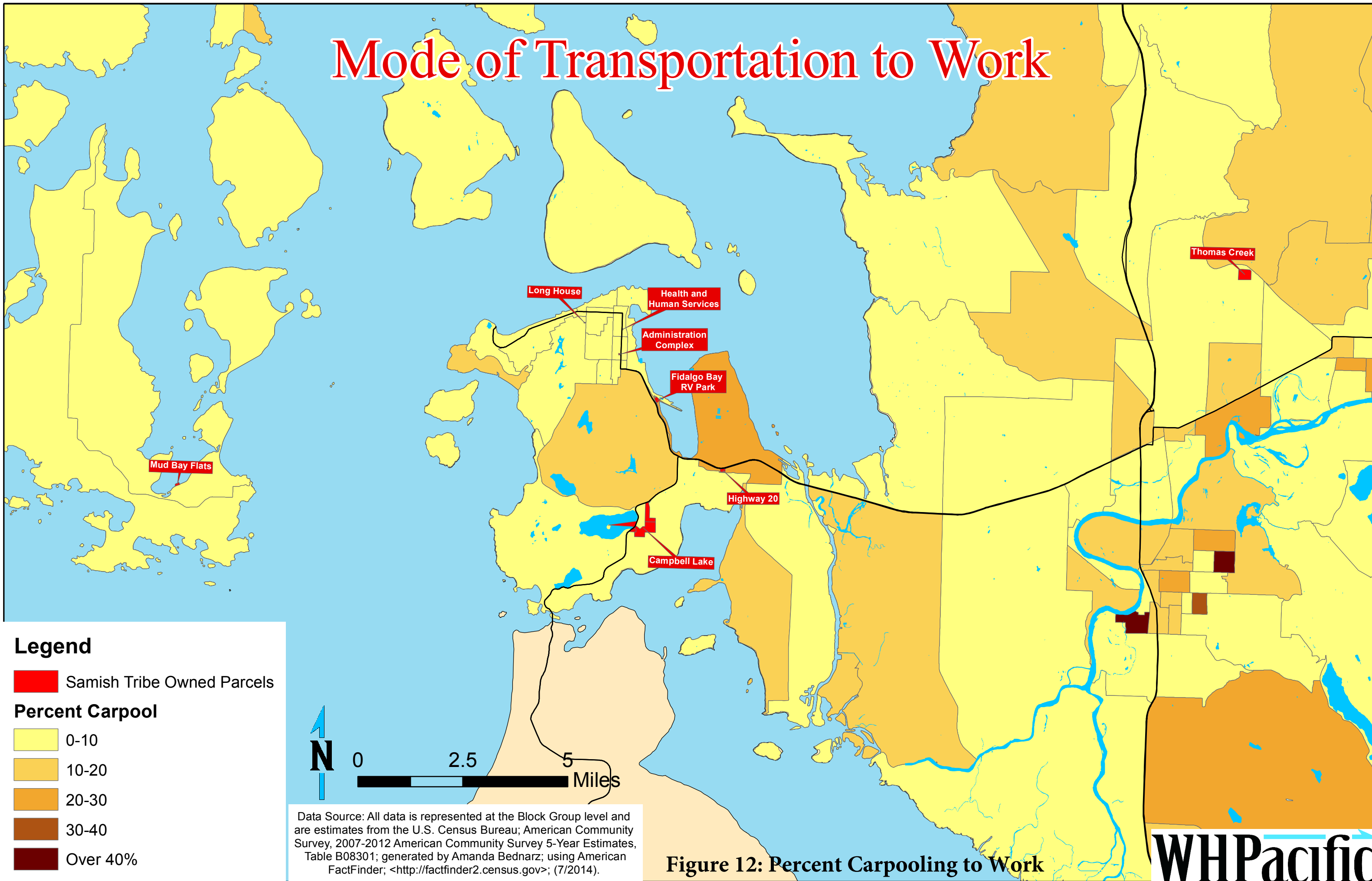


# Mode of Transportation to Work

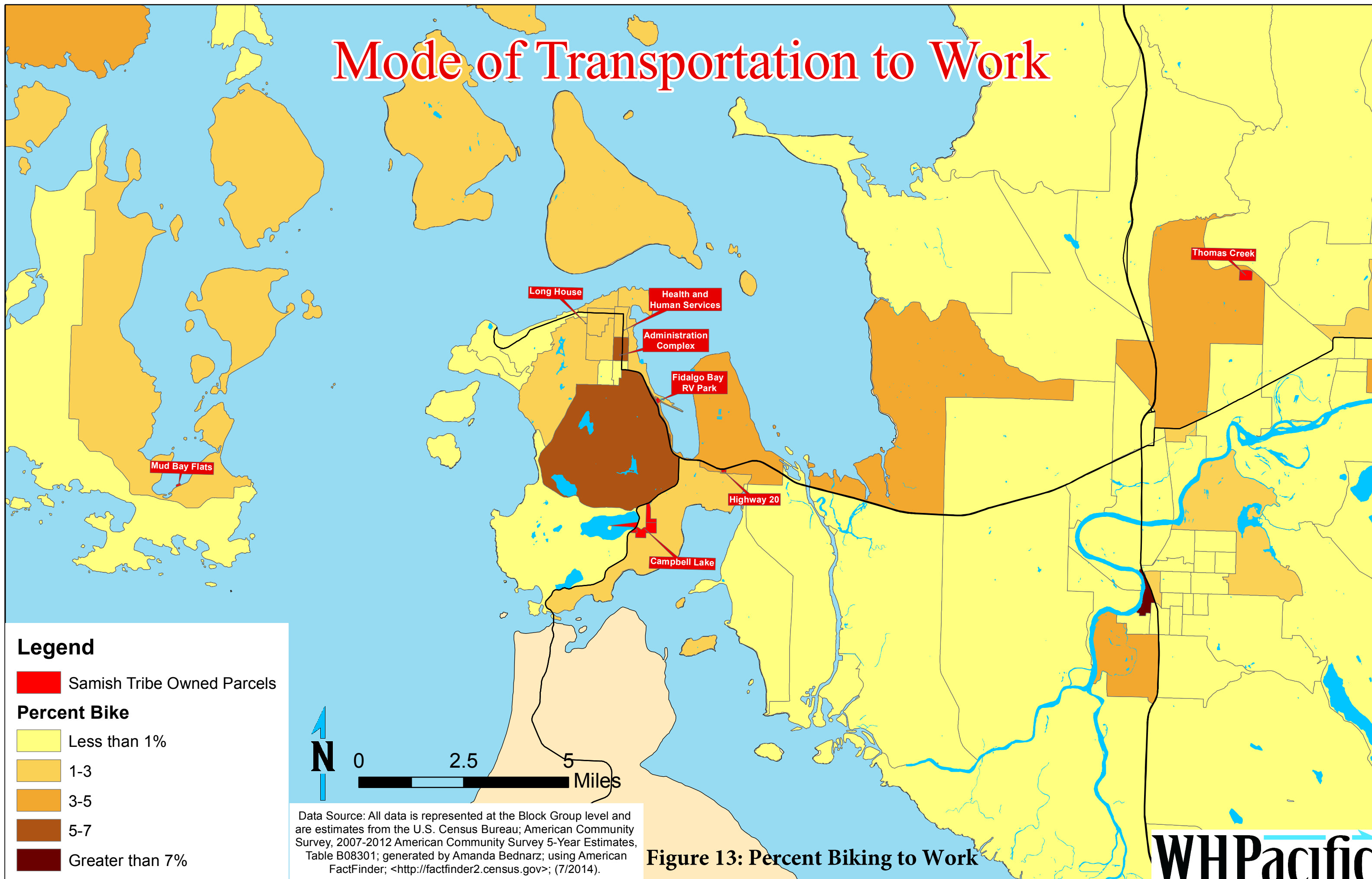


**Figure 11: Percentage Driving Alone to Work**

# Mode of Transportation to Work



# Mode of Transportation to Work



Data Source: All data is represented at the Block Group level and are estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2007-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B08301; generated by Amanda Bednarz; using American FactFinder; <<http://factfinder2.census.gov>>; (7/2014).

Figure 13: Percent Biking to Work

# Mode of Transportation to Work

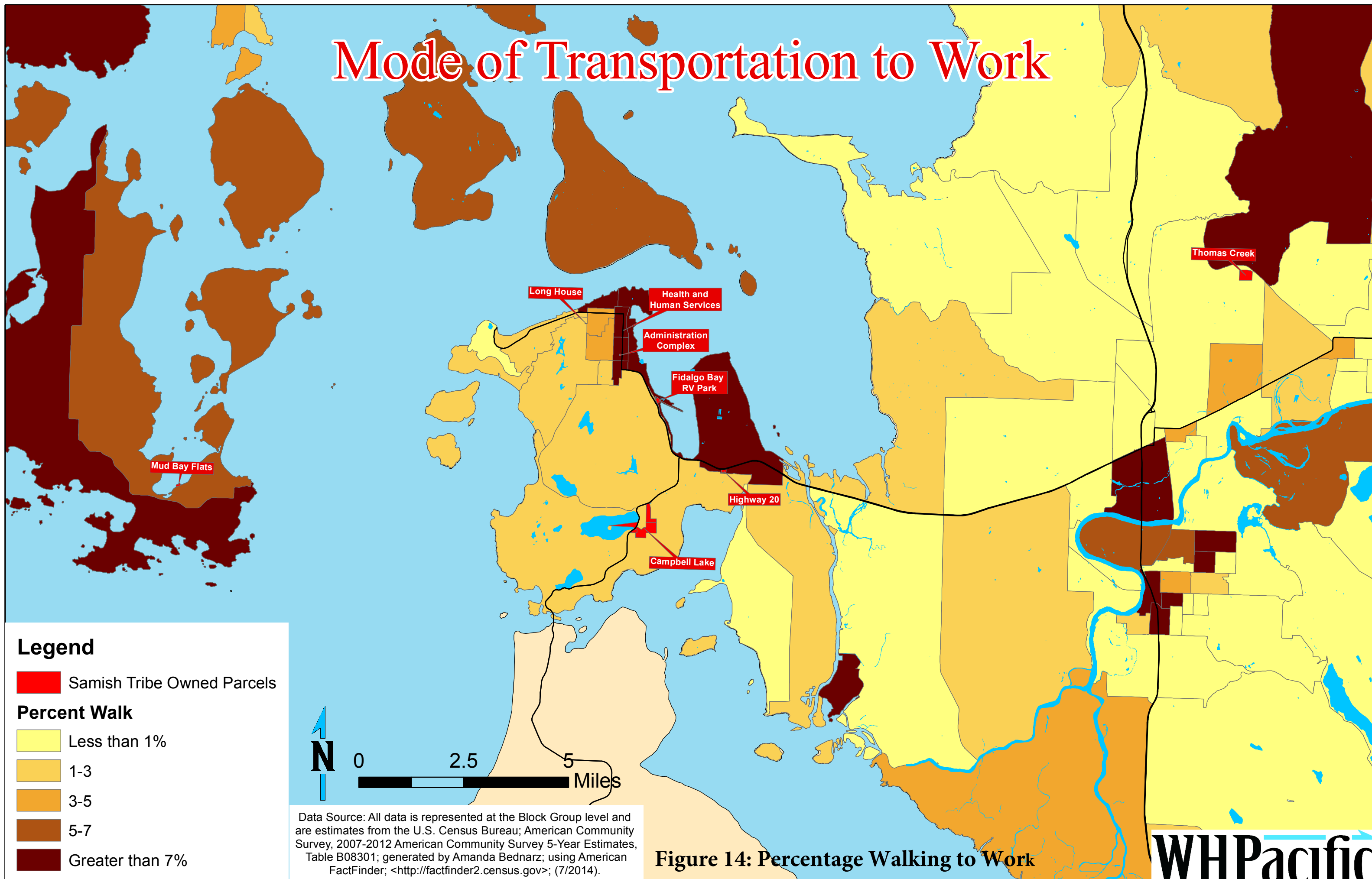


Figure 14: Percentage Walking to Work

**IIE. Tribal Facilities**

**Tribal Administration Office**

2918 Commercial Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221

The Tribal Administration Office is centrally located along Commercial Avenue. The facility is accessible via Skagit Transit’s Route 49. The following Samish programs are located at the Tribal Administration Office:

- Administration
- Human Resources
- Tribal Chairman
- Tribal Enrollment
- Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Accounting
- Information Technology (IT)



**Figure 15: Samish Tribal Administration Office**

**Samish Health and Human Services**

1809 Commercial Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221

The Samish Health and Human Services building is located along Commercial Avenue, several blocks north of the Tribal Administration Office. The facility is accessible via Skagit Transit’s Route 49. The following Samish programs are located in the Samish Health and Human Services building:

- Health
- Social Services
- Housing
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Education



**Figure 16: Samish Health and Human Services**

**Samish Longhouse**

1618 D Avenue  
Anacortes, WA 98221

The Samish Longhouse provides a The Samish Longhouse is not positioned along a Skagit Transit route. Route 410 runs closest to the Longhouse; however, the closest stop is several blocks away. As Route 410 is considered a “flex” route, riders may have the option of requesting door-to-door service to the Longhouse if 24-hour notice is provided. The following programs are located at the Longhouse:

- Elders / Caregiver Program
- Samish Head Start
- Samish Early Learning Center



**Figure 17: Samish Longhouse Facility**

**Samish Community Garden**

1917 Kelleher Road  
Anacortes, WA

The Samish Tribe maintains a community garden in a rural area west of Burlington along Kelleher Road. The Tribe organizes monthly field work days where Samish members gather to plant, weed and maintain the garden, and share a potluck meal. The garden area includes multiple greenhouses that are used to extend the growing season and plant winter crops. The Tribe often donates fruits and vegetables grown in the garden to the elder lunch program. Due to the rural location of the garden, the area is not accessible by transit.



**Figure 18: Samish Community Garden (Source: Samish Website)**

**Fidalgo Bay Resort**

4701 Fidalgo Bay Road  
Anacortes WA 98221

The Fidalgo Bay RV Resort is the Samish Tribe’s sole enterprise. The resort includes 141 RV hook-ups, five (5) cabins, and a clubhouse. The clubhouse can be rented as a venue for special events, meetings and gatherings. The Fidalgo Bay Resort is not presently accessible via public transit.



**Figure 19: Fidalgo Bay Resort (Source: Fidalgo Bay Resort Website)**

**IIF. Samish Vehicle Inventory**

The Samish Tribe owns a small inventory of vehicles serving Tribal programs. The Tribe’s current vehicle inventory includes:

- Two (2) Head Start buses
- One (1) bus for the Elders Program
- One (1) caravan
- One (1) older Dodge van (will be retired soon for repair and maintenance)
- One (1) Honda Element (used mostly for food deliveries)
- One (1) four-door sedan operated by Family Services
- Several pickup trucks operated by Natural Resources Department
- Three (3) GSA vehicles
  - Ford Taurus owned and used by Vocational Rehabilitation program
  - Impala leased via GSA by Family Services
  - Ford Escort leased via GSA for use by all programs
- One (1) sedan operated by Vocational Rehabilitation program
- A Smart Car recently purchased and operated by Health and Human Services



**Figure 20: Elders' Bus**

In addition to the vehicles listed above, a proposal has been submitted to Tribal Council to purchase a four-wheel drive Suburban vehicle with a trailer hitch.

**IIG. Future Development**

The Samish Tribe has long desired to bring Tribal members back to their ancestral homeland in and near Anacortes. Currently, only 120 Samish members live in Skagit County; most members live in neighboring counties due to the lack of housing and job opportunities in Anacortes, as well as a high cost of living. The Samish Tribe is actively seeking to change the conditions that discourage Tribal members from relocating to Anacortes. Strategies for bringing Samish members back to



**Figure 21: Site of Proposed Samish Casino along Highway 20 (Source: GoogleEarth)**

Anacortes include:

- Providing housing options for Tribal members, either through Samish-owned apartment complexes or new modular home construction on Tribal properties.
- Expanding local job opportunities for Samish members through Tribal enterprises, such as the proposed casino (near Highway 20).
- Expanded human and social services for Samish members.
- Design of a central Samish Administration Campus that would include all Tribal programs and staff.

As these strategies are implemented, the number of Samish members living in Anacortes is expected to increase. This population shift will likely increase local transit demands within Anacortes. New transit stops and/or routes may be needed to serve new residential areas populated by Samish members.



**SECTION III: REVIEW OF EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

The City of Anacortes is served by two regional transit providers – Skagit Transit and Island Transit. Skagit Transit is the main bus provider serving the Anacortes area, whereas Island Transit operates one (1) route connecting March’s Point to Oak Harbor. Additionally, Anacortes is home to two (2) ferry terminals: 1) WSDOT Anacortes Ferry Terminal; and, 2) Guemes Island Ferry Terminal.

**IIIA. Fixed-Route / Deviated Fixed Route Service**

**Table 3: Bus Routes in Anacortes**

Transit Provider	Route Number	Route Description	Hours of Service
Skagit Transit	40X	March's Point to Skagit Station in Mt. Vernon.	Weekdays 6:10 am - 7:40 pm (with midday break in service) Saturdays 8:40 am - 5:40 pm
Skagit Transit	49	Downtown Anacortes - Loop covering Commercial Ave. and MAve. Stops at Island Hospital. Covers Samish Administration & Health and Human Services facilities.	Weekdays 7:25 am - 4:40 pm Saturdays - 8:25 am - 4:40 pm
Skagit Transit	410	March's Point to WSDOT Ferry Terminal via Downtown Anacortes (stop at Guemes Ferry by request)	Weekdays 6:40 am - 7:14 pm Saturdays 8:06 am - 5:35 pm
Skagit Transit	513	March's Point along Highway 20 to Swinomish Casino, then on to Chuckanut P&R. Route 513 becomes Route 615 at March's Point.	Weekdays 7:10 am - 7:45 pm Weekends - No Service
Skagit Transit	615	Mount Vernon to LaConner to March's Point (Connected with Route 513, as noted above)	Weekdays 6:15 am - 7:05 pm Saturdays 8:00 am - 6:20 pm
Island Transit	411W	Oak Harbor to March's Point to Mount Vernon. Connects with SKAT Route 40X for those continuing on to Mt. Vernon.	Weekdays 5:35 am - 8:15 pm Weekends - No Service

**Skagit Transit**

Skagit Transit is the main regional transit provider covering the Anacortes area. Skagit Transit (SKAT) provides 17 fixed bus routes and 16 Dial-a-Ride routes within Skagit County. Skagit Transit collects fares from its riders; a standard fare is \$1.00 per ride. SKAT also partners with other regional transit agencies to offer County Connector routes to other hub cities, such as Bellingham. SKAT’s fare structure is summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4: Skagit Transit Bus Fares**

SKAGIT TRANSIT FARES	Regular	Youth	Reduced
Standard Fare	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$0.50
One-Day Pass (Local)	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
31-Day Pass (Local)	\$25.00	\$12.50	\$12.50
County Connector Routes 80X and 90X	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
Route 80X (Local Fare) Mt. Vernon to Alger	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$0.50
Route 80X Alger to Bellingham	\$2.00	\$1.00	\$1.00
County Connector Routes 80X and 90X - 31-Day Pass	\$50.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
Transfer Tickets	Valid 90 min. in any direction on local buses.		

**Route 40x**

Route 40x is a new commuter route introduced by Skagit Transit in July of 2014. Route 40x connects March’s Point in Anacortes to Mt. Vernon. A similar route was previously offered by Island Transit; unfortunately, they had to discontinue this route due to budgetary reasons. Service hours are concentrated around morning and evening commute times, with a bit of a service gap during the middle of the day. Weekday service hours reflect commuting patterns, with a midday break from 10:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

**Route 49**

Route 49 includes a “loop” route through the central business district of Anacortes. Service is approximately hourly, seven days per week. The route travels along Commercial Avenue, 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, M Avenue, and 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Route 49 serves both Fixed Route, Dial-a-Ride and deviated-fixed customers up to 3/4 mile off the posted route. The Samish Administrative Building and Health and Human Services are both located along Route 49.

**Route 410**

Route 410 connects March’s Point to downtown Anacortes via Highway 20. The route has regular stops at the WSDOT Anacortes Ferry Terminal; it may also stop at the Guemes Ferry Terminal by request.

**Route 513 / Route 615**

Route 513 travels from March’s Point along Highway 20, stopping at the Swinomish Casino and Chuckanut Park and Ride. Route 513 was recently combined with Route 615 – at March’s Point, Route 513 becomes Route 615, traveling again to the Swinomish Casino, then southwest over to Mt. Vernon.

**Pocket Service**

Skagit Transit provides “pocket service” to certain underserved areas of Skagit County. Pocket service is essentially a hybrid between fixed route and Dial-a-Ride. Standard fares apply. As of September of 2013, riders are no longer required to register for pocket service – designated stops and times are provided on the Skagit Transit website at [www.skagittransit.org](http://www.skagittransit.org).

A listing of the Skagit routes serving popular Anacortes destinations appears in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Popular Transit Destinations in Anacortes served by SKAT Routes**

<b>Destination</b>	<b>Route</b>
Samish Administration Building	Route 49
Samish Health and Human Services	Route 49
Anacortes City Hall	Route 410
Anacortes Library	Route 410
Island Hospital	Route 49
Safeway in Anacortes	Route 410
Anacortes Senior Center	Route 49
Anacortes Ferry Terminals	Route 410

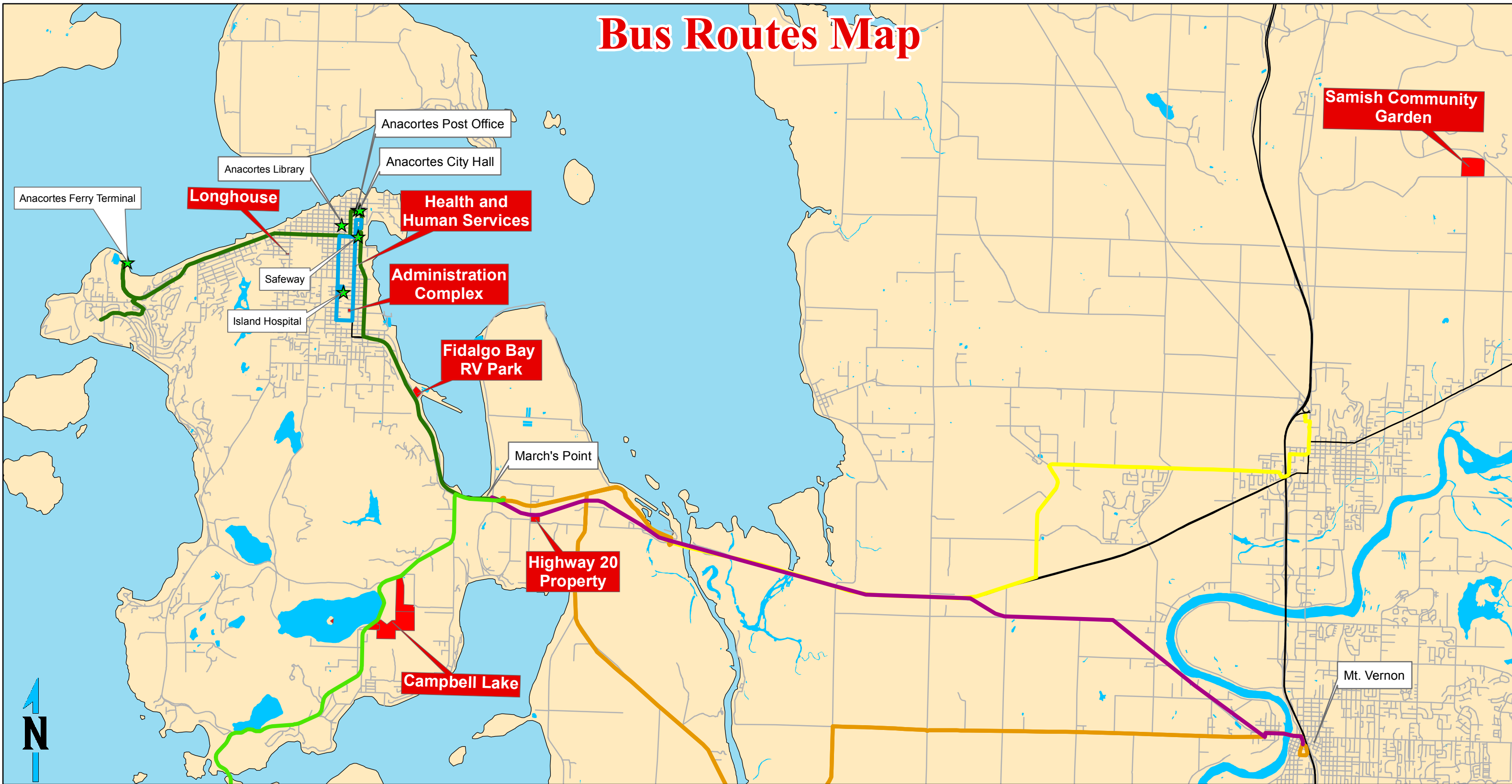
## **Island Transit**

Island provides 13 fixed routes within Island County, including Mount Vernon, Stanwood, Whidbey Island and Camano Island. Island Transit does not charge ridership fares – it is an entirely fare-free system. One of Island’s routes – Route 411 – stops at March’s Point in Anacortes. In addition to its fixed routes, Island Transit operates a vanpool service.

### **Route 411**

Island Transit’s Route 411 was recently scaled back due to budgetary reasons; Skagit Transit has taken over a significant section of the former route (see description of Route 40X). Route 411 connects March’s Point with Oak Harbor. The route passes by the Tribe’s Campbell Lake property. At March’s Point, riders can transfer to SKAT Route 40X to travel on to Mt. Vernon.

# Bus Routes Map



## Legend

- Samish Tribe Owned Parcels
- Places Of Interest

### Bus Routes

- Skagit Transit Route 40X
- Skagit Transit Route 410
- Island Transit Route 411
- Skagit Transit Route 615
- Skagit Transit Route 49
- Skagit Transit Route 513



Figure 22: Bus Routes Serving Anacortes Area

**IIIB. Current Transit Use Patterns**

Skagit Transit reports sustained growth in total ridership (all routes) over the past several years. In 2007, SKAT ridership for all routes was 422,258. By 2013, total ridership had increased by more than 78% to 754,865 (Table 6). Ridership numbers for the main routes serving Anacortes have a strong ridership. SKAT Route 410 had a total of 53,832 boardings in 2013 – an average of 4,486 boardings per month (Table 7). SKAT Route 49, a shorter route focused on downtown Anacortes, had 6,586 boardings in 2013 – an average of 549 boardings per month (Table 8).

**Table 6: Skagit Transit - Total Ridership (all routes) - 2007-2014**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
January	34,184	38,806	39,933	43,001	48,889	51,304	61,649	67,545
February	31,483	38,027	38,156	43,377	46,322	55,239	61,454	63,414
March	34,311	38,265	39,723	47,847	53,472	56,986	64,518	66,754
April	34,900	44,762	43,554	47,343	52,888	62,862	66,724	67,693
May	38,056	44,828	42,491	45,098	53,029	64,357	67,694	71,297
June	34,530	45,202	43,907	44,856	49,858	56,212	59,146	66,667
July	34,535	49,680	45,230	45,976	47,948	53,934	63,788	
August	38,421	44,035	43,257	45,257	55,685	60,690	62,779	
September	33,722	42,345	43,447	45,671	53,223	55,224	56,054	
October	41,663	47,426	46,922	49,558	58,991	68,201	71,614	
November	35,646	36,929	40,193	44,152	54,557	60,041	61,180	
December	30,807	33,016	41,399	42,145	49,842	52,423	58,265	
<b>Total</b>	<b>422,258</b>	<b>503,321</b>	<b>508,212</b>	<b>544,281</b>	<b>624,704</b>	<b>697,473</b>	<b>754,865</b>	

**Table 8: SKAT Route 49 – 2013 Ridership**

SKAT Rt. 49 2013	Annual Total	Ave. Monthly
Boardings	6,586	549
Revenue Hours	2,869	239
Actual Hours	3,005	250
Revenue Miles	26,951	2,246
Actual Miles	30,829	2,569

**Table 7: SKAT Route 410 - 2013 Ridership**

SKAT Rt. 410 2013	Annual Total	Ave. Monthly
Boardings	53,832	4,486
Revenue Hours	3,763	314
Actual Hours	4,114	343
Revenue Miles	71,920	5,993
Actual Miles	80,458	6,705

Ridership data on the SKAT commuter Route 40X is very preliminary, as Skagit Transit only took over the route in July of 2014. However, July’s numbers appear on track with 1580 riders – approximately 18.2 riders per hour (Table 9). Route data on 40X’s previous incarnation as Island Transit Route 411W reveals thriving ridership levels on an upward swing. Total weekday ridership increased from 34,945 in 2006 to 106,046 in 2013 – a sizable increase (Table 10).

**Table 9: SKAT Route 40X - Ridership in July 2014**

Date	Morning 6:10 - 10:30 am	Afternoon 3:15-7:35 pm	Total Riders	Daily Total per Hour
30-Jun	17.8	17.8	154	17.8
1-Jul	17.3	20.1	162	18.7
2-Jul	19.6	18	163	18.8
3-Jul	14.5	17.3	138	15.9
4-Jul	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
5-Jul	6.5	6.9	60	6.7
6-Jul	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
7-Jul	19.2	21.7	177	20.4
8-Jul	22.2	18.1	174	20.1
9-Jul	14.1	20.3	149	17.2
10-Jul	18	21.5	171	19.7
11-Jul	18.2	17.5	155	17.9
12-Jul	8	8.9	77	8.5
13-Jul	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
<b>Totals</b>			<b>1580</b>	<b>18.2</b>



**Figure 23: Skagit Transit Bus Stop Sign in Anacortes**

**Table 10: Ridership History for Island Transit Route 411W**

	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday
<b>411W NB</b>	18,556	1,624	21,126	1,851	29,755	2,033	N/a	N/a	42,060	2,733	50,891	3,273	53,444	3,762	54,064	3,628
<b>411W SB</b>	16,389	1,485	18,604	1,625	27,779	1,904	N/a	N/a	40,236	2,319	49,803	2,919	51,248	3,288	51,982	3,107
<b>TOTAL</b>	34,945	3,109	39,730	3,476	57,534	3,937	71,880	4,584	82,296	5,052	100,694	6,192	104,692	7,050	106,046	6,735

**IIIC. Vanpool**

Skagit Transit operates a vanpool program within Skagit County. Group sizes range from five (5) to 15 people. A minimum commuting distance of 20 miles roundtrip is required. SKAT provides either a seven, twelve, or fifteen passenger van, and covers fuel and maintenance costs in exchange for a monthly fee. The fee varies by the number of passengers and length of commute (see Figure 24). At this time of this report, Skagit Transit reported one (1) vanpool to Anacortes – the commuting destination is the refinery. Island Transit also provides vanpool service within neighboring Island County.

7 Passenger					12/15 Passenger											
Daily Miles	* Rate	cost per passenger			Daily Miles	** Rate	cost per passenger									
		5	6	7			9	10	11	12	13	14	15			
20	326	65	54	47	20	360	40	36	33	30	28	26	24			
25	358	72	60	51	25	400	44	40	36	33	31	29	27			
30	389	78	65	56	30	439	49	44	40	37	34	31	29			
35	421	84	70	60	35	479	53	48	44	40	37	34	32			
40	452	90	75	65	40	519	58	52	47	43	40	37	35			
45	484	97	81	69	45	559	62	56	51	47	43	40	37			
50	515	103	86	74	50	599	67	60	54	50	46	43	40			
55	547	109	91	78	55	639	71	64	58	53	49	46	43			
60	578	116	96	83	60	679	75	68	62	57	52	48	45			
65	610	122	102	87	65	719	80	72	65	60	55	51	48			
70	641	128	107	92	70	759	84	76	69	63	58	54	51			
75	673	135	112	96	75	799	89	80	73	67	61	57	53			
80	704	141	117	101	80	838	93	84	76	70	64	60	56			
85	736	147	123	105	85	878	98	88	80	73	68	63	59			
90	767	153	128	110	90	918	102	92	83	77	71	66	61			
95	799	160	133	114	95	958	106	96	87	80	74	68	64			
100	830	166	138	119	100	998	111	100	91	83	77	71	67			
105	862	172	144	123	105	1,038	115	104	94	86	80	74	69			
110	893	179	149	128	110	1,078	120	108	98	90	83	77	72			
115	925	185	154	132	115	1,118	124	112	102	93	86	80	75			
120	956	191	159	137	120	1,158	129	116	105	96	89	83	77			
125	988	198	165	141	125	1,198	133	120	109	100	92	86	80			
130	1,019	204	170	146	130	1,237	137	124	112	103	95	88	82			
135	1,051	210	175	150	135	1,277	142	128	116	106	98	91	85			
140	1,082	216	180	155	140	1,317	146	132	120	110	101	94	88			
145	1,114	223	186	159	145	1,357	151	136	123	113	104	97	90			
150	1,145	229	191	164	150	1,397	155	140	127	116	107	100	93			
155	1,177	235	196	168	155	1,437	160	144	131	120	111	103	96			
160	1,208	242	201	173	160	1,477	164	148	134	123	114	105	98			
165	1,240	248	207	177	165	1,517	169	152	138	126	117	108	101			
170	1,271	254	212	182	170	1,557	173	156	142	130	120	111	104			
175	1,303	261	217	186	175	1,597	177	160	145	133	123	114	106			
180	1,334	267	222	191	180	1,636	182	164	149	136	126	117	109			
185	1,366	273	228	195	185	1,676	186	168	152	140	129	120	112			
190	1,397	279	233	200	190	1,716	191	172	156	143	132	123	114			
195	1,429	286	238	204	195	1,756	195	176	160	146	135	125	117			
200	1,460	292	243	209	200	1,796	200	180	163	150	138	128	120			

\* Rates are based on \$200 monthly flat fee plus \$0.30 per mile  
 \*\*Rates are based on \$200 monthly flat fee plus \$0.38 per mile

Figure 24: Skagit Transit's Vanpool Fares (Source: Skagit Transit Website)

**IIID. Paratransit**

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires curb-to-curb paratransit service as a “safety net” for persons whose disabilities prevent use of accessible non-commuter, fixed route bus service. The federal government adopted minimum criteria that transit agencies have to meet in operating this complementary paratransit service. Complementary paratransit service is intended to offer a comparable level of service to that provided by fixed-route bus service providers. Paratransit

service is neither required nor intended to meet all the transportation needs of persons with disabilities. Rather, it is intended to provide public transportation in a more specialized form.

Riders are eligible for Paratransit service if they fall under one or more of the following ADA categories or are 80 years or older.

- **Category I:** Any individual with a disability who is unable to board, ride, or disembark from any vehicle on a bus system that is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.
- **Category II:** Any individual with a disability who needs the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding assistance device and the bus route the person wants to travel is not 100% accessible or the bus lift cannot be deployed at the desired stop.
- **Category III:** Any individual with a disability who has a specific impairment-related condition that prevents that individual from traveling to a boarding and disembarking location on the bus system.

All transit providers with fixed-route service must provide Paratransit to eligible riders within their service area. Riders must be pre-approved for eligibility before using the service. Skagit Transit has an ADA Paratransit Route dedicated to Anacortes. Additionally, Flex Route 49 serves ADA Paratransit functions and is designed with time built into the schedule to do so. Also, if Paratransit demand surpasses what can be accomplished by these two routes, Skagit Transit sends another vehicle to assist. Island Transit also provides Paratransit within its service area.



**IIIE. Anacortes Ferry Stations**

**Anacortes Ferry Terminal**

Anacortes Ferry Terminal located at the west end of Oakes Avenue/12<sup>th</sup> Street/SR-20. Anacortes Ferry Terminal hosts 16+ departures per day. Ferry runs extend westward from Anacortes to the following destinations:

- Lopez Island
- Shaw Island
- Orcas Island
- San Juan Island (Friday Harbor)
- Sidney, BC



**Figure 25: Anacortes Ferry Terminal**

**Guemes Island Ferry**

Guemes Island ferries depart from Anacortes approximately every 30-45 minutes. Anacortes departures run from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday; 6:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday; and, 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. on Sunday. The crossing time to Guemes Island is approximately five (5) minutes. Round trip travel is approximately 20-25 minutes.



**Figure 26: Guemes Island Ferry**

**IIIF. Parking Facilities**

**March’s Point Park and Ride**

Skagit Transit operates a park and ride facility adjacent to the March’s Point Station in Anacortes. Transit users may park their personal vehicles and board one of four bus routes at this location: SKAT Routes 410, 615 or 513, or Island Transit Route 411. The parking lot has a 133-car capacity. There is no fee to park at the Park and Ride Lot at March’s Point.

**Anacortes Ferry Terminal Parking**

The Anacortes Ferry Terminal area provides 1,265 parking spaces divided between three lots. Parking fees are charged on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, starting at \$5.00 for 0-24 hours.

**Guemes Island Ferry Terminal Parking**

The Guemes Island Ferry Terminal in Anacortes includes a parking lot with a 148-vehicle capacity. The Guemes Island Terminal has an adjacent lot that can accommodate 100 vehicles.

**SECTION IV: CONGRUENCY ANALYSIS AND SERVICE ADEQUACY**

This section describes the unmet transit needs of Samish members in Anacortes based on stakeholder feedback obtained through multiple sources, including:

- Interviews with Tribal Staff on Program-based Transit Needs
- Community Survey Results
- Community Meeting Results

**IVA. Administrative Department / Program-based Transit Needs**

**Head Start and the Early Learning Center**

**Program Background**

The Samish Tribe runs a Head Start Program and a child care program called the Early Learning Center (ELC). Head Start is open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The ELC is open Monday – Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Approximately 36 students are currently enrolled in the Head Start program – 30 are program-funded, and six (6) are privately funded. The 36 students are divided into two (2) classes. Of the 36 Head Start students, 10 are all-day students that receive wraparound care from the Early Learning Center (ELC).



**Figure 27: A New Elder's Bus was Purchased in 2013 (Photo: Samish Newsletter Dec 2013)**

Only 3-5% of families enrolled in the Head Start program are Native American. None are Samish members. Most families live in Anacortes, although some travel from outside the area.

**Client Transit Needs**

The Head Start program has access to two (2) 16-passenger buses, with seats equipped with five-point harnesses for young riders. Only one of the two buses is currently in use, as the program only has one driver with a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Consequently, Head Start can only provide afternoon transit for enrolled students. Special arrangements are occasionally made when a student requires transportation due to a hardship.

The ELC does not provide daily transportation to students. Many ELC families would likely be interested in transit, assuming the system is cost-effective and meets their needs. The ELC occasionally borrows the Head Start buses for field trips; however, recent field trip requests have been denied, as staff cannot

transport all students in the program with only one driver. The program does not endorse parents to transport any child other than their own due to liability concerns.

Most Head Start and/or ELC families arrive by personal vehicle. At least one family takes the bus. There is at least one (1) carpool. Most Head Start and ELC families have parents that work outside the home, making timing an important consideration for pick-ups and drop-offs.

A few families live close enough to walk to the longhouse. Sidewalks lead to and from the Longhouse; however, a crosswalk is needed at 17<sup>th</sup> and D Avenue to improve safety conditions for pedestrians accessing the longhouse.

At least five (5) Head Start and/or ELC families do not own a car. Some families with cars are still unable to access reliable transportation – cars are often in need of repair or maintenance. Also, the cost of gas and car insurance often prevents families from driving.

Sharing Head Start buses with programs other than ELC is tricky due to funding issues; HHS may borrow them on occasion.

### **Staff Transit Needs**

Most Head Start and ELC staff members drive personal vehicles to work. A few employees that live close to the longhouse choose to walk to work.

### **Future Needs**

Head Start families would like to see expanded transportation options. There were a lot of complaints when the program lost one of its bus drivers and had to curtail services.

## **Education (K-12 and Postsecondary)**

### **Program Background**

There are approximately 32 Samish members enrolled in the Tribe's higher education program. The program is funded by Tribal Council. Participation is steadily increasing. There are 193 tribal members within the traditional college age range (age 18-24). Five (5) of the 32 current students are older students. The Education program provides financial assistance to full and part-time Samish students. Tribal members may attend school anywhere in the United States or Canada. Transportation needs are considered when calculating the overall cost of school and living expenses. However, it is not unusual for students to run through their allotted money fairly quickly, leaving insufficient funds for transportation to and from classes.

### **Client Transit Needs**

Approximately 20 students are currently enrolled in Anacortes School District. The Tribe has a partnership (MOA) with Anacortes School District. They are currently working with the District to

develop and implement a Samish cultural curriculum. Anacortes School District could be a potential partner in transit endeavors. The district has a robust school bus service; however, bus service is not provided for afterschool activities.

The Tribe offers a variety of community education sessions on the weekends (e.g. weaving, carving, Coastal Salish Art, etc.). The classes are generally held Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Transportation is a barrier for some participants, particularly those traveling from Bellingham, Seattle, or other areas.

The Education program does not currently pick up individual students or clients for appointments on an “on-demand” basis. Transportation of groups of students will occur via the new (elders) bus. Improved transit options within Anacortes would benefit the Tribe’s ability to offer internship opportunities.

### **Staff Transit Needs**

At the time of this report, no education staff members used public transit for commuting purposes. Education staff members sometimes need to travel between Tribal facilities during the work day – It is a 20+ minute walk between tribal facilities. There are few bike lanes in Anacortes, making it difficult to bike safely.

### **Future Needs**

A long-term “wish list” item is an eight-passenger van with cargo space for the Education program. The Tribe does not currently own a vehicle that is able to transport a canoe – this is problematic for the Education department in particular, as there are educational programs designed around canoeing. The education program’s transportation needs peak in the summer. Transportation to “Camp Samish” is difficult due to road access issues and vehicle wear-and-tear.

The Education Department is considering opening a Tribal School in the future (under the State of Washington’s charter school legislation). A tribal school would allow the Tribe to provide an effective cultural curriculum to enrolled students. If a tribal school is formed, student transportation would be an important consideration.

## **Housing**

### **Program Background**

The Samish Tribe’s Housing department provides rental assistance for low-income Native American clients within a 10-county area. Enrollment levels vary from year-to-year; currently, the program has over 30 clients, approximately 80% of which are Samish members. Two (2) staff members manage the program.

**Client Transit Needs**

Housing staff report that many of their clients do not have access to a reliable vehicle. When identifying potential housing sites, access to a transit stop is often a consideration. Approximately 30% of the program's clients use public transit on a regular basis. Housing works closely with the Education and Vocational Rehabilitation programs to provide clients with resources to help them gain financial self-sufficiency. Transportation is sometimes a barrier for clients accessing programs, thereby limiting their ability to work towards self-sufficiency (through education or employment). Housing cannot provide bus passes to clients, due to grant stipulations.

Some housing clients have expressed frustration over the condition of pedestrian amenities when accessing transit. The sidewalks in Anacortes are not ADA-compliant, making it difficult for people with disabilities to reach bus stops. One of the program's clients who relies on public transit requires a wheelchair. Sidewalk conditions are so poor in some areas that persons in wheelchairs have to travel along the road shoulders.

**Staff Transit Needs**

Staff require transportation when inspecting housing units to ensure that they meet required health and quality standards. Staff must frequently travel by car to visit or inspect housing sites. Staff travel on a biweekly basis to cities outside of Anacortes (within the 10-county service area). Staff try to group inspection appointments by location, ensuring that their travel time is well-utilized. Staff are instructed to use a tribal vehicle if one is available. If a tribal vehicle is not available, they can use their personal vehicle and be reimbursed for mileage. Staff are not permitted to transport clients in their personal vehicles due to liability reasons.

Staff feel that the Housing program would benefit from having their own vehicle – possibly a crossover / SUV that can handle dirt roads (i.e. 4WD). The vehicle should have sufficient space for a stepladder and toolbox (needed for inspections). A five-passenger vehicle would be sufficient to transport clients (including a certain number of family members).

**Future Needs**

The Tribe has the goal of bringing more Samish members to the Anacortes area. The Tribe is interested in either purchasing an apartment complex, or constructing single or multi-family housing on Tribally-owned land. Future economic enterprises may bring an influx of Tribal members to Anacortes, especially if the Tribe is successful in opening a casino. The shift-work associated with casinos would also require round-the-clock transit in order to be feasible for employees.

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## Health and Human Services

### Program Background

The Health and Human Services Department oversees the following programs:

- Health (e.g. Contract Health, Diabetes and Public Health)
- Education (discussed under separate section)
- Housing (discussed under separate section)
- Social Services Programs
- Family Services Programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Elders

Health and Human Services programs are available to all Native American clients residing within the service area – Samish membership is not required.

### Client Transit Needs

Many of the clients cannot easily travel to Anacortes. The Vocational Rehabilitation counselor also occasionally transports clients to cultural events. Gas cards and/or bus passes may be provided to Tribal clients by HHS to help offset the cost of transportation to various appointments. Gas cards are provided for funerals.

On-demand transportation requests are handled via a formal internal process. A vehicle calendar is maintained to prevent conflicts. Transportation may be provided for appointments related to medical and social services, counseling appointments, support groups, and food stamp renewal. The purpose of the trip must support program goals.

### Staff Transit Needs

One (1) HHS staff member rides the bus and from Mt. Vernon each day. There is a group that carpools from Bellingham. Two other staff members live in Anacortes and walk to work.

The counselor with the vocational rehab program has a four-door sedan, allowing her to drive divide her time between satellite locations across the five-county area. Health and Human Services recently purchased a Smart Car which staff use to travel back and forth between Tribal facilities. Employees can check out vehicles for work-related meetings or activities, if needed, or be reimbursed for use of their personal vehicle for work purposes.

### Future Needs

Many Health and Human Services programs are growing. The Tribe continues to seeking grants to fund expansion of services. This will inevitably impact the level of transit demand among the client population.

### IVB. Transit Survey and Community Meeting

Samish Tribal members living in and near Anacortes face many transportation challenges in trying to access basic Tribal services, employment opportunities, medical appointments, and recreational destinations. These challenges are felt disproportionately by community members with limited transportation alternatives, such as elders and low-income residents; ironically, the members with the greatest need have the fewest options.

#### Limited use of Fixed-Route Transit / Desire for Additional Demand-response Options

Currently, few Samish members use public transit on a regular basis. The transit survey revealed that 85% of respondents only “rarely” used public transit (Figure 28), and that 84% of respondents “always have access to a reliable vehicle” (Figure 29). The community meeting revealed that many Samish members are unaware of: 1) the full range of transit options available to them; 2) how to use the current system to efficiently reach destinations; and 3) how to apply / qualify for special transit programs (e.g. Paratransit, dial-a-ride, etc.). It was apparent from the transit survey and community meeting that there is a strong interest in demand-response transit options among Samish members; indeed, an on-demand service was much preferred over fixed-route improvements such as more bus routes or stops (Figure 30).

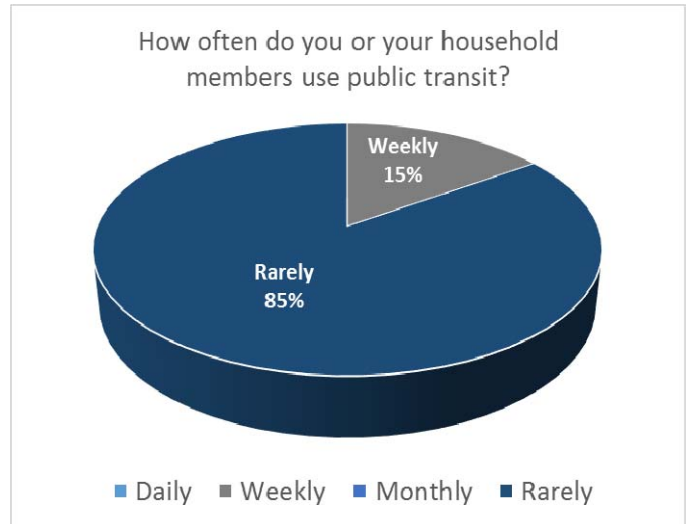


Figure 28: Frequency that Samish Members use Public

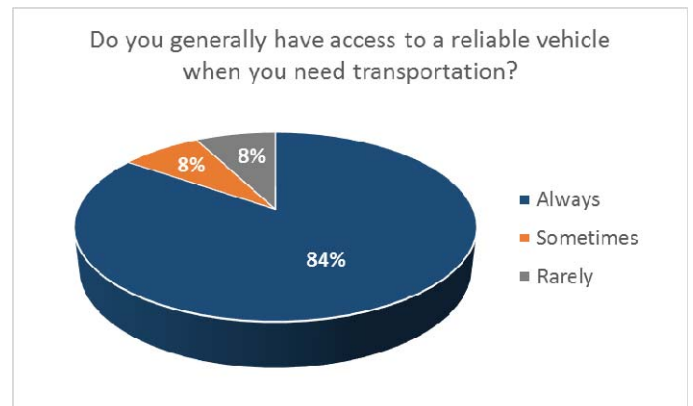


Figure 29: Access to a Reliable Vehicle

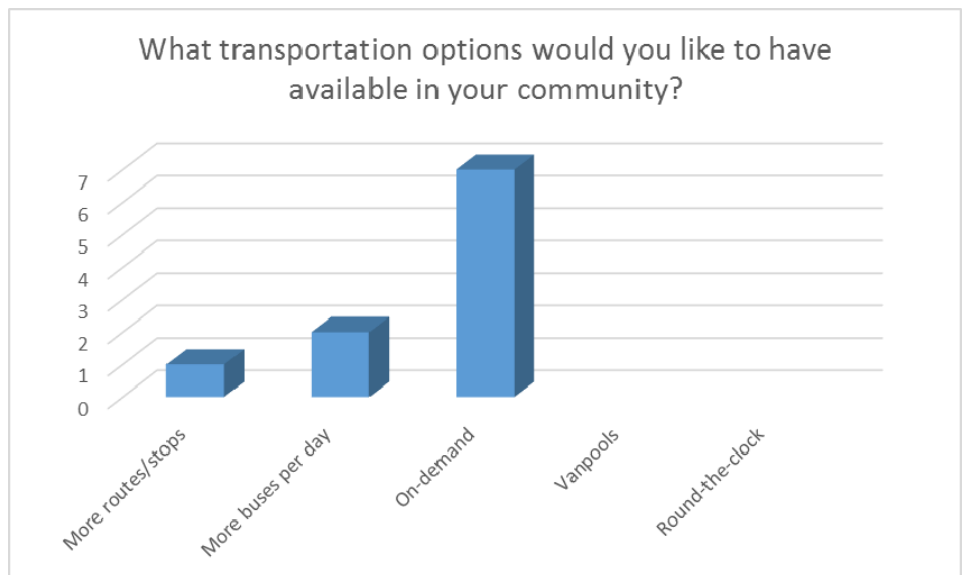
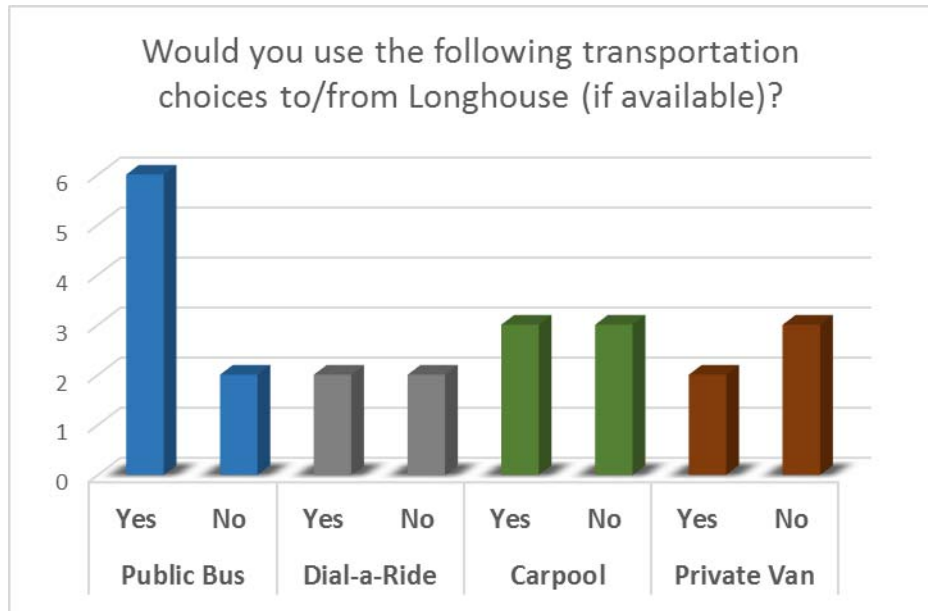


Figure 30: Desired Public Transportation Options

**Lack of Direct Transit Service to Longhouse**

The lack of a regular bus stop near the Longhouse is a significant issue for the Samish community. The Longhouse is the headquarters of three important Samish programs: 1) Samish Head Start; 2) the Early Learning Center (ELC); and, 3) the Elders program. A targeted survey of Head Start / ELC families revealed a high interest in



**Figure 31: Interest in Various Transit Alternatives to/from the Longhouse**

public bus service to the Longhouse – this was in contrast to the survey of the general membership which revealed a preference for demand-based transit options. Although the Longhouse is considered a deviated stop for SKAT, confusion over how to schedule a stop (particularly if less than 24-hours prior) has prevented Tribal members from using this option. Families, staff and Samish members that participate in Longhouse programs need to travel to and from the facility multiple times per week – requesting stops in advance of travel is inconvenient.

**Accessibility Challenges / Lack of Pedestrian Infrastructure**

Samish members and staff are concerned about the condition of sidewalks, crosswalks and bus shelters in Anacortes, particularly those near Tribal facilities. The sidewalks leading to the Longhouse are seriously cracked and overgrown, creating difficulties for those with physical disabilities (Figure 32). Approximately 18% of Head Start or ELC parents responding to the survey reported that they have a child with a physical condition that limits mobility. As the Longhouse is the venue for the Elders program, elders must transverse difficult terrain if walking even a short distance to the facility.



**Figure 32: Sidewalk Conditions near Longhouse**



**Lack of Transit to Tribal Events**

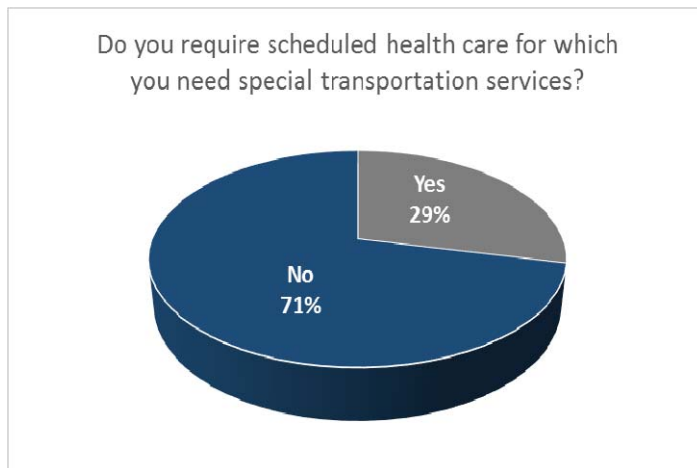
The Tribe hosts a wide variety of events, activities and educational sessions. Tribal members express that they have difficulty sometimes participating in these events due to lack of transportation. The Fidalgo Bay Community Room is a frequent venue for Tribal meetings and arts/crafts activities – however, SKAT bus service does not extend to this destination. Other activities are held in difficult-to-reach rural areas, such as activities at the Samish Community Garden and the annual Camp Samish program. The Elders bus purchased by the Tribe will continue to serve as a resource in transporting members to Tribal events. However, as the local Samish population in Anacortes grows, the demand for the Elders bus will likely exceed its availability.

**Lack of Transit Connections between Residential Areas and Downtown Anacortes**

Although the central business district of Anacortes is served by regular bus routes, there are few options connecting the interior residential areas to the bus lines. Additionally, as Samish members are fairly scattered throughout the city and surrounding rural areas, it would be difficult to extend fixed bus routes sufficiently to reach most members.

**Difficult and/or Limited Connections between Anacortes and Neighboring Cities**

Samish members expressed frustration with cumbersome connections and long wait times when using public transit to travel outside of Anacortes. The addition of SKAT’s commuter route 40X may help to alleviate some of these frustrations; however, the midday service gap makes it difficult to use this route for simple appointments.



**Figure 33: Need for Special Transportation to Health Care**

Medicare or Medicaid transit that nonetheless require transportation assistance for medical purposes. Approximately 29% of respondents to the community survey stated that they needed special transportation services for scheduled health care (Figure 33).

**Lack of Transit Options for Medical Appointments**

Samish members – particularly elders – expressed difficulties with finding transportation to medical appointments. Typically, the appointments presenting the greatest challenge are those located out-of-town, in areas like Mount Vernon, Bellingham or Seattle. Although Skagit Transit provides Paratransit, Samish members are sometimes confused over how to apply for these services. There are Samish members that may not meet the criteria for

### **Desire for Expanded Evening and Weekend Transit Service Hours**

Samish members expressed that extending the service hours of available transit routes to include additional evening and weekend hours would be beneficial.

### **Expanded Transit Options to Meet Tribe's Development Goals**

The Samish Tribe continues to actively plan for the gradual return of Samish members to Anacortes. The Tribe is working to provide housing for members, as well as develop Tribal enterprises that will create employment opportunities for returning Samish members. The proposed casino at the property along Highway 20 would have very unique transit needs, as patrons and shift workers would be accessing the site at all hours. The Samish community would like to see local transit options evolve and expand to meet the changing needs of the growing Tribe over the next decade.

**SECTION V: TRANSIT RECOMMENDATIONS**

At this time, the size and disbursement of the Anacortes-based Samish population is not sufficient to support a tribally-operated fixed or deviated-fixed route transit service. A phased, multi-pronged approach is proposed for addressing the transit deficiencies experienced by local Samish members. The initial approach will emphasize low-cost strategies for increasing use of existing transit resources through education and outreach, while working with regional transit providers. Steps will be taken to extend transit availability to all Samish facilities, particularly during community events. Within the next few years, the Tribe proposes to start a demand-response transit service that can provide door-to-door service within the Anacortes service area. The proposed approach is described in the following section.

**SHORT-TERM APPROACH (1-2 YEARS)**

**Increase awareness of existing transit options through education and outreach.**

One of the findings of the transit study was that many Samish members are not aware of the full range of transit service options and programs available to them via regional transit providers. Members are often confused about their eligibility for special transit programs, such as paratransit, dial-a-ride, or discounted fares. There were also misconceptions about bus routes and times, and the ability to request stops on deviated-fixed routes. Some Samish members expressed frustration with navigating inter-county connections.

It is important to ensure that Samish members have a comprehensive understanding of existing transit services in Anacortes through Skagit Transit and Island Transit. The Tribe should not endeavor to duplicate existing services, but to fill in the service gaps. Some of the transit deficiencies reported by Tribal members can actually be addressed through existing regional transit service providers. In some instances the “gap” is a communications gap rather than a service gap.

The limited understanding of existing transit options manifests itself in the following ways:

- Tribal members are unfamiliar with new routes (such as the new SKAT commuter route 40x)
- Tribal members are unaware that they may be eligible for special transit programs, such as paratransit, dial-a-ride, and reduced-fare programs. Even when Tribal members knew of such programs, there was often confusion over qualification requirements and the application process.
- Tribal members may be unaware that certain destinations that fall outside of an existing bus route may be requested as a deviated stop (e.g. the Guemes Ferry Terminal).
- Tribal members may lack the confidence to successfully navigate connecting routes to reach out-of-town destinations.
- Tribal members without Internet access may struggle to find printed rider’s guides, route maps and time schedules.

The Transit Study proposes to increase knowledge of existing transit options among Samish members in Anacortes by implementing the following approaches:

1. Work with Skagit Transit's Travel Trainer to provide targeted training sessions with various Samish groups (elders, parents, HHS clients, etc.), educating them on how to best utilize local transit options, navigating between various county-based systems, and qualifying for special programs / rates.
2. Train Samish program staff members to help clients apply for special transit programs through Skagit Transit and/or Island Transit. Samish HHS staff should develop a strong working familiarity with existing fixed, deviated-fixed, on-demand, and paratransit services in Anacortes. At least one staff member will be trained to assist Samish members with the paperwork and process required to apply for special transit programs.
3. Circulate printed transit rider's guides, bus schedules, and other materials at Tribal events.
4. Announce changes in Anacortes transit routes or services in Samish Tribal Newsletter.

**Work with Skagit Transit to extend existing bus routes to the Longhouse and Fidalgo Bay Resort.**

The Samish Longhouse and Fidalgo Bay Resort represent two major transit service gaps. The Longhouse is a daily destination for dozens of local residents; as such, a regular bus stop is needed near the facility. The Fidalgo Bay Resort does not attract enough people on a daily basis to warrant a regular bus stop. However, as the Resort's Community Room is a frequent venue for Tribal and other local events, it would be beneficial to add the Resort as a deviated stop. The Tribe plans to continue discussions with Skagit Transit on extending service to these locations.

**Ensure availability of medical transit to Tribal members in need of this service.**

Community feedback revealed that there is an unmet need for transportation to medical appointments, particularly to appointments in Mount Vernon. Part of this need may be met through existing Paratransit services offered by Skagit Transit. The Tribe will work with the SKAT Travel Trainer to ensure that all eligible (and interested) Samish members apply for Paratransit services through Skagit Transit. In addition, the Tribe will consider acquiring an accessible van with a wheelchair lift for HHS staff to use for local medical transportation, as well as to out-of-town destinations such as Mount Vernon, Bellingham or Seattle.

**Make Transit more affordable for Tribal members.**

Some Samish members feel that local transit options are cost prohibitive. Samish elders, students, and/or low income members may not realize that they are likely eligible for reduced fares with regional transit providers. This issue will be addressed through education and working with the SKAT transit trainer to ensure that all eligible Samish members are enrolled in programs for which they qualify. For Samish members that exceed SKAT's income limits for reduced fares (and yet still experience the cost of transit as a financial burden), a Tribal subsidy can make transit affordable for all members. The Tribe can develop an eligibility criteria that encompasses a wider income range, and then purchase and distribute bus passes to eligible Tribal applicants.

**Reintroduce afternoon transit for Head Start program.**

Transit questionnaires revealed that Head Start parents would like to see a reintroduction of afternoon bus service for enrolled students. The Tribe currently has an adequate number of buses to provide both morning and afternoon service. A lack of qualified bus drivers has limited the program's ability to provide wraparound bus service. In order to add afternoon service, one or more additional drivers with a commercial driver's license (CDL) are needed.

**Position the Samish Tribe as an active stakeholder in regional transit planning activities.**

The Samish Tribe has not historically be involved in regional transit planning discussions. It is important for the Tribe to become an active stakeholder in in this area by participating in transit-related committees, boards, and advisory groups. It is recommended that a Samish staff person or Tribal representative begin cultivating relationships with the following groups by attending meetings and volunteering for committee work:

- Skagit Council of Governments
- City of Anacortes, Community Advocacy Committee
- Skagit Transit
- Island Transit

**Provide scheduled transit to Tribal events.**

One of the most significant transit challenges faced by Samish members is the lack of transportation to Tribally-sponsored events, activities or gatherings. Tribal events are typically held at the Tribal Administration building or the in the Community Room at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. However, some events require travel beyond the Anacortes area, such as Camp Samish or community garden activities. Depending on the demand, the event-specific transit might be door-to-door in some cases; however, even providing a shuttle between the Tribal Administration building (which is accessible via SCAT) and the Fidalgo Bay Resort during community events would be beneficial. The Elders Bus may be used for this purpose initially; however, it is likely that a second vehicle will be needed in the future.

**Provide information and resources to increase transit use among Guemes Island residents.**

A number of Samish members live on Guemes Island, and must reach Anacortes via a five-minute ferry. Several members expressed the need for improved transit services connecting Guemes Island and Anacortes. The Guemes Island Ferry Terminal may be accessed via SKAT Route 410 as a deviated (request-based) stop only. Some Samish members may not be aware that they can request a stop at the Guemes Island Ferry Terminal, or are unsure of how to schedule a pick-up. The Tribe will work with Skagit Transit to educate Guemes Island residents about their transit options. Another issue is the lack of a regular bus service on Guemes Island. During the recent dry-docking of the Guemes Ferry, Skagit Transit provided local shuttle service from the Island ferry terminal to various destinations. However, this was a temporary service that was to be discontinued after the regular ferry was again operational. Samish members residing on Guemes Island would benefit if this service was to be added permanently.

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### **MID-TERM APPROACH (3-4 YEARS):**

#### **Develop a tribally-operated demand-response transit service.**

Due to the relatively small size and scattered distribution of the Samish population within Anacortes, a demand-response transit service is presently more feasible than a fixed or fixed-deviated route service. Demand-response transit can prove to be an effective service in low-density, low-demand service areas. This type of service would require (at minimum) one (1) dispatcher and one (1) driver. A van or small cutaway bus is often used for this type of service. Advanced reservations would typically be required to use this service; however, drivers may be able to accommodate last-minute requests depending upon how busy they are at a given time. The system would start small, but expand according to local demand.

#### **Expand use of transit to neighboring cities through education and availability of demand-based options.**

Samish members expressed frustration with the cumbersome connections and time gaps between stops when attempting to use transit to reach cities outside of Anacortes. Skagit Transit's new commuter route 40X addresses some of these issues, with its streamlined service and minimal stops; however, there remains a midday service gap for this route, making it less effective for those wishing to travel outside of normal commuting hours. In addition to educating Samish members about the 40X route via SKAT's travel trainer (discussed previously), the Tribe will contribute to discussions with Skagit Transit regarding the future expansion of midday service for this route. The proposed tribally-operated demand-response transit service, as well as the additional medical transit options implemented as part of the short-term strategies, will further address this perceived service gap.

#### **Expand the transit capabilities of certain Tribal programs.**

Certain transit gaps can most effectively be met through existing Tribal programs, such as Health and Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation and Education. As these programs grow over time, additional vehicles will be needed to support clientele. Additionally, some HHS programs have an eligibility pool that extends beyond Samish members to include all Native Americans within a 10-county area. The distinct transit needs and unique service areas of these groups can best be met by expanding the transit capabilities of certain programs. This will eventually require the acquisition (through lease or purchase) of additional passenger vehicles, SUVs or vans.

### **LONG-TERM APPROACH (5+ YEARS):**

#### **Work with City of Anacortes to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility near Tribal facilities.**

Insufficient bus shelters, deteriorating sidewalks, and a lack of crosswalks can discourage the use of transit due to difficulties traveling between stops and destinations. Bus stops near Tribal facilities lack adequate pedestrian facilities and are not ADA-accessible for persons with physical disabilities. The Tribe can potentially serve as a funding partner to the City of Anacortes and/or Skagit Transit in financing the construction of bus shelters near Tribal facilities. Sidewalk improvements, intersection striping and

signage additions could potentially be funded through the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) if the routes are included in the Tribe's official road inventory.

**Ensure that transit considerations are included in ongoing planning efforts for the Highway 20 property.**

The future development of the property along Highway 20 will have significant transit implications to the Samish Tribe and the City of Anacortes. Transit should be an ongoing consideration when planning for the eventual use and development of this project. If the Tribe is successful in constructing a casino at this location, transit availability should be considered for both patrons and employees. A casino shuttle could provide round-the-clock transit to accommodate the extended operating hours of the casino. It is important to note that a shuttle operated for commercial purposes would not be eligible for federal funding programs – this would need to be a tribally-funded endeavor.

**Reevaluate transit needs in five (5) years to determine whether the growth of the local Samish population and introduction of Tribal enterprises warrant new transit service options.**

Currently, a fixed-route or deviated fixed-route transit service is not feasible due to the low concentration and uneven disbursement of Samish members in Anacortes. However, the Samish Tribe is at a pivotal point in its growth and development. As the Tribe moves forward with land acquisition plans, development projects, and residential construction, transit scenarios will likely change for Tribal members. It is recommended that the Samish Tribe reassess their transit needs in five years to determine whether a tribally-operated fixed route or deviated fixed route service should be initiated.

**SECTION VI: IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE TRANSIT ACCESS AND OPTIONS**

The transit challenges and deficiencies outlined in the previous section will be addressed through the implementation of targeted strategies designed to produce measurable outcomes. The matrix below summarizes: 1) A specific transit challenge or deficiency documented in the study; 2) The documentation source (e.g. public meeting, staff observations, etc.); 3) The strategy or strategies that will be implemented to address the challenge or deficiency; 4) The goals to be accomplished; 5) The performance measure(s) that will be used to assess whether the strategies employed were effective; and, 6) The timeline for implementation of the strategies.

#	Transit Challenge	Information Source	Strategy	Goal(s)	Performance Measure(s)	Timeline: Short (0-2 Yrs) Mid (3-4 Yrs) Long (5+ Yrs)
1	Tribal members are often not aware of existing transit options, or are confused about how to qualify for special programs such as Paratransit and/or Dial-a-Ride.	Community Meeting	1) Organize several sessions with Skagit Transit's Travel Trainer to meet with Samish elders, staff, and local community members. 2) Develop transit brochure specifically designed for Tribal members.	Increase awareness and use of existing transit options and programs among Samish members.	1) Number of Samish members reporting transit use (compare to 2014 survey); 2) Number of local Samish members enrolled in Paratransit and/or Dial-a-Ride services; 3) HHS staff observations.	Short
2	Tribal members struggle to find reliable transportation to medical appointments.	Community Meeting; Staff Interviews	1) Work with Skagit Transit Travel Trainer to enroll all eligible Samish members in Paratransit program; 2) Educate HHS staff, elders, and Samish community members on accessing Paratransit services; 3) Fund HHS vehicle and driver for medical transport of Tribal members.	Ensure that medical transit is available to Anacortes-based Samish members.	HHS staff will report that all local Samish members are eligible for one or more transit options for medical purposes.	Short
3	The cost of transit is an obstacle for some Samish members.	Community Meeting; Questionnaire Comments; Staff Interviews	1) Work with Skagit Transit Travel Trainer to enroll all eligible Samish members in reduced fare program (65+, Medicare, or persons with disabilities; students). 2) Develop need-based tribal subsidy program to provide reduced-price (or free) transit passes for qualifying Samish members.	Reduced SKAT fares for most Samish members.	80% of local Samish members eligible to receive reduced-fare SKAT passes (by qualifying through SKAT, or via Tribal subsidy).	Short



#	Transit Challenge	Information Source	Strategy	Goal(s)	Performance Measure(s)	Timeline: Short (0-2 Yrs) Mid (3-4 Yrs) Long (5+ Yrs)
4	The Samish Longhouse is not presently on a transit route. The Longhouse is a popular daily destination for local residents, as it houses the Head Start, Early Learning Center, and Elders programs.	Kick-off Meeting; Community Meeting; Staff Interviews; Questionnaire Results	Work with Skagit Transit to extend Route 410 to Longhouse.	Provide feasible transit options for those who travel to Longhouse on a regular basis.	Addition of regular bus stop at Longhouse (SKAT Route 410 or other fixed-route).	Short
5	Fidalgo Bay Resort is not currently served by a transit route. The Tribe frequently holds meetings and events in the Resort's community room. Lack of transit provides an obstacle for some Tribal members wishing to attend.	Community Meeting; Staff Interviews	1) Tribally-operated transportation from Tribal Administration Building to Fidalgo Bay for all community events (using Elders Bus or other vehicle). 2) Work with Skagit Transit to add Fidalgo Bay as a deviated stop along Route 410.	1) Provide transit to support attendance at Tribal events; 2) Provide access to Resort via SKAT Route 410 (as a deviated stop).	1) Ability to offer event-based transit using Elders Bus (or other vehicle); 2) Addition of Fidalgo Bay Resort as (deviated) bus stop	Short
6	The Samish Tribe has not historically been included in regional transit planning efforts. The Tribe needs to become an active player in transit matters, to ensure that the Samish Tribe's interests are represented.	Kick-off meeting; Community Meeting	1) Schedule annual meetings (at minimum) with Skagit Transit, Island Transit, the City of Anacortes, and the Skagit COG to discuss changing transit needs. 2) Assign Samish staff member to participate in Skagit Island Special Needs Transportation Committee.	Position the Samish Tribe as an active stakeholder in ongoing regional transit planning and decision-making efforts.	1) Samish representation on regional transit committees. 2) Frequency of communication with regional transit providers.	Short
7	Head Start families desire afternoon transit for enrolled children (in addition to morning transit).	Questionnaire Comments; Staff Interviews	1) Provide time and training funds to ensure minimum of three (3) Samish staff members have CDL license. 2) Provide adequate staffing for afternoon Head Start bus route.	Morning and afternoon bus service for Head Start students.	Reintroduction of afternoon bus transit for Head Start students.	Short
8	The Tribe needs additional drivers with CDL licenses.	Kick-off meeting; Staff Interviews	Ensure that there is an adequate number of Samish staff members with CDL licenses by supporting staff training, licensing and continuing education.	Minimum of three (3) Samish staff members with CDL licenses	Number of Samish staff with CDL licenses	Short

# TRIBAL TRANSIT PLANNING STUDY

## SAMISH INDIAN TRIBE

#	Transit Challenge	Information Source	Strategy	Goal(s)	Performance Measure(s)	Timeline: Short (0-2 Yrs) Mid (3-4 Yrs) Long (5+ Yrs)
9	Expanded transit options are needed for Guemes Island residents.	Community Meeting; Questionnaire Comments	1) Educate local Samish members about ability to request stop at Guemes Ferry via SKAT Route 410. 2) Work with Skagit Transit to discuss possibility of continuing temporary bus route on Guemes Island.	Increase availability and use of transit among Guemes Island residents.	Improved transit connections for Samish members living on Guemes Island.	Short
10	Transit options are needed to transport Tribal members to cultural events.	Community Meeting	1) Tribally-operated transportation from Tribal Administration Building to Fidalgo Bay for all community events (using Elders Bus or other vehicle). 2) On-demand tribal transit program.	Improved transit options for entertainment and recreational activities.	Presence of tribally-operated on-demand and event-based transit.	Short - Mid
11	Expanded evening and/or weekend transit options are needed.	Community Meeting; Staff Interviews; Questionnaire Results	1) Special transit for Tribal events. 2) Develop Tribal on-demand transit.	Improved transit options for entertainment and recreational activities.	Presence of tribally-operated on-demand and event-based transit.	Short - Mid
12	Additional transit options connecting Anacortes to neighboring cities are needed -- without complicated transfers and long waits between connections.	Community Meeting; Questionnaire Comments	1) Educate local Samish members about SKAT's new commuter route 40x to Mt. Vernon (work with Travel Trainer); 2) Work with Skagit Transit to increase 40x midday service.	Increase feasibility of using transit to travel between Anacortes and other area cities.	1) Reduced average travel time between Anacortes and Mt. Vernon, Bellingham, and Seattle. 2) Expanded midday schedule for 40x.	Short - Mid
13	Carpool / vanpool options are needed.	Community Meeting; Staff Interviews; Kick-off Meeting	1) Educate Samish members about vanpool options via Skagit Transit; 2) if Tribe moves forward with casino plans, develop tribal carpool/vanpool or employee shuttle system to accommodate workers.	Increased use of vanpools/carpools by Samish members and staff.	Presence of multiple carpools among Samish staff and/or members (there is presently only one staff carpool).	Short / Long
14	Tribal members living in Anacortes are not concentrated in one area, but widely dispersed. This makes fixed-route transit difficult.	Community Meeting; Staff Interviews; Kick-off Meeting	Develop tribal on-demand transit program.	On-demand transit program operated by Samish Tribe.	Presence of tribally-operated on-demand transit service.	Mid

# TRIBAL TRANSIT PLANNING STUDY

## SAMISH INDIAN TRIBE

#	Transit Challenge	Information Source	Strategy	Goal(s)	Performance Measure(s)	Timeline: Short (0-2 Yrs) Mid (3-4 Yrs) Long (5+ Yrs)
15	Certain Tribal departments would benefit from the use of additional vehicles.	Kick-off meeting; Staff Interviews	1) Provide eight-passenger van with cargo space for Education Department; 2) Provide SUV for HHS Department; 3) Provide ADA-accessible van for transportation to medical appointments.	Increase the number of vehicles available to Tribal departments.	Size of vehicle inventory	Mid
16	Need to connect residential and rural areas to downtown Anacortes.	Community Meeting; Staff Interviews; Kick-off Meeting	1) Develop tribal on-demand transit program. 2) Contribute to City of Anacortes planning process (this is a goal of their Comprehensive Plan).	Improved transit options serving residential areas of Anacortes.	1) Extension of SKAT routes to cover additional residential streets in Anacortes; 2) Presence of tribally-operated on-demand transit service.	Mid
17	Tribe plans to develop Highway 20 property for commercial use (possibly a casino). This will greatly increase transit demands in this area.	Kick-off Meeting; Community Meeting; Staff Interviews	1) Once development plans are finalized, begin discussions with Skagit Transit regarding changing transit needs; 2) If Tribe moves forward with casino plans, develop tribal carpool/vanpool or employee shuttle system to accommodate workers.	Ensure that transit planning is a component of the development of the Highway 20 property.	Inclusion of transit in Master Plan for Highway 20 project.	Long
18	ADA-accessible accessible bus stops, bus shelters and sidewalks are needed, particularly around Tribal facilities.	Staff Interviews	1) Work with City of Anacortes to conduct sidewalk improvements and upgrade bus stops to meet minimum ADA accessibility requirements (for areas near Tribal facilities). 2) Work with City of Anacortes to add a crosswalk and school crossing signage near the Longhouse.	Improved sidewalk conditions and accessible pedestrian infrastructure near Tribal facilities.	Sidewalk conditions near Longhouse, HHS, and Tribal Admin buildings; Number of accessible bus stops; presence of crosswalk near Longhouse.	Long

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**SECTION VII: POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR TRANSIT SERVICE START-UP AND OPERATIONS**

The Samish Tribe should pursue a variety of funding options when planning to expand transit options in and near Anacortes. Relying too heavily on a single operational grant can leave the program vulnerable to changes in funding availability. The following section describes prospective funding sources for tribal transit operations.

**Tribal Funds**

Tribes may choose to fund all or part of their transit services or programs. Matching funds are often required for federal grants. Tribal funds include money from the general fund or tribal enterprises that are allocated to transit operations. Tribal funds often supplement funding from grants or agency partnerships, with the amount varying from year to year.

**Agency Partnerships**

Many Tribes successfully establish partnerships with local transit providers when developing and/or expanding transit services to tribal lands. These partnerships have many potential benefits, including lower upfront capital costs for shelters and vehicles, as well as access to vehicle maintenance facilities. The Tribe should consider the costs/limitations associated with a partnership arrangement vs. organizing an independent Tribal transit operation. This is a complex question that would involve consideration by Tribal staff members and direction from Tribal Council. Policy issues would also need to be reconciled between entities. If the Samish Tribe does elect to pursue a partnership with one or more regional transit providers, it is recommended that discussions begin as soon as possible to allow for potentially lengthy negotiations. For the purposes of this study, initial discussions were held with regional transit providers to explore possible partnership and coordination of service options. Other possible partnering agencies may include health care facilities, municipalities, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or other entities with a mutual interest in expanding local transit offerings.

**Fares**

The Tribe can elect to charge a fare for transit services; however, this would likely be infeasible based on the small scale of the services provided. The Tribe should carefully evaluate the pros and cons of a fare-based system. Having a fare system would require the Tribe to establish fares, install secure fare boxes, create procedures around accepting and removing fares from vehicles, and hire staff to count and record collected fares on a daily basis. Research shows that the cost of maintaining a fare system often exceeds fare revenue collected for smaller transit service providers. Requiring a fare may also discourage Samish members from using the provided transit services.

**Gas Tax Revenue**

If the Samish Tribe opens a gas station in the future, the state gas tax refunds may be used to develop or expand transit services. In 2007, the State of Washington's gas tax law was changed to allow federally-recognized tribes with gas stations on tribal lands to share gas tax revenue with the State. Under the 75% refund / 25% state tax agreement, tribes agree to purchase fuel for sale at tribally owned retail

stations with the state fuel tax included, as the state tax is imposed on the supplier. Tribes report their purchases to the DOL and receive 75 percent of the state motor vehicle fuel tax revenue collected as a refund and the State retains 25 percent as state tax. The Tribe must spend fuel tax proceeds on transportation projects, including: planning, construction, and maintenance of roads, bridges, and boat ramps; transit services and facilities; transportation planning; police services; and other highway-related purposes.<sup>10</sup>

### **Advertising Income**

The Tribe could elect to promote its services or that of others by selling and displaying advertising on the interior and/or exterior of the transit vehicles. Local businesses in the Anacortes area may be interested in the unique opportunity to advertise directly to potential Tribal clients.

### **Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) Funding**

The Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) replaced the former Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) program, providing funding for transportation planning, research, maintenance, engineering, rehabilitation, restoration, construction, and reconstruction of tribal transportation facilities. Program funds may also be used for operation and maintenance of transit programs and facilities that are located on, or provide access to, tribal land, or are administered by a tribal government.

### **Grant Funding**

The Samish Tribe may wish to consider pursuing federal and other grant opportunities to finance the start-up and/or operational costs for tribal transit services. There are many sources of Federal and state funds that may help support tribal transit programs. A very comprehensive list of potential funding sources appears in Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 154: *Developing, Enhancing, and Sustaining Tribal Transit Services: A Guidebook*, Appendix C.<sup>11</sup> The most applicable funding programs to the Tribe are described below:

#### Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) – Public Transportation Grants<sup>12</sup>

WSDOT's public transportation grants help provide access, mobility and independence to Washington residents. Made possible by state and federal funds, these grants provide transit services within and between cities, purchase new buses and other equipment, provide public transportation service for the elderly and people with disabilities, and improve public transportation in and between rural communities. The application deadline for the 2015-2017 competitive grant cycle is November 19, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Washington State Department of Licensing, 2010 Tribal Fuel Tax Agreement Report <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/97C37EB3-7DBC-4992-B790-CBAC914D7DDF/0/Apr192011Updated2010FuelTaxAgreementReport.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> TCRP Report 154 may be downloaded for free at: [http://www.tcrponline.org/PDFDocuments/TCRP\\_RPT\\_154.pdf](http://www.tcrponline.org/PDFDocuments/TCRP_RPT_154.pdf). See Appendix C for section on transit funding resources.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Transit/Grants/#recipients>

The Skagit Council of Governments organizes an advisory committee to help prioritize regional transit projects for submittal under the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program. Additional information may be found at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Transit/Grants>.

### Public Transportation on Indian Reservations / Tribal Transit Program

This grant program falls under the Rural Area Formula Grants (5311). Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Program (Tribal Transit Program) provides \$30 million annually to federally recognized tribes for the purpose of supporting tribal public transportation in rural areas. Of that \$30 million, \$25 million is distributed under a formula program whereas the remaining \$5 million is distributed under a discretionary program. Formula factors include vehicle revenue miles and the number of low income residents on Tribal lands. The Tribal Transit Program provides grants to tribes for the development, operation, maintenance and/or expansion of public transportation systems serving non-urbanized tribal communities. Examples of eligible activities include: planning studies, capital projects; operating costs of equipment and facilities for use in public transportation; and the acquisition of public transportation services, including service agreements with private providers of public transportation services. A 20-percent match is required for capital projects.

### FTA Bus and Bus Facilities Program Ladders of Opportunity Initiative

This is a new grant program (2014) that funds the modernization and expansion of transit bus service specifically for the purpose of connecting disadvantaged and low-income individuals, veterans, seniors, youths, and others with local workforce training, employment centers, health care, and other vital services. Program funds may be used to purchase, replace, or rehabilitate transit buses and vans, as well as to modernize or construct bus facilities. A 20% match is required.

### Bus and Bus Facilities Program (5339)

This program funds the purchase, replacement and rehabilitation of buses, related equipment, and bus-based facilities. The program provided \$422 million in 2013 and \$428 million in 2014; a portion of the funds were distributed by state (\$1.25 million to each state), with remaining funds distributed by formula. The grant requires a 20-percent match. In May of 2014, the Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT) awarded \$5.2 million to 18 public transportation providers in Washington under this program, including \$191,502 to Skagit Transit and \$677,570 to Island Transit.<sup>13</sup>

### Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (5310)

This grant provides federal funds to assist private, non-profit organizations and Tribes with purchasing vans or other vehicles for transporting the elderly and / or persons with disabilities. The program provides 80% of vehicle purchasing costs. The final circular for the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Grant will be effective on July 7, 2014.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> WDOT (2014), *\$5.2M in federal grant funds awarded to improve transit services across state*. WDOT Website: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/News/2014/05/MAP-21Grants.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Federal Register, Vol. 79, No. 109, June 6, 2014, page 32807-32811.

### EPA Diesel Emission Reduction Program

The Environmental Protection Agency offers this grant funding opportunity to tribal applicants for the purpose of reducing emissions from diesel engines. Projects may include school buses, transit buses, heavy-duty diesel trucks, marine engines, locomotives, energy production generators, and other diesel engines. In 2014, this program provided \$1 million in funding, distributed between multiple tribal award recipients. Previous to 2014, the DERA program has awarded 11 Tribal grants totaling approximately \$3 million. Additional information may be found at [www.epa.gov/cleandiesel/prgtribal.htm](http://www.epa.gov/cleandiesel/prgtribal.htm) or [www.epa.gov/cleandiesel](http://www.epa.gov/cleandiesel). Most recent proposal due date for this program was August 12, 2014.

### Technical Assistance and Standards Development (5314)

This grant provides technical assistance for developing voluntary and consensus-based standards and best practices by public transportation industry experts. A 20-percent non-federal share is required.

### USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) Program

The USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program offers a \$500,000 grant for rural transportation projects and a \$250,000 grant for federally recognized Native American tribes. Funds may be used to provide technical assistance and training to help rural communities improve passenger transportation services or facilities. The latest Federal Register notice regarding this opportunity may be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-05-02/pdf/2014-10084.pdf>. Most recent proposal due date for this program was July 1, 2014.

### National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) Funding Programs

The National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) program has previously funded three rounds of senior transportation grant programs: Senior Demonstration Grant Projects (2008-2009), Breaking New Ground Grant Projects (2011), and Person-Centered Mobility Management Grant Projects (2012-2013). NCST hopes to continue to support innovation in senior mobility/transportation through issuing RFPs for grant funding. The organization has an E-News service that alerts recipients to new funding opportunities. Additional information is available at <http://www.seniortransportation.net>.

### USDA Rural Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Program<sup>15</sup>

Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Rural Passenger Transportation Technical Assistance Program is designed to assist rural communities enhance economic growth and development by improving community transportation services. The program provides planning assistance for facility development, transit service improvements and expansion, new system start-up, policy and procedure development, marketing, transportation coordination, training and public transit problem solving activities.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/anmviewer.asp?a=258>

### Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) for Native Americans<sup>16</sup>

Provided by the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), the Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) grant program promotes social and economic self-sufficiency in Native American communities. SEDS grants fund social and economic development projects for tribal communities and provide federal support for self-determination and self-governance among Native American people. Special Initiatives under SEDS include the Native Asset Building Initiative (NABI) and Sustainable Employment and Economic Development Strategies (SEEDS). The most recent application deadline was April 15, 2014.

### Federal Lands Access Program

The Federal Lands Access Program was established in 23 U.S.C. 204 to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within federal lands. The Access Program supplements state and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators. The program requires 13.5% matching funds. The most recent proposal deadline for Washington applicants was July 18, 2014. Information may be found at <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/> or <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flap/wa/documents/2014-WA-FLAP-RFP-Letter.pdf>.

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<sup>16</sup> Text excerpted from ANA website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ana/grants/funding-opportunities>



# Appendix A

# SAMISH INDIAN TRIBE

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## TRANSIT PLAN-MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** June 17, 2014

**Location:** Videoconference

**Participants:** Carolyn St. James, Leslie Eastwood, Edie Hill, and Elisa Warner

**Purpose:** Transit Plan Kick-off Meeting

The Samish Tribe received a \$25,000 grant from the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) in 2011 to conduct a Tribal Transit Planning Study. The purpose of the Tribal Transit Study is to: 1) identify community-wide transit goals based on a clear understanding of the Tribe's transit needs, deficiencies, resources and opportunities; and, 2) provide recommendations for improving transit availability through tribally operated transit services or partnerships with regional transit providers.

### **Samish Tribal Transit Study Scope of Work**

Elisa provided an overview of the scope of work for the transit study. The project will be divided into three (3) phases, spanning a six-month timeframe. The study is expected to be completed by December 2, 2014. This deadline will allow sufficient time for the plan to be brought before Tribal Council for approval before the end of the calendar year.

### **Stakeholder Input**

Community and stakeholder feedback is an important part of the Tribal Transit Plan. This input will be obtained via the following strategies:

#### **1. Transit Questionnaires**

- A transit questionnaire was sent to Tribal members living in the Anacortes area in May 2014, as part of the larger survey for the comprehensive plan. Nine (9) surveys have been returned to date.
- A couple of themes noted on the questionnaires received so far include: 1) a desire for on-demand transit options; and 2) improved options for out-of-town transit.
- Additional questionnaires may be distributed and collected during the upcoming Samish Cultural Day and Business Meeting, June 28-29<sup>th</sup>.
- The group discussed the option of distributing additional surveys to Tribal members that are clients of Health and Human Services (HHS). Carolyn will provide a slightly modified version of the questionnaire for distribution to HHS clients. Edie will coordinate making the surveys available to clients as they come into the office for appointments. Typically, Michelle Johnson would handle this as the primary Family Services contact; however, she will be on leave until the end of July. Sally Barrett, a Social Service Specialist, may be able to assist with distributing and collecting the surveys during Michelle's absence.
- The group discussed also developing a different questionnaire for families with children enrolled in Head Start and/or the Early Learning Center (ELC) at the Longhouse. The Tribe provides the only Head Start program in Anacortes. Participating families are not necessarily Tribal members – many

are non-tribal families living in the Anacortes area. The Longhouse is not currently on a Skagit Transit run. Head Start provides bus transportation in the afternoon only – parents are responsible for transporting their children each morning. Bus service is not available to students in the ELC program. Carolyn and Elisa will develop a unique questionnaire for Head Start and ELC families. The Head Start program will close for the summer shortly; it is important to distribute the survey as soon as possible.

2. Phone Interviews of Key Samish Staff Members / Tribal Representatives

Elisa will conduct phone-based interviews with key Samish staff members. Carolyn provided Elisa with a list of contacts for the interviews. Elisa will prepare a written account of each interview, and distribute to the project team.

3. Tribal Council Presentation

Carolyn can present the transit study to Tribal Council over the summer, with Elisa participating via video. Tribal Council will meet on July 25<sup>th</sup> and August 22<sup>nd</sup> – the group should plan on presenting at one of these upcoming sessions. Carolyn and Elisa must inform Leslie of their intent to present a couple weeks prior to the meeting. Tribal Council meetings typically run from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The transit presentation will take approximately 30 minutes, with most of the time reserved for discussion and feedback. One (1) of the Tribal Council members lives in Anacortes.

4. Site Visit to Anacortes

The project scope includes one (1) site visit to Anacortes by WHPacific for the purpose of obtaining stakeholder input. A community presentation may be held at this time; alternatively, one or more focus group sessions may be organized. A presentation at the Elders Center should be considered. The Elders Center hosts a program each Wednesday with a morning craft, followed by lunch from 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

5. Regional Transit Providers

Elisa will make contact with Skagit Transit and Island Transit to collect ridership data for Anacortes routes. Elisa and Carolyn will try to schedule a meeting with each provider while Elisa is in Anacortes. If this is not possible, discussions may be conducted via conference call. The purpose of the meeting or call will be to explore partnership opportunities between the Tribe and each transit provider.

**Area Transit Providers / Partners**

Skagit Transit provides three (3) Anacortes routes, and a county connector service with Island Transit Route 411W:

- Route 49 – Anacortes / 10<sup>th</sup> St. and Q Ave. / Island Hospital
- Route 410 – WA State Ferry / March's Point
- Route 513 – March's Point and Chuckanut

*County Connector Service (via Skagit Transit)*

- Island Transit Route 411W
  - o Whidbey Island

# SAMISH INDIAN TRIBE

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## TRANSIT PLAN-MEETING MINUTES

- March's Point
- Skagit Station

WSDOT provides ferry service to the following islands from the Anacortes ferry terminal located at the west end of Oakes Avenue/12<sup>th</sup> Street/SR-20:

- Lopez Island
- San Juan Island (Friday Harbor)
- Orcas Island
- Shaw Island

### Samish Department-based Transit Options

The Tribe's current vehicle inventory includes:

- Two (2) Head Start buses
- One (1) bus for the Elders Program
- One (1) caravan
- One (1) older Dodge van (will be retired soon for repair and maintenance)
- One (1) Honda Element (used mostly for food deliveries)
- One (1) four-door sedan operated by Family Services
- Several pickup trucks operated by Natural Resources Department
- Three (3) GSA vehicles
  - Ford Taurus owned and used by Vocational Rehabilitation program
  - Impala leased via GSA by Family Services
  - Ford Escort leased via GSA for use by all programs
- One (1) sedan operated by Vocational Rehabilitation program
- A Smart Car recently purchased and operated by Health and Human Services

In addition to the vehicles listed above, a proposal has been submitted to Tribal Council to purchase a four-wheel drive Suburban vehicle with a trailer hitch. Carolyn will provide a copy of the Tribe's official inventory to Elisa, to ensure that all vehicles are accurately noted for the plan.

Several department-based transit issues were discussed, including:

- Use of the elders' bus has been delayed pending wheelchair lift training. A training is scheduled on June 30, 2014.
- The Veterans Program does not have a vehicle; however, veteran members are geographically scattered. The program has previously requested acquisition of a Suburban or similar SUV, capable to transporting 7-8 people.
- The Samish Tribe hosts a variety of youth events requiring transportation, including an annual Youth Conference and Camp Samish. Transportation is also needed for the annual Tribal Canoe Journey.
- HHS programs provide Skagit Transit passes and/or fuel cards to enrolled participants.
- On-demand, local transit is provided to Title VI elders. On occasion, the Tribe may transport elders beyond Anacortes (on a case-by-case basis). For example, the Tribe recently transported an elder member to Seattle for a medical appointment.

# SAMISH INDIAN TRIBE

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## TRANSIT PLAN-MEETING MINUTES

### Discussion

- Low income Tribal members are most affected by the lack of local transit options. Unfortunately, they are also the members that will be most difficult to speak with. It may be challenging for these families attend a community meeting due to lack of transportation. Phone interviews are also difficult, as some families cut costs by eliminating their home phone and using only a cell phone with pre-paid minutes. It might be beneficial to offer local transportation to the community meeting for those who need it. The Tribe can also encourage participation by providing a meal and child care during the event.
- The Tribe would like to eventually open a gas station; gas tax revenue may be used to fund transit services.
- The Upper-Skagit Tribe used to own several passenger vans that they in turn leased to Skagit Transit, with the condition that the Tribe could use the vehicles when needed. Skagit Transit stored and maintained the vehicles, keeping them in good operational condition. This is an interesting model for consideration.
- The Tribe has applied to place several plots of land in trust status. If the land is developed in the future (as planned), this will create new transit demands. New Tribal enterprises may require round-the-clock employees, particularly if the Tribe opens a casino. Additional routes and expanded hours will likely be needed. Two to three shifts will likely be required at the casino. It is expensive to live in Anacortes – it is likely that many employees will commute to Anacortes from outside the city.
- Currently, Samish staff members have successfully organized one (1) carpool with five (5) participants. Although they previously opted for a formal vanpool, they discontinued the program when the rates increased.
- At least one (1) Samish staff member takes the bus each day to work.
- There is a need for improved transit options from Anacortes to Bellingham. Many commute between these areas for work purposes.
- Some Samish members have trouble finding transportation to medical appointments outside of Anacortes. For example, there is not a pediatric dentist in Anacortes.
- Carolyn described how the Stillaguamish Tribe recently purchased a fleet of Priuses to provide on-demand vehicles to be checked-out as needed. Elisa will contact Stillaguamish to inquire about this. It would be helpful to know how this has been working for the Tribe.
- Guemes Island is an important destination – many Samish members and Tribal employees live on this island, including an elder with physical disabilities.
- The vision for the future is to have solid relationships with regional transit providers, formalized through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or similar interagency agreements.

# Samish Tribal Transit Plan – Community Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2014

Location: Samish Administration Building

Participants: Carolyn St. James, Eunice Thomas, Samara Thomas, Sally Barrett, Julie Pederson, Charlotte Auclair, Becky Bendixen, George Adams, Leslie Eastwood, Larry Thomas Jr.

The meeting began with a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the purpose, process, and preliminary activities of the Samish Tribal Transit Plan. Topics included:

- Background information on project
- Summary of area transit providers / resources
  - Skagit Transit
  - Island Transit
  - Ferry System
- Current transit service options to Tribal facilities
- Samish department-based transit services
- Process for gathering stakeholder input
- Community survey results
- Transit challenges in the Anacortes area



Participants were asked to share their thoughts on area transit needs. Discussion items from the audience are summarized below:

- There are a limited number of Samish members living in Anacortes, and their homes are widely spread throughout the area. This creates challenges when planning transit routes.
- Tribal members would likely use transit for health care appointments (particularly for appointments in Mt. Vernon).
- There is not enough awareness of Paratransit among Samish community members.
- Many Tribal members require transit to attend cultural events, particularly during evening hours.
- The Elders program offers weekly art and cultural activities at the Samish Administration building. The new Elders bus is used for transporting participants.
- The Tribe needs additional drivers with CDL licenses. The lack of qualified drivers has hindered the Tribe's ability to provide transportation for Tribal members in the past.
- Tribal members are frustrated by traffic congestion due to light synchronization issues extending from Burlington to Anacortes. There are 8-10 traffic lights – cars often must stop at every light. This may impact transit times.
- The “stacking lane” for cars waiting to board the ferry becomes backed-up and blocks traffic.

# Samish Tribal Transit Plan – Community Meeting

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## Meeting Minutes

- Tribal members recall that D Street was once served by a fixed bus route (years ago). It is unclear why this service was discontinued.
- Tribally-provided carpool / vanpool options are needed. One group of staff members carpools regularly from Bellingham. Priuses might be a good option.
- The Fidalgo Bay RV Park is not currently served by an existing bus stop. Although SKAT Route 410 passes near Fidalgo Bay, the bus stays on Highway 20 and does not stop at the RV park.
- Cultural events such as Camp Samish would benefit from the availability of transit.
- Expanded transit options are needed to the local islands (e.g. Guemes Island and Lopez Island).
- The Tribe should explore partnership opportunities with area transit providers. For example, consider an arrangement where the Tribe owns a vehicle, but leases it back to a transit provider – they maintain the vehicle, but the Tribe can use it when needed.
- In addition to the new Elders bus, the Tribe owns a smart car (new), van (old), and Ford Ranger (old).
- Additional transit options are needed connecting Anacortes to surrounding cities – direct, streamlined service options. The Bellingham-to-Anacortes commute via bus is 90 minutes each way.
- The cost of transit is an obstacle for some HHS clients.
- The Samish Tribe should have more meaningful input on area transit services. Transit extends within the Tribe’s ancestral land and natural resources. The Tribe should be a vested partner in regional transit decisions. Samish members should copy legislators when sending comments related to transit needs.
- Clearer communication is needed regarding existing regional transit options. Transit providers increasingly use their websites as their primary communication tool. Some of the groups with the greatest transit needs (e.g. elders, low-income) may not have Internet access.
- Skagit Transit employs a Travel Trainer – the Tribe may request that she attend a future Elders luncheon and give a presentation on Skagit Transit’s various options (e.g. fixed, deviated-fixed, pocket, paratransit, on-demand/DAR, vanpool, etc.).

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# Samish Indian Nation

## Tribal Transit Planning Study



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## Meeting Overview

- Background and Purpose of Samish Transit Study
- Process / Study Approach
- Review of existing transit options in Anacortes area
- Preliminary feedback via community survey and program staff interviews
- Discussion of transit needs and deficiencies





## Background on Project

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- The Samish Tribe was awarded a \$25,000 federal grant from the FTA in 2011, for the purpose of developing a Tribal Transit Study.
- A tribal transit study:
  - Identifies community-wide transit goals based on a clear understanding of the Tribe's transit needs, deficiencies, resources and opportunities.
  - Provides recommendations for improving transit availability through tribally-operated transit services or partnerships with regional transit providers.



## Current Transit Options

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# Area Transit Providers

## Skagit Transit



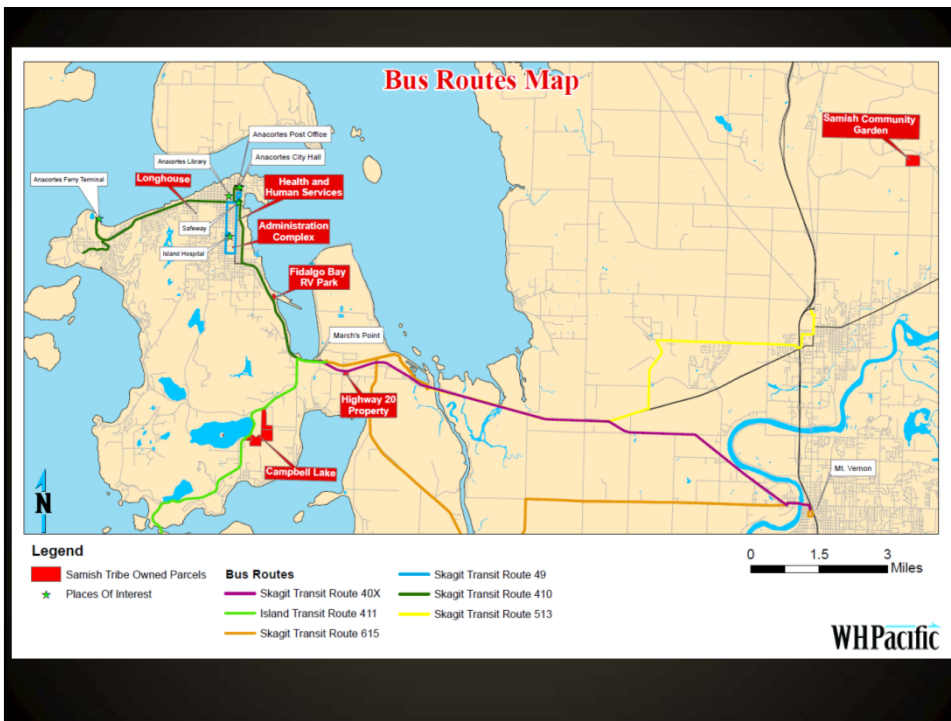
- Route 49 – Anacortes / 10<sup>th</sup> St. and Q Ave. / Island Hospital
- Route 410 – WA State Ferry / March's Point
- Route 513 – March's Point and Chuckanut
- Route 615
- Route 40x



## Island Transit

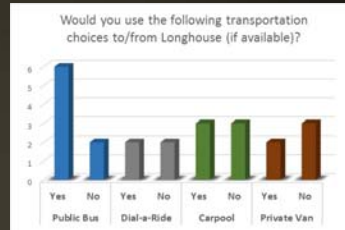


- Route 411
- March's Point
- Connects with Skagit Transit's Route 40x



## Transit Options for Reaching Tribal Facilities

- Tribal Administration and Health and Human Services buildings may be accessed via Skagit Transit Route 49
- Route 410 passes near Fidalgo Bay Resort
- Longhouse is not on a regular stop – must be prearranged (Rt. 49)
- Samish Community Garden is not served by a transit route.



*Some Head Start and ELC parents say that they would take the bus to the Longhouse if it was available.*



## Ferry Routes

WSDOT provides ferry service to the following islands from the Anacortes Ferry Terminal located at the west end of Oakes Avenue / 12<sup>th</sup> Street / SR-20:

- Lopez Island
- San Juan Island (Friday Harbor)
- Orcas Island
- Shaw Island

Guemes Island Ferry



## Samish Department-based Transit Services

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- Health and Human Services
  - Transportation is often a barrier preventing Tribal members from accessing programs – limits their ability to work toward self-sufficiency (via education, employment, etc.)
- Housing Department
  - Approximately 30% of clients use public transit
  - Consideration when selecting housing
- Head Start
  - Two buses – afternoon transit only
- Vocational Rehabilitation
  - May provide bus passes to clients for eligible activities (job interviews, etc.)
- Elders Program
  - New 15-passenger bus
  - Transit to lunch events



## Community Input

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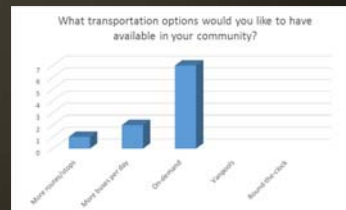
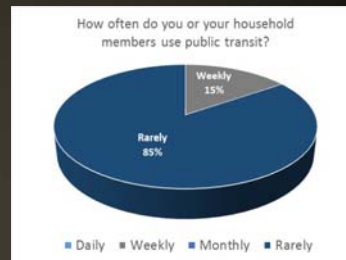
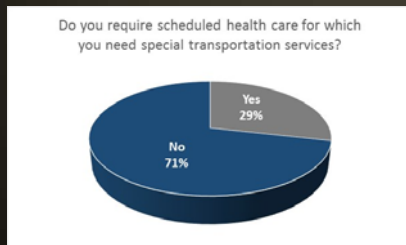
## Stakeholder Input

- Transit questionnaire
- Phone interviews with program staff
- Consultation with regional transit providers
- Community meeting



## Community Survey

- Low survey response rate
- Limited public transit use among Samish members currently
- High interest in on-demand transit services



## Transit Challenges

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- Lack of regular bus service to Longhouse
- Need to connect residential and rural areas to downtown Anacortes
- Need for improved options traveling outside of Anacortes (Mt. Vernon and beyond)
- Expanded transit service hours on weekends
- Additional on-demand service options
- Accessible bus stops
- Improved pedestrian infrastructure / more bus shelters
- Service to match future needs
  - Increasing local Samish population in Anacortes
  - Future Tribal enterprises



## Discussion

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## Discussion

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- How well do existing transit options meet the need of the Samish community?
- What factors encourage or discourage you from using public transit?
- What popular destinations are currently insufficiently served by public transit?
- What type of transit improvements would be the best fit for Samish members in Skagit County?
- What changes are needed to improve transit options connecting Anacortes to neighboring cities?



## Samish Indian Nation

Tribal Transit Planning Study



*Thank you for your participation!!!*



# Appendix B



Stefanie Jones

Director of Head Start

June 20, 2014

- Stephanie is the Director of the Head Start program. Included in her job responsibilities are oversight of three grant-funded programs: Head Start, CCDS, and Title VI.
- Head Start is open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The ELC is open Monday – Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- Approximately 36 students are currently enrolled in the Head Start program – 30 are program-funded, and six (6) are privately funded. The 36 students are divided into two (2) classes. Of the 36 Head Start students, 10 are all-day students that receive wraparound care from the Early Learning Center (ELC).
- The ELC includes two classrooms – toddler and pre-K. The toddler classroom has up to seven (7) children at one time – current enrollment is six (6) children. The pre-K classroom can accommodate up to 20 children – current enrollment is 16 children.
- The Head Start program has two (2) 16-passenger buses; however, the program only has one (1) driver with a CDL currently. Consequently, only one of the two Head Start classes is provided the option of afternoon transit. Special arrangements are occasionally made when a student requires transportation due to a hardship.
- Head Start provides afternoon transit only – morning pick-up service is not provided. There is a program-benefit to requiring parents to drop off their students in the morning, as it requires parents to visit the Center each day (thereby encouraging parent-teacher communications). However, parents would like the option of morning transportation.
- The Head Start buses are specially equipped for preschool-aged students, with five-point harnesses integrated into the seating.
- Only 3-5% of families enrolled in the Head Start program are Native American. None are Samish members. Most families live in Anacortes, although some travel from outside the area.
- The ELC does not provide daily transportation to students. Many ELC families would likely be interested in transit, assuming the system is cost-effective and meets their needs.
- The ELC occasionally borrows the Head Start buses for field trips; however, recent field trip requests have been denied, as staff cannot transport all students in the program with only one driver. Also, the program hesitates to allow parent chaperones to transport multiple students in personal vehicles due to liability concerns.
- A few Head Start and/or ELC families walk to the longhouse. At least one family takes the bus. Most arrive by personal vehicle. There is at least one (1) carpool. Most Head Start and ELC families have parents that work outside the home.
- Head Start families would like to see expanded transportation options. There were a lot of complaints with the program lost one of its bus drivers and had to curtail services.
- The greatest community-wide transit issue would probably be the need for more localized stops.
- Most Head Start and ELC staff members drive personal vehicles to work. A few employees that live close to the longhouse choose to walk to work.
- At least five (5) Head Start and/or ELC families do not own a car. Some families with cars are still unable to access reliable transportation – cars are often in need of repair or maintenance. Also, the cost of gas and car insurance often prevents families from driving.
- Anacortes lacks bus shelters – many more are needed. Additional streetlights would also be beneficial.

Sidewalks lead to and from the longhouse; however, a crosswalk is needed at 17<sup>th</sup> and D Avenue.

- Sharing Head Start buses with programs other than EFC is tricky due to funding issues; HHS may borrow them on occasion.

Edie Hill

Director Health and Human Services

June 24, 2014

- Edie is the Director of Health and Human Services. Included in her job responsibilities are oversight of a variety of programs, including:
  - Child Care / Head Start
  - Health (e.g. Contract Health, Diabetes and Public Health)
  - Education
  - Housing
  - Social Services Programs
  - Family Services Programs
  - Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Elders
- HHS staff do not perform direct health services; consequently, staff do not have a lot of in-person interactions with clients. Staff provide coordination of care. Few clients have cause to visit the HHS office – communications mostly occur via phone. A higher number of clients visit during Open Enrollment periods, or special event / programs (e.g. introduction of ObamaCare).
- Social services include Child Welfare, Independent Living Skills, Family Services, and other programs. Family Services has a GSA sedan (four-door), and a caravan available for check-out on an “as available” basis. Youth programs also have activity-related transportation needs (e.g. Camp Samish, etc.).
- Six (6) people are currently in the process of getting certified to use the wheelchair lift on the new elders bus. Although referred to as the “Elders Bus,” the bus will actually be used by multiple programs. A blue mini-van is also available for program use. It is a 15-passenger van with a wheelchair lift.
- The Tribe participates in a shared elders luncheon program where elders visit a different Tribe each month. This program is offered spring through fall (winter excluded). The new elders bus will be used to transport elders to these monthly events.
- The vocational rehabilitation program is available to all Native American clients – Samish membership is not required. The counselor with the vocational rehab program has a four-door sedan, allowing her to drive divide her time between satellite locations across the five-county area. Many of the clients cannot easily travel to Anacortes. The counselor also occasionally transports clients to cultural events.
- Gas cards and/or bus passes may be provided to Tribal clients by HHS to help offset the cost of transportation to various appointments. Gas cards are provided for funerals.
- The main transportation issue for Samish members is difficulty reaching out-of-town appointments (particularly in Mt. Vernon). Riding the bus from Anacortes to Mt. Vernon involves too many connections with excessive wait times. Mt. Vernon is a frequent destination for those seeking medical care and social services. Transportation to individual health-related appointments may be provided on a case-by-case basis.
- On-demand transportation requests are handled via a formal internal process. A vehicle calendar is maintained to prevent conflicts. Transportation may be provided for appointments related to medical and social services, counseling appointments, support groups, and food stamp renewal. The purpose of the trip must support program goals.
- The Tribe has a shortage of CDL drivers. The Tribe will be partnering with Anacortes School District to organize a CDL training session in September.

- Employees can check out vehicles if needed, or be reimbursed for use of their personal vehicle for work purposes.
- The Housing Department often transports clients to view rentals and apartments. The Tribe does not currently own housing units; however, rental assistance is provided.
- The program-based transit would benefit from a more formal process. On-demand transit will continue to be needed.
- A wheelchair lift is a critical service to provide on transit vehicles.
- One (1) HHS staff member rides the bus and from Mt. Vernon each day. There is a group that carools from Bellingham. Two other staff members live in Anacortes and walk to work.
- The Tribe purchased a smart car for HHS, which staff use to travel back and forth between Tribal facilities (e.g. admin, longhouse, RV park). Traditional work hours would likely be the most popular transit timeframe.
- Popular transit destinations seem to be clustered in Mt. Vernon.
- Expanding transit services would likely involve a partnership with Skagit Transit. Creating a tribally-operated service would require an entirely new department.
- There are very few bus shelters within Anacortes. The intersection near the longhouse needs a crosswalk. School crossing signage is also needed near the longhouse.
- A potential partner in future transit endeavors may be Community Action in Mt. Vernon. Community Action offers services that overlap with HHS to some degree.
- Program-based transit is seasonally-variant; however, the need is present year-round.
- The social services program is growing. The program is currently seeking grants to fund expansion. This will inevitably impact transit needs associated with the client population.
- In the future, the Tribe plans to expand local housing options for Tribal members, bringing more Samish members back to Anacortes. This would increase local transit demands.

Adam Lorio

Education Program Manager

July 1, 2014

- Adam Lorio is the Education Program Manager for the Samish Tribe. He is involved with education programs for all age groups – pre-K, K-12, postsecondary, and community education.
- There are approximately 32 Samish members enrolled in the Tribe’s higher education program. The program is funded by Tribal Council. Participation is steadily increasing. There are 193 tribal members within the traditional college age range (age 18-24). Five (5) of the 32 current students are older students.
- The Education program provides financial assistance to full and part-time Samish students. Tribal members may attend school anywhere in the United States or Canada. Transportation needs are considered when calculating the overall cost of school and living expenses. However, it is not unusual for students to run through their allotted money fairly quickly, leaving insufficient funds for transportation to and from classes.
- The Tribe offers a variety of community education sessions on the weekends (e.g. weaving, carving, Coastal Salish Art, etc.). The classes are generally held Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Transportation is barrier for some participants, particularly those traveling from Bellingham, Seattle, or other areas.
- Approximately 20 students are currently enrolled in Anacortes School District. The district has a robust school bus service. Bus service is not provided for afterschool activities.
- The Tribe has a partnership (MOA) with Anacortes School District. They are currently working with the District to develop and implement a Samish cultural curriculum. Anacortes School District could be a potential partner in transit endeavors. The District has a new superintendent.
- Skagit bus service is insufficient. The cost (\$1 per ride) is high – even compared to King County transit. Service hours and stops are limited. More frequent stops (at least hourly) would be beneficial. Early morning (before 7:00 a.m.) and evening (after 5:00 p.m.) routes are needed. Certain Tribal facilities, such as the Longhouse and the RV Park, are not accessible by public transit.
- Skagit Transit offers “dial-a-ride” service – however, it does not seem like this option is well-utilized by Tribal members.
- Elders are especially impacted by the lack of local transportation. Recently, an elder had to walk six blocks from the local hospital to the Tribal administration building. The new elders bus may help fill the transportation gap. The bus can accommodate up to two wheelchairs at a time. Elders meet frequently – the bus will likely boost participation in organized events.
- The Tribe reimburses Samish members for travel relating to committee service.
- The Education program does not currently pick up individual students or clients for appointments on an “on-demand” basis. Transportation of groups of students will occur via the new (elders) bus.
- Transportation to “Camp Samish” is difficult due to road access issues and vehicle wear-and-tear.
- A long-term “wish list” item would be an eight-passenger van with cargo space for the Education program. The Tribe does not currently own a vehicle that is able to transport a canoe – this is problematic for the Education department in particular, as there are educational programs designed around canoeing.
- Improved transit options within Anacortes would benefit the Tribe’s ability to offer internship opportunities.
- Popular transit destinations are centrally clustered. Anacortes is a retirement community – services / businesses are located within close proximity to each other.

- Staff rely on personal vehicles for transportation. It is a 20+ minute walk between tribal facilities. Adam does not know of any education staff members that use public transit currently.
- Anacortes lacks sufficient pedestrian infrastructure. The curb system is very poor. Crosswalks are not well-marked. Along Highway 20, crosswalks are spaced far apart, leading people to jaywalk. Streetlights are insufficient. Sidewalks are not ADA accessible. There is a high probability for vehicle/pedestrian conflicts – a Natural Resources staff member was recently hit by a car when walking across an intersection.
- There are few bike lanes in Anacortes. Most Skagit Transit buses are equipped with a small bike rack that can hold 1-2 bikes. The system is not multi-modal friendly.
- The Fidalgo Resort could be a potential support organization (not primary).
- The ground is ripe to approach the City of Anacortes regarding transportation challenges.
- If the Tribe is successful in drawing members back to the Anacortes area (as planned), transit needs will greatly increase.
- The Education Department is considering opening a Tribal School in the future (under the State of Washington's charter school legislation). A tribal school would allow the Tribe to provide an effective cultural curriculum to enrolled students. If a tribal school is formed, student transportation would be an important consideration.
- The education program's transportation needs peak in the summer.
- Transportation is a concern for the vocational rehabilitation program, based on their service population.

Dana Matthews

Housing Director

July 2, 2014

- The Housing department covers a 10-county area, serving 30+ Native American clients. Enrollment levels vary from year-to-year. Approximately 80% of current clients are Samish. The Housing department includes two (2) full-time staff members.
- The Housing department provides rental assistance for low-income Native American clients. Eligible clients receive a monthly housing subsidy of up to 30% of their adjusted gross income. If the rent is over the fair market rent (FMR) for the county they live in the client may rent it and pay the difference but only if the difference is not more than \$ 50.00 over the FMR. Housing units must be inspected by program staff to ensure that they meet health and quality standards.
- Staff must frequently travel by car to visit or inspect housing sites. Staff are instructed to use a tribal vehicle if one is available. If a tribal vehicle is not available, they can use their personal vehicle and be reimbursed for mileage. Staff are not permitted to transport clients in their personal vehicles due to liability reasons.
- Dana estimates that approximately 30% of the program's clients use public transit on a regular basis. Most of the sidewalks in Anacortes are not ADA-compliant, making it difficult for people with disabilities to reach bus stops. One of the program's clients that relies on public transit also requires a wheelchair. This person's family does not own a vehicle capable of transporting a wheelchair. Dial-a-ride is an option, although advanced scheduling is required.
- Pedestrian infrastructure is insufficient. There are almost no bus shelters in Anacortes. Additionally, there are not safe areas for buses to pull off to access many of the stops. There are also a lack of crosswalks, leading to people jaywalking. Many sidewalks have significant cracking. Recently, a Samish staff member tripped over a sidewalk crack and broke an arm. The sidewalk conditions are so poor in some areas that persons in wheelchairs have to travel along the road shoulders.
- Housing works closely with the Education and Vocational Rehabilitation programs to provide clients with resources to help them gain financial self-sufficiency. Transportation is sometimes a barrier for clients accessing programs, thereby limiting their ability to work towards self-sufficiency (through education or employment).
- Although the Tribe sought to purchase an apartment complex for use by Tribal members in 2011, the deal fell through due to a variety of factors. The Tribe is still interested in either purchasing an apartment complex, or building such a complex on Tribally-owned land. Another option would be to build a series of modular homes. The amount paid must not exceed fair market value, based on HUD requirements. This is a long-term goal. The availability of suitable land in Anacortes is limited. The Campbell Lake property was originally purchased with the intent to construct housing; however, the Tribe would not be able to build the infrastructure and houses within the total development cost (TDC) requirements.
- The Housing department prepares an annual Housing Plan.
- Whidbey Island offers free local transit services. Skagit Transit's Anacortes routes require fares. Housing does not provide bus passes to clients – there is not funding for this in their grant. Vocational Rehab and Family Services may provide bus passes to clients on occasion.
- Dana will mark up a map, indicating general housing areas. Due to confidentiality requirements, specific locations may not be provided.
- Clients do not typically need to visit the Housing office. Most business is conducted over the phone and

the Housing Staff does home visits.

- The Housing program will likely expand in the future. Ideally, the program would benefit from having their own vehicle – possibly a crossover / SUV that can handle dirt roads (i.e. 4WD). The vehicle should have sufficient space for a stepladder and toolbox (needed for inspections). A five-passenger vehicle would be sufficient to transport clients (including a certain number of family members). The program sometimes must transport children along with parents.
- Staff travel on a biweekly basis to cities outside of Anacortes (within the 10-county service area). Staff try to group inspection appointments by location, ensuring that their travel time is well-utilized.
- Local transit routes require expanded hours (a.m., p.m., and weekends).
- Elders often pair up when driving, with the younger elders driving the older elders. However, this leaves many elders without a reliable source of transportation. The new elders' bus will help with transportation for larger events.
- Bus routes that connect rural areas to downtown Anacortes destinations are needed. Many people live just a few miles outside of town.
- The Tribe has the goal of bringing more Samish members to the Anacortes area. Many Samish members in Whatcom and King County are interested in relocating to Anacortes.
- Future economic enterprises may bring an influx of Tribal members to Anacortes, especially if the Tribe is successful in opening a casino. The shift-work associated with casinos would also require round-the-clock transit in order to be feasible for employees. Wraparound child care for shift workers will create additional transit challenges.
- Many Housing clients do not have access to a reliable vehicle. When identifying potential housing sites, access to a transit stop is often a consideration.
- Education, Family Services and Vocational Rehab could serve as partners in transit endeavors. There are not a lot of outside agencies to serve as partners, with the exception of regional transit providers.
- Tribal Council members do not have difficulty finding transportation to meetings. However, certain committee members have lacked transportation in the past. Committee members are paid for mileage when they attend meetings using their own personal vehicles.



Carolyn Chase

Skagit Transit

July 14, 2014

- Skagit Transit introduced a new commuter route this month – Route 40x connects March’s Point in Anacortes to Mr. Vernon. A similar route was previously offered by Island Transit; unfortunately, they had to discontinue this route due to budgetary reasons (i.e. their grant expired). Island Transit approached Skagit Transit about taking over this route. As ridership on the route was strong, Skagit Transit agreed to add the route to its system. Although Island Transit offered free ridership, Skagit will charge a fare (as with its other routes). It is undetermined whether the addition of a fare will reduce ridership. Service hours are concentrated around morning and evening commute times, with a bit of a service gap during the middle of the day.
- Carolyn offered to send ridership data for Skagit Transit routes, including Routes 49, 410, 513, 615, and 40x. Route 40x will only have a few weeks of data due to the newness of the route. However, Carolyn may be able to locate Island Transit’s ridership data from when they operated the route. Carolyn will ask drivers for information on their busiest stops.
- A number of the transit stops in Anacortes are not ADA accessible. However, Skagit Transit is working with the City of Anacortes to increase the number of accessible stops. Stops on Q and R Avenue were recently upgraded and brought up to ADA accessibility standards. These upgrades were completed by the City of Anacortes. Because Skagit Transit does not have ROW, ADA accessible upgrades are best completed during street projects coordinated by municipalities or the county.
- Skagit Transit has plans to replace two shelters in Anacortes in 2014 and install 3 new shelters. Additional funds have been budgeted to purchase shelters in the coming years. These shelters will be placed through Skagit Transit’s service area at highly used bus stops. The goal is to place shelters where the need is greatest.
- Skagit Transit has partnered with the Swinomish Tribe in the past on operating grants. Marcy Smith at Skagit Transit could provide additional information on past partnerships (360-757-8801).
- There is currently one (1) vanpool to Anacortes – the commuting destination is the refinery.
- The Tribe can request, at any time, for Skagit Transit Operations to consider placing a deviated bus stop for Route 49 at the Longhouse. Operations would travel to the destination to see if a stop is possible.
- Carolyn will check her files to see if there were any recent surveys or community sessions that documented local transit needs / requests of Anacortes residents.
- Skagit Transit has an ADA Paratransit Route dedicated to Anacortes. However, Flex Route 49 serves ADA Paratransit functions and is designed with time built into the schedule to do so. Also, if Paratransit demand surpasses what can be accomplished by these two routes, Skagit Transit would send another vehicle to assist.
- There are no plans to curtail service on Anacortes routes – ridership remains strong. Route 40X is new and while ridership is strong, it is too early to talk about future expansions of service times on this route.
- Carolyn and Elisa discussed scheduling a time in the future when Skagit Transit and the Samish Tribe can meet to discuss transit needs and possible partnership opportunities. This meeting could be coordinated to align with the community-input sessions for the Samish Transit Plan. The timeframe of these meetings is likely early September.

# Samish Tribal Transit Plan

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## Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2014

Location: Samish Tribal Administration Building, Anacortes, WA

Purpose: Meeting with Skagit Transit

Participants: Carolyn Chase, Troy Fair, Robert Gummere, Carolyn St. James, and Elisa Warner

- Skagit Transit is currently in the process of prioritizing transit needs for the upcoming WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program.
- Carolyn St. James and Elisa mentioned that Samish community members are interested in seeing a permanent bus stop at the Samish Longhouse. Skagit Transit may consider whether demand warrants extending fixed route service along a portion of D Avenue.
- Sue Libby is the Travel Trainer for Skagit Transit. She can visit the Tribe and deliver a presentation on current transit resources, and advise Tribal members on how to best use the regional transit system. The Travel Trainer can provide individualized support in helping people successfully navigate the transit system and determining eligibility for special services. Carolyn suggested the possibility of arranging for the Travel Trainer to attend a future Elders luncheon.
- At the Samish Transit Community Meeting, some participants expressed frustration over the timing of the traffic lights from Burlington to Anacortes. Carolyn St. James asked whether Skagit Transit drivers had observed this as well. Skagit Transit has not heard this feedback from its drivers; however, routes typically detour through side streets (making the timing of contiguous traffic lights less apparent).
- Some Samish community members inquired about the pre-qualification process for paratransit, dial-a-ride, and other special transit services. One question related to a change of status due to temporary conditions (such as a surgery with a lengthy rehabilitation period). Troy explained that people can obtain conditional eligibility with a temporary card that covers the recovery period.
- The City of Anacortes is currently updating their six-year master plan. Transit has emerged as an important issue. The City recently contacted Skagit Transit about possible service enhancements. Route 49x is a particular route of interest. Carolyn Chase has spoken with Libby Grage at the City of Anacortes – she will forward their information to Carolyn St. James and Elisa for follow up.
- A replacement bus shelter is slated for 10<sup>th</sup> and Q Avenue. Three new bus shelters were just added along R Avenue.
- Carolyn St. James and Elisa discussed feedback from Samish members on their desire for improved services connecting Anacortes to Mt. Vernon and other cities. Carolyn, Troy and Robert explained that Route 40x has streamlined the commute to Mt. Vernon – however, service hours are focused on the morning and evening commutes (with a mid-day gap). If service demands increase, it is possible that times may be extended to cover the midday period (in the future).
- Carolyn St. James explained that the Fidalgo Bay Resort has a large community room that is often used for Tribal events. Fidalgo Bay Resort is not currently included as a stop on Route 410. Route 410 is a fixed route only – it is not one of SKAT’s deviated-fixed routes. Pick-up and/or drop-off at Fidalgo Bay Resort may be an option for dial-a-ride for those that are pre-qualified.

# Samish Tribal Transit Plan

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## Meeting Minutes

- Elisa Warner and Carolyn St. James inquired about possible partnership opportunities between Skagit Transit and the Samish Tribe in expanding current transit service options. Carolyn Chase felt that some of the discussed service extensions (e.g. adding a stop at the Longhouse) would not necessarily require a grant (if it was determined that there was sufficient demand, etc.). The Tribe may consider pursuing a Tribal Transit Grant in the future – letters of support may be possible, depending of the nature of the project. The Samish Tribe and Skagit Transit will keep the lines of communication open to allow for future discussions on mutually beneficial project opportunities.

# Samish Tribal Transit Plan

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## Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2014

Location: Skagit Council of Governments Office in Mt. Vernon

Participants: Mark Hamilton, Liz Theaker, Carolyn St. James, Elisa Warner

- SCOG is currently updating the Skagit-Island Human Services Transportation Plan. The process is being overseen by the Skagit Island Special Needs Transportation Committee. The committee has 11 representatives. The project will include a review of existing transit services and resources, and a gap analysis to identify unmet needs. Transpo was hired as a consultant for this project.
- Prior to his work with SCOG, Mark managed the development of the transit program for Tulalip Tribe.
- Another activity of the advisory committee is to help prioritize regional transit projects for submittal under the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program. SCOG will issue its Call for Projects in late September. The Committee will prepare and submit a regional ranking of projects. The ranking criteria has yet to be developed. This will be discussed during the meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Following the committee's review, letter grades to each proposed project. High grades (e.g. A or B) earn extra "bonus" points when projects are evaluated at the state level.
- Evan Olson is the contact for grant-related inquiries. He has considerable expertise in this area. All grant writing services are the responsibility of the applicant.
- Carolyn and Elisa discussed the timeline for the Samish Transit Plan, and speculated whether the process would be far enough along to submit a project under the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program. Gaining the necessary approvals from Tribal Council can be a time-consuming process. Furthermore, the Tribe has limited staff resources for grant writing. Consequently, it is uncertain whether the Tribe will be able to submit a project this fall.
- Mark encouraged the Samish Tribe to submit one or more proposed transit projects for consideration. In prior years, Skagit Transit and Island Transit have been the primary applicants for the region. The Swinomish Tribe submitted a proposal previously for a transit-based partnership with the Boys and Girls Club in Anacortes.
- Proposals are due to WSDOT on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

# Appendix C

# Samish Tribal Transit Plan

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## General Questionnaire Comments

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### What public transportation options are most critical to you?

- When the Elder Van is fully operational, can we please be sure to make arrangements to transport Elder members who reside on the Samish homeland of Guemes Island. Even a pick-up / drop-off at the Anacortes side of the Guemes Dock would work. Thank you so much.
- Bothers me to see those big SKAT buses pounding around Anacortes empty. They should use the small buses and/or cut their frequent runs.
- If I were unable to drive it would be to do grocery shopping – also medical appointments. I could see vouchers locally using my Medicare if I couldn't get to VA treatment in Seattle, at least for some things. I have to go to Seattle weekly for VA connected treatment.
- Dial-a-ride out of town requires complicated transfers.
- On-demand call for a ride for elders.
- Buses – daily [are most critical].
- Traffic flow on Highway 20.

### What transportation options would you like to have available in your community? *(Write-in answers under "Other" option)*

- SKAT bus, run on weekends
- I think the emphasis should be on people without reliable transportation on their own. Support for low-wage workers, the elderly, and the disabled.
- Dial-a-ride that you can take out of town (La Conner, Mt. Vernon)
- Dial-a-ride for service out of town

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## Head Start / ELC Questionnaire Comments

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### What transportation options would you like to have available?

- School bus all year to and from work. Only one of us has a license and she works. So it created some difficulties with her at times.
- [Would like] public bus
- More stable bus service please.
- School bus home??
- Bus for AM and PM with consistency so I can depend on it rather than struggling on my work days.
- [Would like] bus to home

## Samish Tribal Transit Plan

**What barriers keep you from driving a personal vehicle to the Longhouse? (*Write-in answers under "Other" option*)**

- Work schedule
- None
- When I work – transportation is hard
- Job