

REGIONAL COORDINATED PLAN

In December 2016 – January 2017, the Thurston Regional Planning Council will update the Regional Coordinated Plan to rank the projects listed on page P1. Consider this page as P-1 pending that ranking.

The following projects are consistent with the Plan, considered a regional priority, and will be considered for ranking by the Council (in alphabetical order):

- Here to There – Mobility Management
- NW Center for Mobility Management and innovation in Accessibility
- Rural & Tribal Transportation (RT)
- Thurston County Bus Buddies



Regional Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan

for the Thurston Region

**Adopted December 3, 2010
Amended December 7, 2012
Amended December 5, 2014**

Prepared by the Thurston Regional Planning Council
in cooperation with Thurston County Human Services Transportation
Forum, Intercity Transit, TOGETHER!, the Nisqually Indian Tribe,
Northwest Connections and other Community Partners

An Update of the June 2007 Area-Wide Job Access and Reverse
Commute Transportation Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Residents of the Thurston Region rely on transportation for independence, employment, health, and quality of life. That transportation may take the form of individual vehicles, public transit, bicycling, walking, ridesharing, or non/for profit providers.

Even with a variety of multimodal options, people with special needs – age, income, ability – may experience limited mobility choices. They may become isolated and unable to participate in vital activities or receive critical services. Without reliable transportation, these residents face severe barriers in obtaining and retaining employment, taking care of essential needs such as health care and shopping, participating in recreational activities, and other critical functions. In this update, we also continue our focus on the veterans' community and consideration of people with special needs in disaster planning.



Regional policymakers recognize the challenges facing people with special needs and dedicate time and other resources to coordination efforts. The Regional Transportation Plan, adopted by the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) in 2004 (update underway, 2015 adoption planned), articulates goals reflecting a commitment to accessibility:

BARRIER FREE TRANSPORTATION

Goal: *Ensure transportation system investments support the special travel needs of youth, elders, people with disabilities, literacy or language barriers, and those with low incomes.*

The Council also elected to facilitate the Thurston County Human Services Transportation Forum (HSTF or Forum) – a coalition of social service and transportation providers, governmental entities, and others. The group documents needs, explores alternatives, and supports services. Forum programs such as Rural & Tribal Transportation (RT), Thurston County Bus Buddies, and Intercity Transit Village Vans have improved the lives of many people in the Thurston Region. Most every day, these services transport people to jobs, training, essential services, and other important destinations.

Beyond the commitment of regional policymakers, the state and federal government encourage coordination. The Washington State Legislature's creation of the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) recognized the wastefulness of duplication of efforts and that coordination would result in more services for more people. ACCT's planning funds, technical assistance, and grant programs made the local and regional successes possible. The federal government's United We Ride initiative and provisions of federal transportation legislation both encourage and require coordination – at the planning and service levels.

However, the support for coordination wavers at both the state and federal level. ACCT sunsetted and funding disappeared. It is unclear what MAP 21 will provide or require for this important part of transportation planning and implementation.

This update required convening the Forum and other community partners – providers and clients. TRPC conducted individual and group interviews and attended meetings, documenting changing needs and the successes of regional initiatives. From these stakeholders, we learned that the goals articulated in the original plan remain relevant:

- Increase mobility options
- Improve individual service
- Increase coordination with other systems and programs
- Improve efficiency

A variety of partners and the public participated in the plan update, including the Regional Planning Council, the Transportation Policy Board, the Forum, social service and transportation providers, and end users. We used a number of outreach efforts, focusing primarily on “going to other people's tables.” Rather than expecting people to attend our meetings, we asked for a space on the agendas of groups such as the Thurston County Veterans' Forum, Thurston Council for Children & Youth, and the Tribal Transportation Planning Committee.

Current Conditions

For purposes of this planning process and coordination strategies, we define people with special transportation needs as people "including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation."

Poverty

In the Thurston Region, the countywide average of households earning less than \$10,000 is 6.4 percent, according to the 2008-12 U.S. Census American Community Survey. In some communities, the percentage is much higher than the average: Olympia 9.4 percent, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation 9.2 percent, and Nisqually Reservation 9.6 percent.

Age

Overall, we are aging. In 2000, the county population's median age was 36.5 years, up from 33.6 in 1990. By 2009, the median age had increased to 38.4 years. In 2009, nearly 25 percent of the region's 249,800 population was under 19, and over 12.1 percent 65 and older. Included in that number was the 1.85 percent aged 85 and older. Projections estimate that 19.5

percent of the population will be 65 and older in 2030. The number of people aged 85 and older was 1,121 in 1980 and is projected to rise to nearly 8,000 by 2030.

On the other end of the age spectrum, nearly 33 percent of the county's population was 19 or younger in 1980, with a drop to 22.5 percent by 2030. Tribal planners, however, report that nearly 40 percent of their population is under 19.

Age and Poverty

The poverty rate by age data shows some interesting needs. In Tenino, for example, nearly 24 percent of those in poverty are under 17 and 19 percent are 64 or older. In Yelm, over 24 percent are under 17 and approximately 3 percent are 64 or older. As noted above, the higher percentage of youth residents may explain that for the Chehalis Reservation, over 35 percent of those in poverty are under 17 while approximately 15 percent are 64 and older.

People with Disabilities

The 2008-12 American Community Survey articulated that approximately 12 percent of the Thurston County population reported having a disability. Social service providers indicate that people tend to under-report in this category, and tribal planners note almost double the average on reservations (approximately 23 percent).

Services

Conditions and system sustainability differ inside and outside Intercity Transit's service area (Public Transportation Benefit Area – PTBA). For years, the PTBA's taxing authority provided some level of assured funding, resulting in a somewhat stable transportation planning environment. This allowed Intercity Transit to engage in long-range planning, building, and adapting programs over time to meet changing needs. However, drops and unpredictability in sales tax revenues and drastic changes in funding at both the state and federal level, have shaken that stability.

Outside of the PTBA, communities without a stable funding source rely on grants and other temporary funding to support transportation choices, often specific to a program or category of individual. This makes long range planning difficult and leaves residents at the mercy of one- or two-year projects – creating a constant state of uncertainty.

In addition to the Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (RT) and Village Vans – initiatives of the regional coordination process – other traditional and non-traditional providers serve Thurston County. Intercity Transit delivers a backbone of fixed route and dial-a-lift (DAL) service in the urban areas of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater and Yelm, and partners on programs outside its service areas. Social service providers transport certain clients for certain types of trips – filling some gaps. The area's nine school districts supply the greatest number of public transportation trips in the region. Greyhound, Northwestern Trailways, and Amtrak provide intercity services. Transit systems and coordinated projects help connect to Pierce, Grays Harbor, Mason, and Lewis counties. We have also seen a growth in the taxi industry, with larger scale operators locating in the Thurston Region. These services, however, remain too expensive for many who need to travel.

Needs and Gaps

Although each part of the region and each client are unique, common themes emerged as we checked in with residents and service providers, and documented needs and gaps in service for people with special needs:

- **Transportation Services:** Despite improvements in recent years, people with special needs, especially in rural areas, have limited mobility options.
- **Available Modes:** Options such as biking, walking and ridesharing are often not viable because of the nature of the built environment, the need to transport children to daycare, and non-traditional schedules. Physical conditions for some people may also limit mode choice.
- **Travel Time:** Cross-town and cross-county trips sometimes require hours of travel and wait times. For many people, the perception of long travel and wait times chills their desire to try public transportation. The goal of non-duplication of services in coordination efforts, while laudable, results in transfers between systems as a part of most trips.
- **Hours:** Most transportation services operate in support of the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. worker, rather than those with non-traditional work hours and split shifts – often a feature of available jobs. Evening and weekend service is weak to non-existent.
- **Cost:** The cost of some transportation options may be prohibitive for many community members.
- **Ease of Use:** Trip planning and traveling on different systems or modes can be daunting. People fear being stranded because of missed connections - especially between different systems - or arriving at the wrong time. For many, riding public transportation is a distant, and not always pleasant, childhood memory. When compared to driving alone in a private vehicle, trips on transit systems often take much longer, require waiting for connections, and often more detailed planning. People also express concern about personal comfort and safety while waiting at transit stops.
- **Information and Awareness:** Residents need an up-to-date information resource reflecting all available transportation options, with information on eligibility and contacts. People might also need a bit of hand-holding to make the first tentative steps toward using other modes. Programs like Thurston Here to There, Thurston County Bus Buddies, RT's Bus Ambassadors, and Intercity Transit's Travel Training can help people become comfortable.
- **Children and Youth:** The October 2010 *Community Needs Assessment* presented by the Thurston Council for Children and Youth identified a "Lack of transportation as a barrier to accessing services for children and youth." This concern crossed all of the systems considered by the study (basic needs, education, early & out-of-school care, employment, health and juvenile justice). These findings corroborate our studies.
- **Land Use and Transportation Disconnects:** Because of the lower cost of land in the fringes of the Urban Growth Areas, public and private facilities often locate there. This can lead to barriers to accessing the goods, services, and jobs.

In addition to individual challenges, institutional and political barriers to coordination include insufficient and unsustainable funding, and conflicting program requirements and regulations. Organizations often hesitate to document funds spent on transportation services, expressing concern about labeling discretionary funds.

Solutions

The regional partners have designed several elegant programs to expand mobility in Thurston County. Many of these projects have evolved over time, with improvements included for the 2015-17 biennium. We selected these projects because they:

- **Increase Mobility Options:** Expand service to rural areas with limited mobility options; support training and employment in the urban areas; and provide transport to specialized services not available in the Thurston Region.
- **Improve Individual Service:** Increase awareness of mobility options; shorten trips; enhance driver training to provide better service; create individual trip planning services; and explore tribal transit options.
- **Increase Coordination with Other Systems and Programs:** Focus on regional and cross-county mobility management. Improve connections with Mason, Squaxin, Grays Harbor and Lewis transit organizations.
- **Increase efficiency:** Modify routes and directional services to increase the number of passengers per hour/trip/mile.

Sustainability

For the past several years, the Region has worked on the *Creating Places Preserving Spaces - A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region*. This federally funded project originated from the US Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Environmental Protection. The agencies recognized that they could no longer operate in silos, needing to work together - and encourage communities to work together - to reach a more sustainable future.

Many of the Priority Goals of that Plan support transportation for all - including those with special needs.

- Create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth.
- Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.
- Ensure that residents have the resources to meet their daily needs.
- Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.

The Region considers the Coordinated Plan as a reflection of current and projected future needs, services, and gaps that will change as new challenges, opportunities, and strategies emerge. Like the plan, the projects will also change over time. While the current /solutions projects have improved mobility for residents of the region, they are designed to adapt to changing needs.

The People We Serve...

We use traditional performance measures to quantify efficiency and effectiveness, but we also gather stories:

- “RT did a fantastic job in helping with the Latino mothers and babies on our trip to Olympia. This is a major accomplishment considering the language barrier they experience.” *Rochester Social Service Provider*
- “We’ve been taking time from our own jobs to transport him. Now we’re all very excited that he can be on his own – great for his self-confidence.” *Parents of a developmentally disabled young adult*
- “I’m so relieved not to be a burden to my children anymore.” *Senior*
- “I was able to get to extra training, so got a promotion at work.” *Rural resident*
- “My daughter’s grades went from C’s to A’s because the transportation service allows her to stay after school for extra assistance.” *Nisqually Tribal Member*

Prioritized Project List and Rankings

Each project contains its own set of performance measures, including number of trips, hours and miles, how each project fills gaps and needs, and how it supports the region’s goals. In addition to project implementation, the Forum will continue to increase awareness of the benefits of coordination, enhance existing services, develop new projects, and seek policy and funding solutions.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) requires that the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) prioritize projects in the regional plan to be eligible for funding under their Consolidated Grant Program. Recognizing the importance of local prioritization, WSDOT allocates specific rankings to each region, based on demographic information. For the 2015-17 cycle, TRPC received 3 A’s, 3 B’s, and 3 C’s. In the grant review process, an A ranking adds 50 percentage points, a B 25 points and a C 12 points.

In addition to the Ranked Prioritized Project List, the Regional also adopted an Unranked Prioritized List. These projects either don’t qualify for funding under WSDOT’s Consolidated Grant Program or are not interested in applying for funds in this cycle. However, the planning partners wanted to document the value and priority that the Region places on these projects/programs.

PRIORITIZED PROJECT LIST

**THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
Ranked Prioritized Project List
2015-2017**

Ranking	Title & Description	Type	Organization
A	Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (RT)	Operating	TOGETHER! & Thurston Regional Planning Council
A	Thurston County Bus Buddies	Operating	Catholic Community Services & Intercity Transit
A	Request for Acquisition of Replacement Vehicles for Rural & Tribal Transportation (RT) in Thurston County	Capital	Northwest Connections

**THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
Un-Ranked Prioritized Project List
2015-2017**

Title & Description	Type	Organization
Village Vans	Operating	Intercity Transit
Nisqually Transit	Operating	Nisqually Indian Tribe

Adopted December 5, 2014 as part of the updated Regional Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Plan for the Thurston Region adoption. Resolution No. 2014-05.

Stakeholders & Planning Process

A History of Coordination

Unlike other communities, who convened stakeholder groups because of state and federal requirements, the Thurston Region realized the need to begin coordination efforts 17 years ago.

In 1997, the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) and Intercity Transit (IT) convened the Human Services Transportation Forum (HSTF) to explore the coordination of transportation services in and around Thurston County. The conveners recognized that a growing need for transportation services coupled with shrinking transit funding called for innovative, cooperative strategies. The group identified and encouraged a wide range of transportation and social service providers to participate.

The group began to meet regularly and identify goals, objectives, and boundaries. While recognizing that many residents travel to adjacent counties for goods, services, and jobs, at that time the group elected to limit their considerations to the county boundaries for planning efforts.

The Forum designed, distributed, and tallied a Transportation Survey to quantify the "who, what, where, why and how" of service needs and provision. Approximately 50 entities, such as the Area Agency on Aging, Morningside Industries, and the Childcare Action Council, responded. The groups identified common issues and needs.

HSTF facilitated a series of focus groups on the topics of Children and Youth, Brokerage and Risk Management, and Dial-A-Lift. We collected the issues and ideas from these sessions and added those findings to the survey data.

In early 1998, HSTF applied for a grant from the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) to implement a demonstration project for coordinated services. While the project was not funded, the process of working together on the application strengthened the group.

In fall 1998, with cuts to social and transportation services, a growing low-income population, and an increased focus on social equity in transportation, renewed interest in the HSTF arose. With the assistance of the local ACCT staff, the Thurston Regional Planning Council joined with community partners to apply for an ACCT Planning Grant. Upon successful award, the partners reconvened the Forum. The Forum revised and distributed the Transportation Survey and began compilation. At monthly meetings, the HSTF discussed demonstration projects and models in other areas, identified needs and potential solutions, and worked on the plan. HSTF wrestled with identifying a core group to serve as decision-makers. The group also made special efforts to identify needs and develop solutions for the Tribal communities.

The Forum facilitated a series of focus groups with clients, including a local welfare rights group, residents of low-income housing complexes, and youth groups. All have validated both the needs and potential solutions outlined in the plan, although the youth group was alone in suggesting skateboards – and rocket packs - as viable transportation choices. During these focus groups, we encouraged clients to continue to participate in the process and provided contact information for follow up purposes.

During this process, Morningside, a rehabilitative enterprise, convened a group to focus on transportation needs of persons with disabilities. The group included the Thurston County Health Department, Thurston Regional Planning Council, Intercity Transit, and other forum members. The group brought general and specific client needs to the table and attempted to find answers. The Thurston Regional Planning Council used technology to map out locations of clients and regular destinations to support ridematching and transit services. After meeting for several months, the ad hoc group concluded that persons with disabilities in the community face the same transportation challenges as others, but with more restrictions. They determined that working through the Forum would be the best approach, so disbanded the group.

The availability of the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Grant accelerated finalization of the JARC plan, including identification of "first steps" projects. The group rallied to provide ideas and support. They identified the location of low-income clients, employment patterns, distribution of jobs, and other supporting data. The WorkFirst Local Area Planning Partners were an integral part of this planning.

The HSTF celebrated the award of three projects in the 2000 and 2001 grant cycles and mobilized to detail implementation plans. Having money on the table raised the expectations of the group that coordination might actually work.

In 2001, the Forum also reached out to two other communities – faith based and senior providers. In adding this data to the inventory, the Forum recognized that while both groups face challenges, they also bring resources and a commitment to client services to the table. Most also indicated a strong desire to explore alternatives to actually providing transportation services themselves.

Over the next few years, the Forum continued to meet – in various forms and for many purposes; sometimes to implement a new service or expand or change an existing one; or because new needs and challenges had surfaced; to do more planning; and sometimes in response to new legislation. The core theme of bringing transportation choices to people with special needs and coordinating services remained constant in all activities.

In developing plans, the group studied sample plans and strategies from other areas and incorporated those elements that made sense for Thurston County. The group provided and validated the data that supports this Plan update, and assisted in estimating potential usage and success of each of the projects. In some instances, service providers informally tested concepts on a segment of their client base. Each partner has contributed important

information; provided insight into the special needs of a specific client base; and remained committed to identifying innovative, effective solutions.

Interesting partnerships and broadening of mission have characterized these implementation strategies. TOGETHER!, a social service provider that focuses on youth, especially on the issues of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse, stepped forward as a key partner in implementing the Rural & Tribal Transportation program (RT). They determined that their mission should include the transportation that allows youth and other community members' access to the services and programs that support their primary mission.

2014 Plan Updates and Next Steps

As in previous updates, the planning group revisited previously documented needs, services, and gaps. We updated demographic data and analyzed the impacts of RT and Village Vans, and considered other alternatives and strategies. TRPC made use of data gathered through the Sustainable Thurston project, which included participation by people from all over the region in meetings, on-line conversations, surveys and interviews. The Washington State University survey conducted at the beginning and end of the project (2011-13), was statistically valid, reflecting the entire community. Special outreach efforts through the Thurston County Food Bank and Home Consortium targeted low-income residents. A household travel survey, conducted in 2013, also informed the Plan update. Specific to the rural community, we used data and other information from the 2014 rural Thurston County Needs Assessment prepared by Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights (POWER).

We worked with small groups and individuals and asked for a spot on the agenda for community group meetings. Not surprisingly – because of on-going analysis of services and needs – no substantive issues arose with the core historic partners during this update cycle. As in last update, we engaged the emergency preparedness community to understand and raise awareness about how current plans address people with special needs. We found these entities to be open to the conversation and expect continued collaboration as their plans move forward.

During this update, we again reached out to the area's veteran population. With close proximity to the services at Joint Base Lewis McChord and the area's medical resources, retirees and others leaving the military often settle in the Thurston Region. Veterans comprise over 12 percent of our County population, especially in the Lacey and Yelm areas.

Many Forum members also participate in the Thurston Council for Children and Youth's Leadership and Community Councils. This group continues to implement their work plan and across all core components (Basic Needs, Education, Early Care/Out of School Time, Employment, Health, and Juvenile Justice), "lack of transportation is a barrier to accessing services for children and youth."

Over time, the planning processes and projects of the Thurston Region have matured. With continued funding, the separate rural and tribal programs evolved into a single coordinated **Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (RT)**. Throughout the life of RT, we have honed service hours and routes, took advantage of expanded transit service in key areas, and sought efficiencies.

In September 2014, we took a leap forward with a more routed program, increasing efficiency and adding mobility options.

Village Vans continues to provide work-related transportation for low-income clients, as well as a successful training program for drivers. This program goes beyond driver training and a basic skills curriculum, resulting in a high percentage of participants finding career path employment. Unfortunately, due to changes in federal funding policy, this program no longer qualifies for funding under the Consolidated Grant Program. Intercity Transit has committed to funding the program for another year (2015-16) and will seek other grant funds.

Thurston County Bus Buddies - a successful transplant from a neighboring county - builds on the success of Intercity Transit's Travel Training Program. This critical support eases people into using fixed route service - which can provide more spontaneous and independent transportation options.

Nisqually Transit - Over the past year, the Nisqually Indian Tribe improved mobility for its members and residents. **Nisqually Transit** provides on-reservation services, bringing passengers to the Tribal Center and other locations for jobs, training, and essential services. Nisqually Transit also provides "last mile" service to help people connect with RT and Intercity Transit for longer trips.

Northwest Connections, the contracted service provider for RT, added a capital project this cycle - asking to replace vehicles to improve efficiency and safety for riders and comply with age and mileage requirements of the contract.

Over the past several years, creating the prioritized project list proved painless. Not for the first time, the benefits of being a single county RTPO were apparent to TRPC and the partners. While supportive of many programs of adjacent counties, we did not have to prioritize across county lines.

Regional Support

Thurston's regional policymakers remain strong and consistent in their support of coordination efforts and programs for people with special needs. When Intercity Transit reduced its service boundaries over 10 years ago, an outcry from rural communities resonated with County Commissioners and rural Councils, galvanizing their interest in potential solutions. As a result of coordination activities, the Thurston Regional Planning Council - for the first time in its nearly 40-year history - became a direct provider of transportation services. Moving from a planning to implementation was challenging, but regional policymakers take pride in their new role.

For the past several years, the Region has worked on the *Creating Places Preserving Spaces Sustainable Development Plan*. This federally funded project originated from the US Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Environmental Protection. The agencies recognized that they could no longer operate in silos, needing to work together - and encourage communities to work together - to reach a more sustainable future.

Many of the Priority Goals of that Plan support transportation for all - including those with special needs.

- Create vibrant centers, corridors, and neighborhoods while accommodating growth.
- Create a robust economy through sustainable practices.
- Ensure that residents have the resources to meet their daily needs.
- Make strategic decisions and investments to advance sustainability regionally.

The Region considers the Coordinated Plan as a reflection of current and projected future needs, services, and gaps that will change as new challenges, opportunities, and strategies emerge. Like the plan, the projects will also change over time. While the current /solutions projects have improved mobility for residents of the region, they are designed to adapt to changing needs.

Thanks...

The Appendix includes a full list of participants over the life of the Forum. Special thanks are due to many stalwart partners: elected officials and other members of the Thurston Region Planning Council and Transportation Policy Board, TOGETHER!, Intercity Transit, Northwest Connections/Transpro, Thurston County Food Bank, Area Agency on Aging, Headstart/ECEAP, various Thurston County departments , Catholic Community Services, Paratransit Services, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, ROOF, Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County, Senior Services for South Sound, Mercy Housing, and staff of the Washington State Department of Transportation, ACCT, Community Transportation Association of America (and Northwest). These organizations and individuals stayed at the planning table from the beginning, providing technical assistance, encouragement and gentle nudging toward coordination.

Service Area

The Plan supports all of Thurston County, which is located in the Southern part of Western Washington at the terminus of Puget Sound. It is the 32nd largest county in the state, with 727 square miles of landmass. More than 91 percent of the land area is unincorporated.

Over 262,000 people live in the county, which is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Map 2 illustrates the location of the major communities, which include Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Rainier, Bucoda, Rochester, Tenino, Grand Mound, and the Nisqually Indian Reservation and Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation. Many of the communities are located along major transportation corridors, with Interstate 5 traversing the county.

While the point of origin for trips for some of the projects outlined in the plan are limited to a specific geographical location (i.e., a specific low-income housing complex or the Nisqually and Chehalis Indian Reservations in rural areas), destinations radiate to all parts of the county and beyond. Other projects supply services that are available countywide. The early JARC Plan focused solely on issues within the Thurston County Border, but this update continues to recognize the need to improve coordination across county lines. TRPC estimates that 15,000 people commute into the Thurston Region for jobs, while 30,000 residents commute out – most to Pierce and southern King County. We project that those numbers will double by 2025. Cross county coordination will only grow as a priority.

Regional Conditions

Unique geographical factors in Thurston County guide transportation policies and strategies. The coastal lowlands, prairie flatlands, Cascade foothills, and numerous lakes, rivers, and wetlands draw people to the area, but also direct where transportation facilities – and development – can locate.

Despite only 52 clear days a year and an average annual rainfall of 51 inches, some residents engage in year-round biking or walking. Grey days and early winter nightfall require a transportation system with safe, well lighted, well maintained, clearly marked sidewalks, roads and trails. Because of decreasing revenues, tribes, local jurisdictions, and the state face increasing challenges to preserve and maintain system safety.

The Thurston Region is the economic and cultural heart of South Puget Sound. Government, education, health care, manufacturing, and service sectors fuel our economy. Ports, freeways, and railroads move our goods, and leafy neighborhoods, urban centers, and open spaces provide us places to live, work, and play. But it's our people – our progressiveness and inclusiveness – that make our growing community attractive to new residents and adaptive to new ideas. The choices we make today will shape our community's economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the coming decades. (Creating Places Preserving Spaces December 2013).

Many people perceive that rural communities provide safe, pastoral settings for biking and walking – either as the primary mode, or to connect to other transportation services. However, limited multi-modal facilities and high accident rates on state routes and other two-lane rural roads belie that assumption. For most of the rural community, the state route also serves as Main Street.

The Interstate 5 corridor runs through the heart of the region, providing access for transporting people, goods and services to the neighboring counties to the south and north. However, the freeway also divides communities, creating gaps for travelers, whether by foot, bike, or automobile.

Even with growing challenges, the region successfully maintains and operates a system comprised of dozens of transit routes and services, over 2,000 miles of roadway, hundreds of miles of bike lanes and sidewalks, over 60 miles of mostly-connected trails, almost 90 miles of rail, a marine terminal and a regional airport.

Population

Current Conditions

At 262,388, Thurston County is the sixth most populated county in the State of Washington and one of the fastest growing. We estimate that we'll add between 140,000 and 170,000 more people by 2035.

The patterns of growth are critical to transportation and land use planning. Between 1980 and 1990, the incorporated county grew at nearly the same rate (2.6% per year) as the unincorporated county (2.7% per year). During the 1990s, cities grew faster (3.3% versus 1.9% per year). During the 2000s, the cities and the unincorporated areas again grew at a slightly slower rate (1.9% versus 2.2% per year). In 1980, 58 percent of the population lived in the unincorporated area, up from 47 percent in 1970. However, in 2013, the proportion has decreased to 53 percent of the total population.

In addition, growth is not evenly distributed among the cities. Between 2000 and 2010, the highest rates of growth were in the southern portion of the county, with the Yelm UGA experiencing a rate of 6.5 percent and the Grand Mound UGA at 5.2 percent.

The Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation report a population of 691 in 2000, up from 491 in 1990. However, our data reflects only the Thurston County portion, as the majority of this population resides in the Grays Harbor County portion of the tribal lands. The Nisqually Tribe population shows only a slight change in population over the same period.

Future Population Growth

Forecasters at the Thurston Regional Planning Council develop projections for future population based on a series of assumptions about human behavior, and by interpreting past trends in the local, state and national economy.

Because of the size of the wave of aging “baby boomers” and the community’s many amenities – a multimodal transportation system, and advanced health care and retirement facilities – older adults will comprise a larger percentage of the total population. Especially for seniors “aging in place” in the more remote areas of the county, transportation and other social systems will be under pressure to expand to match changing needs. Senior service providers note the often-marked difference between the needs of a 65 year old and an 85 year old and the growth of the latter’s population segment and that impact on service provision.

The Sustainable Thurston project began in early 2011 with a simple question for the Thurston Region's quarter-million residents; *How do you want your community to look, function, and feel in 2035?* Online and in person, thousands of people considered the challenges and opportunities of growth from an economic, environmental, and social sustainability perspective. Just as important, these engaged residents helped the Sustainable Thurston Task Force craft a regional vision of sustainable development that encompasses land use, housing, energy, transportation, food, health, and other interconnected issues.

Employment and Commuting

Overview

Thurston County is often characterized as a “government town” with that sector providing the largest share of the jobs. However, in recent years, large retail chains supplied jobs, goods and services for local residents, but also attracted consumers from neighboring counties. Food and other service jobs are also growing. These retail jobs – often the first entry into the workforce for low-income residents – pay minimum wage, with limited or non-existent benefits, and schedules that make using traditional transit service or ridesharing difficult. These schedules also exacerbate transportation challenges in childcare management.

In the past several years – and likely continuing into the future - economic conditions resulted in cuts to state and local government jobs. That trend means that people may be traveling farther to find jobs with similar income potential – or just to find employment.



While the majority of jobs are housed in the urban cores of the larger cities, employers and workers are scattered throughout the region. The transportation system cannot simply carry workers from large residential community X to large employment site Y, but instead must provide a variety of routes and travel options.

Current Conditions

In Thurston County, total civilian employment in 2010 stood at 128,500 jobs and military employment at 4,150 jobs. We forecast that to grow to total employment of 199,700 by 2040, with 4,700 military jobs. State employment is the largest employer, accounting for 23,000 full and part-time jobs. State worksites have experienced consolidations and shifts in location over the past several years. Between 1989 and 2009, the state employed around 16 employees per 100 people. This decreased slightly in ensuing years and expected to decline further by 2015.

Between 1989 and 2009, the location of state worksites has changed. In absolute numbers of growth and decline by jurisdiction, Lacey has seen an increase of 36 percent, Olympia has experienced a 2 percent decline and Tumwater has experienced a 46 percent increase. We are now seeing new state worksites recently constructed or planned on the Capitol Campus.

These changes in siting for the largest employer in the region result in mobility impacts for many employees and potential employees. Because these state agencies serve a number of special needs clients, these location decisions also affect the clients' ability to travel to services. State agency worksites located on the Capitol Campus and other areas in the urban core enjoy a high level of transit frequency. These areas are also supported by multi-modal facilities, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, broadening mobility options. When state employment chooses to move to the fringes of the urban cores, transit frequency and multi-modal amenities may decrease.

Local government, including school districts, is the second largest employer. The same transportation issues that arise from siting of state employment away from the urban core apply to the remote placement of school districts.

The largest private employer is Providence St. Peter Hospital, with 2,400 employees. Group Health Cooperative and the Capital Medical Center are also among the top employers in Thurston County. Although these facilities are located close to urban centers and have regular transit service, the 24/7 operations make the use of commute alternatives difficult. Intercity Transit's service day generally ends at 11:00 p.m., longer than most providers do, and service on weekends is more limited. Shift work also makes for difficult carpool matching.

Tribal Government has become a major regional economic force. Chehalis Tribal enterprises, including the Great Wolf Lodge, Conference Center and Water Park, Lucky Eagle Casino, Chehalis Tribal Construction, Eagle's Landing Hotel and several convenience stores, employ in excess of 1,575 people, with additional employees in tribal government and community services. The rural location of both the Chehalis and Nisqually worksites limits transportation choices for workers, as do shifts and some unpredictability in start and stop times.

Retail stores, such as Wal-Mart, Costco, Safeway, Target, and Cabela's are major employers. Thurston County is also home to several warehouse and distribution facilities. Many of these are located in the Hawks Prairie area of Lacey, which is not served by Intercity Transit.

Small business also plays a major role in the region's employment. Approximately 51 percent of the covered employees in Thurston County were employed in firms or state departments that have more than 100 people. While those firms provided the bulk of the jobs, the largest number of businesses had nine or fewer employees.

Future Projections

Currently, one in four workers commutes outside the region to work, more than travel to Thurston County for employment. These outbound commuters are projected to represent an even higher percentage of the labor force by 2025. Outbound commuters are expected to grow from 26 percent of the civilian labor force in 2005 to 33 percent by 2030. The reasons for this outbound commute are largely driven by the availability of jobs and income potential. Thurston County's job market pales in comparison to the volume of work and higher compensation available in Pierce and King Counties to the north.

Certain employment sectors are expected to outpace others as we look to the future. In 2030, for example, projections show 20,700 jobs in the Retail Trade sector; 25,300 in the Education, Health, and Social Services sector; 4,460 in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector; and 11,850 in the Accommodation and Food Services sector. These sectors, which include restaurant, consumer and health services, often provide low-wage employment with shift work outside the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. hours. This results in continuing transportation challenges even as job opportunities grow.

Most people are also traveling increased distances for jobs and other destinations. Daily vehicle miles traveled per driver is forecasted to increase to 38 miles per day by 2025. More travel and more miles also equate to more automobiles. During the period 2006 through 2008, 27 percent, or more than one in four Thurston Region households owned three or more vehicles. However, in the rural communities and among low-income families, vehicle ownership is more of a challenge, with approximately 12 percent of rural and tribal residents reporting to the Census that they do not have vehicles available.

Education and Quality of Life

Education and Training

Thurston County houses a variety of educational opportunities. These include both private and public primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. A number offer programs outside regular school hours, providing greater accessibility to working adults and students. However, this advantage is diminished if transportation options are limited or unavailable during evening and weekend hours.

Nearly 70 schools are located in Thurston County (3 colleges/universities, 11 traditional high schools, 14 middle schools, 41 elementary schools, and several private and alternative schools.) While most are comprehensive and offer a full range of academic activity programs, non-traditional schools are also available. New Market

Vocational Skills Center, for example, provides technical and professional training classes for high school students in the Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, and Lewis counties. Serving an average of 700 students, students earn high school or college credits, as well as a variety of industry certifications and licenses that meet national industry standards.

South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) is the largest institution of higher education in Thurston County, with an enrollment of more than 6,500 students. SPSCC offers day and evening classes, basic and continuing education coursework, job skills training, and personal enrichment courses at its main and branch campuses. The College's tradition of vocational training continues, with more than 30 technical programs currently offered. The college also cooperates with private companies and public agencies to provide customized training and professional development. This community college plays an important role in the WorkFirst program, coordinating with other state agencies to improve training and employment for low-income residents. SPSCC is planning to move and expand its Lacey site – collocating with the Thurston Economic Development offices. Intercity Transit provides both the main campus and the future Lacey site with frequent service.

education

noun

1. the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life.
2. the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills, as for a profession.
3. a degree, level, or kind of schooling.
4. the result produced by instruction, training, or study.

The Evergreen State College is a public college of liberal arts and sciences. With an enrollment of over 4,800, the college provides an evening and weekend program geared to working adults in addition to a full-time academic undergraduate program. In addition, Evergreen provides upper-division and Tribal programs. Three graduate programs offer master's degrees in environmental studies, public administration, and teaching. In addition, Evergreen offers educational programs at its Tacoma campus, a tribal program at reservation sites, and a program in Grays Harbor County.

Saint Martin's University, a four-year comprehensive university, offers 21 undergraduate programs, six graduate programs, and numerous pre-professional and certification programs. More than 1,500 students attend the main campus in Lacey or at extension campuses at Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Centralia College.

Though located in Lewis County, Centralia College plays an important role in the education of Thurston County residents. The oldest continuously operating community college in the state of Washington, Centralia offers professional, technical, transfer, and basic skills programs to its 10,444 students from the service area of Lewis County and south Thurston County. The University of Washington Branch campus in downtown Tacoma serves a comparable role.

Both the Nisqually and Chehalis Tribes have aggressive training and education programs for their youth, encouraging higher education. Travel to and from the area's colleges, university and other training programs is an important element in planning regional transportation strategies. The Region's Rural & Tribal Transportation Program provides services for both Tribes.

Traditional transit provides some of its highest service levels to the institutions of higher learning in the community. Typically, the routes have extended hours and lower headways. However, for rural residents, for those traveling from non-traditional work hours, or with childcare concerns, mobility choices are limited.

Social Services

Thurston County is home to many organizations and agencies supplying human services. State agencies such as the Department of Social and Health Services, Health, and Employment Security are headquartered in this county. Other regional and local public and private entities focus on categories such as emergency services, children's services, health and related services, and family, youth and senior programs. Because many of these services are located in the urban areas of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater, transportation to these areas is critical for county residents.

Several social service organizations are important members of the Forum, working to plan and benefiting from the services. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County, ROOF, and the Thurston County Health and Social Services Department worked together to coordinate the needs and schedules of after-school programs for at-risk youth to allow for efficient use of RT services. The County Commission recently explored ways to provide afterschool transportation throughout the region.

Social service providers and clients often report frustration with accessibility to social services. The hours of service, especially for required visits to governmental agencies, may not coincide with the schedules of public transit. Often several destinations are required in a single day, made difficult by the need to transfer and wait for connecting services. Clients also note duplication of services and the need to “tell their whole stories” to each entity because of a lack of information sharing and case management tools. Often general social service providers do not have information on transportation options, assuming that distributing Intercity Transit passes will meet all client transportation needs.

A past Thurston County health professional described the region's social service support as "a mile wide and an inch deep." She referred to the hundreds of non-profits in the area - created out of passion and often maintained on a shoestring. These organizations may supply services to a specific subset of the population and may exist for just a short time or become a part of the fabric of the community. The "services only for "people from Iowa with red hair" concept is also rampant in the veteran's community. Coordination is needed not only in transportation, but also in service provision.

Demographics

Age Distribution

Overall, the region's population is getting older. Census figures show that in 2000, the median age was 36.5 years, up from 33.6 years in 1990. However, some interesting distinctions can be noted in the age characteristics between the different areas of the County. Yelm, for example, had the youngest population, with a median age of 30.8, and a higher proportion of its population age 19 and under (35 percent) compared to the county average of 28 percent.

The 2000 Census also indicates a younger population on the Chehalis and Nisqually Reservations. For the Chehalis Tribe, the median age was 24.5, with 44 percent of the population under the age of 19. On the Nisqually Reservation, the median age was 25.8 years, with 41 percent of the population under 19.

The City of Olympia had the oldest median age, at 36 years, and the lowest portion under the age of 19 (24 percent). Olympia also had the highest proportion of its population between the ages of 20 and 64 (62 percent). The county average was 60 percent.

Migration is one factor contributing to the growth of seniors in the region. For the last two decades, the County has been fifth in the state for immigration of people 55 and older. Amenities attractive to an older demographic – advanced health care and retirement facilities – may draw many retirement-age people to the county. For the same reason, it is expected that as people who live in the Thurston Region retire, they will age-in-place here rather than relocate.

In 2000, persons age 65 and over constituted 11 percent of the total population. That climbed to roughly 12 percent in 2010 and is expected to reach 16 percent by 2020. The first of the "baby boomers" reached 65 in 2011.

Disability Status

The Census asks about several types of disability: sensory, physical, mental, self-care and mobility. The Bureau defines disability as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition that makes it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, self-care, learning, and remembering. It can also impede a person from the ability to leave the home alone or work at a job.

In Thurston County, as of 2009-12 ACS data, 30,248 civilian non-institutionalized people have a disability. This reflects over 12 percent of the population. Of these, 35.2 percent were 65 years of age and over, and 22.5 percent had incomes below the poverty level. The non-institutionalized

people in this age group (i.e., not in nursing homes) are characterized by 35.3 percent with a disability. Of the total civilian non-institutionalized disabled population between ages 18 and 64, 42 percent are employed, comprising 6.6 percent of the employed population. The Disability Statistics Center at the University of California notes that disability is often correlated with poverty. In Thurston County, 29.5 percent of the population with incomes below the poverty line had a disability.

The percentage of persons with disabilities in high poverty areas such as the Chehalis Reservation is staggering. In the HeadStart program in 2000-01, nearly 12 percent of children had a professionally diagnosed and documented disability. According to Tribal Planning staff, double the norm of disability ratio should be assumed for the reservations: a 65 percent higher rate of drug/alcohol related illnesses; a diabetes rate that is three times the norm; significantly higher rates of rheumatoid arthritis, tuberculosis, and heart disease; a much higher assault rate which translates to early and high rates of disability; and a higher rate of birth defects and mental illness.

As a general rule, organizations that support persons with disabilities assume that roughly 30 percent of persons with disabilities are clients of local, state or federal programs. Coupled with the data that perhaps 95 percent of people with developmental disabilities are unable to drive, this population faces daunting challenges. Cuts to transit service and complimentary paratransit service resulted in persons with disabilities having to leave their jobs because of lack of reliable transportation. This population also faces critical life-threatening concerns during and following disaster situations.

Language Issues

Several Census questions identify the level of ability to speak English, and the specific language spoken at home. Further, the Bureau defines as “linguistically isolated” those households in which no member aged 14 and above speaks English “very well.” The latest American Community Survey shows that 13.5 percent of Thurston County residents age 5 and older reported that they spoke a language other than English at home. However, only a small proportion of the households (1.9 percent) were linguistically isolated.

Of the 100,766 households in the county, 4,889 speak Spanish, 2,842 other Indo-European languages speaking a language other than English at home, 38 percent speak Spanish, 23 percent other Indo-European languages, 5,004 Asian and Pacific Island languages and 459 speak other languages.

In this region, 1.0 percent of households were considered linguistically isolated in 2000. The majority of those spoke Asian and Pacific Island languages at home. Geographically, the highest percentages in 2000 (the most recent year for detailed geography) were located in Lacey (2.6 percent) and the Chehalis Reservation (2.7 percent). Social service providers in the region consider this category underreported, with many undocumented residents not reporting, and some inaccurate reporting as a result of language challenges.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

With the passage of time, Thurston County is becoming more diverse. In 1970, over 97 percent of the population was White/Caucasian. By 1990, that component had decreased to 92 percent. Changes in reporting choices in the Census make direct comparisons difficult, but in 2006, 86 percent of respondents defined themselves as White only. The Asian population is 4.4 percent, and those who define themselves as two or more races comprise almost 4 percent of the County's population.

The category Hispanic represents those of Hispanic origin, and may denote persons of any race. This population grew from less than 1 percent of the population in 1970 to 5 percent in 2000, with over 9,000 people self-reporting as Hispanic. The American Indian and Alaska Native population was 2 percent, the same as the Black/African American category. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander was 1 percent.

Social service providers – especially in the rural agricultural areas – suggest that Census race and ethnicity percentages are underreported. In the Rochester area, for example, these providers estimate that in the neighborhood of 40 percent of the population are Hispanic, many of whom are undocumented. Even for those categorized as citizens, there appears to be a fear of responding to Census inquiries.

Economics

Income

Thurston County's median household income was \$46,975 in 2000, projected to be \$59,885 in 2008, higher than adjacent counties. Income, however, ranges widely among the local jurisdictions. In 2000 (the most recent year for detailed geography) Lacey recorded the highest of the incorporated jurisdictions with a median of \$43,848. In the past, the south county towns and cities have had a substantially lower median household income than the north county cities. Data from the 2000 Census, however, showed that for median household income, Rainer ranked third among the county's cities. On its surface, this upward income trend in the rural communities may be a positive. However, with an influx of people from outside the region moving to the rural areas, housing prices and the cost of other services are rising, creating a further challenge for those in the lower income brackets.

Poverty

Data from the 2000 Census provided a glimpse of how wealth and poverty is distributed in the Thurston Region. In 1999, the countywide average of households earning less than \$15,000 was 12 percent. In Yelm and Olympia, approximately 18 percent fit the same category. Further analysis shows that households with the highest incomes are located in the urban growth areas of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater.



Poverty thresholds are determined by considering household size, ages of householders and number of related children. For Thurston County, 8.8 percent of its population was considered to fall below the poverty line in 2000. When comparing cities and towns, the heaviest rates of poverty were concentrated in the south county town of Bucoda, with more than triple the county average. Over the previous decade, the rate of poverty had fallen in other small rural communities. However, on the Chehalis and Nisqually Reservations, the rates were close to those in Bucoda (Chehalis 19.7 and Nisqually 13.7 percent). Of the cities, Olympia had the highest rate of poverty, in part due to the concentration of social services unavailable in rural areas.

The Nisqually Indian Tribe, in a 1995 community needs assessment, estimated that there is a 25 to 28 percent unemployment rate among the labor force on their rural Reservation. For the Chehalis Reservation, the enrolled tribal population experienced an unemployment rate, as a

percentage of the labor force, of 42 percent. The number of employed persons with incomes below poverty level was 52 percent of the employed labor force. The 2000 census reported that 34.1 percent are not in the labor force.

Poverty rates for households headed by single mothers in 2000 were high across the board, with 29 percent below the poverty line in the County. For Yelm, the number was much higher at 41 percent and for Lacey 36 percent. Comparable figures for the period 2006-2008 were 26% county-wide, 41% for the Yelm School District area (which is larger than the city), and 27% for Lacey.

Veterans' Services and Transportation

Introduction

In general, veterans have the same mobility needs as their fellow community members. However many veterans are physically or mentally challenged due to the injuries and post-traumatic stress incurred during or following wartime service. These wounds hinder veterans' ability to cope with many aspects of daily living including problems with relationships, employment, housing, and substance abuse. A variety of benefits, services, and programs assist veterans in overcoming or compensating for the challenges they experience. Unfortunately, there may be barriers for certain individuals who seek assistance due to a lack of transportation options. Barriers may be more apparent for indigent veterans that live in rural areas, but it is not clear as to what extent the demand for transportation services for veterans with special needs are relative to existing services.

This section identifies the facilities and programs that serve veterans within or close to Thurston County. It also describes the transportation services that are available to eligible veterans as offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington State, and through Veteran Service Organizations. Lastly, this report summarizes gaps in service and proposes recommendations for increasing mobility options for veterans with special needs.

Veteran Population

Several major military installations are located in the Puget Sound region, including Joint Base Lewis McChord (Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base officially became a single military installation in 2010), Naval Base Bremerton, and Naval Stations Everett and Whidbey. Thousands of military service members from all over the U.S. choose to retire or separate from active duty and reside in the greater Puget Sound Region. In addition, thousands of Washington State residents served in several conflicts from WWII to the current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are generating the largest population of veterans since the Vietnam War.

The 2000 U.S. Census counted more than 670,000 veterans living in Washington State. One state resident, out of every nine, is a veteran; furthermore, Washington ranks fifth in the nation in the portion of veterans in the overall population.

Veteran Population in Thurston County

Thurston County is a desirable community for veterans to reside in because of the area's quality of life and its proximity to U.S. Department of Defense

installation facilities, installation support services, and federal and state veteran services. Approximately 29,500 veterans currently reside in Thurston County. This represents nearly 12 percent of Thurston County's total population. The characteristics of the county's veteran population includeⁱ:

- 89 percent are male
- 10,100 veterans are aged 65 or older (33 percent of total age cohort in the county)
- 1,400 are aged 85 or older (30 percent of total age cohort in the county)
- 1,200 (4 percent) veterans live in poverty and 1,320 (4.5 percent) are on the threshold of poverty
- 7,700 Veterans have some form of disability
- 570 veterans reside in households with no automobiles, and of these 60 percent have a disabilityⁱⁱ
- 160 veterans live in assisted living residences; two-thirds have a disability and two-thirds are over age 80ⁱⁱⁱ

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in Fiscal Year 2008^{iv}, Veterans affairs:

- disbursed \$90.4 million in compensation and pension payments to Thurston County veterans
- treated 4,859 unique local veterans at Veteran Affairs health care facilities
- disbursed \$28 million in medical care coverage
- spent \$5.6 million on education and vocational rehabilitation services in the county

Special Needs Characteristics

Veterans from all war eras require special care and assistance due to seen and unseen injuries that occurred in the line of duty or following their period of service. Aging veterans require geriatric care and eventually assisted living for some. Current challenges that returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan struggle with include:

- combat wounds
- head injuries/brain trauma
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms and readjustment challenges
- Washington National Guard and Federal Reserve Component veterans are having challenges returning to their former jobs
- risk of becoming homeless
- significant marital problems that develop following active duty

Veterans face significant employment challenges. The November 2009 national unemployment rate for veterans was 8.5 percent compared to 9.1 percent for non-veterans.^v Although the overall unemployment rate for veterans is lower, younger veterans aged 20 to 30 who recently separated from active duty service, have a 14.3 percent unemployment rate compared to 12.3 percent for non-veterans in the same age group.

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has identified four major demographic changes^{vi} that will take place in the state's population of veterans over the next twenty years, which will significantly affect the demand for long-term care and other services including transportation.

1. There will be a sharp increase in veterans over age 85:
 - Significant growth in the very elderly reflects the aging of WWII and Korean War veterans. This age group will slowly decline until 2025, then Vietnam-era veterans will begin to comprise this age group.
 - In 2010, veterans will comprise almost one-quarter of the total state population aged 85 and older.
 - Veterans receiving long-term care have higher rates of physical and mental health problems compared to non-veterans.
 - These individuals have limited mobility options.

2. A continued increase in the number of aging veterans considered medically indigent:
 - The growing number of aging veterans will lead to an increase in the number of medically indigent veterans – those that will require care in a State Veterans Home.
 - Low-income veterans generally have a higher rate of poor health conditions than veterans with higher incomes do.
 - Low-income veterans have limited mobility options.

3. Aging Vietnam-era veterans will continue to represent one-third of total veterans:
 - Vietnam veterans receive the largest share of service-connected disability benefits.
 - By 2020, approximately 90 percent of the remaining Vietnam veteran population will be between 65 and 84 years of age.
 - Approximately 31 percent of male Vietnam veterans suffer from PTSD sometime during their lives and one quarter are afflicted by war-related disability.

4. There are unique characteristics of the veteran population under age 45:
 - There will be a greater portion of women veterans.
 - There will be a more racially diverse veteran population.
 - The current trend indicates the demand for physical and mental health services for current redeploying veterans will remain high.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Services and Facilities

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the nation's largest provider of services and assistance to veterans, their dependents, their surviving spouses, or the child or parent of a deceased spouse. It also assists uniformed service members. The VA offers a wide range of benefits including, healthcare, disability, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and

employment, home loan guaranty, dependent and survivor benefits, life insurance, and burial benefits.

VA Health Care

The VA health care system is VA's single largest expenditure. It operates the nation's largest integrated health care system with more than 1,400 sites of care, including hospitals, community clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and other various facilities. The veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 20 primarily administers health care services to veterans in Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. The VA Puget Sound Health Care System is the largest VA health service network in VISN 20. In FY 2008, 68,102 veterans came to VA Puget Sound for treatment and care, including 739,301 visits for outpatient care.

The VA operates 22 health care facilities in Washington State. The two largest medical care centers are the American Lake Hospital in Lakewood and the Seattle Beacon Hill Hospital. A variety of comprehensive inpatient and outpatient services are available at these facilities. In addition, there are several community based outpatient clinics, and veteran counseling centers throughout the Puget Sound area; notably, the Veterans Center in Tacoma which offers PTSD counseling for combat veterans and veterans who are victims of sexual assault. A new center in Centralia and planned satellite in Lacey will improve access to care for Thurston County veterans.

Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is a Governor's Cabinet level agency that is responsible for assisting veterans residing within the State of Washington. The primary services and products provided by the WDVA include long-term health care services, a variety of veteran services programs, and administrative services.

WDVA Long-Term Health Care Services

The WDVA administers and operates three long-term health care homes in Retsil, Orting, and Spokane for honorably discharged veterans and in some instances their spouses or widows. The residents of these homes are typically disabled, indigent or imminently indigent due to the high cost of long-term health care. The homes' interdisciplinary staff fosters an environment that promotes the residents' independence. WDVA has sustained a bedfill rate of 95 percent or better. Federal per diem grants offset the cost of care for medically indigent veterans. Private nursing homes do not receive this per diem.

WDVA Veteran Services Program

Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP)

The "2009 Point-in-Time Homeless Census Report for Thurston County" ^{vii} counted 65 homeless veterans residing in Thurston County; of these, 37 percent reported they were recipients of VA assistance. The WDVA partners with local governments, veteran service organizations, and community organizations in King, Pierce, Thurston, and Kitsap counties to reduce homelessness by referring veterans to employment. This program is funded through a U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training services grant

Between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009, the HVRP assisted 42 homeless veterans in Thurston County. This program provides:

- immediate needs – food, clothing, transportation (bus passes, limited vehicle repairs and fuel expenses), and access to shelter (emergency, transitional, and permanent housing)
- outreach to homeless veterans providers
- employability needs and skills assessment
- job readiness services, including transitional housing assistance, basic skills training, résumé development and employment opportunity referrals
- 90, 180, and 270-day job retention follow-up

Clients access these services through the WDVA Service Center at the Central Office in downtown Olympia.

Transitional Housing Program

WDVA provides a VA Grant and Per Diem Program. Building 9 for Veterans Transitional Housing Program is located at the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil, WA. The Veterans Home sits on a 31-acre bluff overlooking the Sinclair Inlet.

The 40-bed transitional housing facility is available to assist those in need of stable housing, vocational rehabilitation, and increased income potential. Veterans are surrounded with supportive staff and wraparound services designed to lead to their successful completion of the program, and a successful return to the community.

Incarcerated Veterans Services Program (IVRS)

Thurston, King, Pierce, and Clark counties are partnering with WDVA in the IVRS program. The program is tailored to fit each county's needs. The overall goal is to help veterans overcome the issues that led to their incarceration, and get their lives back on track. Veterans must be honorably discharged from military service and those incarcerated for sex offenses, arson, or violent crimes are not eligible to participate.

In Thurston County, a WDVA Veterans Benefits Specialist visits Thurston County Corrections Facility on a weekly basis to identify eligible incarcerated veterans. In 2009, 18 Thurston County veterans were enrolled in the program (74 were interviewed). The specialist conducts an individual assessment with each veteran, assist them within the county justice system, and help them determine a successful path for reintegration to the community. Counties can save money by paying for fewer days in jail and by reducing recidivism.

Veterans Disability Services and Support

The WDVA provides advocacy services and representation to ensure veterans and families can understand and navigate the complex federal claims and benefits system. Whereas the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs role is to adjudicate, the WDVA serves to advocate for and assist veterans with processing disability claims. Over 125 contracted service officers throughout the state provide disability claim services and act as legal representatives in the complicated claims process.

These services are available through the WDVA Service Center at the Central Office in downtown Olympia.

Veterans Community-Based Services

The WDVA has a statewide network that offers re-integration services for incarcerated veterans, outreach to minority and women veterans, centralized admissions processing for veterans homes, and estate management for veterans who lack the ability to manage their funds. An agreement with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) conducts outreach and claims services to veterans and widows in private nursing homes and those who are housebound, connecting them with VA health care and financial benefits. This partnership allows DSHS to realign resources and invest in other needy citizens.

Access to these services can be obtained through the WDVA Service Center at the Central Office in downtown Olympia.

Readjustment Programs

The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) program provides grief, deployment stress, and war trauma counseling to veterans and family members. Outpatient services include individual, couples, and family counseling through a statewide network of specialized contract counselors, as well as community education and consultation.

These services are available through a contract licensed counselor in Olympia.

Veterans Conservation Corps assist veterans by providing volunteer opportunities on natural resources restoration projects that help protect and restore Washington's watersheds (rivers, streams, lakes, marine waters, forest and open lands).

This opportunity permits veterans to return to school, work as an intern, an apprenticeship, VA work-study participant, or as a volunteer. Participants will earn valuable work experience that can enhance a resume and provide work references.

WDVA Administrative Services

The WDVA Administrative Services Division is headquartered in Olympia. It supports the three Veterans Homes, the Veterans Services Program, and all administrative and governance functions of the agency. In addition, the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, serves in an advisory capacity to the Governor and the WDVA Director on all matters pertaining to the agency.

The WDVA administrative office includes a service center that is a single stop location for veterans seeking information on a variety of services provided by WDVA including the services described above, as well as guidance to access services offered through the VA.

Thurston County Veterans' Assistance Fund

RCW 73.080.010 provides counties the legislative authority to establish veterans' assistance programs and RCW 73.08.035 provides the authority to

establish a veterans' advisory board. The Thurston County Veterans' Advisory Board, established in October 2006, advises the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners on the needs of local indigent veterans, the resources available to local indigent veterans, and the programs that could benefit veterans and their families. The board is composed of veterans who reside in Thurston County and members are appointed by the County Commissioners. A majority of the advisory board members must be elected officers or members of nationally recognized veteran service organizations.

RCW 73.08.080 allows counties to establish the program's funds through a property tax levy. The 2009 budgeted revenue for the Thurston County Veterans' Assistance Fund was \$737,941. The fund offers assistance to eligible Thurston County veterans, their families and the families of deceased veterans who were honorably discharged from the military. Applicants must meet low income criteria and demonstrate a proof of need. Eligible veterans may receive financial assistance for privation issues, such as past due rent, past due utilities, food, and monthly or daily bus passes. Families of two or more may receive up to \$800 per year and individuals \$500 a year. Veterans must apply for assistance in person at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services in Olympia.

In 2008, 310 veterans or eligible family members received assistance and 764 service encounters were recorded for in-house visits by veterans or eligible family members. In 2009, over 280 veterans or eligible family members have received assistance and over 677 service encounters recorded for in-house visits by applicants. As of December 11, 2009, twenty-six veterans or eligible family members have received bus passes, for a total distribution of 196 daily and monthly bus passes. In 2008, approximately 27 percent of applicants resided in rural Thurston County.

U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Installation Facilities and Services

Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM)

JBLM, home to I Corp, Madigan Army Medical Center, three of the U.S. Army's Stryker Brigades, and several other major commands and subordinate units, is the largest military installation in Washington State. It has over 40,000 soldiers, air men and women, and civilian employees. The post supports over 120,000 retirees and over 47,000 active duty family members that live both on- and off-post.

JBLM – only 14 miles from downtown Olympia via I-5 – is significant to Thurston County veterans and military retirees because of its proximity and the facilities and services it offers to eligible veterans. Prominent on-post facilities include Madigan, the Post Exchange, the Commissary, and Morale, Wellness, and Recreation Facilities. Many military retirees and their dependents regularly visit the joint base for a variety of trip purposes.

Access to JBLM is primarily restricted to active duty personnel and their dependents, military retirees, DOD civilian employees, contractors, and vendors. Individuals seeking entry must have a military identification card and a current DOD vehicle registration permit. Access may be granted to civilians, with valid requests for entry, who register at the main gate near exit 120 on I-5. Registration requires a driver's license, vehicle registration, and proof of auto insurance.

Madigan Army Medical Center (MAMC)

MAMC is one of largest military hospitals on the west coast. It is one of three designated trauma centers in U.S. Army Medical Command and it is the headquarters for Western Regional Medical Command. Severely wounded service members are transported to MAMC from around the world to receive critical care, recovery, and rehabilitative medical services. War time or peace time, the hospital provides a variety of in-patient and out-patient medical services to active duty military personnel of all branches, retirees, and dependents. Madigan also provides specialized care to veterans through arrangements with the VA.

Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES)

AAFES is an agency of the DOD that operates general merchandise stores, convenience stores, grocery stores (commissaries), barber shops, gas stations, food services, and other retail services. In addition to being a major employer of dependents of service members, AAFES generates a significant source of revenue for the DOD's Morale, Wellness, and Recreation program.

The Post Exchange or PX is a general merchandise store that sells a variety of items, such as clothing, household items, cosmetics, home electronics, books, and other items at competitive prices to service members, dependents, and DOD employees. There is no sales tax on merchandise purchased at the PX. The PX is located in an indoor shopping mall environment. It is surrounded by a barber shop, a food court, and miscellaneous gift shops. Located next door to the PX is the Commissary, a grocery store which sells a variety of household staples and international foods at competitive prices (no sales tax, but a surcharge is applied). Many military retirees and their spouses or widows regularly shop at the PX and commissary for the discount prices and the selection of products that may not be available off post.

Morale, Wellness, and Recreation (MWR)

JBLM also provides a variety of attractions through its MWR facilities and programs. The MWR program caters to service members, military families, and retirees. The MWR functions like a municipal parks and recreation department in many respects. It provides a variety of free or discount services and facilities, including child support services, fitness centers, sports equipment rental, organized youth sports and recreation services, leisure education, travel and lodging and reservation services, organized community events, and entertainment. Although some of these services are only available to active duty personnel and their dependents, retirees also take advantage of the majority of the services that are offered.

Army Community Service (ACS)

Army Community Service is an Army-wide program that provides information, assistance and guidance to members of the Army community in meeting personal and family issues beyond the scope of their own resources. ACS offers a single, easily accessible office for those who need help, or wish to discuss their needs or issues confidentially. A follow-up is made to make sure appropriate services have been provided and the issue resolved.

Army Emergency Relief

Army Emergency Relief (AER) is the Army's emergency financial assistance program that assists soldiers, active and retired, their dependents, their widow(ers), and orphans during valid emergencies that require immediate attention. This service is not available to veterans who were discharged prior to retirement. Assistance is provided as an interest free loan, grant or a combination loan and grant. Any emergency must have originated from other than the service member's own actions, such as AWOLs, Article 15, or civilian fines are not normally covered by AER. Eligible emergencies include rental payment, restoring disconnected utilities, emergency auto repairs, and other privation issues. Applicants must apply in person at the ACS office on JBLM.

Transportation Services

For veterans and retirees that are financially independent and able-bodied, daily mobility needs are largely satisfied by privately owned vehicles. As described earlier in this report, there are few public transportation services available to serve residents who don't have access to a car, including transit, Dial-A-Lift service, Village Vans, and Rural and Tribal Transportation (RT) service. In addition to these services that are described elsewhere in this plan, there are other limited transportation options available to veterans. Veterans service organizations such as Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and others are likely to provide informal voluntary transportation services to fellow veterans in need by word of mouth. It is unknown how many trips are accommodated in this manner in Thurston County, but the amount may be substantial.

Existing Services Summary

Intercity Transit (IT)

IT provides fixed route and Dial-A-Lift services throughout the Public Transportation Benefit Area in Thurston County. Veterans can access a variety of veteran service programs and other activity centers in the greater Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm area. In addition, I.T. provides express bus route service to the Lakewood Transit Station in Pierce County, enabling transit connections to a variety of veteran service facilities within the Puget Sound Region. Intercity Transit does not offer Dial-A-Lift service to Pierce County destinations.

Pierce Transit

Pierce Transit offers fixed route bus service and Shuttle (Dial-A-Lift) service in the mostly urban portions of Pierce County including service to American Lake VA Hospital, MAMC, JBLM, and the Tacoma Veterans Center. Passengers traveling to JBLM via Pierce Transit must have a valid military identification card to gain access to the installation. Pierce Transit operates a circulator route, which serves the main post.

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Shuttle Service

The DAV is a national veteran service organization that partners with the VA to provide limited transportation services for veterans needing assistance to attend VA approved healthcare appointments. This service is offered within the VA Puget Sound Healthcare System and is operated from the VA American Lake Hospital in Lakewood. The DAV provides door to door share ride passenger van service to American Lake and Seattle VA Hospitals, other

regional VA clinics, contract clinical services, and MAMC. In 2009, the DAV scheduled over 365 passenger trips originating from Thurston County.

Vehicles are not equipped with wheel chair lifts or other ADA modifications. Passengers must be ambulatory; veterans who require assistance to enter and exit a vehicle cannot use the service. Passengers must schedule their rides 72 hours prior to their appointment. Appointment wait times after arrival can vary depending on the service demand. The DAV also serves military retirees and their dependents, but dependents must be accompanied by veterans or a sponsor. Retirees and dependents must have a valid military identification card to access Madigan. The DAV does not provide transportation services for spouses or dependents of deceased veterans.

VA covers the cost of vehicle registration, insurance, and maintenance, and the DAV coordinates ride scheduling. A fulltime hospital volunteer manages the service. All drivers are volunteers and must pass a physical assessment conducted by the VA. In addition, the DAV provides mandatory in-house driver training for all drivers.

VA Travel Services and Reimbursement

Certain veterans may be provided wheel chair van or ambulance travel services when traveling for approved VA medical care. The VA Puget Sound Healthcare System contracts with cabulance and ambulance providers to fulfill this service. Veterans must meet specific eligibility requirements and apply for this service with VA Travel Services prior to scheduling travel arrangements. In addition, veterans may seek reimbursement for travel costs for medical appointments and a deductible may apply. Deductibles may be waived if their imposition causes a severe financial hardship.

We continue to work on the Recommendations/Follow Up Tasks articulated in the 2012 plan update.

1. Expand the HSTF to include staff/community members that serve veterans in order to better understand the travel needs of veterans in the Thurston Region
2. TRPC and Intercity Transit will expand data collection efforts to better understand the needs of veterans that use public transportation services
3. Explore methods to improve the veteran community's awareness of the variety of travel services available to them

Emergency Transportation Services

Thurston County is Vulnerable to Natural Hazards of the Pacific Northwest

The Thurston Region has experienced multiple disaster events that have threatened individuals, neighborhoods, and communities. Since 1962, Thurston County has received 23 Federal Disaster Declarations; that is almost one major natural disaster every two years. Six events have occurred since 2003. The elderly, people with physical or mental disabilities, people with chronic illness, or people who rely on others for transportation are especially vulnerable if they reside in a geographical area that is at increased risk to the effects of flooding, earthquakes, landslides, wildland fires, volcanism, or prolonged power outages due to severe storms. People with special needs suffered great losses when Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August 2005. Although the Thurston Region has not experienced a catastrophe of this magnitude, it is probable that many individuals with special needs will be at risk if transportation assistance is unavailable during a severe disaster event in this region.

Mobility Dependent Populations More Vulnerable to Natural Hazards

The 126 adult family homes (646 beds) throughout Thurston County provide assisted living care for people with mental health, dementia, and developmental disabilities. In addition, there are 14 skilled nursing care facilities with 961 beds throughout the region. If a large scale disaster such as a magnitude 9 earthquake were to strike the region, many people with special needs will likely require assistance with evacuation, or require transportation assistance for basic needs during response and recovery operations.

Recent history suggests some of the region's population remains vulnerable. In January 1990, flooding on the Nisqually River forced 83 residents from the Nisqually Valley Care Center in McKenna to evacuate to a Red Cross shelter at Yelm High School. The February 1996 flood forced nearly 1,000 people from their homes and nearly 300 people required rescuing. In December 2007, heavy rains and melting snow resulted in record flooding in the Chehalis River Basin. The flooding shut down I-5 and many local roads were closed. The Washington State National Guard rescued 63 people – 17 by helicopter. Local emergency response personnel assisted in the rescue or evacuation of over 300 people in neighboring Lewis County. It is unknown how many people with disabilities were affected by these events, but people without viable transportation options are unarguably dependent on emergency personnel for assistance with evacuation or rescue.

Emergency Action Plans and Regional Coordination

In accordance with RCW 38.52.110 (1), in responding to a disaster, the Board of County Commissioners are directed to utilize the services, equipment, supplies, and facilities of existing departments, offices, and agencies of the state, political subdivisions, and all other municipal corporations thereof including but not limited to districts and quasi municipal corporations organized under the laws of the State of Washington to the maximum extent practicable, and the officers and personnel of all such departments, offices, and agencies are directed to cooperate with and extend such services and facilities upon request notwithstanding any other provision of law.

The recommendation for evacuation will be issued by the Board of County Commissioners, the County Sheriff, the EOC Supervisor, or a local Fire Chief. The local incident commander will direct and control the evacuation. The relocation of people from their homes, schools and places of business is inter-and intra-jurisdictional, with no one person or agency having the authority and responsibility for carrying out an evacuation. However, coordination of the emergency relocation of the population in unincorporated Thurston County from a risk area will be through the Division of Emergency Management and the Emergency Operations Center. Local governments may request assistance from the State of Washington should local resources and capabilities become over extended.

The execution of emergency response and recovery is principally outlined in the “Thurston County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan” in Emergency Support Function #1, Transportation and Evacuation. Local government roles and responsibilities are identified in Section V. Intercity Transit, Thurston County Public Works, Thurston County Emergency Management, the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office, school districts, and other local governments will coordinate operations and resources should an emergency necessitate mass evacuation.

These key agencies share a responsibility in maintaining essential transportation functions:

- Intercity Transit will serve a lead role in the coordination of the emergency transport of people, secure the necessary public and private resources to move people, and serve as a transportation resource in the Emergency Operations Center.
- Thurston County Roads and Transportation Services will coordinate the emergency transport of material and equipment; determine the usable portions of the local street and road network, and other critical tasks such as repair and restoration of the road network.
- Thurston County Emergency Management will coordinate transportation issues with other local emergency management programs through the Emergency Management Council of Thurston County.
- The Sheriff’s Office will provide traffic control and coordinate evacuation, as necessary.
- School districts will coordinate with the Transportation Supervisor for the provision of district transportation assets to assist in meeting emergency transportation needs.

The plan further specifies Intercity Transit's role to coordinate the use of public and private mass transportation resources for the movement of people who lack transportation or have special needs; for example the handicapped, elderly, and institutionalized persons. Intercity Transit's standard operating procedures and concepts of operations are outlined in detail in their "Draft Emergency Preparedness and Security Plan." The demand for transportation resources is event dependent, but Intercity Transit has the ability of mobilizing 90 buses and other assets that could be used during a countywide disaster.

Recommendations

The Thurston County Emergency Management Council was created via an interlocal agreement to coordinate the emergency management activities of the general purpose governments and tribes within Thurston County. The Council is comprised primarily of the emergency managers of the cities and tribes and their monthly meetings are frequently attended by other stakeholders in the region such as fire districts, CAPCOM, Intercity Transit, Thurston County Public Health and Social Services, Providence St. Peter Hospital, the American Red Cross, and others.

Local transportation managers, service providers, and special needs transportation planners should continue to increase their understanding of the emergency evacuation and rescue requirements for people with special needs. The Emergency Management Council and other regional stakeholders will continue to discuss emergency transportation issues and seek opportunities to promote the safety of vulnerable populations during disaster events.

Origins and Destinations

Origins

As reflected in the previous sections, the population spreads across Thurston County. Certainly, concentrations in the urban areas and the rapidly growing rural community of Yelm exist, but the rural areas remain largely low-density. This current and projected density distribution suggests that traditional transit will be an unlikely option in these communities in the near and longer term. As the population ages, people aging in place will create new “origins.” The region’s prioritized projects attempt to address needs in both the rural and urban areas with RT focusing on the less dense rural and suburban areas and Village Vans serving the people in the urban area.

Destinations

Most destinations in the County are now located and will continue to be located in the urban areas. For residents, transportation systems need to focus on travel to these clusters for most of needs identified in outreach efforts. These centers house educational and training facilities, medical and social services, transportation hubs and most of the jobs in the region. The greatest concentration of jobs lies in the urban areas of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater.

Needs and Gaps

Social services professionals define transportation and childcare as the primary barriers to a successful welfare to work transition.

Transportation professionals speculate that some of the areas worst served by transportation are the rural portions of urban counties.

To supplement analysis of the Census and other reports, people in the trenches of social service and transportation provision helped define the needs of the region's people. In addition to the observations listed above, they noted that of people with special needs, many:

- Have limited access to reliable private vehicles and may not be able to obtain a driver's license or insurance.

Social service providers estimate that less than 50 percent of their clients have access to vehicles and that at least 20 percent would have difficulty obtaining a driver's license. Persons with disabilities are even less likely to have access to a vehicle and may have conditions that prohibit or limit vehicle operation.

The Census reports that approximately 12 percent of the Thurston Region population do not own a vehicle. For some, especially in the urban area, this may be a lifestyle choice. However, for many either income or disability may explain lack of an available automobile.

- Have training, compliance (with court, work or school requirements), and work schedules that necessitate cross-town travel in the course of a day.

Social service providers estimate that each client makes at least three trips per day for training and job seeking purposes, with those unlikely to be in the same geographical area.

- Are likely to obtain employment in jobs with non-standard hours and variable non-traditional schedules.

Even though services (social) exist throughout rural Thurston County, access is limited. Transportation is the number one reason why our participants have trouble accessing services... the most immediate need is transportation. Even if services were plentiful, without the means to access them, they are useless. Better public transit, community vans, support for drivers, organized carpools, car sharing, bicycle paths, well promoted mobile services, affordable car repairs and car buying programs are some options that might begin to alleviate this need."

- Rural Thurston County Needs Assessment by Power (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights, June 2014)

Washington's WorkFirst data continues to indicate that almost half of these clients were required to work evening or weekend hours, and a third reported that their hours change each week.

- Have disability challenges that will increase transportation difficulties.

Of those persons with disabilities who are clients of public social service programs, approximately 35 percent reside in rural areas of Thurston County with nearly 8 percent in the Yelm vicinity and 10 percent in the south county areas.

- Are likely to obtain employment in areas that are auto-oriented, rather than pedestrian/transit friendly.

Growing employment in Service sectors often means that people are traveling to strip malls, developments around freeway exchanges, and other situations not conducive to alternative modes. While local jurisdictions are placing greater emphasis on pedestrian friendly conditions at malls and other retail developments, workers still face safety and distance considerations when attempting to use transit, walk, or bike to work.

- Have limited schedule flexibility in work-related activities.

Historically, low-income clients typically enter employment with small employers in food/beverage preparation, domestic service jobs, miscellaneous sales, sales services, medicine and health, typing/stenography, clerical, personal services, production, and education.

Commonalities of most of these positions include: Non-standard hours (including split shifts); locations in strip mall types of developments where commute alternatives are difficult; and characterized as "time-card" types of occupations where the schedule flexibility needed for using public transportation or ridesharing is unavailable.

- Often live in low-density areas not well served by public transportation.

Census 2000 documents the high rates of poverty in Bucoda and Grand Mound. On the rural Nisqually Indian Reservation, a 1995 needs assessment indicated a 25-28 percent unemployment rate among the Tribal Labor Force and that the average annual family income is less than \$12,000. For the Chehalis Reservation, the enrolled tribal population experiences an unemployment rate, as a percentage of the labor force, of 42 percent. The number of employed persons with incomes below poverty level is 52 percent of the employed labor force.

- May be remotely located from subsidized daycare opportunities, requiring additional travel distance and time.

Social service providers indicate that most openings in daycare are in the Lacey area, while most clients live in Olympia and rural areas.

- Often have a high need for childcare.

In 2000, of the 2,750 children in households receiving Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) in the infant to 18-year age group, 1,050 are younger than school age and 1,290 require before and after school childcare. Single parents head more than 40 percent of all homes on the Nisqually Reservation.

- Cannot afford on-demand services such as taxis that would shorten trip times and provide more direct, individual service.

The estimated cost for a one-way taxi ride from the rural areas to the urban core (30 miles) in Thurston County is \$100.

- Are unaware of available services.

The Human Services Transportation Forum determined, and individual and group conversations validated, that more than 60 percent of providers and clients are unaware of services. Since rules and rates change frequently, even those with basic knowledge struggle with a lack of current, accurate information. Many persons with disabilities may face special challenges because materials are not available in a suitable format, the individual may not be able to read, or travel training services may be limited or non-existent. Language barriers may also inhibit certain clients from awareness of available services.

- Have language barriers that make service delivery difficult.

A growing number of Low English Proficiency clients meet the low-income/TANF profile, as the region experiences growth in racial and ethnic groups. Social service providers identified the nearly 400 Vietnamese families in their client base as having serious language barriers.

In its traditional forms, public transportation is unlikely to fill these unmet needs. It is not well suited for timely cross town travel or the complicated transfers necessary for many childcare and work-related trips during a single day. Standard public transportation operates on a fixed schedule and routes that focus on core areas with hours that may not match the needs of this clientele.

Simply put, the geographical distribution of jobs, training, medical and other services does not match the geographical distribution of special needs. Because of this pattern and the low-density of much of the region, a traditional mass transit solution is not viable.

The combination of growing development in the rural and urban fringes and the mostly urban public transportation benefit area may leave clients with potential service at their point of origin or their point of destination, but not both. Transit focuses on the traditional commute peaks, resulting in lack of service for the non-traditional work hours in jobs and training often encountered by this population. Prior to the Rural & Tribal Transportation Program, no public transportation existed for people in many Tribal, rural, and suburban communities.

During the updates, we asked low-income clients: “What are your transportation challenges and what one item would improve your transportation service?” These replies define the “gap” in human terms.

- Car.
- Driver’s license.
- A van and driver available for trips.
- A regular schedule for trips, where every Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., there is a trip to South Puget Sound Community College and every Thursday at 8:15, we could travel to the Community Service Office.
- At least half of my problem is that Intercity Transit doesn’t serve the rural areas.
- We never know the details about what services we can use. Moreover, the rules keep changing.
- The cost of taxis is too high and that is the only way I can attend my night classes.
- Need reliable transportation. Lateness is bad for school, work, and medical appointments. You need to assert that you have reliable transportation in accepting a job. The school will not be flexible if you are late.

The gaps can be categorized as:

- Available Modes – Growth and development patterns, the need to transport children to childcare, the lack of reliable vehicles and licensure, and other factors limit the use of options such as biking, walking and ridesharing.
- Travel Time – Cross-town and cross-county trips require hours of travel, transfers, and wait times. Since training, social service providers, and potential jobs may be spread across the county, many clients leave two to three hours early to ensure timely arrivals.
- Routes – Many rural routes and suburban neighborhood routes either are no longer served by Intercity Transit or have limited services.
- Hours – Most transportation does not provide service that supports non-traditional work hours and split shifts that are often a feature of available jobs. Weekend service is weak to non-existent. Many workers in this category also have schedules that change on a weekly basis, making transportation planning an onerous chore.
- Cost – The cost of alternatives other than transit may be prohibitive for many community members.
- Ease of Use – For many people, riding public transportation is a distant childhood memory. Schedules are intimidating. People articulate a fear of getting off at the wrong stop. Fares are confusing and not coordinated across systems. Eligibility processes are confusing and require early planning.
- Service Information – No single resource explains all the transportation available to the residents of the Thurston Region. Often service information is outdated or incomplete.

The WorkFirst Local Area Planning Partners indicated that traditional fixed route transit solutions are not the answer for their clients. Transit passes are routinely made available to this client group. They are seldom used.

Transportation Services – Thurston County

While a number of transportation providers serve the region, choices for people with special needs are often limited. Some providers serve only students or clients with certain special needs, such as the senior or disabled community. Other providers supply only specific types of trips, such as medical visits covered by Medicaid.

School Districts

School districts are by far the largest public transportation provider in the area, covering the nine school districts of the Thurston Region. A variety of regulatory barriers inhibit school transportation from coordinating with other transportation providers. The Forum and ACCT continue to look for ways to overcome barriers while still meeting the requirements of each entity.

Intercity Transit

Overview

Intercity Transit has been serving the community for 33 years. Funding is supplied by local sales tax, transit fares, contracted services and federal and state grants. A municipal corporation, Intercity Transit provides public transportation for people who live and work in Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Yelm, an area of approximately 94 square miles. This agency operates 25 bus routes, a door-door service for people with disabilities, a vanpool program, specialized van programs, and are active in community partnerships.



The agency supplied about 5.4 million rides in 2013 on fixed-route service and 157,000 on Dial-A-Lift. Fixed-route bus service is available weekdays on 25 routes, 18 routes on Saturdays, and 14 routes on Sundays. The service operates every 15 to 30 minutes on many major corridors during peak weekday travel times and every 30 to 60 minutes during off-peak times. Service is available weekdays from 5:45 a.m. to 11:55 p.m., on Saturdays generally from 8:15 a.m. to 11:55 p.m., and 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sundays. Bus service includes:

- 20 routes serving the greater Olympia/Lacey/Tumwater/Yelm area;
- 5 routes providing express service to Tacoma/Lakewood (Pierce County),
- including connection to the Sound Transit Seattle Express service and Sounder rail;
- Connections to neighboring transit systems including Pierce, Grays Harbor, and Mason, and Amtrak.

Intercity Transit operates: a fleet of 101 buses and 221 vanpool vehicles; a number of transit centers, including two main facilities in Olympia and Lacey and primary transfer stations at Westfield Mall, Tumwater Square, and Little Prairie Center; bus stops, shelters, and park-and-ride lots. Believing in multimodal connections and accessibility, Intercity Transit has bike racks on all buses, and all vehicles are ADA accessible.

Dial-a-Lift and Travel Training

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 mandated that transit agencies provide a complementary paratransit service for people whose disabilities prevent them from using the fixed route bus service. Intercity Transit meets and exceeds the requirements of the ADA with Dial-A-Lift (DAL), a door-to-door, shared-ride public transportation service for people with qualified ADA disabilities that prevent them from using regular Intercity Transit bus service. The Dial-A-Lift service operates at the same times and in the same areas fixed route service operates.

Potential Dial-A-Lift customers must successfully complete an application and eligibility process before being certified to use DAL. People with disabilities that prevent them from getting to or from a fixed route bus stop, boarding or exiting an accessible fixed route bus may be eligible, as well as those persons whose disability prevents them from navigating the system without the assistance of another person. Qualified individuals may request rides on Dial-A-Lift by calling in from one to five days in advance. Intercity Transit offers limited “same-day” service, if time and space permits.

Intercity Transit’s DAL service travels over 50,000 miles every month, providing service to people who live three-quarter miles from a fixed route in the urban areas of Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater, and people who live one and one-half miles from the nearest fixed route in the more rural communities.

Dial-A-Lift offers a free, one-on-one travel training service for people who want to learn to use the fixed route system. This program helps new riders, seniors, and people with disabilities to successfully and comfortably use the regular fixed route system. Intercity Transit’s Travel Training Program contributes in-kind services to support the Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (RT).

service highlight

Thurston Bus Buddies

As an adjunct to Travel Training, Intercity Transit and Catholic Community Services have implemented Thurston County Bus Buddies. This program provides free, one-on-one assistance for people who want a little extra help riding the bus. A bus buddy will:

- Answer questions about riding the bus
- Help you learn new routes and how to make local transfers
- Ride with you to new destinations
- Show you how to make connections with other regional transit services
- Help with online tools
- These volunteers answer questions, help people learn new routes, ride with the clients and offer group trips.

Volunteer bus buddies are experienced riders who want to help others become more comfortable riding the bus.

Vanpool Program

In 2014, Intercity Transit's Vanpool Program celebrates its 32th year of operation. The 214 active Vanpools serve about 1,700 commuters traveling daily through the south Puget Sound and southwest Washington region. The Vanpool Program serves both public and private employers and one end of the commute must be in Thurston County, and provided about 762,000 passenger trips in 2013. Intercity Transit requires a group of at least five commuters to begin a Vanpool. Intercity Transit approves and trains volunteer drivers. Vanpools from other transit systems also serve the Thurston Region.

service highlight

Village Vans



Village Vans is an innovative service envisioned by the Thurston County Human Services Transportation Forum in the late 1990s, and implemented by Intercity Transit in 2002. The program was designed to meet a gap identified in the planning process – lack of transportation for low income families working toward economic independence. At that time, data indicated

that over 70 percent of work search problems for this population were complicated by the lack of transportation, making transition from government aid to a living wage job much more difficult, if not impossible.

With start-up funding from the Federal Transit Administration Job Access, Reverse Commute Program (JARC) and the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services WorkFirst Transportation Initiative (WTI), Intercity Transit developed and implemented the Village Vans Program, which provides advanced reservation, door-to-door transportation to support individuals with low income in their job search activities.

The program continues with funding from JARC and local support as a successful low cost, high impact service. The program recruits van drivers referred by a variety of agencies to participate in the Village Vans Customized Job Skills Training Program. Participants gain current work experience as professional drivers while completing individualized curriculums designed to provide transferable job skills. They also receive guidance and support in their job search. Nearly 98 percent of training participants found good jobs paying more than minimum wage while in the training program. This creative successful program works with representatives from the departments of Employment Security, Social and Health Services, South Puget Sound Community College and other local service agencies to support their client needs.

Intercity Transit is solely responsible for the continuing financial support of Village Vans with the JARC grant, South Puget Sound Community College, Intercity Transit funds, and the value of local in-kind contributions. Village Vans continues to be an important participant in regular and on-going collaboration and coordination efforts through several groups engaged in improving services to low income families.

Carpool Program

Intercity Transit is part of a multi-county effort to support the Rideshare Online program, led by the Washington State Department of Transportation and King County Metro. This system, coupled with a local database and personal assistance, helps customers to identify carpool partners.

Community Vans Program

Intercity Transit makes passenger vans retired from the vanpool fleet available to nonprofit and governmental agencies located in their service area available on a reservation basis. The transit agency houses, maintains, fuels, and insures the vans and charges a per-mile rate for their use. The agency approves and trains the drivers for the Community Van Program.

Surplus Van Grant Program

Intercity Transit makes passenger vans retired from the vanpool fleet available through a grant process to nonprofit and governmental agencies located in their service area. An annual application process makes up-to four retired vans available to provide non-profits providing options for their unmet transportation needs. Grantees must provide transportation with the vans and demonstrate they can insure and maintain the granted vehicle. Grantees must also report passenger trips quarterly for one year.

service highlight

Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (RT)

Reflecting a strong coordinated community effort, Rural & Tribal Transportation (RT) encompasses years of planning, needs analysis, cooperative effort, regular service monitoring, and frequent modification to provide public transportation services and connections to individuals living outside Intercity Transit's (IT) Public Transportation Benefit Area. RT serves the southern and eastern portions of the Thurston Region outside Intercity Transit's service boundaries, connecting to but not duplicating Intercity Transit's routes. Because many services and employment opportunities for this population lie outside Thurston County, RT also connects to Lewis County and will cooperate with Mason, Grays Harbor and Pierce Counties in trip coordination.

RT provides general public service employing a deviated fixed route system, with on-demand service in certain areas and complementary paritransit within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the route. RT's Intercity Service connects the rural communities and cities of Rochester, Grand Mount, Bucoda, Tenino, Rainier, and Yelm; the urban areas of the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Centralia (Lewis County) and the Nisqually Indian Tribe and Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation. This intercity route also feeds into the service areas of Intercity Transit and Twin Transit, providing connections along the I-5 corridor to the north via Sound Transit, Pierce Transit and King County Metro, to Greyhound services in Olympia, and AMTRAK services in Olympia and Centralia.

Realizing that traditional school transportation efficiently and effectively serves certain trip needs, this element contracts with Laidlaw for after school programs in the Rochester, Bucoda and Tenino areas. Thanks to coordination efforts between the partners, different programs share the ride on the school bus. This element serves both the youth participants, but also parents with non-traditional work schedules.

RT operates weekdays from approximately 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. While there is a demand for evening and weekend service, the small number of potential passengers does not translate into efficient service delivery. The community continues to seek alternative solutions.

service highlight

Nisqually Transit



In response to gaps identified in the Regional Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan for the Thurston Region, in 2014, the Nisqually Indian Tribe began the Nisqually Transit program to serve its members and resident.

Nisqually Transit provides deviated fixed route “shuttle service” between the Upper and Lower Reservation areas, with major stops at the Health Clinic/Library and the New Tribal Center, with connections to Intercity Transit and Rural and Tribal Transportation (RT) routes. The service operates Monday through Friday from approximately 7:30 am to 6:00 pm, depending on the route. There is no service when tribal offices are closed.

In addition to the shuttle service, Nisqually Transit also supplies “call request service” for rides beyond the routes – as far as the Yelm and Hawks Prairie areas. Riders are encouraged to call 24 hours in advance to arrange for the trip.

Nisqually Transit provides free rides, but Intercity Transit and RT charge fees, so passengers need to plan for those connections and transfers.

Special provisions and rules are in place, with children under 12 requiring adult supervision and children 13-15 needing a completed consent form.

This Nisqually tribal enterprise fills a major gap in helping people travel in the Thurston Region, and actively coordinates with other transportation and transit options.

service highlight

Northwest Connections/Transpro

The contracted service provider for RT, Northwest Connections has been supplying transportation services for people with special needs for over 30 years. Northwest Connections provides transportation services for the Medicaid program, Veterans Administration, and other local and state programs. A leader in customer service and driver training, this non-profit organization brings important technical assistance and on-the-ground service experience to the Forum.

For the 2015-17 grant cycle, Northwest Connections is seeking funding to replace a number of the vehicles in its fleet. This will improve safety and efficiency for passengers and drivers.

Senior and Youth Programs

Seniors

The Lewis, Mason, Thurston Area Agency on Aging (AAA) funds transportation programs for seniors. Services are generally provided with no fees, although donations are accepted. This funding supports the transportation programs of Senior Services of South Sound, who contracts with RT in a pass program for certain seniors in the rural portions of the County.

Because of the requirements of funding sources, certain program guidelines, restrictions and definitions apply:

- **Transportation Services** - Services designed to transport older persons to and from medical and health care services, social services, meal programs, senior centers, shopping and recreational activities so such service will be accessible to eligible individuals who have no other means of transportation or are unable to use existing transportation. Personal assistance for those with limited physical mobility may be provided.
- **Available Funding** - Title III of the Older Americans Act and/or the Senior Citizens Services Act (SCSA) may fund this program. For either funding source, the only eligibility requirement is age 60 or over.
- **Regular Specialized Transportation** - The transportation of passengers using provider-owned vehicles utilizing special equipment when required or necessary to accommodate those with limited physical mobility. Drivers are usually paid, but volunteer drivers may also be utilized.
- **Volunteer Transportation** - The transportation of passengers using privately owned vehicles. Drivers are volunteers, generally reimbursed for expenses incurred. These services may be used along with or as an alternative to regular specialized transportation.
- **Target Population** - The target population for transportation services is persons age 60 and over who:
 1. Need transportation to medical and health care services, social services, meal programs, senior centers, shopping and recreational activities; and
 2. Cannot manage their own transportation because:
 - a. They do not have a car; or
 - b. They cannot drive; or
 - c. They cannot afford to drive; and
 - d. They cannot use public transportation; or
 - e. Public transportation is not available or accessible.

Individual organizations also provide senior transportation services, such as the Yelm Adult Community Center and Panorama City. The Thurston Region is home to a growing number of senior facilities, including assisted living and other supportive environments. Most facilities provide at least some level of transportation services for its residents, including weekly shopping trips and recreational excursions, as well as transportation for medical appointments. Many of these businesses have expressed concerns about the cost and liability of these services and an interest in coordinating with other providers.

Youth

The Thurston Region provides many resources to serve the community's youth. These include after school programs like those of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County, the Rochester Organization of Families and the Thurston County Parks Department. Transportation for these critical programs for at-risk youth is provided by RT. Other organizations, such as Community Youth Services make use of Intercity Transit, RT and their agency vehicle depending on the program needs.

Other Private and Non-Profit Programs

Of the many private and non-profit social service programs in the Thurston Region, most are targeted to a specific target population or trip purpose. Many of these organizations have participated in the Thurston County Human Services Transportation Forum and actively work to identify ways to share resources and coordinate to provide more service and increase efficiency and effectiveness of all funding.

Residents of the Thurston Region may also use taxicab, cabulance, airporter and limousine services. However, most are either cost-prohibitive or designed for a specific trip purpose. The one-way cost, for example, from the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation area to downtown Olympia via taxi would be approximately \$100.00.

Transportation Services - Adjacent County Programs

Mason Transit

Mason Transit has operated since 1992, providing county-wide public transportation service to this largely rural county. This service includes routed, route deviated and dial-a-ride service with destinations in adjacent counties making connections to six public transit systems (Kitsap, Jefferson, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Intercity, and Pierce) and Squaxin Tribal Transit. Service is free within Mason County, with a \$1.00 fare charged outside the county boundary. Special rates are available for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Pierce Transit

Pierce Transit was formed in 1979 and serves a 414 square mile area with an estimated population of 721,000. The service area includes the more urban portions of Pierce County. Pierce Transit provides local bus routes, specialized transportation for people with disabilities, vanpool, and ridematching. Local fares are \$1.50, with variable fares outside Pierce County and a reduced fare program for certain riders.

Grays Harbor Transit

Service between Aberdeen and the Westfield Mall in West Olympia and the downtown Olympia Greyhound Bus Terminal.

Located in Grays Harbor County, this transit system's hub is in the Aberdeen/Hoquiam area. Making use of the Greyhound Station in Olympia, one route connects Olympia to Grays Harbor destinations. Weekday service hours vary by route, but many operate from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. On weekends, the service hours and number of trips are limited. Fares start at 50 cents, and discounted tickets and passes are available.

Twin Transit

Twin Transit serves the Centralia and Chehalis areas of Lewis County, including the Amtrak Station and Centralia College. The service operates from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with route variations. Twin Transit charges 50 cents for a one-way fare. The Thurston Region's Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (RT) connects Thurston County residents to Lewis County destinations at several of Twin's hubs. Twin Transit partners with Thurston County efforts and has tried several pilot routes (Great Wolf Lodge and express service from Centralia to Tumwater). While neither program exists today, we all learned valuable lessons in how to best serve these communities.

Transportation Services - Intercity Providers

The area is served by several other transportation providers that supply intercity services:

Greyhound

For years, Greyhound supplied a viable option for longer distance travel for Thurston County residents. With cuts to services and stops, the only access in the multi-county area to this service is at the downtown Olympia terminal. A combination of Northwestern Trailways and Greyhound vehicles supply a number of daily trips along the I-5 corridor. RT, Village Vans and other services can either deliver people to the terminal or transport riders to Intercity Transit's fixed route service for connections. Intercity Transit continues to work on expanding their Olympia Transit Center, which would include Greyhound co-locating their terminal there.

Amtrak

The rail service operates daily north/south trips and east/west trips. Intercity Transit and several cab companies serve Centennial Station. Intercity Transit's route provides service between the Amtrak Station and downtown Olympia, serving the Lacey Transit Center on the way. The bus trip to downtown Olympia takes nearly 45 minutes one way. Delays on the Coast Starlight and Cascades services make transit connections and trip planning difficult.

Squaxin Tribal

Considered a model tribal transit program at state and national levels, the Squaxin Island Tribe has operated a formal community transit service called Squaxin Transit since 1999. The service includes fixed route, deviated route, call response, demand response, and Dial-a-Ride transportation services provided free to the general public, generally Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Squaxin Transit serves on- and off-reservation areas and makes numerous daily connections with Mason Transit in Kamilche and Grays Harbor Transit in McCleary. Squaxin Transit operates a similar service, often running at capacity, in the Steamboat Island Road area of Thurston County (part of the Squaxin Reservation is in this area of Thurston County). It is currently the only fixed route transit service in the fast-growing Steamboat Island Road area.

Solutions

For many years, the Forum and other community partners have explored gaps, needs and problems with transportation in the Thurston Region. In addition to focusing on needs, the group wrestled with solutions. They worked with other ACCT-supported coalitions across the state and with WSDOT and other technical staff. Not content to look just locally, the partners also reviewed national and international programs.

In early planning stages, versions of Rural & Tribal Transportation (RT) and Village Vans were developed, as well as a Local Travel Agency, Tripless Transportation (encouraging employers to support telework), Sweat Equity (Car Sharing & Skill Building), and State Agency Outreach (encouraging employment at locations well served by traditional transit service). The 2002 JARC Plan also suggested expanded coordination and express service across county lines, an emphasis on working with employers in areas of dense development, increased coordination with school transportation providers, including HeadStart, and exploration of technical improvements such as dispatch, GPS, and electronic fare media.

Some ideas were considered, but rejected. The region chose not to create a non-profit entity with its own fleet of vehicles, nor to expand Intercity Transit service to the rural areas. The IT Authority continues to support RT as a cost-effective, efficient solution.

Many of those early thoughts and ideas are included as part of the programs in the Prioritized Project List for 2015-17.

Other strategies remain on the pending list:

- Implement a Smart Card electronic fare system that works on all systems.
- Integrate coordinated transportation strategies with state programs such as Commute Trip Reduction - *As lead agency for CTR in the Thurston Region, TRPC continues to work on this issue.*
- Implement a Mobility Management function.
- Explore the funding mechanisms available to jurisdictions and Tribes for creating sustainable funding streams.
- Develop a strategy for shared maintenance facilities.
- Create, distribute and maintain a Transportation Resource Directory - *TRPC will continue to support and enhance Thurston Here to There, which serves this purpose.*
- Integrate with 2-1-1 service, in maintaining a database of transportation options and supplying appropriate referrals.

These solutions and continued coordination will not be possible without the strong dedication of the region's policymakers and partner organizations. All the projects and organizations included in the Project List are key partners with proven solutions. Intercity Transit's Village Van program has successfully helped people find and retain employment and gain important work skills. Intercity Transit also provides in-kind match, technical assistance, and actively works with the Forum. Rural & Tribal Transportation (RT) transports hundreds of people each workday to jobs, training, essential appointments and for other critical purposes. In addition to being the lead agency for RT, TOGETHER! brings the message of coordination and information about the various transportation options to its many social service partners in the community. Northwest Connections, the contracted provider for RT supplies invaluable technical assistance to the Forum's activities.

Because of a history of coordination and cooperation, the task of creating a prioritized project list was not an onerous one for the Thurston Region. Projects were selected based on the Regional Transportation Plan Goal:

Ensure transportation system investments support the special travel needs of youth, elders, people with disabilities, literacy or language barriers, and those with low incomes.

And, the Regional Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Plan Goals:

- 1. Increase mobility options**
- 2. Improve individual service**
- 3. Increase coordination with other systems and programs**
- 4. Improve efficiency**

service highlight

Thurston Here to There

“I didn’t about this service.” I didn’t know who to call to get a ride.” “I think there are some veterans’ programs, but I can’t find the information.”

The Thurston Regional Planning Council created “Thurston Here to There” to raise awareness of all the transportation choices available in the Thurston Region – a single online resource for South Puget Sound residents to find practical, affordable transportation alternatives to driving alone. Large transportation themed graphic push buttons on the site’s homepage connect the site’s visitors directly to information they are seeking or to regional transportation service providers such as Intercity Transit, Sound Transit, and many others. The site also includes links to private service providers such as taxi companies and airport shuttles. While the website does offer original content, TRPC focused on developing a framework that connects users from ThurstonHereToThere.org directly to other service providers’ content and minimized duplication of information.

ThurstonHereToThere.org connects visitors to a variety of local and regional transportation services and information relating to:

- Puget Sound Area transit agencies
- Vanpools and carpools
- School transportation
- Walking and cycling
- Telework and flex schedules
- Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)
- Veteran and senior services
- South Sound bicycle trails and other recreational opportunities
- Maps, calculators, and other interactive tools

Prior to the publication of the website, the South Sound area lacked a single comprehensive resource for transportation information. The website is succeeding in filling this gap.

Appendix

Policy 1: Regional Transportation Plan, May 2004, Goals & Policies, Goal 3: Barrier-Free Transportation

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3. Barrier-Free Transportation

Goal: Ensure transportation system investments support the special travel needs of youth, elders, people with disabilities, literacy or language barriers, and those with low incomes.

Policies:

- 3.a Ensure transportation facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- 3.b Construct public transportation stops and walkway approaches that are accessible to those with differing physical capabilities.
- 3.c Provide transportation services, facilities, and programs that minimize barriers to people who don't speak or read English.
- 3.d Present information and provide public participation opportunities for people who have limited literacy skills.
- 3.e Promote land use policies that provide a variety of housing types in core areas near employment and services.

The intent of these policies is to support implementation of state and federal regulations for barrier-free transportation.

Why Barrier-Free Transportation Is Important:

Transportation is considered an essential factor in maintaining independence, economic self-sufficiency and dignity, and in preventing isolation. However many residents face challenges because of physical, economic, or linguistic hurdles – such as negotiating curbs and uneven sidewalks, arranging transportation to work, the doctor’s office, and the grocery store, and reading transit schedules and street signs. Barrier-free transportation is based on thoughtful design, diverse travel and housing choices, and policy awareness that reduces these mobility challenges.

Challenges for Barrier-Free Transportation:

The population in the Thurston region is aging rapidly. Fit and healthy baby boomers in their prime wage earning years today will soon begin retiring. As the trend of “aging in place” increases, more people will want to stay in the Thurston region. Services and programs serving seniors, youth, and those with disabilities will see more demand in the next few decades.

Those services and barrier-free improvements to the transportation infrastructure are already under-funded and unable to keep up with current demand. Simply trying to retrofit existing facilities as called for in the Americans with Disabilities Act is beyond the means of most communities. Supporting the independence of our growing senior population depends on the success of establishing cost-effective, convenient travel alternatives and community development patterns.

Public Comment and Input:

People with disabilities are among the most vocal proponents of an efficient, barrier-free transportation system that works. They rely on it, and know the impacts when it’s unavailable.

“Transportation for people with disabilities is really important to me because I’m a person who wants to be on the go, and if my husband can’t drive me I have to hustle a ride. And I work

with lots of seniors who have to rely on someone else for transportation because the transit service doesn't meet their needs."

"People often see these services and programs as part of an essential "social safety net" that they value in their community."

"Many of the people who need social services in this community don't have cars. And they have a hard time getting around. Transit provides a social safety net."

There's a growing awareness of the needs of elders who were once independent travelers, but can no longer drive. This impacts their adult children, who often assume responsibility for their parents' transportation needs.

"People who've lived in this community and grown old will know they don't have to leave and move to another community that does have public transportation just because they can't drive anymore. Having good public transportation means they can stay here."

"We need to think about the elderly and children when we design our transportation systems. They don't have any way to get around without a car."

Balancing individual choice and demand for government service is challenging.

"It's not that the needs of people in the city rank higher than those of rural people, but a rural lifestyle is a choice. And I know a lot of people who, as they got sicker or more infirm, knew that they needed to be closer to the services they need. So they moved. And there has to be a lot of that, because we don't have the same extended families like we used to have. Society has changed. If people live that far out in the sticks, they need to come to where the services are. We can't keep stretching the limited dollars we have to service every square mile of road system we have in every possible place that people may want to live."

Did You Know...?

Two percent of Thurston's population aged 16-64 have a mobility limitation, compared to 13.6% of people age 65 and over. By 2025, about 20% of the region's population will be 65 or older, up from 12% of the population in 2000.

Source: 2000 Census and TRPC forecasts

Measures to Support Barrier-Free Transportation Objectives:

- Forge partnerships among government, non-profit, for-profit, and faith-based agencies to identify and serve the transportation needs of the region's youth, elders, and people with disabilities or low incomes. With an expanding senior population, providing cost-effective alternatives to Dial-A-Lift is becoming increasingly important. Options may involve land use and service delivery measures.
- Look for innovative ways of funding and providing life-line transportation services.
- Identify ways to offer transportation services that connect low-income populations with employment areas and social services. Identify and address regulatory barriers impacting the ability of non-traditional transportation partnerships to provide services.
- Explore innovative public/private partnerships aimed at increasing affordable, transit-friendly housing choices in the urban area near essential services.

Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan Participants

Alliance for Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Washington
Behavioral Health Resources
Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Black Hills High School
Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County
Bountiful Byway Project Team
Capitol Aeroporter
Catholic Community Services
Centralia College
Chambers of Commerce – Thurston, Yelm, Tenino, Rochester
Child Care Action Council
Children’s’ Justice and Advocacy Center
Choice Regional Health Network
CIELO Project at Radio Ranch
City of Lacey
City of Olympia
City of Rainier
City of Tenino
City of Tumwater
City of Yelm
Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason, and Thurston Counties
Community Transportation Association of America
Community Transportation Association of Northwest
Community Youth Services
Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
Congressman Denny Heck, 10th District
Cowlitz Wakiakum Council of Governments
Crisis Clinic
DC Cab
Department of Veteran’s Affairs
Disabled American Veterans
Educational Services District #113
Employment Security Department – WorkFirst
Enterprise for Equity
Evergreen Christian Center
Family Support Center
Grays Harbor Transit
Great Wolf Lodge
Greyhound
Griffin School District
HOME Consortium
Housing Authority of Thurston County

Intercity Transit
Interfaith Works – and various other faith-based organizations and communities
Joint Base Lewis-McChord
Junior League
Lewis Mason Thurston Area Agency on Aging
Lewis Mason Thurston Head Start/ECCEAP
Life Recovery Center
Local Area Planning Group
LOTT Alliance
Lower Columbia Community Action Council
Lucky Eagle Casino
Madigan Army Medical Center
Mason Transit
Mercy Housing
Metro King County
Morningside
New Market Skills Center
Nisqually Indian Tribe
North Thurston School District
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Olympia Child Care Center
Olympia School District #111
Olympic View Elementary
Pacific Mountain Workforce
Pacific Mountain Workforce Consortium
Pacific Peaks Girl Scout
Paratransit Services
Parent to Parent
Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights (POWER)
Partners for Children, Youth and Families
Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Pierce Transit
Port of Olympia
Providence St. Peter Hospital
Providence St. Peter Hospital – Kidney Dialysis Center
Puget Sound Regional Council
Rainier School District #307
Red Wind Casino
Retired Senior Volunteer Program
Rochester School District
ROOF
Safe Place
Sea Mar Behavioral Health
Senior Services for South Sound
Sound to Harbor HeadStart 113
South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA)

South Puget Sound Community College – Various departments, including WorkFirst
South Thurston Economic Initiative (STEDI)
Stonewall Youth
Sustainable Thurston Task Force and community participants
Tenino Community Service Center
Tenino Independent
Tenino School District #402
The Athena Group
The Community Foundation
The Evergreen State College
Thurston Conservation District
Thurston Council for Children and Youth
Thurston County – various divisions, including Veterans, Health & Social Services, Courts
Thurston County Association for the Blind
Thurston County Food Bank – and satellites
Thurston County Parent Coalition
Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office
Thurston County PUD
Thurston Economic Development Council
Thurston Food Systems Council
Thurston Regional Planning Council
Thurston Thrives
Timberland Regional Library
TOGETHER!
Town of Bucoda
Transportation Policy Board
Transpro/Northwest Connections
Tribal Transportation Planning Organization
Tumwater School District #33
Twin Transit
United Way of Thurston County and Lewis County (including 211)
United States Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans of Foreign Wars
Visitor and Convention Bureau
Voluntary Stewardship Program Planning Team
Walmart
Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development
Washington State Department of General Administration
Washington State Department of Personnel
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services – Various, including Aging and Adult Services, Children’s Administration, Division of Developmental Disabilities, and Area Agency on Aging
Washington State Department of Transportation – Headquarters and Olympic Region
Washington State Department of Transportation – Public Transportation & Rail Division
Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington State House of Representatives (Districts 2, 20, 22, 35)

Washington State Senate (Districts 2, 20, 22, 35)

Washington State University – Thurston County Extension, and other WSU staff and departments

WorkSource of Thurston County

Yelm Adult Community Center

Yelm Community Schools

Yelm Community Services

Yelm School District

YMCA

YWCA

December 5, 2014

THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-05

RELATING to the Regional Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Plan for the Thurston Region.

WHEREAS, the Thurston Regional Planning Council is the agency designated by the GOVERNOR as the METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION and the REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION for the Thurston Region; and

WHEREAS, Federal and State Law requires an update of the Regional Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Plan for the Thurston Region to ensure compliance with federal law, and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Department of Transportation requires that projects must be prioritized in the Regional Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Plan for the Thurston Region to be eligible for funding under the Consolidated Grant Program, and

WHEREAS, the Regional Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Plan for the Thurston Region contains a Ranked Prioritized Project List with the following projects: Rural & Tribal Transportation Program (RT), Thurston County Bus Buddies, and Request for Acquisition of Replacement Vehicles for Rural & Tribal Transportation (RT) in Thurston County all ranked as "A" projects, and

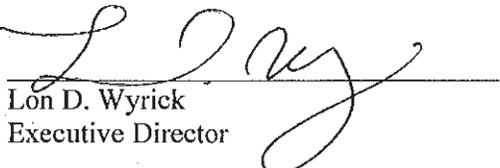
WHEREAS, the Plan also includes an Un-Ranked Prioritized Project List with the following projects: Intercity Transit Village Vans and Nisqually Transit,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL:

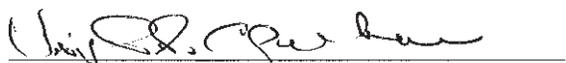
THAT the Regional Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Plan for the Thurston Region be approved.

ADOPTED this 5th day of December 2014.

ATTEST:



Lon D. Wyrick
Executive Director



Virgil Clarkson
Vice-chair, Thurston Regional Planning Council

Table 1
Population Forecast by Urban Area
Thurston County, 2010 – 2035

Urban Growth Area ¹	Forecast					
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Bucoda	560	570	575	675	890	1,065
Lacey	75,540	79,660	88,610	94,990	101,510	107,720
Olympia	58,310	61,820	67,850	74,030	79,940	84,400
Rainier	1,905	2,030	2,145	2,310	2,840	3,150
Tenino	1,710	1,725	1,760	2,030	2,750	3,190
Tumwater	23,350	25,830	30,840	35,620	40,160	42,880
Yelm	8,200	9,685	14,050	18,595	22,455	26,285
Grand Mound UGA	1,345	1,275	1,465	1,630	1,775	1,885
Chehalis Reservation ²	70	75	90	105	125	160
Nisqually Reservation ²	595	750	985	1,035	1,070	1,120
Total Urban Areas	170,920	182,600	207,300	229,890	252,320	270,570
Total Reservations	665	825	1,070	1,145	1,200	1,280
Rural Unincorporated County ³	80,680	83,030	87,500	91,130	95,030	98,740
Thurston County Total	252,300	266,500	295,900	322,200	348,600	370,600

Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council: Population and Employment Forecast (2012 Update)

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding.

1. Urban Growth Area (UGA) includes the incorporated city and unincorporated area designated to be annex by the city over 20 years' time to accommodate urban growth.
2. Data are for Thurston County portion of the reservations only.
3. The rural unincorporated county is portion of the county that lies outside of the city, Urban Growth Area and Reservation boundaries.

Table 3
Employment Projections by Industry
Thurston County, 2010-2043

Industry	Actual	Forecast		
	2010	2020	2030	2040
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, & related	2,780	2,600	2,640	2,670
Mining	110	160	180	210
Utilities	180	270	290	300
Construction	5,620	9,160	11,010	12,700
Manufacturing	3,100	3,480	3,500	3,630
Durable Goods	n/a	2,040	2,000	2,020
Nondurable Goods	n/a	1,440	1,500	1,610
Wholesale trade	3,250	3,630	3,960	4,280
Retail trade	14,660	17,200	19,500	21,500
Transportation and warehousing	2,310	3,190	3,730	4,180
Information	1,280	1,740	1,890	2,050
Finance and insurance	4,610	4,710	5,650	6,400
Real estate and rental and leasing	5,470	5,620	6,280	6,810
Professional and business services	13,000	17,500	21,800	26,200
Education, Health, & Social Services	17,000	20,900	24,500	27,500
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2,750	3,400	4,190	5,020
Accommodation and food services	8,270	10,000	11,530	12,810
Other services, except public administration	7,380	9,950	12,030	13,780
Federal government - civilian	1,010	1,110	1,180	1,240
State government	24,300	26,000	28,200	30,400
State government, except education	n/a	24,300	26,200	28,200
State education	n/a	1,710	1,970	2,230
Local government	11,400	13,300	15,800	18,000
Total Civilian Employment¹	128,500	153,900	177,800	199,700
Total Military Employment	4,150	4,700	4,700	4,700

Source: Thurston Regional Planning Council: Population and Employment Forecast (2012 Update)

Note: Medium Growth Scenario. Employment figures represent annual averages. Numbers may not add to total due to rounding.

1. "Total Civilian Employment" is the number of positions available in Thurston County. Total Local Employment is larger than the Civilian Labor Force, because some individuals within the labor force work multiple jobs.

**Table 4
Population by Age
Thurston County, 1980-2040**

Age Group	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040
0-4	9,680	11,690	12,890	15,381	16,608	18,684	20,857
5-9	9,628	12,882	14,379	15,629	18,452	20,768	23,015
10-14	10,460	12,257	15,348	16,559	19,504	22,362	24,779
15-19	11,109	11,358	15,845	17,216	19,704	23,558	26,277
20-24	10,759	10,469	13,391	16,325	18,094	21,487	24,344
25-29	11,473	12,002	12,967	17,406	18,581	20,987	24,157
30-34	11,028	13,820	14,138	16,609	18,803	20,777	23,996
35-39	8,734	14,676	16,298	16,276	20,206	22,977	25,174
40-44	6,582	13,592	17,405	16,731	19,445	23,274	25,046
45-49	5,853	10,111	17,302	18,108	19,205	23,844	26,913
50-54	5,860	7,258	15,291	18,935	19,350	22,276	26,512
55-59	5,762	6,290	10,830	18,485	19,411	20,442	24,934
60-64	5,106	6,126	7,609	15,840	18,638	19,296	21,781
65-69	4,197	6,064	6,269	11,012	16,918	18,764	19,394
70-74	3,209	4,889	5,766	7,272	13,607	17,082	17,714
75-79	2,249	3,653	5,026	5,557	8,792	14,077	16,109
80-84	1,454	2,313	3,587	4,376	5,228	9,928	13,017
85+	1,121	1,788	2,957	4,547	5,315	7,971	9,651
TOTAL	124,264	161,238	207,298	252,264	295,861	348,554	393,667
% 19 or younger	32.9%	29.9%	28.2%	25.7%	25.1%	24.5%	24.1%
% age 65 or older	9.8%	11.6%	11.4%	13.0%	16.9%	19.5%	19.3%

Source: 1980-2010: U.S. Census Bureau; 2020-2040: Thurston Regional Planning Council: Population and Employment Forecast (2012 Update).

Note: Lower gray band represents the Baby Boom; Upper band represents the Baby Boom Echo (Millennial) Generation. Population is for April 1st of each year.

**Table 5
Population by Age
Thurston County Jurisdictions, 2010**

	Median Age	17 and Younger	18 to 64	65 and Older	Total
Bucoda	40.3	113	377	72	562
Lacey	34.0	10,426	25,998	5,969	42,393
Olympia	38.0	9,064	30,955	6,459	46,478
Rainier	37.1	468	1,157	169	1,794
Tenino	36.8	430	1,044	221	1,695
Tumwater	37.4	3,767	11,354	2,250	17,371
Yelm	29.0	2,467	3,862	519	6,848
Thurston County	38.5	58,122	161,378	32,764	252,264
Chehalis Reservation	28.8	209	391	49	649
Nisqually Reservation	32.4	177	354	44	575

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Note: Reservations include off-reservation trust lands and areas outside of Thurston County.

Table 6
Characteristics of the Population with a Disability
Thurston County, 2008-2012 5-Year Average

Population	Total	Without a Disability	With a Disability	% With a Disability
Civilian Non-institutionalized	246,435	216,187	30,248	12.3%
Age 17 or younger	57,431	55,248	2,183	3.8%
Age 18 to 64	156,454	139,860	16,594	10.6%
Age 65 or older	32,550	21,079	11,471	35.2%
Below Poverty Level	15,933	12,350	3,583	22.5%
Above Poverty Level	137,977	125,086	12,891	9.3%
Employed	111,776	105,201	6,575	5.9%
Unemployed	10,108	8,748	1,360	13.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

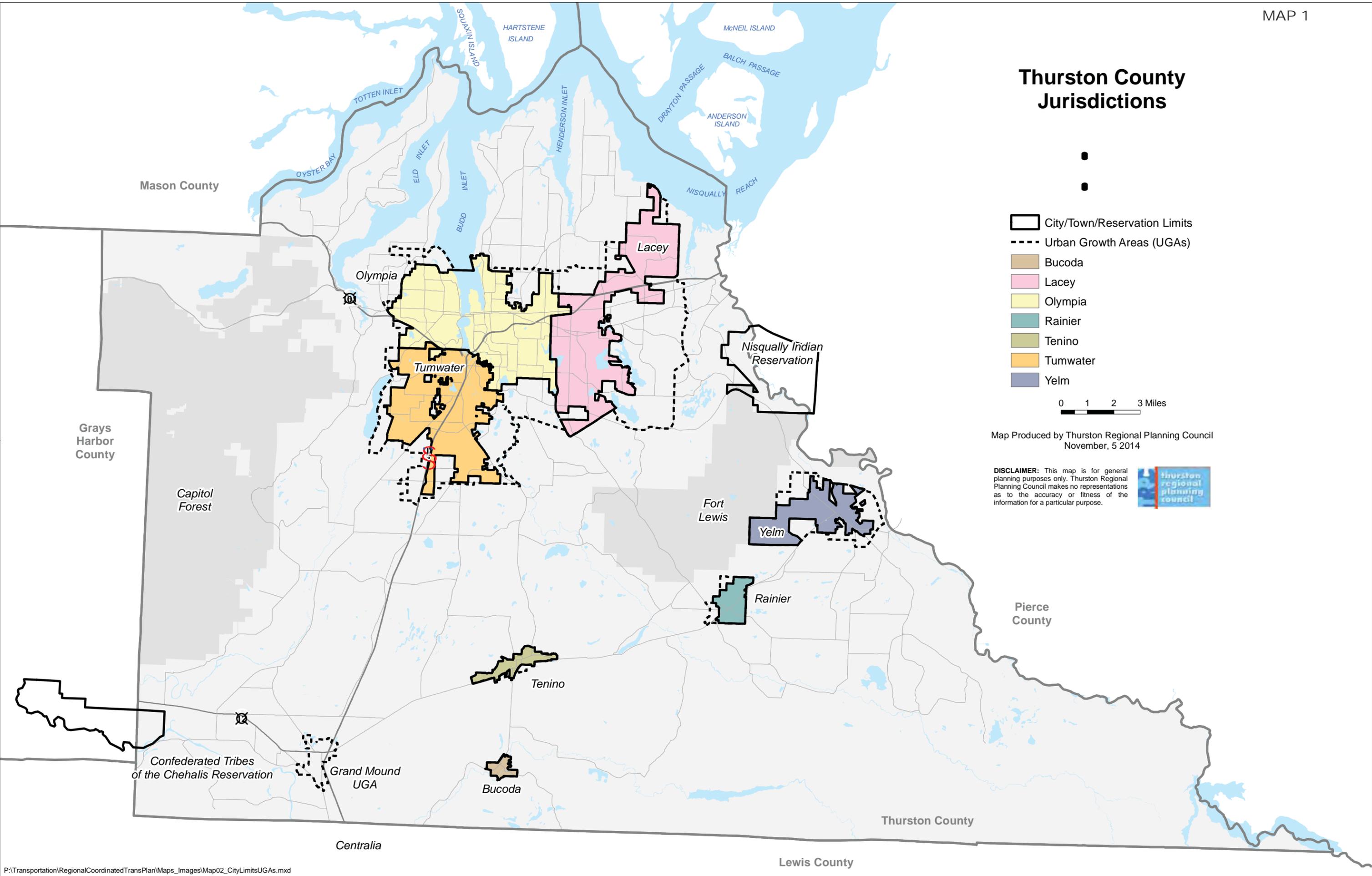
Table 7
Linguistically Isolated Households
Thurston County, 2008-2012 5-Year Average

Language Spoken at Home	Total Households	Not Linguistically isolated	Linguistically isolated	Percent Linguistically Isolated
English only	87,572	87,572	0	0.0%
Spanish	4,889	4,311	578	11.8%
Other Indo-European languages	2,842	2,722	120	4.2%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	5,004	3,876	1,128	22.5%
Other languages	459	401	58	12.6%
Total Households	100,766	98,882	1,884	1.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

Note: The Census Bureau defines a linguistically isolated household as having no member age 14 or older who speaks only English or who speaks English "very well."

Thurston County Jurisdictions



-
-
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- - - Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)
- Bucoda
- Lacey
- Olympia
- Rainier
- Tenino
- Tumwater
- Yelm

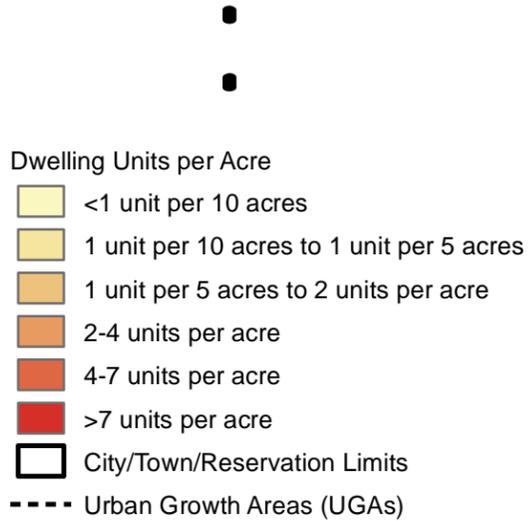
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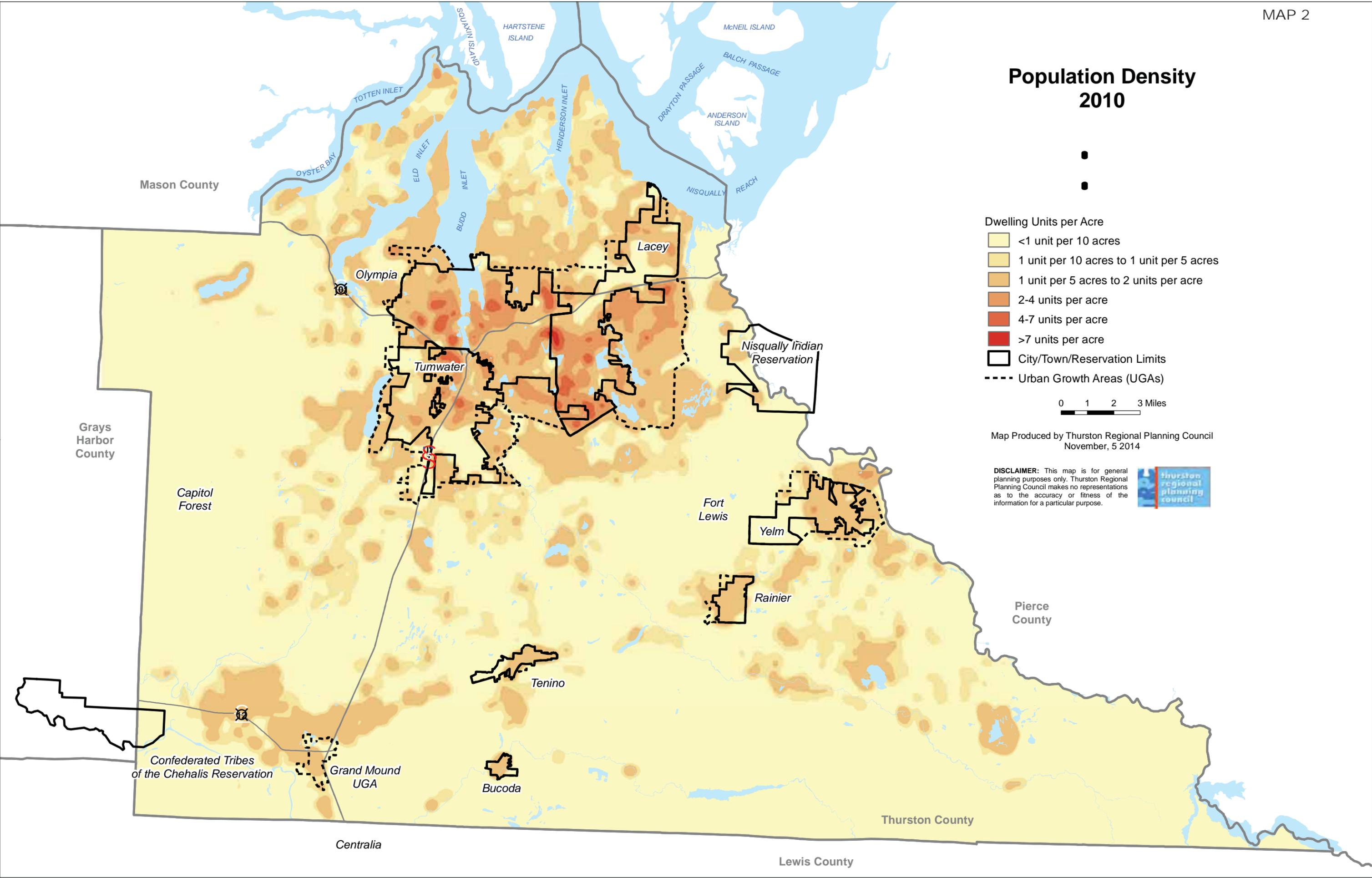


Population Density 2010

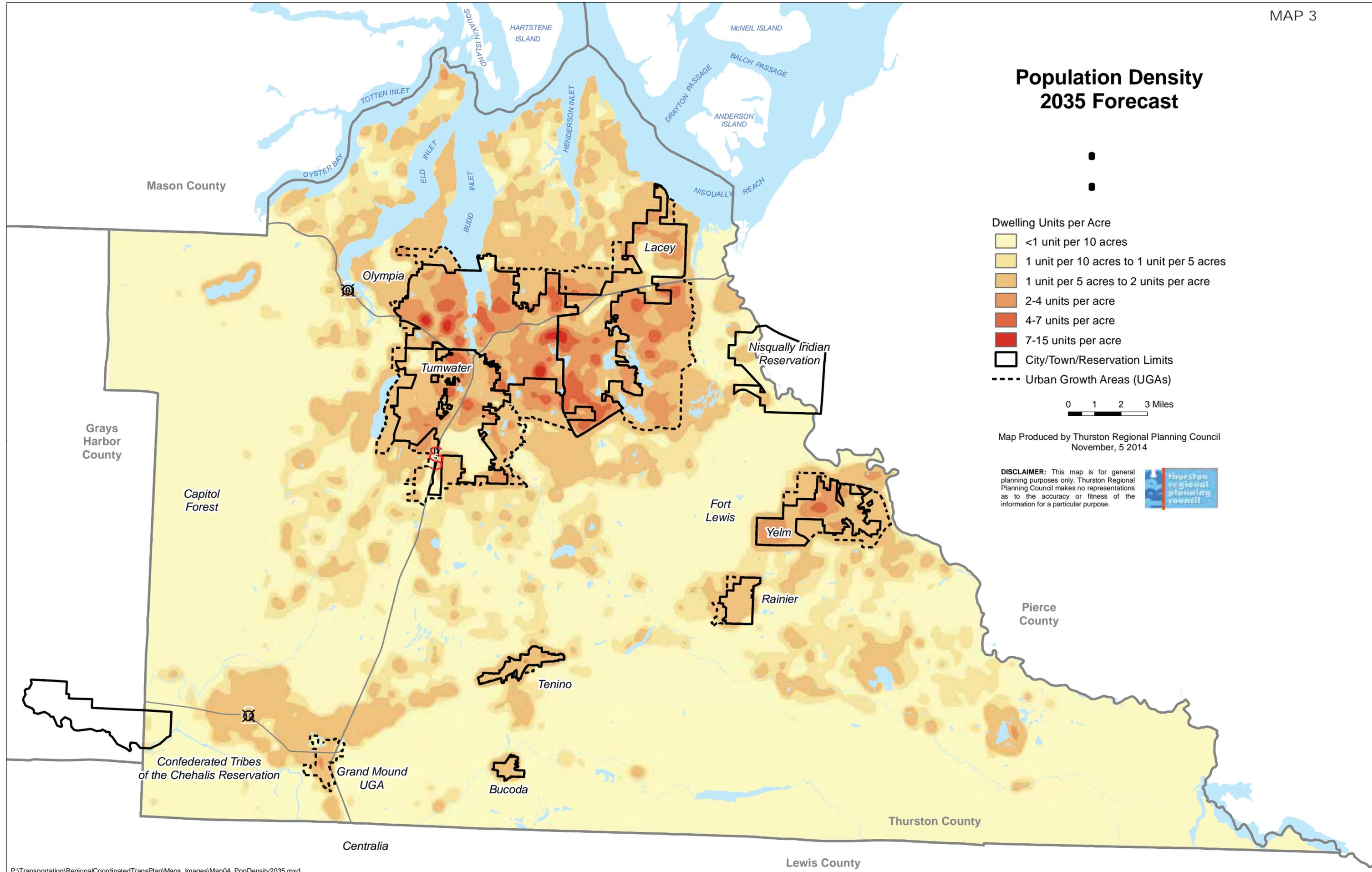


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Population Density 2035 Forecast



- Dwelling Units per Acre
- <1 unit per 10 acres
 - 1 unit per 10 acres to 1 unit per 5 acres
 - 1 unit per 5 acres to 2 units per acre
 - 2-4 units per acre
 - 4-7 units per acre
 - 7-15 units per acre
 - City/Town/Reservation Limits
 - Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

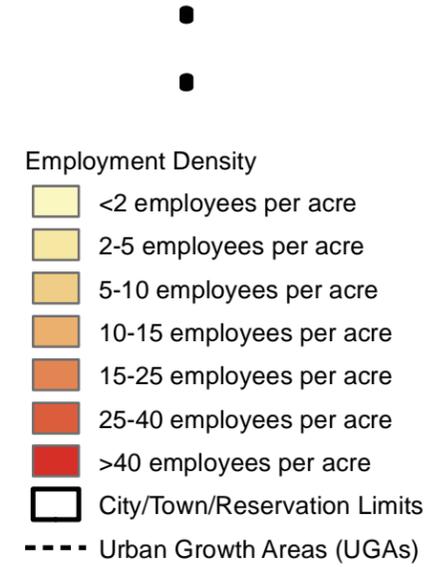
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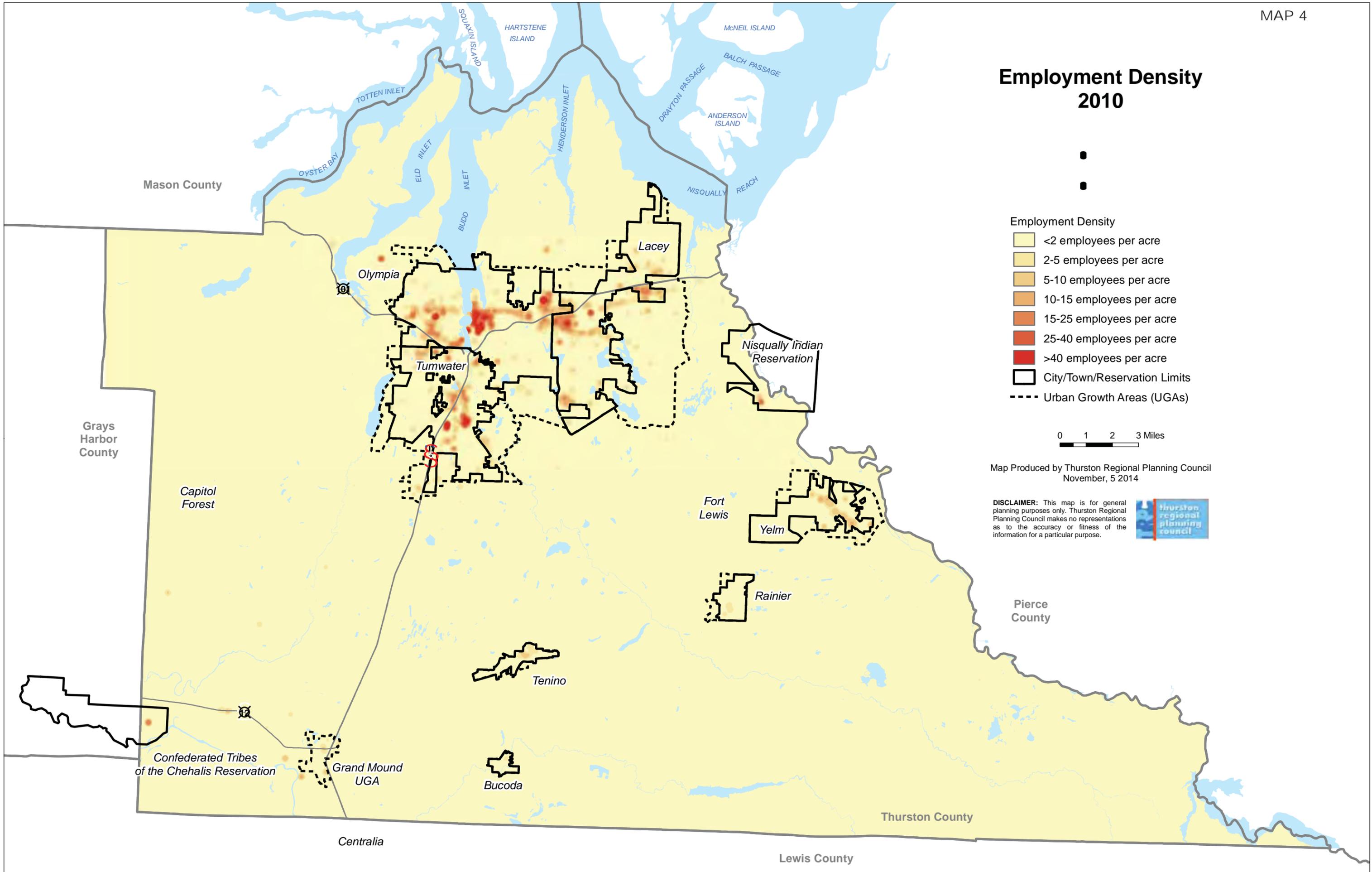


Employment Density 2010

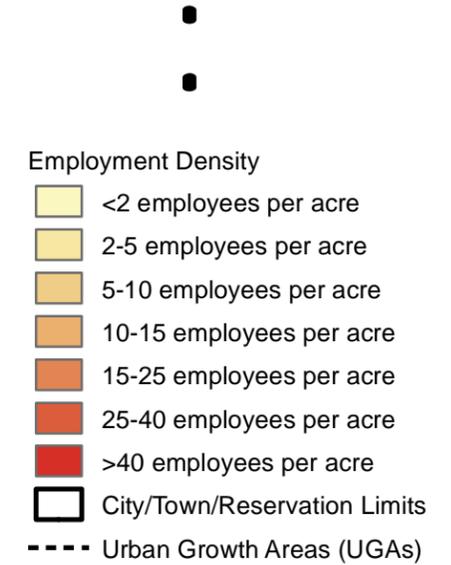


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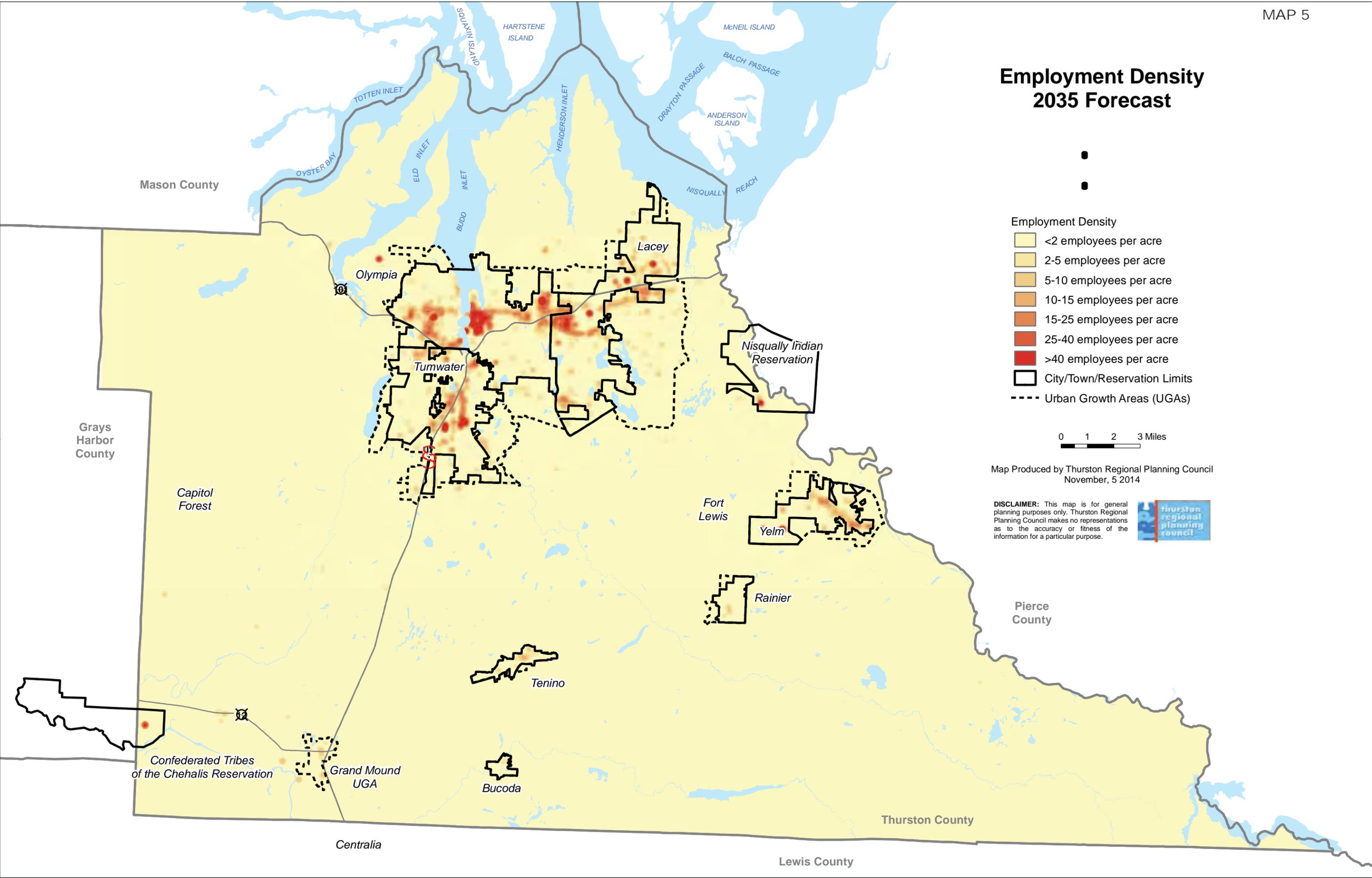


Employment Density 2035 Forecast

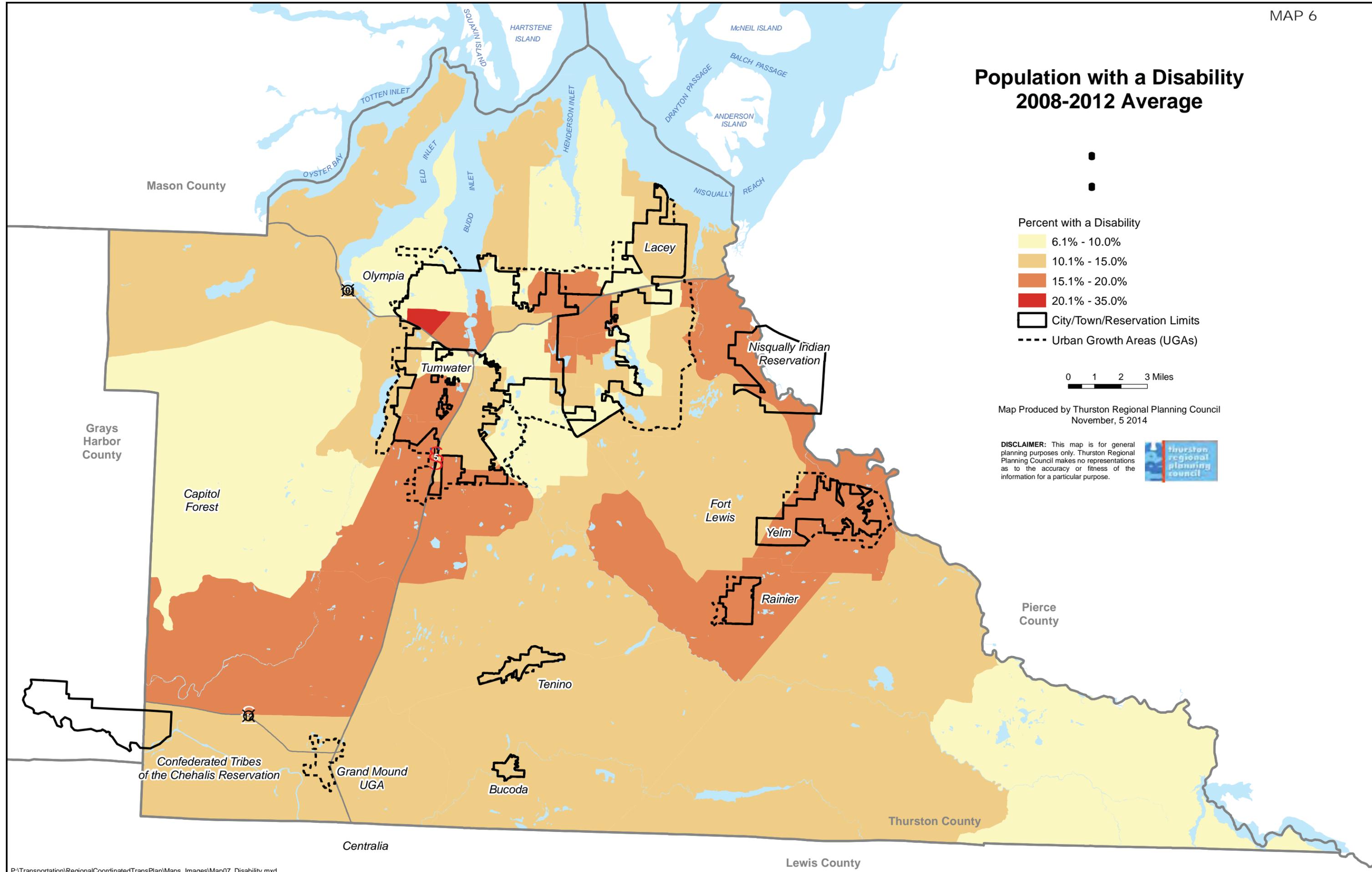


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Population with a Disability 2008-2012 Average



Percent with a Disability

- 6.1% - 10.0%
- 10.1% - 15.0%
- 15.1% - 20.0%
- 20.1% - 35.0%

City/Town/Reservation Limits
 Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

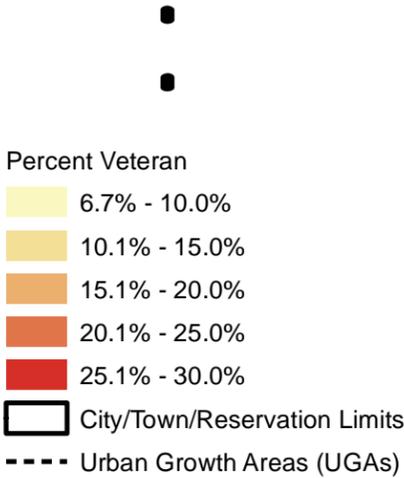


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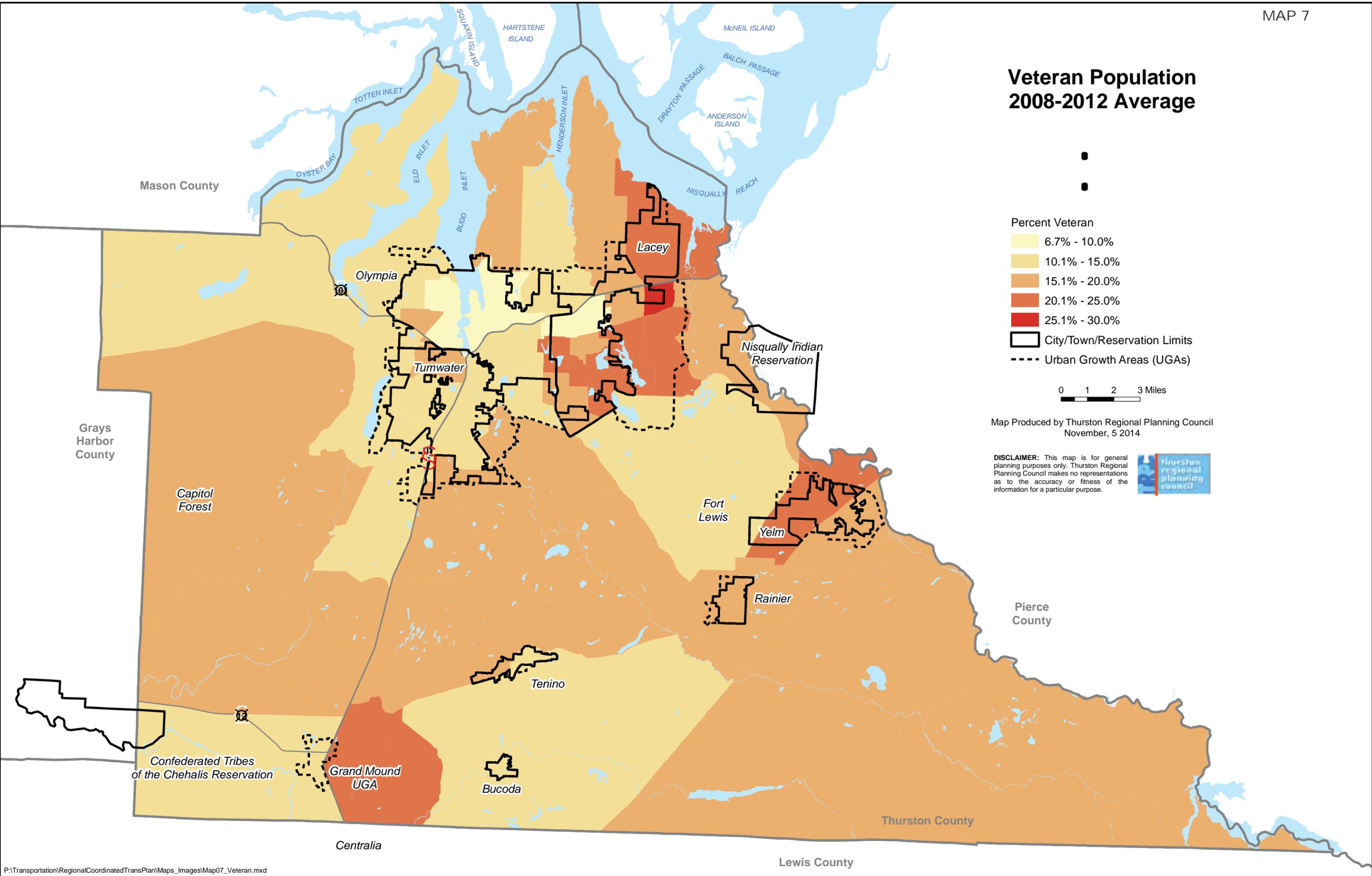


Veteran Population 2008-2012 Average



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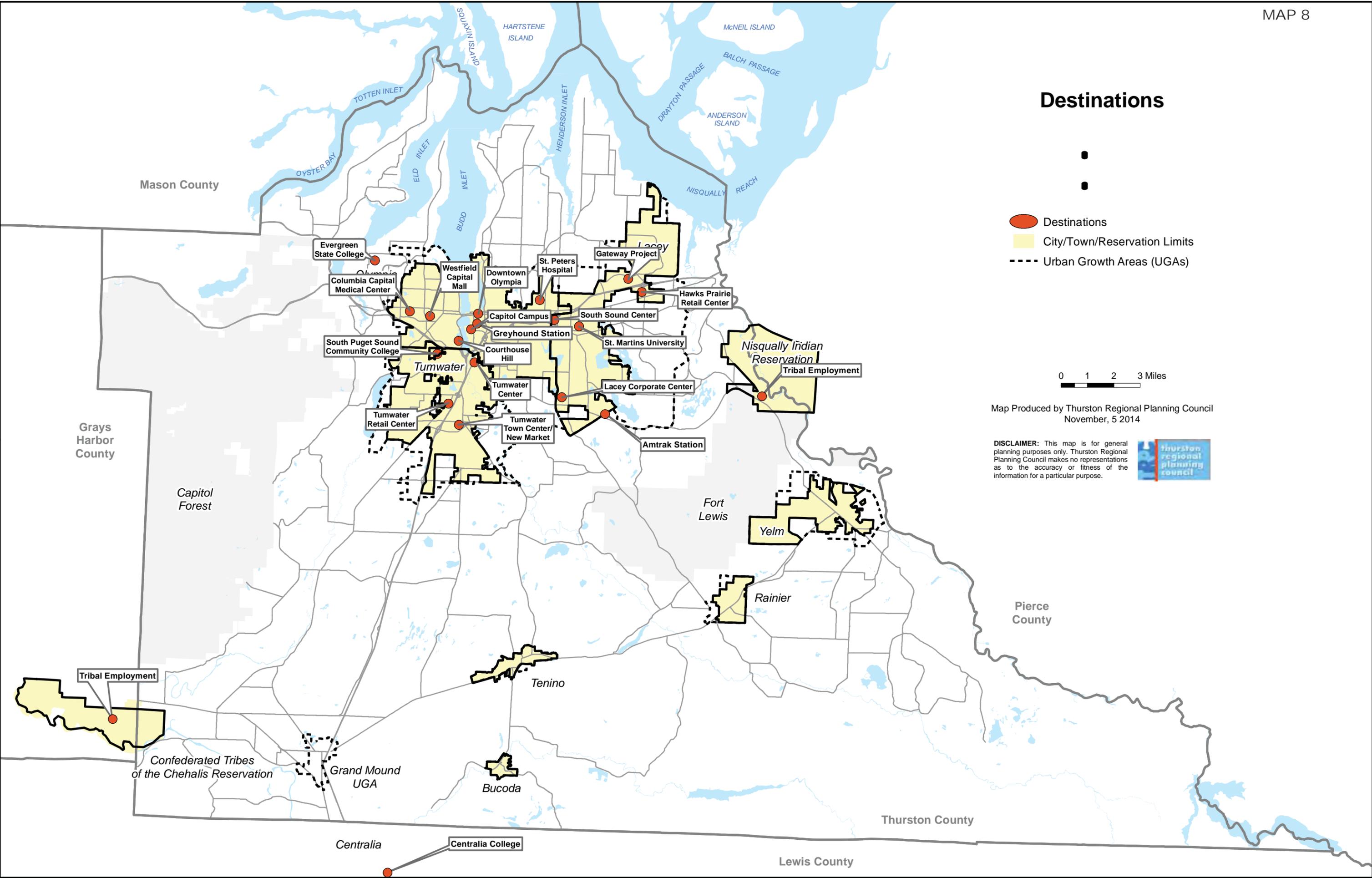
Destinations

- Destinations
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- - - Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)



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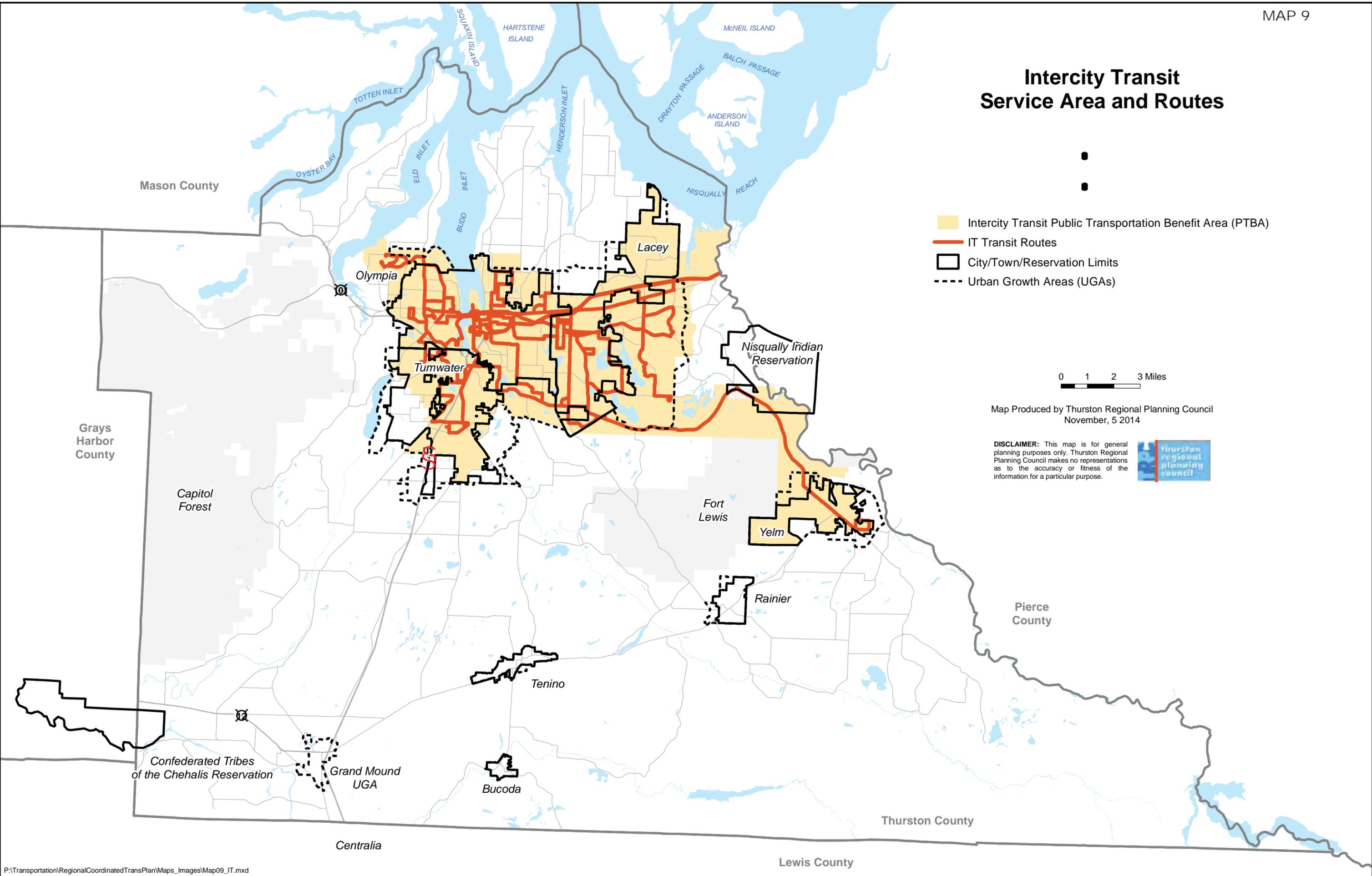
Intercity Transit Service Area and Routes

-  Intercity Transit Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)
-  IT Transit Routes
-  City/Town/Reservation Limits
-  Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

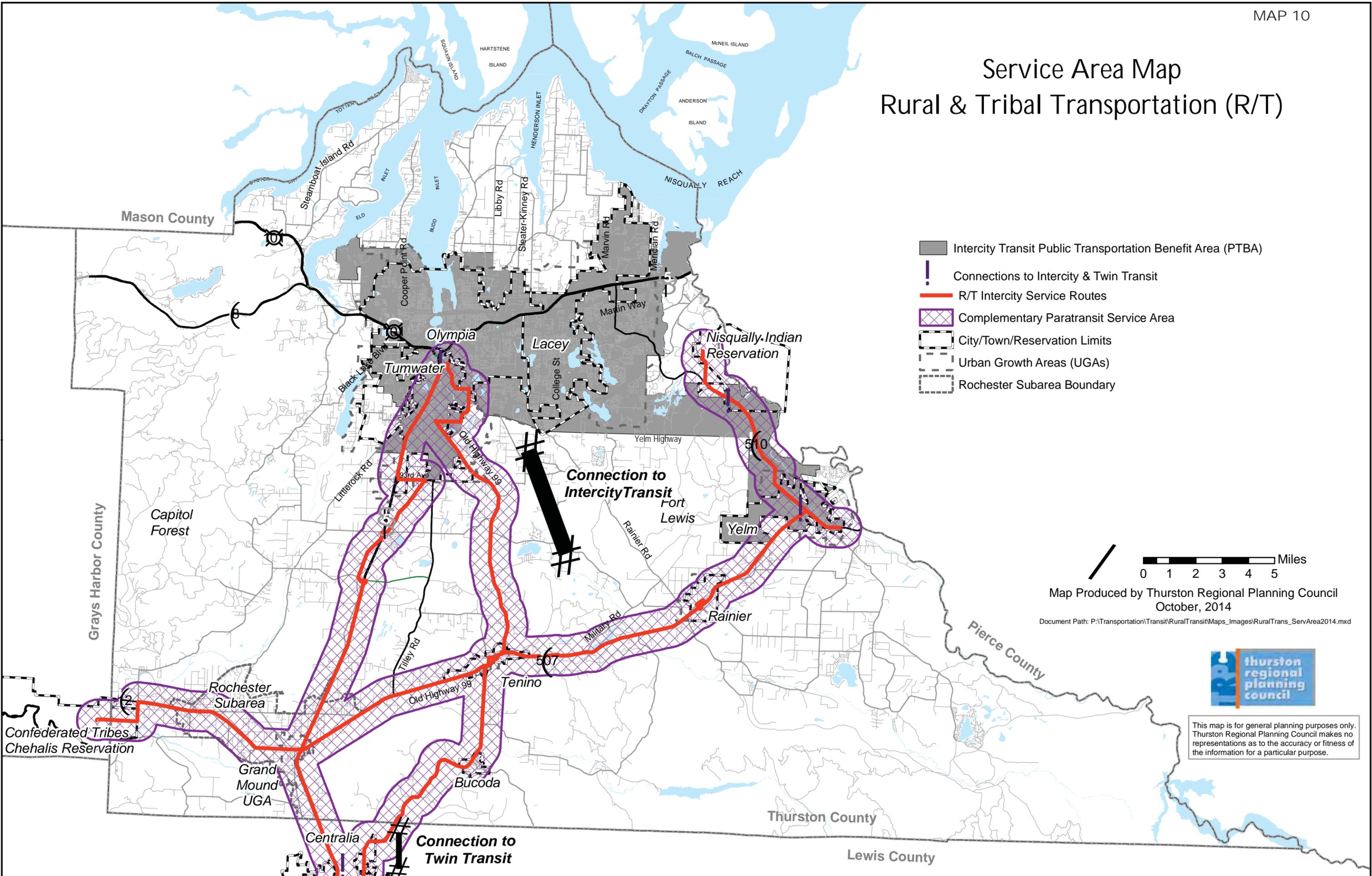


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Service Area Map Rural & Tribal Transportation (R/T)



- Intercity Transit Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)
- Connections to Intercity & Twin Transit
- R/T Intercity Service Routes
- Complementary Paratransit Service Area
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)
- Rochester Subarea Boundary


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 October, 2014
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Nisqually Transit Deviated Fixed Route

-  Nisqually Transit Stop
-  Intercity Transit Stop
-  R/T Transportation Stop
-  Route



Nisqually Indian Tribe

Temporary & Limited Route (RTP) Program - July 2014

Youth Center

7

21st Way

Lashi Street

25th Ave

Reservation Road

Public Safety
Complex

Highway 510

Muck Creek Dr

Nisqually Dr

She-Niah-Numi Dr

Elders Ln

Red Wind Casino

Muk-Sut-Wei

Passer Kwanma Dr

Lashchi Cr

Transit Stop Locations

- 1 Tribal Center
- 2 Health Center, Head Start, Library
- 3 Education Center
- 4 Elders Center, Daycare Center
- 5 Red Wind Casino
- 6 Muk-Sut-Wei Bus Shelter
- 7 Youth Center

ⁱ Thurston Regional Planning Council. 2009. Population estimate of Thurston County veterans based on U.S. Census Public Use Microdata and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs population projections.

ⁱⁱ Thurston Regional Planning Council. 2009. Veteran auto ownership estimation based on U.S. Census American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Survey (PUMS) data 2005-2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ Thurston Regional Planning Council. 2009. Population estimate of Thurston County veterans based on U.S. Census Public Use Microdata and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs population projections.

^{iv} U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. 2008. Geographic Distribution of Veteran Affairs Expenditures (GDX), FY 2008.

^v U.S. Census Bureau. 2009. The Current Population Survey, Veteran vs. Non-Veteran Employment Status.

^{vi} Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). 2006. 2007-2001 Strategic Plan.

^{vii} Thurston County. 2009. Point-in-Time Homeless Census Report for Thurston County. Conducted by the Housing Authority of Thurston County. Figures provided are from the full census profile.