



Whatcom County

COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Agenda Bill Master Report

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TITLE FOR AGENDA ITEM:

Resolution adopting the Whatcom County Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan within the Public Rights-of-Way

SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:

See attached memo

HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE FILE

Date:	Acting Body:	Action:	Sent To:
04/20/2021	Council	INTRODUCED FOR PUBLIC HEARING Aye: 7 Browne, Buchanan, Byrd, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, and Kershner Nay: 0 Absent: 0	Council
05/04/2021	Council	APPROVED Aye: 6 Browne, Buchanan, Donovan, Elenbaas, Frazey, and Kershner Nay: 0 Absent: 1 Byrd	

Attachments: Agenda Bill Master Report, Staff memo, Proposed Resolution with Exhibit A

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-016

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE WHATCOM COUNTY AMERICANS WITH
DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) TRANSITION PLAN WITHIN PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY**

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted on July 26, 1990 and provides comprehensive civil rights to persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, to satisfy the requirements of ADA Title II Part 35, Subpart D, the Whatcom County Department of Public Works initiated the drafting of a Transition Plan to outline modifications and efforts that must be made to correct findings of non-compliance with ADA standards; and

WHEREAS, Title II of the ADA requires public entities to provide an opportunity to interested parties, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities to participate in the development of the transition plan, and

WHEREAS, the County held an official 30-day public comment period of the draft ADA Transition Plan and incorporated feedback from the public and interested groups into the Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan Within Public Rights-of-Way in attached Exhibit A;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Whatcom County Council that the Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan Within Public Rights-of-Way, attached hereto as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted.

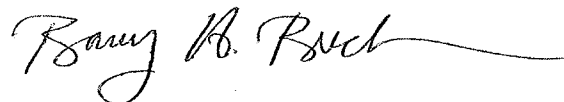
ADOPTED this 4th day of May, 2021.

ATTEST:

A circular seal for the Whatcom County Council. The outer ring contains the text "WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL" at the top and "WHATCOM COUNTY WASHINGTON" at the bottom. Inside the ring, there is a smaller circle with "WHATCOM COUNTY" in the center. The seal is partially obscured by a signature and a horizontal line.

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry Buchanan".

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Approved by Christopher Quinn by email/DH
Sr. Deputy Prosecuting Attorney,
Civil Division

Exhibit A:

**Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan Within Public
Rights-of-Way**

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Whatcom County

ADA

Transition Plan

Within Public Rights-of-Way

Prepared by

transpogroup 

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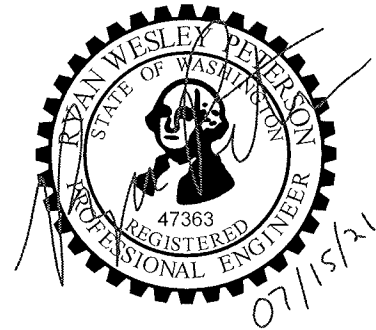
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
Jon Hutchings, Director of Public Works

COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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PREPARED BY
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Additional copies of this document are available online at
www.whatcomcounty.us/ADATransitionPlan

This plan can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Human Resources Manager, ADA Coordinator, at hr@co.whatcom.wa.us or by calling 360-778-5300. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

For questions about Whatcom County's ADA Transition Plan, please contact
Whatcom County - Department of Public Works
322 N Commercial Street, Ste 210
Bellingham, WA 98225
360-778-6200

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Barrier Audit

Appendix B – APS Policy

Appendix C – Maximum Extent Feasible Template

Appendix D – Public Involvement

Appendix E – GIS Inventory

Appendix F – Cost Estimate Backup

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Executive Summary

This Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan establishes the Whatcom County's ongoing commitment to providing equal access for all, including those with disabilities. In developing this plan, Whatcom County has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of its facilities and programs within the public rights-of-way to determine what types of access barriers exist for individuals with disabilities. This plan will be used to help guide future planning and implementation of necessary accessibility improvements.

Both the Self-Assessment and the Transition Plan are required elements of the federally mandated ADA Title II, which requires that government agencies provide equal access to programs and services they offer. While the ADA applies to all aspects of government services, **this document focuses on Whatcom County Public Facilities, within public right-of-way. This includes sidewalks, curb ramps, pedestrian pushbuttons, and other public facilities.**

This document summarizes the Self-Assessment, which includes an accessibility assessment of pedestrian facilities as well as practices and procedures which relate to them, such as curb ramp design standards. It also contains a Transition Plan, which identifies a schedule for the removal of barriers and identifies how the County will address requests for accommodations in a consistent manner, see section 5.3 for schedule details.

The County's objective is to remove physical barriers associated with access to public park facilities, building interior pathways, park trails, sidewalks and curb ramps, in association with the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The County is committed to removing these barriers as soon as possible, the county will implement a program that will remove the highest priority barriers. In addition, the county is committed to ensuring continued ADA compliance for all capital improvement projects, permitted development, and any other right-of-way construction projects.

1 Introduction

1.1 Plan Requirements and Standards

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted on July 26, 1990 and provides comprehensive civil rights protections to persons with disabilities in the areas of employment, state and local government services, and access to public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications.

Counties and other government agencies are required to have an ADA self-assessment and transition plan when they grow beyond a threshold of 50 employees. Accessibility requirements extend to all public facilities. The scope of this plan is focused on accessibility within the public rights-of-way, selected public buildings and parks.

There are five titles, or parts, to the ADA of which Title II is most pertinent to travel within the public rights-of-way and government buildings. Title II of the ADA requires Public Entities to make their existing “programs” accessible “except where to do so would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program or an undue financial and administrative burden.” Public rights-of-way, public government buildings, and public parks all fall within the County’s programs.

This effort was initiated by Whatcom County to satisfy the requirements of ADA Title II Part 35, Subpart D – Program Accessibility § 35.150 (d)(3) which states:

The plan shall, at a minimum—

- (i) Identify physical obstacles in the public entity's facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs or activities to individuals with disabilities;
- (ii) Describe in detail the methods that will be used to make the facilities accessible;
- (iii) Specify the schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve compliance with this section and, if the time period of the transition plan is longer than one year, identify steps that will be taken during each year
- (iv) Indicate the official responsible for implementation of the plan.

The 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design (ADAS), is the standards document in which all federal ADA standards are collectively held. The 2010 ADAS and regulations from the 28 CFR Part 36 replaced the 1991 ADA (ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)).

The Draft Guidelines for Accessible Public Rights-of-Way was first published by the US Access Board in 2005. The US Access Board’s Proposed Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way, or PROWAG, was published for comment in 2011. Both the 2005 and 2011 guidelines have not yet been adopted as standards. Despite this delay, many public entities currently use the draft PROWAG as ‘best practice’ for features within the public rights-of-way and this practice has been endorsed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the US Access Board. The public right-of-way facilities

evaluated under this plan were evaluated against the 2010 ADAS and PROWAG.

1.2 Background

In 1995 Whatcom County Council adopted an ADA Transition Plan and Self-Evaluation, and in 1999 an update to the ADA Transition Plan and Self-Evaluation were adopted. The initial 1995 plan included a statement of requirements, an implementation schedule, a survey of county facilities, and a self-evaluation plan. The 1999 update includes the same elements as well as transition plan notes and updated information for facilities. The transition plans identified 23 facilities for survey and barrier removal. The county removed all barriers identified in the plan and update in accordance with the plan guidelines. The previous plan and update focus on providing access to public buildings and specific programs, but do not provide a robust review of the pedestrian facilities within the public right-of-way.

1.3 Plan Structure

The structure of this plan was organized to closely follow federal ADA transition plan requirements. This includes:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Self-Assessment

Documents self-assessment findings including physical barriers as well as practices or design standards that result in accessibility barriers.

Chapter 3 – Stakeholder Engagement

Documents public engagement efforts.

Chapter 4 – Barrier Removal

Describes both programs and mechanisms the County will use to remove accessibility barriers and identifies a number of detailed recommendations the County should

implement to remove accessibility barriers moving forward.

Chapter 5 – Implementation Outlines a schedule for the transition plan, including prioritization of projects, planning level cost estimates and potential funding sources.

Chapter 6 - Current Practices Provides the County with a location to store important and evolving plan information such as where and how this plan should be accessible, annual performance tracking, identification of the official responsible and other items that will change over time.

Best practices were identified and incorporated throughout the planning process beginning with the Scope of Work.

Several associated appendix items are included along with the plan.

Appendix A – Barrier Audit

Appendix B – APS Policy

Appendix C – Maximum Extent Feasible Template

Appendix D – Public Involvement

Appendix E – GIS Inventory

Appendix F – Cost Estimate Backup

2 Self-Assessment

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that jurisdictions evaluate services, programs, policies, and practices to determine their compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of the ADA.

This section describes the data collection process and resulting inventory of physical facilities such as sidewalks and curb ramps within the County's public rights-of-way. The inventory and self-assessment process are described in these sections.

2.1 Policy, Practices and Design Standards

Practices and design standards that meet accessibility standards are essential to ensure new or upgraded pedestrian facilities are accessible and that these upgrades contribute to the removal of accessibility barriers throughout the County. This section summarizes a review of County's practices and design standards for barriers and includes major findings of this work. Complete documentation of this work can be found in Appendix A. The audit was conducted in February of 2020.

2.1.1 Method

Whatcom County maintains adopted design standards for pedestrian facilities. These standards are used for County funded projects as well as privately designed and constructed projects within the public right-of-way. The Whatcom County Street Design Standards were audited for compliance with ADA guidelines found in the 2010 ADAS and the Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (US Access Board, 2005).

2.1.2 Findings

As a result of the standards review several recommendations were made to update these guidance documents to adhere to ADA standards. The code mostly references the RCWs regarding ADA standards, which is appropriate to clarify legal requirements. For many items' additional references to the WSDOT Design Manual will provide the necessary detail to make sure the county standards are compliant with ADA standards. Additionally, there were a few discrepancies between the Whatcom County Code, Road Standards and Standard Drawings. These recommendations are grouped into several categories including: Sidewalks, Crosswalks, Curb Ramps, and Signals, these can be found in Appendix A.

2.2 Physical Barrier

2.2.1 Data Collection

A self-assessment of all facilities within the public right-of-way was conducted and employed a robust data collection effort that included 8 attributes for sidewalks, 22 attributes for curb ramps, 17 attributes for signal pushbuttons, 4 for crosswalks, 7 attributes for bus stops, 14 for ADA accessible parking aisles and stalls, and 10 attributes for barriers/hazards. These attributes were collected in the field with individuals trained in ADA data collection methods. Data was collected over a four-month period.

A qualitative assessment was also conducted for the accessibility of the Whatcom Chief Ferry from Gooseberry Point to Lummi Island. This assessment occurred in October of 2020 and included a site visit and interviews with Ferry operators and County staff.

2.2.1.1 Process

Data inventory for public ROW features was collected using mobile tablet units and other smart devices with GIS geodatabase information. Attributes for features in the public ROW were collected by a consultant from July to September 2019.

Consultant staff conducted field and data collection under supervision to ensure consistent and accurate measurement of sidewalk and curb ramp measurements as well as correct recording of information using a GIS database.

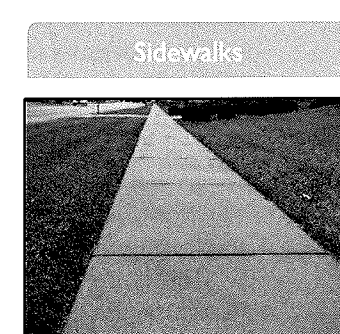
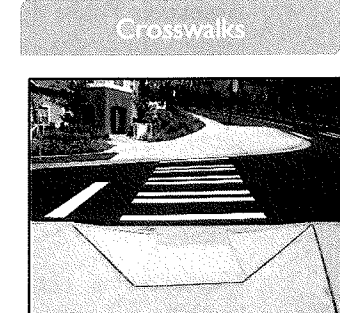
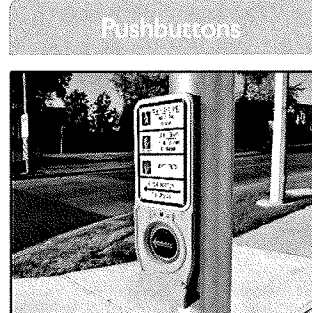
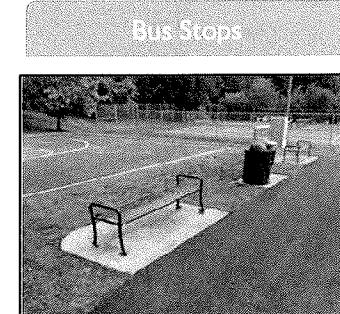
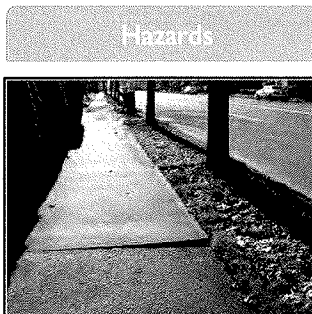
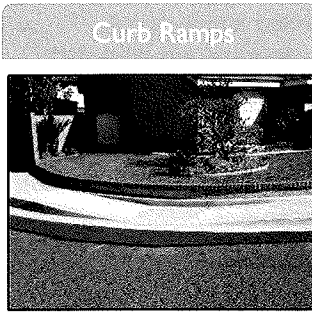
Data collection staff were provided a tape measure (to measure dimensions for features such as widths of curb ramps and sidewalks), and a smart level to efficiently and accurately measure slopes. Data collectors used mobile units with the Collector for ArcGIS application installed to record the measurements and traits of each feature.

For sidewalks, cross slopes were measured at each end of the segment and once in the middle. The running slope was measured at similar locations excluding within curb ramps and driveways, with the steepest measurement being the one recorded. The predominant sidewalk width was recorded for the length of the block from one intersection to the next. In addition, a separate database was developed to inventory specific pedestrian access route (PAR) barriers including:

- Horizontal and Vertical Discontinuities
- Fixed, Movable, or Protruding Objects
- Non-Compliant Driveways

For curb ramps, both existing and missing curb ramps were identified. When measures of the same attribute, such as flare slope (typically each ramp has two flares), differed, the worst measure for accessibility was recorded.

To improve the collection process for curb ramps, an optimization method was developed. The elements of curb ramps that often create



the largest barriers when out of compliance were first measured. If any of these measurements were non-compliant, the data collector stopped taking measurements of other elements on the curb ramp. This method allows

the County to quickly identify which ramps create larger barriers to users and would need to be replaced without collecting data that was deemed irrelevant if the curb ramp needed full replacement. This helped reduce data collection time while still providing the County with accurate data for decision making

The physical inventory included;

- over 53 miles of existing sidewalks, paved shoulder walkways, paved separated walkways
- 1091 curb ramps
- 24 signal pushbuttons
- 261 bus stops
- 2 accessible parking stalls
- over 1850 hazards

The attributes of each feature type were developed using WSDOT’s Field Guide for Accessible Public Rights of Way along with the United States Access Board’s PROWAG as a baseline, with edits based on feedback from County staff. Appendix E and the GIS data base show the exact location of each inventory item surveyed and identify non-compliant facilities.

2.2.2 Findings

The following sections detail the primary barriers inventoried and analyzed for ADA compliance. The barriers found applied to different features including curb ramps, sidewalks, discontinuities and obstacles in pedestrian routes, and pedestrian pushbuttons. State and Federal regulations dictate that curb ramps and sidewalks be ADA compliant. The result of the inventory analysis showed that most ADA features within the public right-of-way are in need of improvement to meet requirements.

2.2.2.1 Curb Ramps

The data collected to evaluate curb ramp compliance was divided into three overarching

categories: compliant, minor non-compliant and major non-compliance. A ramp was found to be compliant only if all collected features of the ramp met the required accessibility standards. Both non-compliant categories represent barriers to accessibility that will require attention such as, reconstruction or new ramps. While compliant ramps require no modification. The majority of the existing curb ramps were found to be non-compliant based on current ADA requirements. A ramp was found to be a major non-compliance, if the ramp width was too narrow or if the run or cross slopes were overly steep. A ramp was found to be a minor non-compliance if the barrier was easily removed with maintenance, or if run or cross slopes were only slightly steeper than standard. Figure 2-1 shows a sample of the curb ramps surveyed in the County and the percentage of non-compliant to compliant curb ramps within the County. All non-compliant curb ramps will need to be addressed and all barriers removed, minor and major non-compliances are used to show the level of severity of curb ramp barriers. Compliant, minor non-compliant, and major non-compliant curb ramps are shown in blue, yellow, and red, respectively.

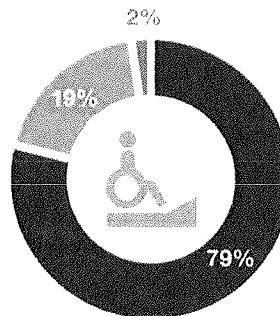


Figure 2-1 Percentage of Major and Minor Non-Compliant Curb Ramps and Compliant Curb Ramps

2.2.2.2 Sidewalks

Most sidewalks in the Whatcom County are non-compliant based on ADA requirements. The most frequent reasons for non-compliant sidewalk segments are:

- The sidewalk width is too narrow
- The cross slope of the sidewalk is too steep
- The sidewalk has fixed/non-fixed barriers and other discontinuities that impede required usable pedestrian space
- Non-compliant driveways intersect the sidewalk

Figure 2-2 shows a sample of the sidewalks surveyed in the County and demonstrates the percentage of sidewalk length that is compliant and non-compliant throughout the County. Non-compliant sidewalks are broken into two categories, minor and major non-compliant. For example; a sidewalk is considered to be a major non-compliance if the width is too narrow, or if the cross or run slopes are overly steep. A sidewalk segment with cross or run slopes only

slightly steeper than standard were considered minor non-compliances. All non-compliant sidewalk segments will need to be addressed and all barriers removed, minor and major non-compliances are used to show the level of severity of sidewalk barriers. Compliant, minor non-compliant, and major non-compliant sidewalks are shown in blue, yellow, and red, respectively.

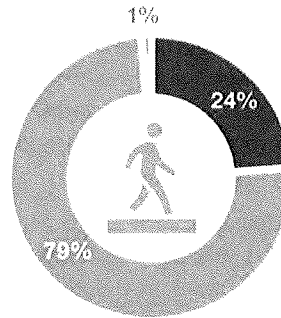


Figure 2-2 Percentage of Major and Minor Non-Compliant Sidewalk and Compliant Sidewalk

2.2.2.3 Pedestrian Pushbuttons

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) and Pushbuttons is an integrated system that communicates to pedestrians in a visual, audible, and vibrotactile manner. There are 24 pushbuttons in the Whatcom County, 18 of these pushbuttons are non-APS style and therefore do not meet current ADA requirements. The remaining 6 pushbuttons are APS style but will require some modifications to be fully compliant. There are two categories of required upgrades, buttons that need to be relocated and reprogramed, and non-APS buttons that need to be replaced. Figure 2-3 shows a sample of the pedestrian pushbuttons surveyed in the County and demonstrates the percentage of pushbuttons in each category throughout the County. APS style and non-APS

style pushbuttons are shown in blue and red, respectively.

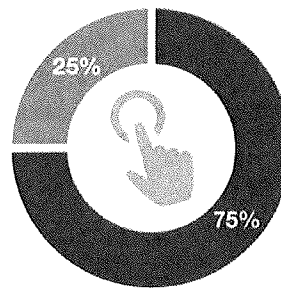


Figure 2-3 Percentage of APS Style and Non-APS Style Pushbuttons

2.2.2.4 Whatcom Chief Ferry

The Whatcom Chief Ferry is primarily a commuter ferry for the residents of Lummi Island. It is also the only access point for the island for tourists and other visitors. The ferry makes approximately 40 round trips per day between Gooseberry Point and Lummi Island. The existing ferry allows for walk-on passengers but the ferry docks have very limited pedestrian facilities. Walk-on passengers must use the vehicular roadways and ramps to board and disembark the ferry. With regards to accessibility, these roadways and ramps have several barriers including vertical and horizontal discontinuities, non-compliant slopes, non-compliant ramps, and no designated pedestrian route.

Both docks have parking spaces marked as accessible that are used sporadically. There is also a bus stop on the Gooseberry Point side. Restrooms are present at the Lummi Island dock but not at the Gooseberry Point dock. There are no dedicated pedestrian facilities between these features and the ferry docks and pedestrians use the adjacent roadway pavement to access these facilities.

The ferry itself has a small indoor passenger area but no accessible ingress or egress point. There are several large vertical hazards between the loading point and the passenger compartment.

In addition to the vehicular ferry, a passenger only ferry is also used for several weeks in the fall while the vehicular ferry is in dry dock for maintenance. This boat was not assessed as part of the self-assessment but interviews with ferry and county staff indicate that accessibility is a challenge with the passenger ferry as well. In particular, ingress and egress to the ferry can be challenging and the ferry is not able to accommodate larger powered wheelchairs.

As of the publication of this report the County has a preliminary design for a new ferry and is working to obtain funding. The new ferry will address the accessibility issues mentioned above and will be more accessible. As these plans are implemented, it is recommended that the County also remove barriers at both docks to provide a fully accessible route for pedestrians.

2.3 GIS Inventory Database

As a part of the self-assessment an extensive GIS database was created to assist with tracking progress through barrier removal. The database contains each attribute that was inventoried and all data that was collected for each attribute.

This database was provided to the county and will be used and updated in the ongoing efforts to bring the county into compliance with the ADA standards.

3 Stakeholder Engagement

Public and stakeholder input is an essential element in the transition plan development and self-evaluation processes. ADA implementation regulations require public entities to provide an opportunity to interested persons, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities, to participate in the self-evaluation process and development of the transition plan by submitting comments (28 CFR 35.105(b) and 28 CFR 35.150(d)(1)). There were three primary goals for the public outreach activities prior to adopting the plan:

- Meet Title II requirements for public comment opportunity.
- Inform the public about the County's plan and processes regarding removal of barriers to accessibility within the right-of-way. Provide information to assist interested parties to understand the issues faced by the County, alternatives considered and planned actions.
- Obtain public comment to identify any errors or gaps in the proposed accessibility transition plan for the public rights of way, specifically on prioritization and grievance processes.

3.1 Engagement Methods

3.1.1 Public Meeting

A public meeting was held at Luke's Community and Education Center on July 30, 2019. The meeting was widely advertised on the Whatcom County Web Page, local radio, and to attendees and speakers at a Whatcom County Hearing on June 18th, 2019. Despite adequate advertisement and public notification less than 10 members of the community were in

attendance. The objective of this event was to reach a broad cross-section of community members to introduce them to the plan, ask them about barriers and gaps in the public right-of-way, to start to define what is most important to the public. Materials included a large map of the County and a board defining potential priorities. Participants were able to use the figures to provide input on priority infrastructure and locations. A full account of the findings can be found in **Appendix A**.

3.1.2 On-Line Survey

With the assistance of a consultant, Whatcom County developed a 19-question on-line survey that was available from June 30, 2019 – August 30, 2019. The survey gathered community feedback from over 90 community members. The survey asked for specific feedback on several important items related to accessibility. Participants were asked to identify barriers they have experienced on pedestrian facilities in the County, as well as types of barriers, barrier locations, and other accessibility issues. There was a detectable difference between perceived barriers for persons with disabilities, and those without disabilities. Persons with disabilities showed hospitals and park access as their highest priorities, while those without put a higher emphasis on community services. **Appendix A** contains a detailed summary of all comments received.

3.1.3 Focus Group

The County hosted two 90-minute focus groups on October 1st and 3rd of 2019. The focus group meetings were offered to interested members of the community to review the initial comments received to date through the open house and survey as well as provide deeper feedback on aspects of

accessibility in the County including specific locations, types of issues, and priorities.

The focus group was provided with a facilitation guide as well a map of the County showing the transit routes, a set of priorities, the PowerPoint and flip charts. Appendix A contains a detailed summary of all comments received.

3.2 Meeting ADA Standards

Per 28 CFR 35.150(d)(1), public involvement is required as follows: A public entity shall provide an opportunity to interested persons, including individuals with disabilities or organizations representing individuals with disabilities, to participate in the development of the transition

plan by submitting comments. A copy of the transition plan shall be made available for public inspection.

The Draft Whatcom County Transition Plan was made available for public review and comment for a period during the months of March and April 2021. A link to the draft plan was provided on the County's project website.

Title VI Nondiscrimination Law

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a Federal statute and provides that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. This includes matters related to language access or limited English proficient (LEP) persons.

4 Barrier Removal

Removal of accessibility barriers is the primary purpose of ADA transition plans. The following section documents the primary methods of barrier removal the County currently has in place. This section also provides recommended changes to County policies, practices and design standards to comply with state and federal requirements related to ADA accessibility.

4.1 Barrier Removal Methods

The County currently has a limited number of methods to remove accessibility barriers in the public right-of-way. Current methods of barrier removal are indirect and are usually related to other programs and projects conducted as part of the Capital Improvement Plan. These projects, when impacting existing pedestrian facilities, will upgrade these facilities when required. Occasionally, permitted development will result in the reconstruction of pedestrian facilities and removal of barriers. However, barrier removal through this method is rare and not consistent year-to-year.

4.2 Barrier Removal Recommendations

An assessment of County policies, practices and design standards, as documented in Chapter 2, was conducted to understand the process that results in barriers to accessibility. This assessment was informed through a review of adopted County plans, field observations, discussions with County staff and a detailed design audit of the County's Public Works Standards (see Appendix D).

The recommendations included below were developed in response to this assessment and

have been written in such a way that recommended actions are clearly identified and progress on each specific recommendation can be easily tracked and updated.

Recommendation 1: Identify an official responsible for Transition Plan implementation within the Public Works Department

Status: Completed

As part of the transition planning process, an individual has been identified as the official responsible (see Section 6.1 for more information). This position, often referred to as the "ADA Coordinator", is one of the four major federal requirements for every ADA transition plan. The ADA Coordinator is responsible for facilitating County transition planning such as responding to grievance requests. They also function as a central figure for organizing the various programs and departments within the County to maintain a consistent approach to barrier removal and ADA standards enforcement in multiple aspects of County operations.

Recommendation 2: Update County budget to include a line item for ADA barrier removal

Status: Pending

Prior to the implementation of this plan, the County did not have any budget allocated for removal of barriers to accessibility within their jurisdiction. In order to fund the removal of the barriers identified in this plan, it is recommended that the County council approve budget to remove existing barriers. A proposal to allocate \$250,000 annually is being reviewed by the County council.

**Recommendation 3:
Update County design standards to
match ADA Standards**

Status: Pending

County practice and design standards must comply with federal ADA guidance. If standards are not updated and enforced, new or reconstructed pedestrian facilities may not be constructed to current accessibility standards, requiring costly revision, and increasing the duration it will take the County to remove accessibility barriers.

A detailed audit of County design standards using the 2010 ADAS and Proposed Accessible Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way 2005 (PROWAG) was conducted to inform Chapter 2. This audit, which is included in Appendix D, recommends several specific changes to the County's Development Standards and Standard Drawings.

**Recommendation 4:
Educate County staff, consultants, and
contractors on ADA standards**

Status: On-going

Transition plans are often a learning experience for County staff, consultants, and contractors alike since they change existing practices and expectations. The County should use updates to the County's design standards as an opportunity to teach and learn about accessibility and the barriers that those with limited mobility or sight experience when traveling in the County's public right-of-way. Education can take many forms from review of updated design standards with key individuals such as field inspectors and contractors, development and review of County specific design standards or checklists with County engineers, or training from groups that serve those with disabilities.

**Recommendation 5:
Adopt a Countywide Accessible
Pedestrian Signal (APS) policy**

Status: Pending

Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) policies serve as a means for cities to be consistent with ADA requirements at traffic signals. The APS policy covers the location and means of communication for APS devices that "communicate information about pedestrian timing in nonvisual formats such as audible tones, verbal messages, and/or vibrating surfaces" (MUTCD). Because the City of Bellingham Public Works staff maintain the County's signal systems, it is recommended that the county adopt the City of Bellingham's APS policy. The City's APS policy is included in Appendix B.

**Recommendation 6:
Provide more accessible options for
community members to participate in
grievance process for barriers to
accessibility**

Status: Pending

Public entities subject to Title II of the ADA are required to adopt and publish a grievance procedure as part of their transition plan. A grievance process allows community members to formally report denial of access to a County facility, program, or activity based on disability.

Currently, The Whatcom County Code section 2.86 discusses the procedure for filing complaints and grievances pertaining to ADA compliance. The County uses a three-step process, with complaints being addressed first by the ADA Coordinator, then the ADA Compliance Committee, and finally, if still not resolved, to the County Council. While this approach is consistent with the Title II requirements, there is an opportunity to make the process itself more accessible. The procedure currently requires submitting a written complaint to the County ADA coordinator. The County's ADA webpage should be utilized to provide multiple options for requesting service and filing grievances including and accessible on-line form, and

phone, email, and in-person options for these requests.

In addition, it is recommended that the first step of the grievance process include notification to the appropriate County department. Including staff from the appropriate department will help provide the ADA Coordinator with the needed expertise to address the complaint. This will also provide a valuable feedback loop between the County staff and the public.

**Recommendation 7:
Develop a consistent and centralized
MEF documentation database**

Status: Underway

Maximum extent feasible (MEF) is policy that dictates that alterations that could affect the usability of a facility in the public right-of-way must be made in an accessible manner to the maximum extent feasible. ADA Standards for Accessible Design (2010) dictates that:

Each facility or part of a facility altered by, on behalf of, or for the use of a public entity in a manner that affects or could affect the usability of the facility or part of the facility shall, to the maximum extent feasible, be altered in such manner that the altered portion of the facility is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if the alteration was commenced after January 26, 1992.

Whatcom County should adopt a MEF documentation process and standard template for the documentation of maximum extent feasible when addressing new or altered construction. Each project to remove barriers should be evaluated to determine if improvements to the facility in the public right-of-way are feasible in the engineering design phase. Some barriers may be infeasible to remove or may be removable only to a point.

Where this is the case the County should document the reason for the variation from accessibility standards. This documentation should be stored in a centralized location and be linked to the County's GIS ADA self-assessment database and/or asset management software to ensure consistency of data.

Consolidation of past MEF records into this data is also recommended. A template example has been provided in Appendix C.

**Recommendation 8:
Develop performance measures and
processes to track removal of barriers**

Status: Pending

The primary purpose of an ADA transition plan is to develop a plan for removal of accessibility barriers. In order to show progress towards this requirement, the County should develop a process of tracking barrier removal on a year by year basis. It is recommended that the County actively update the GIS ADA self-assessment database developed for this plan, tracking how and when ADA barriers are removed. This data can be used to provide annual updates on progress and demonstrate to the public as well as federal regulators that the County is making progress to meet Title II requirements.

**Recommendation 9:
Whatcom Chief Ferry replacement and
dock improvements.**

Status: Underway

The County should continue to pursue funding to replace the existing boat with a new, more accessible ferry.

The County should also create a plan to remove the accessibility barriers at both dock locations. Improvements to be considered should include;

- Additional signing to direct pedestrians to the pedestrian staging area

- Designated and accessible pedestrian access route between accessible parking, pedestrian staging area, restrooms, and passenger area on ferry
- Lighting for the pedestrian access routes and staging areas

5 Implementation

5.1 Approach

Development of an implementation plan and transition schedule included three steps once the Countywide barrier assessment was complete. First, all facilities with an identified barrier were prioritized. Next, a planning level cost estimate was developed to provide an estimate of the financial resources needed to remove all barriers. Finally, a schedule was developed based on a \$250,000 annual budget for barrier removal. This schedule will help inform recommendations for additional funding for barrier removal, see section 5.3.3 for schedule details.

5.2 Prioritization

To focus the County's efforts toward facilities that pose the largest barrier within the public right-of-way, an analysis of the accessibility of each pedestrian facility and its location was completed. The result of this analysis is a prioritized list of projects, with the highest benefit projects identified for removal first.

To complete this assessment for the public right-of-way, a multi-criteria analysis was conducted to determine which facilities do

not meet existing sidewalks and curb ramp standards. Each attribute collected in the field was compared against 2010 ADAS and PROWAG requirements as outlined in Chapter 2.

If the facility does not meet ADA requirements or best practices, or is located near public destinations, points were assigned, with the number of points dependent on the relative importance or proximity. Sidewalks or curb ramps with poor compliance and several proximate destinations received a high score and are prioritized for removal while facilities farther from public destinations have lower scores, and compliant features receive a score of zero.

5.2.1 Accessibility Index Score

Several criteria were used to establish the extent to which each pedestrian facility did or did not present a barrier to accessible mobility. Tables 5-1 and 5-7 shows these criteria, the threshold used to identify them as a barrier, and the score used to indicate the severity of each barrier relative to each other. Facilities with a higher Accessibility Index Score (AIS) represent a large accessibility barrier.

Table 5-1 Sidewalk, Accessibility Index Score Value

SIDEWALK ACCESSIBILITY INDEX SCORE	CRITERIA	THRESHOLD	SCORE
Sidewalks	Width	< 60 inches or < 48 inches with no sidewalk pull-outs	4
	Cross Slope Issue	> 2%	1
	Cross Slope Issue	> 2.4%	1
	Cross Slope Issue	> 3%	2
	Condition	< Average	3
	Vertical Discontinuity Issue > ¼ inch and <= ½ inch without bevel or >½ inch	Barriers Present >=1	1
	Vertical Discontinuity Issue	Barriers Present >=5	1
	Vertical Discontinuity Issue	Barriers Present >=10	1
	Horizontal Discontinuity Issue > ½ inch	Barriers Present >=1	1
	Horizontal Discontinuity Issue	Barriers Present >=5	1
	Horizontal Discontinuity Issue	Barriers Present >=10	1
	Fixed Obstacles	Barriers Present >=1	1
	Fixed Obstacles	Barriers Present >=2	1
	Fixed Obstacles	Barriers Present >=3	1
	Moveable Obstacles	Barriers Present >=1	1
	Moveable Obstacles	Barriers Present >=2	1
	Moveable Obstacles	Barriers Present >=3	1
	Protruding Obstacles	Barriers Present >=1	1
	Protruding Obstacles	Barriers Present >=2	1
	Protruding Obstacles	Barriers Present >=3	1
	Non-Compliant Driveways Non-Compliant >2% cross-slope, and/or Non-Concurrent Grade Break and/or >8.3% Running Slope	Barriers Present >=1	1
	Non-Compliant Driveways	Barriers Present >=2	1
	Non-Compliant Driveways	Barriers Present >=3	1
Maximum Sidewalk (AIS) Score			30

Table 5-2 Curb Ramp Accessibility Index Score Value

CURB RAMP ACCESSIBILITY INDEX SCORE	RATING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE SCORE
Ramp Width (Max. Score)	< 48 inches	30
Ramp Running Slope (Max. Score)	> 8.3% (< 15 feet), or >5% (Blended)	30
Ramp Cross Slope (Max. Score)	> 2%	30
Ramp Type (Max. Score)	Non-Compliant Type	30
Accessible Path	No	2
Turning Space	None or width < full width of ramp or length < 48 inches	5
Turning Space Turning Slope	> 2%	3
Flare Slope	> 10%	2
Receiving Ramp	No	2
Truncated Domes (DWS)	No	3
Truncated Domes (DWS Placement)	Other than Back of Curb	1
Truncated Domes (DWS Depth)	< 2 feet	1
Truncated Domes (DWS Width)	Less than Full Width of Curb Ramp	1
Grade Break	Not Concurrent	2
Counter Slope	> 5%	2
Lip	> ¼ inch	2
End in Crosswalk	No	2
Roadway Clear Space	< 4ft x 4ft	2
TOTAL CURB RAMPS ACCESSIBILITY SCORE (AIS)		30

Table 5-3 Signal Push Buttons Accessibility Index Score Value

SIGNAL PUSH BUTTONS ACCESSIBILITY INDEX SCORE	RATING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE SCORE
Curb Distance	Pushbutton less than 10 feet from curb = No	2
Crosswalk Extension Distance	Pushbutton less than 5 feet from the extension of the crosswalk line = No	2
Force Less Than 5lbs	Pushbutton Force less than 5 pounds = No	2
Vibe Feedback	Pushbutton provide vibratory feedback when pushed = No	2
Button Size and Visual Contrast	Pushbutton size meets minimum 2-inch diameter with visual contrast from housing = No	2
Distance of 2 Buttons on Same Corner	Distance between pushbuttons on the same corner less than 10 feet and audible indication of WALK interval in speech = No, or distance greater than 10 feet and indication of WALK interval in both speech or tone = No	2
Reach Depth from Landing	Reach depth from pushbutton to the landing is less than 10 inches = No	2
Mounting Height	Mounting height of pushbutton from landing area is < 42 inches or > 48 inches	2
Tactile Arrow	Tactile Arrow provided = No	2
Directional Arrow	Directional arrow on pushbutton face, housing or mounting & pushbutton with parallel orientation to crosswalk direction = No	2
Level Clear Space	Level clear space provided at pushbutton (min. 30" x 48") landing area provided with less than a 2% cross slope in any direction = No	2
Both Audible Tone during "Walk" Cycle and Audible Speech during "Walk" Cycle	Audible indication of WALK interval in tone = No and Audible indication of WALK interval in speech = No	2
Locator Tone during "Don't Walk" Cycle	Locator tone operates during DON'T WALK and flashing DON'T WALK intervals = No	2
Braille Street Name	Braille correctly showing street name = No and audible indication of street name at any time = No	2
APS Style Housing	Housing is APS Style = No	2
TOTAL SIGNAL PUSH BUTTONS ACCESSIBILITY SCORE (AIS)		30

Table 5-4 Parking Stall Accessibility Index Score Value

PARKING STALL ACCESSIBILITY INDEX SCORE	RATING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE SCORE
Stall Width	If regular stall, < 96 inches. If van accessible stall, < 132 inches and adjacent aisle is < 96 inches.	4
Stall Turning Slope	> 2%	4
Stall Pavement Marking	No Marking	3
Sign Present	No Sign	2
Sign Height	< 60 inches	1
Wheel stop or Curb Present	No Wheel stop/Curb (and not a parallel stall)	2
Vertical Clearance	< 98 inches and a van accessible parking stall	2
Adjacent Walkway Width	For parallel on-street parking with a sidewalk ≤ 14 feet wide nearby, stall is not at end of block. If sidewalk is > 14 feet wide, no access aisle provided in road parallel to stall or access aisle is < 5 feet wide.	2
Connected to Access Aisle (Max. Score)	No Access Aisle	10
Connected to Accessible Path	Not Connected	2
Access Aisle Width	< 60 inches	3
Access Aisle Turning Slope	> 2%	3
Pavement Marking	No Hatching	2
TOTAL PARKING STALLS ACCESSIBILITY SCORE (AIS)		30

Table 5-5 Railroad Crossing Accessibility Index Score Value

RAILROAD CROSSING ACCESSIBILITY INDEX SCORE	RATING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE SCORE
Flange Gap	> 3 inches wide	10
DWS	No DWS	10
DWS Placement	< 6 feet or > 15 feet from edge of nearest rail, or No DWS	10
TOTAL RAILROAD CROSSING ACCESSIBILITY SCORE (AIS)		30

Table 5-6 Crosswalk Accessibility Index Score Value

CROSSWALK ACCESSIBILITY INDEX SCORE	RATING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE SCORE
Width	< 6 feet	6
Run Slope	> 5%	12
Cross Slope	> 2% at Stop/Yield Controlled Intersections or > 5% at other types of crossings	12
TOTAL CROSSWALK ACCESSIBILITY SCORE (AIS)		30

Table 5-7 Bus Stop Accessibility Index Score Value

BUS STOP ACCESSIBILITY INDEX SCORE	RATING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE SCORE
Boarding Area Dimensions	< 5'x8' or no boarding area	8
Condition	Poor	5
Boarding Area Cross Slope	> 2%	5
Boarding Area Run Slope	> 5% and not similar to roadway grade	4
Accessible Route Slope	> 5% and not similar to roadway grade (if separation between boarding area and shelter)	4
Shelter Cross Slope	> 2% (If there is a shelter)	4
TOTAL BUS STOP ACCESSIBILITY SCORE (AIS)		30

5.2.2 Location Index Score

A number of popular community destinations - such as schools, transit and parks - are used to identify high priority pedestrian facilities within the County. This is done by determining which pedestrian facilities fall within a specified proximity of one or more of these destinations.

Pedestrian facilities within the identified proximity are assigned points based on each destination they are close to, as shown in Table 5-8. This measure is called the Location Index Score (LIS), which identifies high pedestrian generating overlapping areas. Ultimately the more pedestrian generators, the higher the score.

Community Defined Destinations identified during the public outreach process consisted of general land uses as well as specific locations that participants identified as issues. Specific locations included facilities like sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks and signals that individuals had identified as barriers.

Table 5-8 Location Index Score Value

LOCATION CRITERIA	RATING CRITERIA	POSSIBLE SCORE
Schools		
Proximity to Schools	Within 1/8-mile radius of school	5
Walk-To-School Route Proximity	Within 1/2-mile radius of school	5
Parks		
	Within 1/8-mile radius of park	5
Transit		
Park and Ride	Within 1/8-mile of park and ride	5
Bus Stops	Within 1/8-mile of transit stop	5
Traffic Signal/Roundabout	Within 1/8-mile of signal or roundabout	5
Public Buildings	Within 1/8-mile of location	5
Downtown / Urban / Commercial Business Centers	Within 1/4-mile radius of Downtown, Urban and Commercial Business Center Zoning	5
Community Defined Destinations (defined by Stakeholder/Public Engagement*)	Within 1/8-mile of location	5
TOTAL LOCATION INDEX SCORE (LIS)		45

* Note: Community Defined Destinations to be identified based on public outreach, ADA surveys, etc. on what locations are more important, thus giving extra weight to those community defined destinations. (To be determined)

5.2.3 Barrier Removal Priorities

By combining the Accessibility Index Score and Location Index Score or Facility Use Index Score together, a Composite Index Score was developed. Together, these measures prioritize barrier removal at locations where pedestrian facilities present a barrier and where pedestrians would be expected.

Facilities with the highest score should be addressed first (46+ points) and represent facilities that present a clear physical barrier and are in high demand areas. The next levels of

priority are 'high' (31-45 points) and 'medium' (16-30 points). Facilities with the lowest scores should be address last (1 to 15 points), have minor barriers, and are in locations where pedestrian demand would be expected to be lower. These scores are relative, comparing one facility to the other. The ranges for medium and high priority were defined based on review of the identified barriers and assessment of the relative barrier they present. It should be noted that while some barriers have a lower priority, they still should be removed.

5.3 Transition Plan Cost and Schedule

A key requirement of an ADA Transition Plan is development of a schedule which shows how long it will take the County to remove accessibility barriers. Understanding the financial resources needed to remove accessibility barriers is essential for developing such a schedule.

Cost estimates for each barrier were developed to assist in determining a schedule for the completion of the barrier removal process as a tool to help the County plan funding for the full removal of barriers over the coming years.

5.3.1 Process

Unit costs were developed to address ADA barriers described in Chapter 2. The unit costs were developed using recent bid tabulations, input from County staff, and planning level assumptions concerning each ADA barrier type.

ADA deficiencies were totaled using their respective unit of measurement: for example, square yards for sidewalks, and number of facilities for curb ramps.

To avoid overestimation of non-compliant facilities, assumptions were made when necessary to address the repeatability of the unit cost and the quantities for each item. For example, a sidewalk segment with a non-compliant cross-slope that will require full replacement will not also require vertical discontinuity repair.

A final cost estimate was determined using information from the data inventory and calculated using current year construction costs.

5.3.2 Planning Level Cost Estimate

A planning level cost estimate to remove all identified barriers was developed based on the process described above. This overall cost includes construction, design, mobilization, and other construction related contingencies, but does not include County staffing needed for project management. Table 5-9 shows a summary of each activity associated with barrier removal and the applicable cost of removing the specified amount of deficiencies.

Table 5-9 – Planning Level Cost Estimate Within the Public Right-of-way

ADA DEFICIENCY	IMPROVEMENT TYPES	TOTAL QUANTITY	TOTAL PRICE
Sidewalks			
Non-Compliant Sidewalk	Reconstruct existing sidewalk or paved shoulder walkway	135,807 SY	\$19,692,029
Non-Compliant Driveway	New driveway with sidewalk	995	\$2,885,500
Subtotal			\$22,578,000
Maintenance/Miscellaneous			
Non-Compliant Horizontal Discontinuity	Sidewalk crack sealing/grouting (10 LF of sidewalk per horizontal discontinuity)	120 LF	\$600
Fixed Obstacles	Relocation of obstacles including utility pole, mailbox, tree trunk, etc.	18	\$54,000
Moveable Obstacles	Relocation of obstacles including tree/bush (prunable), message boards, parked cars, etc.	129	\$25,800
Protruding Obstacles	Relocation of obstacles including of bush/tree, signs, awnings etc.	216	\$108,000
Subtotal			\$189,000
Curb Ramps			
Missing Curb Ramps	New curb ramp	368	\$2,208,000
Non-compliant ramp (running slope, cross slope, ramp width, flare slope, lip, grade break, etc.)	Reconstruct existing ramp	674	\$4,044,000
Curb Ramps without Detectable Warning Surface (DWS) or DWS is Non-Compliant	Install/replace detectable warning surface	19	\$19,600
Curb ramp at marked crosswalk does not end within crosswalk.	Rechannelize crosswalk.	3	\$3,300
Subtotal			\$6,275,000
Pushbuttons			
Non-APS Pushbutton and Pushbutton are Located Incorrectly	Install new pole and pushbutton	15	\$75,000
Pushbutton is non-APS but is located within 5ft crosswalk extension, 10ft from curb, compliant reach depth, and adjacent to compliant clear space.	Install new pushbutton	9	\$18,000
Subtotal			\$93,000
Bus Stops			
Non-compliant bus shelter turning space cross slope	Replace Bus Shelter Pad (7.5SY per occurrence)	100 SY	\$18,000
Subtotal			\$18,000
Accessible Parking Improvements			
Non-compliant parking stall/parking aisle slope.	Grind surface and/or add asphalt lift.	2 EA	\$4,000
Subtotal			\$4,000
Total			\$29,157,000
Contingency @ 20%			\$5,832,000
Design @ 12%			\$3,499,000
Mobilization @ 8%			\$2,333,000
TESC + Traffic Control @ 12%			\$3,499,000
Construction Management @ 20%			\$5,832,000
Public Right-of-Way: TOTAL 2020 DOLLARS			\$50,160,000

4.3.3 Schedule

Based upon the self-evaluation, planning-level cost estimates, and existing funding programs, a schedule for barrier removal was developed. Table 5-10 below shows barriers at each priority level as a percentage and the total cost to remove those barriers. Highest priority barriers represent a significant barrier to accessibility in areas with high demand for accessibility. The majority of barriers in the high and very high priority categories are curb ramps and pedestrian pushbuttons located in high priority locations. Lower priority barriers represent lesser barriers to accessibility in areas with lower pedestrian demand. The barriers in the low and medium priority categories are primarily lesser barriers to accessibility such as moveable obstacles, horizontal discontinuities and protruding obstacles. It should be noted that while some barriers have a lower priority, they still should be removed.

Table 5-10 Public Right-of-Way Barrier Removal Prioritization and Cost

	Low Priority Barriers (1-15 points)	Medium Priority Barriers (16-30 points)	High Priority Barriers (31-45 points)	Very High Priority Barriers (46+ points)
Percentage	32%	45%	21%	2%
Total Cost	\$16,133,000	\$22,679,000	\$10,286,000	\$1,062,000

A plan should be developed to target removal of the highest priority barriers. The 'very high' priorities consist of 2% of the existing barriers and are estimated to cost a total of \$1,062,000 to remove. By removing the highest priority barriers first, the County is working to provide the best access to the most needed programs, in the shortest timeframe possible. After the highest priority barriers are removed the County should continue to remove the high priority, medium priority, and low priority barriers. The County should create a 5-year barrier removal program with a list of projects to remove specific barriers. The 5-year program should focus on the highest priority barriers. The purpose of the 5-year program is to make progress in barrier removal but also to provide a way to reassess the larger plan and measure incremental progress. At the end of the 5-year program the County should reevaluate their progress with barrier removal and the annual budget. If progress is slower than anticipated additional funding may be required. If progress is faster than anticipated a shorter timeline may be achievable.

The County has proposed an annual budget of \$250,000, distributed between Maintenance and Operations (\$50,000), capital improvements for barrier removal (\$150,000) and project selection/design (\$50,000). With the approved budget of \$250,000 per year, it is anticipated that the removal of the highest priority barriers will be completed within the first 5-year program.

6 Current Practices

This chapter documents key pieces of information which are critical for ongoing plan implementation. This information is likely to change over the lifetime of the plan such as the official responsible for plan oversight or progress report on barrier removal. This section is meant to act as a “living document” which should be updated to represent current practices or information.

This section is updated as of: February 2020

6.1 Official Responsible

- Official Responsible – Human Resources Manager, ADA Coordinator
- Mailing Address – 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham, WA 98225
- Phone Number – 360-778-5300
- Email – hr@co.whatcom.wa.us

6.2 Current Funding Information

- \$250,000 annual funding distributed between Maintenance and Operations (\$50,000), capital improvements for barrier removal (\$150,000) and project selection/design (\$50,000)

6.3 Update of Design Standards and Training

- To be Completed

6.4 APS Policy

- By adopting this transition plan the APS policy shown in Appendix B is adopted.

6.5 Current Grievance Process

- See Whatcom County Code section 2.86 and <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/259/Americans-With-Disabilities-Act-Compliance>

6.6 Maximum Extent Feasible Database and Process

- See Appendix C

6.7 Barrier Removal Performance Monitoring

The plan is currently less than a year old, so it represents the most recent available data.

Appendix A - Barrier Audit

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 11, 2021 **TG:** 1.19049.00

To: David Hower, Whatcom County

From: Ryan Peterson PE, PTOE – Transpo Group

cc: James Karcher PE, Douglas Ranney PE – Whatcom County

Subject: Whatcom County ADA Accessibility Standards Review

Practices and design standards that meet accessibility standards are essential to ensure new or upgraded pedestrian facilities are accessible and that these upgrades contribute to the removal of accessibility barriers throughout the County.

The following Whatcom County documents were reviewed against current accessibility standards:

- Whatcom County Development Standards and Standard Drawings, October 14, 2019
- Whatcom County Code

In conversation with County staff, an approach to the standards review was developed that included a focus on referencing other accessibility standards, rather than providing substantial detail within Whatcom County standards. This was done for several reasons including the lack of County resources to research changes to accessibility standards and update County standards on a regular basis. The review of County standards relies heavily on WSDOT standards, particularly Chapter 1510 of the WSDOT Design Manual. Where applicable, recommendations have been made to reference this standard in lieu of providing substantial detail that would be redundant with the WSDOT Design Manual.

This memo summarizes a review of Whatcom County's policies and design standards for barriers and includes major findings of this work. The memorandum is organized by facility type.

Sidewalks and Pathways

Whatcom County Code mentions sidewalks in various sections and provides guidance on design relative to the different land use zones within the County. These references are not accessibility related. Where specific design requirements are called out, they do not violate current accessibility standards. No modifications to the County Code related to sidewalks are recommended.

Most of the design guidance for sidewalks in Whatcom County is contained in Section 508, *Roadside Features*, of Whatcom County Development Standards and corresponding Standard Plans. Sections 508.A and 508.B address sidewalks and pathways and the following modifications are recommended:

Section 508.A, Urban Pedestrian Facilities

- Section 508.A.4 – Change the wording of this section to “Pedestrian Access Routes (PARs) as defined by Chapter 1510 of the WSDOT Design Manual shall be provided on one side of new and existing perimeter public roads adjoining any development which creates, in the professional judgement of the County Engineer, the potential for significant additional pedestrian movement and the roadway traffic has an ADT of over 400 vehicles. This PAR shall have a firm, stable, and slip-resistant surface and may be incorporated into the shoulder of the roadway. The PAR shall meet all applicable accessibility requirements as shown in the WSDOT Design Manual Chapter 1510.”
- Section 508.A.5 – Change the wording of this paragraph to read “Sidewalks shall be constructed with Class 3000 cement concrete per WSDOT Standard Specifications and be constructed per WSDOT Design Manual Sections 1510.05 – 1510.08 and corresponding WSDOT standard plans. Construction tolerances should be accounted for during design to insure the final constructed sidewalk meets all accessibility requirements. Sidewalks shall be light brush finished and curing compound shall be applied to all finished concrete

surfaces per WSDOT Standard Specifications. Subgrade compaction shall meet the requirements outlined in Section 511.E, Concrete Testing. Sidewalks in cut sections shall be drained as shown on Standard Drawing 508.A-2.”

- Delete Sections 508.A.6, 508.A.7 in their entirety.
- Standard Drawing 508.A-1 – Most of the information in this County standard drawing is redundant with WSDOT Standard Plan F-30.10. It is recommended that this standard plan be deleted and information specific to Whatcom County be incorporated into Section 508.A.5 as described above.

Section 508.B, Rural Pedestrian Facilities

- Section 508.B.1 - Change reference to walkways to “Pedestrian Access Routes (PARs) as defined by Chapter 1510 of the WSDOT Design Manual”. Change all subsequent references to walkways in Section 508.B to “PAR”
- Section 508.B.3 – Change wording to read “Minimum PAR improvements shall consist of a firm, stable, and slip resistant material. Material other than cement concrete and asphalt pavement must be approved by the County Engineer. When the PAR is incorporated into the road shoulder, the typical roadway section shall govern. PAR may be combined with bikeway.”
- Delete Section 508.B.4 in its entirety.

Driveway Approaches

Whatcom County Code contains several requirements for driveways in various sections. These requirements are general in nature and generally identify where and when driveways are to be installed. No specific information to accessibility is referenced in the County Code and no modifications are recommended.

Section 508.D of Whatcom County Development Standards and associated Standard Plans address driveway approaches. The following modifications are recommended:

- Add the following sentence to the end of Section 508.D.3.a: “When a Pedestrian Access Route or sidewalk is present on the arterial/collector street, a Pedestrian Access Route meeting accessibility criteria as defined in WSDOT Design Manual Chapter 1510 shall be provided through the driveway.”

Curb Ramps

References to curb ramps in the County Code are again, general in nature and do not specifically address accessibility. No modifications are recommended.

Section 508.G of Whatcom County Development Standards and associated standard plans address curb ramp requirements. The following modifications are recommended:

- Section 508.G – Change wording to read “Curb ramps shall be installed at all legal pedestrian crossings including intersections and mid-block pedestrian crossings where a Pedestrian Access Route as defined in WSDOT Design Manual Chapter 1510 is provided on both sides of the street and where a transition from sidewalk to pavement grade is required. At-grade pedestrian facilities shall not require a curb ramp. Curb ramps shall be constructed per the WSDOT Design Manual, Chapter 1510.09 and associated WSDOT Standard Plans.”
- Standard Drawings 508.G-1 through 508.G-5 – These standard drawings are redundant with WSDOT Standard Plans F-40.12, F-40.14, F-40.15, F-40.16, and F-45.10. It is recommended that these standard plans be deleted.

Pedestrian Signals

Pedestrian signals are not addressed in either Whatcom County Code or Development Standards. It is recommended that the following modification be made:

- Add sub-section of Section 508A titled *Pedestrian Signals* that states: “All traffic signals within Whatcom County, including pedestrian signals and beacons, shall be built in accordance with City of Bellingham standards. All new traffic signals shall be constructed in accordance with City of Bellingham design standards and standard plans. All new pedestrian signal elements, where applicable, shall be accessible, including countdown pedestrian signal heads and Accessible Pedestrian System (APS) pushbuttons. For retrofits, the City of Bellingham’s APS Policy shall be followed to determine the scope for accessibility upgrades to the signal system.”

Other Pedestrian Facilities

Other facilities of the pedestrian network like handrails, access ramps, and transit stops are not mentioned in any detail within Whatcom County Code and Development Standards. The following is a recommended modification to address this omission:

- Add sub-section of Section 508A titled *Other Pedestrian Facilities* that states “All other pedestrian facilities including handrails, transit stops, access ramps, etc. shall be constructed per WSDOT Design Manual Section 1510.15.”

Appendix B - APS Policy



City of Bellingham
Public Works Department
104 W. Magnolia Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

MEMORANDUM

TO: BRENT BALDWIN, PAUL REED, FREEMAN ANTHONY, JESSICA BENNETT, STEVE DAY,
CRAIG MUELLER, LARRY SCHOLTEN, SAM SHIPP

FROM: KIM BROWN

CC: CHAD SCHULHAUSER, ERIC JOHNSTON, MIKE OLINGER

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS AND PUSHBUTTONS (APS) INSTALLATION

DATE: 30 OCTOBER 2018

Intent:

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local governments to provide "effective communication" for those using or accessing public programs, services, and activities. For pedestrians living with visual and/or hearing impairments, audible and vibrotactile communication may be provided by means of Accessible Pedestrian Signals and Pushbuttons (APS) at signalized intersections. These signals can provide information in an "effective" or accessible format to assist in making signalized street crossings easier to use for all pedestrians.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish reasonable and consistent policy for installing APS.

Policy:

The City of Bellingham will install APS under the following conditions:

- **New construction:** All new construction of traffic signal projects, including HAWKS and enhanced crosswalks, requires installation of APS when pedestrian signals are installed.
- **Alteration:** Existing pedestrian signals shall be upgraded to APS when the signal controller and software are altered or any individual signal or pedestrian head is replaced.
- **Citizen requests:** Individuals living with disabilities or those who directly care for individuals living with disabilities can request installation of APS at signalized intersections, including HAWKS and enhanced crosswalks. Requests will be logged and considered for improvement outside of a new construction or alteration project.
- In addition to the above conditions, signalized intersections will be retrofitted with APS according to the City's ADA Transition Plan prioritization process.

Technical Requirements:

APS shall be installed in compliance with technical requirements specified in Section 4E.08 through 4E.13 of the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and Section R403 of the Proposed Guidelines for Pedestrians Facilities in the Public Right of Way (PROWAG DRAFT 2011).

Appendix C - Maximum Extent Feasible

Maximum Extent Feasible (MEF) Template – Public Right-of-Way Facilities

Project Description:

Barrier Type for MEF Evaluation

- New Construction Project - with proposed accessible route features requiring MEF evaluation
- Reconstruction Project – with existing accessible route barriers for MEF evaluation
- Isolated Accessible Route Barrier identified by Maintenance & Operations or public

Roadway/Accessible Route Parameters

- Roadway Classification:
- Design Speed/Posted Speed:
- Design Year ADT:
- Truck Percentage:
- Pedestrian related crash history:
- Within Urban Growth Area?:
- Facilities verified to be within right of way?:
- CRP #:

Existing Pedestrian Facilities – general description (include a summary of the proposed pedestrian features throughout project, i.e. types of facilities, connections to existing facilities, etc.)

Pedestrian Design Standards – cover the following subjects

- Discuss the criteria that apply to the pedestrian elements on the project that will be built to the Maximum Extent Feasible
- Include reference(s) to the appropriate PROWAG/ADA section(s) and Whatcom County Public Works Standards [including revision date]

Alternative(s) analysis – were there alternatives considered and why were they not selected? needed for new construction projects only

Proposal – cover the following subjects

- What features will remain that meet guidelines (Only applicable to features associated with barriers that are being evaluated for feasibility of removal, or justification being provided per the MEF process. For example, if an intersection has four corners and only one is altered to the MEF, only include information about that one corner)

- What features are being built to guidelines
- What is being built to the maximum extent feasible

Justification

- Discussion of what constraints/challenges there are to meet full design level

Additional Benefits – examples include improving pedestrian connections, improved safety, better traffic operations, etc.

Attachments Included:

- Vic Map
- Plan Sheet(s), description: _____
- Feasibility /Justification Cost Estimate
- Other: _____

Appendix D - Public Involvement

WHATCOM COUNTY

ADA TRANSITION PLAN

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND FEEDBACK

PREPARED FOR: Jim Karcher and Dave Hower, Whatcom County

PREPARED BY: Jeanne Acutanza, Acutanza STS

CC: Ryan Peterson, Transpo Group

DATE: December 2, 2019 FINAL

Introduction

In developing an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Transition Plan for Whatcom County, a key initial step is outreach to people with disabilities or those who support people with disabilities. The goal of this outreach is to gain feedback on current pedestrian facilities within the public right-of-way in Whatcom County, specifically those not in the incorporated areas of Cities like Bellingham, that provide access to community and government services. This draft memo outlines the community outreach process used to support development of the ADA Transition Plan and feedback we have received to date. This memo summarizes outreach efforts through a public meeting, survey, and more in-depth focus groups.

Promotion and advertising for outreach

Outreach to solicit participants and encourage input at the open house, online open house, and survey included outreach to local community service providers and advocacy groups. Specific outreach to organizations serving and advocating for individuals with disabilities included:

- Whatcom County Main Web Page
- Whatcom County Public Works Page
- KGMI Radio
- Attendees and speakers at Whatcom County Hearing on June 18, 2019

An invitation to participate in a more in-depth focus group was solicited at the open house, through the online survey, and personal outreach. This focus group reviewed this summary and provided comments. Part of the focus group feedback was to seek input on ADA issues at bus stops from the school districts. This summary includes feedback from the transportation services of the Blaine, Lynden and Bellingham School Districts.

How were members of the public involved?

To garner feedback from the community, Whatcom County hosted an in-person Open House on July 30, an online survey that was available to the public from July 30 through August 31, and two focus group meetings for interested community members held on October 1 and 3.

Feedback for each element of outreach resulted in the identification of general and specific issues. Community members were also asked about priorities and which issues and areas are most important to them.

Public Meeting July 30, 2019

A community public meeting was held on July 30 at St. Luke's Community and Education Center from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The room is accessible using elevators and the library is centrally located in Bellingham with good transit service. Sign language interpreters were on hand and staff engaged members of the community to provide feedback on maps and boards. Outreach boards were provided to help educate the public on ADA at the meeting. Images of the open house boards are provided in **Attachment A**. While the meeting was broadly advertised, less than 10 people attended the public meeting with very limited feedback. It should be noted that the City of Bellingham, located within Whatcom County is also updating their ADA Transition Plan with their outreach activities, including an open house, occurring roughly one month ahead of this meeting.

On-Line Survey June 30 through August 30, 2019

A 19-question survey was open from the time of the open house meeting on July 30 through August 30, 2019.

The survey was accessed 93 times and asks respondents how they travel, where they live, why they travel in Bellingham, whether they had a disability or support someone with a disability, and whether an accessibility issue ever prevented them from being able to participate or obtain services in Bellingham. Questions regarding demographics were optional. The survey did not specifically ask where respondents live but did request a ZIP code for each respondent. Of those responding to the survey, roughly one third were located largely within the City of Bellingham ZIP codes, one third were located in ZIP codes shared by the City and County unincorporated areas and one third were in the County and outside of Bellingham

The survey also asked for specific feedback on the types of pedestrian facility barriers people experience, the types of public services where access is most important for them, and specific locations where there are barriers or other accessibility issues.

It was also possible to discern differences between the priorities of those with disabilities, those that support people with disabilities, and those who do not have disabilities. Specifically, the top-line survey summary suggests that those with disabilities or supporting someone with a disability clearly experience more barriers in pedestrian facilities than those without disabilities. Those with disabilities and supporting those with disabilities noted priority locations as hospitals and city parks, while those without disabilities prioritized community services and hospitals slightly higher. Access to city parks was

notably a higher priority for those with disabilities as compared to those without disabilities or those supporting people with disabilities.

The survey questions are provided in **Attachment B**. Top-line summaries breaking down respondent types, demographics, and transportation patterns are provided in **Attachment C**.

Respondents reported issues at 100 locations including sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks at signals, ADA parking and with access to transit. **Attachment D** provides a list of issues collected through the surveys.

Focus Group Meetings October 1 and 3, 2019

Purpose

Two focus group meetings each 90 minutes long were held on October 1 and 3 in different areas of the County. The focus group meetings were offered to interested members of the community to review the initial comments received to date through the open house and survey as well as provide deeper feedback on aspects of accessibility in the County including specific locations, types of issues, and priorities.

Meetings Attendees and Locations

The first meeting was held at the Whatcom County Civic Annex, 332 N. Commercial Street on Tuesday, October 1 - 3:30 – 5 p.m. This location is located within the City of Bellingham, near transit services and the building is accessible. In addition to a sign language interpreter, five members of the public participated. The group included people with disabilities, people that support others with disabilities or work on infrastructure projects.

The second meeting was held in unincorporated Whatcom County at the Whatcom County Planning and Public Works offices at 901 W. Smith Road on Thursday, October 3 - 3:30 – 5 p.m. This location is an older building but is accessible and transit is provided nearby. In addition to a sign language interpreters and representative from Whatcom Transit (Janet Malley), five members of the public participated. The group included people with disabilities, and people that support those with disabilities.

Different locations were offered to provide opportunities for broader outreach and in different areas of the County. Whatcom County staff (Jim Karcher and David Hower), as well as members of the consultant team (Ryan Peterson and Jeanne Acutanza) also attended.

Meeting agenda

The focus group was facilitated by County and consultant staff. A draft focus group guide is included in **Appendix E**. Comments and discussion were recorded for all participants.

The focus group agenda is described below:

- **Welcome and acknowledge participants and provide brief purpose of meeting**
- **Review Ground Rules**
- **Self-Introductions**

- **Discussion of the survey results and review of materials**
- **Workshop and in-depth discussion**

Background and survey results

This ADA transition plan is heavily reliant on public perspectives and feedback, particularly by those with disabilities or supporting those with disabilities. This plan will be focused on identifying barriers in pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way and prioritizing, scheduling and identifying funding for the removal of those barriers.

Discussion

After the review of survey top-line results, the group discussed issues and comments. These comments are transcribed from the recording and were summarized and categorized below in four areas:

1. Comments and issues on specific topics
2. Comments and issues at specific locations
3. Comments and issues that may not be addressed by the plan and
4. Priorities

General Comments and issues on specific topics

Some comments were raised related to specific issues. Where they overlapped, they were combined into the topics below:

Additional outreach – Additional outreach at schools or with bus drivers was suggested to gain specific feedback about students with disabilities and at facilities that serve those with disabilities, specifically Spinal Cord Injury support groups.

Less Walking, Limited Sidewalks, and More Driving in the County – Because of the rural nature of most of the County, a more significant portion of travel is done through driving and parking. In some urbanizing or growth areas, sidewalks and crosswalks are not available but should be considered. Speeds in rural, even urbanizing areas are a challenge for pedestrians, especially for crossing roadways. The County maintains few traffic signals, and signal-controlled crosswalks are infrequent. Because driving is an important mode of travel, the number of ADA parking spaces and the design are essential for providing access to community services and government buildings.

Schools – Walking to schools in the unincorporated counties can be challenging and not safe, where there are few sidewalks, and crosswalks. Because there are limited sidewalks, curb ramps are not a challenge. While a safe route to school programs should be part of all school plans, many schools may not have them because walking to school is considered unsafe. There have been cases of pedestrian fatalities near schools. If safe routes are developed, even off-road, they should be developed as accessible, especially where there are specific programs that serve children with disabilities. Places that might be promoting trails with uneven surfaces would not accommodate those with disabilities.

Based on comments from the Focus Groups. Specific outreach to the Blaine, Lynden and Bellingham school districts was conducted to gain feedback on how bus services work with children with disabilities, specifically if they are picking up students at curbside from sidewalks. Blaine School District noted their specialized school buses go door-to-door. Bellingham also noted most students with disabilities use specialized transportation.

Growth Areas – Whatcom County has unincorporated urban growth areas, including Columbia Valley / Kendall, Birch Bay, and Cherry Point. These areas are expected to accommodate more active and intense land uses, potentially resulting in a greater desire for people to walk and bike.

Signals and Crosswalks – Traffic signals at intersections provide opportunities to cross roadways safely. Whatcom County maintains relatively few traffic signals. In addition to a few signal-controlled crosswalks, few crosswalks are crossing potentially higher speed or busy arterial roads. Some signals in the County are maintained by other agencies, specifically WSDOT on state routes, and require coordination to coordinate ADA improvements.

Transit – Transit service in the unincorporated County generally only operates on arterial roadways and does not provide access on many secondary streets that serve residential areas. Paratransit is also limited to 3/4 of a mile from established routes. Transit for many in the disabled community is critical for mobility. Issues for transit include stops that don't have adequate landing pads or weather protection.

Governance and Partnerships – Responsibility to improve pedestrian facilities that provide access to services in Whatcom County are shared with many agencies, including incorporated cities, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Whatcom Transit Authority (WTA), other government institutions and private businesses. Improving access seamlessly, specifically for those with disabilities, may require coordination with different agencies.

County Parks – County Parks like Birch Bay, was not mentioned often; however, county parks provide recreational opportunities for all. For those with disabilities, access may be inhibited

Design Practices and Model Communities – Consider communities worth emulating that have implemented universal design. Ramps, rather than ramps and stairs, can serve as a universal design rather than building both.

Comments and issues at specific locations

Some comments were discussed with reference to specific areas as described below:

Birch Bay Blaine - There are older populations living here, and communities should provide sidewalks and ramps at all locations.

Hannegan Road - Transit and the park along Hannegan Road are not accessible. The grange hall located at Smith Road / Hannegan Road is not accessible.

Lynden – Consider a roundabout and improve for accessibility.

Sudden Valley Area – The Sudden Valley area lacks safe crosswalks by the firehouse crossing Lake Whatcom Boulevard.

Kendall Area

- Kendall Elementary and Mt Baker Library need to be improved with crosswalks and lighting. This is a location that may serve disabled and foster kids. There are uneven sidewalks, and

the inclines do not function well. Sidewalks or crosswalks do not serve the elementary school on SR 542/547. Students are advised not to walk to school. Sidewalks and crosswalks would need to be coordinated with the State.

- Mt Baker Roundabout is not accessible could be better for providing safe and protected pedestrian access for all. Provides access to the library
- Sidewalks are missing at the East Regional Community Center and connecting crosswalks across Kendall Sumas Highway (SR 547). This community center serves a broad community, and access for all users (not just auto) is essential.
- Kendall Trail is a high priority for the pedestrian bicycle advisory committee and could serve the elementary school. A trail should consider accessibility for all users. A path may be good for some users, including cyclists but not ADA.

Birch Bay/Blaine – The area serves many seniors and has mobility issues and limited sidewalks.

Northside of Lakeway Drive - There is missing sidewalk on the north side between Lowe Street and just past Euclid.

County Wide

- Sr. Centers – Senior Centers located in Sumas, Everson, Blaine, and Lynden may not be accessible
- Consider connecting sidewalks in higher population areas of the County. Bicycle systems are not interconnected.

Routine Sidewalk Maintenance - Overhanging brush blocking the sidewalks should be maintained

Comments and issues that may not be addressed by the plan

Some problems identified may not be treated as part of the Whatcom ADA Transition Plan. These are described below:

Facilities on State Routes – Urbanizing areas are often served by State Routes like SR 542 and SR 547. Crosswalks and sidewalks are not often identified as part of a state design standard in rural to urbanizing areas. Whatcom County would need to coordinate improvements on state routes with WSDOT.

Transit and Paratransit – More frequent service is desirable to serve more of the County. More paratransit that is more frequent is desirable. Transit shelters are not provided in areas where many people wait, specifically the WinCo in Bellingham.

ADA parking – There is inadequate ADA parking at private businesses

Incorporated Areas – Within incorporated areas like Bellingham, scooters that are being considered may create another obstacle in addition to sandwich boards on sidewalks. Businesses on the Guide Meridian (like Starbucks) don't have good crosswalk access and signals to protect crosswalks

Priorities

As a final topic, the group discussed priorities and what should be fixed first. Notes from that discussion are provided below:

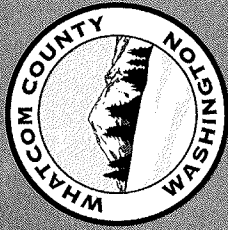
Urbanizing or growth areas – Urbanizing areas, where pedestrian activity is expected to increase, currently lack pedestrian facilities that are adequate for all users and specifically those with disabilities. Specific areas mentioned include Kendall, Birch Bay, and Sudden Valley.

Schools – Improving walkability to local schools and specifically addressing those with disabilities could be a partnership with the schools to create safe routes to school.

Jurisdictional coordination – Management or maintenance of pedestrian facilities can be made more challenging if agencies have shared jurisdiction. Coordination between agencies should be addressed. If the State (WSDOT) has jurisdiction, but the City identifies a need for a change, there should be mechanisms for coordination and collaboration specifically to address ADA concerns.

Additional and on-going outreach – Some mentioned the need to continue outreach and keep the plan dynamic as new issues are raised.

ATTACHMENT A – OPEN HOUSE BOARDS



Mobility for All

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

Improving Access to
Whatcom County's
Public Rights-of-Way

What is ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act

- Signed into law in 1990
- Protects the rights of citizens with disabilities

ADA Title II

- Governments must provide accessibility for everyone
- Sidewalks
- Curb Ramps
- Policies/Procedures

Pedestrian Facilities

Well-developed and-maintained pedestrian facilities are critical for providing access to county services and resources.



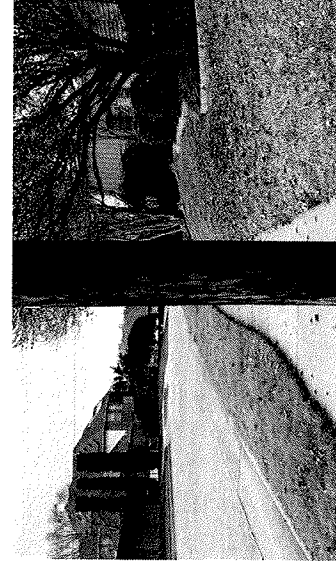
Cracked and Uneven Sidewalks

Sidewalks that have fallen into disrepair present a challenge for many, especially those using walkers, wheelchairs, or canes, pushing strollers, etc.



Curbs at Intersections Without Ramps

Curbs not equipped with adequate ramps create a potentially significant impediment for the mobility-challenged, and are inaccessible for those using wheelchairs.

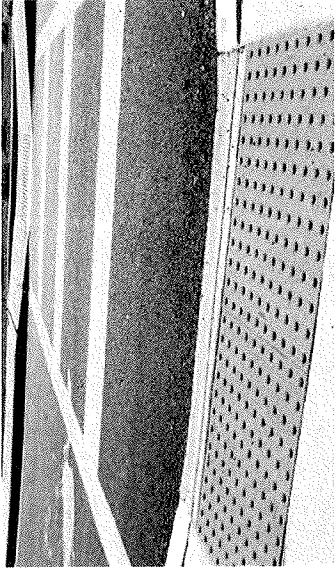


Obstructions in Sidewalks

Sidewalk obstructions such as telephone poles or tree roots, present a significant obstacle to pedestrian travel, especially for sight-and/or mobility-impaired populations.

Pedestrian Facilities

Well- developed and-maintained pedestrian facilities are critical for providing access to county services and resources.



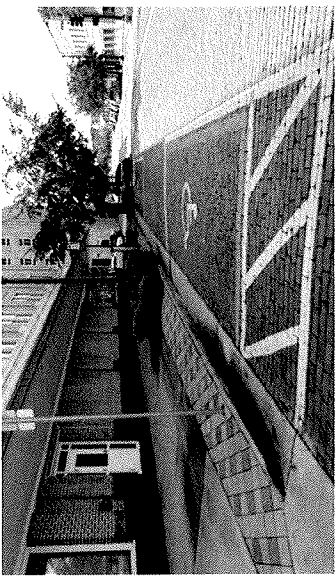
Curb Ramps Without Detectable Warning Surfaces

Ramps not equipped with a means of detection present a basic safety concern for those with sight impairments.



Inaccessible/Inaudible Pedestrian Pushbuttons

Inaccessible and/or inaudible crosswalk push-buttons a basic challenge for users in wheelchairs, as well as those with sight impairments.

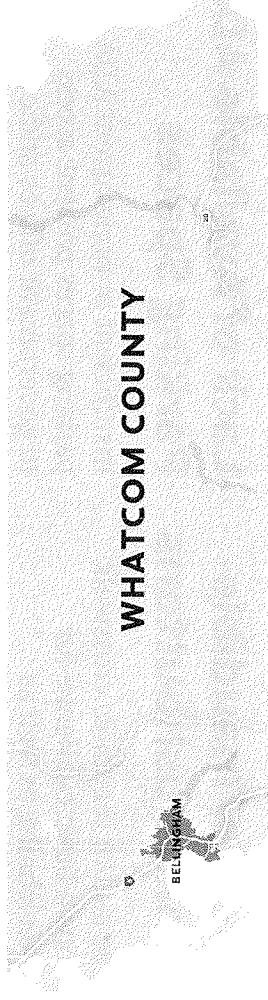


Lack of Available ADA Parking Spaces

Insufficient or nonexistent ADA parking spaces prevent access to government offices and other service-provider locations.

City vs County Planning

How is Whatcom County's
ADA Transition Planning
different from Bellingham's?



City

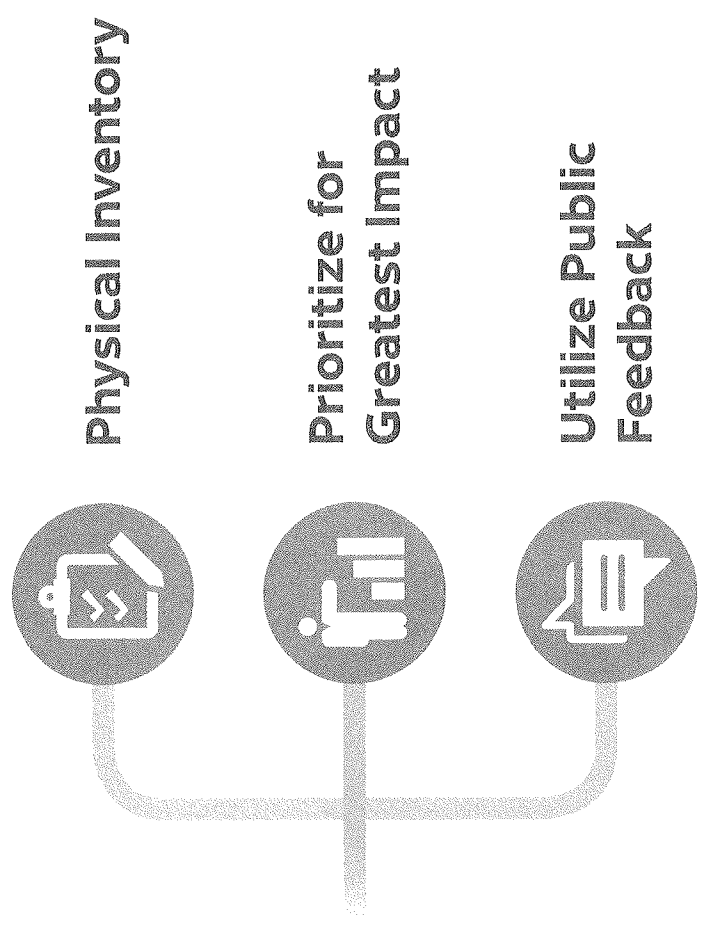
Focuses on services within
the city of Bellingham

Both examine
gaps and barriers
to pedestrian
facilities

County

- Focuses on services outside
the city of Bellingham
- County Plan prioritizes
access to services

Conducting an ADA Inventory



Physical Inventory

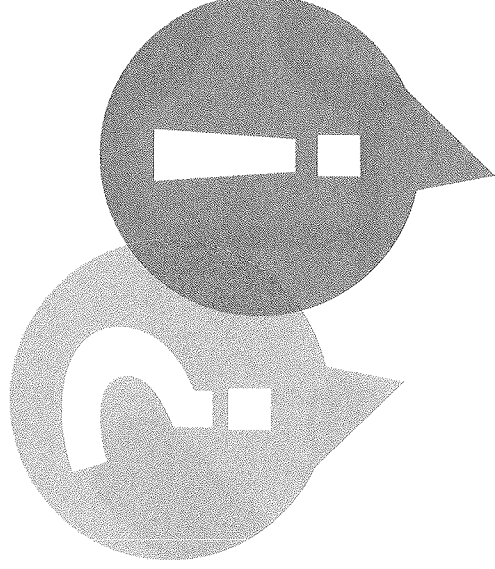
Prioritize for
Greatest Impact

Utilize Public
Feedback

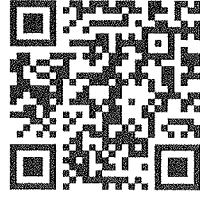
Self-Evaluation

Asking the Community

Where do you
encounter gaps
and barriers?



What areas are
most important
to you?



Take the Survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WhatcomCo>

Outreach



Online Survey

Ask the public for input identifying gaps and barriers



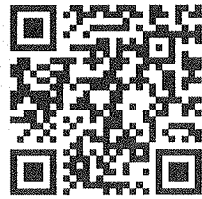
Focus Group

Gather firsthand accounts, experiences, and plan input



Plan Adoption

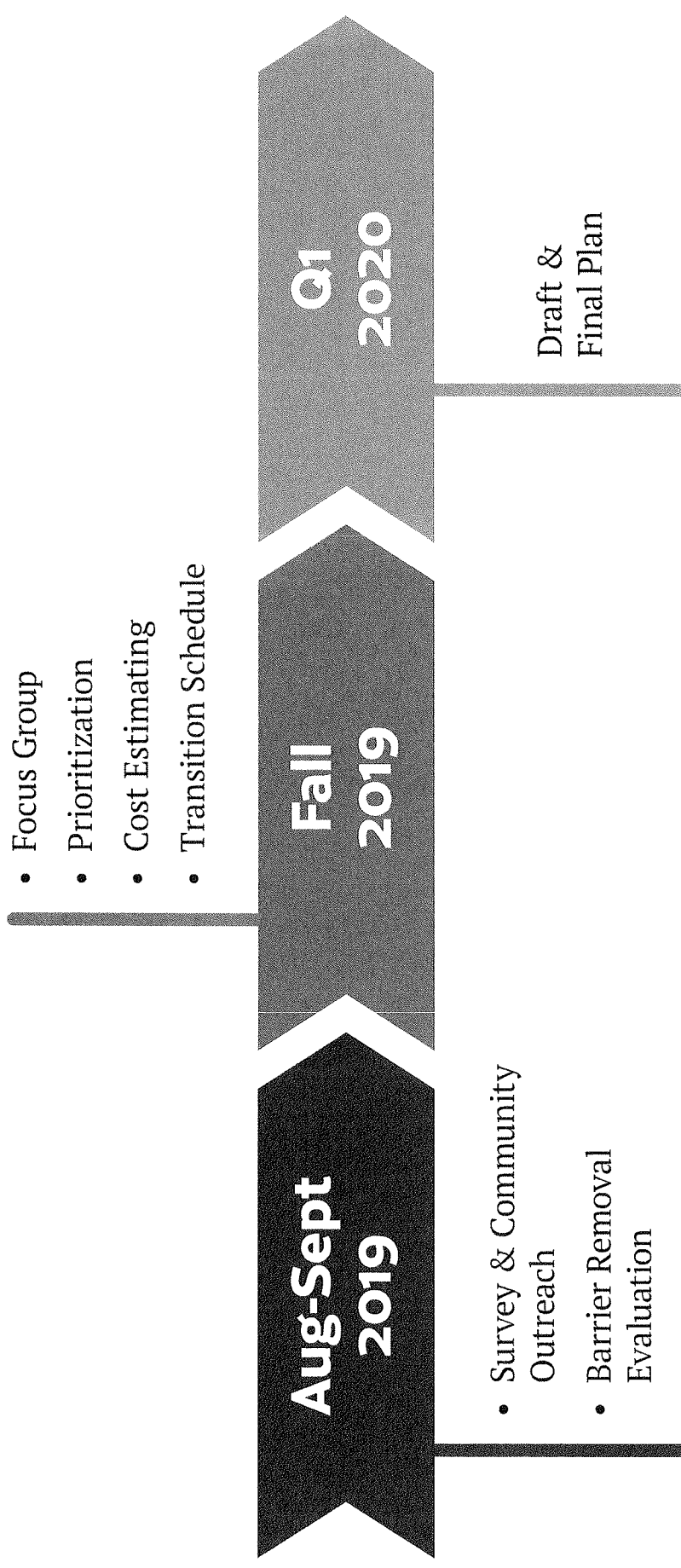
Review and adopt final Whatcom County ADA Plan



Take the Survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WhatcomCo>

Timeline



Thank You

Dave Hower

Sr. Engineer Technician



360.778.6268



dhower@co.whatcom.wa.us

Mike Donahue, PE

Engineering Manager



360.778.6250



ATTACHMENT B – ONLINE SURVEY

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

Whatcom County seeks to create an inclusive and welcoming environment accessible to all. Whatcom County is beginning the process to address the accessibility of pedestrian facilities in the public right of way including sidewalks, curb ramps, and pedestrian crossings. The County work is similar to planning being done by the City of Bellingham but is focused on areas *outside of the City limits*.

Through this brief survey, we'd like you to identify the locations and deficiencies you consider most important.

You may also provide your contact information to receive updates or participate in a future focus group.

* 1. First, please tell us why you travel in Whatcom County? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Live in Whatcom County | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Appointments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work in Whatcom County | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend school / college | <input type="checkbox"/> Other community and social services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation / Recreational Activities | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

* 2. Please tell us about yourself. (Check all that apply)

- I have a disability that impacts how I travel (please describe that disability in question 3)
- I support a person with disabilities (please describe that disability in question 3)
- I have no disability
- I prefer not to say

3. If you indicated you have a disability or support someone with a disability, please select from the following list. (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical, mental or emotional condition that limits learning, remembering or concentrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a wheelchair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blindness or serious difficulty seeing when wearing glasses | <input type="checkbox"/> Use assistive software technology such as a screen-reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Condition that substantially limits one or more physical activities such as walking, or climbing stairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Use hearing aids or hearing assistive devices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deafness or hearing difficulty | <input type="checkbox"/> Use a service animal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use a mobility device | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

4. What resources do you use to find information on ADA issues? (Check all that apply)

- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
- Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)
- Whatcom Transit
- United Blind of Whatcom County
- Other (please specify)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan Demographics

5. Please provide us with your home ZIP code? (enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)

6. How often do you travel in Whatcom County? (Select one)

- 5-7 days per week
- 3-4 days per week
- 1-2 days per week
- less than weekly

7. How do you travel within Whatcom County? (Check all that apply)

- Drive and park
- Take transit or paratransit shuttles
- Wheel (use a wheelchair)
- Walk with assistance like a cane or walker
- Walk with a service animal
- Walk
- Bike
- Other (please specify)

8. If you use transit, how often do you use it in a typical week? (Select one)

- 4 or more days per week
- 2-4 days per week
- 1 day or less per week
- less than weekly

Access to Whatcom County services

9. Are you now or were you ever unable to participate or obtain services in Whatcom County (**Excluding facilities in the City of Bellingham**)?

- Yes
- No

10. What was the reason you could not participate? (Check all that apply)

- Facility not accessible
- Website not accessible
- Materials not provided in an alternative format
- Transportation or parking not available
- Sign language interpreter not provided
- Assistive listening devices not provided
- Program not accessible
- Other (please specify)

11. Which of the following pedestrian facility issues are reasons you could not participate? (Check all that apply)

- Sidewalk barriers
- Pedestrian signal issues including access to push buttons
- Curb ramp barriers
- ADA parking not available
- Pedestrian crosswalk issues
- Other (please specify)

Priorities for pedestrian facilities

Excluding facilities inside the City of Bellingham, please give us your top two priorities where pedestrian facilities need to be improved.

* 12. Of the six types of locations below, which one would be your HIGHEST priority? (Select one)

- Government buildings that provide human services
- Other government buildings
- County parks
- Community services
- Schools and institutions
- Transit facilities (examples are transit stops)

* 13. Of the six types of locations below, which one would be your SECOND HIGHEST priority? (Select one)

- Government buildings that provide human services
- Other government buildings
- County parks
- Community services
- Schools and institutions
- Transit facilities (examples are transit stops)

Specific Problem Areas in Whatcom County

For these open-ended questions please provide locations where you have experienced challenges with pedestrian facilities including sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, and buttons for activating walk signals. Please note areas outside *the City of Bellingham*.

14. Where have you experienced challenges in Whatcom County? Please list up to three locations and the problem. Be as specific as possible about the location and the type of barrier (sidewalk, curb ramp, pedestrian crossings, pedestrian push buttons)

Location 1 (Street address or cross street)

Problem 1

Location 2 (Street address or cross street)

Problem 2

Location 3 (Street address or cross street)

Problem 3

Demographic questions

We would like to better understand the audience taking our survey. Providing information is optional and your responses are confidential.

15. What is your age? (optional)

- under 18
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or older

16. How do you identify yourself? (optional)

- African American/Black
- Asian
- Caucasian/White
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Some other race or combination of races

17. Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin or descent? (optional)

- Yes
- No

Thank you and next steps

Thank you for participating in this survey. Work on the plan will continue throughout the year. If you would like to stay in touch or participate in future phases, please provide your contact information below.

If you have additional question, please contact Dave Hower, Whatcom County Engineering Technician at (360) 778-6268 dhower@co.whatcom.wa.us

18. Please provide your contact information to receive updates on the plan.

Name

Email Address

Phone Number

19. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group related to the plan?

Yes

No

ATTACHMENT C – SURVEY TOPLINE RESULTS

Whatcom County
ADA Transition Plan
Outreach Top Line Results
Open House July 30
Survey July 30 through August 30, 2019

Transpo Group/Acutanza STS

9/20/2019

Overview of Outreach

- Public Meeting July 30 at St. Luke's Community and Education Center
 - Provided educational information on ADA Transition Plans
 - Alternative services / sign language interpretation provided
 - Low turnout (<10)
- Survey open July 30 through August 30
 - Advertised on County Website
 - Promoted through County Social Media Channels

Survey Summary

1. Respondents and demographics
2. Issue areas
3. Priorities

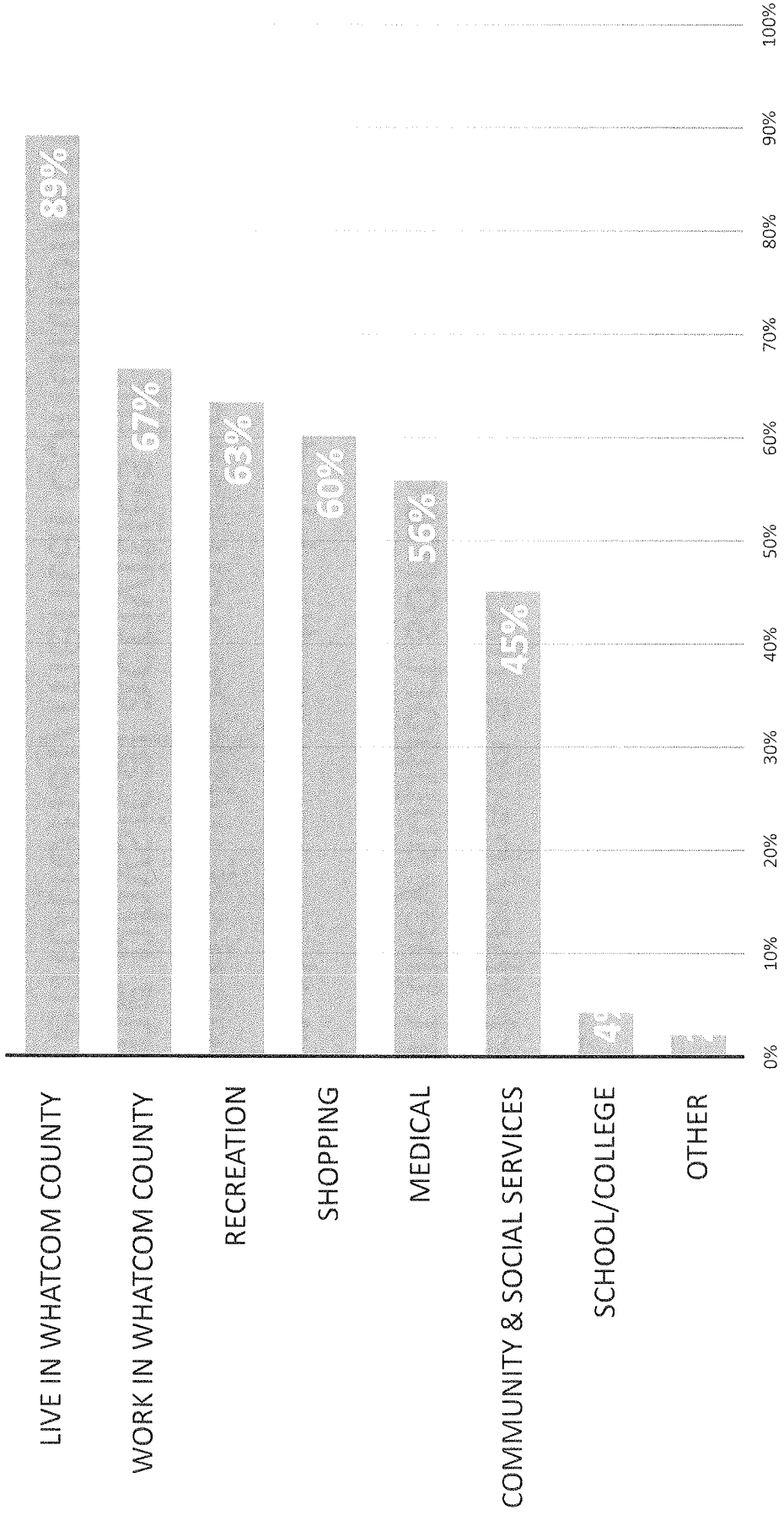
1. Respondents and demographics

1. Demographics and Respondents

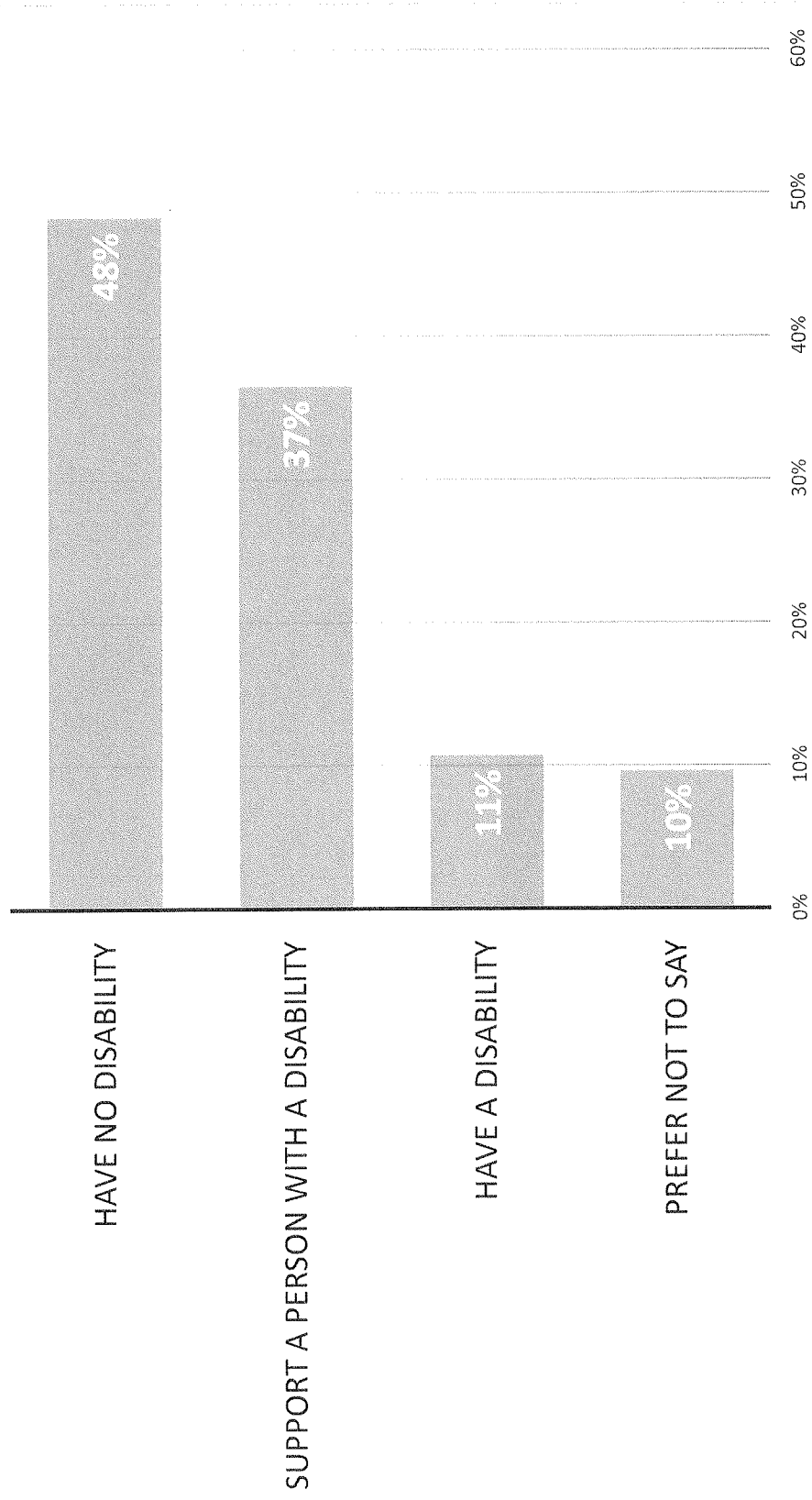
- 93 attempts 9 did not substantially complete
- Most live in Whatcom County
- Many work, recreate, and shop.
- Top three modes are driving/parking, walking and biking

- ## 1. Demographics and Respondents
- Majority are 45-54, with most 35 to over 65
 - Respondents
 - 10% Report they have a disability
 - 36% Report they support someone with a disability
 - 48% Report they are not disabled
 - Disabilities varied with many ranging from those limiting physical activities like climbing, to physical/emotional/mental conditions that limit learning or remembering and using mobility devices and wheelchairs

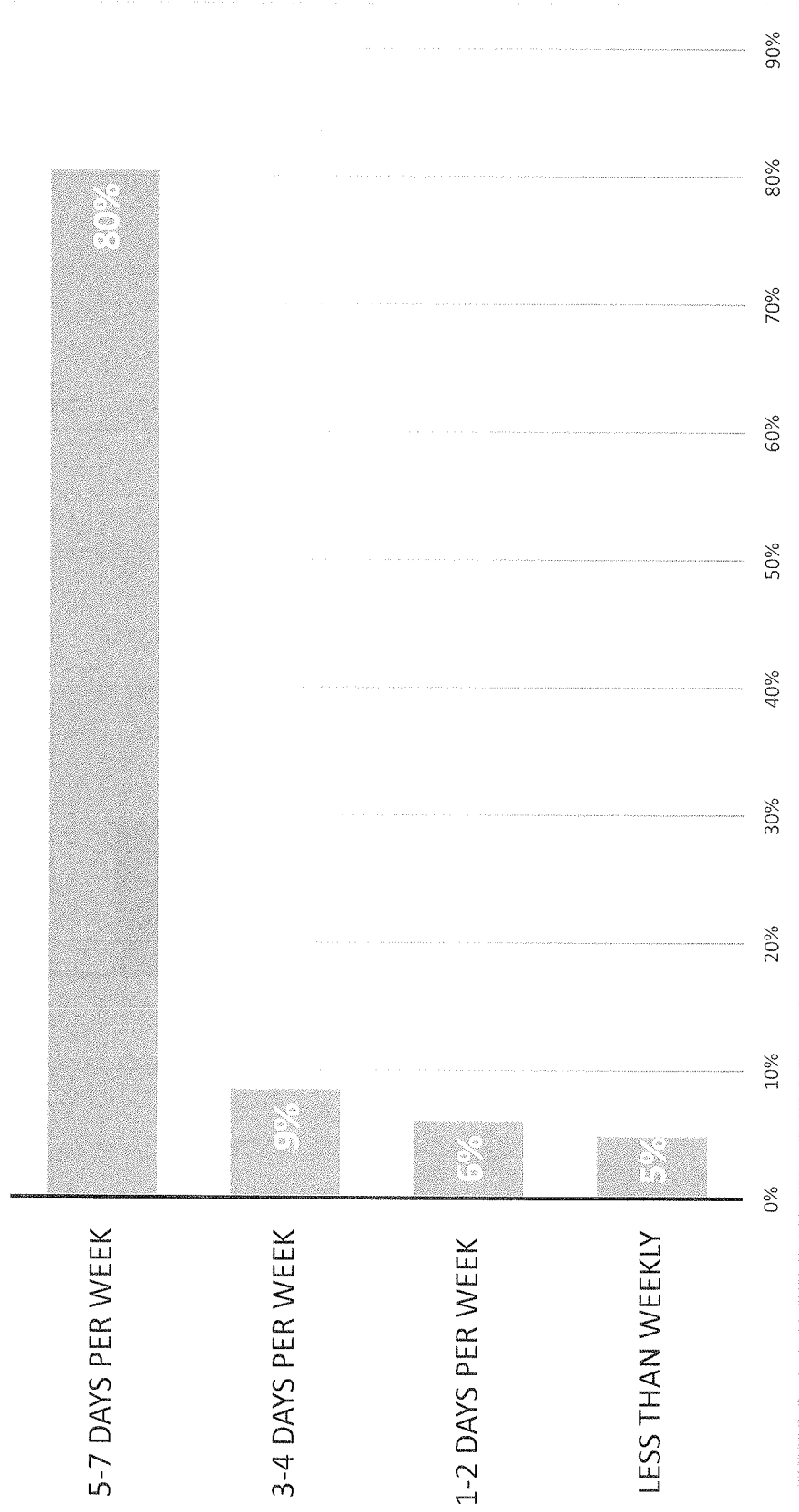
Q1: Why do you travel in Whatcom County? (Choose all that apply)



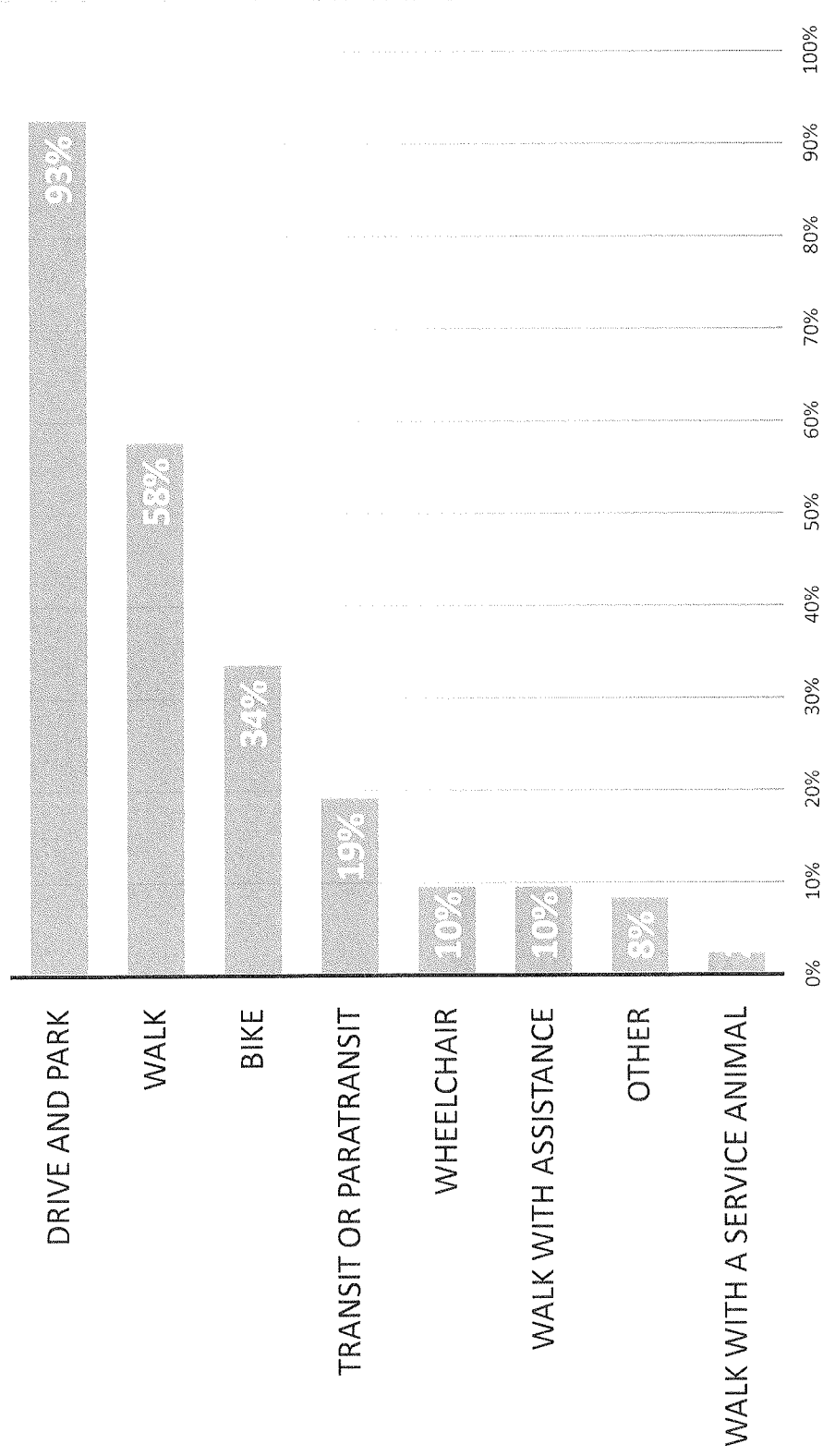
Q2: Please tell us about yourself (Choose all that apply)



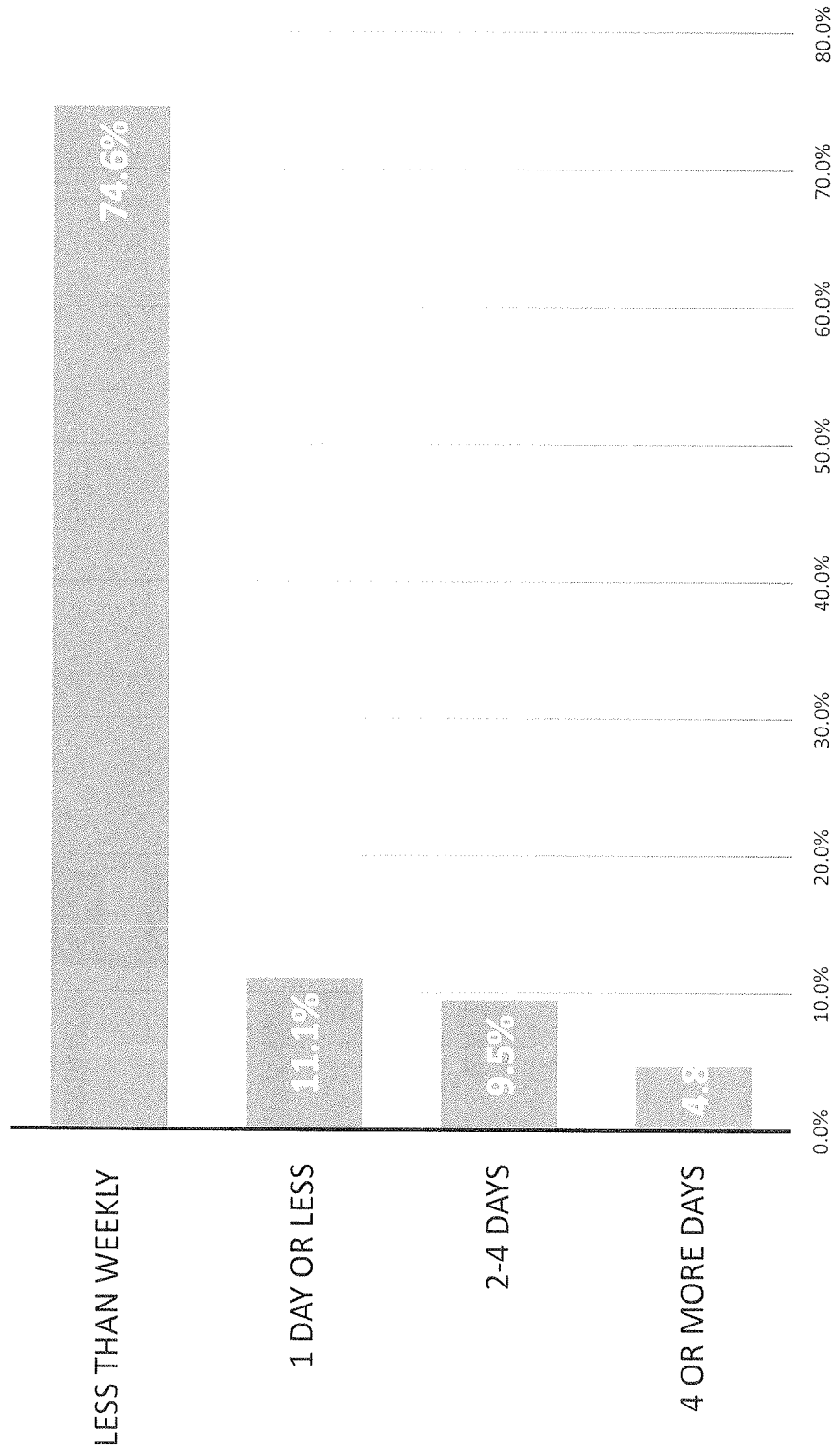
Q6: How often do you travel in Whatcom County (Select one)



Q7: How do you travel within Whatcom County? (Check all that apply)



Q8: If you use transit, how often do you use it in a typical week? (Select one)



2. Issues identified in the survey

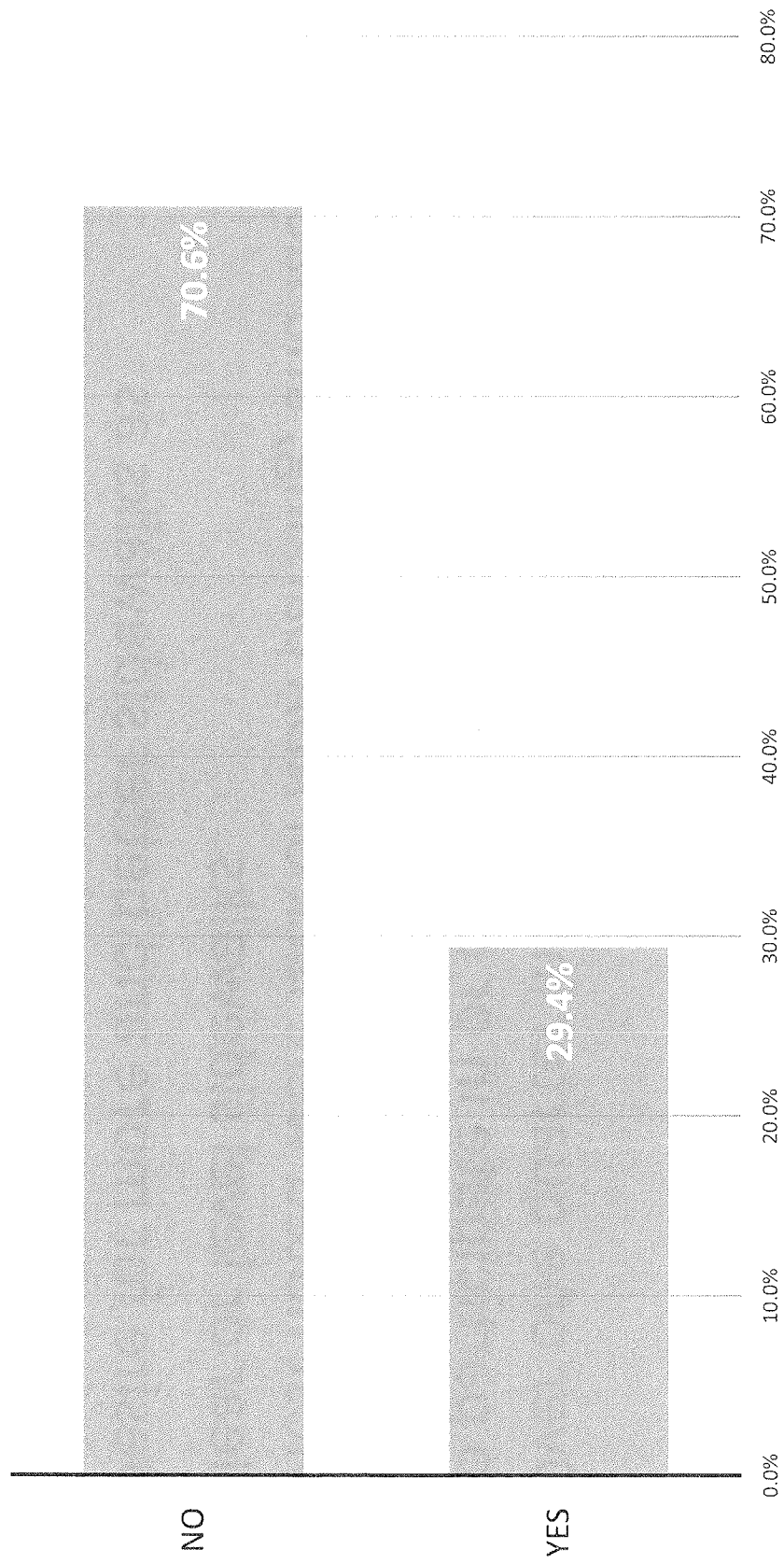
Other reasons people could not participate

- Poor bus service in County or denied access to transit
- No Sidewalk
- Gravel pathways not accessible or path too rough for some mobility devices. Specifically events held on grass or gravel.
- Usually buildings that haven't been updated and only have stairs
- Accessible parking spaces not large enough for a van with wheelchair ramp

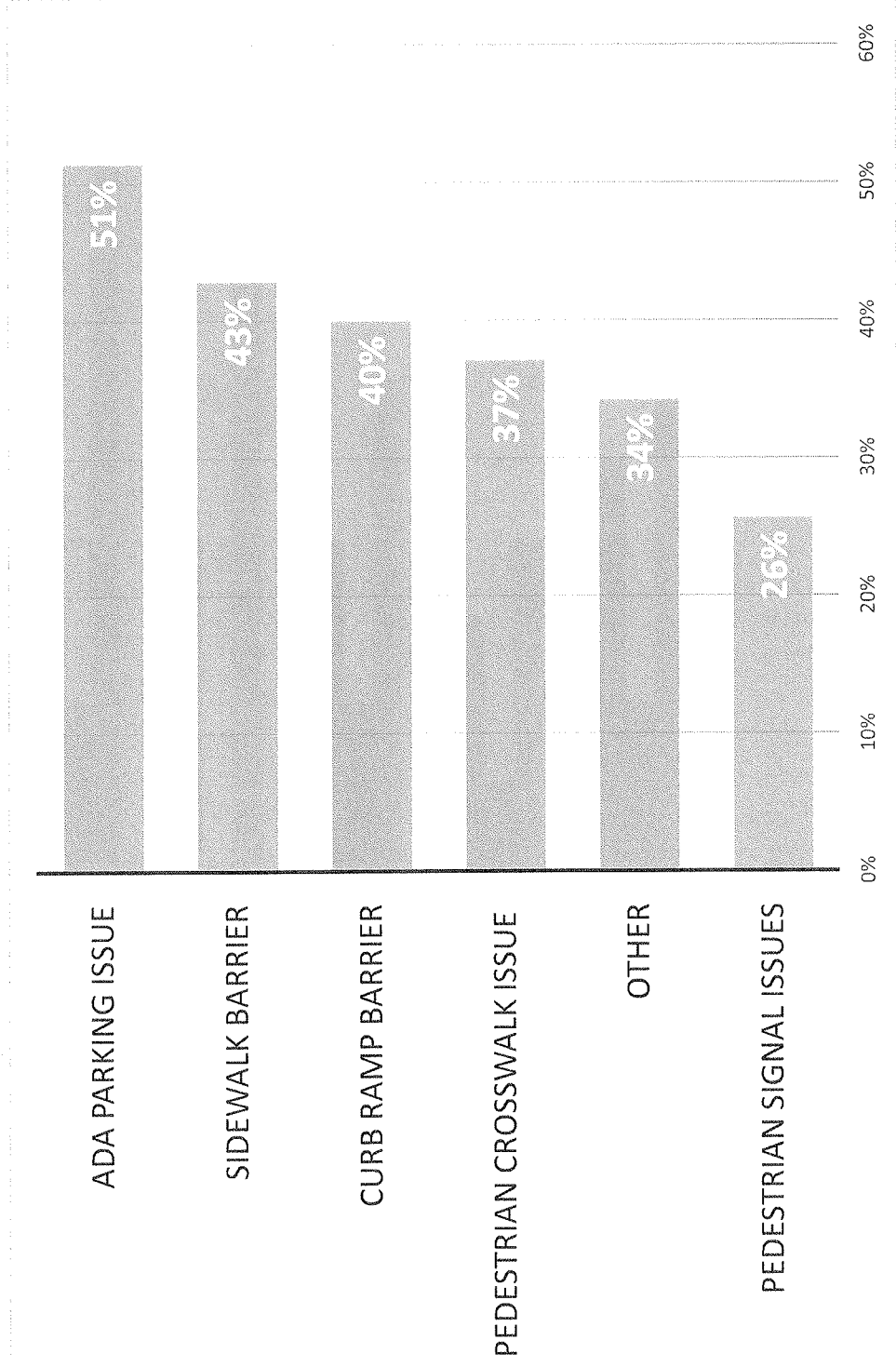
Issues

- Over one quarter indicate they have not been able to participate in or obtain service in Whatcom County
- Most noted were lack of ADA parking, and lack of clear or level sidewalks
- Desire for more and better sidewalks as connections to parks/waterfront, transit and schools

Q9: Are you now or were you ever unable to participate or obtain services in Whatcom County?

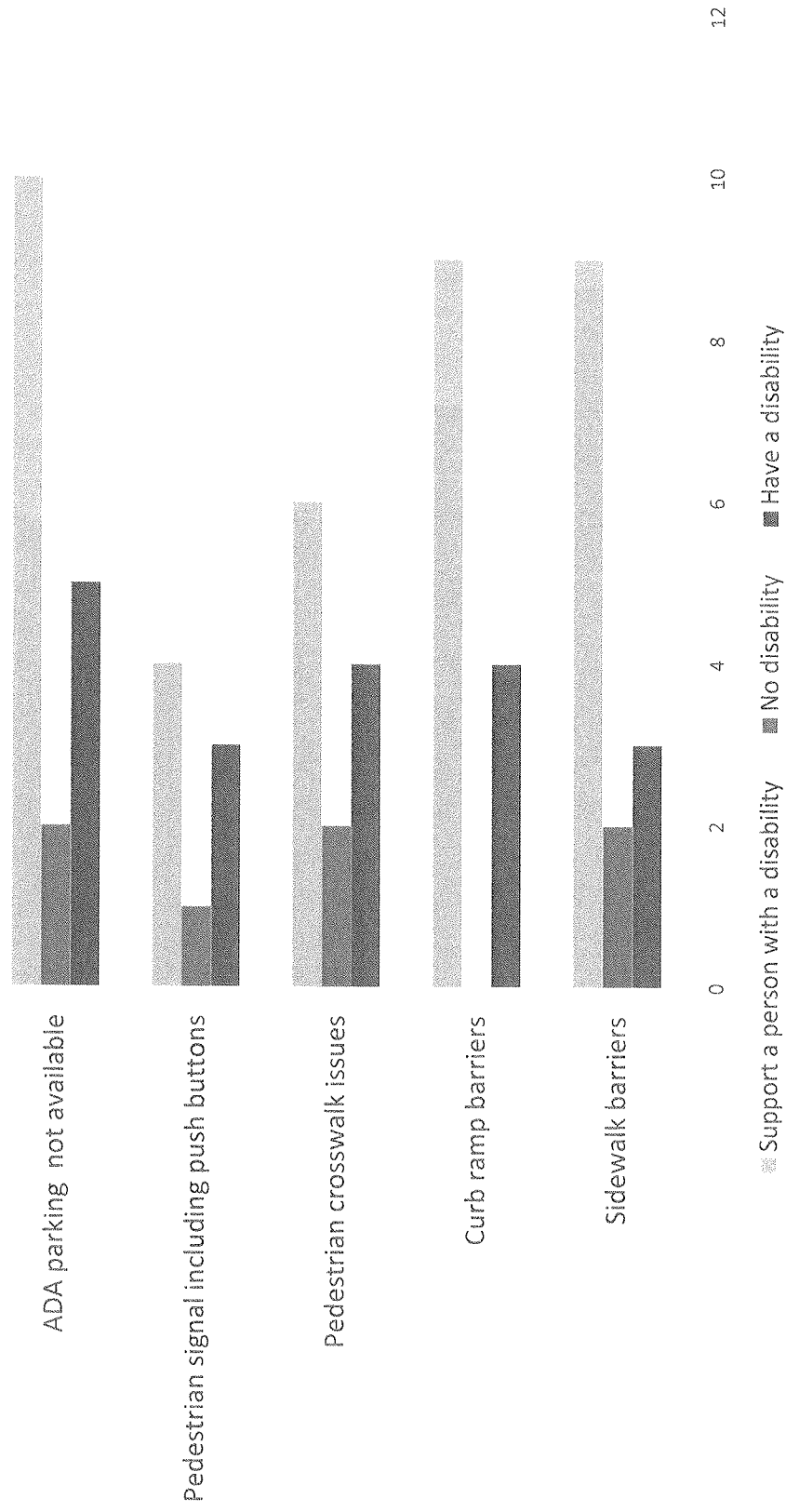


Q11: Which of the following are reasons you could not participate? (Check all that apply)



Contrast - those with disabilities, supporting people with disabilities and without disabilities

Barrier Issues



Questions

- Any surprises
- Concurrence or disagreement

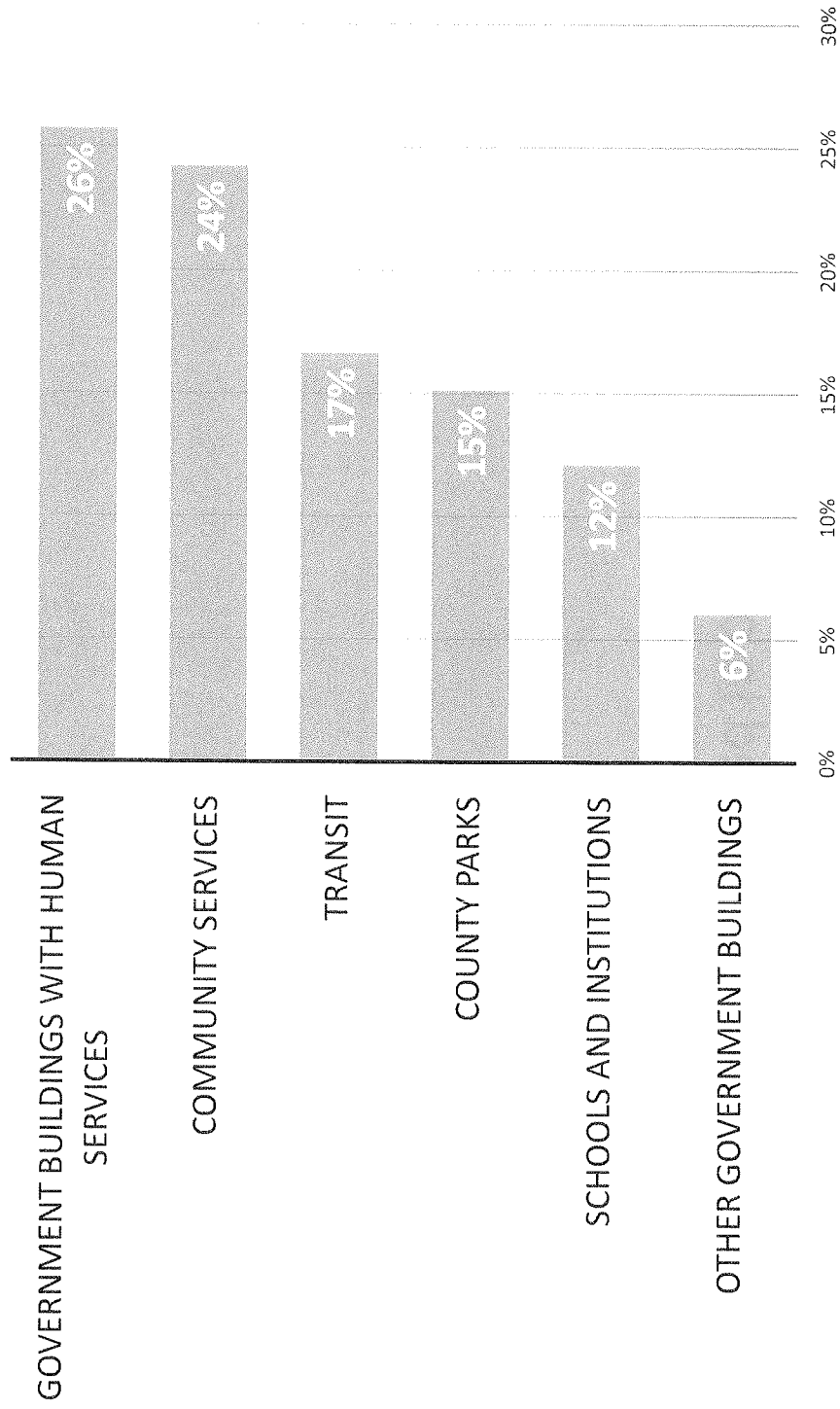
3. Priorities

Priority Destinations and Locations

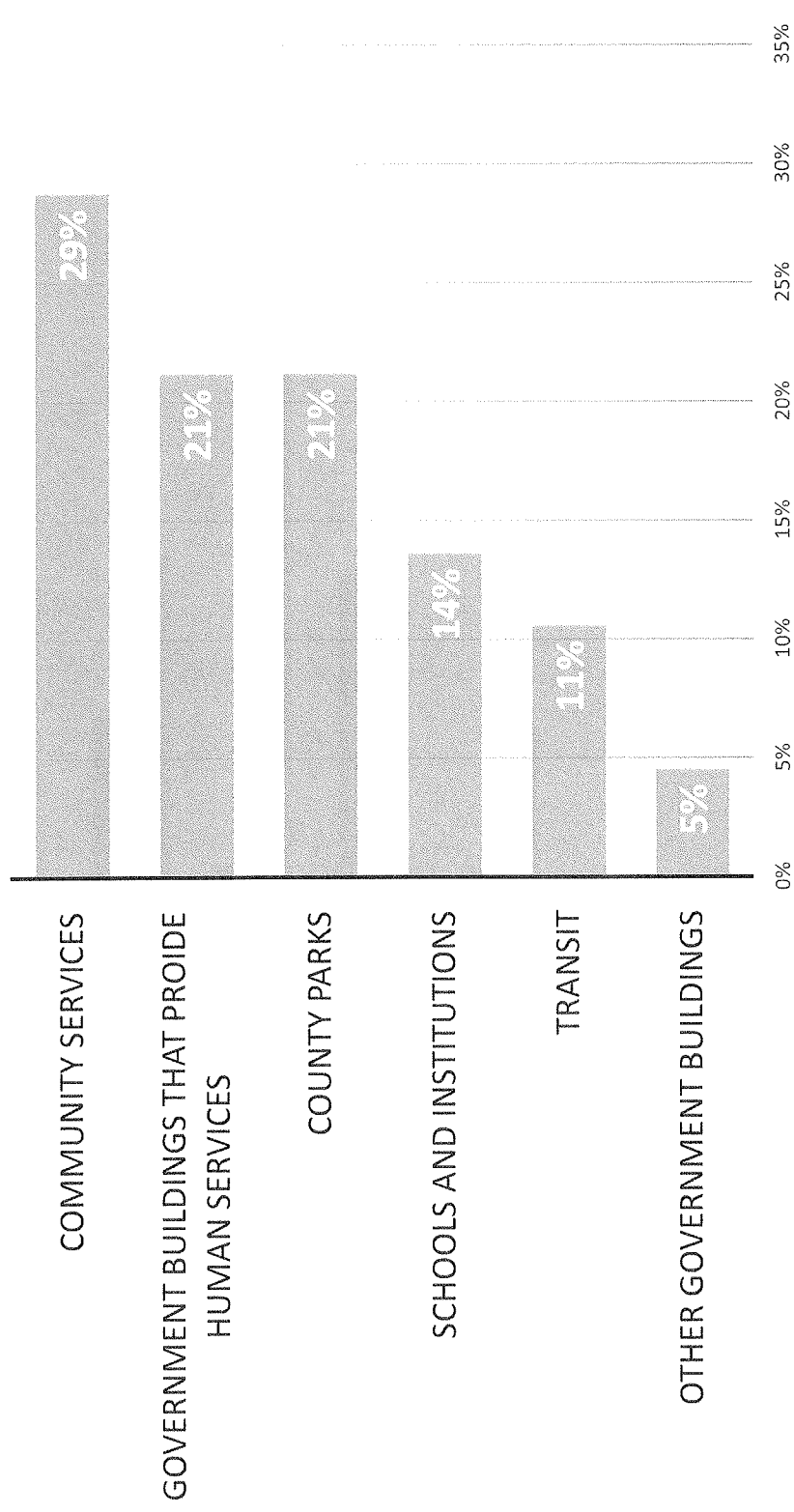
Top destinations were noted in order of preference as:

- Community Services
- Government Buildings
- County Parks
- Transit

Q12: Of the six types of locations below, which one would be your HIGHEST priority? (Select one)

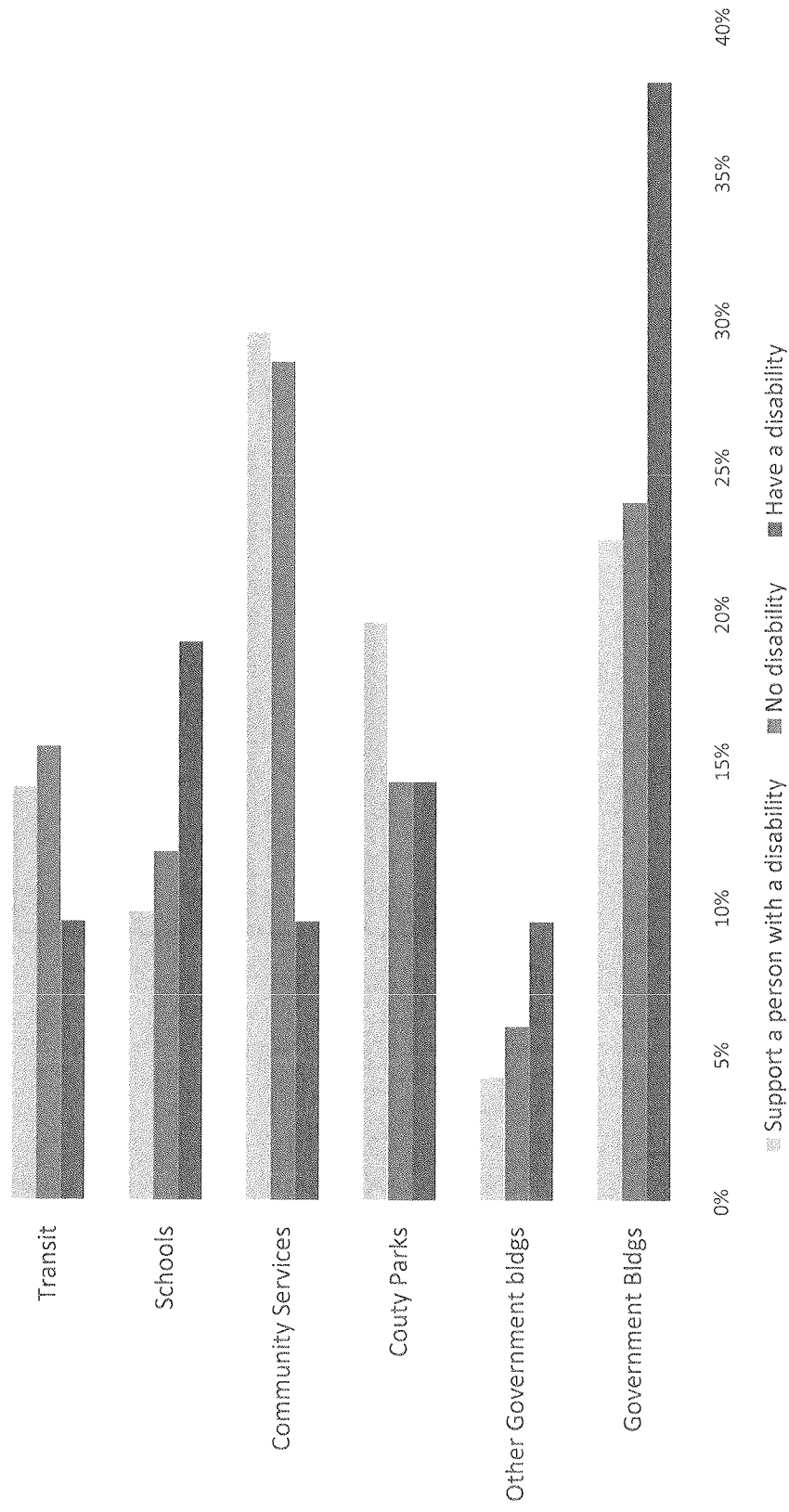


Q13: Of the six types of locations below, which one would be your SECOND highest priority? (Select one)



Contrast - those with disabilities, supporting people with disabilities and without disabilities

Priorities



Typical issue types

- Sidewalks – Not provided or missing, missing for providing access to parks, schools and other destinations
- Crosswalks – not protected or not provided, pavement is uneven in them, people feel vulnerable to cars. Lack of high contrast markings
- Curb cuts and ramps – not level, not oriented in the right direction, angled or not high enough to improve visibility. Lack of tactile maps
- Pedestrian buttons and traffic signals – walk times are too short. Needed at more locations
- ADA parking – Parking not provided, not adequate or ramps not provide
- Transit – Pathway to transit stop or connecting destinations is not accessible

Questions

- Any questions?
- Are any results surprising
- Let's discuss barriers and priorities in greater depth

ATTACHMENT D – ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE SURVEY

Location	Issue	Sidewalks	Curbs	Crosswalk	Signals Pushbuttons	ADA Parking	Transit Stops & Pathways
Health Department 2410 James St. Bellingham	Sidewalks in parking area are horrible.	X					
Birch-Bay Lynden Rd	Handicap parking is not made for ramp access vehicles sidewalk/ bus line	X				X	
Boulevard Park Columbia neighborhood	transitioning from the pathway to the bridge the surface is not even making it difficult to get a wheelchair over it. sidewalk have overgrowth that inhibits walking	X X					
Cornwall	pedestrian walkways not lit, not flashing light for traffic to stop				X		
Ellis and Carolina St Ferry landing at Gooseberry Point	I've watched a woman in wheelchair have to go a different way because there are no curbs down so she can cross. needs more disabled parking		X	X		X	
First and Main Street Ferndale	No button and no way to cross anymore.			X	X		
Gulf Road	Dangerous areas with expansive black top with no designated pedestrian path or clear road entrances.	X		X			
Kendall Elementary Kendall Elementary School	Needs to improve the safety of walking to the library and resource center making it accessible to all No sidewalks or pedestrian walkways	X					
Lake Whatcom Boulevard	No sidewalks/bike path	X					
Main St. at Second Ave, Ferndale Ave	ADA parking					X	

Location	Issue	Sidewalks	Curbs	Crosswalk	Signals Pushbuttons	ADA Parking	Transit Stops & Pathways
Solstice Living Center in Bellingham	Stage is inaccessible for wheelchair						
W. Horton	Guide Meridian						
6896 Guide Meridian Lynden wa 98264	Round about a on the Guide need better pedestrian protection (LIGHTS BLINKING)	X			X		
Any beach in Whatcom County	not accessible by w/c	X					
Bellingham Public Library	When their elevator was broken						
Benson Road and Marine Drive	Needs pedestrian paths that are semi permeable ground away from cars.	X					
courthouse and surrounding area (Bellingham)	lots of county employees cheat the system and park their cars with handicap placards in the public handicap spots					X	
Dodsons IGA,	Dangerous to cross highway where the services are			X	X		
Hovander Park	Difficulty with wheelchairs to access most of the park	X					
Marigold Drive	No sidewalks/bike path	X					
Sudden Valley	Resources are only available by bus one way. To get home the route takes over an hour. You must go into town and back to access gate 9 13 5						X
W. Pole Rd.	sidewalk/ bus line	X					X
Downtown (Bellingham)	Wheelchair accessible areas when it snowed this year all over downtown						
4125 Artic Ave Bellingham WA 98226 Costco	Not enough handicap parking					X	
All playgrounds	No fenced in area for kids with disabilities to play safely with a barrier that prevents them from running						
Many Parks in Whatcom County	not accessible by w/c	X					
Tyee Road also needs pathways away from cars	People walking next to speeding cars. Pathways on other side of ditch would be safer.	X					

ATTACHMENT E – FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Facilitation Guide

Whatcom County ADA Transition

Focus Group

Tuesday, October 1, 2019 (3:30-5:00PM) 2nd Floor Conference Room - 322 N Commercial Street

Thursday October 3, 2019 (3:30-5:00PM) Whatcom County NW Annex

Purpose and Goals

Gain deeper insight on ADA issues in the Public Right of Way from the public and expand on a discussion of priorities identified in the online survey.

Recruiting Members

County will recruit from survey respondents and potential other interested parties. County will provide accommodations requested including alternative formats, sign language interpreters etc.

Agenda and Welcome

- **Welcome and acknowledge/thank participants and provide brief purpose of meeting– Jim/Dave (5 Minutes)**
- **Ground Rules – Jeanne (5 Minutes)**
- **Introductions – All (10 minutes)**
- **Discussion of the outreach results (via PowerPoint) – Ryan (10 Minutes)**
- **Workshop – Jeanne and all (up to 60 minutes)**
- **In depth discussion of the top barrier issues and perspectives on priorities.**

Purpose of the Focus Group

Today we are going to take a deeper dive with all of you on different aspects of accessibility including different locations and types of issues. We want to ask you more about your experiences to explore specific issues and priorities identified in the online survey and open house.

Ground Rules:

We have planned this focus group to last 90 minutes hours. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. We want everyone to take part in the discussion; however, you do not have to respond to every question. Also, feel free to respond to what others are saying—whether you agree or disagree. If you have been speaking a lot, wait a bit before speaking again to allow others a turn. We are genuinely interested in your experiences with barriers to pedestrian access; therefore, there are no right or wrong answers. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to complete the questions or move to the next discussion.

We will be using some graphical material, mostly charts, in the PPT you received . We will do our best to describe them, but please feel free to ask questions.

We will treat your answers as confidential. We will not ask for personally identifiable information. While we may use names during this discussion, we will replace names in the transcript after our discussion. We also will not include your names or other personally identifiable information in any reports we write. We ask that each of you respect the privacy of everyone in this room and not share or repeat what is said here in any way that could identify anyone in this room.

Restrooms are down the hall on the left. Please feel free to get up from the table at any time as you need to. We can take a break if we need to roughly at the 1-hour mark.

Introductions:

Please take a few minutes to tell us about yourself and why you are here today. What is your interest in this project?

Survey Summary

PowerPoint to show the summary of the top-line survey results, issues and priorities.

About Transition Plans

The Transition Plan addresses potential deficiencies to improve mobility in the public right of way including access issues along sidewalks, curb ramps, signals, and transit stops within and adjacent to public roadways.

A transition plan will be developed after completing the public outreach process and a review of the County's current processes for improving facilities. This plan will outline a strategy for making improvements considering several factors such as the extent of deficiencies, identified needs, proximity to certain facilities, requests and complaints by the community, available budget and a realistic schedule. This focus group will be an in-depth discussion. Please, set up you name tent or raise your hand if you would like us to repeat anything.

Materials

- Power point presentation of the outreach to date (We will read every slide)

We will spend our time considering the types of issues that people have raised and the impact those issues have on accessing facilities that provide public and community services. Specifically, these services include schools and institutions, parks, government buildings that provide access to community service, other government buildings and transit

We should note that there were a relatively small number of respondents with disabilities; however, we did reach people who support those with disabilities. This is why your responses are also important input.

Series 1 –Let’s talk about issues and barriers to access - 15-20 minutes

Facilitator Narrative:

First any surprises in the survey?

Let’s talk about the issues to barriers that have been raised to date.

Questions:

Concerns we have heard about:

- Lack of ADA Parking
- Missing or discontinuous sidewalks
- Lack of crosswalks or protection from vehicles
- Short walk times for crossings
- Orientation of curb cuts

What other issues and concerns do you experience when accessing these areas?

Additional probing questions for respondents.

- Which of these barriers do you experience?

- How are they problematic? How often do you experience them and how much does it impact your travel?

- Were you surprised at the different perspectives between those with disabilities and those without as far as barriers?

- Is this a priority or severity of one or some of these issues as compared to others?

NOTES:

Series 2 –Let’s talk about locations where access is most important 15-20 minutes

Facilitator Narrative:

Let’s talk about locations, and specifically services and resources where there may be barriers to access. Notably from the survey, government buildings that provide public services were most noted as priorities for having good access, specifically by those who indicated they have a disability. They also noted schools and institutions.

Questions:

Were you surprised at the difference between perspectives for those with disabilities as compared to those supporting people or without disabilities?

- Notably access to government buildings and schools was higher for those with disabilities while Community Services, County Parks and transit were more critical for those supporting people with disabilities and without disabilities?
- What services do you have trouble accessing due to barriers?
- Are there specific destinations you have trouble accessing?

What other issues and concerns do you experience?

Additional probing questions.

- *Are there barriers or access issues for riding transit? Where are they?*
- *Which parks, schools, community services and institutions are problems to access?*

NOTES:

Empty space for notes.

Series 3—Let's talk about priorities 15-20 minutes

Facilitator Narrative:

Part of our task in developing the ADA transition plan will be to identify what to fix first with limited resources? It is likely our needs will outweigh our resources. Where would you invest?

Questions:

First what types of issues are most important to fix?

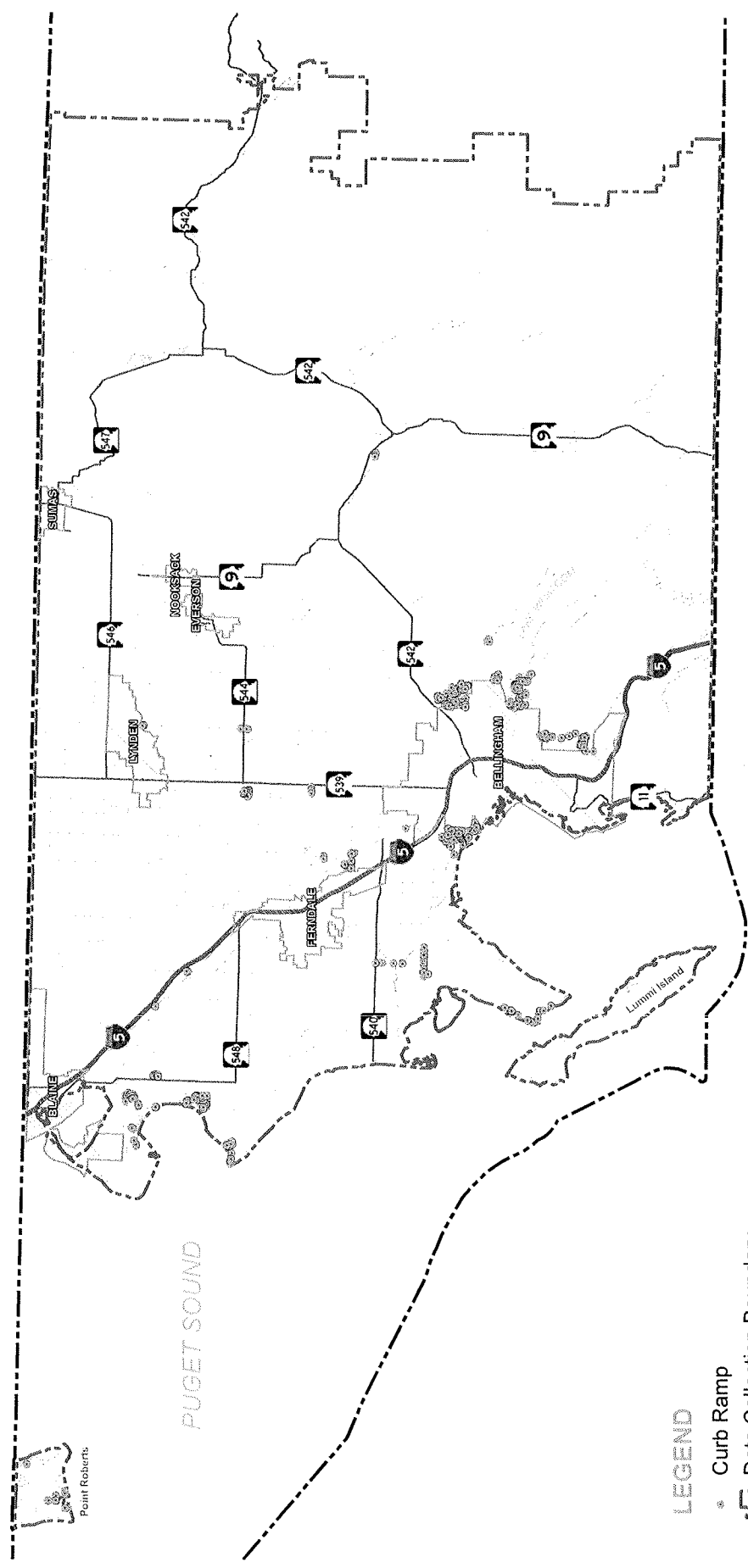
- Completing sidewalks
- Access to parks
- Pathways serving Transit
- Signal Timings, signal improvements and crosswalks

Where should we focus our energy?

- Schools and County Parks
- Transit pathways including sidewalks and crosswalks and curb ramps
- Improvements to make government buildings that provide community services
- Other locations?

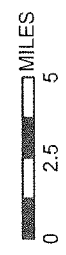
NOTES:

Appendix E - GIS Inventory



LEGEND

- Curb Ramp
- ▭ Data Collection Boundary
- ▭ Whatcom County Boundary
- ⊕ Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
- Park or Open Space
- ▭ Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Curb Ramps)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

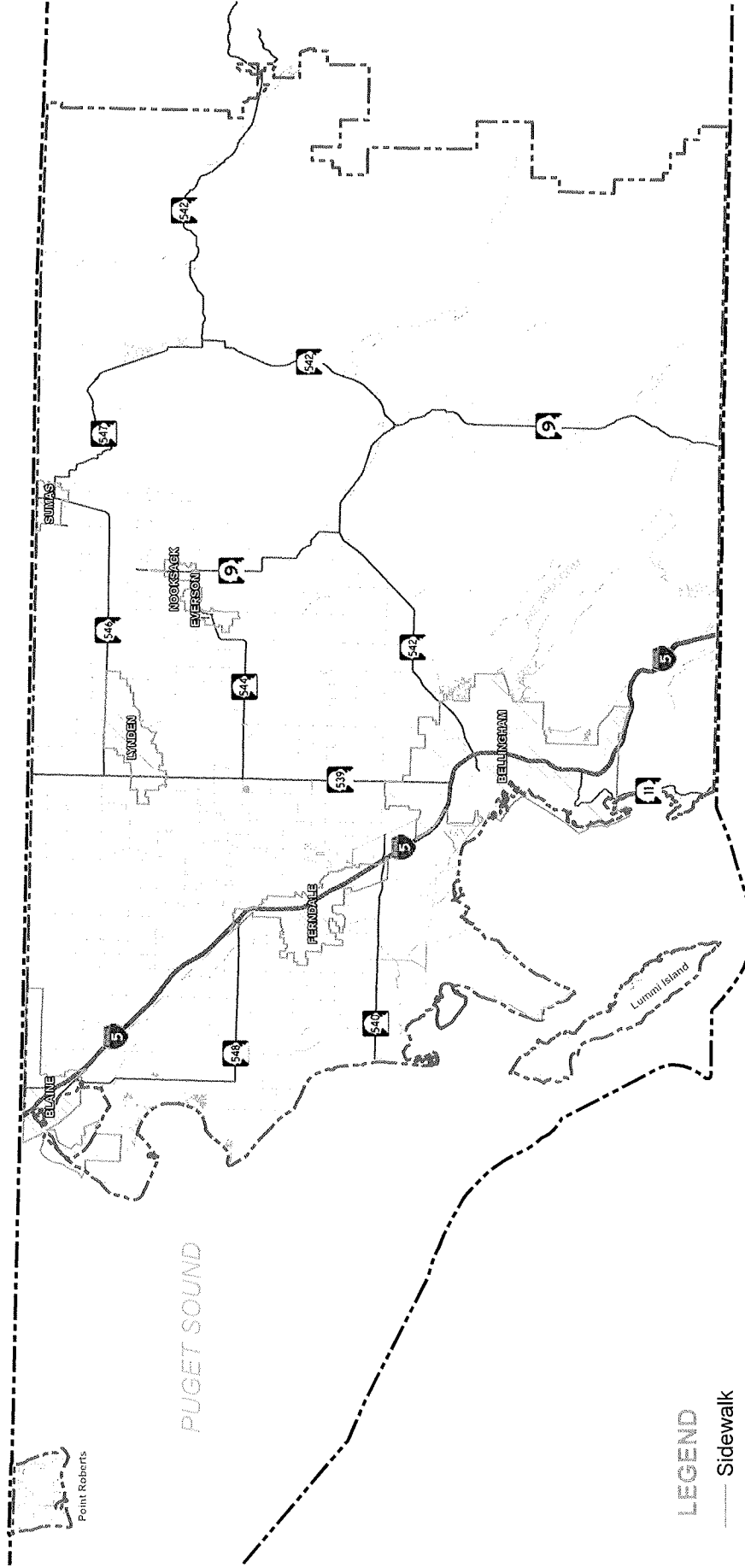
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



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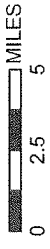
1-1





LEGEND

-  Sidewalk
-  Data Collection Boundary
-  Whatcom County Boundary
-  Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
-  Park or Open Space
-  Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Sidewalk)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

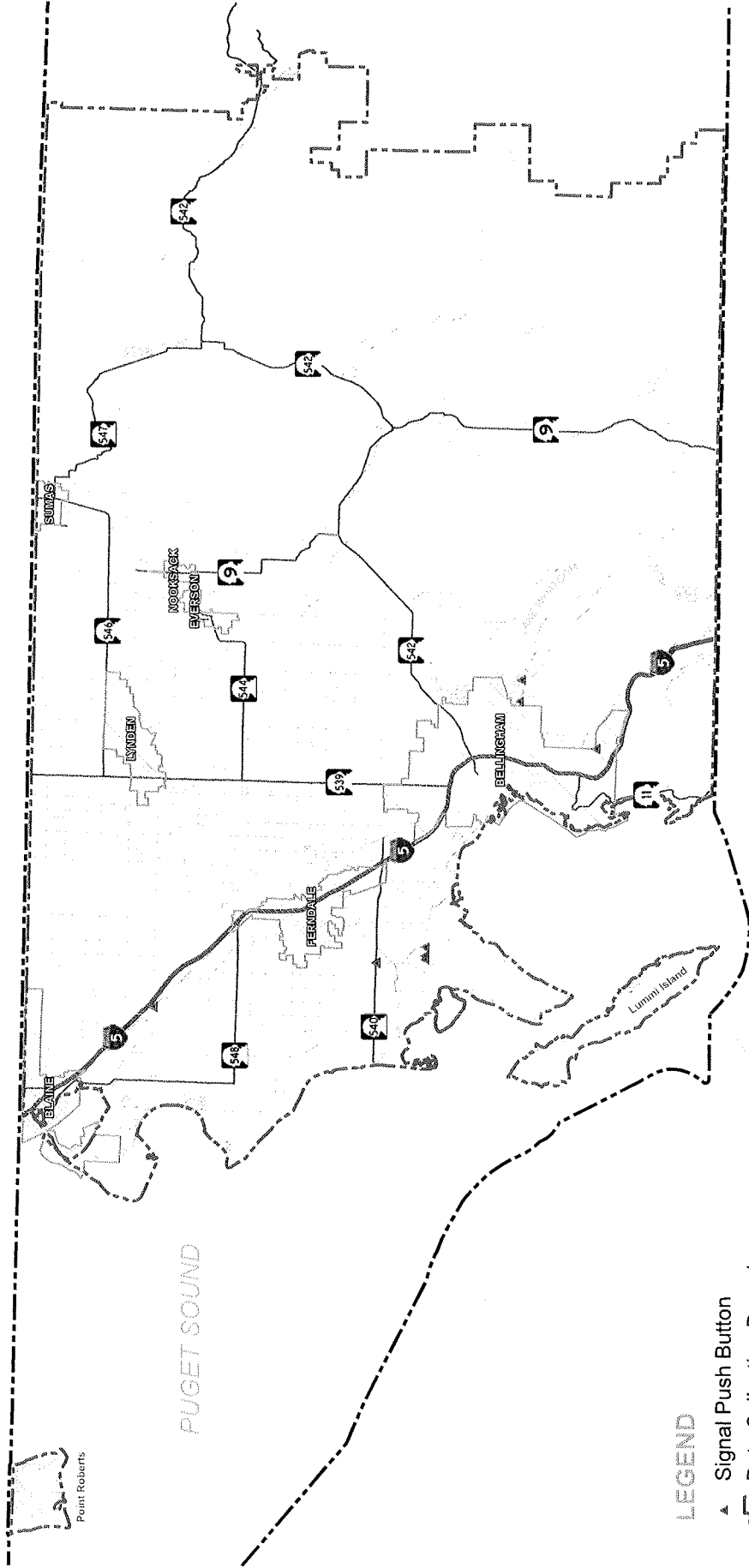
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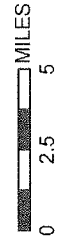
I-2





LEGEND

- Signal Push Button
- Data Collection Boundary
- Whatcom County Boundary
- Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
- Park or Open Space
- Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Signal Push Buttons)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

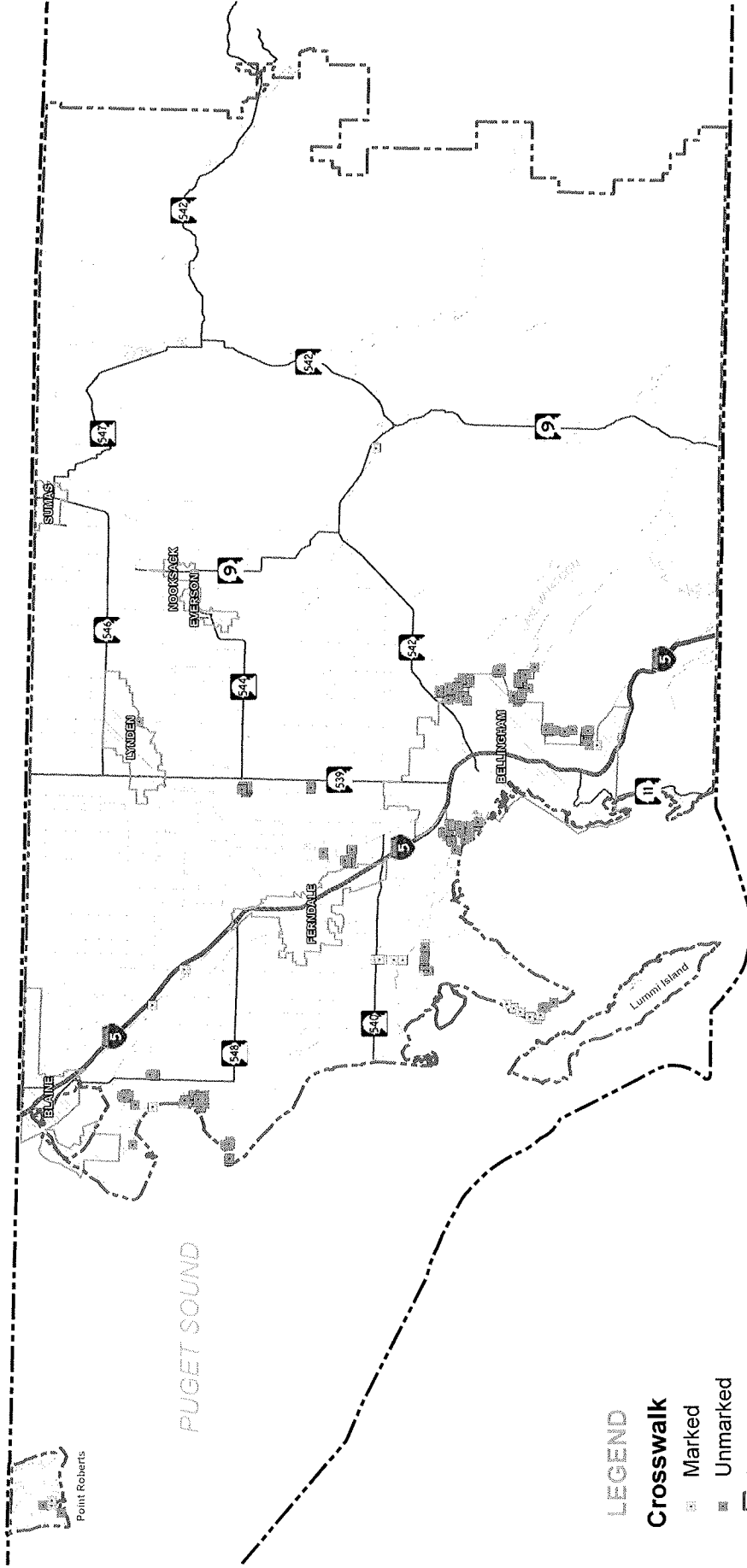
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I-3





LEGEND

Crosswalk

- Marked
- Unmarked

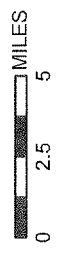
▭ Data Collection Boundary

▭ Whatcom County Boundary

▭ Incorporated Cities (No Collection)

▭ Park or Open Space

▭ Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Crosswalk)

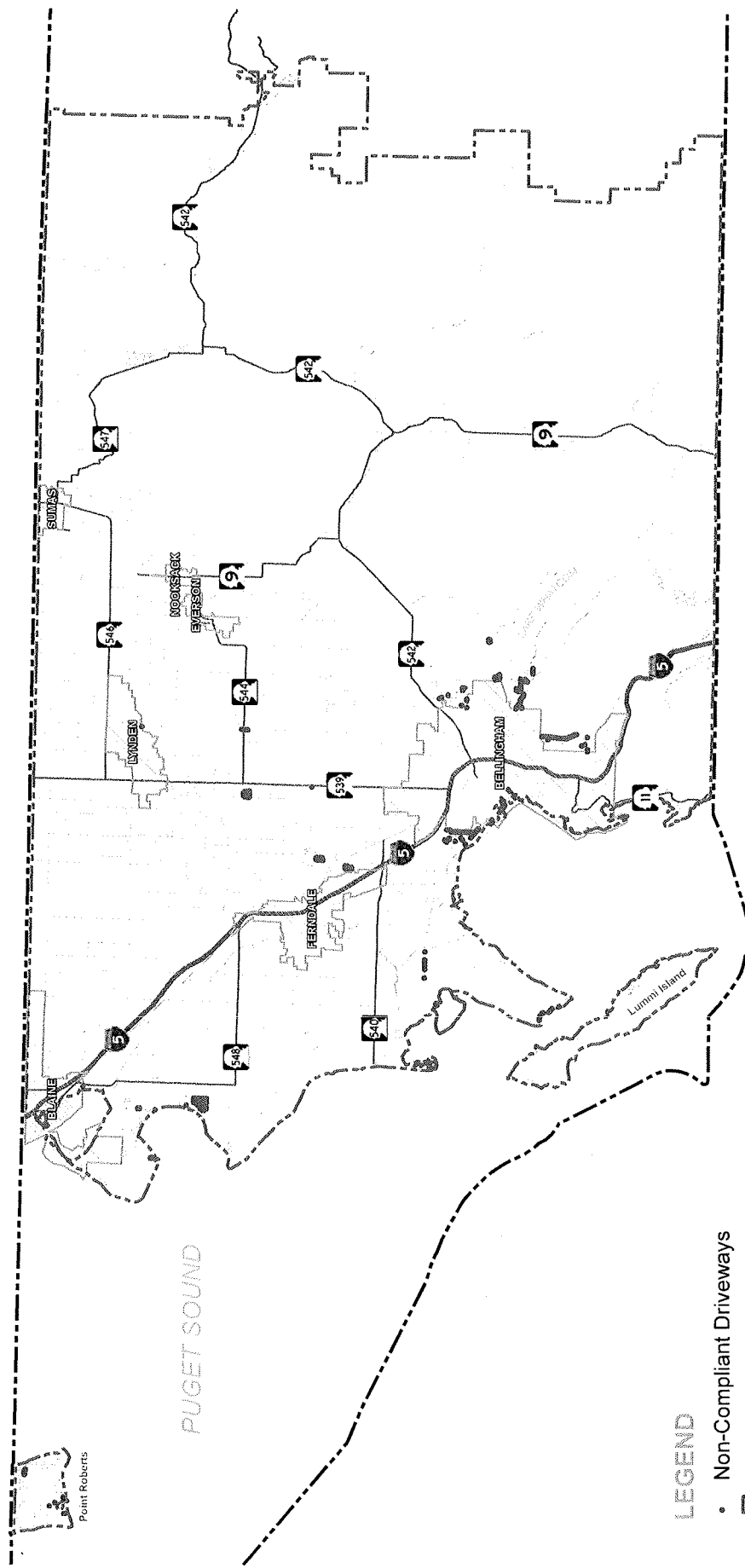
Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

FIGURE

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LEGEND

- Non-Compliant Driveways
- - - Data Collection Boundary
- Whatcom County Boundary
- Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
- Park or Open Space
- Water Bodies



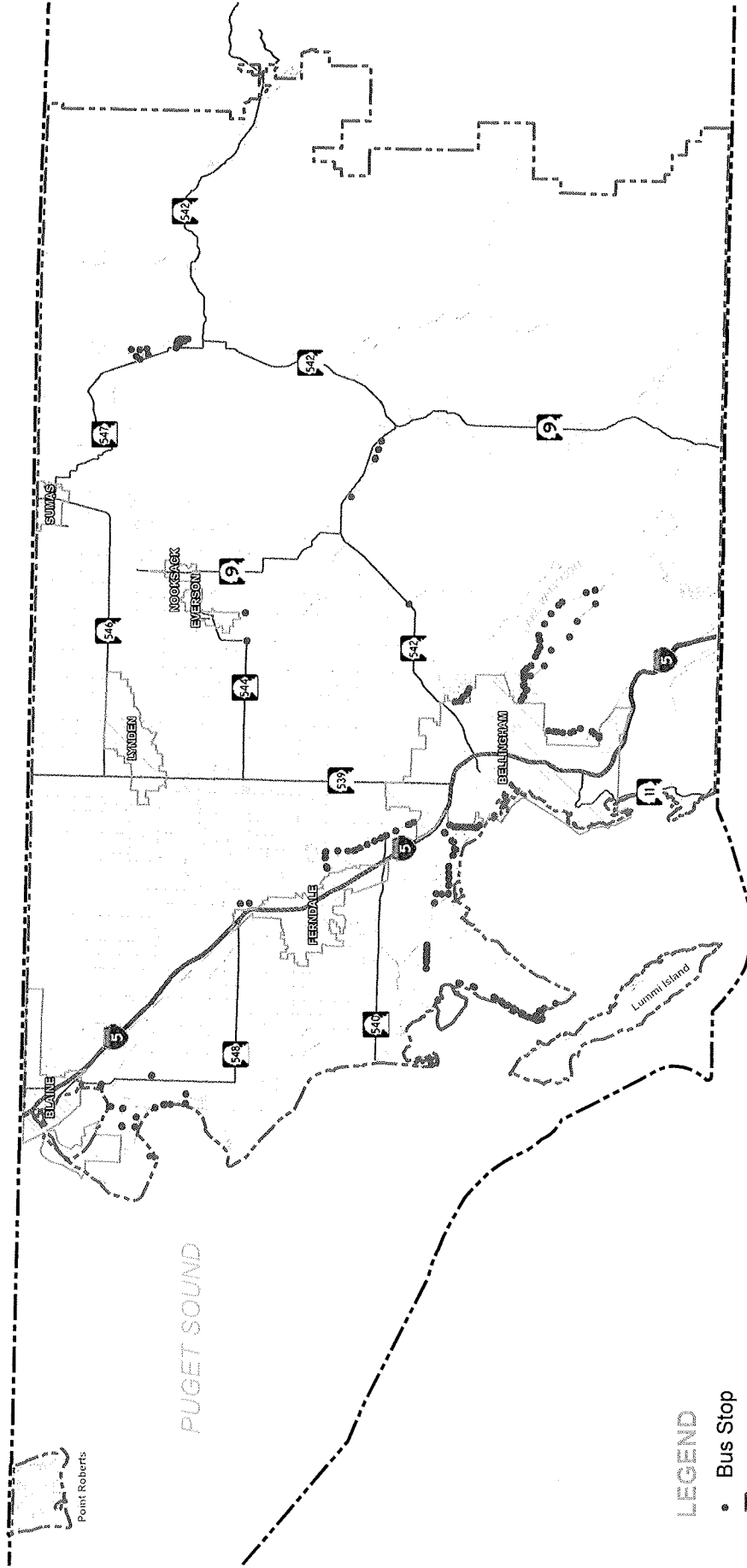
Data Collection Inventory (Non-Compliant Driveways)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

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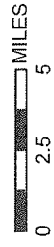
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FIGURE 1-5



LEGEND

- Bus Stop
- ▭ Data Collection Boundary
- ▭ Whatcom County Boundary
- ▭ Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
- ▭ Park or Open Space
- ▭ Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Bus Stop)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

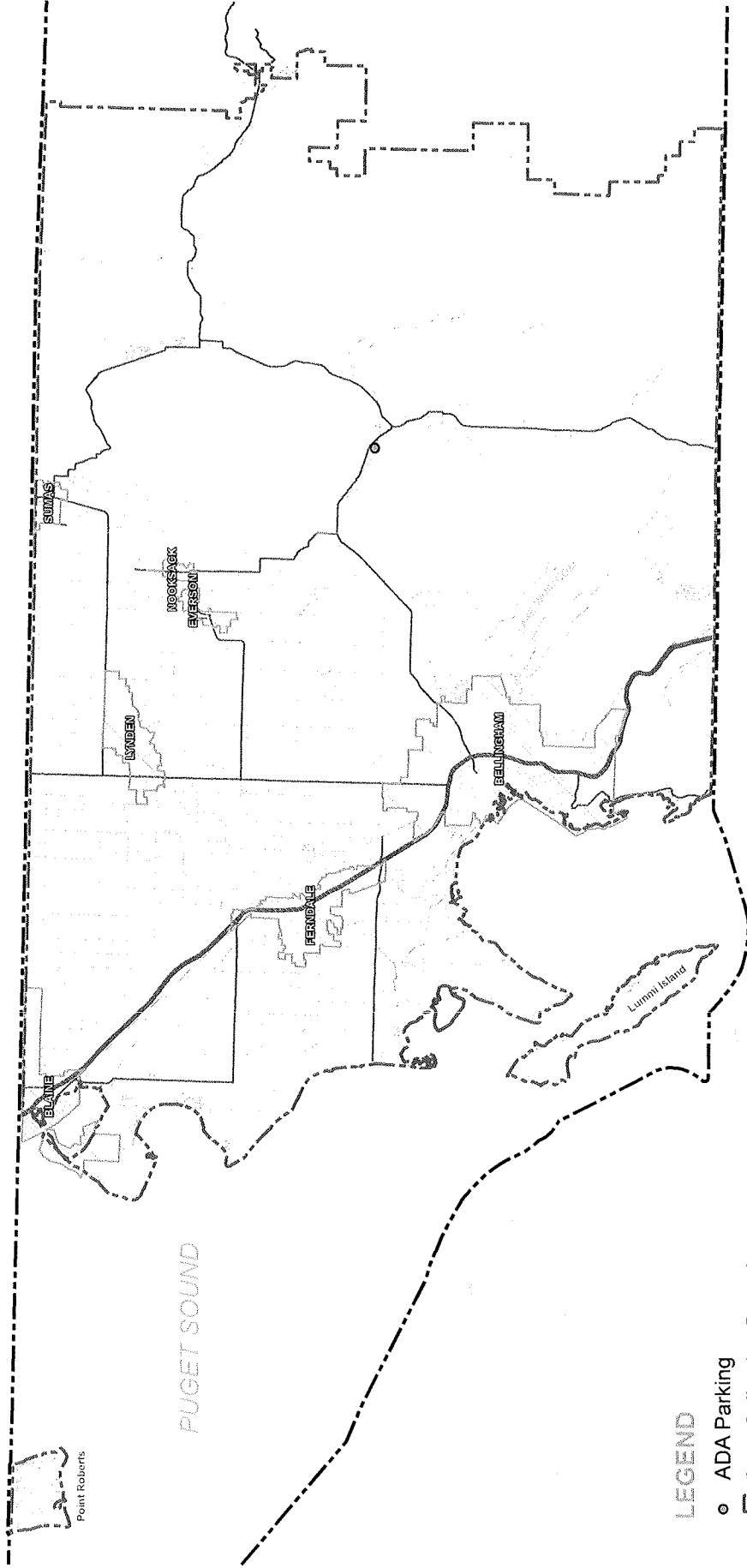
FIGURE

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I-6





LEGEND

- ADA Parking
- ▭ Data Collection Boundary
- ▭ Whatcom County Boundary
- ▭ Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
- ▭ Park or Open Space
- ▭ Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Parking)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

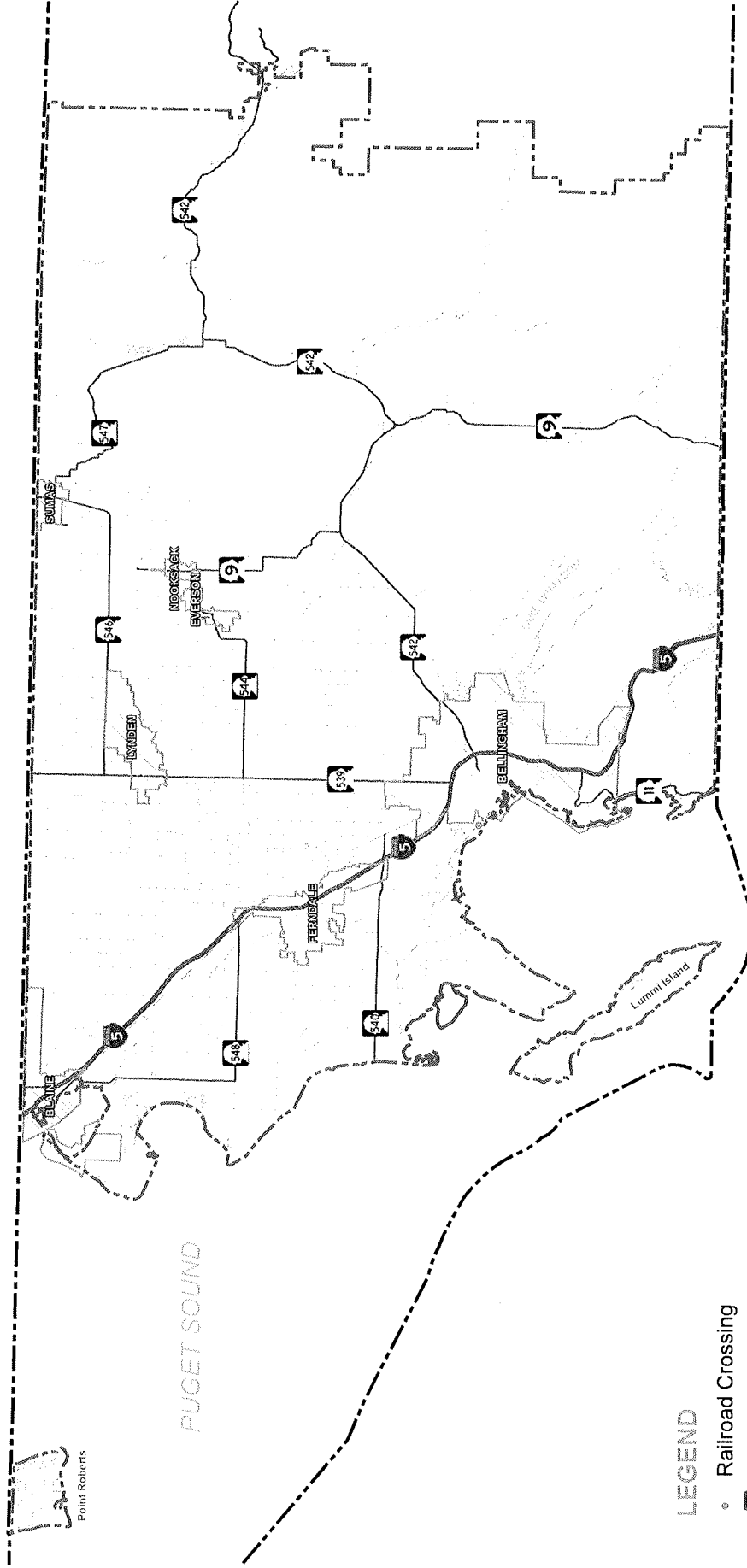
FIGURE

1-7

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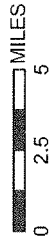
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LEGEND

- Railroad Crossing
- ▭ Data Collection Boundary
- ▭ Whatcom County Boundary
- ▭ Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
- ▭ Park or Open Space
- ▭ Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Railroad Crossing)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

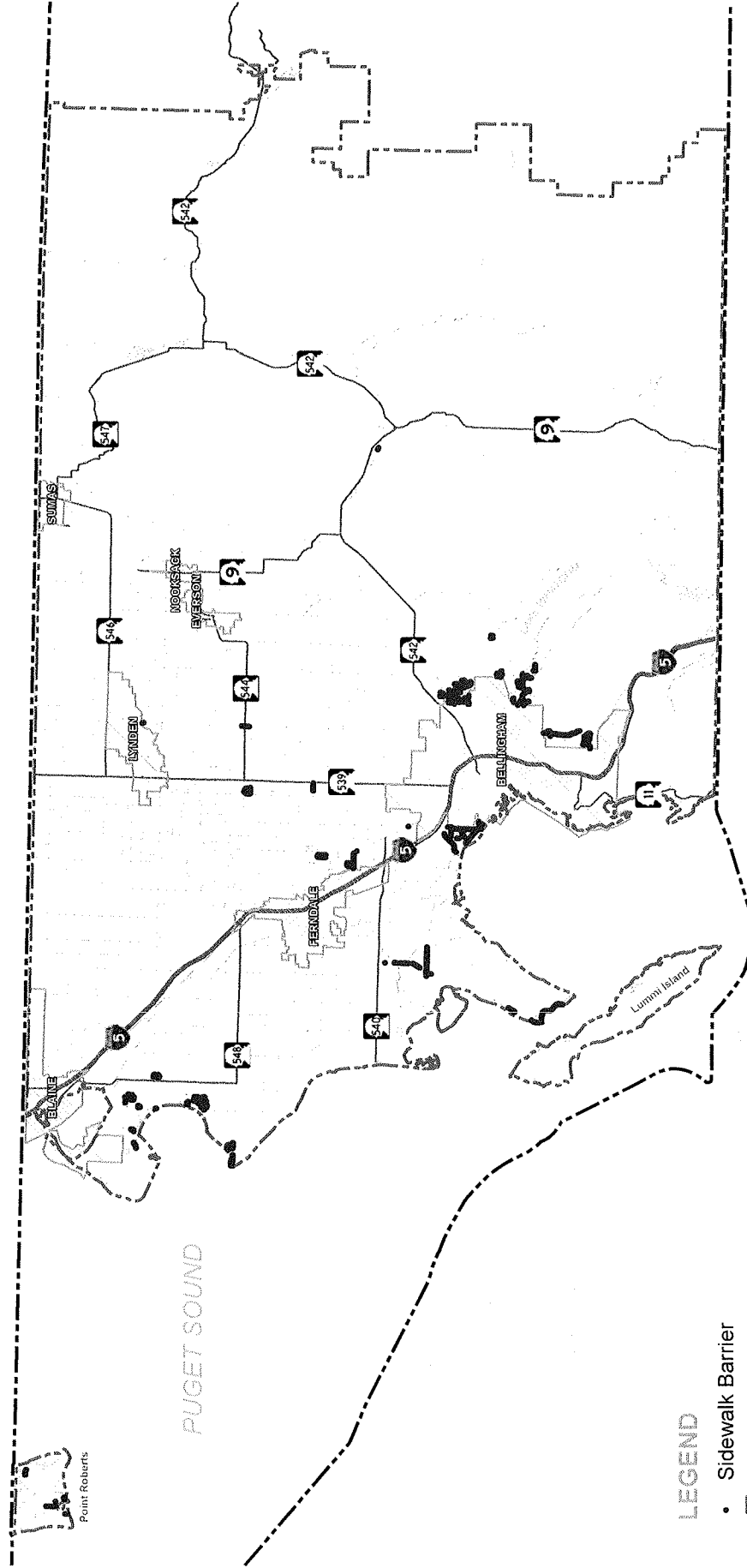
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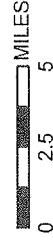
I-8





LEGEND

- Sidewalk Barrier
- Data Collection Boundary
- Whatcom County Boundary
- Incorporated Cities (No Collection)
- Park or Open Space
- Water Bodies



Data Collection Inventory (Sidewalk Barriers)

Whatcom County ADA Transition Plan

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FIGURE

I-9



Appendix F - Cost Estimate Backup

