Cross-County Transportation Needs Between King and Snohomish Counties

By: Kyle Chan, Giannina Ferrara, and Joseph Wei
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Deepest gratitude to the community partners who took the additional time to connect us to their community end-users to participate in interviews as well. This project was made possible through each community partners’ commitment, involvement, and hardwork. We would like to thank the organizations and agencies that participated, in alphabetical order:

➢ Community Transit, DART
➢ Disability Rights Washington
➢ Homage, TAP
➢ Hopelink
➢ King County Metro, Access
➢ Northshore Senior Center
➢ Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition
➢ Puget Sound Regional Council
➢ Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (Snotrac)
➢ Snoqualmie Valley Transportation
➢ Sound Generations
➢ Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Positionality Statement

Kyle Chan is a Master’s student at the Evans School of the University of Washington. He has a background as a project manager for King County and educational background in Anthropology. As a 24-year old able-bodied cis male many of the experiences of the identities studied in this report do not directly relate to his personal experiences. Kyle takes public transit regularly to commute to school and work.

Giannina Ferrara is a Master’s student at the Evan’s School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Washington. She also has a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health. Her work experiences includes over three years in public health research, and nearly two years in social policy research and advocacy. In conjunction with her experience, she values community, equity, and justice. Her experience as an able-bodied, young adult, and English-as-a-first language, do not directly relate to the experiences of the identities studied in this report. Therefore, it’s essential to acknowledge these positions have influenced the project to some extent. Other aspects of her identity include being a cisgender, queer, women of color. She uses public transit services as a part of her day-to-day life in Seattle.

Joseph Wei is a Master’s student at the Evan’s School at the University of Washington. He is a Chinese international student living in Seattle and having a diverse cultural background. He obtained his bachelor degree at Ritsumeikan University in Japan, majoring in Policy Science. As a 25-year old able-bodied cis male many of the experiences of the identities studied in this report do not directly relate to his personal experiences. Wei uses public transit service as an important tool for daily life in Seattle.
Abbreviations

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
KCMC: King County Mobility Coalition
LEP: Limited English Proficiency
MPO: Metropolitan Planning Organization
NEMT: Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
NKCMC: North King County Mobility Coalition
PSRC: Puget Sound Regional Council
PTBA: Public Transportation Benefit Area
WSDOT: Washington State Department of Transportation
Glossary of Terms

Cross-border travel
This refers to travel between two destinations located in different jurisdictions. This can happen at the state, county, city, and even neighborhood levels.

Cross-county travel
This refers to travel between destinations located in different counties from one another.

End-users
End-users refers to riders of public transportation services and special needs and paratransit services.

Mobility Manager
Mobility Manager acts as a travel agent/service coordinator to seek the most effective means for meeting an individual's transportation needs. They work closely alongside transportation providers within a county.

Older people/adults
This refers to community members above the age of 65.

People with disabilities
An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

People with Limited-English Proficiency
Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.
Executive Summary

Existing cross-county travel gaps between King and Snohomish Counties leave challenges and unmet needs for both transportation service providers and their community end-users. Working towards the vision to allow community members to have more mobility freedom between King and Snohomish Counties, we, the Evans School Consultants, in partnership with Hopelink, examine what limitations community end-users face with cross-county travel, and what barriers transportation service providers face that prevent them from addressing these cross-border needs.

To explore this, we conducted a literature review that examined current transportation needs and cases from other counties, states, and countries. In addition, we performed interviews with service providers, mobility managers, funders, and end-users to comprehend the limitations and resources needed for better cross-county travel. As a result, we have identified several barriers to cross-county travel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation service providers</th>
<th>Community end-users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Not Enough or Inconsistent Funding</td>
<td>➢ Mistreatment by Transportation Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Reduced Staffing and Program Capacity</td>
<td>➢ Long Transfer Wait Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Lack of Program Sustainability</td>
<td>➢ Not Qualifying for Paratransit Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Incompatible Technology</td>
<td>➢ Lack of Accessible Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Lack of Cross-Coordination of Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>➢ Some Providers Do Not Meet ADA Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Not Enough Transportation Stops</td>
<td>➢ Not Enough Transportation Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Lack of Communication from Transportation Providers</td>
<td>➢ Challenges in Scheduling Policies Set by Transportation Providers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on these issues, priority recommendations are highlighted that aim to reduce these barriers by garnering resources to meet the needs of both transportation service providers and end-users.

➢ Improve Training and Driver Education
➢ Create Interlocal Agreements for Cross-border Services and Aggregated Resources
➢ Create an Official Structure in Cross-Border Travel
➢ Engage in State Legislative Activities
➢ Improve Disability Certification Process
➢ Population- or Trip-Specific Funding

Due to the multi-level recommended approach to addressing system inequities, not one participant nor community group is able to accomplish these all alone. As you read through this report, we invite you to consider how your organization’s unique perspective can contribute to implementing these recommendations and to forming meaningful partnerships and collaborations to advance ridership equity.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Founded in 1971, Hopelink is a nonprofit organization that strives to promote self-sufficiency for all community members by providing a network of needed social services within King and Snohomish Counties. With a vision to create a community free of poverty, their services include housing, transportation, family development, financial literacy education, and food banks, among other services. One of their biggest service areas is transportation. Of these transportation programs, their Mobility Management program focuses on facilitating greater access for communities to get around. Key practices of this program include providing travel education, collaborating among both non-governmental and governmental sectors to support special needs transportation services, and conducting research to improve services.

The Hopelink Mobility Management team leads 6 different mobility coalitions including the North King County Mobility Coalition (NKCMC) who is the lead coalition in this project. The North King County Mobility Coalition is one of the four sub-regional coalitions within King County. NKCMC’s vision is to have a transportation network that allows everyone around North King County and surrounding areas, such as Snohomish County, to move freely. Coalition membership includes transportation service providers, mobility managers, human service providers, and others that service the following areas: North Seattle, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, Kenmore, Bothell, and Woodinville. In 2020, they conducted a gap analysis where one of the findings was a need for increased coordination and ease of use for cross-county travel.

From this initial analysis, Hopelink sought to understand additional barriers and limitations that may emerge from cross-county and other cross-border traveling, through local, state, and international examples, and how this may apply to the King and Snohomish transportation networks since this is the main area of service for Hopelink and the NKCMC. This project, in coordination with us from the Evans School Consulting Lab, emerged to identify these cross-county barriers within King and Snohomish counties. We, the Evans School consultants, conducted further research to provide potential solutions to these identified issues for Hopelink and other members of the KCMC to consider implementing with hopes to later expand these findings to other cross-county borders.

Research Questions

In this report, we aim to answer the following question: What are the barriers that are encountered with cross-county travel between King and Snohomish Counties and what are possible solutions to improve cross-county travel?

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3 North King County Mobility Coalition. (2023). About NKCMC. North King County Mobility Coalition. Retrieved from: https://www.kcmobility.org/nkcmc
To further comprehend and analyze this question, we divided our analysis by researching the following sub-questions:

- What transportation barriers do certain demographics (people with disabilities, older adults, and people with Limited English Proficiency) face that limit them from crossing county lines?
- What barriers do transportation service providers face that prevent them from addressing cross-border transportation needs?
- What are potential solutions to the identified cross-county transportation barriers?

Other Key Deliverables

In addition to this report, Hopelink asked us to provide two other deliverables. One deliverable is a one-page document that includes an analysis that looks at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the public transportation landscape between King and Snohomish Counties, similar to the SWOT analysis seen in Chapter 4. This one-pager will be used as a key advocacy piece, which can be seen in Appendix 5.

Another deliverable is to present the report findings to the King County Mobility Coalition (KCMC) to an audience of cross-sector partners and end-users throughout King County. In this presentation, we provided an overview of our project scope, methodology, findings, and most importantly, key actionable recommendations for members of the KCMC to do and advocate for.

Project Timeline

| January       | ➢ Develop project plan  
               | ➢ Convene project team |
|---------------|------------------------|
| February      | ➢ Complete literature review  
               | ➢ Schedule interviews with service providers and end-users |
| March         | ➢ Conduct interviews with service providers and end-users  
               | ➢ Analyze findings |
| April         | ➢ Develop recommendations  
               | ➢ First draft of report |
| May           | ➢ Final report  
               | ➢ Present at the King County Mobility Coalition on May 16th |
Chapter 2: Research Methods

In this chapter, we discuss the methods used to answer the research questions and objectives from Chapter 1. We used three methods to inform the identification of cross-county travel barriers and potential solutions: conducting a literature review, conducting semi-structured interviews, and reviewing narrative transportation stories. Further information on how each methodology type was performed and its limitations are discussed in each section.

Literature Review

The aim of the literature review was to understand four aspects of cross-county networks, generally: (1) funding policies and regulations that affect cross-county public transportation services; (2) existing cross-county transportation within King and Snohomish Counties and other existing cross-county transits governance models; (3) public transportation providers’ cross-county transportation barriers and needs within King, Snohomish, and other inter-county transit; and (4) end-users cross-county transportation barriers and needs within King, Snohomish, and other transportation sources.

To start, Hopelink and other NKCMC partners provided us with an initial list of reports, articles, and surveys to synthesize. In addition, we conducted our own search for academic literature and gray literature such as government reports and publications. Compiling these sources was performed by using keywords such as “cross-border”, “inter-county”, and “cross-county” that were searched in Google Scholar, Proquest, and TRID.

This information provided vital background information on the current transportation network for King and Snohomish Counties, alongside other public transportation systems and services provided in other counties, states, and regional areas which helped inform potential solutions that fit the King and Snohomish Counties environment. Additionally, this provided a knowledge basis for shaping the questions asked in the interviews with public transportation service providers and end-users.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The aim of these interviews was to understand the barriers and needs in King and Snohomish cross-county travel from two groups: transportation providers and end-users. Information from both groups was collected using semi-structured interviews. These interviews were performed virtually where one team member led the discussion and asked questions, while at least one other team member took notes. We used Otter.ai, a transcription and recording program, to document the interview to ensure accurate note-taking.

After all interviews, we conducted a thematic analysis to understand emerging themes from both transportation service providers and end-users, to gather the identified cross-county travel barriers. We highlighted some direct quotes from each interviewee that supported these identified barriers. Further information on how responses were collected from transportation service providers and end-users is seen in the following sub-sections.
Transportation Service Providers
The aim of these interviews was to understand what the current limitations service providers are having, why those limitations exist, and what it would take for them to provide services to easily cross the King and Snohomish Counties borders to better serve the community. Interviews were conducted with the transportation providers and mobility managers who have positions to identify specific needs and challenges in cross-border travel, and enact potential solutions we come up with at the end of this project. We sought to understand these conditions within two types of groups: transportation service providers and mobility managers in King and Snohomish counties, and service providers and mobility managers from other counties that facilitate cross-county travel. We tried to interview a few other counties such as Pierce County, to understand the strengths of their cross-county travel system that could be potential solutions for King and Snohomish Counties.

Through Hopelink and their connections, we used snowball sampling to gather interviewee responses. Introductions with service providers and mobility managers were initiated by Hopelink, much of which came from members of the NKCMC. We were able to conduct 12 interviews in total. The list of interviewees can be seen in Appendix 2. For further information about the interview questions asked, see Appendix 3.

Due to time and schedule challenges, the majority of our interviews with transportation providers focused on King County. We were fortunate enough to interview two transportation providers from Snohomish County, Homage and Community Transit. We also interviewed the Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (Snotrac), the Snohomish Mobility Manager, and the coalition that aims to represent Snohomish County service providers, so we were able to gather multiple perspectives from there. We recognize our analysis may lack other Snohomish transportation service provider perspectives. Another limitation of our analysis was we were only able to meet with one service provider outside of the King and Snohomish Counties area. We interviewed a mobility manager for the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition and Beyond the Borders within Pierce County.

End-Users
The aim of conducting end-user interviews was to understand the travel barriers that certain populations face within King and Snohomish Counties: people with disabilities, older adults, and people with LEP. While travel difficulties exist among all populations, it is well known that these target demographics, among others, face some of the greatest transportation barriers. So, we focused our interviews on understanding the barriers that these populations have. These interviews provided an evaluation of the users' experience with the transportation system and the problems they perceive. It also provided an opportunity for users to comment on what worked well within the transportation system, or what aspects of transportation they felt should continue in the future.

While our initial plan included at least one focus group with members from each target demographic, we could not coordinate these because of time constraints and limited management

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capacity. Instead, we decided individual interviews with end-users would allow greater flexibility in scheduling, in-person/online preferences, and reduced management burden. The interviews included three major groups that travel between King and Snohomish County: people with disabilities, older adults, and people with LEP. Through Hopelink’s partnership with transportation service providers, we were able to reach out to these partners to identify potential end-user interview participants. Transportation provider partners asked their community clients if they would like to participate in these interviews as representing at least one of the three groups of study. Participants that were willing to be interviewed were introduced to us by these service providers. Each interviewee was offered $50 to compensate them for their time participating in an hour-long interview, provided by Hopelink. For further information about the interview questions asked, see Appendix 4.

Each demographic has different and unique needs. These aspects factor into how transportation services can plan for and improve upon these services to best meet each group’s needs. Our interviews aimed to understand each group’s current transportation choices, the systems they used, the places they travel, and understand what hinders their access to other transportation options. Alongside this, we sought to understand their feelings and other unmet needs when using current transportation options.

A limitation of our analysis is our limited sample size of people for each demographic group. We were fortunate enough to be able to interview four people with disabilities. Those that were interviewed had disabilities related to physical, developmental, behavioral, and sensory disabilities. For older adults, we gathered interviews from four people. Additionally, we interviewed one person with LEP, whose native language is Chinese. The interview in itself was also a limitation since discussion questions were asked in English. With such a small number of interviews, we recognize that these findings do not fully represent all the needs or perspectives of each group.

**StoryMap Tool**

The Disability Rights Washington has a StoryMap tool that was started by the Disability Rights Initiative that interviewed people from each legislative district to understand how they travel, and their barriers.6 This StoryMap is an online tool that visualizes individual stories and embeds them into the Washington State map. Users can freely browse the map, click on the area of interest, and read specific interview stories (see Figure 1). To gather more information of travel experiences and barriers from people with disabilities crossing between King and Snohomish Counties, we used this StoryMap tool. Since the StoryMap tool categorizes end-user stories by legislative district, we only included stories from legislative districts that were part of King or Snohomish Counties. We further excluded stories that did not indicate or infer cross-county travel. With this criteria, we were able to use seven stories in our thematic analysis to identify cross-county travel barriers between King and Snohomish Counties.

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While this method furthers our understanding of cross-county travel for people with disabilities, only seven stories were able to be included. In combination with the four semi-structured interviews conducted, these together add up to only 11 different stories. This is still a small number of sampling, so these findings are not fully able to encompass all the diverse perspectives from people with disabilities.

Figure 1. Storymap tool
Chapter 3: Literature Review on Cross-County Travel Barriers

To better understand the existing transportation needs and challenges in King and Snohomish Counties, we explored examples of transportation networks in other states to identify lessons on long-term systemic solutions and also, identify the challenges in achieving them as they share similarities with our focus region’s own barriers. We move on to discuss these barriers in greater detail for service providers and target demographics of end-users who use both public transportation and specialized transportation services in order to inform our questions for the semi-structured interviews discussed in later sections.

The findings of this chapter are presented by the following themes: (1) transportation funding policies and regulations, (2) existing transportation networks, (3) transportation agencies’ cross-border transportation needs, and (4) end-users’ cross-border transportation needs.

Transportation Funding Policies and Regulations

To understand why the current structures for public transportation services exist in King and Snohomish Counties, an examination of laws, policies, and other regulations must be assessed. This section aims to understand funding policies and regulations that may create barriers that hinder or that may facilitate transportation providers’ ability to provide cross-county services.

Funding for Transportation and Planning

Federal Funding

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides financial assistance to the public transit system and oversees the grants provided to all states, tribes, and local public agencies that support public transportation. Grantees must comply with the statutory and regulatory requirements that come with federally assisted grants which include legal, financial, and technical capacity, technical inspection and supervision, procurement compliance, and compliance with applicable safety and civil rights statutes.7

For planning, FTA’s Section 5304 regulation funds statewide programs to integrate multimodal solutions to transportation planning.8 All grantees must comply with FTA’s Circular 8100.1D which describes its use for metropolitan and state planning, and research grants.9 Additionally, FTA’s Section 5311 goals, seen in Circular 9040.1F, must support public transportation in rural

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areas with populations of less than 50,000, since there is a high reliance on public transit.\textsuperscript{10} Alongside this, the Intercity Bus Program requires at least 15\% of this program funding to develop and support intercity bus transportation.\textsuperscript{11} These are all potential funding and planning sections that could be in alignment with providing transportation for cross-county travel, especially for rural areas. Washington state statutes allocate all FTA funding to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and smaller living areas.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{State Funding}

The Washington state legislature passes bills every two years to fund transportation needs. These bills amend existing funding bills to reflect new budgets for the following biennium, with specific dollars set aside for different categories of work performed by WSDOT, State Patrol, Department of Licensing, State Treasurer, and other state agencies. In the 2022 legislative session, they passed nearly $3 billion towards 16 years of public transportation development in Washington state. This package is part of the Move Ahead Washington funding passage.

In addition, the legislature appropriated additional funding for existing public transportation grants for the 2022-2023 year. Some of these impacted grant programs, in particular, have been the Special Needs Grant Program funding for nonprofits and the Special Needs Grant Program funding for transit agencies. Within the 2023 legislative session, SB 5164 is the current bill for transportation funding and appropriations. Section 115 of the bill covers funding for public transportation. The last few years have shown a substantial increase in public transportation funding, which could be beneficial in supporting more cross-county transportation services.

\textit{Local Funding}

Local transit authorities are funded according to the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), through several different funding sources. They are funded through a mix of local tax revenues, passenger fares, and state and federal grants. Furthermore, RCW also allows local governments to set up their own Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBA). Most transit agencies are established under RCW 36.75A as PTBAs. PTBAs are established by municipal (city) governments to provide public transit within their borders. Money is raised for PTBAs through local taxes, and these funds are reserved explicitly for providing transportation services within the benefit area, which can either be a city or town, neighborhood, or port.\textsuperscript{13} Therefore, local funding by county may not be as aligned with providing cross-county transportation services since within border transportation options may be prioritized.

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is an MPO between Pierce, King, Snohomish, and Kitsap County. The PSRC develops policies around transportation, growth management, and economic development within the region. PSRC receives funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, FTA, and from the legislature's Move Ahead Washington passage that all help support local transportation providers by identifying the region's transportation needs and developing plans and strategies to address them. This is a key organization that may help with addressing cross-county services between King and Snohomish Counties especially in rural areas, and those that need specialized transportation.

The Sound Transit is a transit authority that covers Pierce, King, and Snohomish Counties. Sound Transit builds and operates large regional transit services such as Link light rail, Sounder Trains, and other such services. This transit agency receives funding from local taxes and fees along with federal grant dollars. Sound Transit differs from the PSRC because it focuses on specific regional services and consists of only one organization. Sound Transit is led by a board of 18 members of elected local officials: three from Snohomish, ten from King County, and four from Pierce County, with the last seat filled by the Secretary of State Transportation. This is another key organization that may help facilitate a pathway and understanding to providing better cross-county services to King and Snohomish Counties.

**Funding for Special Needs**

State grantees receiving FTA Section 5310 funds must comply with the goals seen in FTA’s Circular 9070.1G which looks to enhance mobility for seniors and people with disabilities.\(^\text{14}\) This financing is used to meet the specialized transportation needs of these communities in all areas which include urban, small urban, and rural. Another requirement is that all grantees of the FTA must comply with the civil rights statutes, specifically the Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.\(^\text{15}\)

The Americans with Disabilities Act\(^\text{16}\) (ADA) provides a special service for people with disabilities - paratransit. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a comprehensive federal law in the United States that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in various areas of public life. ADA Title II requires public transportation authorities may not discriminate against people with disabilities and must provide paratransit where they operate fixed-route bus or rail systems, unless it would result in an undue burden. Paratransit is a service where individuals who are unable to use the regular transit system independently (because of a physical or mental impairment) are picked up and dropped off at their destinations. Paratransit service provides convenience for people with disabilities to travel, regardless of purpose.

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The Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964\textsuperscript{17} would ensure compliance that provided public transportation is quality and nondiscriminatory of race, color, or nation of origin, that there is full and fair participation in public transportation decision-making, and that there is meaningful access to transit programs and activities by all people. With this regulation, transportation providers receiving FTA funding must provide people with LEP with benefits to, access to, and participation in programs and services.\textsuperscript{18}

**Existing Transportation Networks**

In this section we identify what King and Snohomish have and don’t have compared to other transportation networks, along with what works well in other regions that might be applicable to King and Snohomish Counties. The section follows with the existing transportation network in King and Snohomish counties to demonstrate how the laws are applied to living reality. The section finishes by discussing other existing transit networks in other States that highlight aspects that serve as important lessons to address King and Snohomish County’s transportation network in cross-border travel.

**Existing Transportation Network: King and Snohomish Counties**

King and Snohomish County have several providers in the transportation sector. King County Metro Transit Department is the public transit authority within King County. Community Transit is the public transit authority for Snohomish County serving all cities except for Everett, which is separately funded by the City of Everett. Both of these counties are part of the Sound Transit taxing authority and benefit from its services as well.

**General Population**

According to the US Census bureau\textsuperscript{19}, in 2021, the population of King County is 2,252,305, and that of Snohomish County is 833,540. Geographic population density data is retrieved from Washington Geospatial Open Data Portal\textsuperscript{20} and is shown in Figure 2. The data is internally divided into four levels.


\textsuperscript{18} Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). (2022, December 20). *Title VI/Limited English proficiency*. WSDOT. Retrieved May 6, 2023, from: https://wsdot.wa.gov/about/title-vi-limited-english-proiciency#:--text=Title%20VI%20prohibits%20discrimination%20based%20on%20race%20of%20Federal%20financial%20assistance

\textsuperscript{19} US Census Bureau (July 1, 2022). *QuickFacts Snohomish County, Washington; King County, Washington*. Retrieved from United Census Bureau: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/snohomishcountywashington,kingcountywashington/PST045222

Mean travel time to work (minutes) is 29.4 in King County and 32 in Snohomish County. For reference, 2019 average travel time to work in the United States is 27.6. The whole Washington state average travel time to work is 27.9, ranking ninth in the state with the longest commuting
time. In report *Travel Time to Work in the United States: 2019*\(^1\), the main contributors to long travel time were public transportation, such as subways and long-distance commuter trains and buses. It is worth noting that this does not mean that Washington State is weak in public transport. On the contrary, this may indirectly indicate that public transport in Washington State is widely chosen by citizens. But at the same time, the data and rankings also pointed out that there is still space for further improvement of public transport in King County, Snohomish County and even Washington State.

**Paratransit**

ADA Title II requires public transportation authorities must provide paratransit where they operate fixed-route bus or rail systems, unless it would result in an undue burden\(^2\). Paratransit is a service where individuals who are unable to use the regular transit system independently (because of a physical or mental impairment) are picked up and dropped off at their destinations. Paratransit service provides convenience for people with disabilities to travel, regardless of purpose.

There are also specialized services that provide transportation but are limited to specific purposes such as medical trips like Hopelink’s Non-Emergency Medical Transportation. Another example is Sound Generation’s Hyde Shuttle which serves adults age 55 and older and people with disabilities within specific cities and areas such as Auburn, Renton, Beacon Hill, and more. There are many local paratransit or paratransit-like services available run by individual cities or community organizations, but these programs have more limited eligibility criteria or service areas.

In 2022, the Hopelink Mobility team convened two focus group projects to learn from community members their experience of the transportation network in King County and their communities. This report combines the findings of those two efforts, highlighting broad community needs specific to the specialized transportation users in King County, particularly older adults, adults with disabilities, community members from diverse backgrounds, and those with limited English proficiency. Several findings from the report observed that participants thought the current transportation system is lacking and that drivers needed to be equipped and properly trained to support diverse riders.

Other counties have also established cross-county routes. For example, transit is available to Island, Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish Counties for crossing, which is made possible by four designated routes by the County Connector bus service that began in 2005 with an appropriation of 2 million dollars\(^3\). In other words, Washington state transportation network does provide a basic level of cross-county transportation services, but end-users and communities have still expressed a need for greater accessibility and availability of cross-county transportation.


**Other Cross-County Systems**

We look at other successful transportation networks in other states, including Oregon, North Carolina, Missouri, and Illinois to better understand other models and how they may be implemented in our focus region to different degrees. From these examples, we examine other transit systems that cross borders and political boundaries put in place by local governments and transit agencies and compare them with the existing transportation network within King and Snohomish County. From these comparisons, we extrapolate lessons that may help improve cross-border travel between King and Snohomish.

**Chicago, Illinois’ Transit Network**

In northeastern Illinois, the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) was created in 1974 through a referendum by the citizens of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties known as The Regional Transportation Authority Act\(^\text{24}\). The RTA provides financial oversight and regional planning for the three public transit operators in northeastern Illinois. In 2021, the RTA’s ridership was 225.4 million, although pre-Covid ridership was over double current numbers\(^\text{25}\). The RTA board recently voted to adopt a 2023 regional transit strategic plan. This plan outlines 14 key areas of advocacy, along with several actionable steps for RTA, Chicago Transit Authority, and Metra to take for the purpose of providing safe, reliable, accessible transportation that connects people to opportunity, advances equity, and combats climate change\(^\text{26}\).

This example shows that despite the transit authority’s long-standing history, improvements to public transit, specifically accessible transportation such as paratransit, are still issues shared between Washington and Illinois. Even so, the RTA has provided a helpful platform for stakeholders to engage, participate, and provide feedback to local transit services and set priorities for improvements and key areas to focus efforts and resources. In other words, a transit authority in itself can serve as a useful tool for advocacy and community engagement to address communities’ and regions’ transportation needs by involving various public perspectives to help innovate and identify solutions that best align with the public’s interests and priorities.

In comparison, Sound Transit is the taxing authority for King, Pierce, and Snohomish County, but plays a very different role in the region’s transportation. Sound Transit taxes go toward operating the Link light rail system, Sounder trains, and Sound Transit Express buses. This makes up only a portion of the transportation routes available through King and Snohomish County. Other transportation providers receive money from WSDOT and through grants at the State and Federal level. In other words, while the Chicago RTA provides oversight and planning for all public transit operators in Northeastern Illinois, Sound Transit is only one of many


different planning and financial oversight organizations, and has no authority regarding services outside their own operations. Another important difference to note is while Sound Transit performs two roles as both a taxing authority and transportation provider, the Chicago RTA is wholly devoted to financial oversight and regional planning.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Oregon’s Metro Transportation Network**

In Portland, Oregon, transportation service is handled by an organization called Metro. Metro consists of a council of six elected representatives from each district and a Council President elected region-wide. There is also a Chief Operating Officer that leads the day-to-day operations. There are several committees that participate in Metro’s transportation and land use decisions.

- The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) comprises three Metro councilors and seven locally elected officials representing cities and counties, and appointed officials from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), TriMet, the Port of Portland, and the Department of Environmental Quality. The state of Washington is represented by two elected officials and an appointed official from the Washington Department of Transportation.

- Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) consists of eleven locally-elected officials, three appointed officials representing special districts, Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet), a representative of school districts, three citizens, two Metro Councilors (with non-voting status), two officials from Clark County, Washington and an appointed official from the State of Oregon with non-voting status. These two committees are key in drafting plans and strategies for transportation in the region.

The committees receive technical support from:

- Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC) and
- Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC).

TPAC and MTAC also include several citizen members on their committees alongside technical staff. A detailed image of Oregon’s MPO structure can be seen in Figure 3.
Together these committees create policy and strategic planning for Metro Council. The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is developed annually for the Portland Metropolitan Area. It is a federally-required document that serves as a guide for transportation planning activities to be conducted over the course of each fiscal year. Included in the UPWP are detailed descriptions of the transportation planning tasks, listings of various activities, and a summary of the amount and source of state and federal funds to be used for planning activities. The UPWP is developed by Metro with input from local governments, TriMet, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and FTA.

Additionally, Metro must annually undergo a process known as self-certification to demonstrate that the Portland Metropolitan region’s planning process is being conducted in accordance with all applicable federal transportation planning requirements. Self-certification is conducted in conjunction with annual adoption of the UPWP.

The Portland transit system highlights the number of diverse stakeholders that must collaborate in order to achieve a cross-border system that combines various services across district and county lines. Metro and the Unified Planning Work Program are a good example of a stronger transportation network but requires a high degree of coordination between various stakeholders, committees, and government departments. In comparison, the Puget Sound Regional Council is
an opt-in organization. PSRC serves as a funnel for WSDOT to pass funds through down to transportation providers. Larger providers such as King County Metro are able to work directly with WSDOT to receive their funding. PSRC does not have the same level of authority as Portland’s transit authority. Funding is more decentralized in King and Snohomish County than it is with Oregon’s transportation network. While Sound Transit is the regional taxing authority for King, Pierce, and Snohomish County, municipal governments and counties also receive individual funding from WSDOT. This creates an added level of bureaucracy for the funding organization to communicate and work with the planning organization.

One-Provider Model: Missouri’s OATS (Operating Above the Standard) Transit Network
In Missouri, OATS Transit is a nonprofit specialized transportation provider that uses buses, vans, and shuttles to provide access to cities, highways, and rural roads all year round. All OATS buses and minivans are ADA-accessible.

OATS Transit began in 1971 when a group of senior citizens spoke with legislators in D.C. and received a grant to help senior citizens get from Point A to Point B. OATS Transit operations are largely funded by FTA grants and matched by local funds through contracts with local departments of mental health, agencies on aging, and other organizations throughout Missouri. OATS also receives funding from a few private foundations as well. Depending on what funding each city or town is able to provide, OATS has different services available to citizens of those cities or towns27. For instance, some counties may only have weekly or even monthly deviated-fixed bus routes to community centers, pharmacies, groceries stores, and other essential destinations while others may have more robust transportation services such as intercity express buses or by appointment transportation services for medical trips or veteran/senior citizens. Fees are minimal while also aiming to make travel as quick as possible.

OATS Transit is an example of a success story in public transit for Missouri’s aging population. It is also a model that runs differently than most others we have seen. Rather than have a funding agency administer funds to multiple service providers throughout the region, OATS has been able to grow and expand to cover most counties in Missouri. OATS Transit now serves 87 out of 114 counties in Missouri, with many services reaching rural areas to serve specific populations such as people 60 years or older and people with disabilities.

European Model: Cross-border Transportation
Internationally, cross-border travel has been an important part of life in Europe. An important difference is many of these borders are international and hold security concerns that are uncommon in Washington State. For example, the Schengen Border code is a common set of rules provided to EU countries that govern external checks on persons, entry requirements, and short-term visits.28 There are many international train routes that facilitate cross-border travel. Many of these trains are located in major urban centers, where public transportation is easily accessible from the train stations. In comparison, King and Snohomish County have many

Transportation hubs dispersed across a wider range of distances and requires more routes to connect them all together. While EU countries are struggling to connect across borders in other ways outside of their rail systems, an important lesson to King and Snohomish County’s situation is that cross-border routes need to connect directly to transportation hubs, or otherwise expand transportation hubs further out into suburban and rural areas.

**Transportation Service Providers’ Cross-Border Transportation Needs**

Transportation service providers are essential to understanding how to build an equitable transportation system for all people riding across counties. Identifying needs and emerging issues that transportation providers in King and Snohomish Counties and other cross-border transportation services encounter is a key step in determining where additional improvement efforts should be focused on. Many recognized provider needs were related to increased data, increased funding and resources, greater administrative and political support, and better governance of cross-coordination.

**King and Snohomish Counties**

Within the King and Snohomish Counties border, identified emerging gaps and needs for facilitating travel, were related to institutional barriers. Specifically, the governance of transportation services and coordination among counties poses challenges since funding for transportation is mostly from counties. Other obstacles included a lack of passenger information such as not knowing where people who need these services live. There were other concerns expressed about difficulty engaging with the public that may not have access to providing online or in-person feedback for system improvements. These pose challenges to understanding what actions are needed to achieve greater travel equity.

**Other Multi-County Systems**

Similar characteristics are present in other transportation systems that deliver cross-county services. We will explore four transportation systems to highlight past or emerging institutional issues to further understand potential needs from transportation providers that may arise from expanding the King and Snohomish cross-county travel services.

The NorthWest Oregon Transit Alliance provides transit, the NW Connector, by connecting multiple counties in the Northwest Oregon region. This public partnership includes provider collaboration from five agencies: Columbia County Rider, Sunset Empire Transportation District, Tillamook County Transportation District, Benton County District, and Lincoln County District. After its implementation, a survey of the connector’s cross-coordination practices was conducted to understand the issues that emerged. There was a myriad of identified challenges by transportation providers, elected officials from cities and counties, and economic professionals: (1) differing service standards by each agency, (2) limited elected official oversight, (3) schedule change complexity, (4) lack of regional performance measures, (5) lack of regional policy and...
procedure framework, and (6) insufficient resources or funding to follow up on raised issues. Another agency capacity-specific issue was that there were not sufficient funds to cover adequate staff time to deliver new initiatives.\textsuperscript{30} Similar to King and Snohomish Counties, the NW Connector identifies challenges relating to service provider funding, governance, and cross-coordination.

In Central Bluegrass, Kentucky, there are two inter-county transit service routes. All other transit services travel within the county. There are limitations in expanding services especially to reach more rural areas, even with expressed need. A specific transit line, the Bluegrass Ultra-Transit Service (BUS), provides services to 11 counties but the root cause of limited expansion is due to funding. With no local funding, BUS suffers from low political support and low public perception of use. To make the issue more complex, issues of operating authority further complicate the situation. Similar themes of poor local funding and poor political support are seen in other Central Bluegrass transit services.\textsuperscript{31} Funding challenges are in alignment with issues identified within King and Snohomish Counties.

Other counties and cross-border areas without accessible cross-travel have expressed their agency needs in order to do so. For example, in the Gorge region area, they plan to build a transit system that serves inter-county and inter-state travel across five counties (Skamania, Klickitat, Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman Counties) between the Washington-Oregon states border. Transportation service providers have expressed obstacles they would face such as lack of funding, lack of transit and active transportation infrastructure, lower population density in rural areas, and the need for more marketing and public awareness of services that currently exist. Also, the bi-state jurisdiction would make service integration even more complex.\textsuperscript{32} King and Snohomish Counties face similar issues including a lack of funding and public involvement.

Another example is in the Charlotte, North Carolina area, where cross-county transportation lines have not been prioritized. So there is a focus on studying regional partnership structures. Historically, transportation systems in this region have been fragmented, making coordination difficult. Another hindering aspect identified was the need for local counties to cede some control to allow for multi-county coordination. Transit consultants and council members in Charlotte envision and hope for a multi-county authority to facilitate funding collection for this implementation in the future.\textsuperscript{33} Similar to King and Snohomish Counties, challenges with funding, cross-county coordination, and governance have occurred.

\textsuperscript{33} Portillo, E. (2022, February 5). \textit{Charlotte's Transportation Challenges Cross County Lines.} WFAE 90.7 - Charlotte's NPR News Source. Retrieved February 6, 2023, from: https://www.wfae.org/charlotte-area/2022-02-05/charlottes-transportation-challenges-cross-county-lines
Other International Cross-Border Systems

Internationally, areas in Europe have many cross-border travel options. A report on all European Union Member States and the European Economic Area borders provides an inventory of all cross-border public transport issues that have emerged. Factors hindering service expansion and improvement were mostly administrative and legal obstacles. Of these, many are applicable to county-level issues that may arise. One obstacle was coordinating between jurisdictions with different legal provisions. Others were related to lack of administrative support where there was no awareness or willingness to initiate solutions to address problems, asymmetric involvement from public transit authorities leading to uncoordinated solutions, lack of harmonizing fare systems, and culture differences in delivering policies. Similar themes are apparent in King and Snohomish Counties where service providers face issues with governance and cross-coordination.

Institutional barriers to better service provision exist among all transportation provider levels. Understanding these recurring obstacles will guide providers to understand holistically what initial actions are needed. In all, expanding intercounty services between King and Snohomish Counties will require addressing transportation provider needs. Needs highly identified include adequate funding and resources, coordinated governance structures, and sufficient cross-coordination efforts in policies and procedures. Although other cross-border transportation networks did not specifically mention data needs and more public involvement, these are still areas of concern for King and Snohomish County servers. Other potential obstacles King and Snohomish might encounter, based on other transportation networks, may be technology efforts to harmonize transportation systems, more political support to garner solution implementation, regional performance metrics for partnered systems, and more service marketing to the communities they serve. These needs must be addressed in order to have quality expansion and reach community members appropriately.

End-Users’ Cross-Border Transportation Needs

This section identifies barriers that end-users have within King and Snohomish counties and compares them to other barriers identified from other transportation communities. We found that our target demographic groups in the public transportation system often encounter many obstacles. For this purpose, the end-users section is further divided into the following passenger groups: people with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited English proficiency.

People with Disabilities

We will discuss the current situation of groups with inconvenient conditions and the problems found in the literature review. The number of people with a disability as of 2021 in Washington state (estimated disability proportion 13.1%) is slightly higher than the overall average of the

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United States (estimated disability proportion 13%), ranking 29th among 51 states. It shows that Washington State does not have an extremely urgent service demand for people with a disability. But challenges still exist.

According to the Disabled World\textsuperscript{36}, the estimated percentage of people with disabilities in King County, Washington, as of 2015, is around 9.3\%. In Snohomish County, Washington, as of 2015, it is around 12.4\%. The distribution map of people with disabilities is in the following figure 4.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{people_with_disabilities_percentage_2012.png}
\caption{People with Disabilities Percentage (2012)}
\end{figure}

Many previous studies and reports point out various barriers that affect riders with disabilities. For example, both North King County - Mobility Coalition 2020 Gaps Analysis and report Transportation Access for Everyone reported that people with disabilities identified that their top transportation concerns were that the bus takes too long to travel, and that bus trips require too many transfers. One rider noted that the long travel makes it physically painful, overwhelming, and anxiety-inducing. The low frequency of public transport, insufficient passenger capacity, and lack of facilities cause obstacles for people with disabilities.

Also, the Gaps Analysis pointed out that only 41% of people with disabilities had an ORCA Regional Reduced Fare Permit. This explains another dilemma, that is, some people with disabilities cannot be officially recognized as “people with disability”. Some individuals with disabilities cannot enjoy the services, such as the reservation of paratransit above, due to both eligibility requirements/the burden of proving you're "disabled enough" as well as a lack of knowledge about specialized services such as discounted fare programs.

Overall, although paratransit has partially alleviated the transportation difficulties of the disabled population, there are still problems including insufficient resources (insufficient shuttle buses or bus stops, which leads to too many transfers and long transportation time), affordability (low-income persons have difficulty affording the cost of transportation), and secondary problems from other systemic deficiencies (the system that fails to assist people with disabilities in applying for officially disability certificates and preventing them from using disability service). These issues are existing or potential issues in King County and Snohomish County.

Older Adults
Another set of data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that people who are aged 65 years or older account for, in 2020, 13.8% (310,819) of the population of King County and 14.4% (120,029) of Snohomish County. The distribution of older adults is shown in the figure 5.
A study focusing on transportation barriers of older adults indicated that primary concerns included lack of transit service or stops nearby and concerns about waiting in uncomfortable

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weather, fears about riding public transit since it was perceived to be unsafe by non-public transit riders, difficulty finding seats in the front of the bus and finding seats before the bus begins moving, and other challenges with access to and lack of knowledge about transit, inconvenience, driver concerns, lack of restroom, wait time, fears and safety concerns. A previous report in Washington County, Wisconsin, pointed out that since transportation funding is often from county sources, most available public transit services are subjected to county borders that prevent transit users from crossing the county borders and limit their use of public transit. Meanwhile, older adults tend to walk more in a neighborhood with mixed land use patterns and choose to drive on roads and at times with lower traffic volume. Nevertheless, North King County Mobility Coalition 2020 Gaps Analysis also reported that for people 65 and older their top transportation needs were safe walking and biking paths. Other similar travel-limiting concerns expressed were not having a bus stop nearby, buses taking too long to travel, and having a mobility condition that made transport options less accessible.

Insufficient transportation resources and inadequate walking environment have become the main concerns of older adults. Complaints about the long waiting time of buses and the scarcity of bus stops are common characteristics. However, older adults have specifically pointed out the issue of sidewalks, which not only requires transportation providers, but also the participation of municipal authorities to improve road conditions in order to further ensure the travel benefits of this group.

People with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
From the 2013-2017 U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, an estimate of 510,111 individuals, equal to 7.11% of the state’s total population, are LEP speakers. In King County and Snohomish County, the top 5 LEP languages are Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Korean</th>
<th>Total County LEP Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>12,943</td>
<td>3,460</td>
<td>12,610</td>
<td>3,982</td>
<td>2,936</td>
<td>35,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snohomish</td>
<td>1,995</td>
<td>1,811</td>
<td>1,281</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>969</td>
<td>6,966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers found that limited English language skills made it difficult for Southeast Asian adults to navigate the transit system “where most of the information, materials, signage and staff assistance are provided in unfamiliar languages.” Language barriers can limit travelers’ knowledge of the transit system, thereby increasing their overall levels of uncertainty and fear and reducing the likelihood of transit ridership. The North King County Mobility Coalition 2020 Gaps Analysis indicated that for people who have limited English proficiency getting to their destination quickly was a top concern. A crucial component to travel was also being able to

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access cultural locations. Another case study\textsuperscript{44} conducted in New Jersey shows that the most popular idea in the LEP focus groups was to have a staff person who spoke their native language to provide information. The second most popular idea was to have timetables, schedules, and other related information presented in their native language. The participants also complained about infrequent service, especially lack of service on weekend and evening hours. They shared anecdotes about the rude behavior and racial abuse they encountered when they asked questions to bus drivers in Arabic, Spanish, or accented English. The safety and reliability of the transit service was a concern.

After a comprehensive review of the literature, as for LEP service in King County and Snohomish County, we found that although the official website provides language options, the foreign language options are only for one or two pages, which do not include the application of services like paratransit. For example, \textit{Metro's Access transportation} website provides paratransit service information and a Spanish language option, but when you choose Spanish, it does not convert the current webpage to Spanish. Instead, it navigates to another Spanish webpage. Although the newly navigated Spanish language webpage contains much information about other government services, the Spanish language website it prepares for users regarding other information may not be what users originally needed. Therefore, when LEP people need to use the service, they may have to face an English interface, which makes it difficult for them to apply for the service independently.

We also tested the dedicated line that helped the LEP community consult on transportation in the Washington Traffic Report released by WSDOT. A Non-native English-speaking team member pretended to be unable to speak English and needed to consult about transportation information from the University District to Olympia. During the first call, the team member only provided the cue English words to prompt for which language service is needed, but the operator could not provide assistance outside of English in the first place. On the second day, a tracking call was called back to the team member, and this time the operator was equipped with language translators and completed the information exchange. The service personnel carefully recorded the requirements and responded as soon as possible. However, the hotline could not switch language services immediately, which may deteriorate LEP members’ reliance on the information line.

Chapter 4: Interview Findings and SWOT Analysis

In the chapter, we discuss our interview findings and how they align with our literature findings. Through this method, we identified five barriers and needs for transportation service providers and eight barriers and needs for end-users from specific communities such as people with disabilities, older adults, and people with LEP. In addition, an examination of the King and Snohomish Counties' public transportation landscape is conducted by using a SWOT analysis.

Interview Analysis: Service Providers

We interviewed 10 service providers and mobility managers. We also conducted interviews with PSRC and WSDOT to better understand their roles in planning and funding public transportation and special needs transportation programs. The full list of interviewees is included in Appendix 2. This section describes recurring themes we found in our interviews. We divide these themes into three sections: (1) current service issues: challenges that service providers face within their respective programs and boundaries, (2) service expansion and collaboration issues: barriers in service expansion and collaboration across providers that limit service providers' delivery of quality cross-county services, and (3) serving community end-user issues: identified travel issues communities face due to service provider limitations.

Current Service Issues

Not Enough Funding

All of our service provider and mobility manager respondents cited funding as an issue in providing services to the targeted populations or designated areas, however the ways funded impact providers differed. Many providers cited funding as the underlying issue for staffing and capacity issues. Other providers remarked how sometimes they would run out of funding and be able to provide rides towards the end of the year.

“Number one, overall as a whole is we're underfunded. If we're just being transparent, we have a large population that we serve, and being underfunded is a challenge. So we're limited with the resources that we have and that goes, you know, with internal staffing with contracting with service providers, just being able to have the funds to expand service, and, of course, desk coverage. I mean, whatever the case may be. Being underfunded is one of those components that really play a large part.” - Hopelink Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

In other ways, funding was cited as an issue because of certain restrictions tied with providers’ funding sources. Funding restrictions limited providers’ ability to transport people within their service areas to desired locations. In some cases, providers stated they would simply eat the cost of completing that ride, rather than have clients figure out how to complete the journey themselves. Several providers noted that end-users would have to travel to destinations outside their service area for medical, employment, or educational purposes. However, since the funding only covers trips within a county’s borders, providers were unable to complete the trip without transferring to other transit agencies through collaborative efforts such as coordinating drop-off and pick-up locations.
“We don't get money… to go outside of our [service area] and everything else. So every month we got to turn in our billing. And if the billing is outside our area, WSDOT will probably not want to reimburse me for that ride because it's outside our area.” - Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition

In interviews with the PSRC and WSDOT, we found that funding restrictions such as service boundaries, target populations, and trip purposes, were set by the state legislature. WSDOT staff assist legislative staff in the implementation of bills, and provide input on specific technical aspects of implementation. However, legislative staff provide guidance on restrictions and definitions based on the bill that created the fund source. Meanwhile, the strategic plans and priorities set by PSRC and gaps analysis that identify service desserts are not enough to secure additional funding or ease funding restrictions. The priorities set by PSRC do influence how transportation funding is split up amongst service providers and for what purposes, PSRC is unable to change the restrictions around those funds.

Funding sources were sometimes volatile, and therefore service providers were unable to consistently rely on those fund sources to operate routes and services or programs. Some providers also noted that certain routes were sometimes suspended or altogether dropped because the funding sources only lasted for a few years. Funding posed a particularly difficult challenge in rural areas, where local governments struggled to raise the local funds needed to match federal and state level grants. Funding as one of the main issues is consistent with the findings from our literature review.

“I'm trying to provide and get a service going out between Arlington and Darrington so there's no cross border issue there but its a funding challenge to just provide the service, and to make sure there is a commitment long-term to the service 'cause..that area hasn't had paratransit service in a decade or two…The other part of it is making sure residents feel like the services is going to exist for a long time, and isn't just going to be taken in the next bi-annium of funding, because these grant cycles are every two years, and you might not get renewed for a grant.”- SnoTrac Mobility Manager

Insufficient Service Capacity & Equipment
As previously mentioned, providers cited funding as a contributing factor to staffing shortages. However, some responses on staffing and vehicle capacity went further than funding. As Northshore Senior Center says, "it's, it's just really, really expensive. You know, the drivers have to be vetted. The vans have to be purchased and maintained."

Many service providers lost drivers during the pandemic, not only as ridership decreased but the vaccine mandate also meant a portion of the workforce was suddenly ineligible for employment with government-funded service providers.

“The biggest issue we have right now is driver shortage. We don’t have enough drivers to operate the entirety of our fleet, and that in turn results in more decline in requests and scheduling challenges…” - Sound Generations

One service provider also pointed out that the conditions of the labor market for drivers has also changed in recent years. Despite increasing wages and benefits, challenges in attracting new
hires persist. Drivers’ preferences have changed from working full-time 40-hour schedules to part-time shifts with greater flexibility. In total, funding contributes to sufficient staffing, vehicle, and overall capacity. Adequate funding and resources is a need that aligns with findings from our literature review as well.

Lack of Program Sustainability
Several providers that have flexibility with their service boundaries often shoulder the costs for trips past those boundaries. This can be particularly challenging when annual funding is insufficient to make it through the entire year or meet all ride demands.

Rural areas have also struggled with transportation across county lines and into more urban areas such as Seattle or Bellevue due to the high costs for services like Metro Access. Lower population density in rural areas also means higher deadhead costs when providing shuttle service to only a few individuals. This is also an issue within rural areas. Although city centers have more transportation options to get around, rural residents struggle with reaching these centers to begin with.

In rural areas, metrics and criteria for transportation services have been a barrier in maintaining services. During our conversations with Snoqualmie Valley Transit, the decentralized populations in rural areas had harder times reaching their destinations using public transportation. Rural bus routes are often in the bottom 25% when measured by ridership and compared to other routes that are in dense urban areas, but still these rural buses serve important roles in commuting from rural areas to larger metropolitan centers. Because of the dispersed population density in rural areas, it is particularly difficult for residents to connect to city centers where transportation services are able to connect end-users to their destinations.

Service Expansion and Collaboration Issues
Not Enough Funding
Funding resources were one of the biggest issues that would inhibit service expansion and delivering quality services. With this resource, expanding services means hiring more service providers, call takers, internal staff, equipment, and many more items. Funding was not only mentioned as a main source for service expansion but also as a way to keep current services intact. Multiple service providers that were interviewed mentioned that additional funding was also needed to keep current systems and equipment updated and running.

“The funding would obviously be number one on my list because if you have more funding, you're able to expand services in multiple ways.” - NEMT, Hopelink

Others mentioned that funding for administrative tasks was also needed such as transit planning, especially with coordinated services. Also, despite wanting to collaborate and provide assistance to other service providers, restrictive funding prevents providers from being able to do so since that could technically be counted as duplicative services.

“The fact that we can't work closer with our partners in transportation... Because my funding says I cannot do that. I would be duplicating rights [to provide service].” - TAP, Homage
In addition, the type of funding also plays a big role where already established funding can only cover certain transportation operations. This is especially important in rural areas within King and Snohomish Counties since low population density makes it difficult to advocate for funding use from standard sources. Funding in transportation-lacking areas is necessary to reach more potential riders.

“If we had more funding, we’d have more services. Part of the “boundaries” is also the grant guidelines for what we are allowed or not allowed to do. For instance: schools. FTA and WSDOT guidelines say that no carrier can perform “Yellow Bus Service.” Yet the schools beg us to help them and we aren’t allowed to go onto school grounds.” - Snoqualmie Valley Transportation

For services funded to extend beyond county borders, there was also mention of needing a way to share funding costs amongst providers. So while funding in itself is a major need for transit providers, more specifically, less-restricted flexible funding is needed to cover the vast array of extended services. This finding of a lack of funding is consistent with our literature review that showed funding as a recurring problem among transportation providers delivering cross-border travel.

*Insufficient Service Capacity & Equipment*

More vehicles and their maintenance such as buses, shuttles, and other forms are needed to deliver timely, recurring services. At the same time, more drivers and other staff are needed to operate this expansion for more cross-county travel. These items aren’t all achievable if the necessary amount of funding is not provided to providers to truly expand services. Having enough adequate resources to provide expanded and quality transportation services for transit agencies to deliver cross-border service was an established need in our literature review as well.

“But until we have drivers to fill that need, you know, that's, that's going to be an ongoing challenge.” - DART, Community Transit

*Incompatible Technology*

With expanded services, more collaboration is needed among transportation service providers. To facilitate better integration of services, especially during transfers, more investment in compatible technology used across providers is needed. Even services used within the counties do not have a coordinated system, since they each have their own platforms. Expanding services to cross-county will require even more effort as well. The issue of needing improved technology was consistent with our literature review findings that also highlighted this aspect.

“Technology plays a big part, our systems aren’t necessarily talking well with one another to be able to make those seamless transitions between the customer and King County or other counties and communities.” - DART, Community Transit

“For the technology side, that's also within the county, like, we have different platforms. Even if we wanted to link someone up with a shared mobility service within the county, oftentimes those technology platforms don't talk well. Getting someone, for example, from a DART trip shared
mobility services to an Access trip, there's not really a direct technology connection there." - Access, King County Metro

Lack of Cross-Coordination of Policies and Procedures
Governance on integrating cross-collaboration among transportation providers should be compatible. Having organizations abide by certain policies and procedures to ensure service efficiency between agencies will minimize issues and strengthen existing transportation systems. The lack of governance and procedural coordination were established barriers to delivering cross-border transportation services that were highlighted in our literature review as well.

“Our biggest challenge is working with different organizations, different policies, and procedures, and different technology.” - Access, King County Metro

Serving Community End-User Issues
The majority of service providers have either a formal, recorded customer service feedback system, or informal feedback through spoken word. Transportation providers are aware about how they serve end-users, communicate with the end-users, and collaborate with other providers across boundaries. Transportation service providers had notable strengths and improvement needs for their service based on end-user comments.

All providers stated that the majority of the feedback they received was positive. Riders were satisfied with drivers, quality of the trip, and interacting with other staff for scheduling.

Many providers mentioned two common customer complaints: (1) providers were unable to serve end-users because they were not able to expand pass their geographical service area to fully serve end-user trips, and (2) providers inability to serve same-day service for scheduled rides. These expressed complaints about improperly reaching end-users aligns with previously mentioned issues service providers face such as not enough funding and its restrictive service requirements. Providers also noted that not being able to cross-county lines and duplicate service areas was the biggest reason for not being able to properly serve riders, especially for medical appointments. In addition, providers are not able to expand service hours such as same-day services without additional funding and resources. Because of these reasons, providers cannot compete with a for-profit company that provides on-demand services like Uber or Lyft. However, these for-profit services are often costly and financially unfeasible for older adults or people with disabilities on fixed incomes.

In total, we identified five barriers that these transportation service providers face with cross-county travel. These can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Transportation Service Provider Issues for Cross-County Travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Current Issue</th>
<th>Expansion Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Enough Funding</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Service Capacity &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Program Sustainability</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incompatible Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Cross-Coordination of Policies and Procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview Analysis: End-Users**

In total, we interviewed six end-users. Several of these interviewees identified as members of multiple groups and categories. Four people identified as having disabilities, four people considered themselves to be older adults and one person with LEP. To further understand the intersectional identities of the interviewees, see Table 2.

**Table 2. End-User Interviewee Identification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person with a Disability</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Older Adult</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these interview findings, we include the analysis of seven stories identified from the Disability Rights Washington StoryMap tool to provide additional information on the barriers people with disabilities encounter when traveling across King and Snohomish Counties.

**People with Disabilities**

*Not Qualifying for Paratransit Services*

Interviews revealed that respondents that identified as people with disabilities had mixed responses to the qualification process when applying for paratransit services. As one respondent noted, whether an application is approved or rejected seems to depend on the occupational therapist that performs the assessment.

Another respondent also expressed that re-qualification for services felt humiliating, since it felt like he had to prove his disability, despite his blindness being a permanent condition.
“I felt sort of funny. Like, I was blind then, nothing's changed. But you know, I still have to go back and get re-evaluated and I find that - I understand that it's part of the bureaucracy - but it's also a little bit humiliating.” - End-User, Interview

Long Transfer Wait Times
When clients needed to transfer between two different services it was hard to coordinate and communicate between the provider and the client. Especially in bad weather, some end-users would have to wait in the cold unsure of when, or if, the next shuttle or van would pick them up. Some clients reported waiting 15 or 20 minutes between transfers. This can be a long time to wait and wait times can accumulate across multiple transfers.

One story noted that traveling to Snohomish from the Bitter Lake area of Seattle always takes a few hours and three different buses. "Once an hour buses are rough. You miss one and you're out in the cold in the rain." - End-User, StoryMap

Also, more weekend and late-night route services were another main need highlighted among stories. Needing more hours in transportation services were due to working night job hours, later medical appointment times, and other activities including attending Sunday church services.

“The hardest thing is I sometimes get off [work] really late, and the buses don't run past midnight. Then I have to literally walk it from the South Everett freeway station all the way home. Sometimes I don't get home until one or two o'clock in the morning.” - End-User, StoryMap

Mistreatment by Transportation Drivers
One respondent indicated that her husband, despite qualifying for Metro Access, found the services were a bad fit for her husband’s conditions. Due to her husband's mental disabilities, long trip times were incredibly challenging. Because Access buses carried several passengers, each with their own destinations, trip times were lengthened for her husband. She also noted past experiences with drivers who did not understand her husband’s mental disabilities and gave joking responses when asked how much longer it was until his destination. This further worsened her husband’s experience with Metro Access. While this respondent expressed a desire to completely rely on public transit, given her husband’s special needs and the existing transportation environment, she also needed to rely on friends and private services to reach destinations.

A Washington Disability Rights Group board member also noted other issues his clients have had with poorly trained drivers in paratransit services. He cited examples of drivers pulling up to clients with the ramp on the wrong side, making it difficult to reach or completely inaccessible. He also cited cases when the driver was unable to reach the specific location because of road blocks and construction and dropped clients off at locations that did not have walkability and accessibility (such as sidewalks or chair ramps).

Some Providers do not meet ADA requirements
For clients that have to use private services, because for example they do not qualify for paratransit or service providers cannot provide same-day service, ADA accessibility is even
harder to get. Washington State Disability Rights informed us that despite ADA act requirements, Uber and Lyft rides often did not meet the demands of persons with disabilities or minimum ADA requirements. Taxi cabulances are scarce and can deny service if the driver does not want to go out to rural areas. There are other restrictions on which cabulance drivers can serve only Seattle or all of King County. In other words, for people that have to rely on transportation services, when public services are unable to meet their needs, private sector services can also fall short. Despite ADA requirements, many private service providers deny any obligation to meet these requirements.

“Lyft and Uber are covered (by the ADA). Although both Lyft and Uber will say they are not covered by the ADA. So if you’re in a taxi, it’s privately owned, picking up a rider. Lyft and Uber are privately owned, picking up a rider. But you know darn well those are not going to be accessible.” - Disability Rights Washington Board Member

In addition, narrative stories mentioned that there is not enough accessibility within bus transportation. For example, not having enough spots on buses for wheelchair users, left them waiting for buses that can finally accommodate them. Another instance was inside signs in buses not working properly especially when for people with impaired hearing. This led to the driver announcing stops but that created a barrier to understanding travel stops.

“Some bus drivers announce the stops, but a Deaf person like me cannot hear the announcements.” - End-User, StoryMap

Other issues include a lack of sidewalk maintenance and a lack of curb ramps. Also, accessing public transportation can be difficult and hinder safety for actually getting to transportation stops. One story noted that there was no crosswalk light by the nearest bus stop. These issues become exacerbated when there is snow and ice present. Inaccessible infrastructure creates safety issues.

“I have to get off and wait for a safe moment to cross without any protection or I have to go further up the street where there's a crosswalk with a flashing yellow light, but there’s not a stop sign… I’m an asthmatic with spinal damage -- you're asking me to go several blocks out of my way to just travel safely. And that can be a really big deal.” - End-User, StoryMap

*Not Enough Transportation Stops*

There was an expressed need for more transportation stops to have more accessible travel. Many respondents noted that paratransit services were unable to reach their desired destination, such as medical appointments, at times due to the service area constraints. Others noted that cuts and suspensions in already established routes made it difficult to travel at all since suspensions led to more suspensions, then eventually fully cut stops. Even with more of the Sound Transit’ Link Light rail transportation services expanding, there have been more routes fully cut because of it. A few stories noted how a Link Light rail expansion in their area had led to more transfers and greater travel inconvenience.

“They did a survey, and decided that not enough people were riding that bus, which was why they originally cut some of its hours… And like, as somebody who was riding the bus throughout that entire time, very consistently people who would get on the bus and comment to
the bus driver that they couldn’t reliably get anywhere anymore. The reason they didn't ride the bus anymore was because its schedule was so reduced that it was non-functional.” - End-User, StoryMap

**Older Adults**

**Long Transfer Wait Times**
A respondent talked about complaints from the senior community around her. They sometimes feel worried about buses or paratransit services while waiting. They may not be familiar with the pick-up and drop-off locations, nor may they know the specific location of the driver. If they are outside and the weather starts to get worse, this concern will intensify.

**Mistreatment by Transportation Drivers**
Older adults may encounter unprofessional and rude drivers when they use transportation services. One respondent shared an unpleasant story, where an Access driver, who was unfamiliar with the interviewer's address, informed the respondent over the phone that they would not pick up the respondent. Even though the respondent reiterated the address over the phone, the driver chose to refuse the request and drove away. This is not an isolated case that rude treatment occurs to this demographic, which can have negative and avoidable health outcomes when medical trips are impacted by refusal of service.

“I would like to suggest that all drivers need to have periodic continuing education to put passengers, especially elderly citizens' safety as first priority. Drivers' unethical behavior can cause passengers', especially elderly citizens' life-long illness or even untimely death.” - Anonymous

**Not Enough Transportation Stops**
This issue is reflected in multiple specific situations. A respondent mentioned that he hoped the drop off location would be closer to home when we asked what kind of changes he wanted to see. Another respondent mentioned a transportation challenge that although she could get off at a bus stop near to the church, she felt laborious to walk through the steep road from the bus stop to the church. The latter one seems more like a geographical environmental issue, but it reflects a problem of limited available transportation points and lack of accessibility considerations. If the distance between transportation points is too long or the terrain difference is particularly large or inaccessible, they may give up or take a detour.

**People with LEP**

**Lack of Communication from Transportation Providers**
Issues arise from the lack of transportation provider communication. Consistent efforts from the end-user calling transit services to schedule rides have not resulted in many actions, even when waiting for them to call back. If there are specialized transportation services coordinated, many times, there has been no communication from the providers which resulted in the end-user left waiting and not knowing when the driver will arrive. Also, transportation drivers often will not communicate when they’re planning to pick up other riders along the trip which contributes to arriving late or completely missing medical appointments. These reasons led to a loss of trust in transportation service providers. Consistent communication issues were present within the
literature review as well where language barriers between service providers and people with LEP were present which made procedures hard to understand.

*Mistreatment by Transportation Drivers*
Another issue was transportation drivers’ behavior. There are frequent mentions of rudeness and inconsiderateness such as not waiting for the end-user to sit down, which put their safety in danger and resulted in an injury. Further themes of this rude behavior were consistent in the literature review where rudeness from drivers was also rooted in racial discrimination.

*Challenges in Scheduling Policies Set by Transportation Providers*
Certain policies in place have also hindered the ease of transit service use. Each time the end-user needed to go to their medical appointment, they had to provide documentation of a negative COVID test to use transportation services. This policy creates barriers to reaching medical appointments, which ultimately may lead to missed appointments or having to reschedule appointments, which also means rescheduling transportation services. In addition, transportation services requiring a minimum threshold for rides to occur have placed another burden on scheduling and reliability. While these policies were not highlighted as a transportation obstacle among people with LEP in the literature review, this seems to be a notable issue that arises in King and Snohomish Counties. Due to these policies, communication issues, and drivers’ behaviors, this end-user has had to rely on neighbors to get around.

In total, we identified eight barriers that these three end-user groups face with cross-county travel. These can be seen in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>People with Disabilities</th>
<th>Older Adults</th>
<th>People with LEP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mistreatment by Transportation Drivers</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Transfer Wait Times</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Qualifying for Paratransit Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Accessible Infrastructure</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Providers Do Not Meet ADA Requirements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Enough Transportation Stops</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Lack of Communication from Transportation Providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenges in Scheduling Policies Set by Transportation Providers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
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</table>
SWOT Analysis

To assess current transportation networks between King and Snohomish Counties, an analysis was conducted to assess the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) to public and special needs transportation. The SWOT analysis highlights aspects of transportation that should be maintained, improved, further explored or developed, and guarded or protected against. Many of the strengths and opportunities discussed in the SWOT analysis are further explored in the Recommendations Chapter. The summarized analysis can also be seen in Figure 4.

Strengths

1) Transportation service providers in the King and Snohomish area show a commitment towards quality transportation and a dedication to the communities they serve. Several providers collaborate together to coordinate transfers for trips that cross service boundaries. Others shoulder the cost of going a few miles outside their service area to complete the trip.

2) Local governments have found ways to pool funds together to provide a base level of services in rural areas. Interlocal agreements have created cross-county routes between King and Snohomish Counties such as between King County Metro Access and Community Transit DART.

3) For areas governments are unable to provide service to, nonprofits have stepped in to help fill the gaps. End-users expressed positive feedback in regards to services offered by nonprofits and the level of personal connection end-users could form with the people that do the work.

4) Volunteer driver and vanpool programs have also provided a way to circumvent service area boundaries, but are less reliable and consistent in their availability and scheduling to meet demand.

Weaknesses/Barriers

1) Many programs are not operating at full capacity or at the level to meet community needs and service demand. While this is partially tied with funding, changes in the labor market preferences have also made it difficult to hire new drivers.

2) End-users have also expressed concerns in drivers’ competency in handling persons with disabilities for both physical and mental disabilities. Examples from interviews include drivers not responding to end-user’s questions in ways easily understandable by people with mental disabilities or pulling up to buildings with the chair ramp facing a wall.

3) Several end-users also voiced concerns with the current disability qualification process, in terms of the assessment performed by the occupational therapist and the renewal process for long-term or permanent disabilities.
4) Long transfer times and insufficient bus stops (that would put end-users closer to their start or end point) contribute to longer travel times and inefficiencies for end-users. Longer travel times means end-users may miss appointments or be unable to complete all their tasks in city centers. Lack of real-time tracking or the ability to check status of when vehicles (vans, buses, shuttles) will arrive at a transfer point also contributes to end-users’ anxieties and negative experiences when using public transportation. The absence of a standardized cross-border policy, dissimilar information systems used by providers, and differing scheduling policies amongst providers also contribute to this issue.

Opportunities

1) Hopelink’s NEMT program has unique funding from the Healthcare Authority, which has granted greater flexibility in trip destinations. Identifying and advocating for other fund sources that target specific populations instead of service areas will give providers greater flexibility in covering costs for trips outside their service boundaries.

2) Service providers and local governments can also work together to form interlocal agreements that pool funds together or allow exceptions for certain trip destinations (such as medical facilities and hospitals).

3) Hopelink’s One Call One Click/Find A Ride project aims to develop a centralized information hub for riders to understand routes and services available to them. This developing resource is a good opportunity to implement other features that will further enhance cross-border collaboration and coordination. For example, if this project could be expanded to an app that allows end-users to schedule rides with providers, or if the database of end-users’ information could be shared with providers.

Threats

1) Our conversation with Disability Rights Washington revealed that because there is no organization that ensures compliance with ADA accessibility, which includes sidewalks, crosswalks, and chair ramps on public easements. Disability Rights noted that legal action is taken against the organization in violation of ADA accessibility requirements. This means transit agencies and local governments are vulnerable to lawsuits and litigation. Therefore, expanding cross-county services may pose a risk to local governments and service providers that serve both people with disabilities and the aging populations in Washington state if vehicles and structures are not ADA compliant. There is a similar risk of lawsuits should drivers continue to inadvertently injure or hinder older adults and people with disabilities that use their services.

2) Service routes vary according to fiscal budgets and funding sources. However some of these routes provide much needed services and community needs remain constant despite changes in funding and budgeting. Short term and changing service routes means communities are less likely to be able to rely on public transport for their travel needs for medical appointments, errands, and social activities. This can have serious negative health implications for communities that do not have other alternatives to public transportation as alternatives.
3) Policy choice by legislators and as implemented by WSDOT also means routes dropped or cut back, and is another limiting factor in service providers' abilities to serve their communities. Particularly as the light rail expands out, more routes are likely to disappear in accordance with the “no overlap or duplicity” policy. When service providers are unable to provide transportation to end-users for these reasons it can sometimes mean end-users are unable to get transportation service at all. This creates a risk of service desserts where individuals or groups in certain geographical locations are unable to reach essential destinations.

4) Service cuts disproportionately affect routes that are in rural areas because measurement criteria are applied across all routes regardless of rural, urban, or suburban context. Lack of rural equity puts rural communities at risk of transportation deficiencies, which is already an effect felt by many in rural areas of King County.
Figure 4. SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Service providers and mobility managers are committed to working</td>
<td>- Shortages in staffing capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towards quality transportation</td>
<td>- ADA training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nonprofits help fill the gaps</td>
<td>- Disability qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interlocal agreements between providers</td>
<td>- Long Transfer times and travel times</td>
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<td>- Volunteer driver programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Additional funding sources for specific populations or purposes</td>
<td>- ADA requirements not currently being met by service providers and local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interlocal agreements between municipalities and service providers</td>
<td>governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hopelink <em>One Call One Click</em> program</td>
<td>- Funding sources lacks consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- No overlap or duplicity of service areas and service routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of Rural equity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: Recommendations

Based on our comprehensive literature review, semi-structured interviews, and other narrative analyses, we propose suggestions through discussion or reference to other similar cases. We have found that effectively improving cross county transportation in King County, Snohomish County, and Washington State requires transportation providers to continuously improve their service quality and further promote cooperation. Furthermore, to better safeguard the travel rights of our target demographic groups, it is also necessary for cross-sector cooperation. In total, we propose 13 recommendations. We have summarized some of these recommendations into four types of implementation sections: (1) individual organizations: these recommendations are able to be implemented by organizations themselves, (2) organizations in partnership: these recommendations can be implemented by at least two organizations that work in partnership together, (3) collaboration among multiple organizations: these recommendations are able to be implemented through the partnership of multiple organizations working together, and (4) collaboration with other sectors: these recommendations can be implemented in solidarity with other sectors that can be mutually beneficial for long-term solutions.

Individual Organizations

*Improve Training and Driver Education*

Federal Transit Administration\(^{45}\) clearly proposes training requirements for paratransit service providers, which include requirements to ensure safe transportation and eliminate discrimination. Even so, mistreatment by drivers is reported among several riders with disabilities and older adults, which reflects a gap in professional training and quality concerns with the paratransit system. If there are resource constraints, priority should be given to providing training for paratransit drivers and drivers who work directly and frequently with older people and people with disabilities.

Paratransit and specialized transportation providers can take *The ADA and Demand Responsive Service Requirements*\(^{46}\) as chief resource for training material, and optimize training based on feedback from actual operations in the future. This could also be an additional project contracted out and funded by WSDOT, KCMC, or PSRC. As an alternative, KCMC could also establish a task force to create training material. PSRC and WSDOT could help by enforcing service providers use the training material created by KCMC or an equivalent training curriculum. This curriculum should ensure drivers handle end-users with respect and increase their ability to communicate effectively, particularly with riders who experience mental disabilities that can hinder communication. It should also bring greater awareness to important accessibility structures at drop-off locations for end-users with physical and mental disabilities. For example, drivers should know where wheelchair ramps are located around hospitals and other buildings, or where the closest wheelchair accessible entrance is located.


\(^{46}\) Federal Transit Administration. (May 20, 2020) *The ADA and Demand Responsive Service Requirements*, Retired from: [https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Webinar%204%20transcript_0.pdf](https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/Webinar%204%20transcript_0.pdf)
Organizations In Partnership

*Create Interlocal Agreements for Cross-border Services and Aggregated Resources*

Fund sources may also be consolidated and more equitably distributed throughout King and Snohomish County if providers and local governments work together to pool funding resources together under signed interlocal agreements, such as the one between King County Metro and Snohomish Community Transit.

This measure can help alleviate the difficulties of provider services. Agreements can more effectively and fairly allocate funds, alleviate the financial problems in marginalized areas, and further alleviate their shortage of manpower. This greatly contributes to the sustainability of transportation providers.

To create interlocal agreements, it is important to establish the funding conditions for the trip. In other words, who pays for the trip? Funding can be specifically set aside for cross-border trips. It may also be that a provider pays for the trip going in one direction and the other provider pays for the trip going back. The trip may also be funded in different parts. For example, a provider pays for the trip with King County funding until the vehicle reaches the border of King and Snohomish County. At this point, the other provider would pay for the trip with Snohomish County funding while the vehicle is within the borders of Snohomish County.

Another tool to create aggregated funding pools is through Public Transit Benefit Areas (PTBA). A PTBA can be established or expanded by local governments after a public hearing has been made to inform the public on plans to establish or expand a territory for a PTBA (RCW 36.57A.030). This is useful for any local governments that wish to bridge gaps in transportation service: they can use this method to set a PTBA that spans across multiple cities, and give service providers greater flexibility in services across local city borders. It can also be used to amend current laws around PTBA funding to create a specific pool of tax dollars to be used for cross-border trips. We see this as a potential tool to help create a governmental entity that manages larger areas that can span across counties as well. This is especially important for municipal and local governments that contract services out to transportation providers.

Collaboration Among Multiple Organizations

*Create an Official Structure in Cross-Border Travel*

To address issues in cross-county travel involving transfer between different agencies, coordination procedures and practices must be the same across transit agencies and transportation providers. We are aware Hopelink is working on a project where end-users can call in to one phone number and access a centralized hub of services and information. We propose this information system also be integrated with standardized procedures and be used as a platform to help coordinate and inform end-users on their transfers. This can help bridge gaps in disaggregated and incompatible information systems that have been a barrier for collaboration between service providers.

PSRC can also develop standardized procedures for cross-border transfers and coordination with help from service providers that already collaborate for cross-border transfers and travel to help
identify best practices. Some important aspects that must be considered in creating standardized procedures include the following:

➢ Communications between providers: set points of contacts within organizations to coordinate multiple transfers for end-users

➢ Communications with end-users: this involves establishing clear lines of communication and responsibilities for who contacts end-users between transfers. Clearer and readily available information will help ease some of the anxieties we have heard about from end-users.

➢ Scheduling: service providers will sometimes have different scheduling deadlines that must be adhered to. Information must be shared so providers are aware of scheduling restrictions for other partners. This information should also be easily accessible and made clear to end-users.

As a joint effort across multiple services providers, this should be handled as either a PSRC or Mobility Coalition project. By setting rules such as these in place, it can also help lay down groundwork for interlocal agreements, allowing providers to transport end-users in one continuous trip instead of broken down into parts with transfer points.

Collaboration With Other Sectors

Engage in State Legislative Activities

The legislature enacts new policies, regulations, and develops budgets that could benefit the development of more equitable cross-county transportation for addressing both end-user and service provider needs.

The Transportation Choices Coalition (TCC) is a nonprofit organization that participates in statewide policy and advocacy efforts to bring Washington more transportation choices. Through involvement in their advocacy, King and Snohomish Counties’ transportation stakeholders can help steer and deliver impactful change. They have four policy areas of advocacy: (1) access and affordability, (2) technology and new innovation, (3) health and sustainability, and (4) plans and projects. Advocating for policies within all four areas would benefit the goals of delivering better cross-county services. In terms of access and affordability, advocacy on greater access to urban areas from rural counties, cities, and unincorporated areas is vital, especially through greater funding. For technology and new innovation, an emphasis is needed on providing more compatible technology such as fare harmonization and vehicles that are able to accommodate all people with disabilities especially during transfers. For health and sustainability, many end-users have noted that cross-county barriers make it difficult to go to medical appointments regularly. This is worth noting as transportation and health are closely tied. In addition, emphasizing the importance of sustainable transportation services is essential since end-users need to know that their transportation provider will be there when they are needed long-term. In the area for planning and projects, greater advocacy on more involvement

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from more rural communities, and aligning with their transportation planning priorities is needed in tandem with greater statewide and regional planning.

While the TCC may already work in coordination with state legislators to advocate and champion bills and budget provisos, it is essential to understand which legislators and officials have a special focus on transportation issues that may hinder or support cross-county travel. For example, the House and Senate Transportation Committees members are key champions of delivering these issues.

Marko Liias, the Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, has sponsored many bills that are of interest such as SB 5162 (2023) that makes transportation appropriations for the 2023-2025 biennium; SB 5164 (2023) that makes supplemental transportation appropriations for the 2021-2023 biennium; SB 5023 (2023) that looks at ensuring road safety measures; SB 5342 (2023) that looks at transit agencies’ ability to enter into interlocal agreements for procurement; SB 5560 (2023) that improves older adults driver safety; and SB 5575 (2023) that concerns PTBAs governing bodies. For example, SB 5560 could hinder the lives of older people and accessing needed services since it would require people aged 70 and older to renew their license. This would further create another barrier for people who have to rely on their own vehicles to get around since there is not a stated alternative if their license is rescinded. In contrast, SB 5342 could support agencies that want or already part of interlocal agreements to have better cost saving from obtaining vehicles from state cooperative procurement schedules without having to abide by certain interlocal administrative requirements.

Raising these bills to the TCC would give these issues more awareness and therefore, more voice to the people and agencies involved in cross-county travel. In addition, actively signing in support or opposition to bills is a simple way to engage with the legislature. For more active engagement, providing live or written testimony would help propel issues and also working with TCC to gather advocacy sign-ons to write to and meet with certain legislators such as Marko Liias would help the cross-county community with King and Snohomish counties have a greater voice and impact.

**Improve Disability Certification Process**

Our analysis highlighted how end-users do not fully understand the process. There are two aspects to improve the disability certification process. One is to reduce the cost and complexity of disability certification. As mentioned by our interviewee, the bureaucracy and complexity in disability certification can bring difficulties to people with disability. Currently, the Social

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Security Administration\(^52\)(SSA) routinely conducts continuing disability reviews (CDRs) on recipients of social security disability benefits. We encourage the Social Security Administration to partner with medical institutions. The disability certification and review processes can be completed online via the SSA’s website, and medical institutions can provide further documentation on the person’s disability history. The applicant only needs to submit the name of the medical consultation institution, and the SSA can complete the review digitally. If needed, SSA can request the applicant to provide more information. This can optimize the efficiency of most people’s reviews and help alleviate their review burden.

Despite having an appeal system, one of our interviewees expressed the hope of process transparency. The reasons why people are denied and clear communication on how they may be expected to travel without the special needs transit services can eliminate information barriers for people with disabilities when traveling, and help them to better understand the certification process and transportation services available even without a disability certification.

*Population- or Trip-specific Funding*

To address the funding restrictions that keep service providers from providing cross-border trips, and ways to make these trips more sustainable for providers, our recommendation is to find specific funding sources from inside and outside of WSDOT and FTA grants. These should focus on serving certain populations, such as older adults or people with disabilities. This could also focus on certain purposes, such as medical trips or employment training, for example. As we have seen from Hopelink NEMT that receives funding from the Healthcare Authority, this type of funding benefits from having greater flexibility in travel destinations.

Trip and population-specific funding for cross-county transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities could work well for King and Snohomish Counties. An example of this is seen in Central Indiana’s MyFreedom program where vouchers are given to people with disabilities specifically for cross-county travel. Every month there is a limited number of vouchers that people with disabilities can purchase on a first-come, first-serve basis. More vouchers are available on a monthly basis.\(^53\) This program, governed by the Central Indiana’s Regional Transportation Authority (CIRTA), has received funding from the FTA, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and CICOA,\(^54\) a non-profit focused on providing resources to older adults and those of any age with disabilities.\(^55\) This means that FTA and state funding is possible to deliver cross-county services. In tandem, through partnerships with nonprofits serving communities of interest could serve as another transportation funding source.

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Another population-specific voucher-driven example is by the City of Seattle. The Seattle Department of Transportation’s recent pilot program, called RideNow, used vouchers for older adults and people with disabilities to access on-demand point-to-point rides. They used a multi-provider system where people can access Yellow Cab, Uber, and Lyft services. Riders got anywhere from $20-120 in vouchers per month for trips up to 3 miles starting or ending in Seattle, which implies cross-county travel would be a potential service option for some. While this pilot program was only implemented for four months, the results of this program have proven to be significantly beneficial for its end-users. This pilot had high demand with close to a thousand riders requesting vouchers, had high usage with nearly 60% of riders using their vouchers, and had high impact with better quality of life, and savings on time, money, and effort. RideNow was funded by the Inclusive Mobility on Demand grant specifically for people with disabilities and older adults. This grant was created from a partnership with funding from the U.S. Administration for Community Living and management by the FTA. These kinds of population-specific grants such as from the Administration for Community Living could serve to be beneficial for the King and Snohomish Counties area.

While this section is meant to understand how funding can be used for trip-specific or population-specific services, it is worth highlighting that both examples use a voucher approach to facilitate rides. For King and Snohomish Counties, important points of transportation access are especially vital in rural areas where options may be scarce. A voucher system may work as a cost-sharing approach among partnered transportation organizations where end-users could have a multi-provider choice in transportation options. This cost-sharing voucher approach could avoid duplicative services, reduce service gaps, and increase services. This also gives riders more choice, and puts resources in the hands of riders. Along with the previously mentioned funding from the examples provided, available funding for this project could be from WSDOT’s consolidated grants.

Other Recommendations To Consider

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Below are recommendations that we suggest considering in future research and projects. These ideas hold lower priority to the above recommended actions but could still help improve cross-county travel and address some of the challenges we have identified.

**Advocating for Accessibility as a Performance Measure**
Measurements that aim to understand how far and accessible public transit is to communities will center what people need. Current transit measurements favor urban areas with high population density especially when performance metrics are based on ridership numbers alone. Ridership is highest in urban areas compared to rural areas due to low population density. This is a measure of efficiency. Standard transit performance metrics should consider those that are comparable across all urbanicity types such as accessibility.

**Engaging the Public**
More service marketing and public involvement is needed to ensure services are well known, especially for those who qualify for reduced price services. More outreach efforts to properly reach target populations is needed. Public involvement when developing new procedures and policies would ensure that potential consequences can be mitigated to garner more mobility freedom.

**Better Communication Practices**
Recommendations in improving communication to end-users can be broken up into two different aspects: (1) language access, (2) feedback engagement/accountability measures.

1. Language access is not just translated information into other languages but ensuring that information is easily understandable. Translated marketing materials and informative plaques on bus routes and websites, along with a language access line for people to call in to for an interpreter for phone-based services or assistance. Translators and interpreters that are part of the communities being served will have a better understanding of the cultural language in the area too, and will better ensure translated materials and interpretation services are easily understood.

2. Community engagement and inclusion in decision-making processes. Public accessibility and compensation should be considered. The important part here is community engagement: communication has to go both ways.

These are steps that can be taken by individual providers but can also happen with PSRC or WSDOT levels too.

**Trackable feedback and complaint system**
Solutions that hold drivers more accountable, such as follow up customer service rating calls or surveys, can effectively prevent the occurrence of mistreatment. After the service starts, inform both passengers and drivers to choose voice recording or video recording based on the principle of agreement, to ensure that the service process is traceable. If there is a mistreatment, education, punishment or even expulsion will be imposed based on the severity level. Conduct quarterly or semi-annual complaint reviews to optimize services.

*Work with WSDOT to address and identify infrastructure/accessibility*
Due to its special geographical location and weather, Washington State has brought great challenges to transport infrastructure. After combining interview analysis and literature review, we found that many end-users expressed the following concerns: the sidewalk road conditions are poor, inadequate bus stops, and need of rain shelter bus stops. These problems are more urgent in the rural area. Addressing these issues requires collaboration with WSDOT and other departments in Washington to promote the upgrading or increase of infrastructure.

One method for it is to collect the public opinion about transport infrastructure that needs to be increased urgently through the feedback system or passenger surveys. Including the construction of bus stops, renovation of pedestrian walkways, etc. In addition, through geographic information systems or other technological means, authorities can identify rugged terrain areas and conduct on-site inspections to determine whether to increase infrastructure.

**Popularization and support of ORCA cards**
The issue of affordability requires financial support from governments. In the literature review, we learned that only 41% of people with disabilities own or apply for ORCA cards. Further research should be conducted to understand this gap and identify possible solutions such as outreach, marketing materials, or improving the application process.

**Working Solutions**
Throughout our interviews with transportation providers, we learned several working solutions that address some of the barriers identified in Chapter 4. These are changes that are small in scale but worth consideration. Providers have cited combining multiple purposes for traveling in, such as passing by a grocery store on the way back home from a medical institution or if two end-users happen to have destinations in the same location or nearby to one another, which can improve service efficiency.

Another suggestion was to share volunteer drivers across different volunteer van programs. This could help because having a larger pool of volunteer drivers means volunteer van programs are more reliable in scheduling and program capacity.

We have also heard confusion based on the different age requirements to qualify for senior services. Some areas only serve adults age 65 and older while others serve adults 55 and older. Consistency across programs could help eliminate confusion around what services an older adult qualifies. We advise this may be difficult to achieve, as raising the age to 65 and older cuts an age group out of the programs, while lowering it to age 55 and older may be difficult to achieve in federally mandated and funded programs.
## Appendix

### Appendix 1: SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Service providers and mobility managers are committed to working</td>
<td>- Shortages in staffing capacity</td>
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<td>towards quality transportation</td>
<td>- ADA training</td>
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<td>- Nonprofits help fill the gaps</td>
<td>- Disability qualifications</td>
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<td>- Interlocal agreements between providers</td>
<td>- Long Transfer times and travel times</td>
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<td>- Volunteer driver programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td>THREATS</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Additional funding sources for specific populations or purposes</td>
<td>- ADA requirements not currently being met by service</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Interlocal agreements between municipalities and service providers</td>
<td>providers and local governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hopelink <em>One Call One Click</em> program</td>
<td>- Funding sources lacks consistency</td>
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<td>- No overlap or duplicity of service areas and service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>routes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Lack of Rural equity</td>
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Appendix 2: List of Transportation Service Provider Interviewees

Transportation Providers:
1. Snoqualmie Valley Transportation (SVT)
2. Northshore Senior Center
3. King County Metro Access (Paratransit)
4. Community Transit DART (Paratransit)
5. Hopelink Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)
6. Homage
7. Sound Generations

Mobility Managers:
1. Snohomish County Transportation Coalition (Snotrac)
2. Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition (PCCTC)
3. Hopelink Mobility Management

Funding and Planning Organizations
1. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
2. Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)
Appendix 3: Transportation Service Provider/Mobility Manager Interview Questions and Script

Background – Defining Existing Services
1. What are service boundaries (geographical, population-specific) your program has? This might include boundaries at the neighborhood, city, county, state, etc. Levels.
2. Have you provided cross-border services in the past and why might that have changed?
3. What are some reasons why these service boundaries exist for your program? For example, is it because of funding restrictions, policy restrictions, capacity, etc.?
4. Is there any flexibility with expanding these service boundaries geographically? (To expand service geographically) Why or why not?

Identifying Issues
5. What current issues do you face serving communities and areas within your service areas?
6. How do service boundaries affect your ability to serve the community?

Collaboration
7. When you are unable to meet a client’s transportation needs, how well are you able to direct them to other transportation resources? Could you give examples?
8. Can you share any stories about how your clients have been impacted by these service boundaries? Or cross-border travel in general?
9. What limitations do you face in collaborating with other service providers? What resources might facilitate coordination between your organization and others?
   a. Funding
   b. Policy/legal restrictions
   c. Management capacity
   d. Other: ____________

Service Expansion
10. If you were asked/contracted to expand your program’s service boundaries, what would the impacts be? Consider both positive and negative impacts on riders, operations, funding, etc.
11. What would it take to expand your program’s service boundaries? What resources would you need to do this?

Resource Sharing
12. Do you have any resources or data such as ridership metrics that we could use for this project? Are there other people you suggest we interview?*
13. Is there anything else you would like to share?
14. Do you currently have a system for riders to provide feedback for your services? If so, are there any patterns in feedback topics or recurring themes?
*We asked specific transportation providers for data (number of applications for paratransit, number of vehicles available for paratransit, etc.)
Appendix 4: End-User Interview Questions and Script

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today and participating in this interview for our Cross-County Transportation Analysis project. This project is a partnership between the Hopelink Mobility Management team (specifically the North King County Mobility Coalition) and consultants from UW Evans School of Public Policy and Governance. My name is [name] and my colleague(s) [name] are also helping with the interview today. We’re UW Evans School graduate students who are consulting on this project.

To give you a brief overview of this project, the goal is to allow people to move freely across county lines with ease by conducting an environmental scan identifying and advocating for improvements in travel between King and Snohomish Counties.

Before we begin this interview, we would like to ask permission to record this meeting for notetaking purposes. Your responses may be quoted in our final report although we will remove any names in the final report.

Questions for All

1. How do you currently get around?
   1. I drive my own car
   2. I carpool with others
   3. I take public transit
   4. I use taxi or taxi-like services such as Uber
   5. I use paratransit or shuttle bus services
   6. Other:________

2. How often do you use public transit services such as buses, rideshares, and vanpools?
   1. Every day (or almost every day)
   2. 3-5 times a week
   3. Once or twice a week
   4. 2-3 times a month
   5. Less than twice a month
   6. I do not use public transit

3. What is the purpose of your trips (Medical, grocery, recreational, etc.)?

4. How satisfied are you with the current public transit system?
   1. Is information easy to find and understand? What do you use to find information?
   2. Are rides easy to get?
   3. Are there areas that you wish you had better access to? For what?

5. During the past 6 months, how many times were you NOT able to reach a desired destination due to a lack of transportation?

6. What are the things you would want to see changed in the current transportation services? What are things you would like to keep/see as strengths?

Additional Questions for People with Disabilities

1. Are you aware of all the available services for disabled riders? How did you find out about available services?
2. Do you have any difficulties in obtaining disability certification/qualification to use services for disabled riders?
3. Do you have difficulty applying for services such as paratransit service? If so, what difficulties arise?
4. What are the biggest or toughest challenges for you to travel between counties or other local-level boundaries such as cities, neighborhoods, or districts?
5. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the current transportation system?
   a. Transit is unreliable and not useful for my transportation needs.
   b. Transit is inadequate to fully meet my transportation needs.
   c. Transit currently meets my base transportation needs but requires improvements.
   d. Transit is perfect and fully meets my transportation needs

Additional Questions for Limited English Proficiency riders
1. Were you able to find information on transit services in your native language?
2. How often did you need a neighbor or friend to help translate information for you?
3. If you’ve had to call to arrange transportation services, were you able to reach a provider in your native language?
Appendix 5: One Page Overview on Recommendations

Improvements in Cross-County Transportation

Trip or Population Specific Funding
Explore funding aimed at certain trips or population-specific areas such as for cross-county travel or people with disabilities and older adults. Funding sources identified are from working with the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Federal Transit Administration, local transit authorities, and nonprofits. Using cost share vouchers, specifically for cross-border travel, or for certain populations such as older adults or people with disabilities, is a mechanism this funding can be used for.

Create Policy for Cross-County Trips
Transportation providers establish clear policy regarding scheduling rides and transfers, communications between providers and riders, and how client information will be shared.

Engage in State Legislators
NKCMC members work with the Transportation Choices Coalition or state legislators such as Marko Lilius on providing input or working on new bills that could create flexible spending for providers to use for cross-border trips, or amendments to old bills that can give it more flexibility.

Interlocal Agreements
Providers will need to work with funders at both the local and state levels. Agreements must specify what funds will be used to be for which parts of the trip. Work with city, county, and/or WSDOT officials to understand the limitations of your fund sources.

Improve ADA training
Drivers should be aware of mental disabilities that may hinder communication and best practices to communicate with riders that have such disabilities. Drivers should also know locations of ADA structures at drop-off and pick-up locations.

Other Improvements

➢ Advocate for Accessibility as Measurement
➢ Share volunteer drivers across programs
➢ Public Engagement in Decision-Making
➢ Encourage more shared rides
➢ Better Communication from Provider to End-users
➢ Consistent definition for older adults “seniors”
➢ Work with WSDOT to identify gaps in ADA accessibility
➢ Improve feedback and complaint systems
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**Improve the Disability Certificate Process**
The Social Security Administration can streamline the process by partnering with medical institutions to provide needed documentation on end-users’ disabilities and push to fully digitize the certification and review processes.

**Improve ADA training**
Drivers should be aware of mental disabilities that may hinder communication and best practices to communicate with riders that have such disabilities. Drivers should also know locations of ADA structures at drop-off and pick-up locations.

**Other Improvements**
- Advocate for Accessibility as Measurement
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- Better Communication from Provider to End-Users
- Work with WSDOT to identify gaps in ADA accessibility
- Share volunteer drivers across programs
- Encourage more shared rides
- Consistent definition for older adults “seniors”
- Improve feedback and complaint systems

Figure 1. Storymap tool
“Most people are pretty good about recognizing when someone with differing abilities will need to go from point A to point B. But sometimes you have to remind them, hey, I’m a pedestrian, I need to get here too. Hey, that’s a sidewalk, don’t park on it. Or don’t park in front of the ramp, or as you’re driving along and you’re near a crosswalk, don’t stop in it, and if you’re about to enter an intersection and there is someone in the crosswalk, whether it’s painted or not, stop for that person — it’s the law.”

Jim lives in Center Park Apartments, a Low Income Public Housing (LIPH) community in the Rainier Valley. If it’s dry and not too cold, he uses his power chair to get around and stop for groceries, visit friends and family, go to the doctor, go to the bank, go out to lunch, go dancing, and other errands.
Figure 2. Population density

Population Density 2020

- King
- Snohomish

Legend:
- Low
- Relatively low
- Relatively high
- High
Figure 3. Oregon’s MPO Structure
Figure 4. People with disabilities percentage

People with Disabilities Percentage (2012)

- King
- Snohomish

Legend:
- Low (3% - 8%)
- Relatively Low (8% - 12%)
- Relatively High (12% - 18%)
- High (>18%)
Figure 5. Older adults percentage
Table 1. Transportation Service Provider Issues for Cross-County Travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Issue</th>
<th>Expansion Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Enough Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient Service Capacity &amp; Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Program Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incompatible Technology</td>
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<td>Lack of Cross-Coordination of Policies and Procedures</td>
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Table 2. End-User Interviewee Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee A</th>
<th>Interviewee B</th>
<th>Interviewee C</th>
<th>Interviewee D</th>
<th>Interviewee E</th>
<th>Interviewee F</th>
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<tr>
<td>Person with a Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older Adult</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
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Table 3. End-User Issues for Cross-County Travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>People with Disabilities</th>
<th>Older Adults</th>
<th>People with LEP</th>
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<td>Mistreatment by Transportation Drivers</td>
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<td>Long Transfer Wait Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Qualifying for Paratransit Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Accessible Infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some Providers Do Not Meet ADA Requirements</td>
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<td>Not Enough Transportation Stops</td>
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<td>Lack of Communication from Transportation Providers</td>
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<td>Challenges in Scheduling Policies Set by Transportation Providers</td>
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