



Appendix B

Demographic Information

PROFILE OF THE REGION

Approximately 3 million people live in the three county areas of King, Pierce and Snohomish, of which 57 percent or 1.7 million people live in King County. Roughly 1 to 1.3 million people - thirty to forty percent of the population - has a higher need for transportation services because they are potentially unable to drive due to a disability, their age or income status.

According to the U.S. Census, Pierce County has a higher percentage of their population with potential special transportation needs than the other two counties. In Pierce County, seniors and youth account for 42 percent of the population as compared to 32 percent and 31 percent in King and Snohomish Counties, respectively. Pierce County also has the highest percentage of their population with low-incomes (13 percent) and with disabilities (23 percent) as compared to King (low income; 9 percent, people with disabilities; 18 percent) and Snohomish (low income; 7 percent, people with disabilities; 17 percent).

Table B.1 People typically with higher transportation needs (U.S. Census 2000)

	King	Pierce	Snohomish	3 County
Population By Special Need Category				
Youth (5-17ys)	350,424	205,992	133,297	689,713
Seniors (65+yrs)	198,406	88,626	57,497	344,529
People w/disabilities	306,057	161,531	101,206	568,794
Low-income	158,248	94,110	44,641	296,999
Total Population	1,737,034	700,820	606,024	3,043,878
Percentage of Total Population				
Youth (5-17yrs)	20.17%	29.39%	22.00%	22.66%
Seniors (65+yrs)	11.42%	12.65%	9.49%	11.32%
People w/disabilities	17.62%	23.05%	16.70%	18.69%
Low-income	9.11%	13.43%	7.37%	9.76%

The magnitude of transportation need is difficult to quantify. However, even with a conservative guess of half of this “higher-risk” population having a transportation need at some time, we are talking about a half million people. That is, for every 6 people in the region, 1 person is unable to make it to the doctor, grocery store, social services, after-school activities, or to quality of life events that make Puget Sound enviable around the nation.

Age Demographics

Older Adults: About 345,000 older adults over the age 65 live in the 3-county region. This sector of the population is growing more rapidly than any other. In 2000, the 60+ age group makes up approximately 13.2 percent of the region's population. Over 1 million people in Washington will be 65 or older in 2020, almost twice the number of people in that age group today.¹ Recent research² estimates that one in five (21%) Americans age 65 and older do not drive, and more than 50 percent of non-drivers age 65 and older stay home on any given day because they lack transportation options. In addition, people outlive their ability to drive an average of six to eleven years. These statistics mean our aging population will have a more and more reliance on transportation services in the near-term.

Children: Approximately 690,000, or 23 percent of the region's population, are children age 5 to 17. This population group either does not have a driver's license, or in the case of older kids, have just left home for the first time and perhaps without a vehicle (or reliable vehicle). Parents, school buses, transit, walking, and bicycling are all part of this age groups mobility options. In some cases, these options are not available or feasible.

Disability Demographics

Over 569,000 people, about 19 percent of the region's population, report a disability. A disability as defined by the U.S. census means a sensory, physical, mental, self-care, or going outside the home disability.

While accessibility offers more enriched lives for people with disabilities, the economy also benefits. If health and transportation options allow it, people with disabilities can be very active participants in the community. Roughly 60 percent of people with disabilities, age 21-64, are employed. For every 6 employed people **without** a disability in the region, there is 1 employed person working **with** a disability.

Beyond employment, the transportation needs of people with disabilities can be life threatening. If they are unable to get the medical attention they need, their vulnerable health condition puts their life at additional risk. In addition, the ability to actively engage in a social life outside of employment and medical treatment is an important part of anyone's quality of life, including people with disabilities.

Table B.2 Employment and People with Disabilities (U.S. Census 2000)

	King County		Pierce County		Snohomish County		TOTAL	
Population 21 - 64 yrs	1,092,800	100%	389,033	100%	355,833	100%	1,837,666	100%
With a disability	165,148	15.1%	79,383	20.4%	59,598	16.7%	304,129	16.5%
Percent employed	62.6%	-	58.3%	-	63.3%	-	61.4%	-
No disability	927,652	84.9%	309,650	79.6%	296,235	83.3%	1,533,537	83.5%
Percent employed	80.9%	-	77%	-	80.1%	-	79.3%	-

¹ Safe Transportation for an Aging Population, Washington State Department of Transportation, January 2004

² Aging Americans: Stranded Without Options, Surface Transportation Policy Project, April 2004

Income Demographics

About 297,000 people, or 10 percent of the region's population, live below the poverty level. For a family of four persons, the US Census poverty threshold is an annual income of \$18,810. Many people with lower incomes are either without a car or without a reliable car – which makes it even more difficult to change circumstances. One-quarter of this poverty level population is under the age of 18. Children living below the poverty level are often unable to participate in positive after-school activities, unless transportation is available.

Transportation costs put a tremendous strain on low-income budgets. According to the Surface Transportation Policy Project³, the poorest 20 percent of American households, those earning less than \$13,908 (after taxes) per year, spend 40.2 percent of their take home pay on transportation. For many people in this situation, owning a private vehicle, or being able to maintain a private vehicle, is not a reasonable option.

Retaining employment can be difficult for low-income people if they do not have a car and there are no transportation options. Most entry level positions involve early morning or late night hours when transit service may not be available.

³ Transportation Costs and the American Dream, Surface Transportation Policy Project, July 22, 2003.