TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

ISLAND COUNTY – COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared for:

2025

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Introduction

The Transportation Element provides the framework to guide the growth and development of the County's transportation infrastructure. It also integrates land use and transportation by ensuring existing and future developments are adequately supported by the transportation system. The Transportation Element addresses the development of a balanced, multimodal transportation system for both the County's rural and urban areas by recognizing the regional nature of the transportation system and the need for continuing interagency and adjoining Counties coordination.

The Transportation Element establishes the County's goals and policies for developing the transportation system within the County. The Transportation Element is based on a 2024 study of the existing transportation network, combined with projections of future growth and transportation needs in 2045. The transportation element is comprised of five sections:

1. Goals and Policies
2. Existing Condition of Transportation Facilities
3. Travel Forecasts Evaluation
4. Transportation Systems Plan
5. Financing Program

The Transportation Element is intended to serve as a guide for making transportation decisions to address both short- and long-term needs. To meet Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements, the Transportation Element must identify existing transportation system characteristics, establish standards for multimodal levels of service, and identify existing and future deficiencies based on land use growth projections. The Transportation Element also discusses roadway mobility and accessibility needs, identifies improvements necessary to enhance safety, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and public transit. Consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Element establishes a policy framework for making decisions consistent with the County's vision and describes a strategy for accomplishing the County's vision over the 20-year planning horizon.

Plan Development

The purpose of the 2025 Transportation Element is to provide an update to the existing Transportation Element by identifying and evaluating the transportation improvement plans for the County through the years 2026 to 2045.

The plan was developed to address future land use growth and identify multimodal transportation needs to support the expected growth. The plan is needed to satisfy Growth Management Act (GMA) requirements and to update the County's transportation improvement projects funding program. The following sections summarize the regulatory setting and regional planning efforts that guided the development of the Transportation Element.

Growth Management Act Requirements

Under the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.070), referred to herein as the GMA, the Transportation Element is required to assess the needs of a community and determine how to

provide appropriate multimodal transportation facilities for current and future residents. The Transportation Element must contain:

- Inventory of existing facilities;
- Assessment of future facility needs to meet current and future demands;
- Multi-year plan for financing proposed transportation improvements;
- Forecasts of traffic for at least 10 years based on adopted land use plan;
- Multimodal Level of service (LOS) standards for arterials and public transportation, including actions to bring deficient facilities into compliance;
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, and;
- Identification of intergovernmental coordination efforts.

Additionally, under GMA's Concurrency Mandate, development may not occur if the development causes the transportation facility to decline below the County's adopted level of service standard unless existing infrastructure exists or strategies to accommodate the impacts of the development are made *concurrently* with the development; specifically the impacts must be mitigated within six years of the development's completion. This mandate extends to include state highways in counties consisting of islands, which applies to Island County.

Finally, the Transportation Element must include a reassessment strategy to address how the plan will respond to potential funding shortfalls.

Countywide Planning Policies

The GMA also requires that counties adopt Countywide Planning Policies (CWPPs) to guide and coordinate issues of regional significance. The Island County Department of Planning and Community Development developed CWPPs in conjunction with the City of Oak Harbor, the City of Langley and the Town of Coupeville in 2024-2025. The policies are anticipated to be adopted by each agency in 2025. Section 3.8 of the CWPPs addresses transportation and includes nine specific policies that are intended to ensure that the transportation system evolves in a coordinated manner to best serve the diverse land uses in Island County, both now and in the future. Island County adopted 2025 Countywide Planning Policies on March 26, 2024.

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1. Goals and Policies

Island County has developed broad goals, along with specific policies, to provide the framework for the Transportation Element. Goals and policies established through feedback solicited at public meetings conducted in 2024 and public input from the online survey and open house, and meetings with the Board of Island County Commissioners and the Island County Planning Commission. The statements were developed to be consistent with the statewide goals articulated in the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP 2025) , Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO), and Island County's Countywide Planning Policies[1]

Goals are followed by specific policies to help achieve each goal

Goal No. 1	***Provide a safe, comfortable, resilient, and reliable transportation system that provides adequate and equitable mobility for people, goods, and services.***
Policy 1.1	Base transportation investment decisions on clearly stated rational criteria;
Policy 1.2	Implement proven safety countermeasures and crash modification factors to reduce the number and severity of collisions;
Policy 1.3	Identify and work to reduce multimodal transportation network gaps that hinder the safe and efficient movement of people and goods;
Policy 1.4	Prioritize active, multimodal, and demand-management solutions to mobility and congestion problems over high-cost vehicle capacity capital projects;
Policy 1.5	Promote transportation facilities that provide for everybody, including people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, incomes and neighborhoods;
Policy 1.6	Promote alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel such as walking, riding transit, carpooling, vanpooling, and bicycling.
Policy 1.7	Encourage residents living in coastal areas with limited access to work with emergency service agencies to develop local evacuation plans for natural or man-made disasters.
Policy 1.8	Coordinate with state and local agencies to implement the "safe systems approach" in the IRTPO Comprehensive Safety Action Plan to advance transportation safety for all users of the transportation system including transit, bike and pedestrian activities.
Policy 1.9	Implement the Island County Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan

[1] Island County Countywide Planning Policies. March 26, 2024 in Ordinance No. C-08-24 PLG-003-24

Goal No. 2	***Preserve prior investments in the transportation system, where feasible.***
Policy 2.1	Prioritize timely repair, maintenance, and reallocation of road space over new construction for vehicle capacity;
Policy 2.2	Emphasize the most cost-effective solutions that meet the needs of the transportation system;
Policy 2.3	Operate in compliance with the Standards of Good Practice established by the County Road Administration Board (CRAB);
Policy 2.4	Follow established maintenance and repair procedures in order to reduce the long-term costs of operating and maintaining the County's transportation system;
Policy 2.5	Restrict new transportation projects that increase vehicle capacity unless the project proposal shows that sufficient revenues exist to adequately maintain both existing facilities and the proposed expansion.
Goal No. 3	***Support safety, mobility, and economic vitality by providing transportation infrastructure designed to be appropriate for the context of adjacent land uses.***
Policy 3.1	Implement a concurrency program that supports the development of the multimodal transportation system to adequately support land use development;
Policy 3.2	Provide an Annual Concurrency Report documenting the completeness of the multimodal system and Active Transportation Network to ensure the concurrency program is meeting its objective consistent with policies 6.9 through 6.14;
Policy 3.3	Transportation infrastructure and services within urban areas should be reflective of urban design, supporting urban development; Particular attention should be given to ensuring that roadway design standards in urban areas provide a high level of connectivity and promote pedestrian circulation;
Policy 3.4	Transportation infrastructure and services in rural areas should be consistent with rural design, land use context, and County funding realities.
Goal No. 4	***Minimize negative environmental impacts.***
Policy 4.1	Prioritize transportation investments that avoid negatively impacting critical areas;
Policy 4.2	Utilize established best management practices for storm water runoff in the planning, design, and construction of transportation infrastructure;
Policy 4.3	Identify potential environmental constraints and impacts as early as possible in the conceptual design phase of new transportation projects for mitigation sequencing requirements to minimize project costs and expedite the delivery of transportation services and facilities;

Policy 4.4	Involve environmental permitting authorities as early as possible in the design and location of new transportation projects to protect wetlands adjacent to roadways;
Policy 4.5	Proactively identify opportunities to replace road culverts to improve fish passage, wildlife habitat, and other aspects of the natural environment.
Goal No. 5	***Build strong relationships between Island County and other local and regional agencies to engage in cooperative planning of common transportation improvements.***
Policy 5.1	Provide regular public forums for both elected officials and staff to collaborate with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Washington State Ferries (WSF), Island Transit, Port of Coupeville, Port of South Whidbey, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, local City and Town jurisdictions and other relevant agencies;
Policy 5.2	Explore opportunities to collaborate and develop cost effective solutions with state, county and local organizations;
Policy 5.3	Coordinate with adjoining jurisdictions and transit service providers, such as Naval Air Station Whidbey Island and Island Transit, to develop and provide better connections between Island County and regional employment centers;
Policy 5.4	Affordable housing, public services and facilities should be accessible by all transportation modes. Housing, public services and facilities serving low income or mobility impaired citizens should be located in close proximity to transit stops and in areas with a well-developed network of sidewalks and paths;
Policy 5.5	Give particular attention to improving pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities along the SR 20 and SR 525 corridor and in areas surrounding ferry terminals to facilitate a greater share of walk-on ferry passengers;
Policy 5.6	Work with WSDOT to ensure that new development in Island County is concurrent adopted MMLOS standards.
Policy 5.7	Work with local and regional municipalities to identify planned active transportation networks and multimodal transportation corridors and plan transportation needs based on land use plans within the rural county and Urban Growth Areas (UGAs).
Policy 5.8	Inform and coordinate early and often with WSDOT to: a. Identify and plan for projects on or across state facilities. b. Identify and plan for projects to support multimodal use along and across the regional transportation network including state highways consistent with RCW 47.04.035 Complete Streets Principles. c. Identify and plan for projects to support multimodal use along and across the regional transportation network including state highways consistent

	with and the WSDOT Active Transportation Plan to meet Bicycle and Pedestrian Levels of Traffic Stress (LTS) of 2 or better d. Pursue support and funding for recommended projects identified in the IRTPO Safety Action Plan, the countywide Active Transportation Network, the County 6-year TIP, and other plans. e. Support maintenance in state rights of way. f. Ensure effectiveness, connectivity, and safety of SR 532, SR 20, and SR 525. throughout Island County. g. Review development projects near or adjacent to state highways to coordinate local access and address transportation needs for all users. h. Minimize private access to state highways to enhance safety and mitigate chances of vehicle collisions. i. Identify multimodal transportation improvements or strategies that may be needed to maintain safety, operations, and functional traffic flow, where pm peak hour vehicle level of service cannot be maintained. j. Establish that proposed improvements on state facilities are consistent with the WSDOT Design Manual. k. Establish that alterations to landscaping in WSDOT right-of-way are consistent with WSDOT removal and replacement policies. l. Ensure effectiveness, connectivity, and safety of the state marine highway system.
Goal No. 6	***Promote safety, physical activity, and public health by expanding options for active transportation modes.***
Policy 6.1	Promote coordination between jurisdictions in the planning and implementation of bicycle, transit, pedestrian and other active transportation facilities to establish continuous networks that support healthy communities;
Policy 6.2	Install and maintain paved shoulders = or > 4 feet on County arterial and collector roadways where feasible;
Policy 6.3	New projects will be designed and constructed considering ADA, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, as well as bus stop amenities, where transit service exists;
Policy 6.4	Require ADA upgrades and connections between modes of transportation at public transit facilities;
Policy 6.5	Promote a multiuse pathway alongside SR 20, SR 525 and SR 532, as well as a connected system of multi-use paths to encourage active transportation, recreation and physical activity;
Policy 6.6	Promote public beaches for human-powered watercraft access and collaborate with other agencies on access and parking
Policy 6.7	Encourage innovative and cooperative approaches among public agencies and private parties to provide recreation opportunities and public access;

Policy 6.8	Encourage linkage of parks, recreation areas and shoreline public access points with linear systems, such as hiking trails, bicycle routes, and scenic drives.
Policy 6.9	Vehicle LOS standards for Island County arterials are: Roadway LOS D (volume to capacity ratio 0.81 to 0.90) in rural areas and Roadway LOS E (volume to capacity ratio 0.91 to 1.00) in incorporated and unincorporated UGAs.
Policy 6.10	Rural and Urban Pedestrian LOS Standards on the countywide Active Transportation Network are listed below: a) Incorporated UGA: Urban standard sidewalks both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side. b) Unincorporated UGA: Urban standard sidewalk one side or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side. c) Rural County: = or > 4-foot-wide shoulder on roadway On the Countywide Active Transportation Network, Pedestrian LOS is depicted according to the categories below: (see Table on page 37) **Dark Purple** = Rural (County) meets standard **Light Purple** = Rural (County) substandard **Dashed Purple** = Further Study Needed **Dark Blue** = Urban (UGA) meets standard **Light Blue** = Urban (UGA) substandard
Policy 6.11	Rural and Urban Bicycle LOS Standards on the countywide Active Transportation Network are listed below: a) Incorporated UGA: Urban standard marked bike lanes both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway one side. b) Unincorporated UGA: Urban standard marked bike lanes both sides or shared two-way multiuse pathway on one side. c) Rural County: 4-foot-wide shoulder on roadway On the Countywide Active Transportation Network, Bicycle LOS is depicted according to the categories below: (see Table on page 37) **Dark Purple** = Rural (County) meets standard **Light Purple** = Rural (County) substandard **Dashed Purple** = Further Study Needed **Dark Blue** = Urban (UGA) meets standard **Light Blue** = Urban (UGA) substandard
Policy 6.12	The Transit LOS Standard is based on presence of bus shelters and marked crossings at Island Transit bus stops within the public road right-of-way. The prioritization and installation of shelters and crosswalks at transit bus stops helps to make transit safe and convenient for residents and therefore provides mutual benefit to both Island County and Island Transit.

Policy 6.13	Document Active Transportation LOS and Transit LOS standards each year in the Island County Annual Report of Transportation Facilities in advance of the Six-Year TIP.
Policy 6.14	Work with WSDOT to plan, fund, and construct Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) Type 1 or 2 (Separated/Protected) facilities on SR 20 and SR 525 in population centers as called for in WSDOT's Active Transportation Plan – 2020 and Beyond.

2. Existing Condition of Transportation Facilities

The inventory of existing transportation facilities describes the foundation for the transportation and land use conditions utilized for analysis, decision-making, and the Goals and Policies (Chapter 1). This chapter contains maps, statistics, and other information that provide a picture of the transportation system in its current condition.

Personal vehicles are the predominant mode of transportation within the County, where the majority of Island County residents work. Snohomish County is the largest work destination outside of Island County, where residents may commute by personal vehicle or ferry route. For ferry routes to/from Mukilteo in Snohomish County, commuters may connect to off-island transit providers or other modes.

Island County is unique due to its composition of two disconnected islands. This arrangement creates an interesting challenge for those who need to travel between Whidbey and Camano Islands within the County. Driving between Coupeville on Whidbey Island and Maple Beach on Camano Island requires either riding the Clinton-Mukilteo Ferry and driving north through western Snohomish County or crossing Deception Pass Bridge and driving east through both Skagit County and the Northwestern corner of Snohomish County. Either way, this requires a drive of at least 90 minutes on the existing road network for a trip between two destinations that are five miles apart geographically.

The first section of this chapter provides an overview of planning standards and classification schemes used to manage the County's transportation system. The sections that follow describe the existing infrastructure in Island County's unincorporated areas by each of the travel modes (vehicles, ferries, transit, non-motorized, and other) included in the County transportation network.

2.1. Planning Context

Long-range transportation plans build on existing transportation facilities available for residents to travel to home, work, and other destinations, and tourists visiting Island County. There are almost 35,000 people that make up the workforce within Island County. Most of these workers are Island County residents. There are also a significant number of Islanders who travel to other nearby counties for work. Over 5,000 people commute to Snohomish County, where many are employed by Boeing at the airplane factory located adjacent to Everett's Paine Field. Skagit and King Counties are also significant employment destinations, with over 2,000 Island County workers commuting to each of those counties. In addition, there are also over 1,500 workers living in Snohomish County that come to jobs located in Island County. Skagit County also adds substantially to Island County's workforce, with almost 1,000 people arriving each workday via the Deception Pass Bridge.

Most travel within Island County occurs on roadways, which provide public space for vehicles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. Roadways are classified by their intended function and desired service to provide a hierarchy of roadways. The County recognizes two functional

classification systems that are maintained at the County and Federal levels. This section provides an overview of the planning context for the Transportation Element and includes descriptions of functional classification systems for roadways, concurrency management, level-of-service standards (LOS), and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements.

Island County Functional Classification

The Island County Functional Classification defines the characteristics of individual roadways to accommodate the travel needs of all roadway users. The design of cross-sections for existing and planned roadways is tied to the functional classification as described in *Island County Code: Title 11.01*. Island County has classified its street system into five primary categories: State Highways, Major Arterials, Secondary Arterials, Collectors, and Local Access streets. The following sections describe the general characteristics of each functional classification designation. A map of the existing County functional classification is provided in Figure 2-1~~Figure 2-1~~.

State Highway

The State Highway system serves as the primary arterial roadway system within Island County. State Highways connect many of the subareas within the County, including Oak Harbor and Clinton on Whidbey Island and Camano Island to the City of Stanwood. WSDOT classifies certain State Highways as highways of Statewide Significance (as described later in this section). The three state highways in Island County are SR 20, SR 525, and SR 532.

Major Arterial

Major Arterials are county-maintained roadways that prioritize moving traffic efficiently on the arterial roadway system. These roadways connect State Highways and provide mobility in areas between towns and communities. Major arterials may also provide access to large land areas or serve a large traffic generator, providing the function of local access. These roadways typically have the highest traffic speeds and volumes of all county roadways.

Secondary Arterial

Secondary Arterials support the Major Arterial system by providing another tier of mobility and access between the Major Arterial and Collector networks. These roadways also connect two or more communities and may serve as an alternate route to a Major Arterial or State Highway. While still some of the busiest roadways on the county roadway network, Secondary Arterials typically have lower traffic speeds and/or volumes as compared to Major Arterials.

Collector

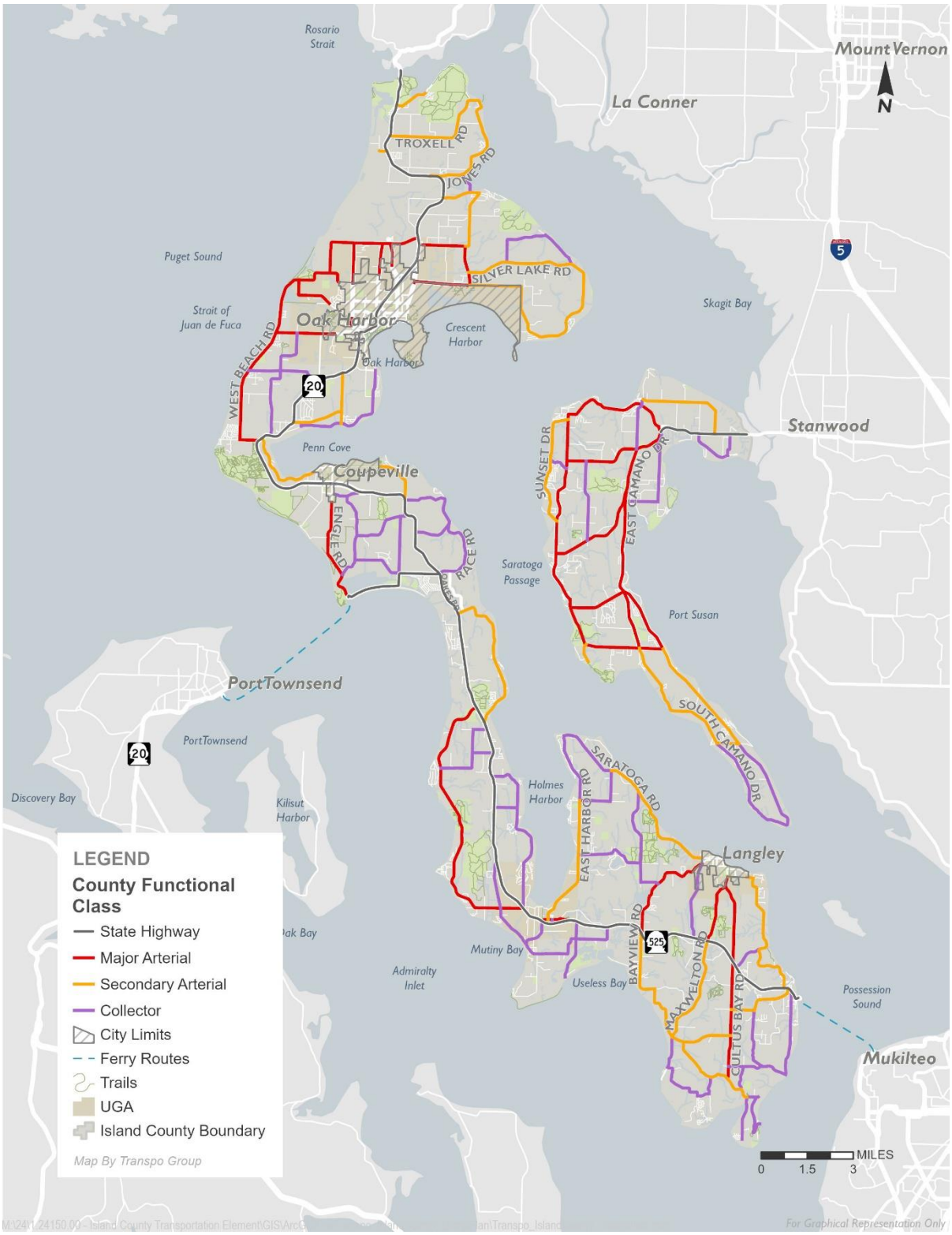
Collectors provide both access and mobility within Island County between the arterial network and local access streets. The predominant function of these roadways is to collect traffic from neighborhoods and local streets. They may provide for considerable local traffic that originates or is destined to points along the corridor, while providing direct access to adjacent properties.

Local Access

Local access streets provide direct access to adjoining properties, commercial businesses, and similar traffic destinations. Local access roads typically carry low volumes of traffic to low activity

land uses. While these roadways typically have low speeds, some of the rural access roadways have higher posted speeds.

Figure 2-1 Island County Functional Classification Map



Federal Functional Classification System

In addition to the Functional Classification system adopted by Island County, there are Federal and State roadway designations that are used to determine funding eligibility under Federal-Aid programs. The Federal Functional Classification system provides a hierarchy of roadways as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and is maintained for Washington State roadways by WSDOT[2]. This classification defines the operation of roadways as a network and arranges the hierarchy of roadways based on the regional function of the system. As a result, the Federal Functional Classification includes several differences to the Island County Functional Classification, which generally focuses on the function of individual roadways as related to adjacent land uses.

Changes to the Federal Functional Classification may be requested through WSDOT with review and approval by the FHWA. Requests are submitted by the local agency for review by the Regional Local Programs Engineer and FHWA. FHWA provides approval, denial, or conditional approval for the request that is supplied back to the local agency. This process is usually completed in 3 months or less. Designations for the National Highway System (NHS) and Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) are also maintained at the Federal and State levels. A map of the existing Federal functional classification is provided in Figure 2-2~~Figure 2-2~~.

National Highway System

The National Highway System (NHS) includes the Interstate Highway System as well as other roads important to the nation's economy, defense, and mobility as defined by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). SR 20, from I-5 to the Coupeville Ferry Terminal, and Ault Field Road from SR 20 to Langley Boulevard are designated as NHS facilities. The Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) is a subsystem of the NHS for facilities which have strategic defense significance. SR 20, from I-5 to the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, is a designated STRAHNET facility.

Highways of Statewide Significance

WSDOT designates interstate highways and other principal arterials that are needed to connect major communities in the state as Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS). This designation assists with the allocation of some state and federal funding. These roadways typically serve corridor movements having travel characteristics indicative of substantial statewide and interstate travel. SR 20 and SR 525 are classified as Highways of Statewide Significance.

[2] WSDOT Functional Classification Map Application. Available at: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/travel/hpms/functionalclass.htm

Figure 2-2 Federal Functional Classification Map

Vehicle LOS Standards

Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing the operating conditions for a given transportation facility such as a roadway or intersection. Transportation LOS can be measured by criteria such as level of congestion, travel times or speeds, volume of traffic compared to capacity, frequency of transit service, comfort and convenience, or safety. LOS standards can be based on roadway sections or on intersections, or combinations of facilities or services.

LOS standards are part of the mandatory elements of the County's Comprehensive Plan as required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) (RCW 36.70A.070). The GMA indicates that the transportation element shall include "level of service standards for all locally owned arterials and transit routes to serve as a gauge to judge performance of the system. These standards should be regionally coordinated." The transportation element needs to identify specific actions and requirements for bringing into compliance locally owned transportation facilities or services that operate or will operate below the established LOS standard.

For purposes of the Transportation Element, the County has adopted LOS standards for transportation facilities under its jurisdiction as required under GMA. Island County must also address in coordination with WSDOT LOS standards on state highways and ferry routes serving the County. Evaluating LOS for roadways with transit service is vital to maintaining the on-time performance of local transit service. Roadways with transit routes are evaluated under Island County's LOS standards for the roadway network (Section 2.2). Island Transit does not maintain transit LOS standards that pertain to the frequency and quality of transit within the County.

In addition, the County needs to review its LOS standards within the context of the regional policies established by WSDOT. Furthermore, the County needs to coordinate its LOS standards with cities located within the County, especially as they apply to development within future designated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), and the agencies included in the Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO).

Transportation Concurrency Management

The County must ensure the transportation system meets the needs of new development. The primary regulatory mechanism to achieve this is referred to as concurrency, which is mandated in the GMA. The requirements in the GMA (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(b)) state that:

> *"…local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development… concurrent with development shall mean that improvements or strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies within six years."*

The County uses a concurrency management program to ensure transportation facilities are constructed as development occurs. Island County is unique under current state law which requires counties made up of islands to apply concurrency to those facilities designated as Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS). In other counties, the concurrency requirements do not apply to HSS facilities. While this requirement might seem to unfairly penalize Island

County, the GMA offers some flexibility by allowing local jurisdictions to define, measure, monitor, and maintain LOS according to the land use and transportation system priorities adopted in their unique local Comprehensive Plan.

Concurrency Service Areas

Creating Concurrency Service Areas (CSAs) allows concurrency issues to be defined by the location of the development proposal within the County. This ensures that concurrency evaluations in one part of the County do not prohibit development where different major transportation facilities are used in another part of the County. The proposed CSAs coincide with the Island County Planning Areas (Camano Island and North, Central, and South Whidbey) as shown in Figure 2-3~~Figure 2-3~~.

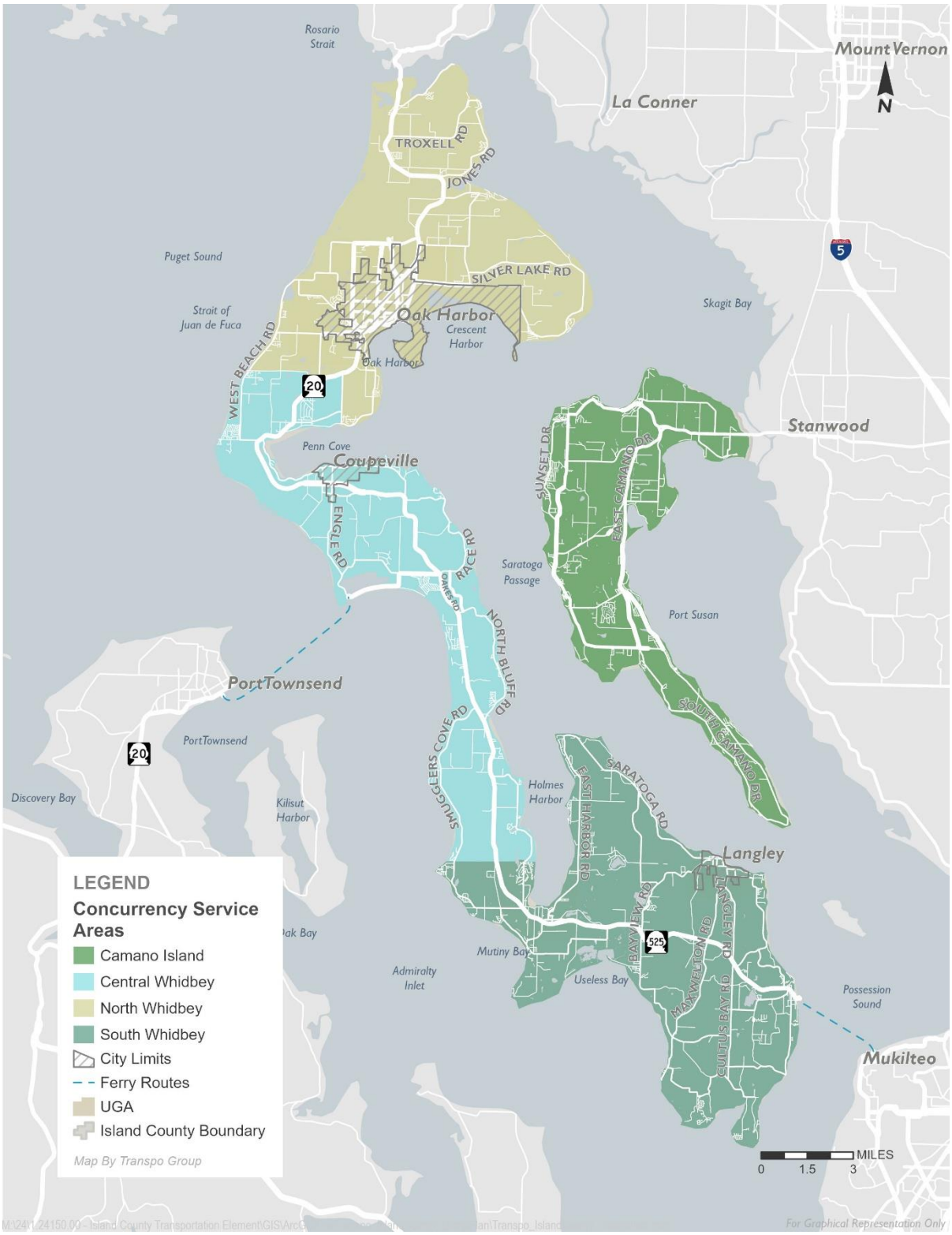
The concurrency service areas are used to apply the LOS standards to the state highways, ferry routes, and County intersections as described in the following section. The details and agreement of LOS standards on state facilities are contained in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and WSDOT.

Prior to the 2015 update of its Transportation Element, Island County used an intersection-based LOS standard for managing concurrency. For county-owned facilities located within designated urban areas, the standard was LOS D. For county-owned facilities located in outlying rural areas, the standard was LOS C. In locations where county facilities intersect non-county-owned facilities (such as city streets or state highways) the standard was LOS E for urban areas and D for rural areas.

The County determined that two components were important to defining the adequacy of its transportation system for the purposes of concurrency. The first was the ability to maintain a reasonable travel speed for major corridors serving the County. Additionally, the County wants to ensure that intersections on state highways and arterials operate without extensive delays during peak travel periods. To accommodate these two objectives, the County established a travel time-based LOS standard for designated corridors and a second standard for designated intersections.

In addition to establishing LOS standards for corridor travel speeds and designated intersections, the County periodically reviews intersection operations through updates to the Transportation Element. The most recent results from the 2015 update to the Transportation Element and a comparison to the results from the previous 2000 Transportation Element is contained in the Traffic Operations section of this chapter. This is an important methodology for assessing the overall health of the roadway network as it provides an update on how the transportation system has changed since the previous plan. Intersection safety is also part of State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements as described later in this section.

Figure 2-3 Concurrency Service Areas and Facilities



Concurrency LOS Standards

As part of the Transportation Element update, the County determined that three components of the transportation network are most important to defining the adequacy of its transportation system. The facilities tested for concurrency include:

- State highway corridors serving the County are evaluated based on minimum average travel speeds during peak travel periods that correspond to LOS thresholds in the Highway Capacity Manual (Transportation Research Board, 2010);
- Ferry service to and from Whidbey Island is evaluated based on the level of service standards set by Washington State Ferries (WSF); and
- Intersections of roadways federally classified as arterials or collectors (including roadways with transit routes) with other arterials or collectors are evaluated based on intersection delays during peak travel periods.

Corridor Level of Service Standards

Island County and WSDOT have agreed that weekday PM peak hour travel speeds along state highways are critical to maintaining the adequacy of these routes. Highways within Island County are generally two-lane facilities with varying densities of unsignalized intersections and driveways. These highways serve moderately developed areas and have some segments that pass-through areas with more intense development. These segments are typically differentiated by lower speed limits. These characteristics are generally consistent with the Class III two-lane highway definition in the *Highway Capacity Manual* (HCM 2010). HCM 2010 defines LOS for these facilities by the percent of free flow speed for traffic, which represents the ability of vehicles to travel at or near the speed limit, on highway segments.

The percent of free-flow speed (PFFS) range that represents LOS D for Class III two-lane highways is between 66.7 and 75 percent. LOS D was selected based on the table of *Level of Service Standards for Washington State Highways* (WSDOT Design Manual). For each concurrency corridor, a minimum average travel speed based on the PFFS will be applied to concurrency review. The average travel speeds on the corridors are set at 70 percent of the posted speed limit (within the range for LOS D). The standards are applied during the weekday evening commute, typically from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., where roadways regularly experience the highest traffic volumes and slowest travel speeds within the County. The travel speeds account for the total average speed of a vehicle, including delays at the intersections between the limits of each segment.

For each of the corridor segments, the County has established a minimum average travel speed which will be applied to concurrency review. These corridors measured for LOS consist of several segments along the three state highways within the County. The extents of the corridors end at major intersections, including at or near city limits, or CSA boundaries. The following corridors and extents are contained within one of the four CSAs and have LOS standards set as described in the *Island County Transportation Concurrency Management Program* (May 2015):

- SR 20
    - Deception Pass Bridge to Oak Harbor City Limits
    - Oak Harbor City Limits to Libbey Road

  - Libbey Road to W Main Street (Coupeville)
  - Main Street (Coupeville) to Race Road/Wanamaker Road
  - Race Road to Coupeville Ferry Terminal
- SR 525
  - Race Road to Mutiny Bay Road (Freeland)
  - Mutiny Bay Road (Freeland) to Bayview Road
  - Bayview Road to Langley Road/Cultus Bay Road
  - Langley Road/Cultus Bay Road to Clinton Ferry Terminal

As part of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WSDOT, the status of these corridors will be updated periodically.

Ferry Routes

For the purposes of concurrency, ferry routes are considered extensions of the roadway network and subject to concurrency LOS standards. The details of the LOS standards for the ferry routes are contained in the Ferry Service section of this chapter. Ferry routes serving the County are operated by WSDOT under the Washington State Ferries (WSF). The Port Townsend-Coupeville and Mukilteo-Clinton ferry routes are included in the Central Whidbey CSA and South Whidbey CSA, respectively.

Ferry LOS is reviewed for concurrency in the associated CSAs according to the LOS standards established in the *Final Long-Range Plan* (WSF, 2009). WSF LOS standards include two levels, where Level 1 LOS standards indicate when additional pricing and operational strategies might be needed, and Level 2 LOS standards indicate when additional service might be needed.

For purposes of implementing the County's concurrency program, "Level 2/Mitigated" is the LOS standard. This standard requires implementation of transportation mitigation when the LOS for ferry routes exceeds Level 2 standards. While WSF may implement potential mitigation strategies once Level 1 standards are exceeded, the County will require development proposals within CSAs exceeding Level 2 standards to implement mitigation measures as part of the condition of development approval. Decisions on what mitigation measures are appropriate will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Island County Public Works Director.

Intersection Level of Service Standards

The County has established LOS standards for intersections on Arterials, Collectors, and transit routes. The standards apply to both signalized and unsignalized intersections according to the standard practices contained in the latest edition of the *Highway Capacity Manual* (Transportation Research Board).

Signalized intersection LOS is defined in terms of a weighted average control delay for the entire intersection. Control delay quantifies the increase in travel time that a vehicle experiences due to the traffic signal control as well as provides a surrogate measure for driver discomfort and fuel consumption. Signalized intersection LOS is stated in terms of average control delay per vehicle.

Unsignalized intersections LOS criteria can be further reduced into two intersection types present within Island County: all-way stop control and two-way stop control. All-way stop control intersection LOS is expressed in terms of the weighted average control delay of the overall intersection or by approach. Two-way stop-controlled intersection LOS is defined in terms of the average control delay for each minor-street movement (or shared movement) as well as major-street left-turns. The County establishes LOS standards based on the type of intersection as described below.

- **Traffic Signals, Roundabouts, and All-Way Stop Controlled Intersections** – LOS D or better based on overall average delay per vehicle.
- **Unsignalized Two-Way Stop Controlled Intersections** – LOS E or better for worst traffic movement. On a case-by-case basis, the County may allow the LOS for traffic movements from the minor streets at two-way stop controlled intersections to operate below the adopted standard, if the County determines that no significant safety or operational issues will result.

The lower LOS standard for unsignalized, two-way stop-controlled intersections reflects the desire to minimize delays on the major street and through street traffic, while supporting safe and efficient operations for minor streets. The County typically will apply the intersection LOS standard to the weekday PM peak hour. The County may, however, define additional evaluation periods for intersection review to identify if potential impacts would occur. These could include weekday AM peak hour, weekends, or other time periods depending on the type and location of a proposed development.

State Highway Level of Service Standards

WSDOT sets LOS standards for Washington State Highways of Statewide Significance (HSS) jointly with regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) across the state. These LOS standards can also be used for SEPA evaluations and are contained in Appendix 29 of the *Development Services Manual*[3].

WSDOT has established LOS standards for Urban and Rural designations in Island County based on UGA boundaries. For HSS located in Urban areas the standard is LOS E, and for HSS located in Rural areas the standard is LOS D. Within Island County, these standards apply to SR 20 and SR 525. LOS standards for state highways of non-HSS are established at the same thresholds: LOS E for Urban areas and LOS D for Rural areas. SR 532 is a non-HSS route in Island County.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

Island County will continue to use SEPA to review the impacts of new development on roadways and intersections. The SEPA review would be used to evaluate impacts on:

- Safety, such as horizontal curvature issues, sight distance, non-motorized, and other
- Intersection operations, level of service, and queue impacts

[3] Development Services Manual. WSDOT. 2005. Available at: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Publications/Manuals/M3007.htm

- Roadway congestion
- Transit and Non-motorized transportation

SEPA review is based on the development project having an adverse impact. Assessment of transportation impacts under SEPA depends on the conditions for each transportation facility or service serving a new development. If adverse impacts are identified, the County can condition the development to provide mitigation to offset or reduce its impacts. This mitigation would help improve the transportation system, at least to the extent of mitigating project impacts.

2.2. Roadway Network

The road and highway system provides mobility and access for most travelers and accommodates multiple types of modes. Roadways on Whidbey and Camano Island do not directly connect to one another, but both include major roadways within the transportation system. These roadways comprise the predominant routes of travel within Island County and include a range of purposes, which are analyzed for operations in this transportation plan.

- Camano Island – A series of major and minor county roadways circulate around Camano Island. These roadways connect to SR 532 on the northeast end of the island. SR 532 serves as the primary connection to the mainland across Davis Slough and the Stillaguamish River via the Camano Gateway Bridge, connecting to the City of Stanwood and I-5 in Snohomish County.
- Whidbey Island – SR 20 and SR 525 transect Whidbey Island and serve as the primary north-south facilities for roadway travel. SR 525 provides access to the Clinton Ferry at the south end of the Island. The Clinton Ferry takes passengers, bicyclists, and motor vehicles to the City of Mukilteo in Snohomish County. SR 20 provides access to the Coupeville Ferry at approximately the mid-point of the island. The Coupeville Ferry takes passengers, bicyclists, and motor vehicles to Port Townsend in Jefferson County on the Olympic Peninsula. SR 20 also provides a roadway connection to the mainland via the Deception Pass Bridge. The Deception Pass Bridge is at the north end of Whidbey Island and connects to Skagit County. Other roads feed into these state highways and connect local neighborhoods, cities, towns, and recreational areas at wider sections of the island.

Separate summaries for the traffic volumes and traffic operations at intersections are presented in the following sections.

Traffic Volumes

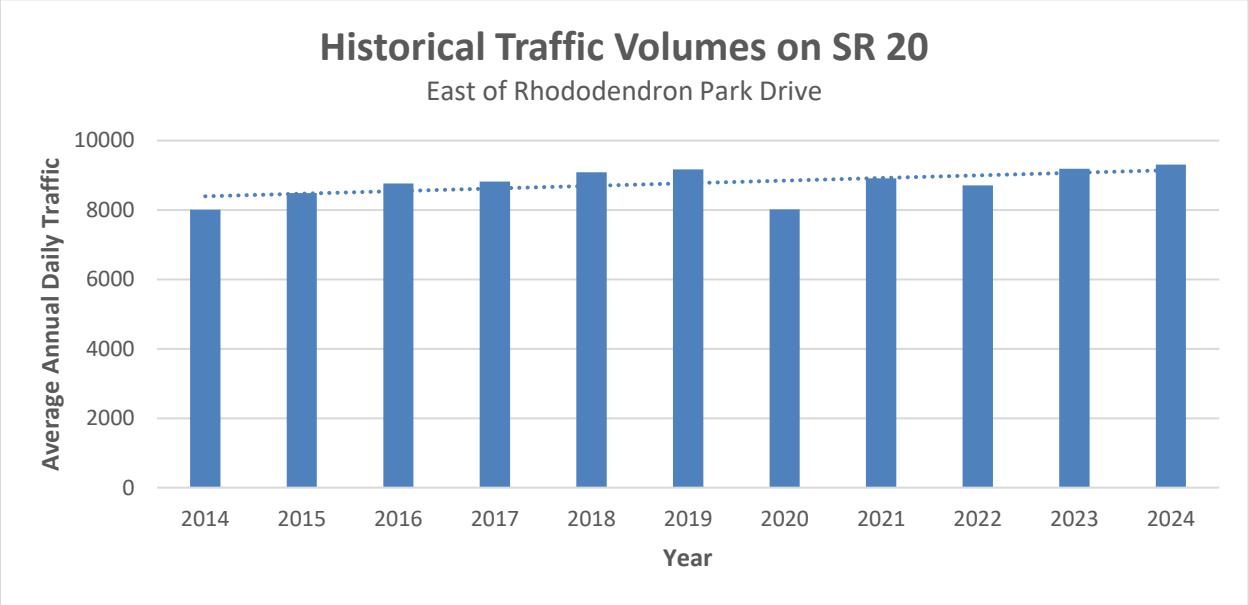
This section describes vehicle traffic volumes on Island County roadways. Traffic counts have been collected at several locations on State Highways and County roadways. Traffic counts conducted by WSDOT are continuously collected at permanent traffic recorders and maintained in a statewide database. Traffic counts on County roads are collected on occasion with tube counters and maintained in a database at the County Road Administration Board. These are typically updated on a three-year rolling basis to maintain a baseline of traffic counts throughout

the county. Traffic counts are also collected at select locations by WSDOT on an annual basis to provide traffic volumes based on seasonally adjusted traffic counts.

State Highways

State Highways carry the most vehicle volume in Island County. These roadways have the greatest number of travelers and are maintained by WSDOT. Traffic counts collected on these roadways are summarized into Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes that are seasonally adjusted to account for fluctuations in travel due to summer peaks or winter lows. AADTs are reported in Island County for the sole permanent traffic recorder location, which is on SR 20 east of Rhododendron Park Drive (Station #706). Figure 2-4~~Figure 2-4~~ shows the AADT for this location on SR 20 from 2014 through 2024.

Figure 2-4 Historical AADT for SR 20



As shown in the graph above, traffic volumes on SR 20 in Island County have grown slightly over the past decades. Traffic volumes on SR 20 at this location are around 9,000 average daily trips for the most recent year available. The linear trend line shows an average of 1.5 percent growth in roadway volumes per year. However, the upward trend in traffic volumes decreased during 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic but began increasing again. 2024 AADT values passed the 2019 pre-pandemic high.

Island County Roadways

An extensive data collection effort is performed by Island County for many Arterial and Collector roadways each spring. Tube counts are collected along several roadways on Whidbey and Camano Islands to collect average daily counts (ADT) and peak hour counts by direction. Traffic volumes at key locations are shown in Figure 2-5~~Figure 2-5~~ through Figure 2-7~~Figure 2-7~~. Peak hour traffic counts at major intersections throughout the County were collected periodically to support analysis of intersection traffic operations. The most recent turning movement counts (TMCs) were collected during Fall 2024.

Figure 2-5 Existing (2025) Traffic Volumes (North Whidbey)

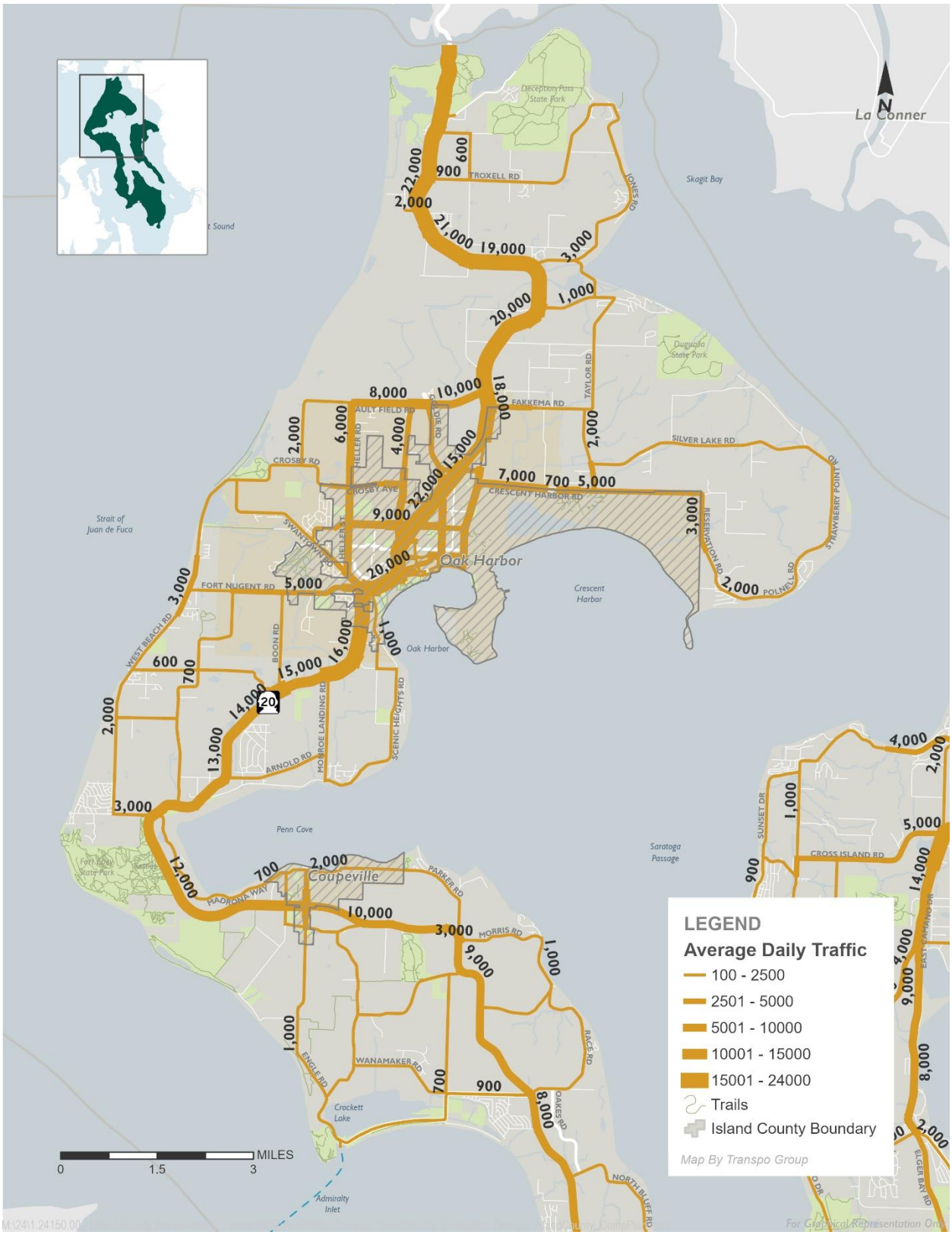


Figure 2-6 Existing (2025) Traffic Volumes (South Whidbey)

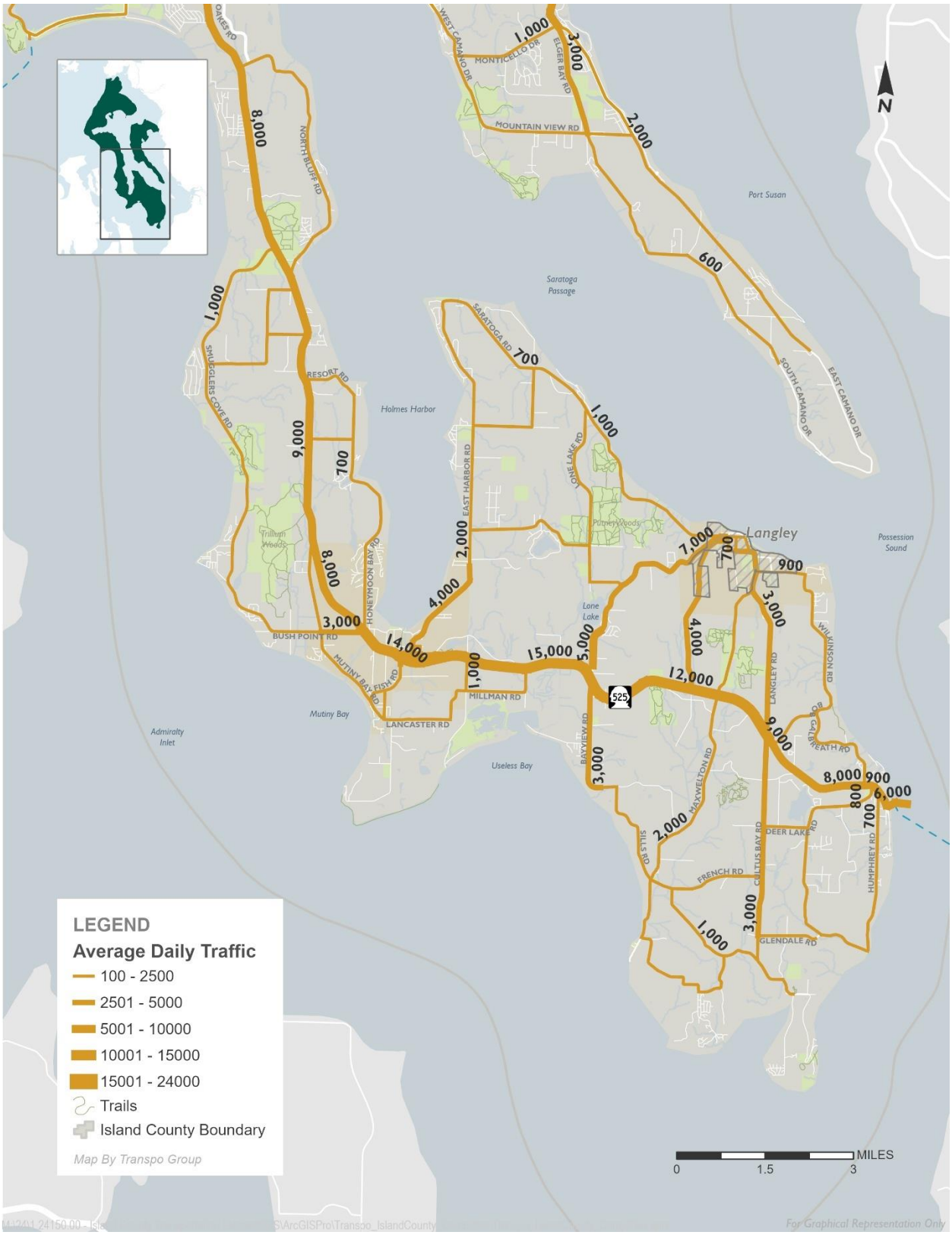


Figure 2-7 Existing (2025) Traffic Volumes (Camano)

Traffic Operations

Existing traffic operations were evaluated for intersections identified by county staff based on their knowledge of locations with potential operational or safety concerns. This is an important methodology for assessing the overall health of the roadway network as it provides an update on how the transportation system has changed since the previous plan. In addition, intersection traffic operations provide a snapshot of the health of the roadway network by providing:

- Delays experienced by drivers at intersections,
- Information on pinch points in the system, and
- A picture of active transportation mode use through counts collected at intersections.

Traffic operations include a technical analysis to evaluate how drivers experience traveling through the roadway system. It is applied to existing and forecast conditions to assist in identifying issues and potential improvement options. Traffic operations are compared to level of service (LOS) standards established by jurisdictions and local agencies.

Existing Operations Results

Intersection traffic operations were evaluated at several intersections in the County based on the standards and practices contained in the *Highway Capacity Manual* (Transportation Research Board, 7th Edition). Intersection levels-of-service were evaluated using a traffic planning and analysis software called Synchro version 12 for the PM peak hour. The evening peak hour was selected due to the higher typical traffic volumes occurring during that time period for a single hour between 4 and 6 p.m. Table 2-1~~Table 2-1~~ shows the LOS results at key intersections in the County.

As shown in the table, all of the intersections operate at LOS D or better during the weekday PM peak hour except for the intersection of SR 525 / E Bush Point Rd / SR525 / S Honeymoon Bay Rd. This intersection operates at LOS E during the PM peak hour due to difficulty for left turn vehicles accessing SR 525 during periods of afternoon travel peaks. The 2025 PM peak hour results are also shown Figure 2-8~~Figure 2-8~~.

Table 2-1 Existing Intersection Level of Service

Intersection	Jurisdiction	Intersection Control[2]	2025 PM Peak Hour		
			LOS[1]	Delay[2]	WM[3]
SR 20 / Ault Field Road	WSDOT	Signal	C	25	--
Heller Road / Clover Valley Road / Ault Field Rd	Island County	Roundabout	A	7.5	0.57
East Harbor Road / Main Street	Island County	All-Way Stop	A	9.2	
Langley Road / Maxwelton Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	B	10.5	EBL
Cultus Bay Road / Log Cabin Road / Deer Lake Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	B	11.1	WB
East Cross Island Drive/East Camano Drive	Island County	Signal	B	18.6	
McElroy Drive / East Camano Drive	Island County	Signal	A	9.4	
East Camano Drive / South Camano Hill Drive	Island County	Signal	A	1.5	
East Monticello Drive / E Camano Drive / South Elger Bay Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	C	20.7	EB
SR 525 / Honeymoon Bay Road	WSDOT	Two-Way Stop	E	47.6	WBL
South Elger Bay Road / East Mountain View Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	A	9.9	EB
North Torpedo Road / West Cresent Harbor Road	Island County	Two-Way Stop	C	19	SB

1 Level-of-service based on *Highway Capacity Manual* 7th Edition methodology.
2 Average delay in seconds per vehicle.
3 Worst movement reported for unsignalized intersections.

Acronyms for Table 2.1

Delay = Average seconds of delay per vehicle during PM Peak Hour

LOS = Level of Service

SR = State Route

PM Peak Hour = The heaviest 60 minutes of traffic volume between 4:00-6:00pm

WM = Worst Movement

WSDOT = Washington State Department of Transportation

Figure 2-8 Existing Intersection LOS

Traffic Safety

Collision records for the most recent complete five-year period were reviewed for all collisions reported in Island County. Historical safety data was collected from WSDOT for the period of January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023. Table 2-2~~Table 2-2~~ summarizes the collision history records by year for State Highways and County Roads.

Table 2-2 Island County Collision History (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)

Location	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-Year Total
State Highway Collisions						
Fatality[1]	4	3	2	3	2	14
Injury[2]	101	80	97	74	88	440
PDO[3]	249	194	251	224	237	1,155
Subtotal	*354*	*277*	*350*	*301*	*327*	*1,609*
County Road Collisions						
Fatality	4	3	3	2	2	14
Injury	88	75	71	67	75	376
PDO	153	153	165	136	156	763
Subtotal	*245*	*231*	*239*	*205*	*233*	*1,153*
State Highway and County Road Intersections Collisions						
Fatality	8	6	5	5	4	28
Injury	189	155	168	141	163	816
PDO	402	347	416	360	393	1,918
Total	*599*	*508*	*589*	*506*	*560*	*2,762*

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports
1. Collisions with at least one fatality
2. Collisions with at least one injury
3. Collisions with property damage only (PDO)

As shown in the table, there were nearly 2,800 reported collisions in Island County over the five-year study period. This is an average of 560 collisions reported per year, with slightly more occurring on State Routes (average of 300 per year) than County Roads (average of 260 per year). The year with the highest number of collisions is 2009, where 610 collisions were reported on State Highways and County Roads. Many of the collisions that occurred on County and State roadways are single vehicles running off the road or striking fixed objects, such as guardrails. While some of these collisions occurred along curves on roadway, there are few discernible patterns to these types of roadway collisions.

Collision records for State Routes were further analyzed to calculate historical collision rates for comparison to statewide averages. Collision rates are calculated based on the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) derived from the roadway length and AADT volumes. This provides a common denominator for comparing the number of collisions on roadways with different traffic volumes and lengths.

Table 2-3~~Table 2-3~~ summarizes collision rates for State Highways in Island County over the 5-year study period.

Table 2-3 Exhibit State Route Collision Rates (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)

Roadway	Length (mi.)	5-Year Total Crashes	Crashes / Year	AADT[1]	MVM[2]	Collision Rate[3]
State Highways						
SR 20	29	1,130	226	22,000	211.7	5.34
SR 525	22	379	76	10,000	96.4	3.93
SR 532	3	100	20	17,000	18.6	5.37
Total	**54**	***1,609***	***322***	***49,000***	***327***	***14.64***

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports
1. AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic for 2012 (from WSDOT Traffic Report)
2. MVM – Million Vehicle Miles
3. Average number of crashes per million vehicle miles traveled

As shown in Table 2-3~~Table 2-3~~, collision rates per million vehicle miles of travel on the Principal Arterials within Island County range between 3.93 for SR 525 and 5.37 for SR 532. The severity of collisions on State Highways within Island County was summarized to determine the number of fatality, injury, and property damage collisions that were reported on the roadways. Table 2-4~~Table 2-4~~ shows the severity of collisions on state routes recorded during the most recent 5-year period of crash data obtained from WSDOT.

Table 2-4 State Route Collision Severity Summary (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)

		Number of Collisions			Number of Occupants		
Roadway	Total Crashes	Fatality[1]	Injury[2]	PDO[3]	Fatalities[4]	Injuries[5]	Vehicles[6]
State Highways							
SR 20	1,130	7	307	816	7	442	2,035
SR 525	379	7	102	270	8	151	649
SR 532	100	0	31	69	0	53	188
Total	***1,609***	***14***	***440***	***1,155***	***15***	***646***	***2,872***

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports
1. Number of collisions with at least one fatality
2. Number of collisions with at least one injury
3. Number of collisions with property damage only (PDO)
4. Total number of fatalities
5. Total number of injuries
6. Total number of vehicles involved

As shown in the table, there were 15 fatalities on State Highways in Island County over the 5-year study period due to 14 separate collisions. Over the same period, there was an average of 1.46 injuries for each collision that resulted in an injury. Similarly, an average of more than 2 vehicles was involved in each property damage only reported collision, showing that many collisions reported during the study period involved multiple vehicles. Figure 2-9~~Figure 2-9~~ through Figure 2-11~~Figure 2-11~~ show the collision location and severity during the 5-year period.

Figure 2-9 Island County Crash History 2019 – 2023 (North Whidbey)

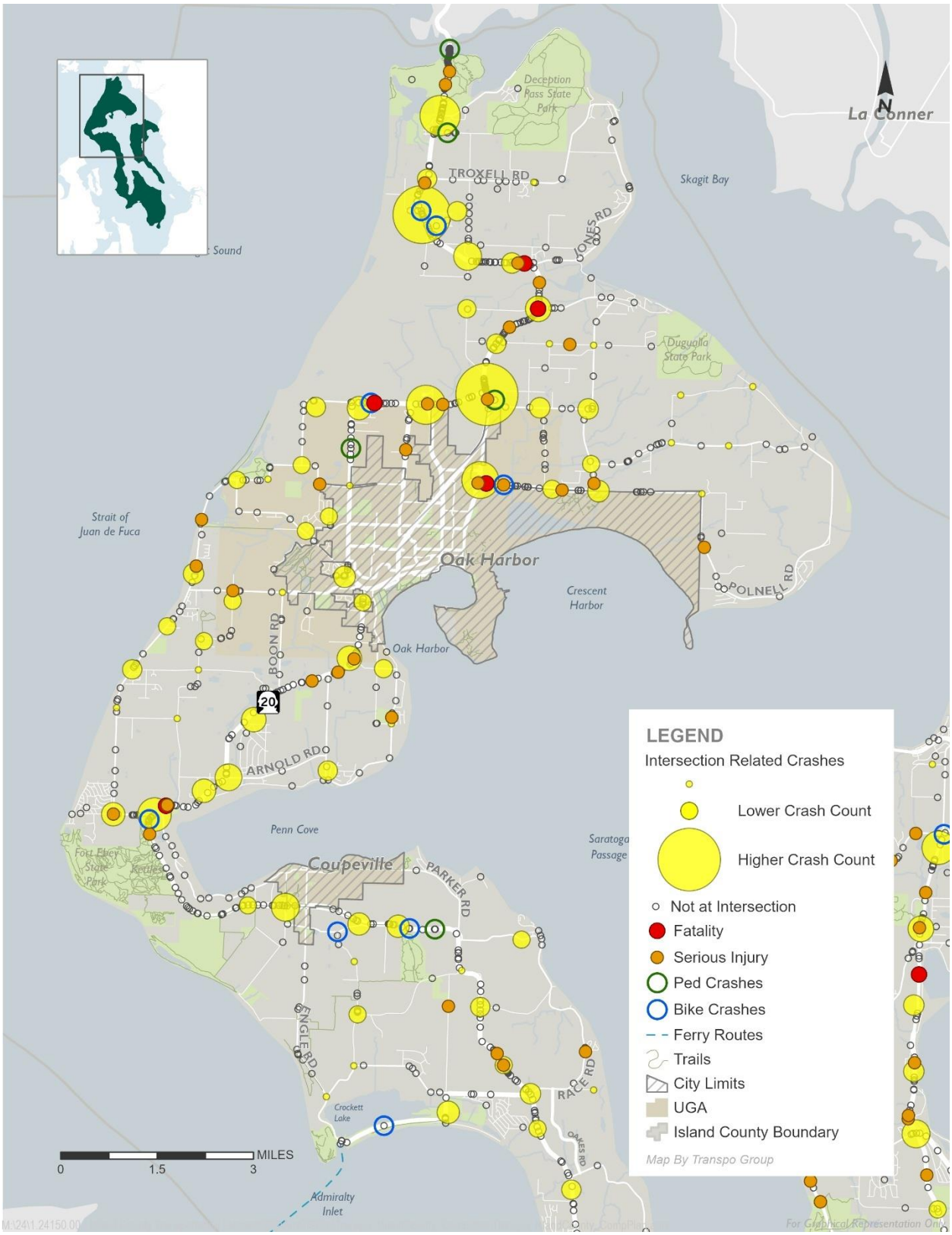


Figure 2-10 Island County Crash History 2019 – 2023 (South Whidbey)

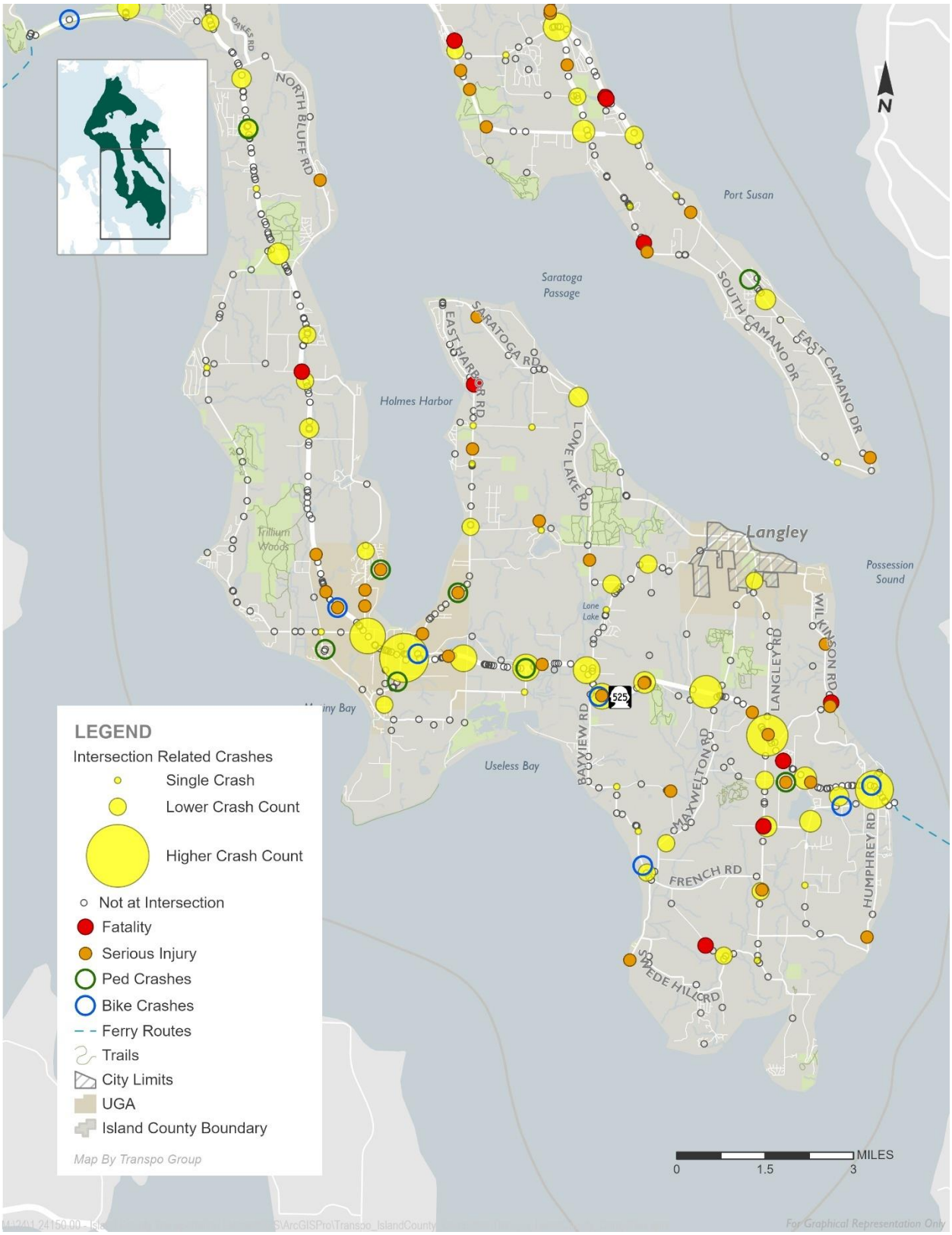
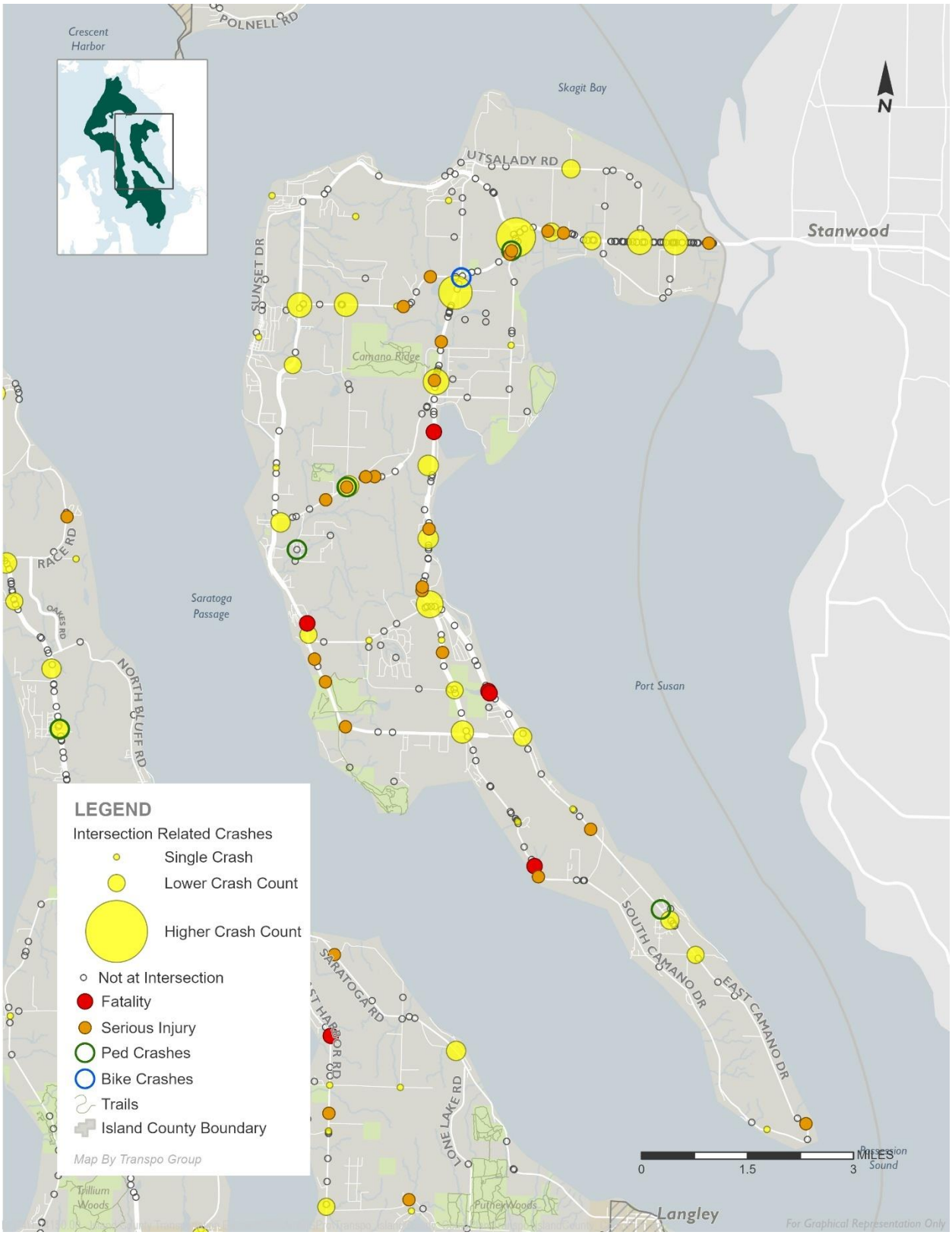


Figure 2-11 Island County Crash History 2019 – 2023 (Camano)



Freight Routes

The Washington State Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS)[4] classifies highways, county roads, and city streets according to the average annual gross truck tonnage they carry. Truck tonnage values are derived from actual or estimated truck traffic count data that is converted into average weights by truck type[4]. The FGTS uses five truck classifications, T-1 through T-5, depending on the annual gross tonnage the roadway carries.

- T-1: more than 10 million tons per year
- T-2: 4 million to 10 million tons per year
- T-3: 300,000 to 4 million tons per year
- T-4: 100,000 to 300,000 tons per year
- T-5: at least 20,000 tons in 60 days and less than 100,000 tons per year

Routes with the highest annual gross tonnage, T-1 and T-2 routes, are also identified as Strategic Freight Corridors.

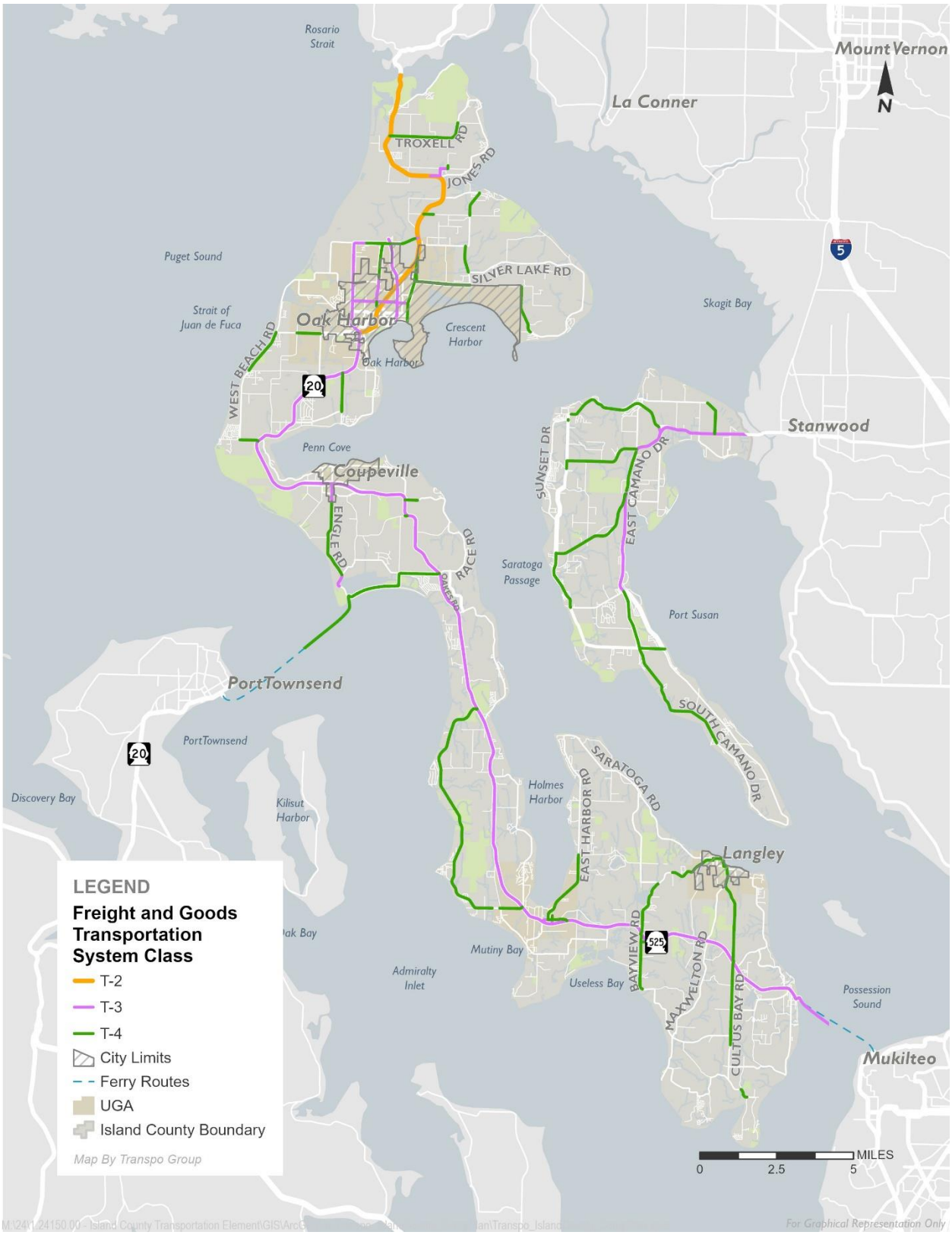
Figure 2-12~~Figure 2-12~~ shows the FGTS classifications in Island County. The highest classification road in Island County is for SR 20 from Deception Pass Bridge through the City of Oak Harbor which is classified as a T-2 route. The remaining segments of SR 20, SR 525, and SR 532 are T-3 routes, along with short spurs to ferry terminals and towns. Several other important freight routes are county roads on Whidbey and Camano Islands

Freight Movements

Most of the truck traffic originating from or destined to Island County comes from the City of Oak Harbor, the largest urban area on Whidbey Island and home to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island. The predominant routes for all truck trips include SR 20, SR 525 and SR 532 for all or part of their trip within Island County.

[4] *WSDOT Freight and Goods Transportation System (FGTS)* (December 2023)

Figure 2-12 Island County Truck Routes



2.3. Active Transportation

This Transportation Element establishes a long-term countywide Active Transportation Network of existing and planned designated walking and bicycle facilities. The portion of this network that can realistically be constructed over the 20-year planning period will depend on the amount of funding available for improvements to County roads, as well as WSDOT funding for improvements to State Routes.

Establishing an Active Transportation Network can be very challenging for an unincorporated rural geography. The land use context and reality of living in a rural environment demands a different societal expectation for what type of walking and bicycle facilities can be provided. The first step is to take an inventory of regional walking, biking, and multiuse facilities that currently exist. The next step is to examine the physical space and constraints of the existing countywide roadway system to determine if there are opportunities to enhance what already exists, such as roadway shoulders. Some roads currently have paved shoulders, which may not be ideal for comfort and safety, but can serve as places to walk and bike outside of the vehicle travel lane.

The Active Transportation Network consists of facilities for residents and visitors to participate in active transportation and recreation activities throughout Island County. A combination of on-street facilities and off-street pathways and trails provide the core network for people walking, biking, and rolling to popular destinations. The comprehensive Active Transportation Network complements the 2018 Island County Non-Motorized Trails Plan and will provide local connectivity to work, shopping, education, entertainment, and recreation and regional connectivity between communities, to ferry access points, parks and natural areas, points of interest, and other destinations. The existing non-motorized facilities documented in this section of the plan are based on an inventory conducted in 2025.

In a rural environment, a 4-foot paved shoulder is considered the minimum standard for a designated bicycle facility (Source: FHWA Small Town and Rural Design Guide, 2017; Paved Shoulder illustration below). There are currently several County roads and State Routes that have shoulders equal or greater than four (4) feet in width.

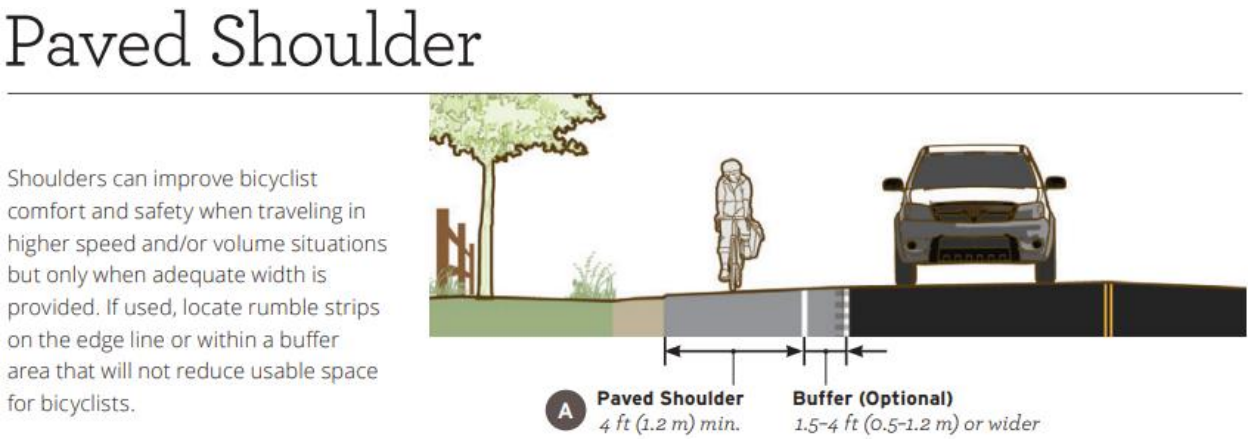


Figure 12. Minimum Active Transportation LOS Standard

Active Transportation Facilities

Active Transportation facilities vary across Island County to include a range of types that are suited for pedestrians, cyclists, and other types of active users.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are the primary pedestrian facility within towns and developed areas. Many of the downtown areas including Freeland, Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and Langley provide sidewalks. Along with off-street trails, sidewalks are the primary facility type for pedestrians. Cyclists may also use sidewalks within many of these jurisdictions provided they yield right-of-way to pedestrians. Because sidewalks are typically focused on serving local travel within Island County, they are not shown on any of the non-motorized system maps.

On-Street Facilities

On-street facilities include the bicycle lanes, striped shoulders, and shared roadways that comprise the non-motorized facilities on State Highways and County Roads. These facilities are primarily used for commuter and utility travel between and within the urbanized areas of Island County. Recreational and tourist activities in the county also use these routes. The on-street facilities are shown in Figure 2-13~~Figure 2-13~~.

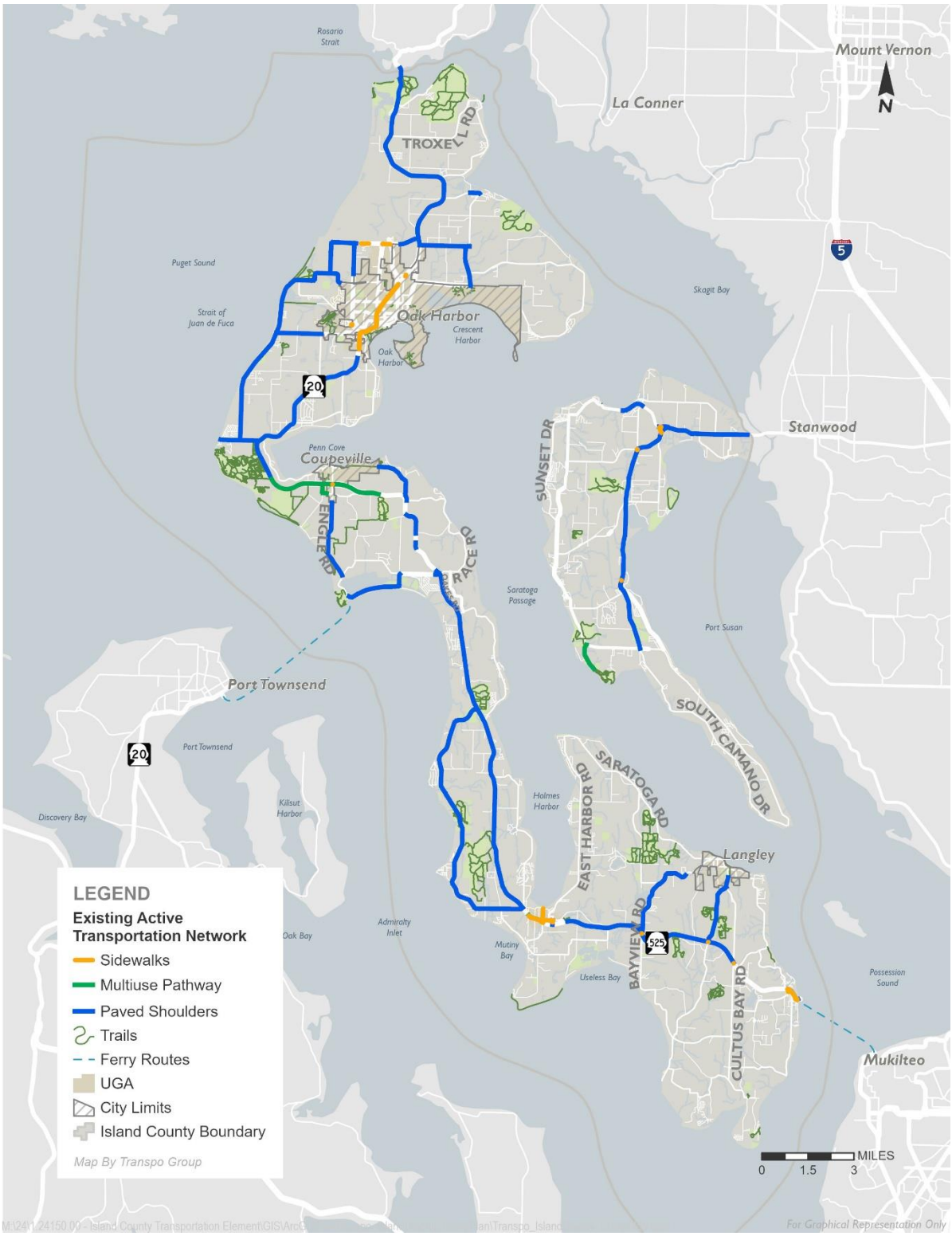
Bicycle Lanes

Dedicated bicycle lanes are a minimum of five (5) feet of physical roadway space for biccyclists that are typically in both directions on the edge of the traveled way. They are marked with a wide (4” to 8”) white stripe and parking is prohibited. Main Street and Harbor Avenue in Freeland are currently the only county roads that have sections with dedicated / striped bike lanes.

Paved Shoulder

Paved shoulders are on the edge of the traveled way for vehicles. Striped shoulders are considered non-motorized facilities where there is a reasonable distance available for pedestrians and cyclists to travel with minor impact to motor vehicles. For the purposes of this plan, this facility type only includes roadways with striped shoulders greater than four (4) feet wide. Striped shoulders with more than 4 feet of usable width typically provide enough comfortable space for non-motorized users, while narrower striped shoulders often result in non-motorized users being forced into the other travel lanes.

Figure 2-13 Active Transportation Facilities



Shared Roadway

Shared roadways include roadways with striped shoulders less than 4 feet wide, roadways without striped shoulders, and roadways with curbs. On shared roadways, non-motorized users share the travel lane with motor vehicles.

Off-Street Facilities

Off-street facilities include the trail network and recreational beach walks comprised of the low-tide trails in Island County. These types of facilities are generally used for recreational purposes but may also serve commuter and utility travel between urban areas in Island County. The off-street facilities are shown in Figure 2-13.

Trails

The Island County Non-Motorized Plan designates both high-standard, medium standard, and Wildland Trails. For the purposes of the county-wide transportation element, standard trails are separated from the roadways and vary in width from approximately 5 feet to 12 feet wide. ADA access is provided on many trails, but not all.

Low-Tide Trails

Low-tide trails, or beach walks, are regionally significant stretches of firm sand or gravel that allow for walking during low to moderate tides. These do not follow a constructed pathway but are shown as trails on the non-motorized maps. Only walkable beaches that are owned by the public, are of significant length, and have reasonable access are included in the inventory.

Active Transportation Safety Data

Collision records were reviewed for pedestrian and bicycle crashes on State Highways and Island County roadways. Collision records during the most recent 5-year period of crash data obtained from WSDOT were analyzed for collisions that involved non-motorized users. Table 2-5~~Table 2-5~~ shows the total and severity of these collisions within Island County.

Table 2-5 Non-Motorized Collision Summary (January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2023)

Roadway User	Total Crashes	Fatality Collisions[1]	Injury Collisions[2]	PDO Collisions[3]	Number of Fatalities[4]	Number of Injuries[5]	Number of Vehicles[6]
State Highway Collisions							
Pedestrian	21	3	15	3	3	20	26
Cyclist	11	0	11	0	0	11	11
Subtotal	*32*	*3*	*26*	*3*	*3*	*31*	*37*
County Roadway Collisions							
Pedestrian	12	0	11	1	0	11	12
Cyclist	11	0	11	0	0	11	11
Subtotal	*23*	*0*	*22*	*1*	*0*	*22*	*23*
State Highway and County Roads Intersection Collisions							
Pedestrian	33	3	26	4	3	31	38
Cyclist	22	0	22	0	0	22	22
Total	*55*	*3*	*48*	*4*	*3*	*53*	*60*

Source: WSDOT Collision Reports
1. Number of collisions with at least one fatality
2. Number of collisions with at least one injury
3. Number of collisions with property damage only (PDO)
4. Total number of injuries
5. Total number of fatalities
6. Total number of vehicles involved

As shown in the table, there were 55 total crashes involving non-motorized roadway users on State Highways and Island County roadways. Over the 5-year study period, three fatalities and 53 injuries (from 48 injury collisions) were recorded.

Active Transportation LOS Standards

The 2025 Transportation Element supplements the 2018 NMTP and the Parks and Trails Element of the Comprehensive Plan to meet current policy direction from the GMA and WSDOT by establishing an active transportation network, performance measures, and MMLOS standards.

For active (aka non-motorized) transportation, performance and prioritization measures focus on safety and comfort while LOS standards focus on network connectivity and completeness rather than design capacity or user counts. People walking, biking, and rolling in wheelchairs and mobility devices are the most vulnerable users of the transportation system because they:

- Do not have a vehicle structure to protect them
- Are smaller and lighter than larger and heavier vehicles
- Travel at slower speeds (10-15 mph) than vehicles
- Are exposed to vehicle passing and turning conflicts
- Are at higher risk of injury in collisions with vehicles

Active Transportation LOS standards were developed for this plan in alignment with the rural character of much of the county's road network. These rural roadways often have low vehicle volumes which can make them attractive alternatives for active users seeking to avoid the discomfort associated with higher volumes on major routes. However, rural roads often lack shoulders and may see higher traffic speeds due to a variety of factors. A person's choice to walk, bike, or roll is primarily influenced by the availability of well-connected routes and user perception of safety and risk of conflict. For these reasons, it is important that roadways in the active network have adequate facilities to increase the safety and comfort of all users.

The Active Transportation LOS standards are presented in Table 2-6. The LOS designations are shown in blues and purples that correspond to the differing standards in rural vs. urban areas. In unincorporated areas of the county, the standard is defined primarily by the presence or absence of shoulders along designated routes. Shoulders greater than or equal to 4ft wide are the standard which is considered the minimum for a designated bicycle facility in a rural context. (Source: FHWA Small Town and Rural Design Guide, 2017) Incorporated vs. unincorporated areas of UGA within the county have differing LOS standards per Policies 6.10 and 6.11 in the goals and policies section of this document. The Urban vs. Rural designation was made using the current UGA and City boundaries for Island County.

The darker blue or purple LOS indicates a roadway or route that provides adequate shoulder width for its location and where the active network is considered complete. The lighter blue and purple LOS indicate facilities where shoulders lack sufficient width or may not be present at all. A green LOS indicates multiuse pathways which are separated from the roadway and are low stress facilities appropriate for all ages and abilities. The network of roads where these standards are applied and an existing conditions assessment is shown in section 4.2 of this plan. Specific deficiencies identified when comparing these standards to existing conditions form the basis of projects identified in section 4.6 of this plan.

Table 2-6. Active Transportation Network LOS Standards

LOS	Rating	Bicycle Standard	Pedestrian Standard
	Rural Meets Standard	Shoulders with width >= 4ft	Shoulders with width >= 4ft
	Urban Meets Standard	Marked Bike Lanes in both directions/Multi Use Path	Incorporated UGA: Sidewalk on Both Sides of Street Unincorporated UGA: Sidewalk on One Side of Street
	Rural Substandard	Shoulders with width < 4ft	Shoulders with width < 4ft
	Urban Substandard	No Bike Lanes	Incorporated UGA: Missing sidewalks on one or both sides Unincorporated UGA: No sidewalks
	Meets Standard – All Locations	Multi Use Path	Multi Use Path

2.4. Transit

Island Transit service is a fundamental part of the transportation network that operates on state highways and county arterials, as well as county collectors on both Whidbey and Camano Islands. Within Island County, Island Transit offers fare-free service. Over the past several years, transit ridership in Island County has been increasing on this fare-free system while service has remained relatively constant.

The transit services available in Snohomish and Skagit Counties are important to residents of Island County, particularly weekday commuters who work on the mainland. The primary locations where Islanders can access transit services are Mukilteo, Stanwood, and March's Point Park and Ride in Anacortes. Weekend transit service is minimal, with local service offered on some routes on Saturdays and Sundays.

Mukilteo offers the most transit options. There are currently three different transit providers with stops within walking distance of the ferry terminal.

Sound Transit's *Sounder* commuter train offers four round trips Monday through Friday into Seattle's King Street Station on the North Line.

Community Transit provides connection to and from downtown Seattle on weekdays, via the Lynnwood Transit Center. The Lynnwood Transit Center is well connected to Sound Transit's frequent express bus service, as well as a significant number of local routes that extend to major destinations throughout Snohomish County.

Community Transit also offers reliable service from Stanwood that is useful for Camano Island residents, including service to the Lynwood Transit Center throughout the day, six days per week.

Island Transit provides a shuttle between Terry's Corner Park and Ride and Stanwood to make it easy for Camano residents to leave their cars on the island when connecting to transit.

In addition to bus service, Island Transit operates vanpools that Island County residents use to commute. Major off-island destinations include the Microsoft campus in Redmond, various other Eastside locations, and Downtown Seattle. Vanpoolers travelling aboard ferries enjoy registered high-occupancy vehicle status, making them exempt from having to wait in line at the terminals, provided they have already paid the ferry fare and arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled sailing time.

Fixed Route Service

Transit service is funded through a tax-based transit district and operated by Island Transit. There are currently 16 fixed service bus routes on Whidbey and Camano Islands. These routes serve communities across the county and are summarized in Table 2-6~~Table 2-6~~.

Table 2-6 Existing Fixed Route Service Summary

Route	Description	Type of Service	Midday Service Headways (min.)	Peak Service Headways (min.)
Whidbey Island				
1	North-south spine route connecting Oak Harbor, Coupeville, Greenbank, Freeland, Bayview and Clinton Ferry Terminal	Weekday, Express, Saturday & Sunday	60	60[1]
2	West Oak Harbor Loop via Heller and Oak Harbor Roads	Weekday, Saturday & Sunday	60	60
On Demand Zone 3	East Oak Harbor Loop via Taylor Road	Weekday	120	120
411W	Tri-County Connector Route between Oak Harbor and Skagit Transit Center via Deception Pass Bridge and SR20 and SR536	Weekday, Saturday	60	60
6	Keystone-Coupeville Route with connection to Oak Harbor via West Beach Road	Weekday	90	90
On Demand Zone 6	Coupeville-Admirals Cove with connection to Coupeville ferry landing	Weekday	120	120
9	West Oak Harbor	Weekday	60	60
10	Central Oak Harbor	Weekday	30	30
60	Route connecting Clinton, Freeland and Langley	Weekday, Saturday	60	60
Clinton Commuter	Clinton Ferry to Clinton P&R	Weekday	30	30
On Demand NASWI	Shuttle connecting Victory Terrace and Crescent Harbor to NASWI base	Weekday	120	120
Camano Island				
1	Route serving the west region of Camano Island	Weekday	60	60
2	Route serving the east region of Camano Island	Weekday	60	60
3	Route serving Stanwood	Weekday	60	60
411C	Tri-County Connector Route between Terry's Corner and Skagit Transit Center via Stanwood	Weekday, Saturday & Sunday	120	120
412	Route between Terry's Corner and Everett Station via Stanwood P&R	Weekday	-	60

Note: 1) Route 1: 15-minute headway at weekday noon commute hour. Source: https://www.islandtransit.org/Route1SBWeekday

As shown in the table, there are eleven routes operating on Whidbey Island and five serving Camano Island. Island Transit does have more frequent service on some routes during peak hours, particularly those serving commuter travel. Route 1 on Whidbey Island has the shortest headways during the noon hour, with buses arriving approximately every 15 minutes. Most routes, however, operate with headways of 30 or 60 minutes throughout the day. Figure 2-14~~Figure 2-14~~ through Figure 2-16~~Figure 2-16~~ shows the transit routes currently operating in Island County.

Figure 2-14 Island County Transit Service (North Whidbey)

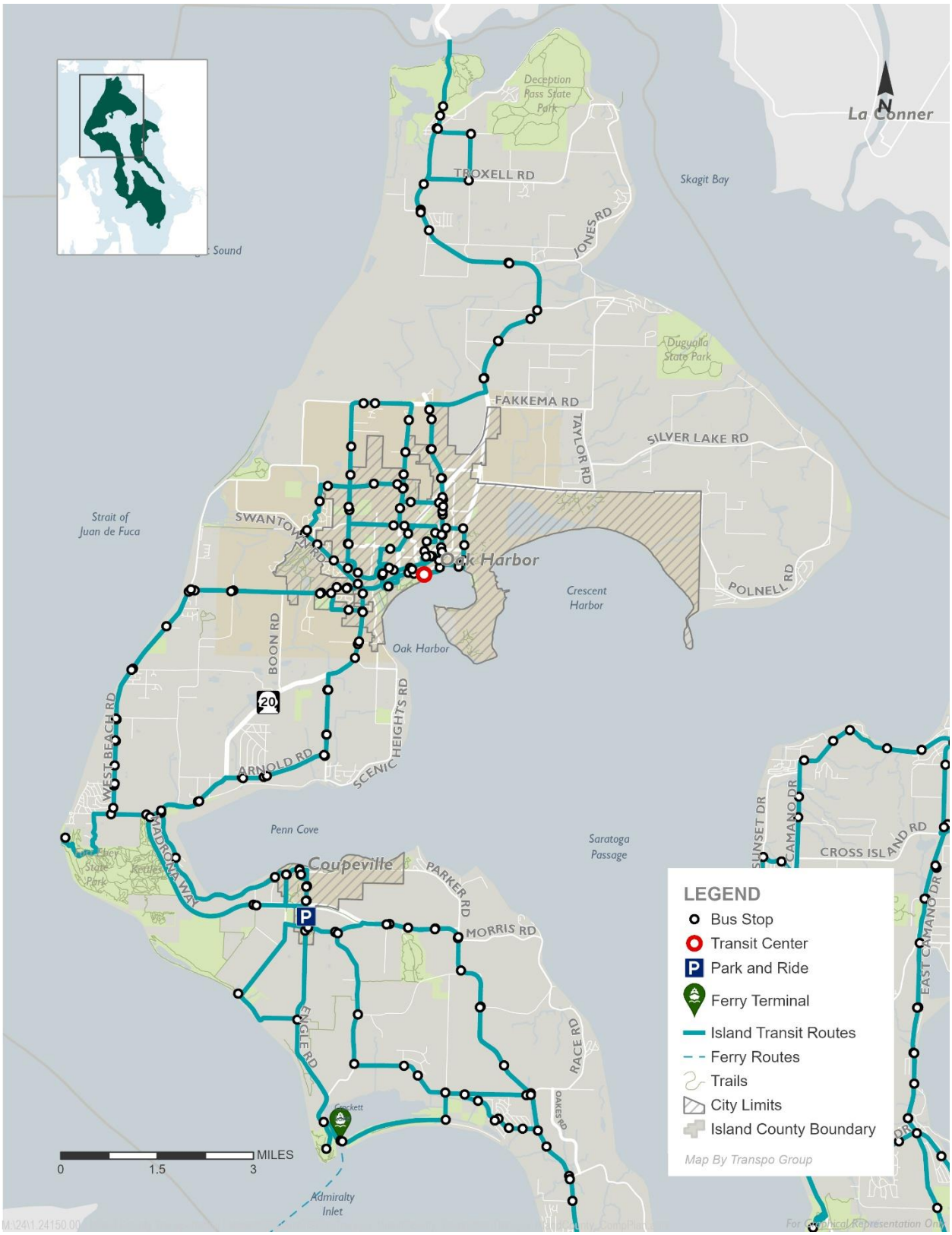
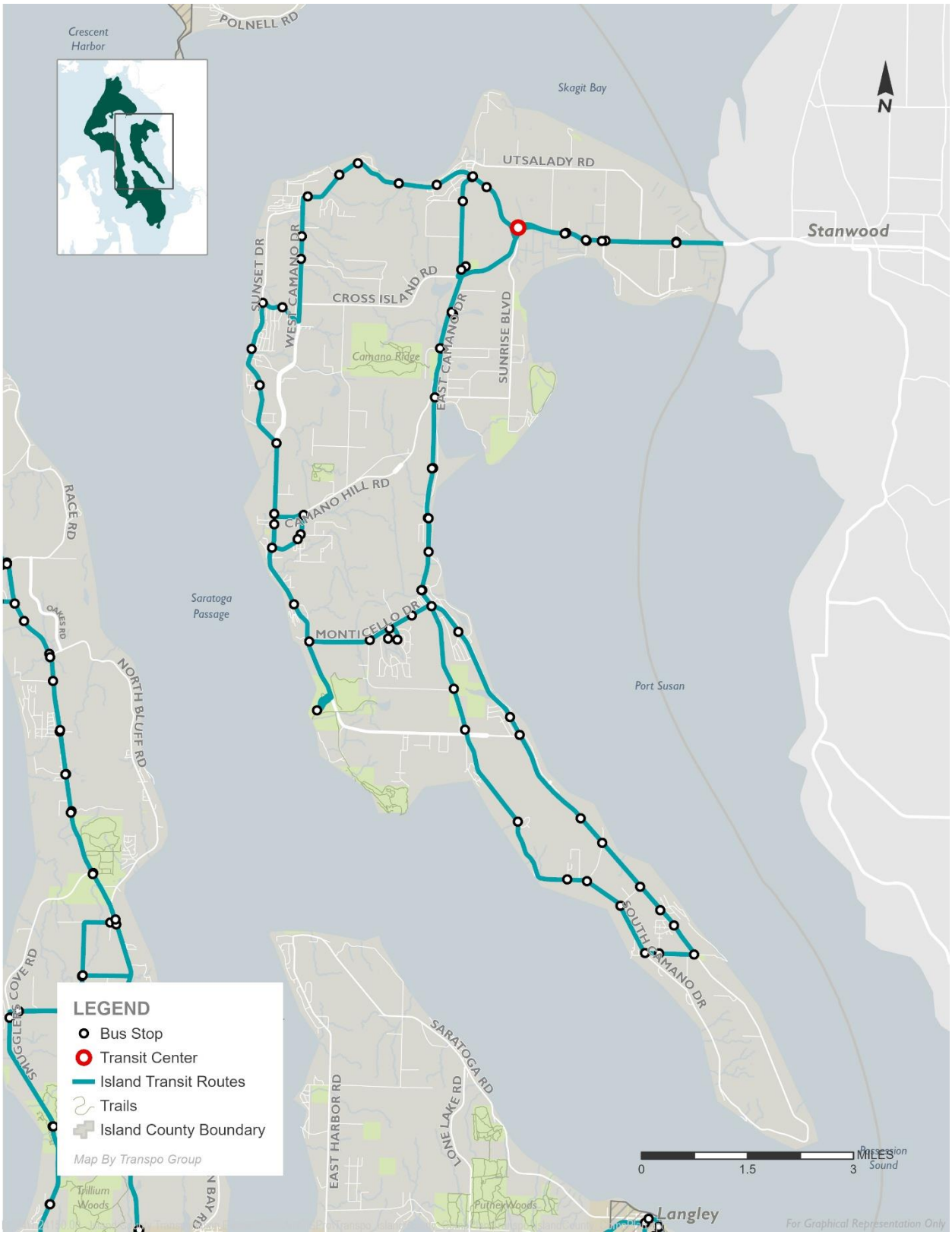


Figure 2-15 Island County Transit Service (South Whidbey)

Figure 2-16 Island County Transit Service (Camano)



Paratransit Service

Paratransit service is based on fixed transit service routes that are designed to allow time for a transit vehicle to deviate up to three-fourths of a mile off the fixed route structure to pick up or drop off eligible persons with disabilities. Greater deviations will be made to serve ADA eligible individuals living outside the corridor structure on a space available, schedule permitting basis. In many cases, route deviation increases ridership on the fixed routes while serving those unable to use the regular fixed route service.

Vanpool Program

Island Transit operates a vanpool program for groups of people that have similar schedules and share a commute to and from work or school. In 1988, Island Transit's Board of Directors adopted a vanpool administration policy modeled after the policy developed by the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle's (Metro) Commuter Pool Program. This policy provides a clear schedule of reimbursements as well as comprehensive rider and driver agreements.

Park-and-Rides

Park-and-rides allow transit users to drive private vehicles to a centralized location and ride transit to their ultimate destination. In rural areas these can be a critical component of the transit system as they extend the reach of transit routes to farther origins or destinations. There are nine park-and-ride lots in Island County at the sites shown in Table 2-7~~Table 2-7~~ and Figure 2-14~~Figure 2-1~~5.

Table 2-7 Park-and-Ride Facilities

Name	Location	Bus Routes Served	Number of Parking Spaces
Clinton Park and Ride	SR 525 / Deer Lake Road	1, 7, 8	200
Bayview Park and Ride	SR 525 / Bayview Road	1, 7, 8	85
Freeland Park and Ride (Trinity Lutheran Church)	SR 525 / Woodard Road	1	70
Greenbank Park and Ride	SR 525 / Bakken Road	1	20
Langley Noble Creek Transit Park	Camano Avenue / Sandy Point	5, 7, 8	64
Coupeville Prairie Station Transit Park	SR 20 / S Main Street	1, 6	48
Oak Harbor Park and Ride	SR 20 / Hoffman Road	4, 411-W	33
Soundview Shopper Park and Ride	SR 20 / Troxell Road	4, 411-W	15
Terry's Corner Park and Ride	SR 532 / Sunrise Boulevard	1, 2, 3, 411-C, 412C	80
WSDOT Clinton Ferry Parking Lot	6491 Humphrey Road		209
		Total	**824**

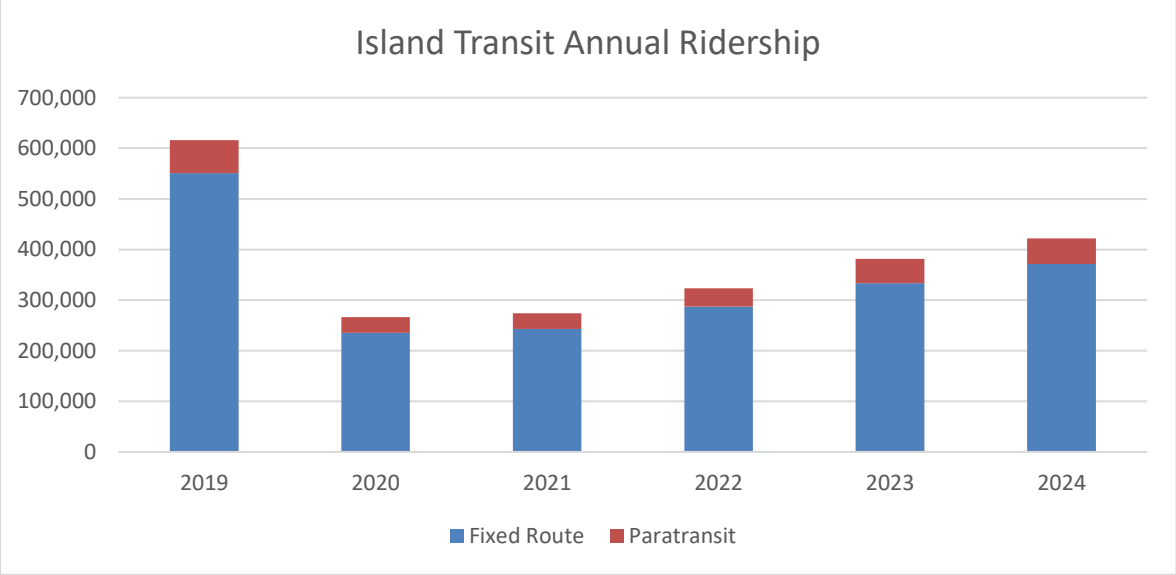
Source: WSDOT Park and Ride Database

As shown in the table, approximately 824 parking spaces are available across all park-and-ride facilities in Island County. The WSDOT Clinton Ferry Parking Lot has the highest number of total parking spaces, with 200 available for personal vehicles. No formal studies on the utilization rate of park and rides in Island County were available at the time of this report.

Transit Ridership

Ridership information is collected by transit operators to observe the annual and seasonal trends for transit service provided. Annual system-wide ridership data was collected from Island Transit for the most recent 6 years of data available. Figure 2-17~~Figure 2-17~~shows the annual ridership for fixed route transit services for 2019 through 2024.

Figure 2-17 Historical Island Transit Ridership



As shown in Figure 2-17~~Figure 2-17~~, Island Transit ridership substantially decreased because of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Island Transit systemwide ridership has been slowly recovering since the 2020 decrease but has only reached approximately 68% of the pre-pandemic peak.

Transit LOS Standard

GMA requirements state that comprehensive plans must include measurable level of service standards for local transit systems. These standards may be based on transit access, capacity, ridership or other methods based on context, but should be created in collaboration with local transit agencies.

Transit service within Island County is maintained and operated by Island Transit, which provides Fixed Route, Vanpool, and Demand Response services on Whidbey and Camano Islands and provides connections to the Skagit Transit and Community Transit networks via shared stop locations in Stanwood, Mt. Vernon, and Anacortes, WA. Island Transit began work on its first Long Range Transit Plan as of Fall 2025 and as such does not yet have well defined LOS goals for the bus network.

In consultation with staff at Island transit, the planning team identified service goals around increasing frequency of service in urban areas, as well as increasing the safety and accessibility of transit throughout the county. Since there is little the county can do in terms of increasing

service frequency, Island County will endorse Island Transit's safety and accessibility goals at 47 priority stop locations in urban areas, near schools and at select community destinations. A map of these stop locations along with the current LOS is viewable in section 4.3.

Many stop locations in the county are characterized by high speeds and narrow shoulders with few crossing locations to allow passengers to safely travel to and from bus stops. Bus pullouts that allow buses to pull off busy roads and allow riders to board and alight away from travel lanes are frequent along major routes. However, 28 of the 47 locations lack an accompanying crosswalk nearby which means transit riders frequently attempt to cross highways where vehicles are travelling at speeds of more than 50 miles per hour. In recent years several serious or fatal accidents have occurred at state highway locations (link) in relation to riders attempting to cross the street when travelling to or from a stop location. Island County will work with Island Transit and WSDOT to consider installing ADA-complaint marked or enhanced crosswalks at bus stop locations where needed along County roads and state highways.

Additionally, of the 47 priority stop locations identified, only 13 have a bus shelter. Shelters are an important amenity and serve to increase the safety and comfort of passengers, as well as improving ADA accessibility and providing community benefits by encouraging transit use. The county proposes to coordinate with Island Transit at the remaining locations so that Island Transit can install shelter structures at stop locations where shelters are not currently installed.

2.5. Ferry Service

Scheduled ferry service to Island County is provided by the Marine Division of the WSDOT, generally referred to as the Washington State Ferries (WSF). This system provides two connections to Whidbey Island via the following routes:

- **Mukilteo–Clinton Route** links southern Whidbey Island at Clinton to the Everett/Seattle metropolitan area at Mukilteo in Snohomish County.
- **Coupeville–Port Townsend Route** links the central portion of Whidbey Island near Coupeville to the Olympia Peninsula at Port Townsend in Jefferson County.

These two routes serve several trip purposes, including recreational-related and tourist trips, commuter-related and business trips, and freight movements as an extension of the highway system. In 2013, WSF completed a comprehensive origin-destination study that documents the travel patterns of their customers. The study was intended to help WSF better match services with customer needs, make ferry operations as efficient as possible, and capture more data that will feed into the ferry travel model for use in the upcoming update of the WSF Long-Range Plan. The complete 2013 study is available on the WSF website[5].

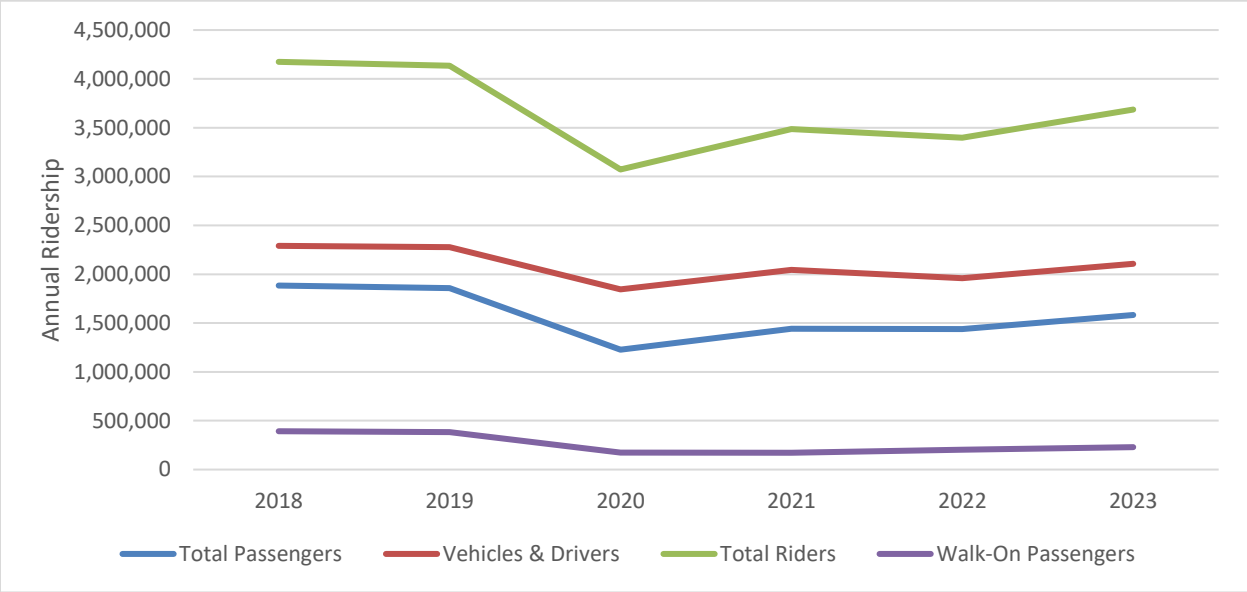
Mukilteo-Clinton Ridership

WSF provides ferry service for vehicles and pedestrians directly to Whidbey Island from Mukilteo through the ferry terminal located in Clinton. Historically, ferry ridership grew rapidly

[5] The website for the 2013 study was https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/WSF-2013OriginDestinationSurvey-FullReport.pdf at time of writing.

between the mid-1970s and late-1990s until reaching a generally steady state since about 2000. Ferry ridership to and from Whidbey Island, via the Clinton and the Mukilteo Terminals for the most recent 6 years of available data is shown in Figure 2-18~~Figure 2-18~~.

Figure 2-18 Mukilteo/Clinton Annual Ferry Ridership

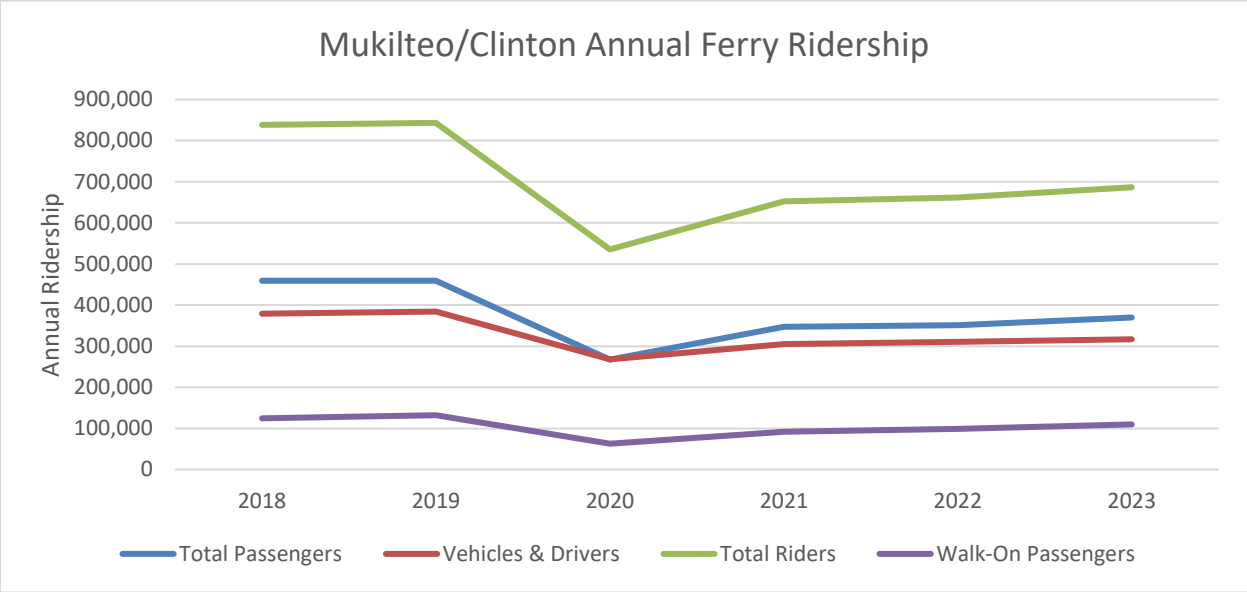


As shown in the chart, there have been approximately 4 million annual riders on the Mukilteo-Clinton route before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Ridership dropped to approximately 3.1 million during 2020 and has slowly increased to about 3.7 million (88% pre-pandemic levels) in 2023. The Mukilteo-Clinton route has historically catered slightly more to commuters. Pre-pandemic, there were approximately 390,000 annual walk-on passengers. While overall passenger values have increased, walk-on passengers have increased the slowest, back to approximately 230,000 (~60% pre-pandemic levels) in 2023. These ferry riders access the terminal via transit, active transportation modes, or the park-and-ride facilities located near the Clinton terminal.

Coupeville-Port Townsend Ridership

WSF provides ferry service for vehicles and pedestrians directly to Whidbey Island from Port Townsend through the ferry terminal located near Coupeville. Like the Mukilteo-Clinton route, ferry ridership grew rapidly between the mid-1970s and late-1990s. Ferry ridership to and from Whidbey Island, via the Coupeville and the Port Townsend terminals, for the most recent 6 years of available data is shown in Figure 2-19~~Figure 2-19~~.

Figure 2-19 Coupeville/Port Townsend Ridership



As shown in the figure, there was a significant dip in the number of total passengers during the 2020 COVID pandemic, when overall ridership was down from approximately 840,000 annual passengers to 535,000 (63%). Annual ridership has increased back to approximately 687,000 in 2023 (82% of pre-pandemic levels).

2.6. Other Modes

This section of the report covers other transportation modes that are not explicitly present within Island County but may be included in the future. These modes include air, rail, and equestrian facilities.

Air Transportation

Island County has three privately-owned airfields, Camano Island Airfield, DeLaurentis Airport, and Whidbey Airpark. In addition to these locations, there are two naval airfields located at the Whidbey Naval Air Station and Coupeville Naval Outlying Field. WSDOT's Aviation Division provides general characteristics of the commercial facilities, including the total number of aircraft based at each location.

Camano Island Airfield is a privately-owned airport that allows public use of its single runway. DeLaurentis Airport is also a privately-owned public use airport located about three miles from Oak Harbor. The airport previously had scheduled passenger service provided by Kenmore Air, which ended operations to Oak Harbor in 2008. Whidbey Airpark is a privately-owned public use airport with a single runway and is located two miles southwest of Langley.

The Whidbey Naval Air Station is the major air facility in Island County with an air traffic control tower and an instrument approach system. At present, it is used exclusively by military aircraft. Coupeville's Naval Outlying Field is also used exclusively by military aircraft for Navy pilots practicing aircraft carrier landings.

Rail

No rail service presently exists within Island County, although rail terminals are within close proximity of Whidbey Island and Camano Island at nearby towns. Passenger rail service in the region is provided by Sound Transit and Amtrak. While not within the county, rail lines provide key connections for freight and passenger service to the region. Connection to nearby rail facilities may only be made via the highway system or water transportation routes extending out from Island County.

Sound Transit operates *Sounder* regional commuter transit service. The closest Sounder train station is located in Mukilteo, which is served by the north line that operates between Everett and Seattle. Sounder trains make four roundtrips per weekday and it takes approximately 50 minutes to travel from Mukilteo to Seattle. The closest Amtrak rail stations are located in Everett, Mount Vernon, and Stanwood. Intercity passenger rail service is available on the *Cascades* route that operates between Vancouver, BC and Eugene, Oregon.

Equestrian Facilities

Currently, there are no public equestrian facilities located in the unincorporated areas of Island County; however, there are multi-use trails including the Kettles Trail in Coupeville, the Putney Woods Trails in Langley, and the Trillium Woods Trails in Greenbank that permit equestrian use. There are also some private riding facilities and trails throughout the County and Langley that have separate horseback riding trails, such as along Anderson Road right-of-way and within

a separate easement through Cedars Trail residential development. In addition, there are exercise and riding areas at the county fairground near Langley.

Motorcycles

Motorcycles are a popular option for ferry commuters, particularly with Boeing employees who contend with substantial parking lots surrounding the campus. Due to their small footprint, motorcycles are allowed to park closer to the factory worksite and, like vanpools, are also permitted to bypass long lines of cars at the ferry terminals that are typical during the peak tourist season. These perks make riding a motorbike a reliable way to streamline the commute time for Whidbey Island residents.

A map of existing ferry, and air facilities is shown in Figure 2-20~~Figure 2-20~~.

Figure 2-20 Ferry Service Routes and Air Facilities

3. Travel Forecasts Evaluation

The County maintains its transportation system to accommodate future growth and development. The Growth Management Act (GMA)[6] requires that the transportation planning horizon be at least ten years in the future. For the 2025 Transportation Element, the County selected 2045 as the forecast year for consistency with the overall comprehensive plan. The longer-range horizon year allows the County to better plan for and scale transportation facilities that are needed as the County grows over the next two decades.

A travel demand model was built to support the County's transportation planning efforts. The model provides a means for forecasting traffic volumes based on population and employment growth allocations for the County.

Ferry service is another important component of the transportation system for Island County that is operated and maintained by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Planning for the two ferry routes operating between Mukilteo-Clinton and Port Townsend-Coupeville is contained in WSF's *Long-Range Plan*[7]. However, the long-range plan was developed in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted ferry ridership. As such, the ridership forecasts developed in 2019 are out of date and will be updated as part of WSF's next long-range plan. More discussion of ferry operations is provided in Section 3.3.

3.1. Land Use Forecasts

Land use forecasts are based on anticipated changes in population and employment within Island County. The travel demand model utilizes forecast land use assumptions to estimate various types of trips that are applied to the transportation network. The land use forecasts included in the travel demand model are intended for planning purposes only. They represent an estimate of future conditions rather than a planned or desired outcome and do not restrict or require specific land use actions.

The land use assumptions are based on the zoning available at the time the model was created. Future forecasts must also incorporate growth in travel demand entering and exiting the County. These travel demands are based on regional population and employment trends. Detailed assumptions for land use growth within the County are available in the Land Use Element of the Island County 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

3.2. Forecast Travel Conditions

Forecast travel conditions determine where future bottlenecks may occur on the roadway network based on 2045 forecast travel demand and fully funded transportation system projects. Forecast travel demand is based on the forecast land use contained in the travel model and allocated to Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). TAZs are defined geographies that contain a

[6] Washington State 36.70A RCW. Available at http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=36.70A.
[7] Washington State Department of Transportation, Ferries Division. Available at https://wsdot.wa.gov/travel/washington-state-ferries/about-us/washington-state-ferries-planning

mix of land uses and generate trip estimates based on population and employment forecasts. The aggregation of those trips on County roadways provides planners with a future snapshot of the future operating conditions of the multimodal transportation system.

2045 Baseline Traffic Volumes & Improvements

The travel demand model was calibrated with 2024 traffic counts and used to forecast 2045 traffic volumes and travel patterns based on anticipated changes in land use. The forecast traffic volumes show small changes in overall growth on roadways within Island County. The highest areas of traffic growth are north of Oak Harbor, with minor traffic growth in the City of Oak Harbor. Roadways within the communities of Langley and Freeland also are anticipated to have additional traffic volumes due to future land use growth concentrated in these communities. 2045 average daily traffic volumes are shown in Figure 3-1~~Figure 3-1~~ through Figure 3-3~~Figure 3-3~~.

The 2045 baseline model and LOS results were developed assuming no roadway or intersection improvements from the existing roadway network.

Figure 3-1 Forecast 2045 Traffic Volumes (North Whidbey)

Figure 3-2 Forecast 2045 Traffic Volumes (South Whidbey)

Figure 3-3 Forecast 2045 Traffic Volumes (Camano)

Forecast Evaluation

The evaluation of the forecast travel model includes an operations analysis of key intersections within the County. The intersections included in the forecast evaluation are the same locations evaluated with the *Highway Capacity Manual* (7th Edition) methodology described in the Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities (Chapter 2). The outcomes of the forecast evaluation are typically used to identify future project locations to improve safety, mobility, and access on County roadways outside of any potential projects driven by concurrency.

The forecast evaluation showed that the majority of traffic continues to travel along state routes. There is one intersection along state routes forecast to have notable change in intersection LOS:

- **SR 525 / Bush Point Road & SR 525 / Honeymoon Bay Road**– This intersection operates at LOS E under existing conditions and degrades to LOS F under forecast conditions. The stop-controlled westbound minor leg from Freeland experiences moderate delays, with the majority of the traffic turning left onto SR 525. With additional traffic volumes on SR 525 more of these drivers will have fewer breaks in traffic to turn onto the highway. The side street traffic volumes are relatively low compared to the overall traffic at the intersection

3.3. Ferry Service Forecasts

In 2019, WSF finalized its 2040 Long Range Plan (LRP). The LRP provided a twenty-year plan for ferry service expansion and enhancements to accommodate anticipated ferry ridership growth. However, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, limited vessel availability and an ongoing shortage of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) credentialed crew has presented significant challenges for WSF. While WSF has made some service improvements since 2019, WSF has primarily been focused on restoring ferry capacity to pre-pandemic levels, as noted in the 2023 Long Range Plan Progress Report.

The Washington State Ferry Service Contingency Plan, published in January 2024 (updated March 2025), outlines WSF's immediate plans to restore and enhance service. The plan notes that WSF requires at least 26 vessels to provide pre-pandemic level service, but currently WSF only has 21 vessels in operation that range from 7 to 66 years old. WSF has funding for five new ferries needed to meet baseline service levels, but the vessels are unlikely to enter service until 2029.

Operating existing "full service" on every route requires 19 vessels in the summer, 18 in the spring and fall "shoulder" seasons (generally Mother's Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day) and 17 in the late fall/winter/early spring. Throughout 2023, WSF operated with 14-16 vessels in service for extended periods of time, and in 2024 operated with 15-16 vessels in service the entire year. Due to the increasing age of the fleet and a long history of deferred vessel maintenance, WSF believes planning for a baseline of 17 vessels in service, with up to 18 available during the peak season, is the most reasonable projection until new vessels enter service in 2029. With limited vessel availability, WSF will be unable to operate full service on every route until new vessels are constructed and delivered.

The plan specifically notes that if WSF is unable to meet the 18-vessel peak / 17-vessel off-peak baseline, that WSF will likely have to reduce the Port Townsend / Coupeville service to one-boat (down from two) in the shoulder/summer seasons. This will increase delays and reduce overall ferry ridership to/from Port Townsend and Coupeville.

The WSF Service Contingency Plan also outlines planned staffing increases and other priority investments needed to bring service levels back to pre-pandemic levels and minimize trip cancellations.

As a result, WSF service in Island County is likely to face some disruption, cancellation and service cuts for the next few years while the WSF staffing and vessel quantities reach pre-pandemic levels. Given these disruptions, further forecasting of ferry ridership growth is not included due to the overall uncertainty with the WSF service. Once the WSF LRP is updated again (in 2029 or before), the forecasts and estimated impacts to the Coupeville-Port Townsend and the Clinton-Mukilteo routes will be included in the next update of the Transportation Element.

3.4. Transit Service

Transit service is anticipated to continue serving as a fundamental piece of the transportation network. The COVID-19 pandemic substantially impacted transit services and ridership. Transit services across the country reduced capacity and restricted services, partially due to staffing issues and partially to maintain social distancing. Island Transit's fixed route and paratransit ridership dropped off significantly in 2020 and has not fully recovered.

Island Transit recently began the process of developing its first Long-Range Plan. The plan will include a robust and meaningful public outreach to better understand the needs of both county residents and visitors to guide Island Transit service over the next twenty years. Island Transit has recently been delivering on the Island Transit Maximized initiative that identified areas of improvement, leading to enhancements in regular and seasonal services, including Sunday service, new on-demand zones, later hours, and new fixed routes. Island Transit has also pivoted away from transitioning to hydrogen buses due to changes in federal priorities.

The Island Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) was updated in 2022. The plan focuses on the transportation needs of people with special needs, including seniors, people with low-income, and people with disabilities. The HSTP documents existing services, identifies needs/service gaps, and defines regional priorities and recommends projects for state and federal grant funding. Plan implementation projects include the following:

- Sustain Rural Public Transportation Service North Sound Regional Connector (Island Regional Connector)
- Sustain mobility management programs
- Implement first/last mile on-demand service
- Continue funding Snow Goose Transit – fixed route with deviations in Camano, Stanwood and Arlington
- Regional Mobility Management Coordination for all of Island County and off-island needs
- Whidbey Island Veterans Transportation Services and Healthcare Access Coordination
- Establish Ongoing Coordination between project partners (healthcare providers, transit agencies, non-profits, government organizations, etc.)

4. Transportation Systems Plan

The transportation systems plan provides a long-range strategy for Island County to address future transportation issues and needs. Transportation system improvements are necessary to accommodate the travel needs of the projected population and employment growth as described in the Forecast Travel Evaluation. Because only modest growth is expected, the County's emphasis should be on preserving the existing transportation system and implementing safety projects rather than adding more roadway capacity.

Additionally, opportunities to enhance the connectivity of the transportation network should be considered. The connectivity of transportation systems is increasingly important as local, state, and federal planning agencies who seek to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of transportation systems. System connectivity is also important for increasing physical activity and integrating transportation system planning with broader land use planning objectives.

This chapter begins with a description of the travel characteristics for the range of modes that comprise the transportation system. Roadways are used by nearly every travel mode, not just personal vehicles, and represent the bulk of the transportation improvements described later in the chapter. Highways in the County make key connections to the ferry system which is a critical component for inter-County travel. While ferry service is the primary function of the State of Washington, connections to ferry terminals are impacted by projects initiated by the County. The non-motorized transportation network supports commute, utility, and recreational trips throughout the County. The following sections describe the common characteristics among these transportation modes within the County.

4.1. Road and Highway Systems Plan

Roads and state highways are the core of the transportation system serving the County and its communities. Major routes connect Island County to surrounding communities via bridges and ferry terminals. The road network provides for the overall movement of people and goods, for a wide range of travel modes that includes private vehicles, transit, vanpools, carpools, trucks, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Planned improvements to the state highway and county roadway system are implemented on an annual basis through the development of six-year Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP) by Island County and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). In these six-year programs, emphasis is given to safety improvements and roadway preservation.

4.2. Active Transportation Systems Plan

The countywide Active Transportation Network includes facilities for both pedestrians and bicyclists. These modes have many different characteristics but share many facilities throughout the County including roadway shoulders, multiuse pathways, unpaved trails, sidewalks, and shared roadways in certain locations.

Pedestrians

Every trip begins and ends with a walk. People walk to their cars and drive somewhere where they will walk into a building or facility. Or they need to walk to the bus stop. The County hopes to connect more destinations with walking paths to encourage walking between trip destinations. Walking paths not only help people get from "Point A to Point B" but also promote physical activity and recreation. The County will continue to develop pedestrian and bicycle facilities as part of its transportation system improvements and has adopted street standards that provide for a range of facilities including sidewalks, wider roadway shoulders, and multiuse pathways.

A viable pedestrian network consists of connections to pedestrian generators, such as major employers, schools, residential areas, parks, and transit stops through a system of pedestrian facilities. Land use and neighborhood street design patterns can also form barriers to pedestrian travel. For example, overly large blocks and the lack of mid-block crossings cause pedestrians to travel further to reach local destinations, often resulting in a decision to utilize a vehicle for short trips that could otherwise be completed on foot. The Active Transportation Network.

Bicycles

Bicycling is an important and growing mode of travel for people in Island County. When appropriately planned, bicycle routes have a role in reducing congestion, improving air quality, providing travel choices, encouraging exercise and recreation, and providing greater mobility for those both with and without access to a motor vehicle. Encouraging or facilitating bicycle tourism may also represent an important economic development opportunity for the County. The County encourages the use of bicycles; endeavors to coordinate linkages between off-road and on-road bicycle facilities; considers impacts on bicycles when designing and engineering roadways; and emphasizes continuous bicycle linkages to existing facilities. The County is interested in incorporating adjacent bicycle lanes, wide shoulders, and other design treatments, as appropriate, into roadway construction projects whenever the right-of-way is sufficient and funding can be secured.

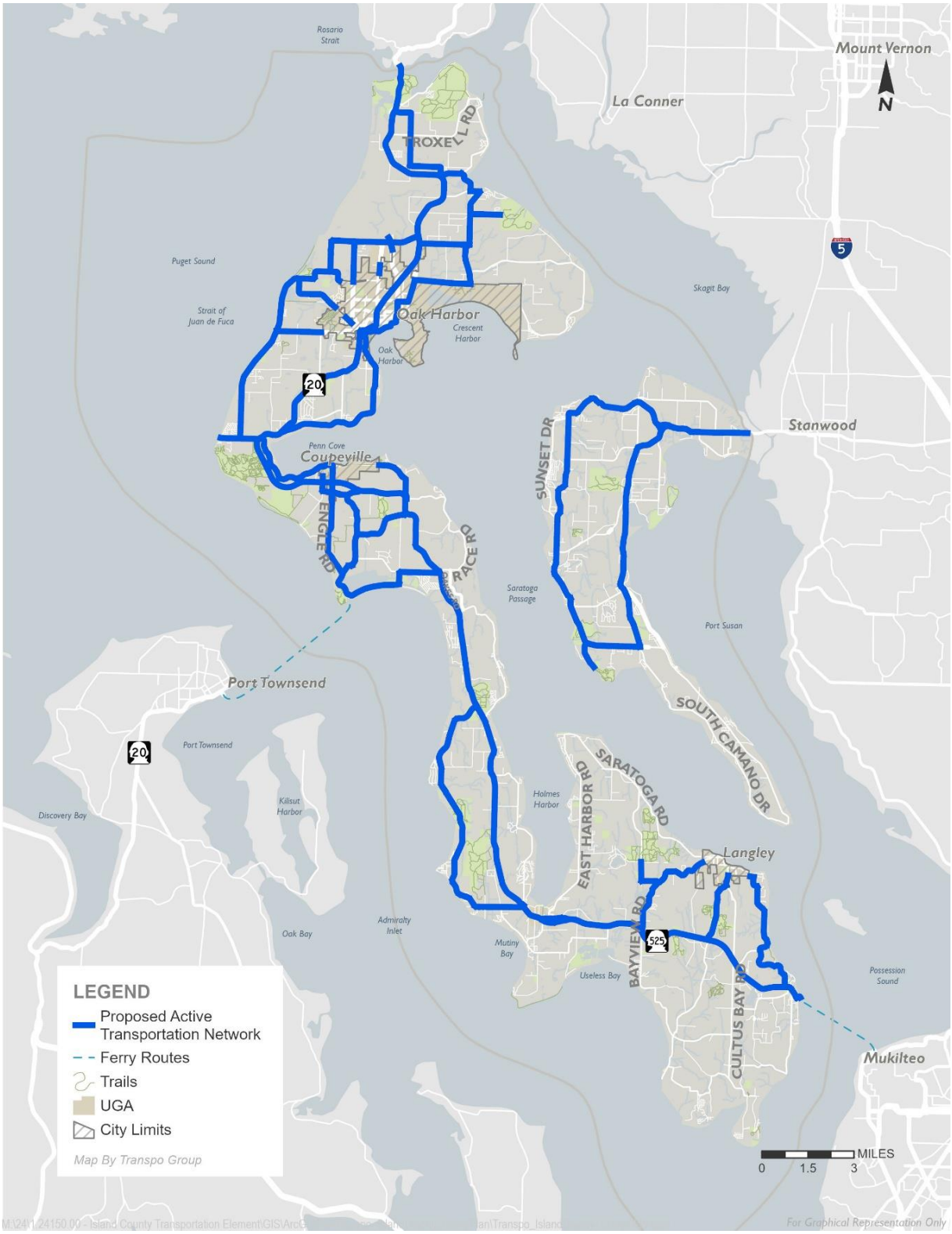
The bicycle network includes a range of transportation enhancement investments on these corridors to facilitate and increase the number of bicycling trips. Specific bicycling improvements may include widening shoulders on existing or planned roadways, installing signs to assist cyclists with wayfinding and to alert drivers to the likelihood of cyclist presence, or developing on street and off-street bicycle paths. For many corridors in the County's bicycle network, specific roadway improvements have not yet been identified.

Active Transportation Network

Figure 4-1~~Figure 4-1~~ shows the planned active transportation network which includes both planned and existing facilities. Developing new facilities for active modes can be difficult in a rural context. Limited right-of-way available for shoulder widening, along with prohibitively high construction costs must be taken into consideration. Additionally, the land use context and reality of living in a rural environment demands a different societal expectation for what type of walking and bicycle facilities can be provided. In developing the active network, efforts were made to ensure that roadways with existing shoulders formed the backbone of the network. Additionally, multiuse pathways or designated bike routes that already existed were

incorporated into the network. The planned facilities are all multi-use and can be assumed to accommodate all active modes, including walking and bicycling and micromobility vehicles.

Figure 4-1 Planned Active Transportation Network



Active Transportation Network – Existing Levels of Service

Figure 4-2~~Figure 4-2~~ through Figure 4-4~~Figure 4-4~~ show the current level of service along the planned active transportation network using the criteria described in section 2.3 of this plan. Notably, US Bike Route 97 is included in the active network. This bike route was established in 2011 and approved by AASHTO, however no comprehensive study of the suitability of the included roads was completed at that time. USBR97 is therefore included in the network, but all sections are symbolized with a yellow dash to indicate “further study needed” since in many cases bringing the route up to the county’s LOS standards for bicycles may not be feasible. Segments identified as substandard are included in the 20-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list where specific deficiencies are identified and associated planning level costs have been calculated.

Figure 4-2 Active Transportation Level of Service (North Whidbey)

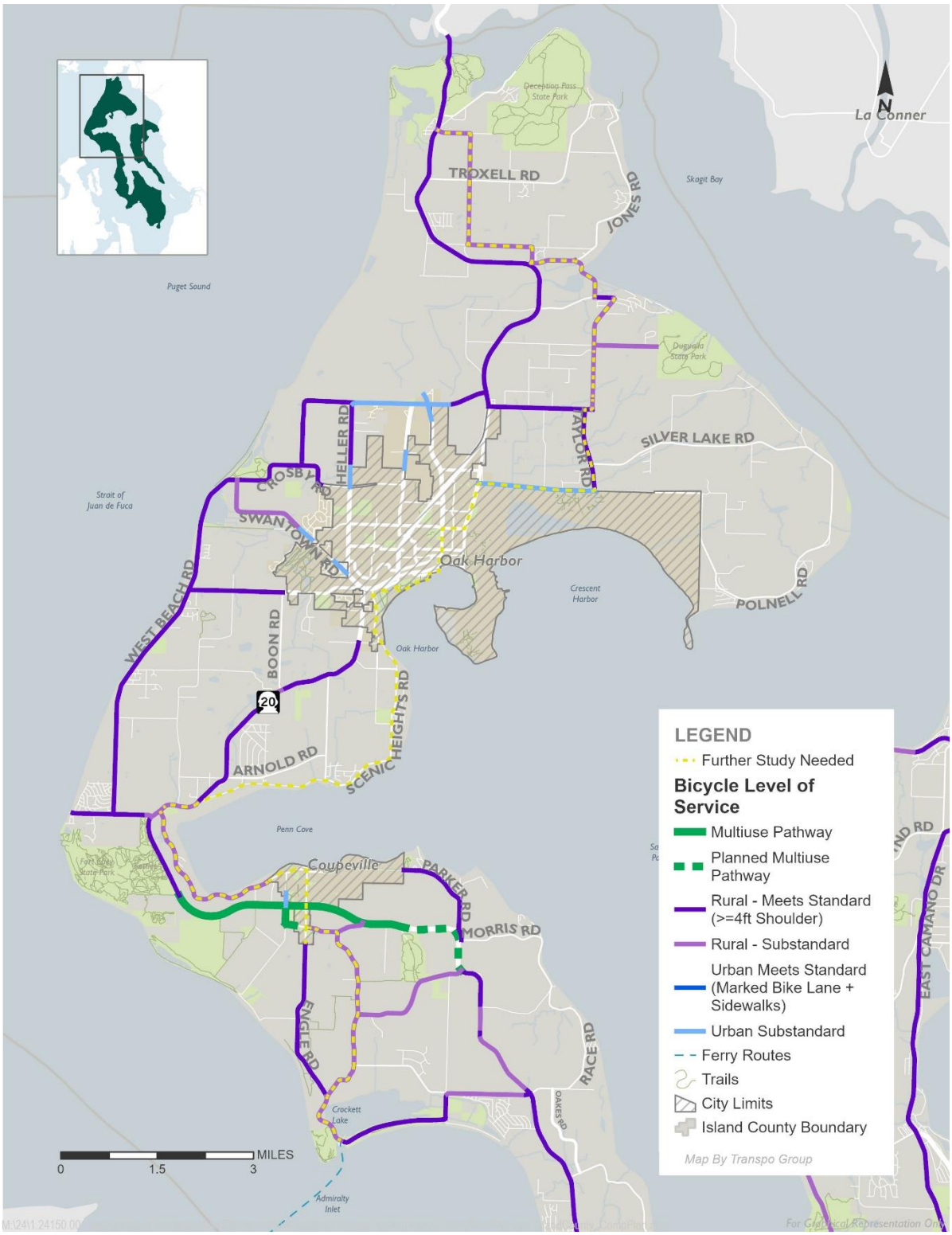


Figure 4-3 Active Transportation Level of Service (South Whidbey)

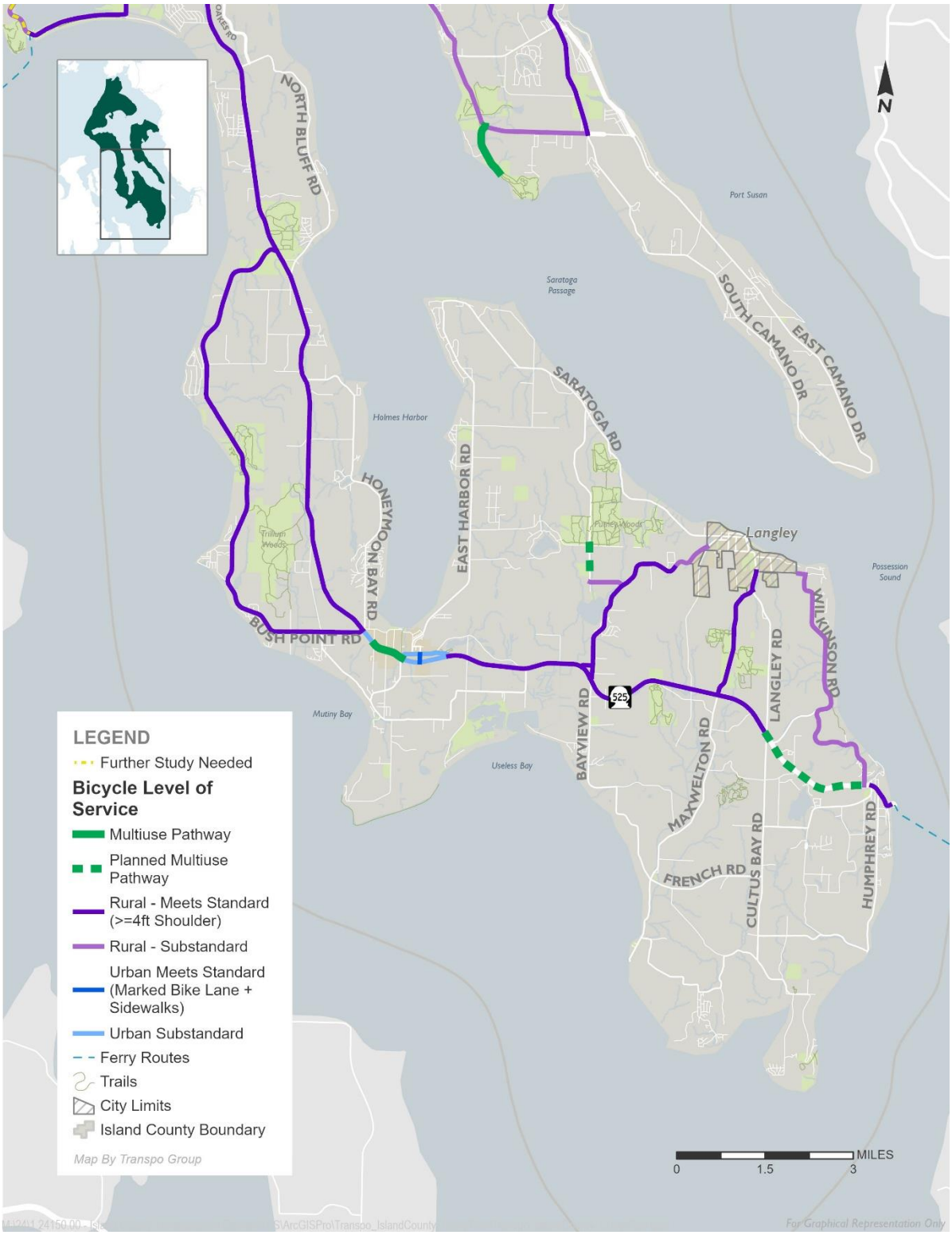


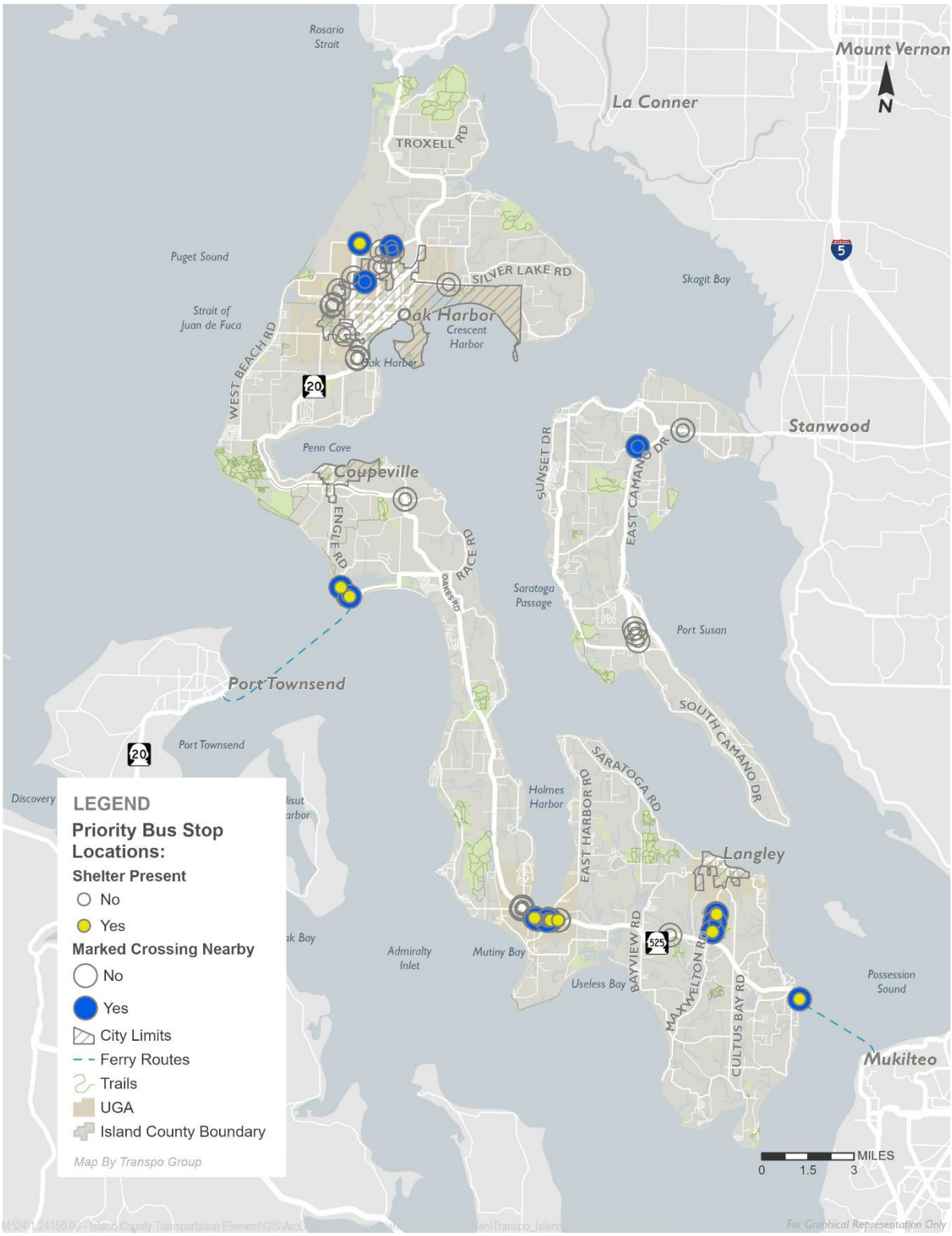
Figure 4-4 Active Transportation Level of Service (Camano)

4.3. Transit

Improvements to the transit system are the primary responsibility of Island Transit. As of September 2025, Island Transit has been focused on restoring ridership to pre-pandemic levels with recently installed Sunday services as part of the Island Transit Maximized initiative. Given that Island Transit is responsible for providing transit service and controls routes and frequency, Island County is focused on providing access to transit stops, as described in Section 2.4

Figure 4-5~~Figure 4-5~~ shows the location of 47 bus stop locations identified as a high priority for improvements based on their location within UGA areas or proximity to schools and other important destinations in the county. Yellow and blue indicate the presence of shelters and crosswalks respectively while hollow points indicate the absence of one or both amenities at a stop. Transit stops lacking shelters and nearby marked crossings present opportunities for the County and Island Transit to improve accessibility to transit.

Figure 4-5 Transit Level of Service



4.4. Ferry Service

Improvements to ferry service in the County are the primary responsibility of the Washington State Ferries (WSF) with support services provided by WSDOT, Island County, IRTPO, and Island Transit. WSF maintains the Clinton-Mukilteo Route and the Coupeville-Port Townsend Route. At this time there are no service increases planned for any of the routes serving Island County.

Many ferry commuters rely on personal vehicles for one or both legs of their trips to and from work. Some park near the Clinton terminal and walk onto the ferry, then connect to transit. Others leave a vehicle in Mukilteo, though demand for overnight parking there is high and the supply is very limited. The City of Mukilteo currently discourages overnight parking.

As discussed in Section 3.3, future ferry service enhancements have generally been on hold as WSF has prioritized restoring ferry service to pre-pandemic levels. WSF will develop their next long-range plan in the next 5 years, which will outline their plans for service expansion and enhancements at that time. Over the next few years, WSF will continue to prioritize replacing aging fleet vehicles and building up crew capacity to establish pre-pandemic ferry service.

4.5. Other Transportation Modes

Air, Rail and Equestrian

The other modes discussed in Chapter 2 are not anticipated to have future changes that are under the jurisdiction of Island County. As such, these modes are not discussed in this chapter.

4.6. Transportation Projects & Programs

Transportation projects and programs are vital to maintain and enhance transportation within and through the County. These are anticipated to serve the County's safety, circulation, and active transportation goals over the planning horizon year of 2045.

The project improvements address safety, capacity, connectivity, and expanded active transportation facilities. Improvements also cover upgrades to existing roads and construction of new roadways, stormwater management / fish passage and interconnected trail systems to support the forecast economic development and growth in the County. The project improvement types are described below, with the complete list of projects summarized in Table 4-1~~Table 4-1~~ and in Figure 4-6~~Figure 4-6~~ to Figure 4-8~~Figure 4-8~~.

Shoulder Widening Program
An ongoing work program focused on installing shoulders on arterial and collector roadways. This program also assists the active transportation system to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Potential sites are evaluated and prioritized based on traffic volumes, accident history, roadway conditions, and the availability of funds. Right of way needs are identified and acquired as necessary.

Intersection Improvements
Intersection improvements were identified where existing or forecast operational deficiencies, as well as the need to realign intersections to improve safety. The projects are intended to improve operations at the identified intersections, improve safety or better accommodate active transportation users.

Roadway Improvements
Roadway improvements were identified to reconstruct roadways where enhanced stabilization is required, additional left turn lanes are needed to better accommodate vehicles turning off state routes, or where new roadways may be desired. The projects are intended to improve traffic operations, improve safety and/or reinforce roadway structures.

Trail System Expansion
Several expansions to the County's trail network are included as part of the transportation improvements identified in the transportation element. These improvements are aimed at expanding the trail system to provide enhanced connections to serve both local transportation needs, and tourist/visitor needs. These projects are intended to improve active transportation options across the County and support the construction of a countywide active transportation network.

Active Transportation Improvements
Active transportation improvements include the construction of sidewalks, bike lanes or multiuse trails. The county planned active transportation network and multimodal level of service standard requires construction of sidewalks and bike lanes along key roadways located within the urban growth areas. In addition, several multiuse paths (10-12' paved pathways) have been identified to accommodate active users across the county. These improvements, like the train system expansion, are intended to improve travel options for active users.

Countywide Spot Improvements

County staff and consultants identified roadway improvements to reconstruct roadways where enhanced stabilization is required, additional left turn lanes are needed to better accommodate vehicles turning off state routes, or where new roadways may be desired. The projects are intended to improve traffic operations, improve safety and/or reinforce roadway structures.

Table 4-1 2044 Transportation Improvement Project List

Project ID	Project Type	Roadway	Project Description	Cost
TE-11	Active Transportation	Goldie Rd	Add bike lanes, 5' sidewalks to both sides of Goldie Rd from Halyard Ln to Christian Road	$2,450,000
TE-12	Active Transportation	Oak Harbor Rd	Add bike lanes, 5' sidewalks to both sides of Oak Harbor Rd from Gun Club Rd south ~1380 ft to existing sidewalk	$1,590,000
TE-13	Active Transportation	Ault Field Rd	Stripe bike lanes, add 5' sidewalks on south side on Ault Field Rd from Heller Rd RAB to N Oak Harbor Rd	$2,400,000
TE-14	Active Transportation	Heller St	Add bike lanes, 5' sidewalks on east side of Heller Street from NW Crosby Avenue to Family Bible Church Entrance	$565,000
TE-18	Active Transportation	Swantown Road	Add bike lanes, 5' shoulders on Swantown Road from Liberty Ln to SW Heller St	$740,000
TE-19	Active Transportation	Engle Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Engle Rd from Fort Casey Rd to Keyston Ferry Landing	$2,210,000
TE-22	Active Transportation	Main St	Sidewalk on north side of Main St from SR 525 to Harbor Ave, restripe on-street parking for bike lanes	$650,000
TE-26	Active Transportation	Camano Avenue	Add multiuse path from Sandy Point Rd to Fairgrounds Road	$550,000
TE-32	Active Transportation	NW Broadway St	Widen and pave existing gravel path on east side of NW Broadway from SR 20 to City Limits (Oakmont St)	$350,000
TE-33	Active Transportation	SR 20	Install 5' sidewalk on both sides of street from Eagle Vista to Waterloo	$1,410,000
TE-35	Active Transportation	Main St / Scott Road	Add sidewalk on one side of E Main St / Scott Road from S Harbor Road to SR 525	$1,690,000
TIP-12	Countywide	Misc. Intersection Alignment Improvement Projects	Improving safety by realigning intersections to be close to perpendicular	$510,000
TIP-18	Countywide	Misc. Minor Safety Improvements and Project Developments	Small projects to improve safety, or initial project development	$1,325,000
TIP-19	Countywide	Evaluate Horizontal Curves for Safety Improvements	Countywide horizontal curves for safety improvements	$405,000
TIP-21	Countywide	Install Guiderails as needed	Countywide installation of guardrails as needed	$50,000
TIP-22	Countywide	Speed Limit Evaluation / Changes	Countywide speed limit changes	$25,000
TIP-24	Countywide	Non-compliant regulatory and warning sign replacement	Countywide regulatory and warning signing replacement	$490,000
TE-04	Further Study Needed	SR 525	Study Addition of Multiuse Path on south side of SR 525 from Fish Rd to Scott Rd	TBD
TE-05	Further Study Needed	Madrona Way	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from SR 20 to Coupeville Limits	TBD
TE-06	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (Ducken Rd / Monkey Hill Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from SR 20 to W Henni Rd	TBD
TE-08	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (E Henni Rd, Imperial Lane, Jones Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from W Henni Rd to E Frostad Rd	TBD

Project ID	Project Type	Roadway	Project Description	Cost
TE-09	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (Taylor Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from E Frostad RD to E Fakkema Rd	TBD
TE-15	Further Study Needed	Swantown Road	Further Study Needed - active transportation improvements on Swantown from Wieldraayer Rd to Fairway Dr	TBD
TE-30	Further Study Needed	US BR 97 (Scenic Heights Rd, Penn Cove Rd)	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from southern Oak Harbor City limits to SR 20	TBD
TE-31	Further Study Needed	Marona Way / Nw Coveland St / N Main St	Further Study Needed - US BR 97 from western Coupeville limits to southern limits	TBD
TE-36	Intersection	SR 525 / Honeymoon Bay Rd	Install RAB or signal	$5,160,000
TIP-13	Intersection	Swede Hill Road / Burley Road Intersection Improvements	Improve safety by realigning the Burley Road approach to Swede Hill Rd	$625,000
TIP-14	Intersection	Monkey Hill Road / Henni Road Realignment	Improve safety by realigning the intersection	$655,000
TIP-15	Intersection	East Camano Drive / Cross Island Road Intersection Improvements	Intersection improvements at East Camano Dr / Cross Island Rd / Arrowhead Rd (CSAP says RAB)	$4,370,000
TIP-16	Intersection	East Camano Dr / McElroy Roundabout	Construct RAB at intersection of East Camano Drive / McElroy Drive	$3,575,000
TIP-17	Intersection	Heggenes Road Intersection Realignments	Improve Safety by realigning Heggenes Rd / Orr Rd	$120,000
TIP-23	Intersection	North Camano Dr & Utsalady Dr Guardrail Replacement	Replace non-standard guardrails	$1,089,000
TIP-44	Intersection	East Camano Dr, Monticello Dr, Elger Bay Rd Intersection Improvements	Install Signals or RABs as needed	$5,150,000
IB-05	Roadway	SR 20 Corridor Improvements - Cedar Hollow to Terry Road	Provide left turns lanes at intersections, or RABs. Add wildlife signing.	$11,690,000
TIP-05	Roadway	South Whidbey Industrial Park Road	Provide public access to the light industrial zone portion of Crawford Rd.	TBD
TIP-10	Roadway	Cultus Bay Road Reconstruction	Bailey Rd to Jewett Rd	$2,850,000
TIP-11	Roadway	Cultus Bay Road Reconstruction	French Rd to Bailey Rd	$3,950,000
TIP-20	Roadway	Karen Way Shoulder Stabilization Phase 2	Stabilize shoulder to prevent roadway collapse	$650,000
IB-14	Shoulder Widening	Sandy Point Rd Traffic Calming	5 ft paved shoulder (4 ft additional pavement)	$2,470,000
TE-03	Shoulder Widening	SR 20	Widen shoulders to 4' on SR 20 from just north of Race Rd 5477 ft	$3,160,000
TE-07	Shoulder Widening	Fort Casey Road	Widen shoulders to 4' on Fort Casey Road from Terry Rd to Engle Rd	$8,610,000
TE-10	Shoulder Widening	E Sleeper Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on E Sleeper Rd from Taylor Rd to Dugualla State Park	$2,880,000
TE-16	Shoulder Widening	Swantown Road	Widen shoulders to 4' on Swantown Road from Wieldraayer Rd Crosby Rd	$3,660,000
TE-17	Shoulder Widening	Terry Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Terry Road from Coupeville City Lmits to SR 20	$2,560,000
TE-20	Shoulder Widening	Patmore Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Patmore Rd from Fort Casey Rd to SR 20	$5,790,000
TE-21	Shoulder Widening	SR 20	Widen shoulders to 4' on SR 20 from Wanamaker Rd to just west of 525 / Race Rd intersection	$3,530,000
TE-23	Shoulder Widening	Andreason Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Andreason Rd from Lone Lake Rd to Bayview Rd	$1,710,000

Project ID	Project Type	Roadway	Project Description	Cost
TE-27	Shoulder Widening	Sandy Point Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Sandy Point Road from Clara Cornu Ln to Wilkinson Rd	$360,000
TE-28	Shoulder Widening	Bob Galbreath Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Bob Galbreath Rd from SR 525 to Zimmerman Rd	$2,050,000
TE-29	Shoulder Widening	Camano Drive / Mountainview Rd	Widen shoulders to 4' on Camano Drive from Nellie St to Elger Bay Rd	$26,400,000
TIP-02	Shoulder Widening	Shoulder Widening Program	Ongoing program to cover design and right of way research of additional shoulder width	$525,000
TIP-03	Shoulder Widening	Sunrise Boulevard Shoulder Widening	Shoulder widening on Sunrise Boulevard from SR 532 to Russel Rd	$3,825,000
TIP-06	Shoulder Widening	Scenic Heights Road Shoulder Widening	Shoulder widening on Scenic Heights Rd from Monroe Landing Rd. to north of Balda Rd.	$6,650,000
TIP-07	Shoulder Widening	SR 20 Shoulder Widening: Race to Welcher	This section of SR 20 has minimal shoulders. The project will provide Four (4)-foot shoulders on both sides of the highway.	$5,400,000
TIP-09	Shoulder Widening	Bayview Road Shoulder Widening	Sunlight Dr to Ewing Rd	$2,770,000
NI-05	Study	Neighborhood Traffic Management Program	Continue funding the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program	TBD
NI-07	Study	Safe Routes to School Plan	Develop a Safe Routes to School Plan in Island County to improve safety and mobility for children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. Island County Public Health proposes piloting this program on Camano Island before expanding to other school districts as efforts to improve routes to school will also address locations of concern and other safety concerns.	TBD
NI-11	Study	Active Transportation Plan	Develop an Island County Active Transportation Plan to identify and improve active transportation connections and facilities.	TBD
NI-17	Study	Intersection Traffic Studies	Conduct traffic analysis studies on priority locations to determine intersection controls. Consider a compact roundabout at SR 525 and Double Bluff Road	TBD
TIP-40	Trail	Misc. Trail Projects	Small trail projects to improve or expand the trail system for transportation	$300,000
TIP-41	Trail	Kettles - Fort Ebey Trail Connector	Improvements to an existing trail connecting the paved portion of the Kettles Trail to Ford Ebey State Park	$133,000
TIP-42	Trail	Clinton to Ken's Corner Trail	New multi-use trail along SR 525 connecting Clinton to Langley Rd	$12,030,000
TIP-43	Trail	Rhododendron Park Road to Patmore Road Trail	Install multi-use trail between Rhododendron Park Road and Patmore Road	$3,370,000

In addition to the capital improvement programs, the County also has Maintenance and Operations costs related to overseeing and operating existing transportation assets. They generally include the normal cost of maintaining and preserving existing roadways and other transportation infrastructure, as well as the cost of administering transportation programs in the County. The costs associated with maintenance and operations are discussed in Chapter 5.

Figure 4-6 Transportation Improvement Projects (North Whidbey)

Figure 4-7 Transportation Improvement Projects (South Whidbey)

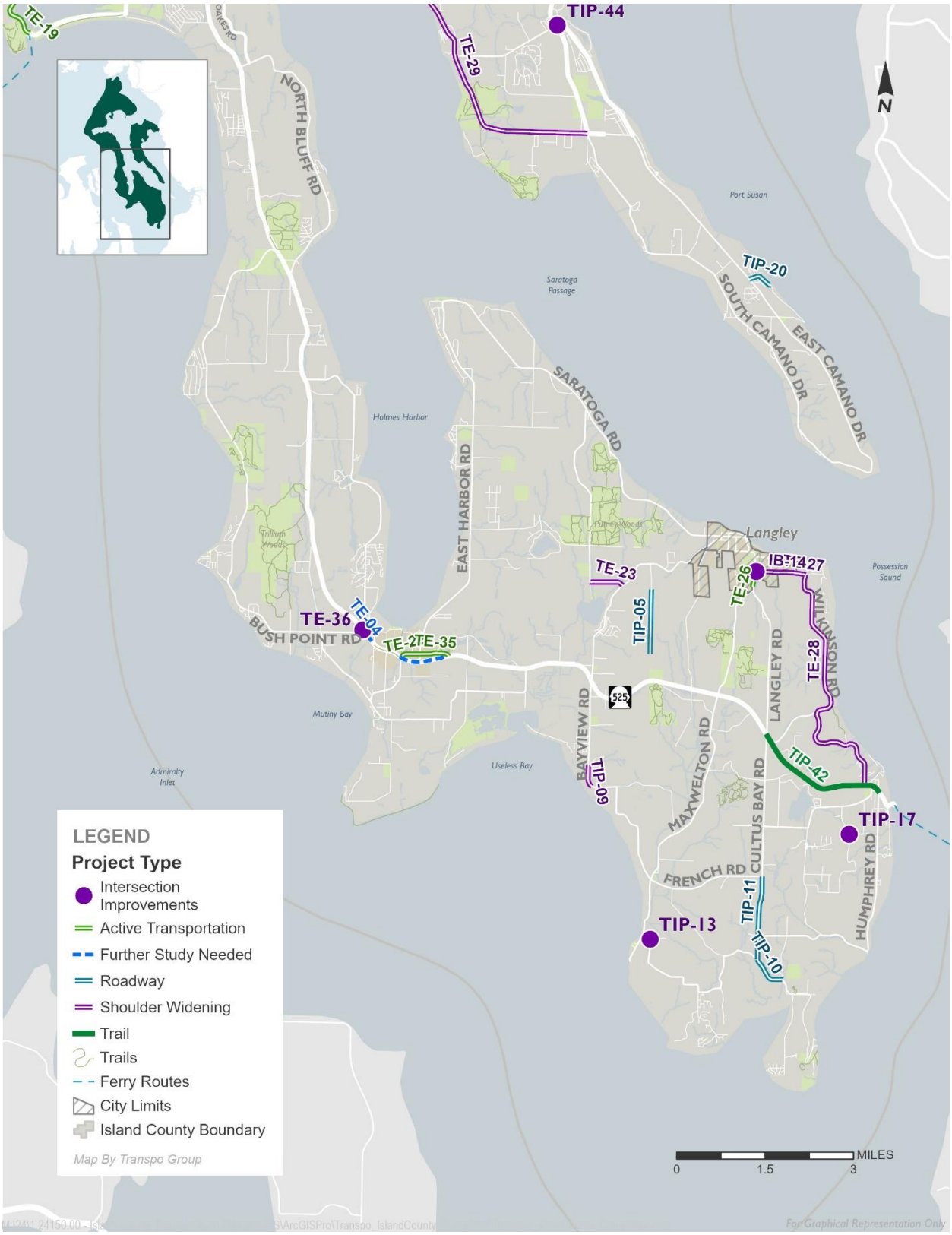


Figure 4-8 Transportation Improvement Projects (Camano)

5. Transportation Funding Situation Assessment

The list of transportation improvement projects must be funded and implemented to meet existing and future travel demands in and around Island County. Estimated project costs and future revenues are presented and options to fund the projects are described in this section. Implementation strategies are discussed and include items such as coordination with WSDOT, IRTPO, and local agencies to prioritize and fund regional improvements. The implementation plan sets up the framework for the County to prioritize and fund the improvements identified in the transportation plan.

The GMA requires the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan to include a multi-year financing plan based on the identified improvement needs in the transportation systems plan. The financing plan is to be the basis in developing the required six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). If probable funding is less than the identified needs, then the transportation financing program must also include a discussion of how additional funding will be raised or how land use assumptions will be reassessed to assure that level of service standards will be met. Alternatively, the County can adjust its level of service standards.

A summary of costs for capital improvement projects and countywide maintenance and operation programs are presented. The capital project and maintenance and operations program costs are compared to estimated revenues from existing sources used by the County to fund transportation improvements. Other potential funding sources to help reduce the projected shortfall are described. Lastly, a summary of a reassessment strategy for the county to use for reviewing transportation funding in the context of the overall Comprehensive Plan is also included.

5.1. Project and Programs Cost Estimates

Table 5-1~~Table 5-1~~ summarizes the costs of the recommended transportation improvement projects and programs. These cover Island County capital improvements, maintenance and operations. The costs are summarized for the life of the Plan. Improvements under the responsibility of WSDOT and local agencies are not included in the summary table. However, the County may choose to include a share of the costs of WSDOT improvements in its transportation impact fee or other funding options.

Table 5-1 Transportation Project and Program Costs (2026 – 2045)

Improvement Type	(2026-2045) Total Costs[1]	Percent of Total Costs
Transportation Capital Projects[2]		
Shoulder Widening Program	$84,350,000	53.6%
Intersection Improvements	$19,140,000	12.2%
Roadway Improvements	$20,744,000	13.2%
Trail System Expansion	$2,805,000	1.8%
Active Transportation Improvements	$15,833,000	10.1%
Countywide Spot Improvements	$14,605,000	9.3%
Subtotal Capital Projects	**$157,477,000**	**100%**
Transportation Maintenance & Operations (M & O) Programs		
Salaries (including Sheriff's Office levy)	$61,350,000	22%
Maintenance & Operations	$218,560,000	78%
Subtotal M & O Programs	$279,910,000	**100%**
Total Costs	**$437,387,000**	

1. All costs in 2025 dollars, rounded to $1,000
2. Does not include other agency improvements

Planning-level cost estimates were developed for the capital improvements and presented in the Transportation System Plan Chapter (4). The planning estimates were prepared based upon average unit costs for transportation projects within the region. Planning-level costs were developed with the assumption that costs would include associated storm water development requirements, property acquisition, wetland mitigation, and utility extensions and/or upgrades, based upon historic costs for those items. More detailed cost estimates will need to be prepared as the projects are closer to design and construction. Future design studies will identify specific property impacts and options to reduce costs and impacts on properties.

The estimated capital cost of the Transportation Plan is approximately $437.4 million (in 2025 dollars). Approximately 54 percent of the capital costs are associated with the shoulder widening program. These costs cover upgrading roadways to provide 4-foot-wide shoulders across the planned active transportation network. 25 percent of the capital costs are associated with roadway and intersection improvements, 19 percent with construction of active transportation improvements (sidewalks, bike lanes and multiuse paths) and expansion of the trail network. The remaining 2 percent of capital costs are for countywide spot improvements.

Maintenance and operations costs were projected based on historic expenditures from 2018 through 2024. Maintenance and operations costs cover general administration, roadway and storm drainage maintenance, street lighting, traffic signal and street signs, street sweeping, and

other miscellaneous safety improvement programs. The M&O budget also includes the salaries of staff and the sheriff's department's support. To reduce the need for extensive capital reconstruction projects, the maintenance and operations program to preserve the existing street system is estimated to be nearly $280 million of the total $437.4 million Transportation Plan cost.

5.2. Funding Analysis with Existing Revenue Sources

Historically there are seven main sources of revenue that have been used to fund transportation projects in Island County:

- Federal Funding Sources
    1. Federal Entitlements and Grants
- State Funding Sources
    2. State Fuel Tax
    3. CAPRON Funds
    4. State Entitlements and Grants
- Local Funding
    5. Property Taxes
    6. County General Fund Transfers
    7. Local Entitlements and Grants

Federal Funding Sources

Federal Entitlements and Grants

Federal transportation grants are funded through the federal portion of the Fuel Excise Tax. The federal gas tax rate has remained consistent since 1993 at approximately $0.184 per gallon. Most of these funds are deposited into the Highway Trust Fund and disbursed to the states through the Highway and Mass Transit Accounts. The Federal share of funding has represented a relatively small portion of overall funding and is sporadic and generally tied to success in grant applications for specific projects.

Additionally, Island County receives some non-grant federal transportation funding through federal entitlements that are part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The IIJA program is a federal program that has funded surface transportation programs at over $350 billion for federal highway programs for fiscal years 2022 through 2026.

State Funding Sources

State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT/Gas Tax)

Although historical per capita fuel tax dollars have been increasing in nominal numbers, when adjusted for inflation it is clear that per capita revenues have been declining over time. This trend is becoming more pronounced in very recent history due to large increases in the price of gasoline and a significant shift toward electric-powered and more fuel-efficient vehicles. On average, Island County has received 11% of its revenues from their share of overall county distributions of the State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax. This category has been the County's third largest source of revenue for Transportation.

CAPRON Funds

Island County receives a sizable Capron refund distribution of State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax. The Capron refund is authorized by the Capron Act, which was originally made law in 1919 (and is now codified as RCW 46.68.080) as a means to ensure equitable distribution of the State portion of MVFT revenues by refunding State MVFT proceeds collected within counties comprised entirely of Islands. At the time, San Juan and Island Counties were the only counties wholly comprised of islands and without any state highways. When State Route 20 was extended to Whidbey Island, the Capron refund was adjusted by reducing the refund to 50% of MVFT collected in the county.

Currently, the Capron Act distributes one-half of the vehicle license fees collected under RCW 46.17.350 and 46.17.355 and one-half of the fuel taxes collected under RCW 82.36.025 (1) and 82.38.030 (1) and directly or indirectly paid by the residents of those counties composed entirely of islands and which have either a fixed physical connection with the mainland or state highways on any of the islands of which they are composed, to those counties to fund their transportation programs.

Historically, about 27.5% of Island County's transportation revenues have come from Capron Refund distributions. This category is the County's second largest source of revenue for Transportation. This is a unique funding source that is extremely beneficial to Island County in funding its transportation program, including both M&O and capital improvements.

Over the past several decades there have been many attempts in the state legislature to repeal the Capron Act. So far, all attempts have failed. It is likely that in the future the act will be subject to attempted repeal again. In addition, this source suffers from the same overall uncertainty surrounding the continued viability of Motor Fuel Tax, so there is particular risk for Island County in terms of maintaining traditional levels of transportation funding.

Other State Funds

This category is primarily state grants, like those from the Department of Ecology, Urban Arterial Board, Transportation Improvement Board, Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, and the Washington State Department of Transportation. Beyond State grants, state shared revenues, entitlements, impact payments, and in-lieu taxes might be included in this revenue category.

Local Funding Sources

Property Taxes (Road Levy)

Property Taxes are used by the County and Cities to partially fund transportation projects. The County has a dedicated road levy. The local Cities and Towns use property tax receipts for a range of programs, including transportation. The Road Levy is a property tax collected by the County specifically for transportation funding and accounts for the largest portion (up to 48%) of the County's transportation funds.

General Fund Transfers

Because general fund revenues have few restrictions on how they are spent and the fact that the County has a dedicated Road Levy for transportation, it is relatively unusual for these funds

to be used for transportation purposes. Historically the County's General Fund contributions to transportation have been sporadic.

Other Local Funding

These dollars typically include some combination of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funds, Leasehold Excise Taxes, Road Permits, payments in lieu of taxes, and other miscellaneous capital and transportation funds. This has been a relatively steady source of funding, though overall contributing a relatively small share of total revenues for transportation investments.

Grants

Over the past several years the County has had some success in securing grants for transportation improvements. Grant funding is typically tied to specific improvement projects and distributed on a competitive basis, often with a local funding match.

Table 5-2~~Table 5-2~~.summarizes the anticipated transportation revenues for the 20-year plan lifecycle.

Table 5-2 2026-2045 Transportation Revenues

Revenue Source	Total Revenues	Percent of Total Revenues
Road Levy Tax	$188,000,000	48.70%
Capron	$106,000,000	27.46%
State Entitlement	$44,000,000	11.40%
Grants (State and Federal)	$34,000,000	8.81%
Other	$14,000,000	3.63%
Total Revenues	**$386,000,000**	**100.0%**

Revenue projections were estimated based upon 7-years of historical revenues (2018-2024). Based on recent historical data, it is estimated that revenues would be more than $386 million during the 20-year period.

TBD revenues are assumed to generate approximately 48.7 percent of revenue, while Capron funding is expected to generate 27 percent of the revenue.

5.3. Forecasted Revenue Shortfall

Table 5-3~~Table 5-3~~ summarizes the County's proposed transportation financing strategy for the approximately $280 million cost of maintaining and operating the County's roadways as well as the $157.5 million in capital costs. The Plan results in a shortfall of approximately $51.4 million. This assumes that the level of grants and developer commitments will be generated as estimated in the Transportation Plan. The deficit could be greater if the level of development or the level of grant funding is less than forecast. The former would be offset by a reduced need for transportation improvements to accommodate growth. If the County is more successful in

obtaining grants or other outside funding for projects, then the potential deficit could be reduced, as discussed in the next section.

Table 5-3 Forecasted Revenues and Costs (2026-2045)

Revenue Source[1]	Total (2015–2035)
Transportation Revenues	$386,000,000
Transportation M&O Costs	$279,910,000
Estimated Capital Budget	**$106,090,000**
Estimated Capital Costs	$157,477,000
Estimated Capital Shortfall	**($51,387,000)**

1. All revenues in 2025 dollars
2. Does not include other agency improvements

Capital Revenue Shortfall

The County pools both capital and maintenance funds in the County's roadway fund (Fund 101). The county plans to prioritize the maintenance of the roadway system before additional capital projects are constructed. Therefore, the county revenue projection assumes approximately $106.1 million available (after necessary maintenance) for capital projects over the next twenty years. This results in an approximate $51.4 million shortfall in funding to fund all of the identified capital improvement projects during the planning period.

5.4. Potential Options to Balance the Plan

As noted above, projected existing revenue sources would allow the County to fund approximately 67 percent of the identified transportation improvement project costs. The County could address this shortfall in two ways:

1. **Prioritizing Capital Projects.** The County can prioritize its capital projects, such that projects are funded on an as-funds-are-available basis. This would result in a delay in implementation of some projects, especially lower priority improvements.
2. **Adopting New Policies to Generate Additional Revenue.** The County could increase funding for capital transportation projects through several policy changes that would generate additional transportation revenues. These include partnering with other agencies or additional grants.

Prioritizing Capital Projects

Some of the capital improvements may only become necessary when and if development occurs. These projects are somewhat unique in that the cause and effect of capital projects is directly linked to the individual development projects themselves, as compared to capital projects that become necessary due to aggregate growth within the County as a whole. Funding for these projects could be tied to developer mitigations/or other County revenues generated through increased sales taxes.

The County may choose to prioritize its project list, and fund and pursue additional revenues only for the highest priority projects.

New Policies to Generate Additional Revenues

There are several new policies that Island County could consider to generate additional revenues for transportation:

- Property Tax Levy Lid Lifts
- Transportation Benefit Districts
- Voter Approved Bond/Tax Package
- Other Developer Mitigation and Requirements
- Local Improvement Districts

It is possible that some of these policies may be less feasible than others based on Island County's unique position and limited anticipated growth. That should be considered when considering any of these new policies. Each of these policies is discussed below.

Property Tax Levy Lid Lifts

The Road Levy is a property tax collected by the County specifically for transportation funding and accounts for a large portion of the County's transportation funds. Since the passage of I-747, the revenues from this levy have been declining because the 1.0 percent allowed increase does not keep pace with inflation (which hovers around 3.0 percent), or population growth.

One tool that counties can, and increasingly are, using to combat this is a levy lid lift. To do this, a county asks its voters to "lift" the 1 percent levy limit on annual levy increases so the district can collect a higher levy amount, up to the maximum rate limit amount for that jurisdiction. Districts have certain statutory maximum rates but many of these districts have seen their levy rate reduced year after year to avoid levying more than 1 percent additional revenue as property valuations increase. A levy lid lift lets them increase rates up to the statutory maximum rate. This is a powerful funding tool but does pose the challenge of requiring voter authorization. There is prevailing sentiment, though, that baring the legislature redesigning the current levy caps, jurisdictions will be forced to employ levy lid lifts to collect revenues lost from the 1 percent levy cap.

Transportation Benefit Districts

Transportation Benefit Districts (TBDs) (Chapter 36.73 RCW) are independent taxing districts that can impose fees and/or taxes to fund transportation improvements. TBDs can be established via ordinance in jurisdictions ranging from a city to multi-county area. TBDs are intended to finance the construction of, and operate, improvements to roadways, high-capacity transportation systems, public transit systems, and other transportation management programs.

Sales and Use Tax (RCW 82.14.0455). Cities and counties can authorize local TBDs that provide up to a 0.2% local sales and use tax with voter approval. This tax must be authorized by voters and may not be in effect longer than 10 years unless reauthorized by voters.

Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) (RCWs 81.100 and 81.104). TBDs can levy up to a $100 fee for each new vehicle weighing less than 6,000 pounds registered in its jurisdiction. $20 of this fee can be leveraged without a public vote.

Currently, Island County has not established a TBD, and, therefore, does not collect any revenue via this mechanism. To generate transportation revenues via a TBD, Island County would first need to pass a County ordinance establishing the TBD and then impose a fee or tax (from the options above) on that TBD. Depending on the fee or tax levied in the TBD, Island County might have to hold a public election to levy the tax.

Voter Approved Bond/Tax Package

Bonds do not result in additional revenue unless coupled with a revenue generating mechanism, such as a voter approved tax. The debt service on the bonds results in increased costs which can be paid with the additional tax revenues. Although the County does not anticipate issuing bonds in the near future, it remains an option for generating additional transportation revenues to fund some of the higher cost improvement projects.

Other Developer Mitigation and Requirements

The County could adopt specific development-related requirements which would help fund the identified improvements. These include frontage improvements and mitigation under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and concurrency requirements. The County requires developments to fund and construct certain roadway improvements as part of their projects. These typically include reconstructing abutting roads to meet the County's current design standards. These improvements can include widening of pavement, drainage improvements, and construction of curb, gutter, and sidewalks.

The County has the authority to evaluate impacts of development projects under SEPA. The SEPA review may identify adverse transportation impacts. These could include impacts related to safety, traffic operations, non-motorized travel, or other transportation issues. The needed improvements may or may not be identified as specific projects in the Plan.

The County could also require an evaluation of transportation concurrency for development projects. The concurrency evaluation may identify impacts to facilities that operate below the County's level of service standard. To resolve that deficiency, the applicant can propose to fund and/or construct improvements to provide an adequate level of service. Alternatively, the applicant can wait for the County, or another agency or developer to fund improvements to resolve the deficiency. Again, this funding source, while common in Washington State, may not be viable for Island County since growth projections do not appear to require capacity increases in the system.

Local Improvement Districts

A local improvement district (LID) (*RCW 35.43 to 35.56)* is a special assessment area established by a jurisdiction to fund specific public improvements, including transportation improvements, through mechanisms that assess those costs to benefitted property owners. LIDs could be formed to construct sidewalks, upgrade streets, improve drainage, or other similar types of projects. A LID may be in residential, commercial, or industrial areas or combinations depending on the needs and benefits. LIDs can be proposed either by the County or by

residents or business/property owners. LIDs must be formed by a specific process which establishes the improvements, their costs, and assessments. The assessments are added to the property tax which helps to spread the costs over time. The amount of money you can generate through an LID has to be equal to or less than the special benefit generated by the project for the properties being assessed. Due to that funding limiter, this tool works only in certain situations and for certain projects, but if the right opportunity presents itself, it could be a useful tool. Many of these situations hinge on development, so it is unlikely that it will be a large funding source for Island County moving forward.

5.5. Intergovernmental Coordination

Regional transportation planning was significantly affected by the adoption of the Growth Management Act in 1990. One of GMA's provisions authorized establishment of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). In 1991, Skagit County jurisdictions joined with Island County jurisdictions to form the Skagit-Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SIRTPO). The SIRTPO existed from 1991 – 2015, until it was dissolved because it no longer met the member requirements for an RTPO. Upon its dissolution, SCOG became the RTPO for Skagit County and the Island RTPO, or IRTPO, was formed in September 2016.

Island RTPO (IRTPO) is the lead agency for coordinating the transportation planning efforts of jurisdictions within the county. The organization is responsible for maintaining a regional transportation plan that frames the policy basis for coordinating transportation planning and improvements within Island County, including County, city and town, ports, Indian tribes, WSDOT, and public transportation service providers. IRTPO maintains the regional travel demand forecasting model and facilitates discussion and decision-making among its member agencies, including:

- Island County
- City of Oak Harbor
- Town of Coupeville
- City of Langley
- Port of Coupeville
- Island Transit
- Port of South Whidbey
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)

Northwest Region Office Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) and the City of Stanwood are associate members. As part of WSDOT, the Washington State Ferry (WSF) system also sends representatives to IRTPO meetings. The member organizations voluntarily participate in the IRTPO and have elected Island County as the lead agency and fiscal agent. The IRTPO operates on State and Federal grant funding. No dues are collected from member agencies. The 13.5% matching funds required by any of the Federal grants the IRTPO receives are divided amongst the project-specific agencies. No matching funds are required for the IRTPO's State grants.

Regional Transportation Plan

The IRTPO regional transportation plan Island Access 2045 is based on public and agency outreach and establishes four key pillars with supporting policies, as listed below.

PILLAR 1 – LEADERSHIP

Refers to actions that establish a shared vision or common goal, motivate others to pursue that direction, foster collaboration and innovation, and advance regional objectives.

Policy 1. Consistency & Coordination

Policy 2. Strategic Decisions

Policy 3. Public Accountability

Policy 4. Visionary Direction

PILLAR 2 - SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Refers to those strategies and actions that keep all aspects of the multimodal transportation system working safely and efficiently, and which keep life cycle costs as low as possible.

Policy 5. State of Good Repair

Policy 6. Efficient Reliability

Policy 7. System Safety

PILLAR 3 - SUSTAINABILITY

Refers to those actions that support the triple-bottom line of social equity, environmental health, and economic vitality.

Policy 8. Environmental Health

Policy 9. Economic Vitality

Policy 10. Social Equity

PILLAR 4 - PREPAREDNESS

Refers to actions that increase the ability to respond and adapt to unexpected disruptions or harness emerging opportunities.

Policy 11. System Resiliency

Policy 12. Technology & Innovation

Transportation Demand Management

Beyond the GMA requirements to forecast how physical transportation facilities may be capable of accommodating the transportation demands attributed to future growth, Island County and other jurisdictions are responsible for identifying possible optional means such as management of transportation services in creative ways that maximize efficiencies and leverage the capacities of existing transportation facilities.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) includes an entire set of measures and strategies that can be employed to manage the demand, rather than the supply, side of the societal transportation equation. TDM strategies include increased use of active transportation travel, transit and car-pooling, working from home, coordination of land use and transportation decisions, and encouraging major trip generators to plan their activities in such a way that peak hour travel demands are minimized.

5.6. Reassessment Strategy

Although the financing summary identifies the potential for a total, conservative revenue shortfall of approximately $51.4 M (in 2025 dollars) over the life of the plan, the County is committed to reassessing their transportation needs and funding sources each year as part of its 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This allows the County to match the financing program with the short-term improvement projects and funding. To implement the Transportation Element, the County will consider the following principals in its transportation funding program:

New Policies to Generate Additional Revenues

There are several new policies that Island County could consider generating additional revenues for transportation:

- Balance capital improvement with available revenues, by prioritizing transportation capital improvement projects as part of the annual 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
- Consider new policies to generate additional revenues; these may include:
    - Property Tax Levy Lid Lifts
    - Transportation Benefit Districts
    - Voter Approved Bond/Tax Package
    - Other Developer Mitigation and Requirements
    - Local Improvement Districts;
- Review project design standards to determine whether costs could be reduced through reasonable changes in scope or deviations from design standards; and
- Continue to vigorously pursue grant funds from state and federal sources, understanding that grant funds are anticipated to decline.

The County will use the annual update of the 6-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to re-evaluate priorities and timing of projects and need for alternative funding programs. Throughout the planning period, projects will be completed and priorities revised. The development of the TIP will be an ongoing process over the life of the Plan and will be reviewed and amended annually.