



Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

for the Thurston Region

November 4, 2022

Planning Area: Thurston County

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Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC)

Thurston Regional Planning Council is a 23-member intergovernmental board made up of local governmental jurisdictions within Thurston County, plus the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Established in 1967 under RCW 36.70.060, TRPC helps make the region an extraordinary place to live, work, and play. TRPC fosters the region's livability through collaborative, informed planning. It carries out regionally focused plans and studies on topics such as transportation, growth management, and environmental quality.

TRPC also provides information regarding the region and its emerging planning issues. Regional statistics, trends, analyses, and maps provide a basis for planning and decision-making on both the regional and local levels. A variety of Council-sponsored community forums relating to regional planning help to educate and promote public participation and dialogue.

TRPC's mission is to **“Provide visionary, collaborative leadership on regional plans, policies, and issues for the benefit of all Thurston region residents.”**

To accomplish this mission, TRPC

- Conduct regional transportation planning consistent with state and federal requirements
- Address growth management, environmental quality, economic opportunity, and other topics to sustain and enhance the region's quality of life.
- Assemble and analyze data that support informed local and regional decision making
- Act as a “convener” to build regional consensus on issues through information and inclusive public involvement.
- Build intergovernmental consensus on regional plans, policies, and issues in support of local implementation.

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“These are the hardest transportation decisions I’ve ever had to make.” Steve Hutchins, owner, Around the Sound noted about having to terminate long-term employees for failure to comply with COVID guidelines, “Now, should I hire them back to fill the shortage of drivers? What if we have to mask up and vaccinate again?”

Introduction

The Worst of Times: Flooding. COVID Pandemic. Shortages of food. Not enough drivers for school and transit vehicles. Home schooling. Rising traffic fatalities – especially for people walking or riding bicycles. Violence – often racially motivated. Increasing homelessness. Inflation.

The Best of Times: Employers suddenly encouraging full time telework and flexible schedules. Increased online services and access to telemedicine, government services, and education. Thurston region adds equity as criteria in distribution of federal funds. Fare-free services on both Intercity Transit (IT) and ruralTRANSIT (rT). Passage of legislation that flips the transportation priorities from roads and cars to transit, bicycles, and pedestrian investments. Extra funding to help struggling families. Free PPE for transit and school providers. Passage of the HEAL act and an increased emphasis on environmental justice. New FEMA guidelines about people with disabilities and hazard plans.

The best of times. The worst of times.

During COVID, some people have said “we’re all in the same boat.”

Many people in our community do not have the opportunity to experience the best of times – even when others do. They are not in the “same boat.”

First adopted in 2010, the Thurston Region’s Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan serves as a comprehensive blueprint for addressing transportation choices, gaps, and solutions for the region’s people – who because of age, income or ability – may face mobility issues. In working with stakeholders to update this Plan, we were often reminded that the needs and gaps articulated do not just impact certain groups of people. As is often said about the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA) – when we design systems to serve people with challenges, the systems generally serve everyone better.

Nearly 30 years ago, the Thurston Region realized the need for coordinated efforts for people with special transportation needs. Since then – working in regional partnerships with cities, town, county, and transit and service providers – the region has employed several strategies for coordination. For many years, the Thurston Regional Planning Council convened the Human Services Transportation Forum (HSTF). Over time, HSTF participation waxed and waned, but Thurston’s regional policymakers remain strong and consistent in their support of coordination efforts and programs for people with special needs.

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

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

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

Beyond the commitment of regional policymakers, the state and federal government generally encourage coordination – such as the requirement for creating and updating this plan.

Public policy is all about “who gets what when and how.”

*- Political scientist and economist and communications theorist Harold
Lasswell*

Barrier-Free Transportation

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

Policies:

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

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

Importance and Challenges

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

The Thurston region population is aging rapidly. Fit and healthy baby boomers in their prime wage-earning years are beginning to retire. As the trend of "aging in place" increases, more people will want to stay in the Thurston region. The portion of the population 65 and over will grow from the current 15 percent in 2015 to 23 percent by 2045. It will become even more important - and challenging - to provide transportation options that meet the needs of our community's elders. Similarly, services and programs serving youth and those with disabilities will see more demand in the next few decades.

Those services and barrier-free improvements to transportation infrastructure are already underfunded and unable to keep up with current demand. Simply trying to

retrofit existing facilities, as called for in the Americans with Disabilities Act, is beyond the means of most communities. Supporting the independence of our growing senior population depends on the success of establishing cost-effective, convenient travel alternatives and community development patterns.

Examples of Supportive Measures

- Sustain partnerships among government, nonprofit, for-profit, and faith-based agencies that serve the transportation needs of the region's youth, elders, and people with disabilities.
- Look for innovative ways of funding and providing life-line transportation services.
- Continue transportation services that connect low-income populations with employment areas and social services.
- Explore innovative public/private partnerships aimed at increasing affordable, transit-friendly housing choices in the urban area near essential services.
- Find sustainable financial support for urban and rural public transportation programs.

Source: Thurston Regional Transportation Plan

Equity
Transportation access that is systematically fair and just for all individuals

Accessibility
Transportation systems that are easy for anyone to use and allow individuals to reach desired services and activities

Mobility
Transportation options that maximize independence

Access
The ability for anyone to conduct activities of daily living throughout the community

Affordability
Transportation options that are not cost prohibitive to users of varied financial means

Safety
Transportation options that preserve the health and well-being of individuals and reduce transportation fatality and injury

Reliability
Transportation options that are consistently good in quality, performance, and dependability to the community they serve

The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility
“supports communities by improving public
transportation services across our nation, while
focusing on equity, affordability, and safety for riders.”

- Nuria Fernandez, FTA Administrator

This Federal interagency council works to coordinate funding and provide expertise on human services transportation for three targeted populations: people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals of low income. Members: US Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Affairs, Interior, Justice, Labor, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, National Council on Disability, and the Social Security Administration.

Their 2023-2026 Strategic Plan (October 27, 2022) articulates their core values in this diagram, and explains that “while the outer circle - accessibility, safety, reliability, affordability, equity, and mobility – help improve transportation and mobility options, the goal is to help each individual better reach or access everyday destinations.” Those destinations include jobs, school, housing, recreational facilities, parks, social support and bringing resources to the individual such as medical care, food, prescriptions, and technology.

With geographic and demographic nuance, the Thurston Human Services Transportation Plan shares the goal – help people go where they need to go.

**“Nothing about
us without us!”**

*- United States Convention on the
Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

Public Outreach

TRPC has used adaptive management in outreach – keeping what works and jettisoning what doesn't. Now, we're in an integration mode. As part of our Equity in Planning strategies, we now routinely consider impacts for those with special transportation needs in all our projects and planning efforts. For example, the current update to the Regional Trails Plan included survey questions that tried to ascertain the level of trail comfort and safety experienced by people of color, women using the trail alone, and people with disabilities.

For this update, the community revisited previously documented needs, services, and gaps. We updated demographic data, analyzed the impacts of COVID, and considered new strategies. TRPC used data and ideas gathered through climate efforts, Point in Time Homeless Counts, new Census information, conversations with community representatives on various boards and committees, the Healthy Youth Survey, I-5 surveys, and other outreach efforts. As local and regional data is not always available and may be dated, we also looked at state and national trends.

When possible, TRPC went to the “tables” of many organizations in the community – routinely to the Regional Council and Transportation Policy Board, public and private transportation providers, associations such as Community Transportation Association of the Northwest (CTANW), Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), and the Washington State Transit Association. TRPC discussed gaps and strategies at service clubs, with the Senior Network, and with providers of services for people with low incomes and people who are unsheltered. We reached out to Veterans forums and the South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI) – a rural business and community building organization. We asked questions at poverty forums and at community workshops for other TRPC initiatives. We spoke to new organizations and long-standing colleagues and asked “what about...” through Hazards, Climate Adaptation, and emergency response and recovery planning meetings and events.

TRPC worked with small groups and individuals and asked for a spot on the agenda for community group meetings – generally using remote technology during the COVID pandemic. Not surprisingly – because of on-going analysis of services and needs – few new substantive issues arose with the core historic partners during this update cycle. However, we confirmed that COVID and economic conditions exacerbated previously noted needs and gaps.

As in the last update, we engaged the emergency preparedness community to understand and raise awareness about how current plans address people with special needs. We found these entities to be open to the conversation and expect continued collaboration as their plans move forward.

We again reached out to the area’s veteran population. With proximity to the services at Joint Base Lewis McChord and the area’s medical resources, retirees and others leaving the military often settle in the Thurston Region. Veterans comprise over 12 percent of our County population, especially in the Lacey and Yelm areas. We built on relationships with organizations such as South Sound Military and Community Partnerships. Thurston and Pierce County Commute Trip Reduction staff also help connections with active duty military personnel and their families.

Certainly, we consider youth in coordinated transportation efforts, but we also recognize the transportation challenges facing school districts as they support homeless students (McVinney Vento Act) and brainstormed potential solutions.

Transportation Priorities Survey

New to this update, TRPC focused significant effort on a Transportation Priorities Survey, conducted between June and November 2021. This survey served as the primary public outreach for the Plan update. This strategy recognized the impacts of COVID such as staff shortages, increased customer needs, and general uncertainty and struggles. In many cases, these “tables” simply weren’t open to one more topic - even if they recognize the importance of transportation. We also heard - and continue to hear - that newly formed and existing equity groups simply didn’t have time to “represent” a particular disadvantaged group as we strive to be more inclusive in planning. In addition to general and specific publics, we invited high school students from Thurston County schools to answer a smaller subset of questions. Numerous partners helped staff advertise, distribute, and encourage involvement in the surveying efforts.

Surveying was primarily conducted online, but we strategically distributed paper surveys. To provide a consistent and holistic opportunity for all members of the community to participate in the survey, TRPC sent a postcard invitation to every residential address in Thurston County. We then issued a press release, boosted posts on social media, sent email through internal distribution lists (including such groups as Thurston Strong – a business support group convened during COVID, worksite Commute Trip Reduction Employee Transportation Coordinators, and people interested in a specific topic (such as the Climate Plan). TRPC worked with the cities of Rainier and Tenino to include a survey invitation in their respective water bills, repeatedly solicited help from our TRPC and TPB members, and made announcements at any public meeting attended by TRPC staff. We deployed paper surveys to the Housing Authority of Thurston County clients and people on the agency’s wait list, the Thurston County Food Bank, the Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF), and area senior housing facilities. As always, the Timberland Regional Library helped by displaying posters and distributing paper surveys to all the branches.

Since we sent the postcard only to those in the community with a residential address, we know we likely missed people experiencing homelessness. Some number of that community may have heard about the survey through public meetings, the Housing Authority, Thurston County Food Bank, and other social service providers. We also reached out to customers of Intercity Transit and ruralTRANSIT (rT).

Working through our community partnerships bolstered response rates for the survey, and informed us on the best ways to distribute, advertise, and encourage participation. In particular, the Chehalis Tribe’s willingness to email tribal members and staff members resulted in a higher response rate for Native American members of our community than in previous surveying efforts.

We also explored state and federal data and nationwide advocacy and other groups for strategies. See Appendix A for more details.

Aside from demographics collected voluntarily in the Survey, TRPC did not document the number of people with disabilities or those with low incomes during the outreach and other work on this Plan. Asking people these questions or worse - guessing what categories participants represent - does not support our efforts to be more inclusive.

**“...every
transportation
decision is
inherently an
equity decision.”**

*- Pete Buttgieg, Secretary of Transportation
Transportation Research Board's 2022 Annual Meeting,
Plenary Session, January 12, 2022*

Current Conditions

Service Area

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

Thurston County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Map 2 (Appendix E) illustrates the location of the major communities, which include Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Yelm, Rainier, Bucoda, Rochester, Tenino, Grand Mound, and the Nisqually Indian Reservation and Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation. Many of the communities are located along major transportation corridors, with Interstate 5 traversing the county. Rochester, a census-designated place rather than a town or city, does not appear on the maps, but is part of rural service connections.

While the point of origin for trips for some of the projects outlined in the plan are limited to a specific geographical location (i.e., a specific low-income housing complex or the Nisqually and Chehalis Indian Reservations in rural areas), destinations radiate to all parts of the county and beyond. Other projects supply services that are available countywide.



Earlier plans focused solely on issues within the Thurston County Border, but the last two updates recognize the need to improve coordination across county lines. In 2015, more than 20,000 people commuted into the Thurston Region for jobs while 35,000 commuted out. We project these numbers will increase more than 50 percent by 2045. The community's embrace of telework and flexible work hours could alter that projection, but it is still unclear the extent of those non-travel modes post-COVID. However, cross county coordination will only grow as a priority. We will need the State Legislature and WSDOT to support more robust attention and funding to cross-county transportation services.

Origins

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

Destinations

Most destinations in the County are now located and will continue to be located in the urban areas. For residents, transportation systems need to focus on travel to these clusters for most of the needs

identified in outreach efforts. These centers house educational and training facilities, medical and social services, transportation hubs and most of the jobs in the region. The greatest concentration of jobs lies in the urban areas of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater.

The Region

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

Despite only 52 clear days a year and an average annual rainfall of 51 inches, some residents engage in year-round bicycling or walking. Grey days and early winter nightfall require a transportation system with safe, well lit, well maintained, clearly marked sidewalks, roads, and trails.

As is true statewide, Tribes, local jurisdictions, and the state face increasing challenges to preserve and maintain the transportation system.

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

The Interstate 5 corridor runs through the heart of the region, providing access for transporting people,

goods, and services to the neighboring counties to the south and north. However, historically and in the present, the freeway also divides communities, creating gaps for travelers, whether by foot, bicycle, or automobile. The community of Tumwater, for example, was forever changed when I-5 bisected their city center. Lacey, on the other hand, was built around a freeway interchange.

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

Employment

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

Changing job markets and higher wage opportunities may result in people traveling further to find jobs with higher income potential – or just to find a job.

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

In Thurston County, total civilian employment in 2016 stood at 149,800 jobs. We forecast that to grow to total employment of 200,900 by 2045. State government is the largest employer, accounting for 26,300 full and part-time jobs. State worksites have experienced consolidations and shifts in location over the past several years. In the 1999-2001 Biennium, the state employed around 17.0 employees per 1,000 people on average. This decreased to 15.5 in the 2019-2021 Biennium.

Between 1994 and 2017, the location of state worksites changed. During this time the percentage of state workers decreased from 13 to 10 percent in Lacey and 62 to 52 percent in Olympia. Tumwater has seen its share increase from 21 to 34 percent. In the last several years, new state worksites have been built on the Capitol Campus and plans are underway for major construction to replace several aging buildings and add additional parking.

These changes in siting for the largest employer in the region result in mobility impacts for many employees and potential employees. Because these state agencies serve a number of special needs clients, location decisions also affect the clients’ ability to travel to services. State agency worksites located on the Capitol Campus and other areas in the urban core

enjoy a high level of transit frequency. These areas are also supported by multimodal facilities, such as sidewalks and bike lanes, broadening mobility options. When state employment chooses to move to the fringes of the urban cores, transit frequency and multi-modal amenities may decrease.

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

The largest private employer is Providence St. Peter Hospital, with about 1,800 employees (2018 CTR Annual Report). Although these facilities are located close to urban centers and have regular transit service, the 24/7 operations make the use of travel alternatives difficult. Intercity Transit's service day generally ends at 11:00 p.m. with some limits on weekend service. Shift work also makes for difficult shared ride/carpool matching.

Tribal Government has become a major regional economic force. Chehalis Tribal enterprises, including the Great Wolf Lodge, Conference Center and Water Park, Lucky Eagle Casino, Chehalis Tribal Construction, Eagle's Landing Hotel, and several convenience stores, brewpubs and restaurants, employ over 1,000 people, with additional employees in tribal government and community services (2014 InfoUSA). The rural location of both the Chehalis and Nisqually worksites limit transportation choices for workers, as do shifts and some unpredictability in start and stop times.

Retail stores, such as Walmart, Costco, Safeway, Fred Meyer, and Cabela's are major employers. Thurston County is also home to several warehouse and distribution facilities. Many of these are in the Hawks Prairie area of Lacey. While put on hold during COVID, Intercity Transit plans to improve service to those areas.

Small business also plays a major role in the region's employment. Approximately 50 percent of the covered employees (those covered by state and federal unemployment insurance laws) in Thurston County were employed in firms or state departments that have more than 100 people. While those firms provided the bulk of the jobs, most businesses had nine or fewer employees.

Future: In 2015, more than 21,000 people commuted into the Thurston Region for jobs while 35,300 commuted out. Prior to the COVID pandemic, we projected those numbers to increase more than 50 percent by 2045. We assumed outbound commutes will continue to exceed inbound commutes largely due to the availability of jobs, income potential, and relative cost of housing in Thurston County. Thurston County's job market pales in comparison to the volume of work and higher compensation available in Pierce and King counties to the north.

COVID restrictions and increased telework opportunities have been – and will likely continue to be – a game changer. On the state Capitol Campus, the telework mode increased from about 6% to nearly 90% at the height of lockdowns. In the

Thurston region, and across the state and nation, employers have experienced first-hand the increase in productivity and employees have embraced the opportunity for work/life balance. Some employers want everyone back in the office. Some employees want to continue to work at home.

Certain employment sectors are expected to outpace others as we look to the future. In 2045, for example, projections show 22,100 jobs in retail trade; 31,100 in education, health, and social services; 4,700 in arts, entertainment, and recreation; and 12,900 in accommodation and food services. These industries, which include restaurant, consumer and health services, often provide low-wage employment (approximately a third of wages in other industries. Q3 2021 Employment Security data) with shift work outside the 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. hours. This results in continuing transportation challenges even as job opportunities grow.

While total vehicle miles traveled on Thurston County's roadways has increased, per capita VMT has declined. Between 1990 and 2019 per capita VMT decreased from 10,800 to 8,900 miles per person. (Note: "person" in this data includes total population including those who do not drive, such as children).

Education and Training

Thurston County houses a variety of educational opportunities. These include both private and public primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. A number offer programs outside regular school hours, providing greater accessibility to working

adults and students. However, this advantage is diminished if transportation options are limited or unavailable during evening and weekend hours. Remote learning continues to grow, which supplies options for people underserved by multimodal options – if they have sufficient broadband to participate.

The region boasts over 70 schools (3 colleges/universities, 11 traditional high schools, 16 middle schools, 44 elementary schools, and several private and alternative schools). While most are comprehensive and offer a full range of academic activity programs, non-traditional schools are also available. New Market Vocational Skills Center, for example, provides technical and professional training classes for high school students in Thurston, Mason, Grays Harbor, and Lewis counties. Serving an average of 700 students, enrolled youth earn high school or college credits, as well as a variety of industry certifications and licenses that meet national industry standards.

The Olympia Regional Learning Academy (ORLA) is the fastest growing school in the Olympia School District. It is divided into three programs: hConnect, which provides resources, classes and support for home-school families; iConnect, an online school for grades 6-12; and ORLA Montessori, which serves children in preschool to sixth grade.

South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC) is the largest institution of higher education in Thurston County, with an enrollment of approximately 5,300 in 2020. SPSCC offers day and evening classes, basic and continuing education coursework, job

skills training, and personal enrichment courses at its main and branch campuses. The College's tradition of vocational training continues, with more than 30 technical programs currently offered. The college also cooperates with private companies and public agencies to supply customized training and professional development. This community college plays an important role in the WorkFirst program, coordinating with other state agencies to improve training and employment for low-income residents. SPSCC Lacey site co-locates with the Thurston Economic Development offices, supporting planned and spontaneous connections. Intercity Transit provides both the main campus and the Lacey site with frequent service.

The Evergreen State College is a public college of liberal arts and sciences. With an enrollment of over 2,000 (2021), the college provides an evening and weekend program geared to working adults in addition to a full-time academic undergraduate program. Evergreen also provides upper-division and tribal programs. Graduate programs offer master's degrees in environmental studies, public administration, and teaching. Evergreen also offers educational programs at its Tacoma campus, a tribal program at reservation sites, and a program in Grays Harbor County.

Saint Martin's University, a four-year private comprehensive university, offers 21 undergraduate programs, six graduate programs, and numerous pre-professional and certification programs. More than 1,300 students attend the main campus in Lacey or at extension campuses.

Though located in Lewis County, Centralia College plays an important role in the education of Thurston County residents. The oldest continuously operating community college in the state of Washington, Centralia offers professional, technical, transfer, and basic skills programs to its 10,500 students from the service area of Lewis County and south Thurston County. The University of Washington Branch campus in downtown Tacoma serves a comparable role.

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

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

Social Services

Thurston County is home to many organizations and agencies supplying human services. State agencies such as the departments of Social and Health Services, Health, and Employment Security are headquartered in this county. Other regional and local public and private entities focus on categories such as emergency services, housing and homelessness,

children’s services, health and related services, and family, youth and senior programs. Because many of these services are in the urban areas of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater, transportation to these areas is critical for county residents.

Several social service organizations are important contributors to this update, working on the planning and benefiting from resultant services. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Thurston County, ROOF, and the Thurston County Health and Social Services Department continue to work with TRPC to coordinate the needs and schedules of after-school programs for at-risk youth.

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

A past Thurston County health professional described the region’s social service support as “a mile wide and an inch deep.” She referred to the hundreds of non- profits in the area - created out of passion and often maintained on a shoestring. These

organizations may supply services to a specific subset of the population and may exist for just a short time or become a part of the fabric of the community. The “services only for people from Iowa with red hair” concept is also rampant in the veteran’s community. Coordination is needed not only in transportation, but also in service provision.

Demographics

Population

At 294,800 Thurston County is the sixth most populated county in the State of Washington and one of the fastest growing (2020 Census). We estimate that we’ll add 88,700 more people by 2045.

The patterns of growth are critical to transportation and land use planning. Between 1980 and 1990, the incorporated county grew at nearly the same rate (2.6% per year) as the unincorporated county (2.7% per year). Since 1990, cities have grown faster than the unincorporated county. Between 2010 and 2020 cities grew at 2.5 percent per year compared to 0.7 percent per year in the unincorporated areas. In 1980 and 1990, 42 percent of the population lived in the unincorporated area. However, in 2020, the proportion has increased to 51 percent of the total population.

In addition, growth is not evenly distributed among the cities. Between 2010 and 2020, the highest rates of growth were in the southern portion of the county, with Yelm having the highest rate of growth, at 4.5 percent per year.

The population on both the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation and the Nisqually Reservation increased between 2010 and 2020. The Chehalis Reservation population increased from 649 to 767 and the Nisqually Reservation population increased from 575 to 639. Most residents in the Chehalis Reservation live in Grays Harbor County.

Forecasters at the State Office of Financial Management develop projections for future population based on a series of assumptions about human behavior, and by interpreting past trends in the local, state and national economy.

Age & Age Distribution

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

On the other end of the age spectrum, 71,600 people were under 20 (24 percent), projected to rise to 82,000 (21 percent) in 2040. Per the 2020 Census, 32 percent of the Chehalis Reservation and 31% of the Nisqually Reservation population are under 18.

Overall, the region’s population is getting older. Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show that over the 2016-2020 time period, the median age was 39.1 years, up from 38.5 in 2010 and 36.5 in 2000. However, some interesting distinctions can be noted in the age characteristics between the different areas of the County. Yelm, for example, was the city with the youngest population, with a median age of 29.6 and nearly a third of its population under the age of 18.

Those over 65 have unique transportation needs. Countywide, 17 percent of population is age 65 or older. Lacey, Olympia, the Nisqually Reservation, and the unincorporated County has the highest proportions of their population age 65 and older – all over 18 percent.

Amenities attractive to an older demographic – advanced health care and retirement facilities – may draw many retirement-age people to the county. For the same reason, it is expected that as people who live in the Thurston Region retire, they will age-in-place here rather than relocate. Between 2020 and 2045, the population 65 years and older is projected to increase by 34,300 (65%) while the population age 85 and older in projected to more than triple – from 5,500 to 19,600.

Disability Status

The Census asks about several types of disability: sensory, physical, mental, self-care and mobility. The Bureau defines disability as a long-lasting physical, mental, or emotional condition that makes it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing

stairs, self-care, learning, and remembering. It can also impede a person from the ability to leave the home alone or work at a job.

While driving in one's personal vehicle is undoubtedly convenient, the best way to ensure continued transportation as we age is to become comfortable using a variety of options.

- National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

In Thurston County, as of 2016-2020 ACS data, 37,900 civilian, non-institutionalized people have a disability. This reflects 16 percent of the population. Of these, 42 percent were 65 years of age and over, and 16 percent had incomes below the poverty level. Of the civilian non-institutionalized disabled population age 16 to 64, 87 percent are employed, comprising 6 percent of the employed population. The Disability Statistics Center at the University of California notes that disability is often correlated

with poverty. In Thurston County, 22% percent of the population with incomes below the poverty line had a disability compared to 13 percent of the population above the poverty line.

Organizations that support persons with disabilities assume that roughly 30 percent of persons with disabilities are clients of local, state or federal programs. Coupled with their assumptions that perhaps 95 percent of people with developmental disabilities are unable to drive, this population faces daunting challenges. When cuts to transit service and complimentary paratransit service occur, persons with disabilities may have to leave their jobs because of lack of reliable transportation. This population also faces critical life-threatening concerns during and following disaster situations.

Language Issues

Several American Community Survey questions identify the level of ability to speak English, and the specific language spoken at home. 33,300 individuals speak a language other than English at home (11 percent of people aged five and older). Spanish is the most common language other than English (5 percent). Other languages commonly spoken in Thurston County include Vietnamese, Korean, German, Tagalong, and Khmer. Each of these languages has over 1,000 residents using it as the primary language at home. Lacey has the highest proportion speaking a language other than English at home.

Further, the ACS defines as “linguistically isolated” those households in which no member aged 14 and above speaks English “very well.” The 2016-2020 American Community Survey estimates that only a small proportion of households (2 percent) were linguistically isolated.

Social service providers in the region consider the number of linguistically isolated households to be underreported, with many undocumented residents not reporting, and some inaccurate reporting because of language challenges.

Racial and Ethnic Composition

With the passage of time, Thurston County is becoming more diverse. In 1970, over 97 percent of the population was White/Caucasian. By 1990, that component had decreased to 92 percent. Changes in how the Census asks about race and ethnicity make direct comparisons difficult, but in 2020, 73 percent of respondents defined themselves as White only. Of the non-white population, the Asian population is the largest group (6%), followed by Black or African American (3%), American Indian (2%), and Pacific Islander (1%) Those who define themselves as two or more races comprise 12 percent of the County’s population.

The category Hispanic represents those of Hispanic or Latino origin and may denote persons of any race. This population grew from less than 1 percent of the population in 1970 to 10 percent in 2020, with 29,000 people identifying as Hispanic.

Social service providers – especially in the rural agricultural areas – suggest that Census race and ethnicity percentages are underreported. In the Rochester area, for example, some providers estimate

that about 40 percent of the population they serve are Hispanic, many of whom are undocumented. Even for those categorized as citizens, there appears to be a fear of responding to Census inquiries.

Income

Thurston County’s median household income was \$75,047 in 2019, projected to be \$80,738 in 2020, higher than adjacent counties.

Poverty

Data from the 2016-2020 ACS provided a glimpse of how wealth and poverty is distributed in the Thurston Region. In that period, the countywide average of households earning less than \$30,000 was 17 percent (roughly the HUD income limit for very low income households of 4 persons). In Tenino, approximately 32 percent fit the same category. Further analysis shows that in Tumwater, households with the highest incomes (more than \$100,000 per year) make up 36 percent of all households.

Poverty thresholds are determined by considering household size, ages of householders and number of related children. For Thurston County, 10 percent of its population was considered to fall below the poverty line in 2016-2020. As mentioned above, data can be unreliable at the small community level, however Bucoda has the highest poverty rate (31 percent). On the Chehalis and Nisqually Reservations, the rates are also high – 28 percent on the Chehalis Reservation and 16 percent on the Nisqually Reservation.

Poverty rates for households headed by single mothers were high across the board, with 23 percent below the poverty line in the County.

Homelessness and Affordable Housing

Like many communities, the Thurston Region has an increasing number of unsheltered people. This population includes diversity in age, ability, and mobility. Transportation is typically identified as a priority for moving into a more sustainable living situation – including access to training, jobs, medical, and other services. The Annual Point in Time Homeless Census is the method the community uses to determine who is homeless and why. Each year, in late January, service providers and volunteers use a confidential survey to gather information, which is then entered in the statewide Homeless Management Information System. The census number includes people who are: Unsheltered living outdoors, in vehicles, in substandard buildings not fit for human habitation; emergency shelter short-term 90-day accommodations, either dormitory style or in apartments; and transitional housing short-term housing, offering 18 months or less.

In 2020, 995 people were counted as homeless in Thurston County. This is more than double the recent low of 476 in 2015.

In calendar year 2016 – the most recent data - 213 people in Thurston County received rental assistance and 1,480 received Essential Needs assistance, according to Department of Commerce’s Homelessness in Washington State 2017 annual report. On any given night, Washington state has 11.2 families without a home for every 10,000 in the general population. (2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress). The report considers this “Above Average.”

A 2017 report by the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness found that Washington’s homeless student population grew by nearly 30 percent between 2012 and 2015. At that time 35,000 students were experiencing homelessness, up nearly 5,000 from the 2012-13 school year. Nationwide, The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s 2018 Kids County Data Book notes that 1 in 5 children live in poverty. The American Institutes for Research/ National Center on Family Homelessness ranked Washington state as 40th (1=Best, 50=Worst) in their 2014 “America’s Youngest Outcasts.” The report also notes that 1 in every 30 children in the United States is homeless. 2.5 million children.

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

*- Sustainable Thurston - Creating Places Preserving Spaces
December 2013*

Special Focus Areas

Veterans Services & Transportation

In general, veterans have the same mobility needs as their fellow community members. However, many veterans face physical or mental challenges due to the injuries and post-traumatic stress (PTSD) incurred during or following wartime service. These wounds hinder veterans' ability to cope with many aspects of daily living resulting in problems with relationships, employment, housing, and substance abuse. A variety of benefits, services, and programs assist veterans in overcoming or compensating for those challenges. Unfortunately, a lack of transportation options may act as a barrier for certain individuals who seek assistance. Barriers may be more apparent for indigent veterans who live in rural areas, but we do not have a clear picture of the extent to which the demand for transportation services for veterans with special needs are relative to existing services.

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

Population

The Puget Sound region is home to several major military installations, including Joint Base Lewis McChord, Naval Base Bremerton, and Naval Stations Everett and Whidbey. Thousands of military service members from all over the U.S. choose to retire or separate from active duty and reside in the greater Puget Sound Region. In addition, thousands of Washington State residents served in several conflicts from WWII to the more current Afghanistan and Iraq operations. Those wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are generating the largest population of veterans since the Vietnam War.

The 2016-2020 American Community Survey counted more than 517,000 veterans living in Washington State. Washington ranks eighth in the nation in the portion of veterans in the overall population.

Thurston County is a desirable community for veterans to reside in because of the area's quality of life and its proximity to U.S. Department of Defense installation facilities, installation support services, and federal and state veteran services. Approximately 28,600 veterans currently reside in Thurston County. This represents nearly 10 percent of Thurston County's total population. The characteristics of the county's veteran population include:

- 86 percent are male
- 11,500 veterans are aged 65 or older (23 percent of total age cohort in the county)
- 4,900 are aged 85 or older (26 percent of total age cohort in the county)
- 1,400 (5 percent) veterans live in poverty
- 7,700 veterans have some form of disability

Special Needs Characteristics

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

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

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

1. There will be a sharp increase in veterans over age 85:
 - Significant growth in the very elderly reflects the aging of WWII and Korean War veterans. This age group will slowly decline until 2025, then Vietnam-era veterans will begin to comprise this age group.
 - In 2010, veterans comprised almost one-quarter of the total state population aged 85 and older.

Highlights from 2021 Bureau of Labor Statistics, at the national level

In 2021, 18.5 million men and women were veterans, accounting for about 7 percent of the civilian noninstitutional population age 18 and over. About 10 percent of all veterans were women. In the survey, veterans are defined as men and women who have previously served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and who were civilians at the time these data were collected. Veterans are more likely to be men than were nonveterans, and they also tend to be older. In part, this reflects the characteristics of veterans who served during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam era, all of whom are now over 60 years old. Veterans who served during these wartime periods accounted for 36 percent (6.6 million) of the total veteran population in 2021. Forty-two percent of veterans (7.9 million) served during Gulf War era I (August 1990 to August 2001) or Gulf War era II (September 2001 forward). Twenty-two percent (4.1 million) served outside the designated wartime periods.

- The unemployment rate for all veterans (4.4 percent) was lower than the rate for nonveterans (5.3 percent) in 2021.
- Unemployment rates for both male and female veterans decreased in 2021. The rate for male veterans was 4.4 percent, little different from the rate of 4.2 percent for female veterans.
- Unemployment rates declined over the year for veterans of all service periods: Gulf War-era II veterans (to 4.6 percent in 2021); Gulf War-era I veterans (3.5 percent); World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam era veterans (4.4 percent); and veterans of other service periods (5.0 percent). However, these rates remain above their levels in 2019, prior to the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Unemployment rates for White and Black veterans were lower than for their nonveteran counterparts in 2021, while the rates for Asian and Hispanic veterans were not statistically different than their nonveteran counterparts.
- Among the 386,000 unemployed veterans in 2021, 56 percent were ages 25 to 54, 39 percent were age 55 and over, and 5 percent were ages 18 to 24.
- Among Gulf War-era II veterans, the unemployment rate of veterans with a service-connected disability declined to 3.2 percent and the rate for veterans with no disability decreased to 3.6 percent in August 2021.
- Gulf War-era II veterans who reported a service-connected disability rating of less than 30 percent were much more likely to be in the labor force than those with a rating of 60 percent or higher in August 2021 (94.4 percent compared with 63.8 percent).
- In August 2021, 27 percent of employed veterans with a service-connected disability worked in the public sector, compared with 21 percent of veterans with no disability and 13 percent of nonveterans.
- In 2021, the unemployment rate of veterans varied across the country, ranging from 1.6 percent in Kentucky to 7.6 percent in Washington.

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/vet.pdf>

- Veterans receiving long-term care have higher rates of physical and mental health problems compared to non-veterans.
 - These individuals have limited mobility options.
2. A continued increase in the number of aging veterans considered medically indigent:
 - The growing number of aging veterans will lead to an increase in the number of medically indigent veterans – those that will require care in a State Veterans Home.
 - Low-income veterans generally have a higher rate of poor health conditions than veterans with higher incomes do.
 - Low-income veterans have limited mobility options.
 3. Aging Vietnam-era veterans will continue to represent one-third of total veterans:
 - Vietnam veterans receive the largest share of service-connected disability benefits.
 4. There are unique characteristics of the veteran population under age 45:
 - By 2020, approximately 90 percent of the remaining Vietnam veteran population will be between 65 and 84 years of age.
 - Approximately 31 percent of male Vietnam veterans suffer from PTSD sometime during their lives and one quarter are afflicted by war-related disability.
 - There will be a greater portion of women veterans.
 - There will be a more racially diverse veteran population.
 - The current trend indicates the demand for physical and mental health services for current redeploying veterans will remain high.





Services

Lacey Veterans Hub:

The Lacey Veterans Services Hub is located near South Puget Sound Community College and across the street from Intercity Transit's Lacey transit center. The Hub has expanded and now helps veterans find assistance with benefits, counseling, housing, finance, employment, education, nutrition, healthcare, legal issues, and transportation. The Hub provides weekday service to the American Lake VA Medical Center in Pierce County.

U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs Services and Facilities (VA):

The nation's largest provider of services and assistance to veterans, their dependents, their surviving spouses, or the child or parent of a deceased spouse. It also assists uniformed service members. The VA offers a wide range of benefits including, healthcare, disability, education and training, vocational rehabilitation and employment, home loan guaranty, dependent and survivor benefits, life insurance, and burial benefits. VA Health Care is the single largest service, operating the nation's largest integrated health care system with more than 1,400 sites of care, including hospitals, community clinics, community living centers, domiciliaries, readjustment counseling centers, and other various facilities. The veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 20 primarily administers health care services to veterans in Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. The VA Puget Sound Health Care System is the largest VA health service network in VISN 20.

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

Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs:

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

The WDVA administers and operates three long-term health care homes in Retsil, Orting, and Spokane for honorably discharged veterans and in some instances their spouses or widows. The residents of these homes are typically disabled, indigent or imminently indigent due to the high cost of long-term health care. The homes' interdisciplinary staff fosters an environment that promotes the residents' independence. WDVA has sustained a bedfill rate of 95 percent or better.

Federal per diem grants offset the cost of care for medically indigent veterans. Private nursing homes do not receive this per diem.

WDVA partners with local governments, veteran service organizations, and community organizations in King, Pierce, Thurston, and Kitsap counties to reduce homelessness by referring veterans to employment. This program is funded through a U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training services grant. In Thurston County, this program provides: immediate needs – food, clothing, transportation (bus passes, limited vehicle repairs and fuel expenses), and access to shelter (emergency, transitional, and permanent housing); outreach to homeless veterans' providers; employability needs and skills assessment; job readiness services, including transitional housing assistance, basic skills training, résumé development and employment opportunity referrals, and 90, 180, and 270-day job retention follow-up.

For transitional housing, WDVA provides a VA Grant and Per Diem Program. Building 9 for Veterans Transitional Housing Program is located at the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil, WA. The Veterans Home sits on a 31-acre bluff overlooking the Sinclair Inlet. The 40-bed transitional housing facility is available to assist those in need of stable housing, vocational rehabilitation, and increased income potential. Veterans are surrounded with supportive staff and wraparound services designed to lead to their successful completion of the program, and a successful return to the community.

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

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

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

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

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

The Veterans Conservation Corps assists veterans by providing volunteer opportunities on natural resources restoration projects that help protect and restore Washington's watersheds (rivers, streams, lakes, marine waters, forest and open lands). This opportunity permits veterans to: return to school; work as an intern; an apprentice; VA work-study participant; or as a volunteer. Participants will earn valuable work experience that can enhance a resume and provide work references.

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

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

RCW 73.080.010 provides counties the legislative authority to establish veterans' assistance programs and RCW 73.08.035 provides the authority to establish a veterans' advisory board. The Thurston County Veterans' Advisory Board, established in October 2006, advises the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners on the needs of local indigent veterans, the resources available to local indigent veterans, and the programs that could benefit veterans and their families. The board is composed of veterans who reside in Thurston County and members are appointed by the County Commissioners. A majority of the advisory board members must be elected officers or members of nationally recognized veteran service organizations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Transportation Services:

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

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

ruralTRANSIT (rT) provides direct pre-arranged service for south county rural veterans to Veterans services in Lewis County. rT also connects to Twin Transit in Lewis County and Intercity Transit, which helps veterans make connections to facilities along the I-5 corridor.

The Lacey Veterans Hub Provides weekday service to American Lake Veterans Facility.

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

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

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

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

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

Next Steps:

- Currently underway, the Commute Trip Reduction Coordinators for Thurston and Pierce counties are working together to explore multimodal commute options for active duty military personnel. JBLM provided origin and destination data to support ridesharing – either individually set up – or a shuttle system. We are looking at the successful worker-driver bus program in Bremerton as a model.
- Continue to work on the Recommendations/Follow Up articulated in previous plan updates.
- Ensure that staff/community members/organizations who serve veterans are part of the community coordination efforts.
- TRPC and Intercity Transit will expand data collection efforts to better understand the needs of veterans that use public transportation services.
- Explore methods to improve the veteran community’s awareness of the variety of travel services available to them.

Thurston County has the fifth-highest rate of federal disaster declarations in the state. Between 1965 and 2016, the county received 22 federal declarations, including ones tied to a 6.7 magnitude earthquake that rocked the Puget Sound region on April 29, 1965, the eruption of Mount St. Helens on May 18, 1980, and the 6.8 magnitude Nisqually Earthquake on Feb. 28, 2001.

*- from "Local officials outline ways to minimize impacts of earthquakes and other hazards"
The Olympian, March 31, 2017*

Emergency Transportation Services – Disasters and People with Special Needs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the 2017–18 school year, 40,365 students were identified as homeless in Washington State, which amounted to 3.4 percent of students statewide.

- Homeless Student Data, Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Transporting Homeless Students

(Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act)

Research compiled by the U.S. Department of Education shows that homelessness has significant and lasting impacts on children and youth.

Homeless students experience greater school mobility than their non-homeless peers. School mobility can cause interruptions to a child's education and is associated with lower school achievement and increased risk of dropping out of school.

Homeless students are at a greater risk of being chronically absent than their non-homeless peers. Chronic absenteeism is associated with lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates.

Homeless students face significant gaps in high school graduation rates compared to their peers, according to data from the States that disaggregate graduation rates for homeless youths. The McKinney-Vento Act intended to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to the same free public education and supportive services as their sheltered peers and an equal opportunity to meet the same academic standards.

Every school district must implement the McKinney- Vento Act, which includes appointing a local homeless liaison responsible for ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified, immediately enrolled in school, and linked to services.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” The act provided examples of children and youth who would fall under this definition.

- Children and youth sharing housing due to loss of housing.
- Children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative accommodations.
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Children and youth abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g., park benches, cars, abandoned buildings, etc.).
- Migratory children and youth.
- Children and Youth not living with a parent or guardian.

The Act provides limited federal funding to states to support school district programs that serve homeless students. In return, states are bound by the terms of the act. Washington receives approximately \$950,000 in grant funding each year from the U.S. Department of Education to support the education of homeless students. In Washington, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) operates as the state educational agency. OSPI designates a statewide Education of Homeless Children and Youth Coordinator to review policies and create procedures.

Under McKinney-Vento all homeless students have rights to:

- A free, appropriate public education.
- Immediate school enrollment; even if they lack health or school records, or proof of residency or guardianship.
- Enroll in the school they attended when permanently housed, attend the school where they were last enrolled, or enroll in the school district where they are currently living (School of origin).
- Remain enrolled in their selected school until the end of the academic year.
- Transportation services; A homeless student has a right to transportation to go to and from their school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.
- Priority in certain preschool programs.
- Receive free meals at school.
- Participate in tutoring or other school related activities.
- Obtain information regarding free services.

According to 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(A), the choice of school must be made “according to the child’s or youth’s best interest” and the school “shall presume that keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is in the child’s or youth’s best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of child’s or youth’s parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.” 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(B)(i).

School District members of the Thurston Regional Planning Council again asked that we consider this issue as part of the Plan update. They were contemplating a grant through OSPI that would cover operations, but not the cost of space. We discussed possible locations such as transit centers, park and ride lots, and other community facilities – including shared space with the Boys and Girls Club. We clarified rules – can kids share the ride? We learned that if the school district uses a school bus, they can be reimbursed for expenses, but if they use a smaller vehicle such as a van, they will not be reimbursed. This results in higher costs in vehicles and drivers and produces more greenhouse gases – and only exacerbates the issues with lack of drivers.

The school transportation professionals explained the daily workings as something like: Currently Yelm is going to Shelton with two on board and returning empty. This situation is happening with Aberdeen, Shelton, Centralia, Olympia...We believe we could eliminate hours of driving and redundant service by establishing a Hub. For example: Two homeless students live in Yelm but came from Shelton. Two homeless students live in Shelton and attend Tumwater Schools. Under the Hub concept, Yelm would bring the students to the Hub. Shelton would also come to the Hub. The Yelm students would get on the Shelton bus when it arrives and heads back to Shelton. The students needing to go to Olympia Schools would be picked up at the Hub by Olympia. No bus would come or go without students on board.

We also confirmed both the problem and potential solution with other school districts in the region. We will continue to seek solutions that support children and make sense for the school districts. We will continue to include this issue in the Un-Ranked Prioritized Project List – unless the Consolidated Grant Program includes funding for such activities. In that case, the region will consider adding it to the Ranked Prioritized Project List.

How do you get from here to there,
what do you do? Well if you want to
cross the street my friend

Here is my advice to you:

Simply walk across the street

Make sure you look both ways with
care And that is how you get from
here to there! You use your feet!

How do you get from here to there,
what do you do? Well if you want to
go downtown my friend

Here is my advice to you:

Simply climb aboard a bus

Pay the driver man his fare

And that is how you get from here to
there! You ride the bus!

You use your feet!

*- from "How do you get from here to there?"
Sesame Street Sing-Along Travel Songs*

COVID

Reports from the Field:

“Effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on PTSD: The COVID-19 pandemic creates stressors like fear about getting sick, concern for loved ones, isolation, job loss and new childcare and family demands. If you have been through traumatic events in the past, you may have learned to cope well in crisis situations. However, dealing with the pandemic is unique; some ways people cope—like eating out or watching or playing sports—may not be an option. For those with PTSD, the pandemic may trigger or affect your PTSD symptoms. PTSD affects many aspects of life. It may cause you to feel anxious, unsafe and on high alert. It may make you less interested or less willing to do things most people consider safe. With PTSD, you may see the world as dangerous or worry about your ability to handle difficult situations. Trusting others and being intimate with others can be challenging. Here are some ways the pandemic can further affect PTSD-related symptoms and difficulties: Feeling more on guard or unsafe; More trauma triggers; Not doing things that are still considered safe; An increase in negative thoughts and feelings; and Problems with sleep and concentration.” - US Department of

Veterans Affairs: National Center for PTSD

“According to CDC data, [15 Washington counties](#) now have “high” COVID-19 transmission rates, meaning the CDC recommends that residents resume wearing masks in public indoor spaces and on public transit.” - KING 5 News,

July 2, 2022

“The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated conditions that existed before the pandemic. Child care was already expensive, and child care providers already operated with thin margins.” - David

Schaffert, President/CEO of the Thurston County Chamber

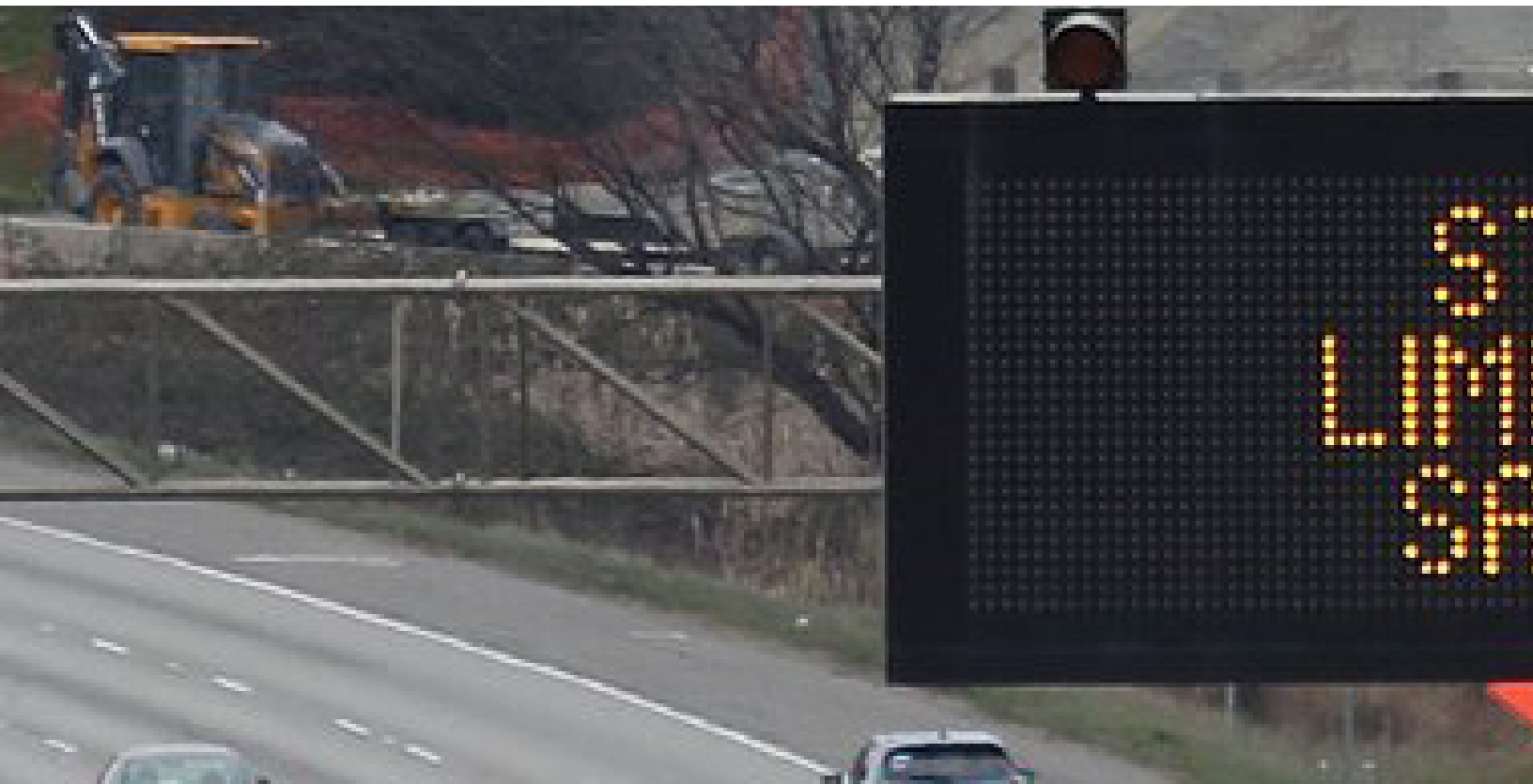
“Thurston County, Washington: Cases – approximately 55,000. Deaths – over 400.”

“Customer Service Closed. Village Vans Suspended. Dial-a-Life may be disrupted. Nightline, “The One,” and DASH discontinued until further notice.” -

Intercity Transit

COVID impacted – and continues to impact – everyone in the Thurston region. Grief, loss of livelihood, violent disagreements about strategies, shortages of food and masks and tests, isolation, homeschooling, limited routine and scheduled medical services and full emergency rooms, overwhelming numbers of cases in congregate care facilities...

In many ways, the region “came through” for its residents. Neighbors helped neighbors. Services such as ruralTRANSIT (rT) continued operations even as they terminated long term employees non-compliant with COVID requirements. Schools and libraries established hot spots for connectivity.



The Economic Development Council created Thurston Strong to help the business community survive. They helped with access to funding, PPE, and hope.

The people who – because of age, income, or ability – face transportation challenges were disproportionately impacted by COVID. Many, especially in rural communities, lacked sufficient connectivity to take advantage of online services, work, and learning opportunities. That lack of broadband/internet also limited access to information in this rapidly involving event: Where can I get tested? Where can I purchase masks? “Which services are still operating?”

Things that were on the edge just got worse. Daycare availability. Driver shortages. Medical and social service networks.

For some people, the pandemic created opportunities for telework and flexible schedules. While still a changing landscape, demands for the productivity and work/life balance produced through changes to where and how we work are here to stay. Unfortunately, the people we serve in this plan, some of whom do not have white collar office jobs, did not enjoy more flexibility.

TRPC will continue to work with stakeholders to identify and monitor changes brought about by COVID and adapt our plans and programs to fill new gaps.



What is Mobility?

It turns out it's not a simple question after all...

So here's what we came up with:

We take the word "mobility" for granted, but it's not synonymous with transportation. Transportation is basic: moving stuff and people. Mobility is more than that.

To have mobility is to have access. Getting to places necessary for living a healthy life – your job, school, doctor's offices, community centers, parks – is possible.

But living by a bus that comes once an hour isn't mobility. And owning a car in a city with congested highways isn't mobility, either.

So mobility isn't just having access to one mode of transportation. Mobility is having transportation options, and the quality of those options.

Our team defined quality transportation options with these three necessary ingredients:

1. **Time.** If it takes you forever to get there, you don't have access to it. You might not always go to the nearest grocery store if the bus that runs past it is always stuck in traffic – you might just run to the convenience store across the street, even though they don't sell fresh food.
2. **Affordability.** Transportation options need to be affordable. If your only option is to drive but you can't afford a car, you don't have mobility.
3. **Safety.** If it isn't safe to walk, bike, or drive, you don't have mobility. You won't use modes that are dangerous.

So in short, mobility is access. Mobility is having transportation options that you can count on to get you where you need to go.

Without mobility, transportation is meaningless. Improving people's mobility should be the goal of any transportation project.

- Jenna Fortunati, July 26, 2018 for Mobility Lab

Needs and Gaps

In August 2021, Disability Rights Washington (DRW) identified transportation access issues experienced by users who do not drive. DRW noted that nearly a quarter of our state's population do not drive - a figure that is likely to increase as a larger percentage of our population ages out of driving.

- Sidewalks, Curb Cuts & Intersections
- Transit Frequency, Connections & Schedules
- Transit Wayfinding, Equipment & Shelter
- Specialized Transportation Services
- Ride-hail Services & Taxis
- Transit Driver Training
- Fare Enforcement
- The Needs of Parents & Caregivers
- Leveraging Technology
- Crisis Response & Resilience
- A Tough Trade-Off: Housing Affordability or Transportation Access?
- Access to Employment
- Independence, Community & Well-Being
- Deterred Demand
- Inclusive Transportation Planning

This study adds to our base of knowledge garnered from other sources.

- Social services professionals define transportation and childcare as the primary barriers to a successful welfare to work transition.
- Transportation professionals speculate that some of the areas worst served by transportation are the rural portions of urban counties.

People in the trenches of social service and transportation provision also note that people with special needs may:

- Have limited access to reliable private vehicles and may not be able to obtain a driver's license or insurance. Providers estimate that less than 50 percent of their clients have access to vehicles and that at least 20 percent would have difficulty obtaining a driver's license. Persons with disabilities are even less likely to have access to a vehicle and may have conditions that prohibit or limit vehicle operation.

At the state level, the Legislature heard several bills in 2019 that deal with license revocation and its impact on people in poverty. Sometimes an accumulation of parking tickets or minor offenses lead to losing the license. The loss of the ability to legally drive may add barriers to accessing jobs, training, and other assistance or may result in more "driving while suspended" offences.

The Census reports that approximately 2 percent of Thurston County's employed residents do not have access to a vehicle. For some, especially in the urban area, this may be a lifestyle choice. However, for many either income or disability may explain lack of an available automobile.

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

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

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

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

- Have disability challenges that will increase transportation difficulties.

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

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

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

- Have limited schedule flexibility in work-related activities.

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

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

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

Map 2 illustrates that much of the rural portion of the Thurston Region has very low density. rT primarily serves the core areas of the small town and cities, but not the <1 unit per 10 acres areas surrounding those communities.

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

Child Care: Important to Local & Regional Economic Development

“Child care opportunities are essential for maintaining a workforce for our businesses and instrumental in providing early education at an important stage of child development, beginning the preparation of our future workforce.”

IMPACT ON WORKING PARENTS

WITHOUT AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

Parents reduce their hours or opt out of the workforce



94%

of workers involuntarily working part-time due to child care problems are women.

ANNUAL COST OF CHILD CARE



INFANTS



4 YEAR-OLDS

CENTER-BASED CARE

\$10,759

19.4% of household income

\$8,672

14.4% of household income

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

\$7,887

13.1% of household income

\$7,148

11.8% of household income

Sources: Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board, Child Care in State Economies: 2019 Update; 2016 U.S. Census Bureau Economic Census and County Business Pattern data and non-employer statistics data; Current Population Survey for the 2015-2017 period; 2016-2017 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and Child Care Aware of America 2017 child care rates, the U.S. and the High Cost of Child Care (2018). Note: Regulations for child care licensing vary by state. The economic information provided through the U.S. Census Bureau Economic Census includes employers and sole proprietors who report child care business income. This does not mean such entities are regulated by the state or are in compliance with state law. Therefore, state regulatory lists may vary from child care business data reflected in the Census Bureau data.

Social service providers indicate that most openings in daycare are in the Lacey area, while most clients live in Olympia and rural areas. The Thurston Economic Development Council has also concluded that childcare options are dwindling in the Thurston Region. This may result in even longer trips with multiple stops to deliver children at childcare and then travel to training or employment sites.

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

While rideshare companies such as Uber and Lyft do have a presence in the Thurston Region, rural service is problematic, and the costs are high.

- Are unaware of available services.

The region has not been successful in “cracking this nut.” We continue to learn that we have a huge information gap in awareness of available services. Unless we break a leg and need to ride the bus for the duration, we simply don’t take in information on available services.

This is true for individuals who could benefit from the services, but also from providers of services. While it has been listed in the past, we just discovered that 211 does not include information about our ruralTRANSIT (rT) service. Queries to CSOs and other service providers validate that they do not have access to current information on how to access transportation services – even if an individual might be eligible. Since rules and rates change frequently, even those with basic knowledge struggle with a lack of current, accurate information. Many persons with disabilities may face special challenges because materials are not available in a suitable format, the individual may not be able to read, or travel training services may be limited or non-existent. Language barriers may also inhibit certain clients from awareness of available services.

- Have language barriers that make service delivery difficult.

“Especially for low-wage workers with children, the decision to work or seek additional education may depend on the availability of affordable child care.

Affordable child care may encourage low-skilled parents to maintain their connection to the labor force or to upgrade their skills through education, both of which contribute to economic growth and productivity over the long term.”

- Committee for Economic Development “Child Care in State Economies” 2019 Update

“Child care is both an economic necessity and barrier to employment for most families: 65 percent of children under six have either both parents or a single parent in the workforce. At the same time, most working parents encounter significant barriers to finding affordable, high-quality child care. The cost of child care is increasingly squeezing middle class families and has become unaffordable for many low-income families...The situation is even more dire for families living in poverty; among those that pay for child care, they spend over one-third of total income on child care.”

- Think Progress/Center for American Progress Action Fund

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

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

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

The combination of growing development in the rural and urban fringes and the mostly urban public transportation benefit area may leave clients with potential service at their point of origin or their point of destination, but not both. Transit focuses on the traditional commute peaks, resulting in lack of service for the non-traditional work hours in jobs and training often encountered by this population.

Prior to the rT, no public transportation existed for people in many Tribal, rural, and suburban communities.

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

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

The gaps can be categorized as:

- Available Modes – Growth and development patterns, the need to transport children to childcare, the lack of reliable vehicles and licensure, and other factors limit the use of options such as biking, walking and ridesharing.



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

The WorkFirst Local Area Planning Partners indicated that traditional fixed route transit solutions are not the answer for their clients. Even though transit is free, this client group seldom rides.



“rT is the only transportation option I have at the moment to get back and forth between Grand Mound and Olympia. This transportation option is crucial in my effort to reunite me with my children. If it weren’t for rT I would have no possible way to get up to Olympia several times a week to do what I need to get done and to attend my visitations with my children on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please do not discontinue these services for the Grand Mound area.”

- James Knight, rider

Transportation Services

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

In the last several years, both Intercity Transit and ruralTRANSIT (rT) have moved to fare-free service, removing a major barrier to access.

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

Intercity Transit took matters into their own hands by undertaking a significant public engagement strategy – the IT Road Trip - and the community said “we want more transit, and we want it now.” Then, the state Legislature granted IT authority to request an additional 3/10th of 1% in sales tax with a vote of the people. IT placed Proposition 1 on the November 2018 ballot and voters approved it by over 65%. IT has a path forward to provide more service in more places with increased frequency.

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

In addition to the ruralTransit Program (rT) and Village Vans – initiatives of the regional coordination process – other traditional and non-traditional providers serve Thurston County. Intercity Transit delivers a backbone of fixed route and dial-a-lift (DAL) service in the urban areas of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Yelm, and partners on programs outside its service areas.

Social service providers transport certain clients for certain types of trips – filling some gaps. The area’s nine school districts supply the greatest number of public transportation trips in the region. Greyhound, Northwestern Trailways, and Amtrak provide intercity services. Transit systems and coordinated projects help people connect to Pierce, Grays Harbor, Mason, and Lewis counties.

See Appendix E for route maps.

School Districts

School districts are by far the largest public transportation provider in the area, covering the nine school districts of the Thurston Region. A variety of regulatory barriers inhibit school transportation from coordinating with other transportation providers.

Regional partners continue to look for ways to overcome barriers while still meeting the requirements of each entity.

Intercity Transit

For this Plan update, we chose to not update the Intercity Transit and other service provider services sections to 2022 data. Because of pandemic slowdowns, lack of drivers and other staff, and changing conditions, the current data does not adequately reflect typical Intercity Transit services. For planning purposes, this older data better represents “normal” service levels for fixed route, dial-a-lift, vanpool, and other Intercity Transit services.

Overview

Intercity Transit has been serving the community for over 35 years. Funding is supplied by local sales tax, transit fares, contracted services and federal and state grants. A municipal corporation, Intercity Transit provides public transportation for people who live and work in Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, and Yelm, an area of approximately 94 square miles. This agency operates 25 bus routes, a door-door service for people with disabilities, a vanpool program, specialized van programs, and is active in community partnerships.

The agency supplied about 4 million rides in 2019 on fixed-route service and 210,000 on Dial-A-Lift. Rides fell by half in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fixed-route bus service is available five days a week on 18 routes.

The service operates every 15 to 30 minutes on many major corridors during peak weekday travel times and every 30 to 60 minutes during off-peak times. Service is available weekdays, generally 4:30 a.m. to 12:25 a.m. (next day); Saturdays, generally 7:15 a.m. to 12:25 a.m. (next day); and Sundays between 7:15 a.m. to 12:25 a.m. (next day). Bus service includes:

- 17 routes serving the greater Olympia/Lacey/Tumwater/Yelm area;

- One route providing express service to Tacoma/Lakewood (Pierce County), including connection to the Sound Transit Seattle Express service and Sounder rail;
- Connections to neighboring transit systems including Pierce, Grays Harbor, and Mason, and Amtrak.

Intercity Transit operates: a fleet of 140 buses, 54 dial-a-lift vehicles, and 222 vanpool vans; several transit centers, including two main facilities in Olympia and Lacey and primary transfer stations at Westfield Mall, Tumwater Square, and Little Prairie Center; bus stops, shelters, and park-and-ride lots. Believing in multimodal connections and accessibility, Intercity Transit has bike racks on all buses, and all vehicles are ADA accessible.

Dial-a-Lift and Travel Training

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

Potential Dial-A-Lift customers must successfully complete an application and eligibility process before being certified to use DAL. People with disabilities that prevent them from getting to or from a fixed route bus stop, boarding or exiting an accessible fixed route

service highlight

Thurston Bus Buddies

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

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

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

This program addresses the fear that is often associated with trying transit. People who can comfortably ride fixed routes can make more spontaneous decisions about travel and connect to places outside the Thurston Region.

bus may be eligible, as well as those persons whose disability prevents them from navigating the system without the assistance of another person. Qualified individuals may request rides on Dial-A-Lift by calling in from one to five days in advance. Intercity Transit offers limited “same-day” service if time and space permits.

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

Dial-A-Lift offers a free, one-on-one travel training service for people who want to learn to use the fixed route system. This program helps new riders, seniors, and people with disabilities to successfully and comfortably use the regular fixed route system.

Intercity Transit’s Travel Training Program contributes in-kind services to support rT.

Vanpool Program

In 2020, Intercity Transit’s Vanpool Program celebrates its 38th year of operation. The 180 active Vanpools serve about 1,260 commuters traveling daily through the south Puget Sound and southwest Washington region. The Vanpool Program serves both public and private employers and one end of the commute must be in Thurston County. They provided about 284,796 passenger trips in 2020. Intercity Transit requires a group of at least five commuters to begin a Vanpool.

Intercity Transit approves and trains volunteer drivers. Vanpools from other transit systems also serve the Thurston Region.

Carpool Program

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

Community Vans Program

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

Surplus Van Grant Program

Intercity Transit makes passenger vans retired from the vanpool fleet available through a grant process to nonprofit and governmental agencies located in their service area. An annual application process makes up to four retired vans available to nonprofits to address their unmet transportation needs. Grantees must provide transportation with the vans and demonstrate they can insure and maintain the granted vehicle.

Grantees must also report passenger trips quarterly for one year.

service highlight

Village Vans

Village Vans is an innovative service envisioned by the Thurston County Human Services Transportation Forum in the late 1990s and implemented by Intercity Transit in 2002.

The program was designed to meet a gap identified in the planning process – lack of transportation for low income families working toward economic independence. At that time, data indicated that over 70 percent of work search problems for this population were complicated by the lack of transportation, making transition from government aid to a living wage job much more difficult, if not impossible.

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

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



service highlight

ruralTRANSIT (rT) Transportation Program

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

rT provides general public service employing a deviated fixed route system, with on- demand service in certain areas and complementary paratransit within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the route. rT connects rural communities and feeds into the service areas of Intercity Transit and Twin Transit, providing connections along the I-5 corridor to the north via Sound Transit, Pierce Transit, and King County Metro, to Greyhound services in Olympia, and AMTRAK services in Olympia and Centralia.

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

rT operates weekdays from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. While there is a demand for evening and weekend service, the small number of potential passengers does not translate into efficient service delivery. The community continues to seek alternative solutions.

Senior and Youth Programs

Seniors

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

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

- Transportation Services - Services designed to transport older persons to and from medical and health care services, social services, meal programs, senior centers, shopping and

recreational activities so such service will be accessible to eligible individuals who have no other means of transportation or are unable to use existing transportation. Personal assistance for those with limited physical mobility may be provided.

- Available Funding - Title III of the Older Americans Act and/or the Senior Citizens Services Act (SCSA) may fund this program. For either funding source, the only eligibility requirement is age 60 or over.
- Regular Specialized Transportation - The transportation of passengers using provider-owned vehicles utilizing special equipment when required or necessary to accommodate those with limited physical mobility. Drivers are usually paid, but volunteer drivers may also be utilized.

Emerging Technologies to Support an Aging Population Transportation Movement around and beyond the community is key for individuals to be able to access social, health, and business facilities. As each person is unique, so too is his or her ability to live independently, along with the resultant transportation needs and limits associated with each person's physical and cognitive abilities. Some older adults are completely independent and continue to drive without assistance, while others may be able to drive but require vehicle modifications and/or some advanced technologies to assist them. Other older adults have transitioned away from driving altogether, sometimes due to age-related disabilities, and rely fully on public transportation and a variety of other transportation services. Finally, there are older adults who also rely on services and technologies, not only for transportation, but for basic day-to-day mobility as well. Technologies to support transportation may vary depending on the distance of travel planned.

- A Report by the Task Force on Research and Development for Technology to Support Aging Adults, Committee on Technology of the National Science and Technology Council. March 2019

- Volunteer Transportation – The transportation of passengers using privately owned vehicles. Drivers are volunteers, generally reimbursed for expenses incurred. These services may be used along with or as an alternative to regular specialized transportation.
- Target Population - The target population for transportation services is persons age 60 and over who:
 1. Need transportation to medical and health care services, social services, meal programs, senior centers, shopping and recreational activities; and
 2. Cannot manage their own transportation because:
 - a. They do not have a car; or
 - b. They cannot drive; or
 - c. They cannot afford to drive; and
 - d. They cannot use public transportation; or
 - e. Public transportation is not available or accessible.

Individual organizations also provide senior transportation services, such as the Yelm Adult Community Center and Panorama City. The Thurston Region is home to a growing number of senior facilities, including assisted living and other supportive environments. Most facilities provide at least some level of transportation services for

their residents, including weekly shopping trips and recreational excursions, as well as transportation for medical appointments. Many of these businesses have expressed concerns about the cost and liability of these services and an interest in coordinating with other providers.

Youth

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

Other Private and Non-Profit Programs

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

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

Ridesharing

Currently Uber and Lyft are the two ridesharing companies serving Thurston County, however there are some smaller communities which may not be able to get service. The downside to ridesharing companies like Uber and Lyft is passengers are at the mercy of when and where cars are available, and cars are not always available in all communities when they are needed. Vehicles may also not be equipped to serve people with disabilities, nor have the necessary training to provide assistance. Using these companies, it is generally easier to travel from larger communities to smaller ones.

Ridesharing companies differ from taxi companies because they rely on a digital network. A smartphone is needed to access the app to connect passengers with independent contractors who use their personal vehicles. Ridesharing can also be a cost-prohibitive option. Fares are set for each service in each city depending on its own formula using either a per mile rate or a per minute rate, in addition to a base or minimum fare. However, there are also times of day and circumstances when fares increase, this is called surge or prime pricing. For example, a one-way trip from Grand Mound may cost on average \$40, but with surge pricing at rush hour the cost could rise to over \$200 for the same trip.

service highlight

Around the Sound

The contracted service provider for rT, Around the Sound has been supplying transportation services for people with special needs for over 35 years. This family-owned business has provided transportation services for the Medicaid program, Veterans Administration, and other local and state programs. A leader in customer service and driver training, Around the Sound brings important technical assistance and on-the-ground service experience to transportation planning in the Thurston Region. The owner of Around the Sound is the current president of CTANW.

ADJACENT COUNTY PROGRAMS

Mason Transit

Mason Transit has operated since 1992, providing county-wide public transportation service to this largely rural county. This service includes routed, route deviated and dial-a-ride service with destinations in adjacent counties making connections to six public transit systems (Kitsap, Jefferson, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Intercity, and Pierce) and Squaxin Tribal Transit. Service is free within Mason County, with a \$1.50 adult fare charged outside the county boundary. Special rates are available for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Pierce Transit

Pierce Transit was formed in 1979 and serves a 414 square mile area with an estimated population of 770,564. The service area includes the more urban portions of Pierce County. Pierce Transit provides local bus routes, specialized transportation for people with disabilities, vanpool, and ridematching. Local adult fares are \$2.00, with variable fares outside Pierce County and a reduced fare program for certain riders.

Grays Harbor Transit

Located in Grays Harbor County, this transit system hub is in the Aberdeen/Hoquiam area. Making use of the Greyhound Station in Olympia, one route connects Grays Harbor to select Olympia destinations. Weekday service hours vary by route, but many operate from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. On weekends, the service hours and number of trips are limited. Fares start at \$1.00, and discounted tickets and passes are available.

Twin Transit

Twin Transit serves the Centralia and Chehalis areas of Lewis County, including the Amtrak Station and Centralia College. The service operates from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with route variations. Twin Transit charges \$1.00 for a one-way fare. The Thurston Region's rT connects Thurston County residents to Lewis County destinations at several of Twin Transit's hubs. Twin Transit partners with Thurston County efforts and has tried several pilot routes (Great Wolf Lodge and express service from Centralia to Tumwater). Twin Transit now serves Thurston County locations and we continue to encourage greater communication and coordination.

INTERCITY PROVIDERS

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

Greyhound

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

Amtrak

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

While each community may differ, their services, needs, gaps, and strategies resonate with our local findings and helped with local and regional considerations.

Vision, Goals, and Solutions

Vision – Regional Transportation Plan

The Thurston Regional Transportation Plan – What Moves You – (July 2020) envisions a transportation system that works for everyone. Through its planning efforts, projects, programs, and strategies, TRPC aims to develop, maintain, and grow a transportation system that offers safe, efficient, affordable travel choices for people and goods, while supporting land use plans and long-term quality of life objectives.

To achieve this vision, transportation decisions and investments will be:

- **Sustainable:** Balancing our needs today with those of future residents. Thinking broadly, regionally, and globally – and acting locally. Supporting community health and well-being with transportation options. Providing a transportation system which advances economic, personal, and environmental health.

In 2013, the Region adopted the *Creating Places Preserving Spaces - A Sustainable Development Plan for the Thurston Region*. This federally funded project originated from the US Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Environmental Protection. The agencies recognized that they could no longer operate in silos, needing to work together - and encourage communities to work together - to reach a more sustainable future.

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

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

- **Supportive:** Reflecting adopted community goals and plans. Integrating transportation and land use decision-making processes. Increasing viable, affordable travel choices for people and goods. Moving people efficiently and cost-effectively among diverse destinations. Improving access for all people, regardless of age, ability, or income. Promoting local economies without compromising other core values. Making investments that contribute to a community’s character. Providing transportation infrastructure that meets the majority of transportation needs. Complying with Washington State’s Growth Management Act requirements. Complying with all other state and federal requirements.
- **Responsive:** Providing pragmatic, visionary leadership that maximizes future opportunities while recognizing today’s realities. Revising direction as necessary to adapt to changing situations or objectives. Initiating timely response as substantive issues evolve.
- **Fiscally Responsible:** Making cost-effective investments that result in best value solutions for the community. Ensuring system funding supports a range of transportation choices. Being realistic about financial capacity and prioritizing accordingly.

Goals – Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Clearly Goal 3 Barrier-free Transportation impacts people with special transportation needs. However, others such as 2 Multimodal Transportation System, 4 System Safety and Security, and 10 Public Transportation support all people including the system users we focus on in this plan.

1. Transportation and Land Use Consistency
 - Ensure the design and function of the transportation facilities are consistent with and support sustainable, healthy urban, suburban, and rural communities.
2. Multimodal Transportation System –
 - Work toward an integrated, multimodal transportation system that supports the adopted land use plans, reduces overall need to drive, and encourages transit, walking, and cycling as choices.
3. Barrier-Free Transportation – Ensure transportation system investments support the special travel needs of youth, elders, people with disabilities, literacy, or language barriers, those with low incomes, and other affected groups.

4. System Safety and Security – Enhance the safety and security of those who use, operate, and maintain the system.
5. System Maintenance and Repair – Protect investments that already have been made in the transportation system and keep life-cycle costs as low as possible.
6. Transportation Demand Management – Increase overall operating efficiency of the transportation system through the effective use of measures that reduce the need to drive.
7. Transportation Technologies – Use technology-based approaches to address transportation congestion, safety, efficiency, and operations.
8. Freight Mobility – Promote efficient, cost-effective, timely, and safe movement of freight in and through the region.
9. Streets, Roads, and Bridges – Establish a street and road network that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while supporting adopted land use goals.
10. Public Transportation – Provide a robust level of reliable, effective public transportation options to increase the share of all trips made by public transportation.
11. Bicycling – Increase the share of all trips made safely and conveniently by bicycling.
12. Walking – Increase the share of all trips made safely and conveniently by walking.
13. Rail – Ensure the continued long-term viability of existing and rail-banked rail lines in the region for future freight and passenger rail travel.
14. Aviation – Provide an appropriate level of facilities and services to meet the general aviation needs of residents and businesses in the region.
15. Marine Transportation – Provide an appropriate level of facilities and services to meet the region’s marine transportation needs.
16. Public Involvement – Build a community of an engaged and informed public that contributes ideas and supports actions to create a highly functional multimodal transportation system consistent with the goals and policies in this plan.
17. Intergovernmental Coordination – Ensure transportation facilities and programs function seamlessly across community borders and between regions.

18. Environmental and Human Health – Minimize transportation impacts on the natural environment and the people who live and work in the Thurston region.
19. Performance Measures – Develop performance measures that are realistic, efficient to administer, effective in assessing performance, and meaningful to the public.
20. Transportation Funding – Secure adequate funding from all sources to implement the goals and policies of this plan

Vision, Goals, & Solutions – Human Services Transportation Plan

The Human Services Transportation Plan echoes the Vision and Goals and builds on the solutions of previous HST plans. The region considers the plan a reflection of current and projected future needs, services, and gaps that will change as new challenges, opportunities, and strategies emerge. Like the plan, the projects will also change over time.

Transportation professionals often talk about the concept of “one ride at a time,” recognizing that each individual’s needs differ and a successful transportation system must consider those individual needs, while also recognizing how they fit into the whole. Without careful planning, coordination, and collaboration, our “one ride at a time” can lead to a disjointed, inefficient, and confusing system.

The solutions we propose need to work in urban, suburban, and rural places – seeking equal access and inclusivity, but also recognizing challenges. How do we measure “productivity” in areas with low density and longer trips? And in looking at best

solutions, how do we compare costs between a very rural and a mostly urban service?

These solutions and continued coordination will not be possible without the strong dedication of the region’s policymakers and partner organizations. All the projects and organizations included in the Project List are key partners with proven solutions. The Bus Buddies program has successfully increased people’s comfort with and ease of using public transportation. Intercity Transit’s new vehicles will support expansion of their services and reduce greenhouse gases. IT also provides in-kind match, technical assistance, and actively collaborates with community partners. rT transports hundreds of people each workday to jobs, training, essential appointments and for other critical purposes. In addition to a history of partnering on rT, TOGETHER! brings the message of coordination and information about the various transportation options to its many social service partners in the community. Around the Sound, the contracted provider for rT, supplies invaluable technical assistance supporting coordination.

Solutions - Plan:

- **Increase equity** in transportation planning and services.
- **Increase mobility options.** Expand service to rural areas with limited mobility options; support training and employment in the urban areas; and provide transport to specialized services not available in the Thurston Region.
- **Improve individual service.** Increase awareness of mobility options; shorten trips; enhance driver training to provide better service; create individual trip planning services; and explore tribal transit options.
- **Increase Coordination with Other Systems and Programs:** Focus on regional and cross-county mobility management. Improve connections

with Mason, Squaxin, Grays Harbor, and Lewis transit organizations.

- **Improve efficiency.** Modify routes and directional services to increase the number of passengers per hour/trip/mile.
- **Identify and obtain sustainable funding to close gaps.** Including supporting local, state, and federal initiatives and bills.
- **Broadly distribute information** about available transportation options – in many forms, formats, and languages.
- **Explore options that don't involve travel,** such as telework, telemedicine, online public services, tele-education...
- **Expand access to high speed Broadband services.**
- **Embrace technology** – to help manage our systems more efficiently, to provide planning and real time information to travelers, and to produce new materials and methods to help maintain our system.

Many people with special transportation needs – and their advocates and support organizations – express frustration with not knowing what services are available, the complexity of determining eligibility, and difficulty of arranging trips.

Emerging technologies such as autonomous vehicles may provide some extended mobility and freedom, but the technology is new, and likely underserved rural areas will see those options long after they are adopted in more urban areas. The Regional Council is tracking this technology.

The TRPC Here to There Mobility Management program, which expands on an “all things to all people” website, provides links to a range of transportation options. Improvements should make the user experience easier, as it is tailored more to

“who are you and what do you need?” rather than just “here are all the options.”

Transit agencies and other providers have adopted smarter dispatch and on-board technologies that allow drivers and dispatchers to better communicate about connections, trip planning, and ridesharing. “One bus away” and similar apps supply real time information to help people make connections and avoid waiting – especially in inclement weather.

- Explore new methods of hiring, supporting, and retaining public transit and school bus drivers and other staff to supply a system that serves the WHOLE community.
- Keep supporting existing programs and projects on the Regional Prioritized List and continually look for new ways to serve our communities.
 - ruralTRANSIT (rT)
 - Thurston Here to There
 - Bus Buddies
 - Village Vans
 - Vehicle Replacement

This chapter includes “service highlight” boxes that report on the many successful programs that have resulted from solutions set forth in the Human Services Transportation Plan over the years. For more rural programs, we know that success is not necessarily measured by number of riders/hour. When initially implemented, rT, for example, filled a gap in an area with no transportation services. It continues to adapt to changing community conditions and needs with expanded services, routes, and hours. When rT delivers 2 people to classes at Centralia Community College, or 3 people to better jobs in Lacey and Olympia, or a Veteran directly to PTSD services with no need to transfer, or provides greater independence for a teenager with disabilities – that is success.

Solutions – You!

- **Be a Helper.** Mr. Rogers suggested that we “Look for the helpers.” We can also “be” the helpers. Commit to making sure that your organizations (workplace, faith-based community, Planning Commission, college or university, service club, school, neighborhood association, book club, gym, yoga studio,

Little League team) know about available transportation services and help people find what they need.

- **Visit Thurston Here to There** and let us know what is missing, inaccurate, or confusing. We’re updating this information and need your help.
- **Use and encourage others to use the great multimodal services** in our community. Ride

#WEEK WITHOUT DRIVING - SEPTEMBER 19-25, 2022

[Week Without Driving 2022: September 19-25 - Disability Rights Washington](#)

What if you couldn’t drive? What if taking the bus, riding your bike or walking to work, carpooling, or paying for ride-hail weren’t a choice you could make, but a necessity? What would it be like getting around without driving yourself?

If you can drive, and can afford a car, this isn’t something you think about. But for nearly a quarter of the people in our country – people with disabilities, young people, seniors, and people who can’t afford cars or gas, this is our every day.

How does the Week Without Driving work?

- You can get around however you want, **but you can’t drive yourself in any car.** This applies to all your activities - not just your work commute. If you normally transport other family members or friends, it applies to those trips too. You can ask someone else to drive you but make a note of how much you “owe” this person in their time, and if you felt obligated to support them in other ways (i.e., doing all the dishes). You can use ride-hail or taxis but note how much it costs you.
- This isn’t a disability simulation or a test of how easily you can find alternatives. We know that it is far easier to give up your keys if you can afford to live in a walkable area well served by transit or can outsource your driving and other transport and delivery needs to other people.
- We want you to have this experience so you can start to understand the barriers nondrivers experience in accessing your (and our) communities.

the bus. Explore vanpool options. Walk. Ride a bicycle. Hit the trail system. And then, find ways to let people know how it works and suggest improvements.

- **Participate in a community event.** Recently, elected officials, local staff, and advocates walked downtown Olympia led by the Walkability Action Institute. This program is part of Center



for Advancing Healthy Communities, which believes that all states and communities should be designed to support physical activity and non-motorized forms of transportation so that people can have the policy, system, and environmental (PSE) supports needed to engage in active lifestyles, whether recreationally or through essential daily functions like commuting to and from work, to community destinations, and/or places of interest (community events, schools, shopping, etc.).

During the Week Without Driving, TRPC hosted an event for policymakers and staff that focused on the Martin Way Corridor. Thurston County, Lacey, Olympia, Intercity Transit and TRPC are working together on this old highway corridor with an emphasis on improving safety and access for all modes.

TRPC encouraged the group to ride an Intercity Transit bus from either Olympia’s or Lacey’s Transit Center and then meet in the middle at a local restaurant to discuss their experience. One long time resident and business leader noted “It was the first time I ever rode the bus here.” A mayor commented: “It feels really different to ride a bus and walk on this corridor than drive it in my car. It is a long walk from the corridor to the Transit hub.”





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APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A: Public Outreach

TRPC outreach to people who because of income, ability, or age face transportation challenges is not limited to an every-four-year update of the Human Services Transportation Plan. Equity in Planning requires that we examine impacts to all people in all our work - corridor studies, environmental and climate projects, Commute Trip Reduction, data collection and analysis, active transportation, health, housing, and economic forecasting.

In previous plan updates, we surveyed community members with a narrow set of questions geared toward the needs of the HSTP. This time, we found that imbedding the questions into broader efforts resulted in a greater number of respondents. We have also noticed that people are now more likely to answer demographic questions. For the Transportation Priorities Survey, 88 percent provided their residence location, 82 percent age, 75 percent race/ethnicity, and 68 percent household income. This allows us to look at survey results through a variety of lenses.

Countywide Transportation Priorities Survey: June - November 2021

TRPC opted to use the Countywide Transportation Priorities Survey as the primary outreach tool for the HSTP update. The survey aimed to collect information, needs and gaps, and preferences to support a variety of TRPC regional projects and programs, including Climate Mitigation Planning, Hazards Mitigation Planning, Here to There - Website/ Mobility Management, High Capacity Transportation Study, Regional Trails Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, and Rural Mobility Study. TRPC chose to use this countywide survey methodology to better integrate equity into transportation planning, to better understand the changes to the way we work/where we work/stability of jobs linked to the COVID pandemic, and to test survey and outreach methods that result in more inclusive information.

To provide a consistent and holistic opportunity for all members of the community to participate in the survey, TRPC:

- Sent a postcard invitation to every residential address in Thurston County
- Issued a press release
- Posted and boosted posts on social media
- Communicated with the nearly 200 worksites TRPC manages as the lead agency for Commute Trip Reduction in the Thurston region – encouraging participation by major employers – including our largest employer – state government
- Sent an email through internal email lists, such as participants in Hazards and Emergency planning, Climate efforts, agriculture, et.al.
- Mailing an additional invitation to residents of Bucoda

- Worked with the cities of Rainier and Tenino to include a survey invitation in their respective water bills
- Made announcements at all public meetings attended by TRPC Staff
- Asked the Thurston Regional Planning Council, Transportation Policy Board, and Technical Advisory Committee to encourage participation by their constituents and communities (at meetings each month during the survey period)
- Translated the survey into Spanish
- Mailed paper surveys to the Housing Authority of Thurston County clients and people on the agency's wait list
- Distributed paper surveys to the Thurston County Food Bank, the Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF), and area senior housing facilities
- Provided posters and paper surveys to local Timberland Regional Library branches
- Since we sent the postcard only to those in the community with a residential address, we know we likely missed people who are experiencing homelessness. Some number of that community may have heard about the survey through public meetings, the Housing Authority, Thurston County Food Bank, and other social service providers that we contacted.
- We also reached out through Intercity Transit and ruralTRANSIT (rT)
- In addition to the general survey, staff also administered a high school student survey with a smaller subset of questions. We invited all high school students in the region to participate

and heard back from 499 students from the Yelm and Olympia school districts. The survey was primarily administered online

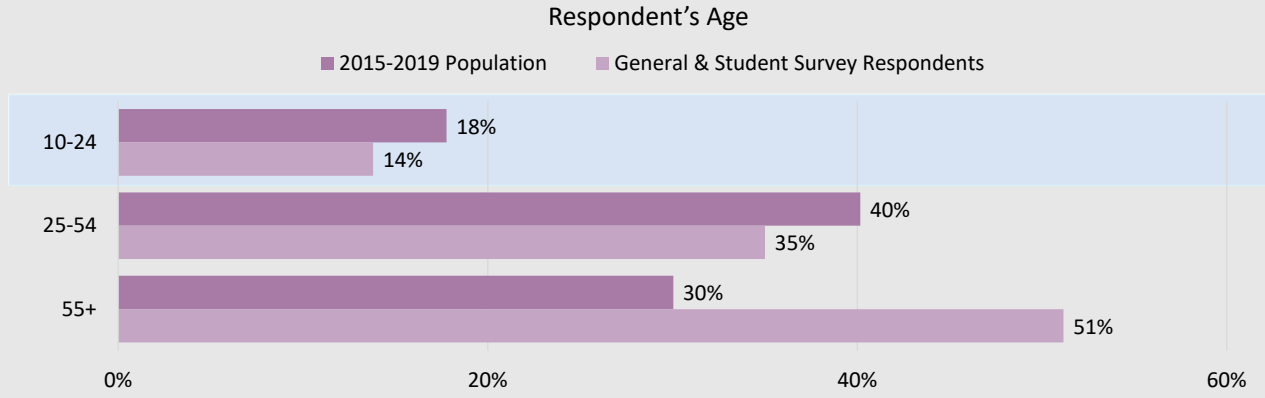
- Numerous partners helped staff advertise, distribute, and encourage involvement in the surveying efforts.

Working through our community partnerships bolstered response rates for the survey. In particular, the Chehalis Tribe's willingness to email tribal members and staff members resulted in a higher response rate for Native American members of our community than in previous surveying efforts. Other notable partners that helped get the word out about the survey include the Housing Authority of Thurston County, the Thurston County Food Bank, ruralTRANSIT, Intercity Transit, Yelm and Olympia school districts, Timberland Regional Library, and the cities of Rainier and Tenino, among others.

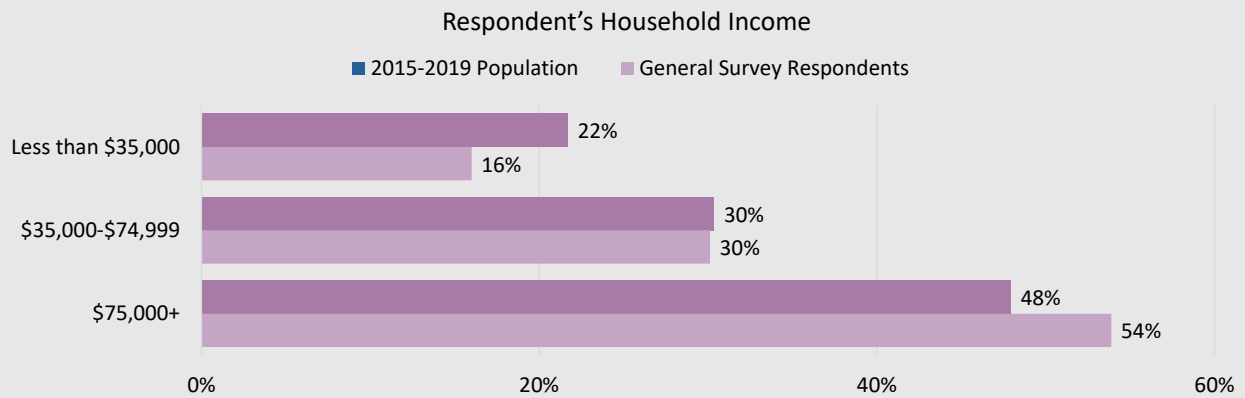
4,190 people responded to the general survey and 499 students from the Olympia and Yelm school districts participated in the student survey. The survey included questions about:

- COVID and commuting
- Transportation access
- Job access
- Project funding priorities
- Big picture values
- Equity

Demographics: AGE



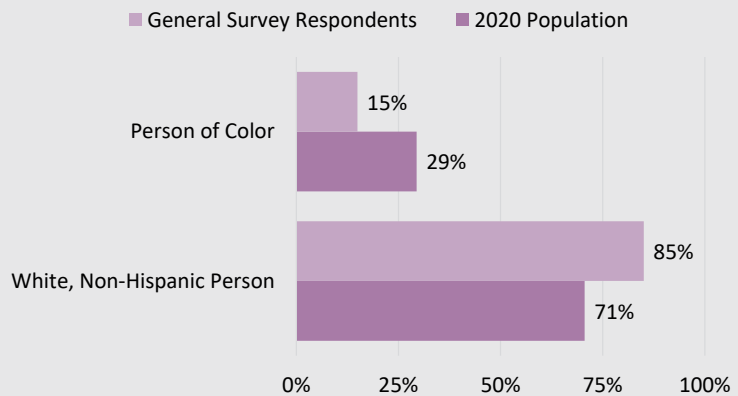
Demographics: HOUSEHOLD INCOME



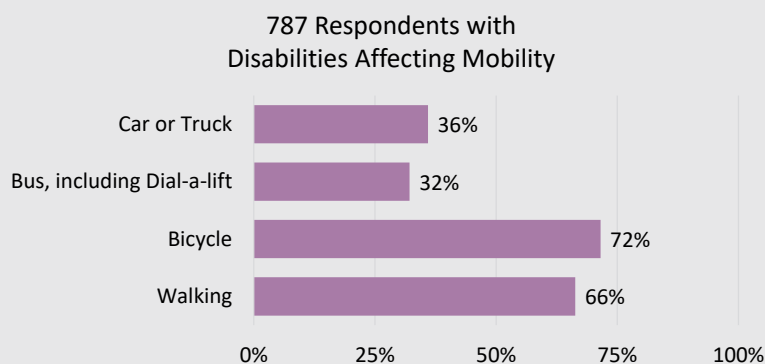
Demographics: RACE & ETHNICITY

RACE/ETHNICITY	COUNT
American Indian and Alaska Native	100
Asian	118
Black or African American	67
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	123
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	28
Some Other Race	98
White	2,821
Total	3,125

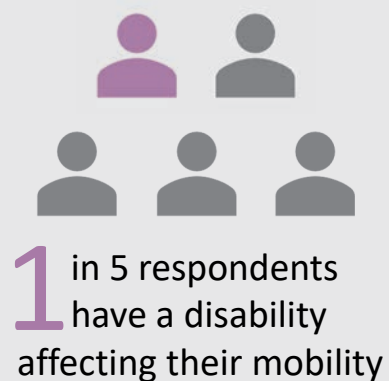
Respondents could choose more than one race/ethnicity.



Demographics: DISABILITY AFFECTING MOBILITY

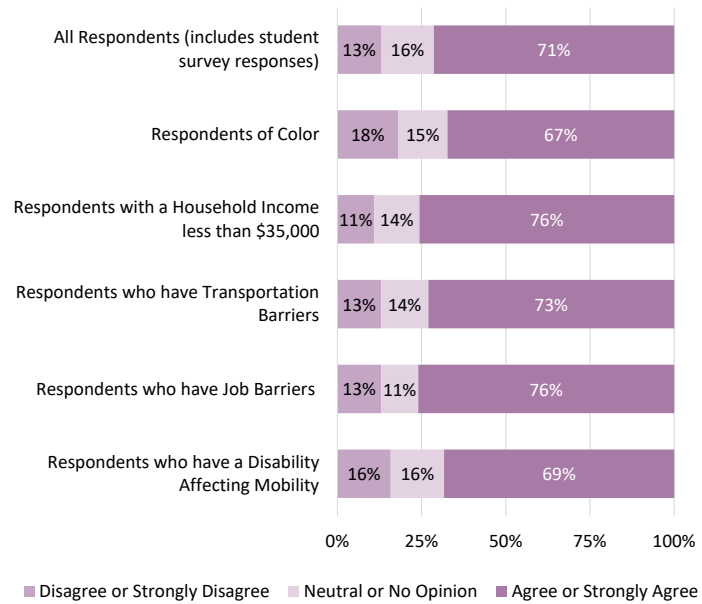


Respondents could choose more than one mode affected by their disability.



How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following goal?

Provide equitable transportation access and service for people of all ages, races and ethnicities, incomes, abilities, English language proficiencies, or other demographic characteristics as appropriate for the community's land use characteristics (urban, suburban, and rural).



During a normal week in June 2021 (during COVID-19 pandemic), how many times a week do you use these kinds of transportation?

- People with a disability affecting mobility and those with a household income less than \$35,000 are more likely to use transit as a transportation option at least one day a week than the general public.

Do you have trouble getting from home to shopping or other places like medical appointments and errands?

- 12% of people have trouble getting from home to shopping or other places like medical appointments and errands. When student survey responses were included, this increased to 14%.
- 28% of people 24 or younger have trouble getting from home to shopping or other places like medical appointments and errands. This compares to just 11% of people 25-54 and 10% of people 55 or older.
- 30% of people with a disability affecting their mobility have trouble getting from home to shopping or other places like medical appointments and errands. This compares to just 12% of the general survey respondents.
- 35% of respondents with a household income less than \$35,000 have trouble getting from home to shopping or other places like medical appointments and errands. This compares to just 12% of respondents with a household income between \$35,000 and \$75,000 and 4% of respondents with a household income of \$75,000 or more.

Why do you have trouble getting from home to shopping or other places like medical appointments and errands? (Check all that apply)

The top 5 reasons for each demographic group are highlighted in purple.

Reason	All Respondents	Respondents 24 or younger	Respondents 55 or older	Respondents who have a Disability Affecting Mobility	Respondents with a Household Income less than \$35,000
I don't have a reliable vehicle	42%	35%	34%	44%	60%
I don't know anyone to give me a ride	41%	32%	46%	51%	49%
Parking is difficult to find	25%	10%	27%	26%	28%
It is not practical to walk	76%	60%	81%	82%	80%
it is not safe to walk because there are no sidewalks or safe places to cross the street	53%	38%	54%	56%	56%
Riding the bus (including Dial-a-Lift) isn't practical	47%	32%	44%	46%	50%
Riding the bus (including Dial-a-Lift) isn't available	47%	31%	47%	47%	48%
Bicycling isn't practical	58%	38%	67%	67%	63%
Bicycling isn't safe	55%	41%	60%	59%	60%
I don't know how to find out what transportation I can use	22%	12%	28%	26%	22%

Do your transportation options prevent you from finding a job or a better job?

- 7% of respondents have trouble finding a job or a better job due to their transportation options.
- 41% of respondents 24 or younger have trouble finding a job or a better job due to their transportation options. This compares to just 11% of respondents 25-54 and 3% of respondents 55 or older.
- 13% of respondents with a disability affecting their mobility have trouble finding a job or a better job due to their transportation options.
- 19% of respondents with a household income less than \$35,000 have trouble finding a job or a better job due to their transportation options. This compares to just 7% of respondents with a household income between \$35,000 and \$75,000 and 4% of respondents with a household income of \$75,000 or more.

Why does transportation prevent you from finding a job or a better job? (Check all that apply)

The top 5 reasons for each demographic group are highlighted in purple.

Reason	All Respondents	Respondents 24 or younger	Respondents 55 or older	Respondents who have a Disability Affecting Mobility	Respondents with a Household Income less than \$35,000
I don't have a reliable vehicle	48%	75%	36%	60%	79%
I don't know anyone to give me a ride	46%	60%	47%	58%	72%
Parking is difficult to find	29%	25%	29%	27%	27%
It is not practical to walk	78%	85%	83%	86%	86%
it is not safe to walk because there are no sidewalks or safe places to cross the street	53%	60%	45%	56%	58%
Riding the bus (including Dial-a-Lift) isn't practical	60%	60%	56%	57%	55%
Riding the bus (including Dial-a-Lift) isn't available	54%	60%	62%	62%	55%
Bicycling isn't practical	60%	50%	71%	65%	56%
Bicycling isn't safe	57%	40%	67%	60%	60%
I don't know how to find out what transportation I can use	19%	20%	26%	28%	20%

Thurston Regional Planning Council distributes money from the federal government through grants for transportation studies, projects, and programs. Because of federal rules, this money can only be used in certain ways. Please mark how important the following types of studies, projects, and programs are to you:

Highlighted the top 5 answers for each demographic group. Note that responses by age are only for the active transportation projects – only the top option was highlighted in that case.

Project	All Respondents	Respondents 24 or younger ¹	Respondents 55 or older ¹	Respondents who have a Disability Affecting Mobility	Respondents with a Household Income less than \$35,000
Percentages are based on the percent of respondents who indicated a project was “Somewhat Important” or “Very Important”					
Purple = Top 5 Projects					
Planning and Studies					
Conduct planning studies, with public involvement, that address current and future transportation challenges	95%			96%	95%
Safety					
Make intersections safer	97%			96%	93%
Make crossing the street safer	96%			96%	94%
Make bus stops more convenient and safe for bus riders, especially for people with disabilities	93%			94%	94%
Efficiency					
Add turning lanes or center lanes	89%			89%	86%
Invest in new transportation technologies (improved traffic signals, real-time travel information)	90%			89%	88%
Invest in projects that reduce the need to travel, such as encouraging working from home	81%			79%	83%
Maintenance					
Increase road maintenance (fix pavement/potholes)	97%			97%	96%
Replace transit vehicles or bus stop shelters	80%			83%	87%
Resiliency					
Improve roads that are detour routes to Interstate 5 (I-5)	91%			93%	88%
Improve roads that are more likely to be impacted by hazards such as flooding or landslides	93%			94%	93%
Complete missing roads/street connections	83%			87%	84%
Help improve water quality and/or fish habitat by fixing places where roads and bridges impact natural areas	93%			92%	96%
Active Transportation					
Add sidewalks and safe street crossings to existing streets	95%	96%	96%	95%	96%
Add bike lanes to existing streets	83%	85%	86%	78%	88%
Complete the regional trail network	87%	88%	88%	82%	87%
Invest in school/public awareness programs to reduce travel trips and increase safety	80%	80%	86%	79%	87%

¹ Active transportation projects only.

Examples of Other Project Outreach Informing the HSTP Update

Grand Mound Transportation Study:

The Grand Mound Urban Growth Area (UGA) sits southwest of Olympia, near the border of Thurston and Lewis counties. The unincorporated community (census-designated place) of about 1,300 residents is attracting significant commercial development due to a prime location at the intersection of US Route 12, Interstate-5, and Old Highway 99. More growth is on the horizon, so the time is right to take stock of the area's current conditions and future opportunities.

The Grand Mound Transportation Study aimed to identify projects to improve safety and reliability of the transportation network in Grand Mound, as well as support access to businesses, improve connections for pedestrians and other users, and help develop the overall character of Grand Mound as it continues to grow.

As part of this effort (2018-2020), TRPC administered a survey of Grand Mound-area residents and businesses. TRPC mailed the survey to 1,645 addresses and elicited responses online for approximately 45 days. We also placed paper copies at businesses and other community locations. About 10 percent of the area responded, with 156 people completing the survey.

ruralTRANSIT, funded through the Consolidated Grant Program serves this area. We asked if people used transit, which provider, how often, and what would encourage them to ride the bus. What we learned: Over 20 percent ride rT. Overall, respondents ranked bus frequency and bus stop locations as barriers to taking transit, but 68 percent of respondents said they wouldn't ride the bus anyway.

To improve the area's safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and mobility device users, Grand Mound would benefit most from: more sidewalks (42 percent), wider sidewalks, buffer between sidewalk and roadway, more lighting, more pedestrian crossings, and a separate shared use trail. (choose one)

Ten percent of respondents noted that they were looking for work or unable to work. Household income ranged from more than \$60,000 annually (62 percent) to less than \$35,000 annually (13 percent). Nine percent indicated that they either sometimes or frequently did not have enough income to pay for their basic needs and must do without.

Thurston Regional Trails Plan: Survey February 1, 2021 – March 15, 2021: 1,200 responses.

Trails in the Thurston region serve recreational, physical activity, and transportation uses – among others. For some, a trail might serve first/last mile issues to connect with transit or to connect transit to a destination.

A few items of interest to the HSTP from the Trails Plan outreach:

In terms of your personal safety and security, how confident do you feel using a trail?

- Men are nine times more likely to feel fearless using a trail alone than their female counterparts.
- One in five women will not use a trail alone.
- One in four women feel fearless using a trail when they are with a companion

How do you generally use or plan to use trail(s)? Check all that apply.

Mode	% of Responses
Walk	80
Ride a bicycle, tricycle, or other type of bike using my own power	67
Run/jog	32
Ride an electric assist bicycle or tricycle	5
Use skates, skateboard, or a stand-kick scooter using my own power	5
Ride a horse	4
Ride some form of electric powered skateboard, stand-kick scooter, or a self-balancing device	1
Use wheelchair under my own power or with assistance from someone else	1
Ride some form of electric powered wheelchair or sit-down scooter	1

What “gets in your way” of using the trail closest to your home?

2% of respondents noted: Lack of accommodation for people with disabilities or mobility issues

How welcoming are the region’s trails to people who experience barriers and discrimination?

The categories included youth, women, people who are elderly, people of color, people who have a disability, people who are unhoused or unsheltered, and people who identify as LGBTQ. Participants responded to whether they considered the trail system as “hostile, neutral, friendly to those categories

- A small share of respondents perceive that trails are less welcoming to the listed groups/individuals.
- Accounting only for respondents who answered either ‘Hostile, Neutral, or Friendly,’ trails are perceived as the least friendly to people who are unhoused. This is followed by people with disabilities, women, and people who are elderly.

A few comments:

- *“As a woman of color because it is easy to end up alone on the trail when the trail is not busy I definitely find myself cautious as I approach lone males. I’m new to the area so don’t have any running partners (plus COVID concerns) and don’t have a sense for the safety of different areas yet.”*
- *“There is a strong settler colonial narrative throughout the parks and trail system here, that history did not begin until settlement. Part of feeling safe and welcome in the system is to see your cultural and historical identity reflected equally with that story. Youth programs, BIPOC programs, alter-abled and senior programs for increasing awareness, sense of safety and inclusion in the trail system would be of value. These programs should be led by the diversity of people they would represent.”*
- *“I am a white female and I don’t feel comfortable at times on sections of the trails because of the isolation.”*
- *“I like to think the trails are open to everyone and a place where people can be free from labels and judgments, but that doesn’t mean it’s true.”*

Other Outreach Activities

Ride Along – May 25, 2022

Elizabeth Stefsten (WSDOT) and Amy Hatch-Winecka (TRPC lead for rT) went on the first ride-along on Rural Transit to begin to become familiar with the service, the routes, the riders and the Around the Sound staff. We followed this route for the ride-along:

- Step 1: Route 3 bus from Tumwater Square (in front of Chevron) leaving at 9:45am.
- Step 2: Transfer to Route 4 bus at Grand Mound Park and Ride at 10:15am. Route 4 bus took us to the Tenino Library.
- Step 3: Transfer to Route 2 bus at Tenino Library at 10:30am. Route 2 bus took us back to Tumwater Square arriving at 11:00am.

Brandon Taylor with Around the Sound (ATS) met us on the bus when we left Tumwater Square and rode with us until we transferred to Route 4 at Ground Mound, as he needed to transition to a driver given the staffing shortage.

Elizabeth and I were able to talk with drivers and passengers throughout our ride-along. Below is an outline of the details:

- The service is highly valued and indispensable. One rider noted that she uses it intermittently when her car breaks down and that without it, she wouldn’t be able to get to work or to her shopping.
- The service needs to expand to include a route to Yelm. One rider noted that it takes about two hours with multiple transfers to get to Yelm now from south county, adding a huge burden to those needing to travel there.

- The service needs to expand to include Saturday service, either full or half day. The service hours during the week means that most riders are using the service to get to and from work or have time off to access shopping or the casino, but weekday hours limit mobility for many. Expanding to include even a half-day would enable much needed access and potentially grow ridership.
- The service needs to expand to add a stop at the Mellon St. E-station.
- One rider noted that the service isn't very well known and suggested putting posters up at the following locations:
 - Laundromats
 - Churches
 - Schools
 - Social service agencies
 - Welfare office
 - Food stamps
 - Child services
 - Libraries
 - Post offices
 - Co-ops

Elizabeth and I also made observations that could improve the service. We noted that:

- Bus stop signage is a must. When leaving Tumwater Square, Elizabeth and I stood where we thought the stop was, but still ended up running about 50-feet to the correct spot. For those with disabilities this would be difficult. Additionally, the lack of knowledge likely reduces the confidence for new riders, lowering their ability to participate in the service. And the marketing provided by simple bus stop signs would increase knowledge of the service.
- Adding route numbers to the buses would allow for easier transfers and enhance confidence and understanding for riders. If the buses move from route to route, ATS could put a clear plastic folder in the window that would allow route numbers to be easily interchanged.
- Drivers could announce the stops as they come to them.
- ATS could add signage on the bus to inform riders of the deviated route option within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the existing route.
- ATS could add signage regarding Title 6

Recap

Again, our primary Outreach was the Transportation Priorities Survey and information gleaned from other planning activities. Covid limited the number of events where we could either present or table with our materials in person. Many of our social service and transportation providers and other community partners were dealing with keeping people safe, housed, fed and other basic needs.

Thurston Regional Planning Council
Transportation Policy Board
Technical Advisory Committee
Intercity Transit Authority
Intercity Transit Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
Intercity Transit Staff
South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI)
Thurston Thrives
Lacey Veterans Hub
South Sound Military and Communities Partnership
Pierce Transit
Transportation Providers Quarterly Meetings
ruralTRANSIT Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Activity/Report Review
Thurston County Food Bank
Timberland Regional Library
Nisqually Indian Tribe
ROOF
Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
Boys & Girls Club
TOGETHER!
Quarterly Planners Meetings
Hazard and Emergency Planning
Census Complete Count Committee Participants
Timberland Regional Library

Numbers and Categories

Numbers

- 4,190 responded to the Transportation Priorities Survey
- 1,200 responded to the Regional Trails survey
- An average of 80 policymakers, staff, and the public attend monthly Council, TPB, and TAC meetings. We presented on the HSTP, Survey, and other related issues approximately 12 times.
- As the lead agency for the Commute Trip Reduction program in the Thurston Region, we reached out to the nearly 200 major and state worksites in the region to encourage participation in the survey and review of the plan.
- We presented to both the Intercity Transit Authority and to their Citizens Advisory Committee.
- Timberland Regional Library distributes information through its 7 library locations and headquarters in the Thurston Region. The Library system boasts 74,658 patrons and has 73,924 people on its mailing list. They only have demographic information by age, reporting that in the Thurston region (Lacey, Olympia, Rochester, Tenino, Tumwater, and Yelm). 11,441 patrons are between the ages of 65 and 108.

Categories

- The survey overview provides information on participant’s location, age, race/ethnicity and household income.

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APPENDIX B: Prioritized Project List

To qualify for the Washington State Department of Transportation’s (WSDOT) Consolidated Grant Program, programs/projects must be included in a Human Services Transportation Plan.

As the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MPO) for the Thurston Region, TRPC has the responsibility to rank projects submitted to the Consolidated Grant Program. Based on demographics, WSDOT assigns ranking slots. For this cycle, TRPC has 3 A’s, 2 B’s, and 3 C’s.

The use of these rankings has changed over the years, but for 2023-25/2027, WSDOT will complete initial review and rank all applications submitted across the state. Then, WSDOT will overlay the regional rankings. Ranking slot values: A = Automatically awarded; B = 25 points; C = 12 points; and D = No additional points.

For purposes of ranking, the Region focuses on continuing existing successful strategies/programs, maintaining/replacing vehicles that support successful strategies/programs, and new programs that fill gaps identified in the Human Services Transportation.

The Projects

ruralTRANSIT (rT): The service connects the communities of Grand Mound, Rochester, Tenino, Bucoda, and Rainier and the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation to the greater tri-city area of Tumwater, Olympia, and Lacey. rT connects to Twin Transit in Lewis County and Intercity Transit in Thurston County. The service operates from approximately 6 am to 6 pm weekdays. Veterans can request a direct connection to services in Centralia.

Village Vans: See details on page 67 to learn more about Village Vans.

Intercity Transit (IT) Replacement Dial-a-Lift: Vehicles (DAL): DAL supplies complementary door-to-door, shared ride public transportation service for people with disabilities that prevent using fixed route bus service. With an aging population, IT’s DAL service is growing while federal funding is waning. Intercity Transit also has a commitment to environmental stewardship, and will purchase propane-powered vehicles, replacing the diesel vehicles that are beyond their useful life.

Ranked Prioritized Project List 2023-2025/2027 (Potential projects known as of 10/27/2022).

PROJECT	SPONSOR	TYPE	STATUS	DURATION	RANKING	AMOUNT
ruralTRANSIT (rT)	Thurston Regional Planning Council	Operating	Continuing	4 years		
ruralTRANSIT (rT)	Thurston Regional Planning Council	Operating	Expansion	4 years		
Village Vans	Intercity Transit	Operating	Existing program, but not funded through WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program	4 years		
Replacement Dial-a-Lift Vehicles	Intercity Transit	Capital	New	2 years		

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APPENDIX C: Adopting Resolution

November 4, 2022

THURSTON REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
RESOLUTION NO. 2022-06

RELATING to the Human Services Transportation Plan for the Thurston Region,

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

WHEREAS, Federal and State Law requires an update of the Regional Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Plan for the Thurston Region every four (4) years to ensure compliance with applicable laws and guidance; and

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

WHEREAS, the Thurston Regional Planning Council will adopt the Prioritized Project List, which will become a part of this Plan, at their January 13, 2023, meeting,

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

THAT the Human Services Transportation Plan for the Thurston Region be approved.

ADOPTED this 4th day of November 20.

ATTEST:



Marc Daily
Executive Director



Hilary Seidel
Chair, Thurston Regional Planning Council

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APPENDIX D: Tables

POPULATION ESTIMATES AND FORECAST THURSTON COUNTY CITIES, URBAN GROWTH AREAS, AND RESERVATIONS 2010-2045

Jurisdiction		TRPC Estimates		TRPC Forecast 2021 Jurisdiction Boundaries				
		2010	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
Bucoda	Total	562	600	625	685	720	765	800
Lacey	City	42,393	53,526	53,980	55,120	56,210	57,110	57,890
	UGA	33,170	37,733	44,070	47,210	49,760	52,570	55,490
	Total	75,560	91,259	98,050	102,330	105,970	109,680	113,380
Olympia	City	46,478	55,605	58,840	63,010	66,990	69,800	72,070
	UGA	11,840	12,480	13,260	13,390	13,730	14,600	15,600
	Total	58,320	68,085	72,100	76,400	80,720	84,400	87,670
Rainier	City	1,794	2,369	2,350	2,570	2,725	3,075	3,165
	UGA	110	133	115	120	130	135	160
	Total	1,905	2,502	2,465	2,690	2,855	3,210	3,325
Tenino	City	1,695	1,870	2,055	2,315	2,570	2,755	2,795
	UGA	15	26	15	15	15	15	45
	Total	1,710	1,896	2,070	2,330	2,585	2,770	2,840
Tumwater	City	17,371	25,350	29,110	31,680	34,100	35,930	36,900
	UGA	6,350	3,357	5,410	7,040	8,250	9,020	9,180
	Total	23,720	28,707	34,520	38,720	42,350	44,950	46,080
Yelm	City	6,848	10,617	13,600	17,460	20,980	23,980	25,960
	UGA	1,355	1,514	1,310	1,310	1,330	1,350	1,610
	Total	8,205	12,131	14,910	18,770	22,310	25,330	27,570
Grand Mound UGA	Total	1,345	1,358	1,870	2,270	2,505	2,665	2,745
Chehalis Reservation	Total	64	58	65	65	65	65	65
Nisqually Reservation	Total	575	715	855	870	885	905	930
Total Cities		117,141	149,937	160,570	172,820	184,300	193,410	199,580
Total UGAs (1)		54,180	56,601	66,060	71,350	75,710	80,360	84,820
Total Reservations (2)		639	773	920	930	950	970	990
Rural Unincorporated County (3)		80,300	87,482	88,950	90,890	93,440	95,950	98,110
Thurston County Total		252,264	294,793	316,500	336,000	354,400	370,700	383,500

SOURCE Thurston Regional Planning Council
Small Area Population Estimates and Population and Employment Forecast (2018 Update)

NOTES Estimates are for April 1 and reflect city limits on that date. A decrease in UGA population is likely due to annexation. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

1) Urban Growth Area (UGA): Unincorporated area designated to be annexed into city limits over 20 years time to accommodate urban growth.

2) Reservations: Estimate is for Thurston County portion of reservation only.

3) Rural Unincorporated County is the portion of the unincorporated county that lies outside UGA and Reservation boundaries.

**MAJOR PRIVATE EMPLOYERS
THURSTON COUNTY, 2021**

Rank	Company	Employees
1	Providence St. Peter Hospital	1,800
2	Safeway (8 locations)	1,000
3	Lucky Eagle Casino	1,000
4	Walmart (4 locations)	1,000
5	Fred Meyer (2 locations)	700
5	Nisqually Red Wind Casino	700
7	South Sound YMCA (2 locations)	550
8	Northwest Cannabis Solutions	500
9	Continuum Global Solutions	500
9	Great Wolf Lodge	500
11	Harbor Wholesale Foods	470
12	Costco Wholesale (2 locations)	420
13	Home Depot (3 locations)	360
14	Panorama Convalescent & Rehab	350
15	American Medical Response	300
15	Cabela's	300
15	Titus-Will Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac	300

SOURCE: Data Axle Reference Solutions (Accessed via Timberland Regional Library)

**TOTAL EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES AND FORECAST
THURSTON COUNTY JURISDICTIONS**

2017 Employment												
Industry	Bucoda	Lacey	Olympia	Rainier	Tenino	Tumwater	Yelm	Grand Mound	Chehalis Reservation	Nisqually Reservation	Rural Unincorp.	Total
Ag., Forestry and Fishing, Mining	0	530	150	20	0	340	130	30	60	0	2,520	3,800
Construction and Utilities	0	2,020	1,710	40	20	1,550	260	40	10	50	1,960	7,600
Manufacturing	0	840	1,310	10	20	1,760	10	40	0	0	360	4,300
Wholesale Trade	0	620	780	10	20	1,210	70	50	0	0	430	3,200
Retail Trade	10	4,700	6,640	20	130	2,480	910	250	0	0	800	15,900
Transportation and Warehousing	10	1,100	620	10	70	680	60	40	0	0	710	3,300
Information	0	350	810	0	20	110	90	10	0	0	160	1,600
Finance and Insurance	0	1,130	2,130	10	30	560	190	30	0	0	490	4,600
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	10	1,860	1,960	30	20	690	190	10	0	10	1,020	5,800
Professional Services	20	4,900	6,480	80	160	2,130	440	90	0	10	2,310	16,600
Education Services, Health Care and Social Assistance	20	5,250	11,010	60	80	1,960	660	60	0	10	1,910	21,100
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0	470	550	0	10	410	50	10	0	0	210	1,700
Accommodation and Food Services	10	2,640	4,270	20	70	1,180	480	710	0	0	440	9,800
Other Services	10	2,200	3,520	40	30	1,020	240	60	0	20	1,430	8,600
Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Government	0	5,560	18,690	160	250	10,960	880	0	720	1,220	2,420	40,900
Total	90	34,160	60,630	530	930	27,030	4,650	1,420	790	1,330	17,180	148,700

2045 Employment Forecast												
Industry	Bucoda	Lacey	Olympia	Rainier	Tenino	Tumwater	Yelm	Grand Mound	Chehalis Reservation	Nisqually Reservation	Rural Unincorp.	Total
Ag., Forestry and Fishing, Mining	0	520	140	20	0	330	130	30	60	0	2,470	3,700
Construction and Utilities	10	2,380	2,040	40	30	1,750	400	50	10	60	2,030	8,800
Manufacturing	0	1,070	1,350	10	20	2,130	60	80	0	0	370	5,100
Wholesale Trade	0	1,800	980	10	30	1,760	200	90	0	0	430	5,300
Retail Trade	20	7,250	8,120	40	240	3,550	1,720	310	0	0	840	22,100
Transportation and Warehousing	10	1,210	760	10	170	750	100	40	0	0	740	3,800
Information	0	360	810	10	30	110	100	10	0	0	160	1,600
Finance and Insurance	10	2,190	2,920	30	70	950	650	40	0	0	630	7,500
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	10	2,510	2,500	60	70	980	480	20	0	10	1,160	7,800
Professional Services	30	8,170	8,950	120	210	3,330	1,850	120	0	20	2,600	25,400
Education Services, Health Care and Social Assistance	20	8,060	15,520	100	150	3,040	1,900	90	0	20	2,190	31,100
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	10	1,510	1,450	10	20	860	540	20	0	0	270	4,700
Accommodation and Food Services	20	3,780	5,040	40	170	1,710	920	760	0	0	470	12,900
Other Services	30	6,520	7,040	100	120	2,850	2,210	150	0	20	2,060	21,100
Federal, State, Local, and Tribal Government	0	7,860	23,360	230	260	13,670	1,280	420	940	1,800	3,390	53,200
Total	180	55,200	81,000	830	1,590	37,760	12,540	2,220	1,020	1,940	19,810	214,100

SOURCE Thurston Regional Planning Council Population and Employment Forecast (2018 Update)

Estimates are for jurisdiction boundaries as of April 1, 2017

NOTES Numbers may not add due to rounding.

**POPULATION BY AGE COHORTS
THURSTON COUNTY
1980-2045**

Age Group	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
0-4	9,680	10,860	11,690	13,277	12,890	13,438	15,381	15,447	16,810	17,069	17,401	17,991	18,735	19,291
5-9	9,628	10,654	12,882	14,363	14,379	14,233	15,629	16,364	17,913	18,643	18,782	19,107	19,604	20,213
10-14	10,460	10,503	12,257	15,081	15,347	15,780	16,559	16,701	18,677	19,754	20,379	20,536	20,740	21,036
15-19	11,109	10,777	11,358	13,561	15,846	17,047	17,216	16,930	18,202	19,912	20,844	21,508	21,562	21,525
20-24	10,759	10,671	10,469	11,799	13,391	15,595	16,325	17,709	16,657	17,239	18,739	19,564	20,058	19,856
25-29	11,473	11,999	12,002	12,886	12,966	13,662	17,406	16,620	17,195	17,783	18,403	19,958	20,789	21,226
30-34	11,028	12,540	13,820	15,010	14,138	13,739	16,609	17,519	21,139	20,215	20,586	21,272	22,785	23,286
35-39	8,734	12,088	14,676	16,714	16,299	15,590	16,276	17,055	21,979	23,404	22,211	22,614	23,163	24,457
40-44	6,582	9,319	13,592	16,395	17,405	17,620	16,731	17,063	19,306	23,533	24,808	23,602	23,891	24,220
45-49	5,853	7,074	10,111	14,531	17,302	19,150	18,108	17,348	18,097	20,301	24,595	25,910	24,565	24,690
50-54	5,860	6,083	7,258	10,829	15,291	18,036	18,935	18,711	18,060	18,724	20,914	25,340	26,556	25,035
55-59	5,762	5,954	6,290	7,908	10,830	15,023	18,485	19,261	18,656	18,090	18,675	20,900	25,291	26,219
60-64	5,106	5,982	6,126	6,606	7,609	10,137	15,840	18,223	18,809	18,670	18,116	18,732	20,919	25,177
65-69	4,197	5,057	6,064	6,300	6,270	7,269	11,012	15,450	17,967	18,497	18,354	17,889	18,459	20,541
70-74	3,209	4,142	4,889	5,940	5,765	5,857	7,272	10,461	14,707	17,098	17,571	17,518	17,118	17,613
75-79	2,249	2,835	3,653	4,361	5,026	4,966	5,557	6,738	9,336	13,300	15,478	15,974	16,015	15,667
80-84	1,454	1,801	2,313	3,027	3,587	4,081	4,376	4,644	5,338	7,823	11,211	13,150	13,624	13,723
85+	1,121	1,397	1,788	2,357	2,957	3,739	4,547	5,166	5,484	6,452	8,897	12,849	16,823	19,635
Total	124,264	139,736	161,238	190,945	207,298	224,961	252,264	267,410	294,332	316,507	335,964	354,414	370,697	383,410

SOURCE U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010)

Washington State Office of Financial Management (1985, 1995, 2005, 2015-2045)

NOTE Orange represents Baby Boomer; blue represents Millennials

**POPULATION BY AGE
THURSTON COUNTY JURISDICTIONS
2016-2020 AVERAGE**

	Bucoda	Lacey	Olympia	Rainier	Tenino	Tumwater	Yelm	Thurston County	Chehalis Reservation	Nisqually Reservation
17 and Younger	25%	21%	18%	27%	25%	22%	32%	21%	25%	31%
18 to 64	61%	60%	64%	58%	62%	67%	60%	61%	65%	50%
65 and Older	13%	18%	18%	14%	13%	12%	7%	17%	10%	19%
Median Age	36.5	36.8	37.7	38.4	34.3	36.1	29.6	39.1	32.2	38.2

SOURCE U.S. Census Bureau: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISABLED POPULATION
THURSTON COUNTY
2016-2020 AVERAGE**

	With a Disability	Without a Disability	Total Population	With a Disability	Without a Disability	Total Population
Below Poverty Level	5,973	21,580	27,553	16%	9%	10%
At or Above Poverty Level	31,798	217,062	248,860	84%	91%	90%
Total	37,771	238,642	276,413	100%	100%	100%
Unemployed	1,130	5,943	7,073	13%	5%	6%
Employed or in the Armed Forces	7,261	111,002	118,263	87%	95%	94%
Total	8,391	116,945	125,336	100%	100%	100%
Age 65 or Greater	15,788	32,639	48,427	42%	14%	17%
Age 0 to 64	22,115	207,357	229,472	58%	86%	83%
Total	37,903	239,996	277,899	100%	100%	100%

SOURCE U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey

NOTE Data universe changes by topic:
 • Poverty—population for whom poverty is determined
 • Employment—population age 20-64 in the labor force
 • Age—civilian noninstitutionalized population

**HOUSEHOLD LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTIC ISOLATION
THURSTON COUNTY
2016-2020 AVERAGE**

Language Spoken at Home	Total	Linguistically Isolated	Not Linguistically Isolated	Percent Linguistically Isolated
English only	96,945	N/A	96,945	N/A
Spanish	4,801	982	3,819	20%
Other Indo-European languages (1)	3,400	0	3,400	0%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	6,943	1,416	5,527	20%
Other languages	820	327	493	40%
Total Households	112,909	2,725	110,184	2%

SOURCE U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey (ACS)

NOTE A "linguistically isolated household" is one in which no member 14 years old and over speaks only English or speaks a non-English language and speaks English "very well." In other words, all members 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with English. By definition, English-only households cannot belong to this group.

(1) Language family that includes languages spoken throughout Europe, west Asia, and south Asia. The most commonly spoken Indo-european languages in Thurston County are German, French, and Hindi.

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND POVERTY
THURSTON COUNTY JURISDICTIONS
2016-2020**

Household Income	Bucoda	Lacey	Olympia	Rainier	Tenino	Tumwater	Yelm	Thurston County	Chehalis Reservation	Nisqually Reservation
Median Household Income (2020 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)	\$50,417	\$69,752	\$63,185	\$76,016	\$49,167	\$76,676	\$77,297	\$75,867	\$58,500	\$50,500
Percent of Population Below Poverty	30.70%	10.30%	14.70%	11.80%	22.90%	8.70%	5.70%	9.80%	28.30%	16.30%

SOURCE U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS)

NOTE [Federal Poverty Thresholds are available at http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html](http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html)

Data are for reservations and off-reservation trust lands as a whole, including those portions outside Thurston County.

Poverty status is not available for all individuals (e.g. certain group quarters population).

**POPULATION BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN
THURSTON COUNTY JURISDICTIONS
2020**

Jurisdiction	Total Population	White/Non-Hispanic	American Indian & Alaska Native*	Asian*	Black/African American*	Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander*	Other Race*	Two or More Races*	Hispanic or Latino of Any Race
Bucoda	600	102	9	4	2	3	13	49	43
Lacey	53,526	21,204	663	4,859	3,135	1,352	2,411	7,035	6,764
Olympia	55,605	15,983	690	3,745	1,759	367	1,762	6,230	5,059
Rainier	2,369	487	30	47	22	16	60	225	192
Tenino	1,870	385	32	23	18	2	61	206	148
Tumwater	25,350	6,797	328	1,372	681	189	606	2,988	2,203
Yelm	10,617	3,476	206	387	360	240	394	1,436	1,275
Thurston County	294,793	86,808	4,458	17,268	9,403	3,347	10,359	34,160	29,024
Chehalis Reservation	767	579	488	0	13	1	16	60	51
Nisqually Reservation	639	505	418	8	7	4	9	47	70

SOURCE U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2020

NOTE *Includes those identifying as Hispanic or Latino

The 2000 Census was the first to allow respondents to select more than one race.

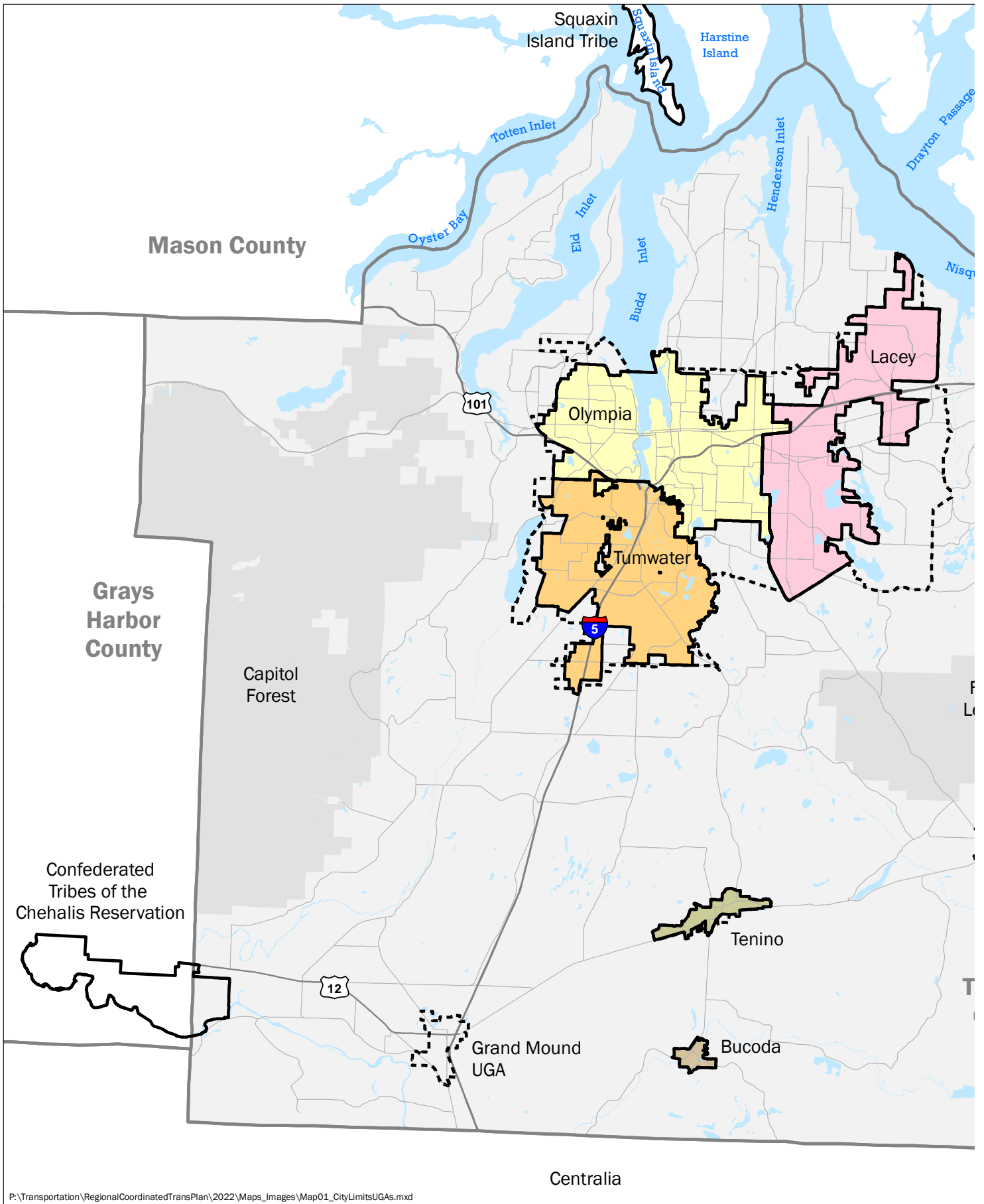
The Census has respondents identify Hispanic or Latino origin separately from race; Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race.

Data are for reservations and off-reservation trust lands as a whole, including those portions outside Thurston County.

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APPENDIX E: Maps

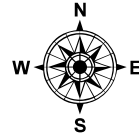
Rochester and Grand Mound, while important communities in the plan, are not included in the maps as they are Census-Designated Places rather than cities or towns.












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Map 1

Thurston County Jurisdictions

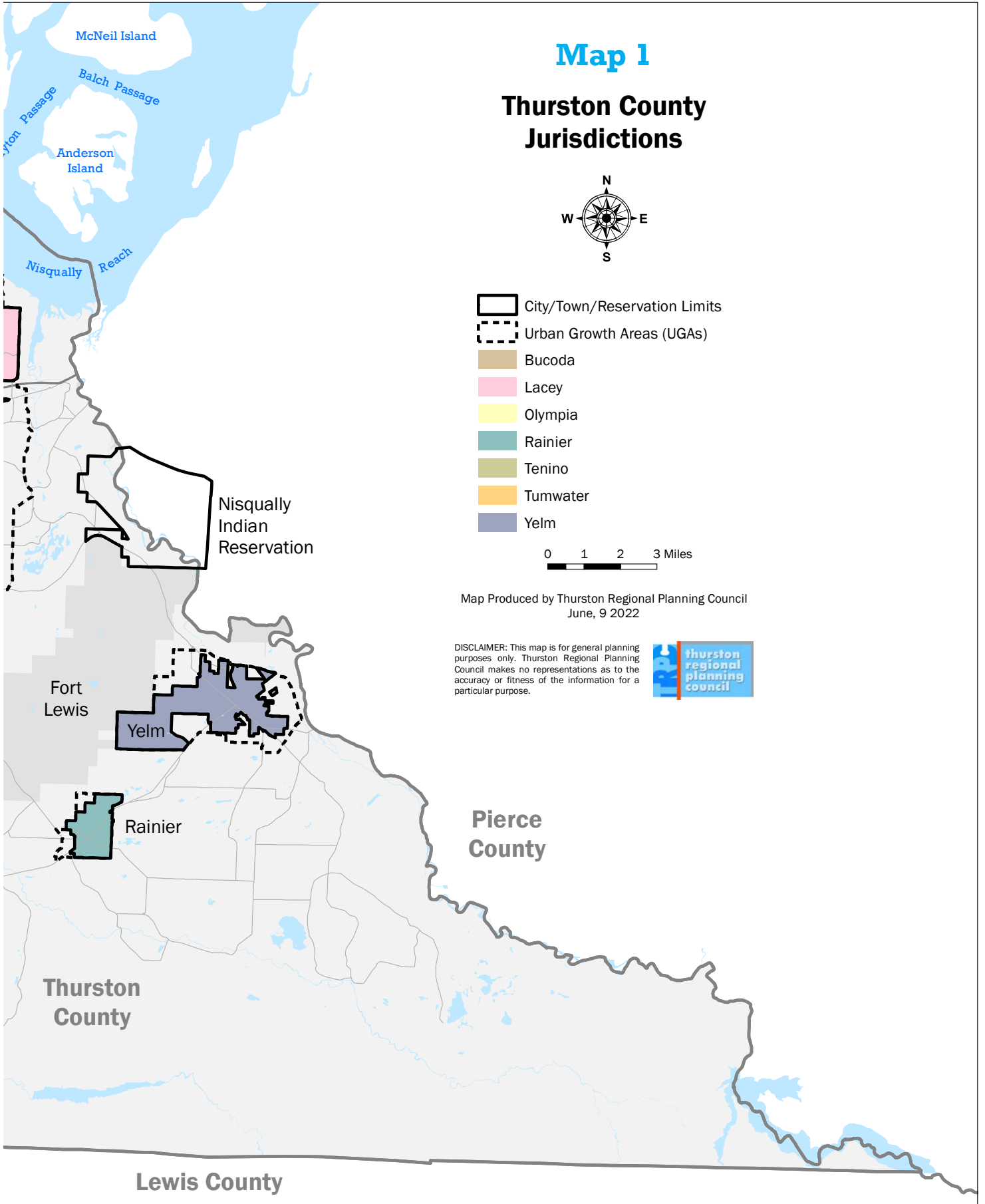


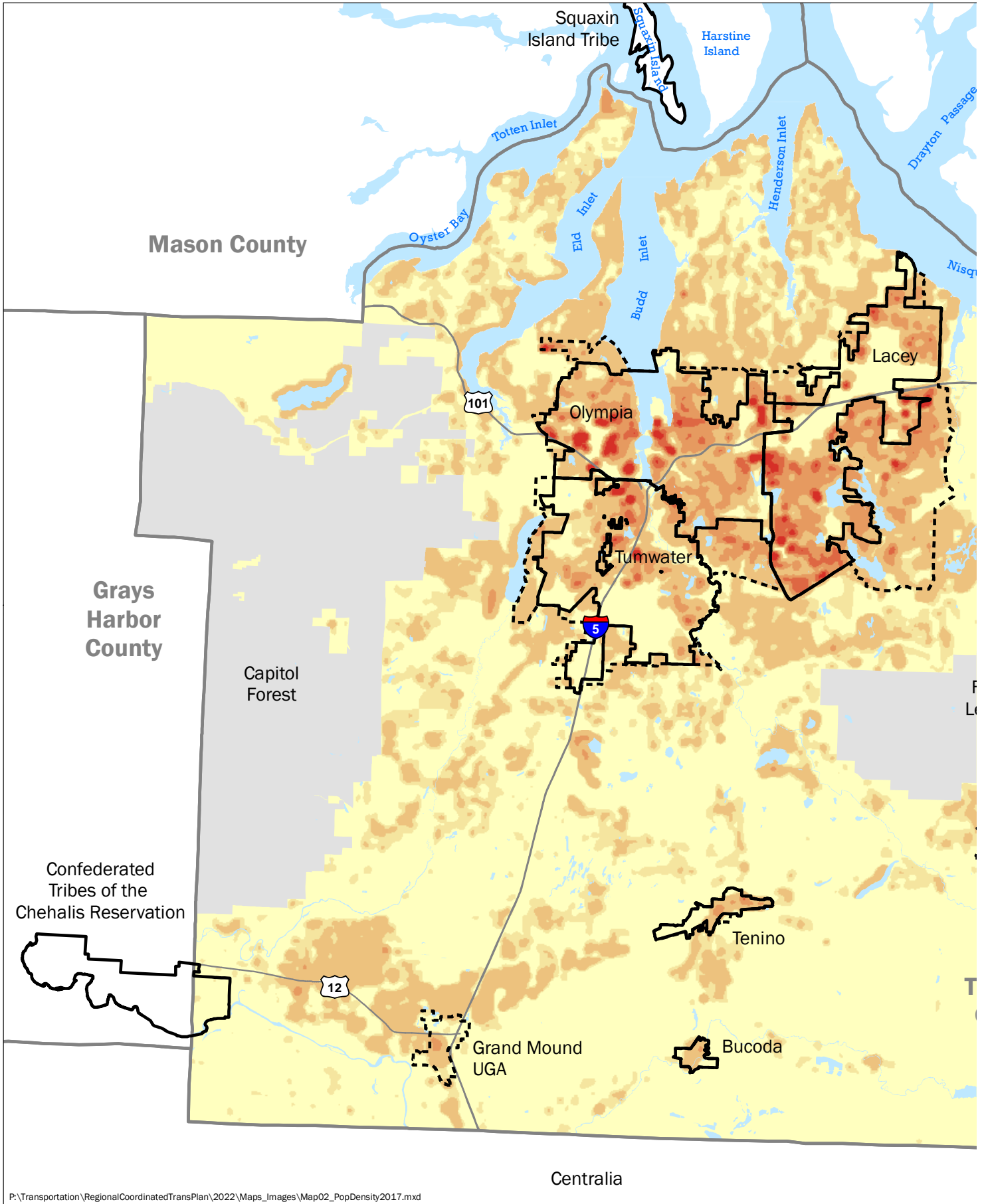
-  City/Town/Reservation Limits
-  Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)
-  Bucoda
-  Lacey
-  Olympia
-  Rainier
-  Tenino
-  Tumwater
-  Yelm



Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

DISCLAIMER: This map is for general planning purposes only. Thurston Regional Planning Council makes no representations as to the accuracy or fitness of the information for a particular purpose.

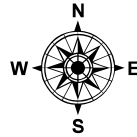










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Map 2

Population Density 2017



Dwelling Units per Acre

-  <1 unit per 10 acres
-  1 unit per 10 acres to 1 unit per 5 acres
-  1 unit per 5 acres to 2 units per acre
-  2-4 units per acre
-  4-7 units per acre
-  >7 units per acre

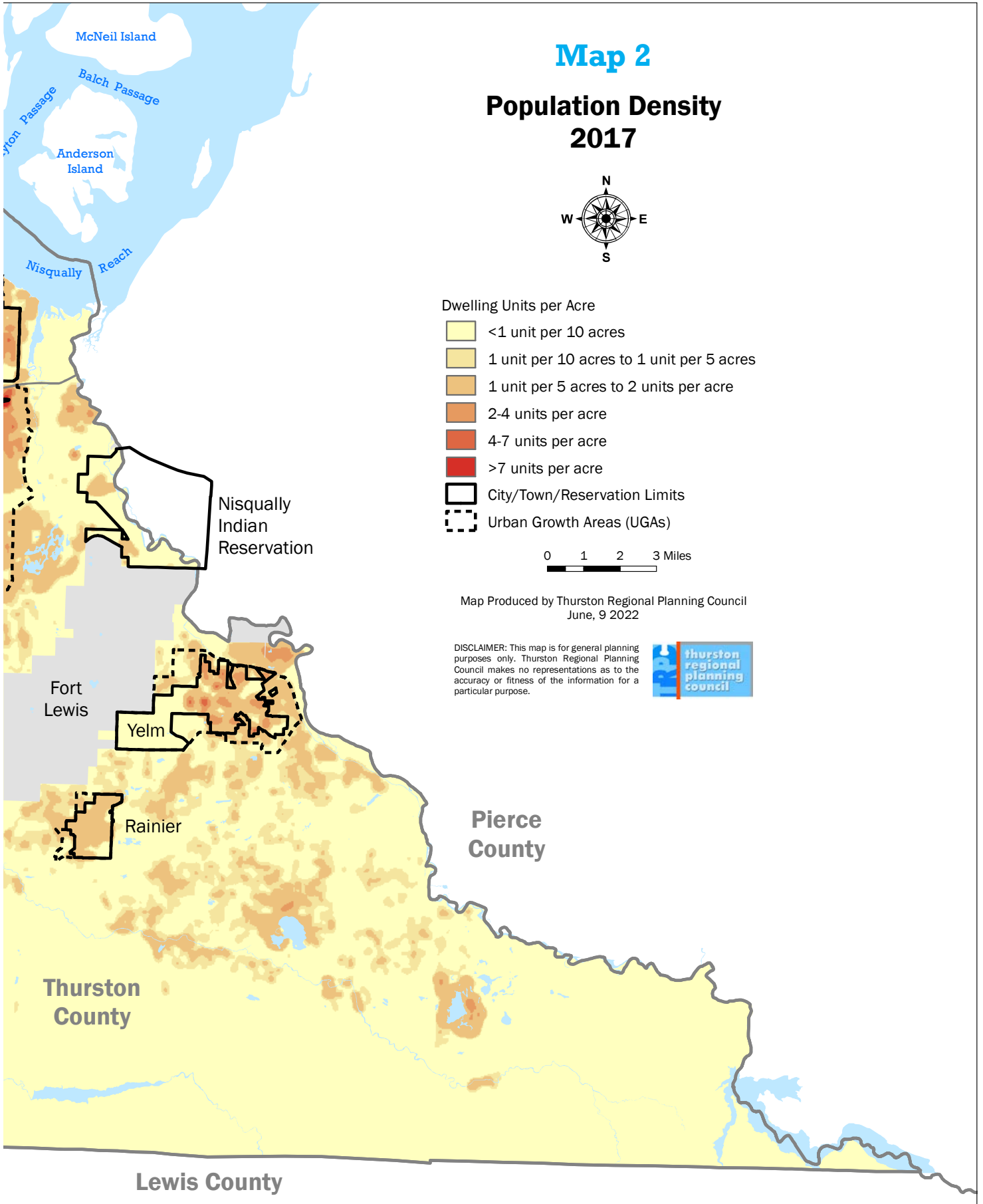
 City/Town/Reservation Limits

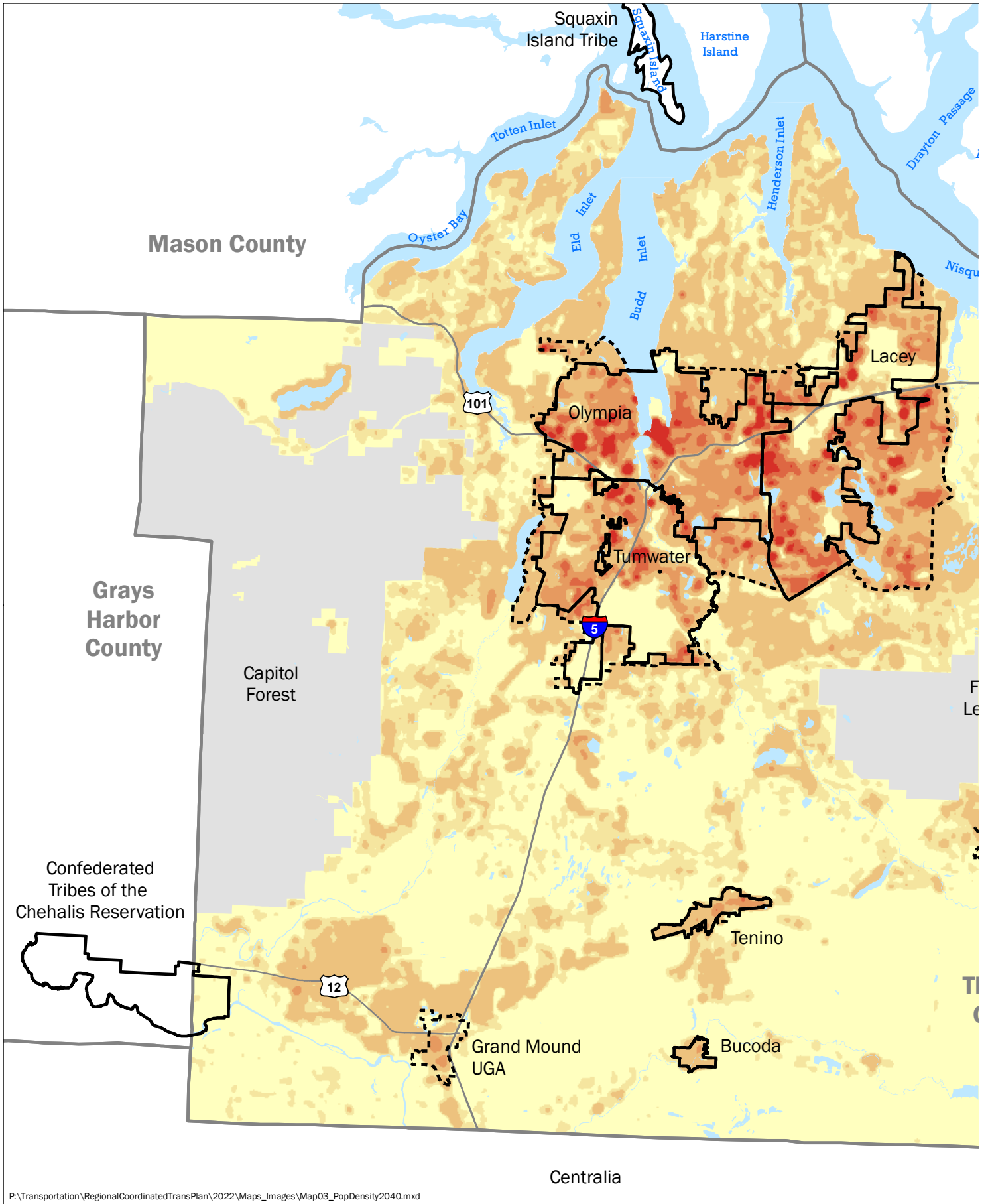
 Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

0 1 2 3 Miles

Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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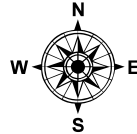




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Map 3

Population Density 2045

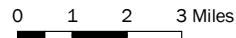


Dwelling Units per Acre

- <1 unit per 10 acres
- 1 unit per 10 acres to 1 unit per 5 acres
- 1 unit per 5 acres to 2 units per acre
- 2-4 units per acre
- 4-7 units per acre
- >7 units per acre

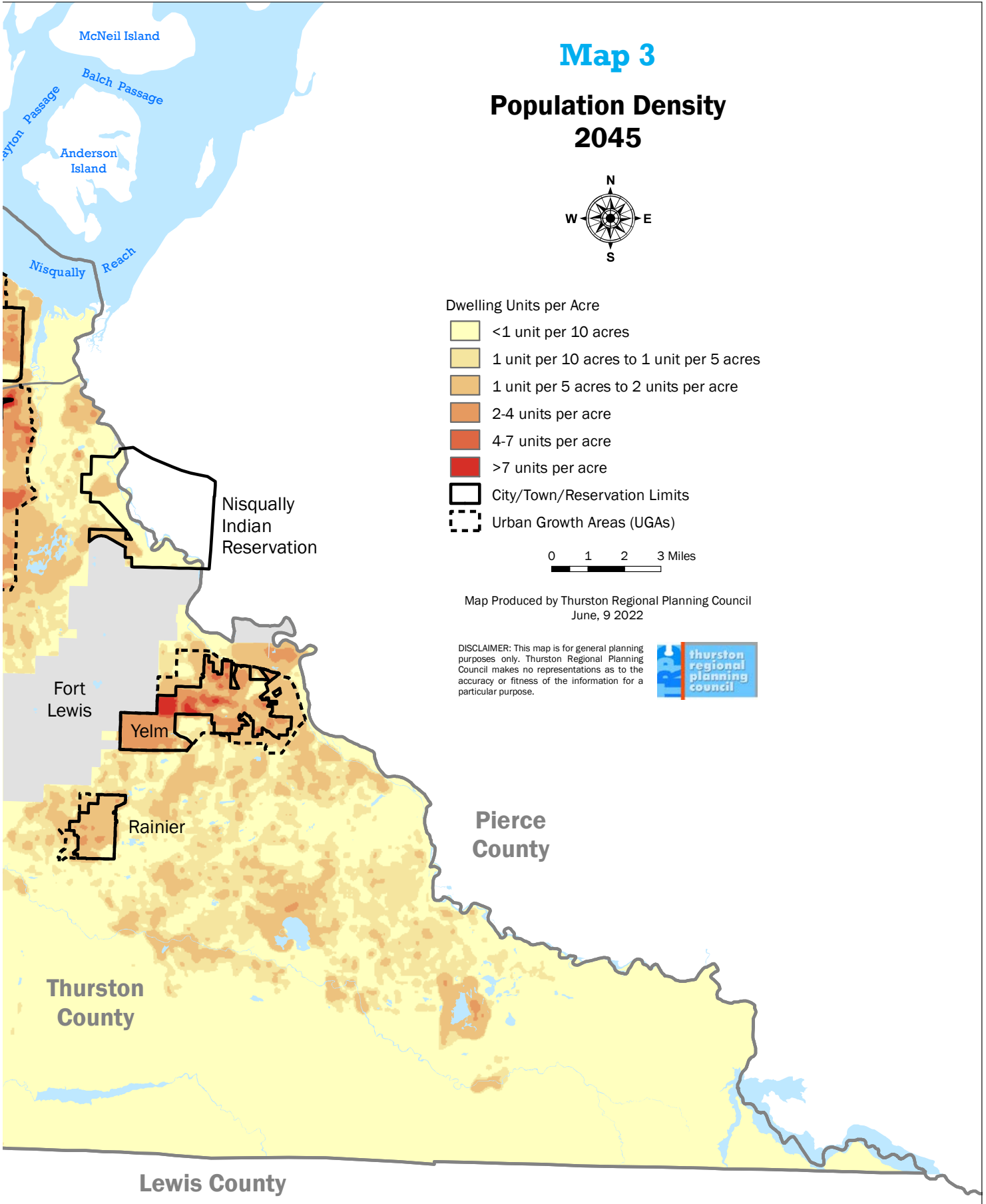
City/Town/Reservation Limits

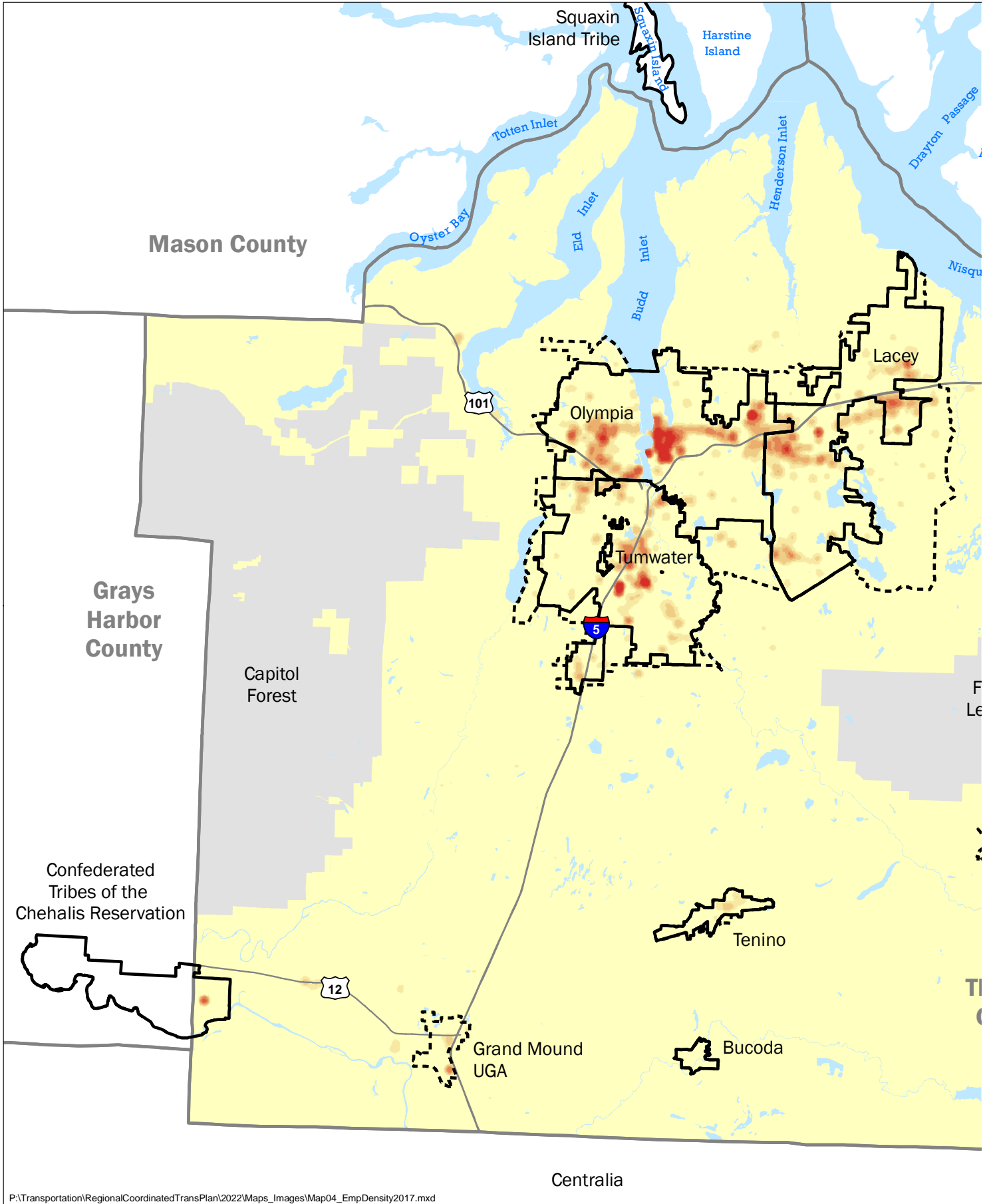
Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)



Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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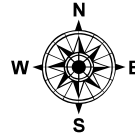













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Map 4

Employment Density 2017



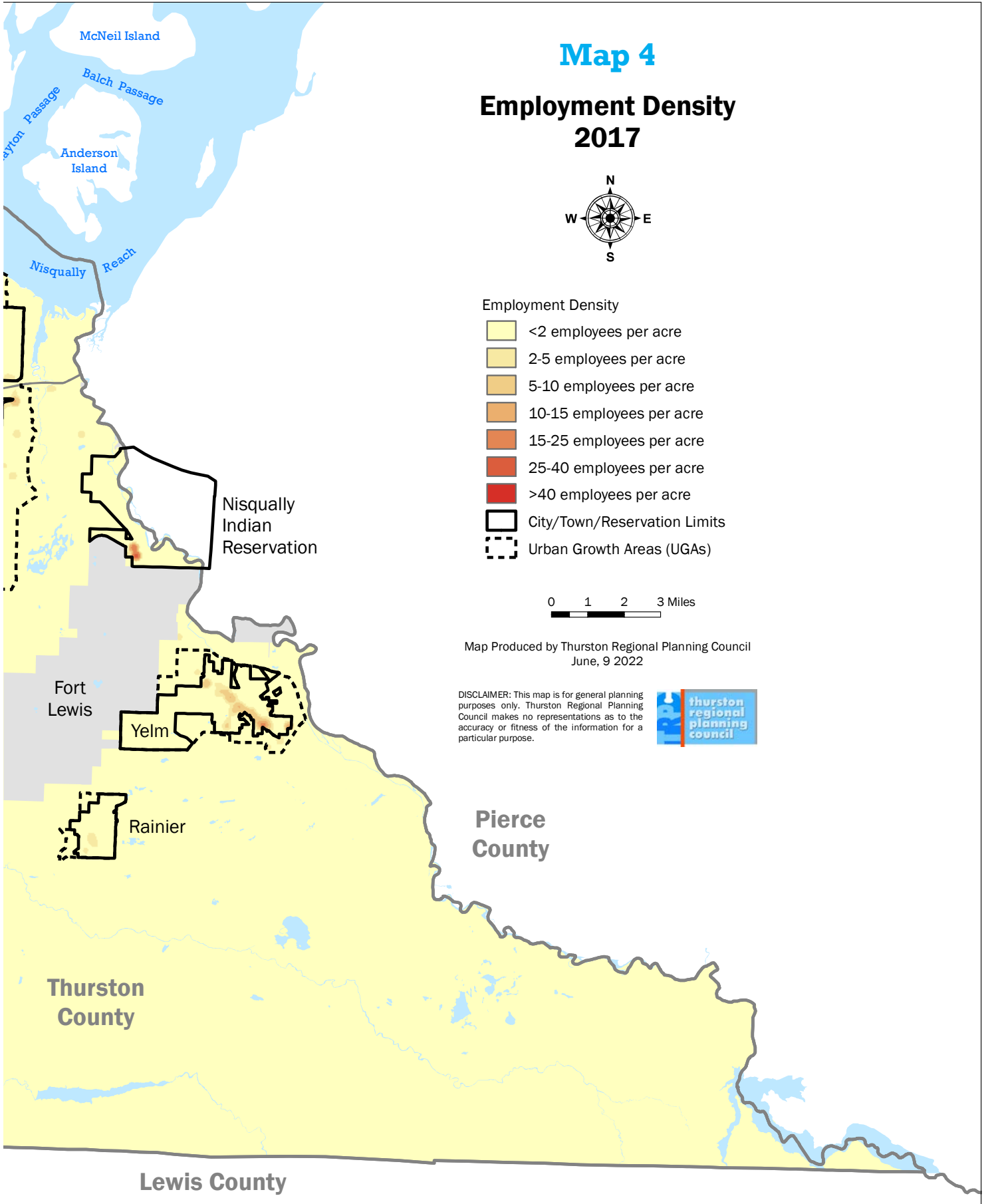
Employment Density

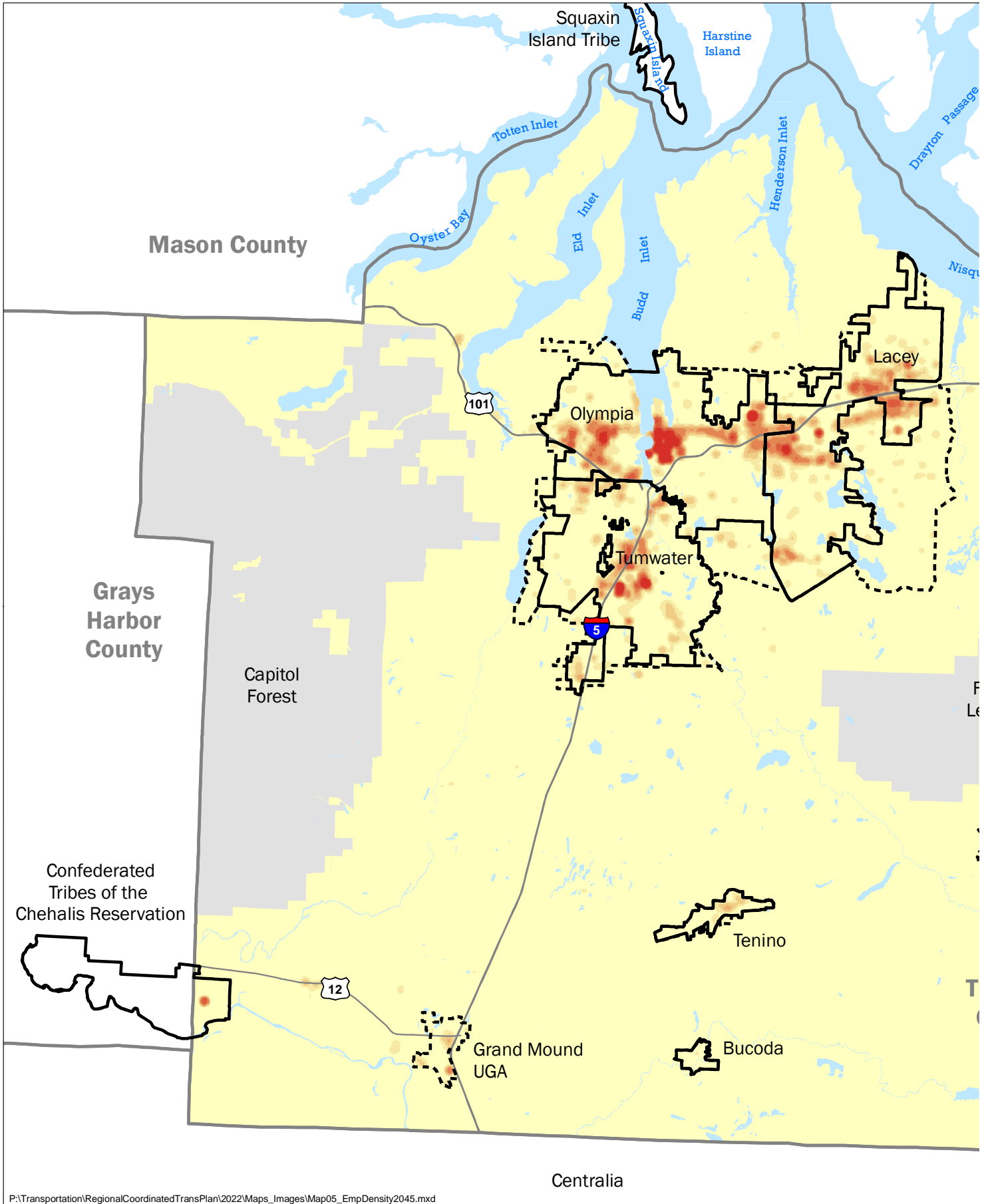
-  <2 employees per acre
-  2-5 employees per acre
-  5-10 employees per acre
-  10-15 employees per acre
-  15-25 employees per acre
-  25-40 employees per acre
-  >40 employees per acre
-  City/Town/Reservation Limits
-  Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

0 1 2 3 Miles

Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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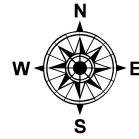













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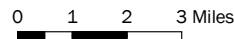
Map 5

Employment Density 2045



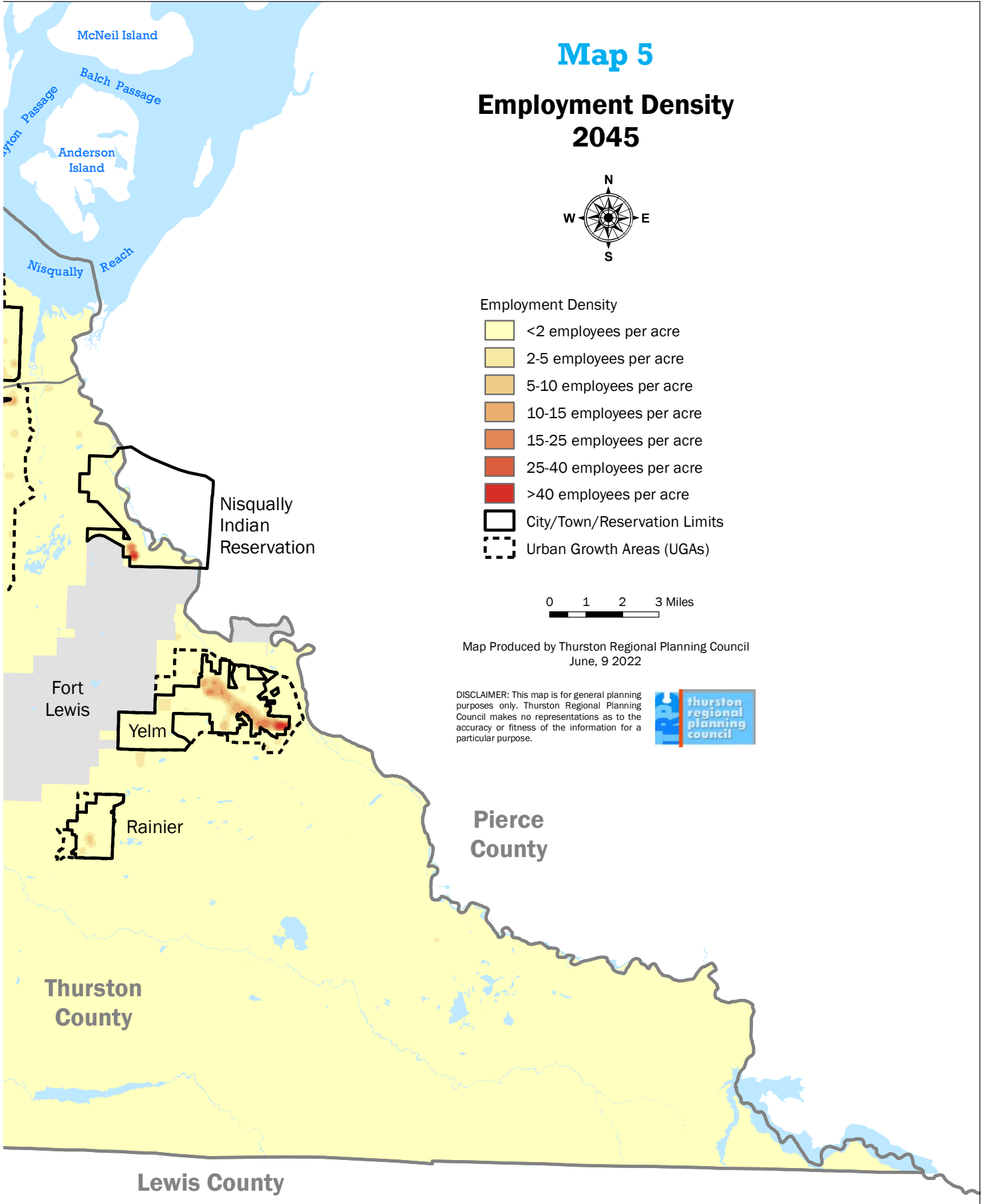
Employment Density

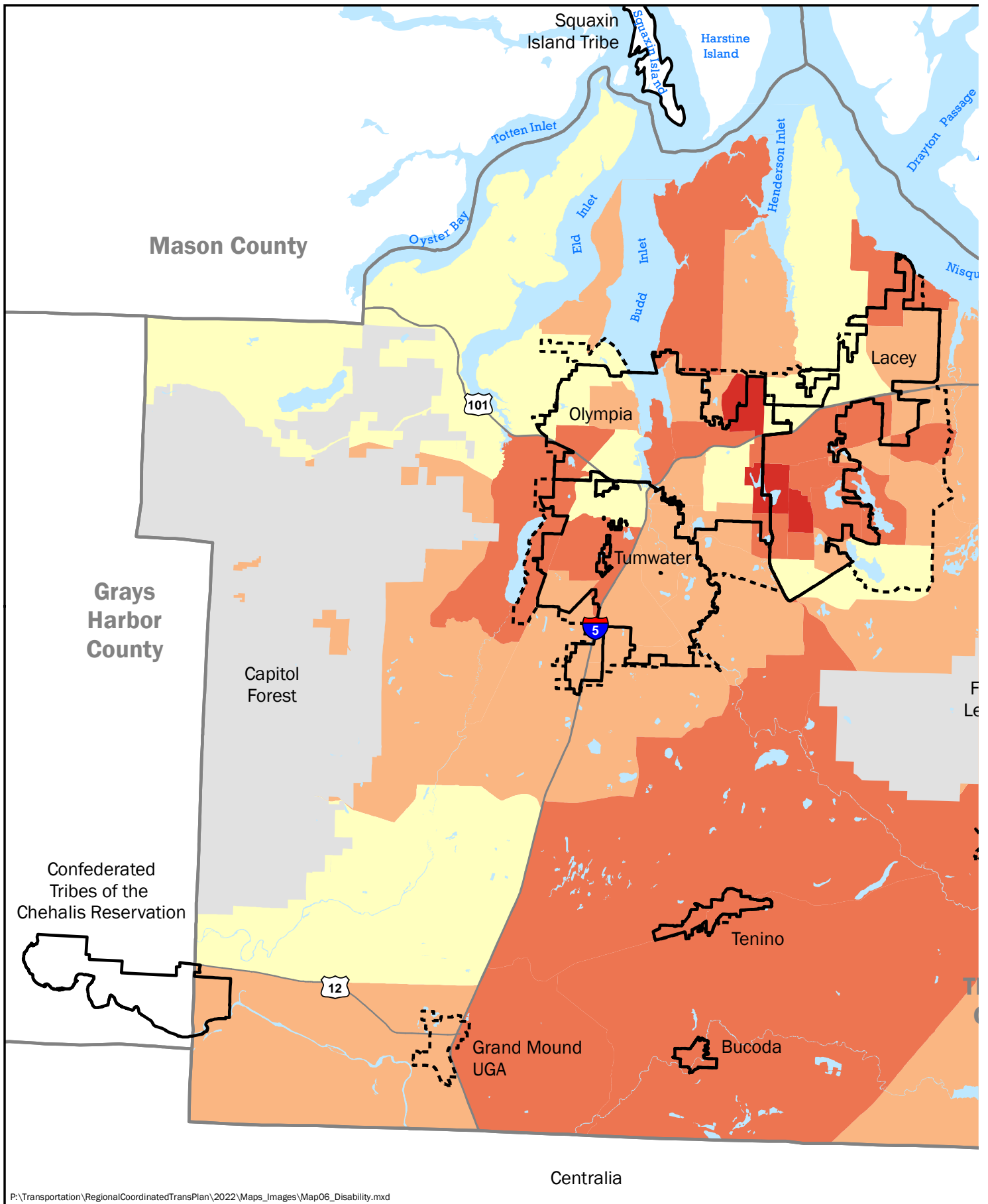
-  <2 employees per acre
-  2-5 employees per acre
-  5-10 employees per acre
-  10-15 employees per acre
-  15-25 employees per acre
-  25-40 employees per acre
-  >40 employees per acre
-  City/Town/Reservation Limits
-  Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)



Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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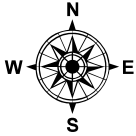




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Map 6

Population with a Disability 2010-2016 Average



Percent with a Disability

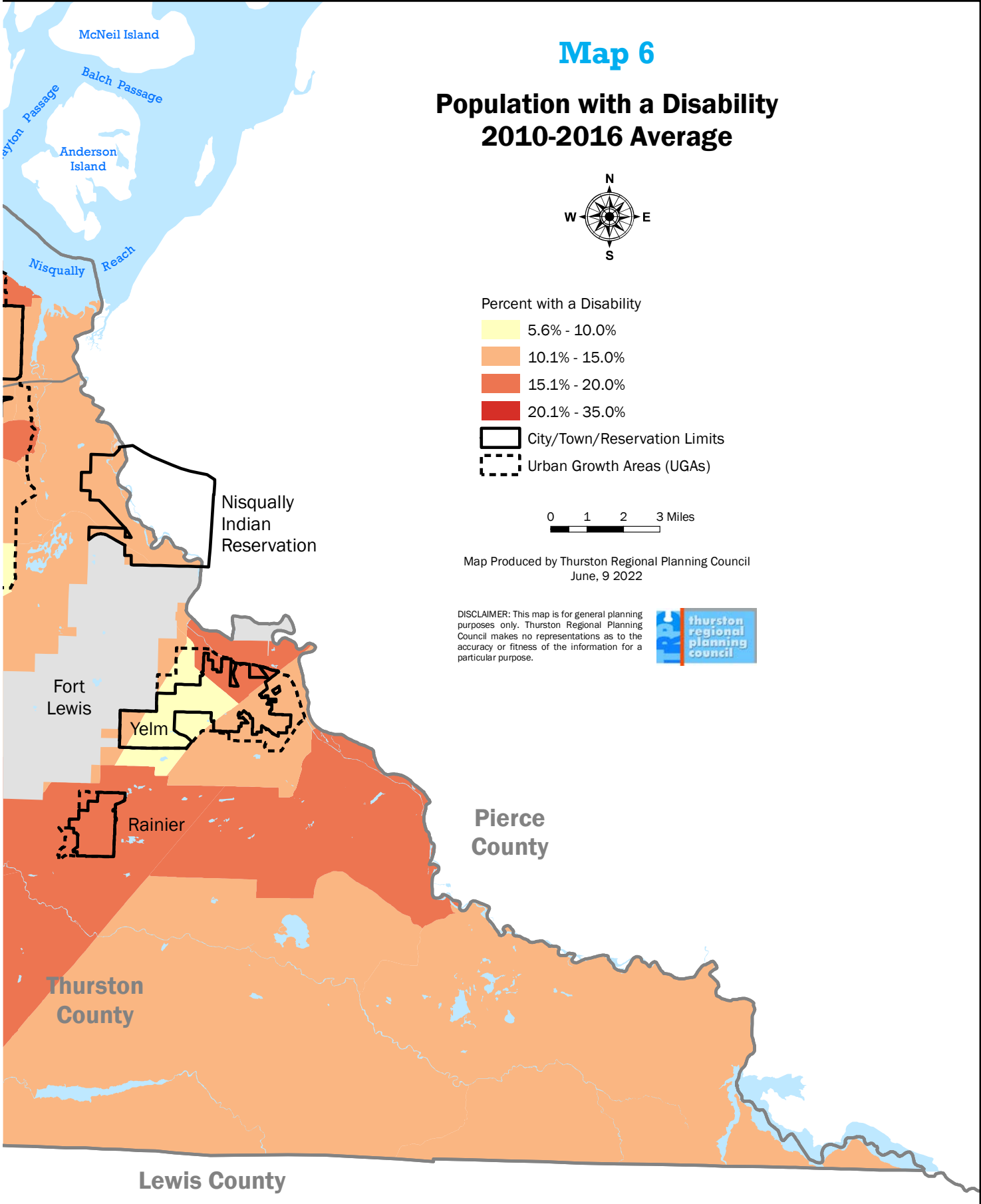
- 5.6% - 10.0%
- 10.1% - 15.0%
- 15.1% - 20.0%
- 20.1% - 35.0%

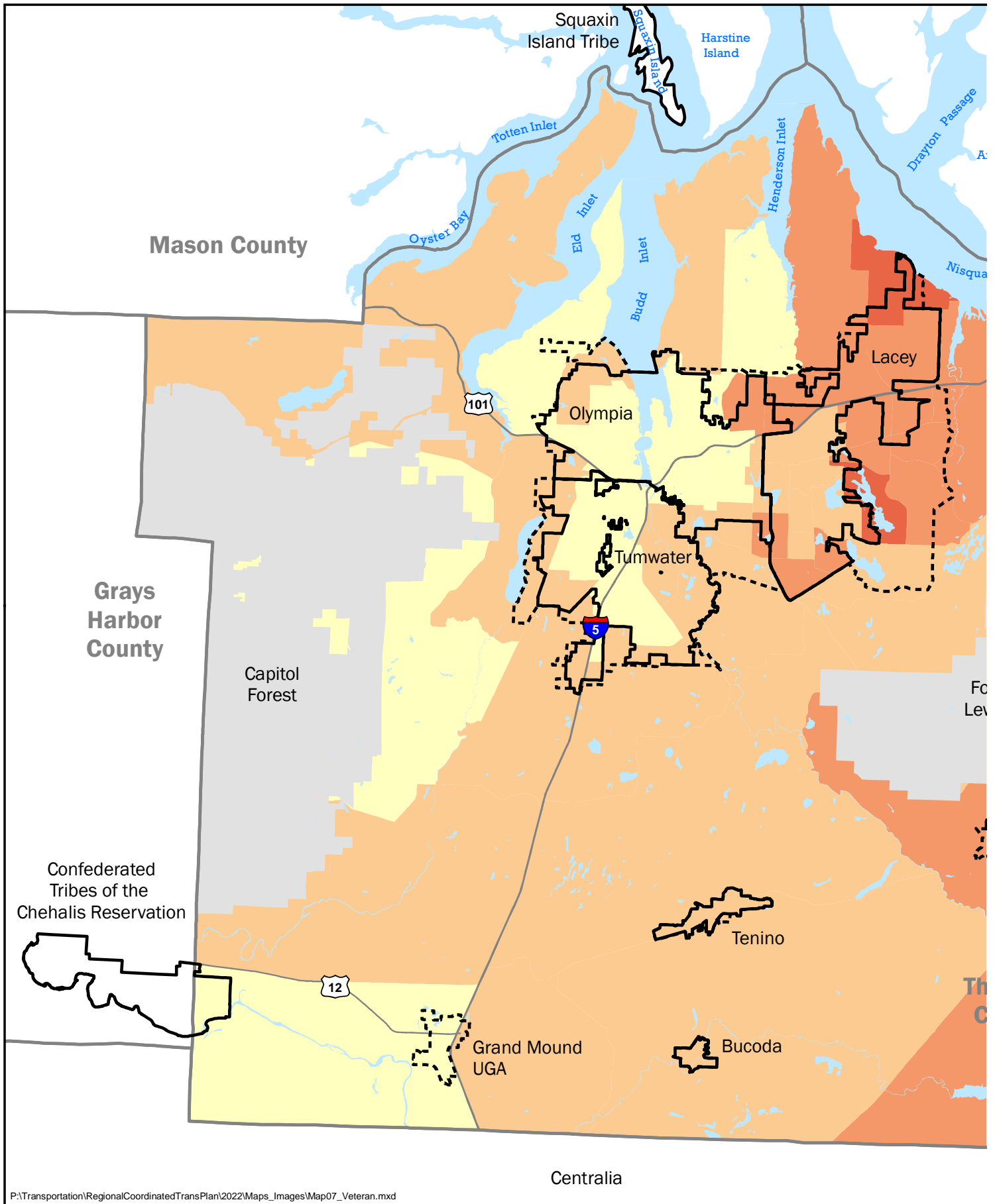
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

0 1 2 3 Miles

Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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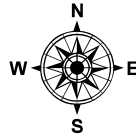




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Map 7

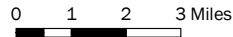
Veteran Population 2010-2016 Average



Percent Veteran

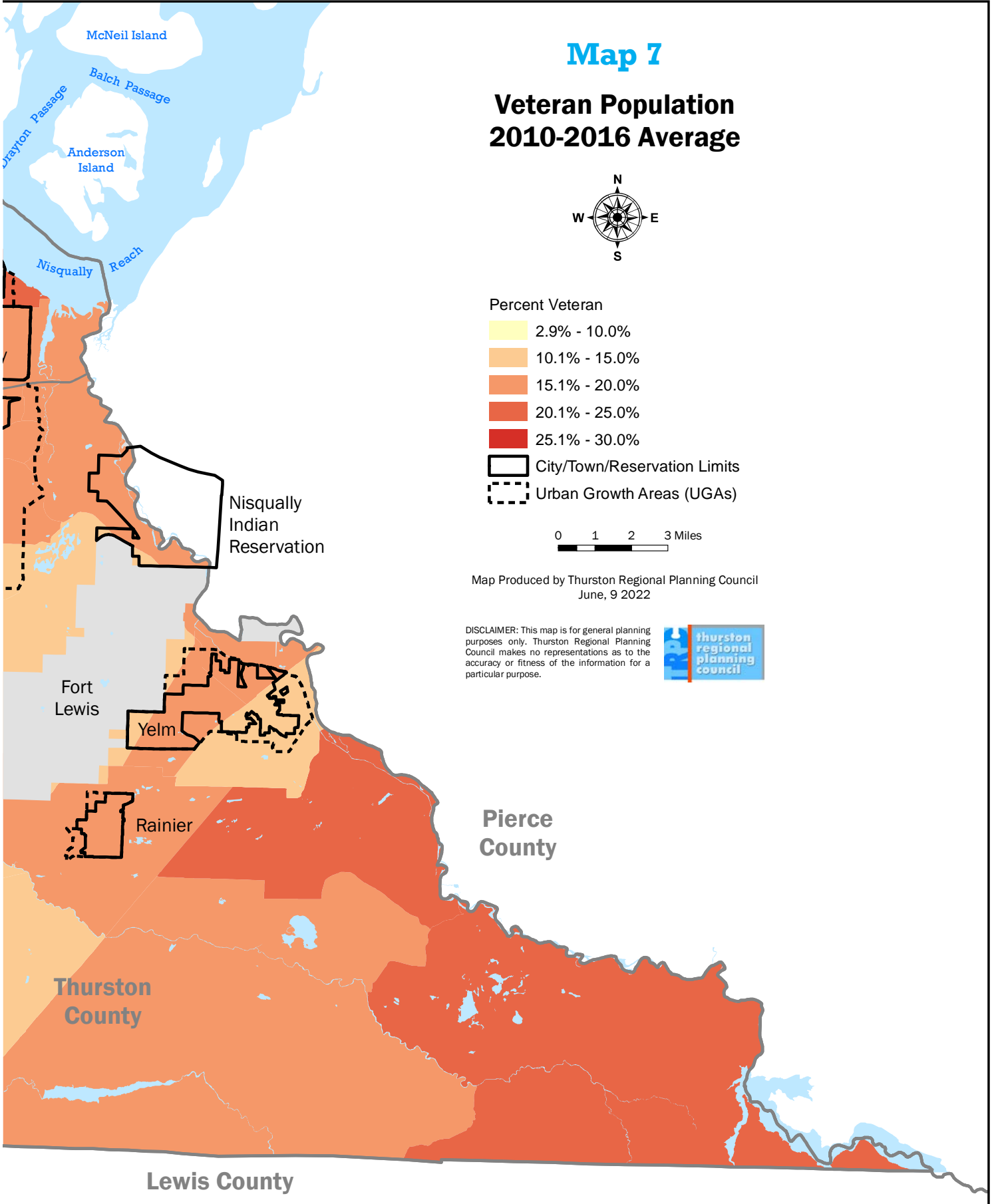
- 2.9% - 10.0%
- 10.1% - 15.0%
- 15.1% - 20.0%
- 20.1% - 25.0%
- 25.1% - 30.0%

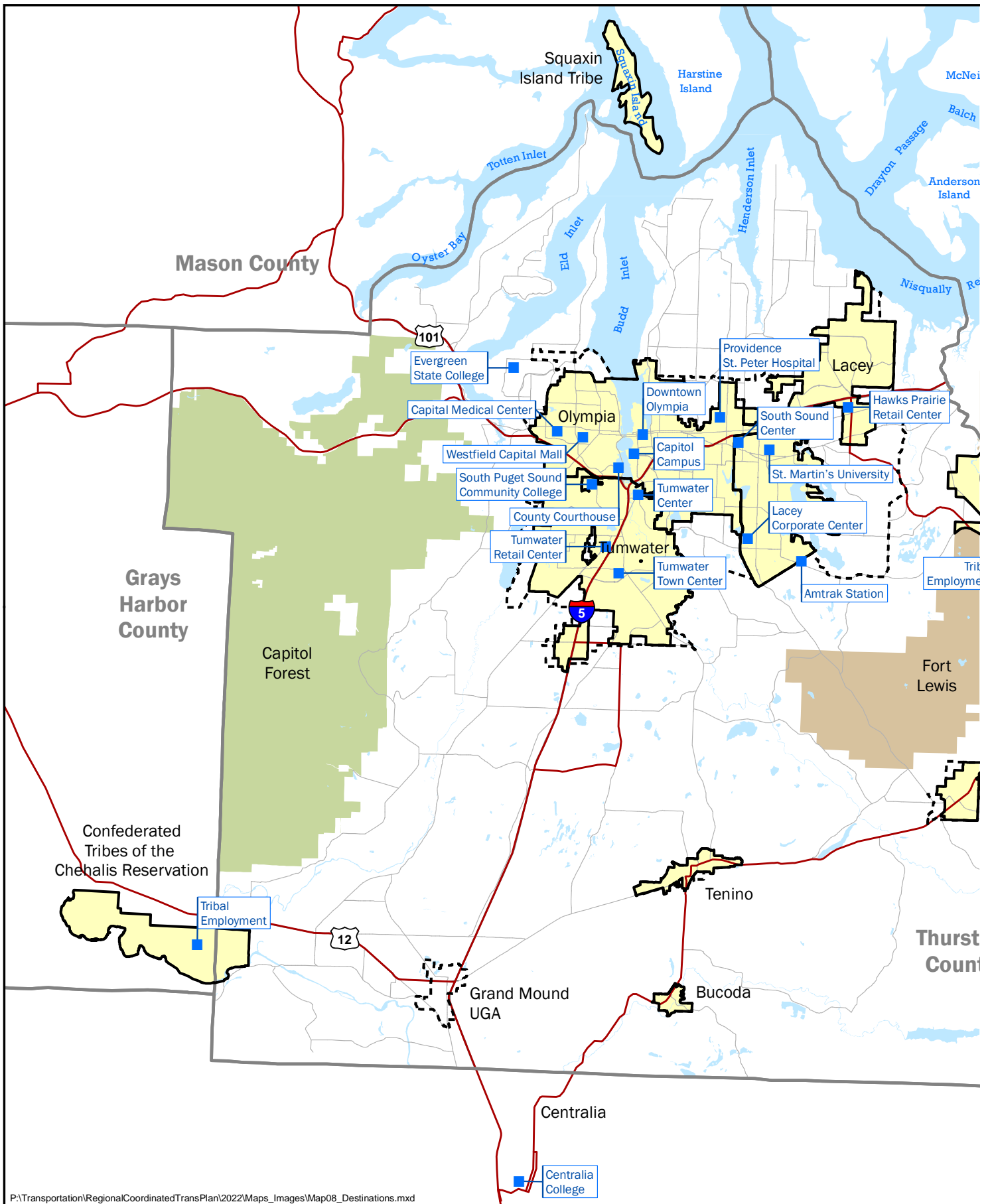
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)



Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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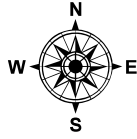




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Map 8

Destinations

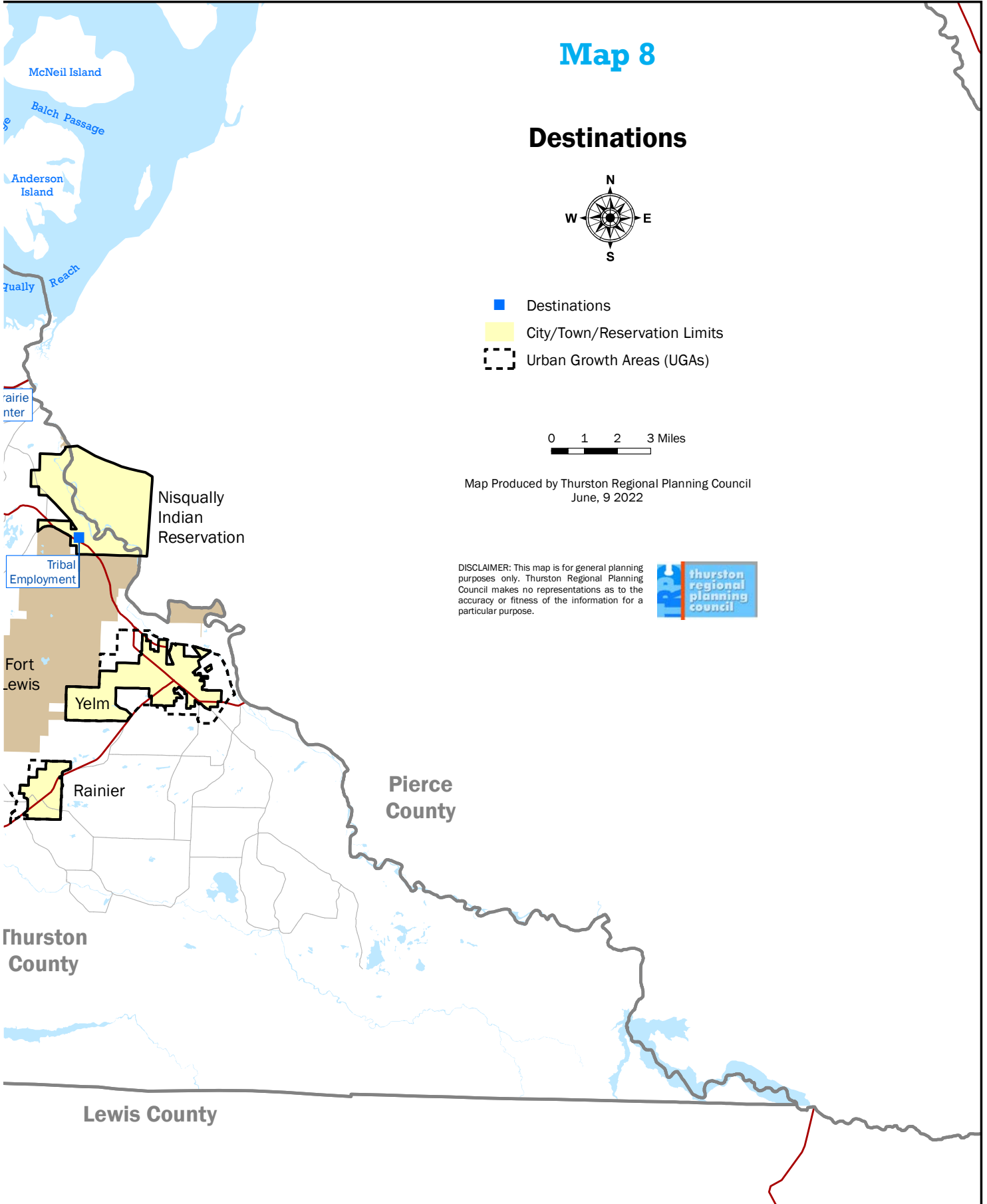


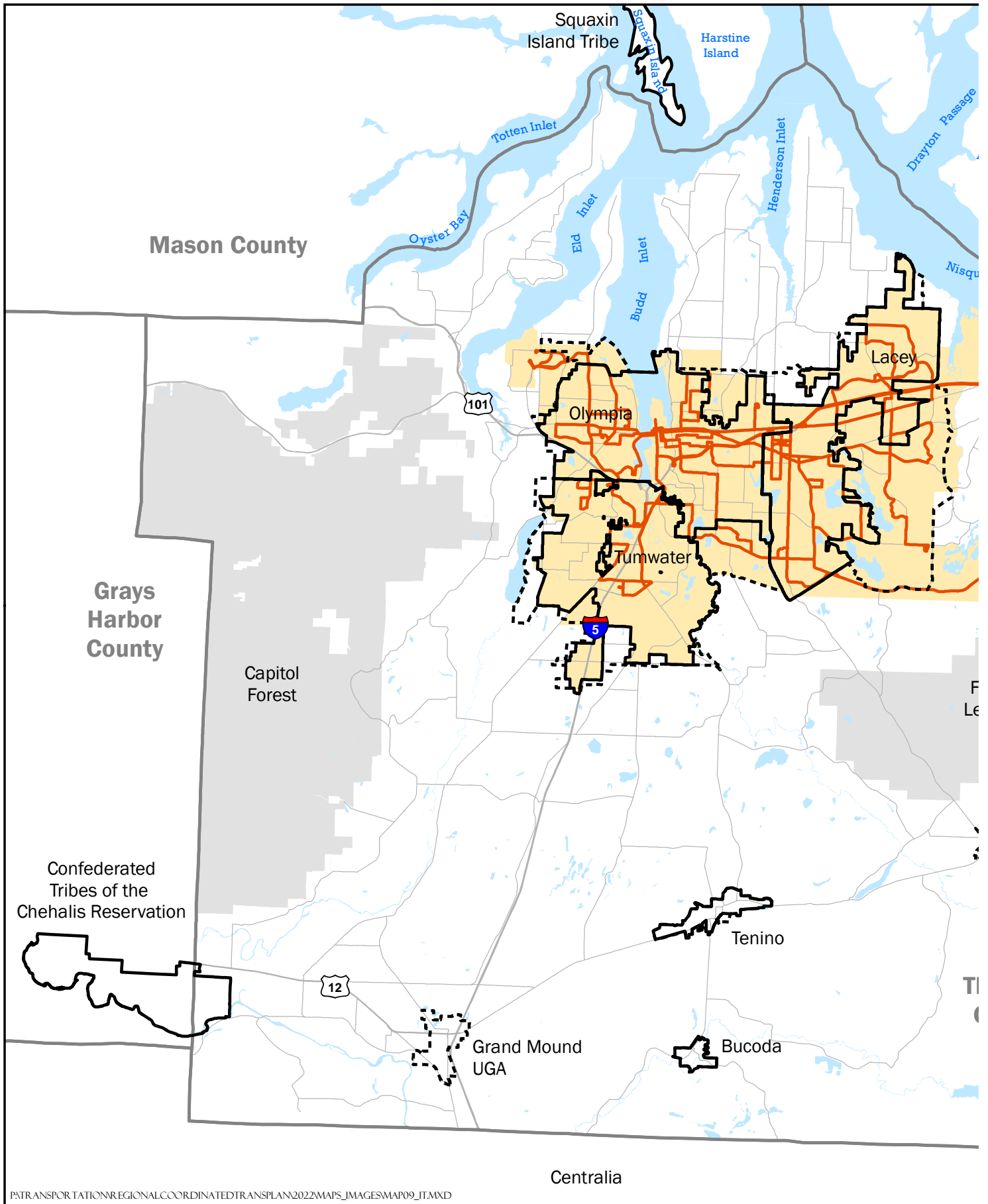
- Destinations
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

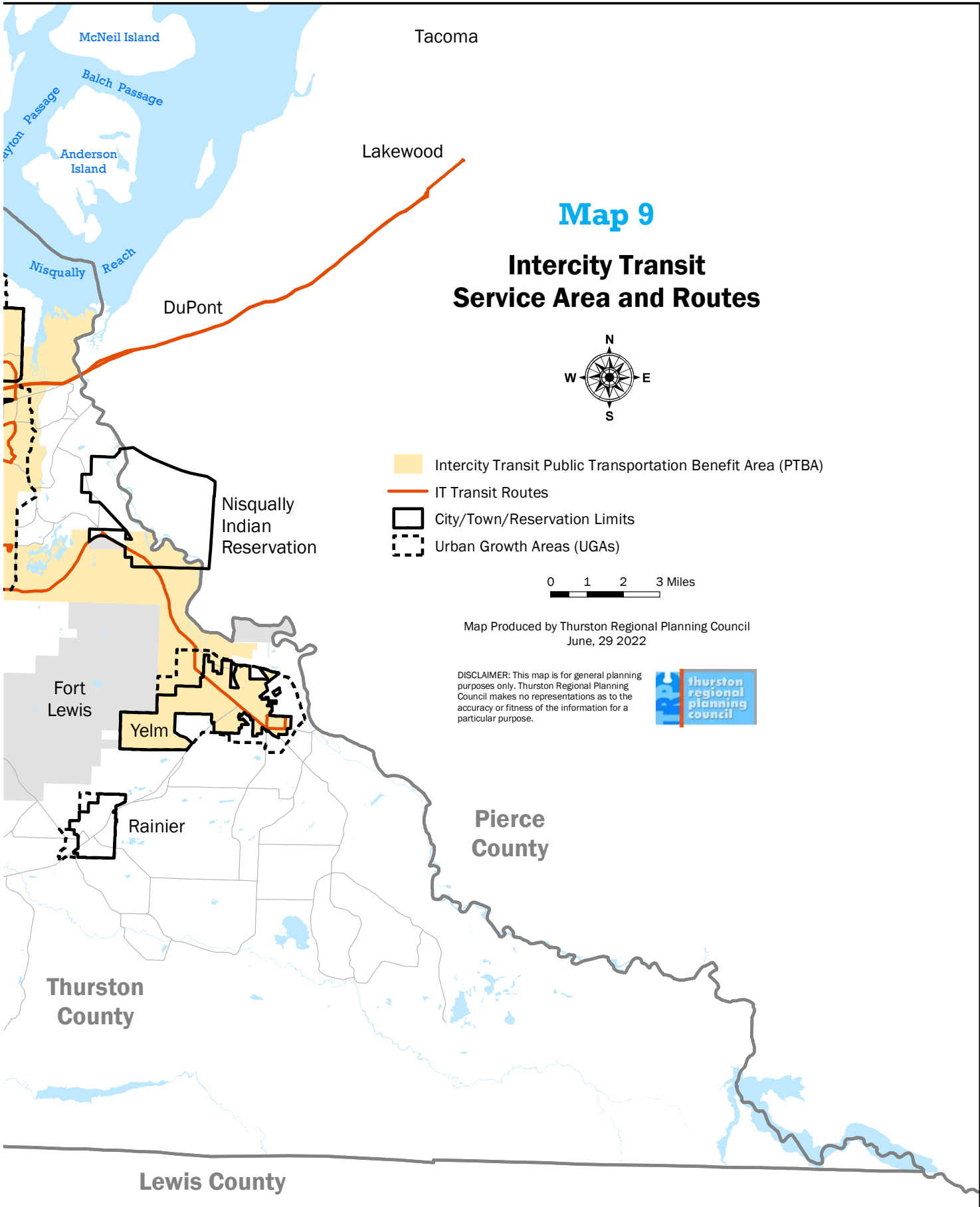
0 1 2 3 Miles

Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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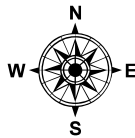






Map 9

Intercity Transit Service Area and Routes



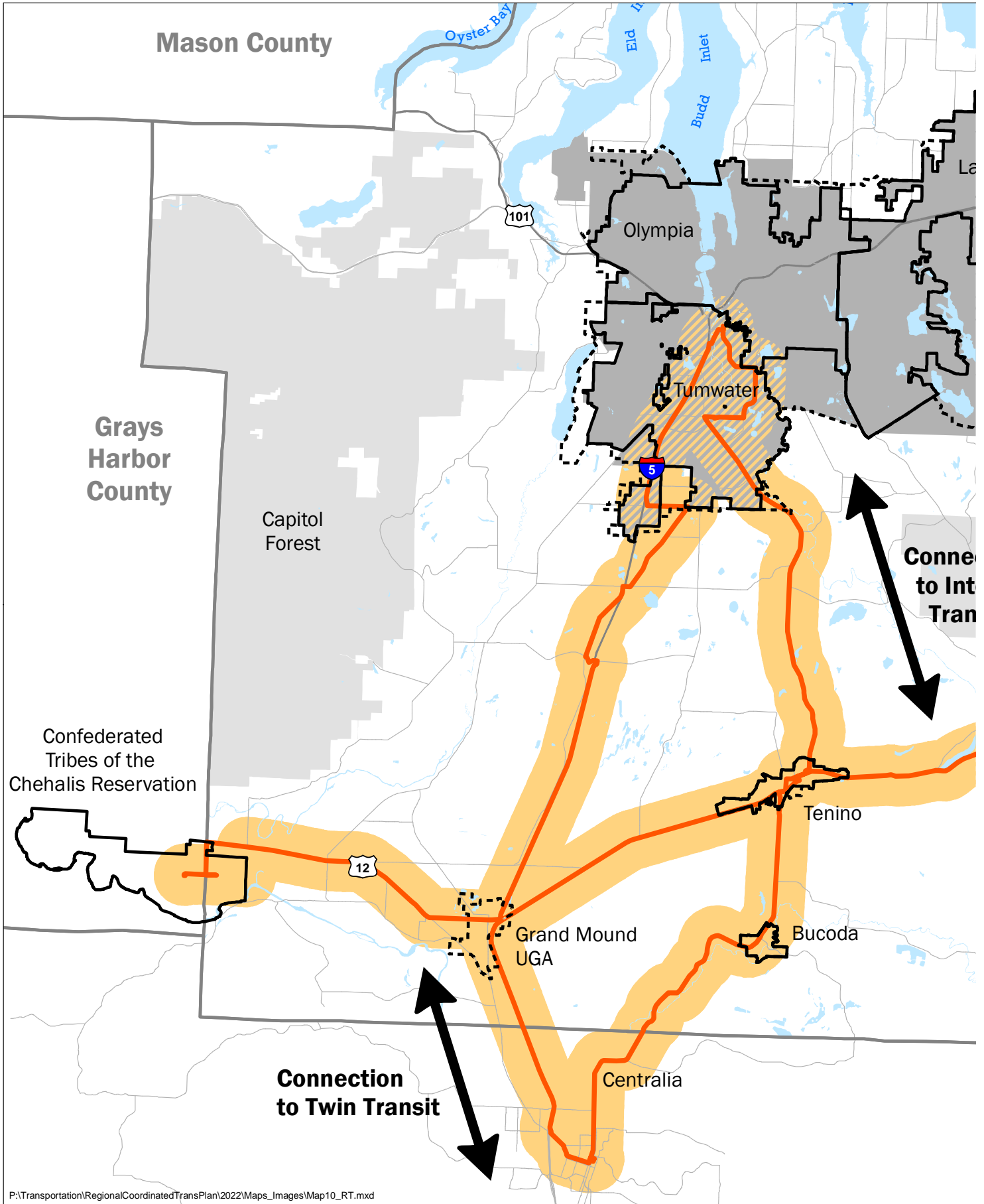
- Intercity Transit Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)
- IT Transit Routes
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

0 1 2 3 Miles

Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 29 2022

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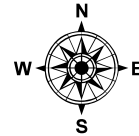




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Map 10

Rural Transit Service Area and Routes



- rT Routes
- Complimentary Paratransit Service Area
- Intercity Transit Public Transit Benefit Area
- City/Town/Reservation Limits
- Urban Growth Areas (UGAs)

0 1 2 3 Miles

Map Produced by Thurston Regional Planning Council
June, 9 2022

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