

# MEMORANDUM

---



To: Jefferson Transit Authority  
From: Left Turn Right Turn  
Date: November 14, 2024  
Subject: Comprehensive Operations Analysis: Current State and Guiding Framework

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Jefferson Transit Authority (JTA) commissioned a Comprehensive Operations Analysis to support near- and medium-term planning and operations decisions to improve the rider experience, operational efficiencies and service reliability. In January 2024, JTA became a permanently fare-free transit agency to address social and community goals for improved access to transit. However, operating in a primarily rural environment, long-distances between major service centers and low population densities make providing equitable service to all residents a challenge. The goal of this Comprehensive Operations Analysis is to identify near- and medium-term opportunities to improve transit services for residents across Jefferson County, progress toward net-zero climate goals, and ensure the financial sustainability of transit services.

As a first phase of this analysis, developing an understanding of the current conditions and existing performance was critical. Through a series of discovery meetings, on-site investigations, detailed data analysis and public engagement, the project team identified how the existing transit service has achieved recent success while also understanding current challenges and gaps. This report provides an overview of the current state as well as outlines the guiding framework for the next phases of options analysis and implementation planning.

## 2 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

### 2.1 Jefferson County Overview

Jefferson County is situated on the Olympic Peninsula in Western Washington. The county is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west, Clallam County and the Juan du Fuca Straight to the north, the Puget Sound and Hood Canal to the east, and by Grays Harbor and Mason Counties to the south. Jefferson County spans across the Olympic Peninsula, with population centers on both the western and eastern coasts. The middle of the peninsula is largely uninhabited due to the rugged terrain and high peaks of the Olympic Mountains. The mountains and the Olympic National Park bisect the county, creating a natural barrier to

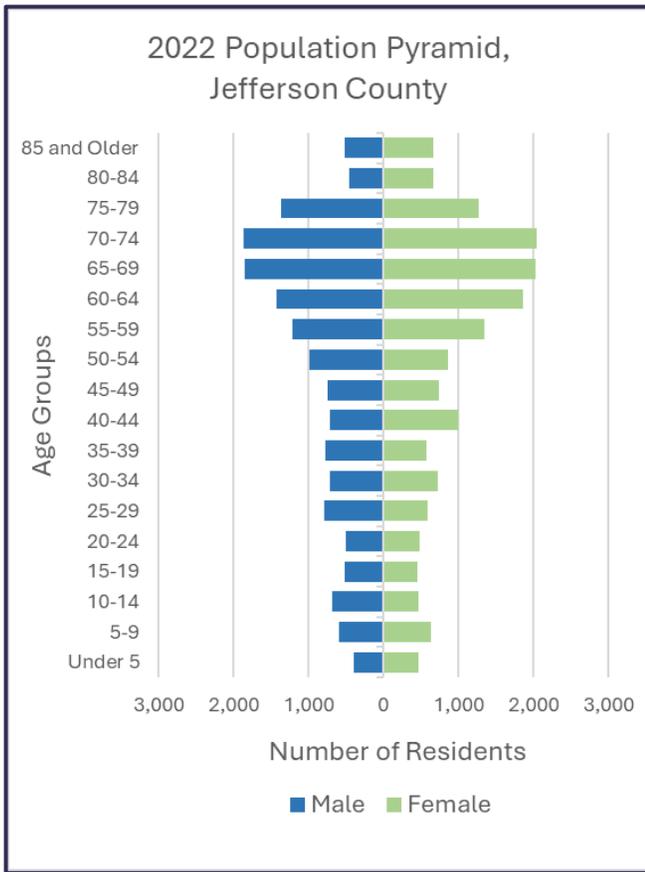
mobility between the populated coastal areas. Travel between the areas requires traversing through either Clallam County to the north or Grays Harbor and Mason Counties to the south. Jefferson County covers some 1,803.7 square miles – a diverse range of territory, from high alpine glaciers and coastal lowlands to farmlands and temperate forests. Jefferson County’s location within the state of Washington and neighboring counties are highlighted in the map below:



**Figure 1: Jefferson and Neighboring Counties in Washington.**

### 2.1.1 Demographics

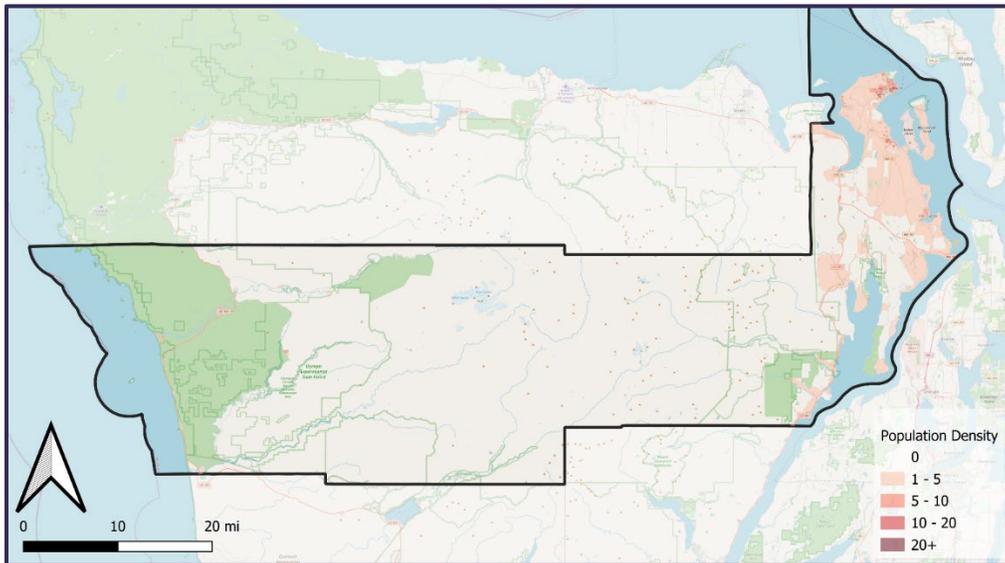
In 2022, the population of Jefferson County was estimated to be 33,589 residents living in 15,589 total households. The county has seen steady population growth since the 1970s, it is currently the 27<sup>th</sup> most populous county in the state of Washington. As of 2022, the median household income in Jefferson County was \$64,796 – roughly 30% below the state average. The percentage of residents in the county experiencing poverty is also higher than the Washington average at 13.8%. Jefferson County also has a comparatively high median age at 59.4 years and therefore a lower employment rate. 38.6% of Jefferson County residents are aged 65 or older, more than double the state average. The population pyramid for Jefferson County can be found below:



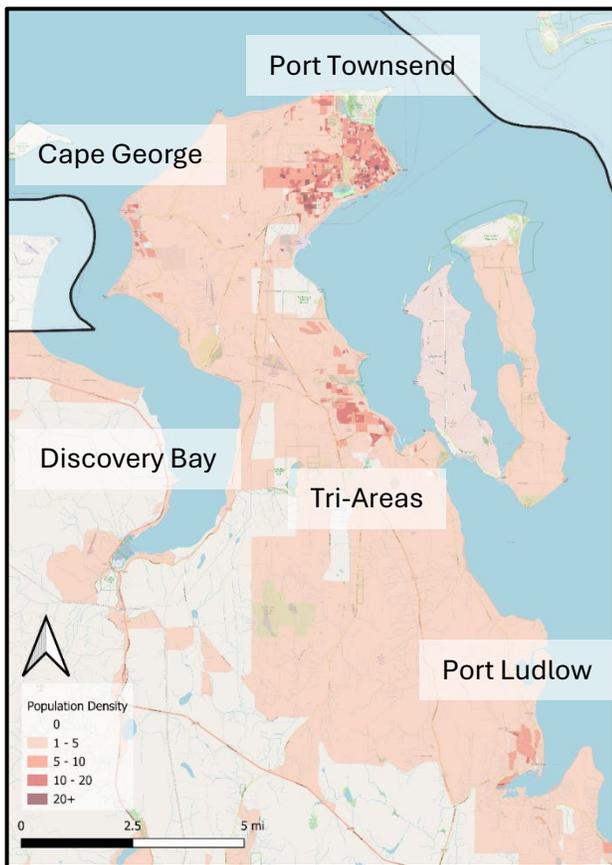
**Figure 2: Population Pyramid Describing the Age Breakdown of Residents of Jefferson County**

The largest city and seat of Jefferson County is Port Townsend, with an estimated population of 10,611 in 2024. Other population centers include the tri-areas (Port Hadlock, Irondale, and Chimacum), Discovery Bay, Port Ludlow, Brinnon, Marrowstone Island, and Quilcene. The eastern side of the county can be described as low-density suburban to rural with population centers in small towns and cities. On the more rural western side of the county, the Hoh Indian Reservation, Quinault Reservation, and towns of Oil City, Queets, and Clearwater account for most of the population. Travelling between the two populated portions of Jefferson County is a significant journey through rural areas, driving from Port Townsend to the Hoh Indian Reservation takes nearly 3 hours through Clallam County. The distance and topography divide the county into two distinct halves.

This trend is exemplified by figures 3 and 4, which highlight population density through the number of inhabitants per square mile across Jefferson County.



**Figure 3: Population Density (Residents per Square Mile) Across Jefferson County**



**Figure 4: Population Density (Residents per Square Mile) in Eastern Jefferson County**

### 2.1.2 Transportation and Infrastructure

The primary transportation corridors in Jefferson County include Washington State Routes 19, 20, and 104 and US 101. These roads are the main arteries for the movement of people and goods within Jefferson County and for movement to destinations elsewhere in the region. The routes and their connections are described briefly in the bullets below:

- Washington State Route 19 connects to Route 20 south of Port Townsend, continuing southeast through the tri-areas and connecting with Route 104 west of the Hood Canal floating bridge.
- Washington State Route 20 enters Jefferson County through a Washington State ferry connection with Fort Casey on Whidbey Island across the Puget Sound. Arriving in Port Townsend, Route 20 runs southwest where it intersects with Route 19 and continues south toward a connection with US Route 101 east of Discovery Bay.
- Washington State Route 104 enters Jefferson County via the Hood Canal Floating Bridge, with further connections to Kingston in Kitsap County and Edmonds via a ferry across the Puget Sound. On the Jefferson County side, Route 104 connects with Route 19 south of Port Ludlow and continues west where it terminates at an intersection with US Route 101 south of Discovery Bay.

- US Route 101 enters the east side of Jefferson County south of Brinnon, in the county it runs mostly north-south connecting to Quilcene and Discovery Bay. After leaving the county west of Gardiner, Route 101 continues to Port Angeles and Forks in Clallam County. The route then re-enters Jefferson County on the west side of the Olympic Mountains, where it connects rural communities as it continues south into Grays Harbor County.

While these roads provide robust and reliable infrastructure for transportation throughout Jefferson County, travel from Jefferson County to key destinations including Tacoma, Olympia, and Seattle requires travelers to take Route 104 and the Hood Canal Floating Bridge. The bridge is a chokepoint for entering or exiting Jefferson County, its bridge opens regularly creating traffic issues and mobility barriers on the only road connecting the county with areas to the southeast. Without disruption, the total travel time from Port Townsend to Seattle is about 2.5 hours by car or 2.25 hours with a ferry connection. If the Hood Canal Floating Bridge is open to marine traffic, travelers can wait up to an hour, this can lead to further delays if the initial disruption causes travelers to miss a ferry connection. This bridge therefore serves as a vital connection between Jefferson County and regional nodes and as a source of disruption and headache as it is a key route for many out-of-county trips.

Disruptions to travel out of and into Jefferson County can also occur as a result of cancelled or delayed ferry services. During inclement weather and storms, ferry services are commonly suspended for the safety of passengers and crew. However, ferries can be delayed even on days with pleasant weather, causing cascading delays to travelers into and out of Jefferson County. To accommodate riders through ferry delays from Edmonds and Seattle, JTA will sometimes hold the Kingston Express at the ferry terminal.

## **2.2 Jefferson Transit Context**

The Jefferson Transit Authority (JTA or Jefferson Transit) is the official public transit agency providing transit services to residents and visitors across Jefferson County in Northwestern Washington. Jefferson Transit was established in 1980 and began operations in May of 1981. Since its construction in 2015, Jefferson Transit has been based out of the 4 Corners Facility in Port Townsend.

### **2.2.1 Governance**

JTA is formally classified as a public transportation benefit area authorized under the Revised Code of Washington's Title 36 which determines the roles and responsibilities of counties within the state. Within Title 36, Chapter 57A establishes the powers and duties of the organization as a public transportation benefit area. JTA is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of seven voting members and one non-voting member. The Board is comprised of representatives from the following organizations:

- Three elected Jefferson County Commissioners,

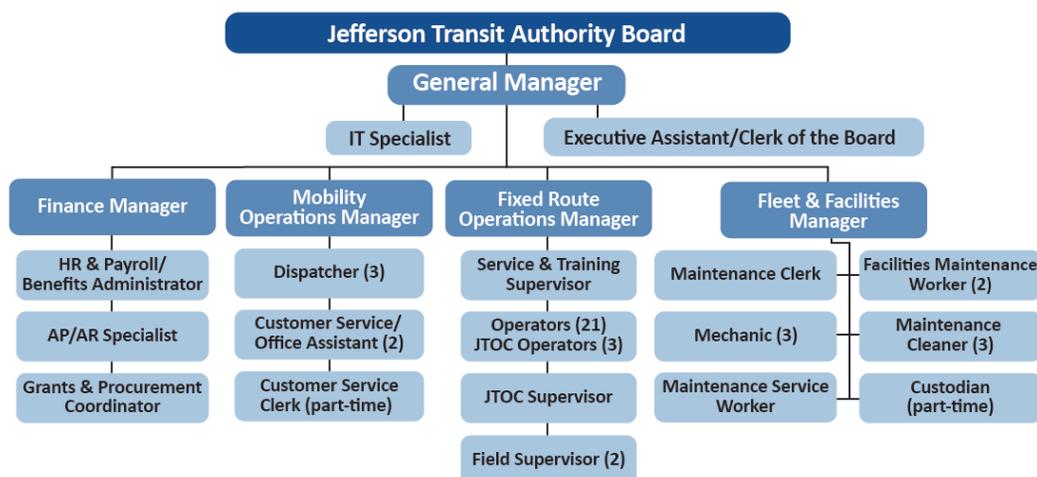
- Two elected appointees from the City of Port Townsend Council,
- One elected School District Representative,
- One elected representative from a local school, port, public utility district, or hospital district, and
- One elected non-voting labor representative from the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 which is the union representing Jefferson Transit employees.

In addition to the board of directors, JTA has a Transit Advisory Group (TAG) comprised of local riders who advocate for improved service, ridership growth, and work with JTA to advance the organizations goals. The TAG currently has eight members, six representing the city of Port Townsend and one representative from both Port Hadlock and Port Ludlow. TAG meetings occur once every other month, attendance is encouraged for members of the public to share ideas and experiences.

At the organizational level, JTA is composed of three departments that oversee the daily delivery of service and long-term sustainability of the agency. The three departments are: maintenance, operations, and finance. Each department is managed by a member of the leadership team, with the JTA General Manager serving as the organization’s Chief Executive Officer. The leadership team includes the following roles:

- General Manager,
- Finance Manager,
- Fleet and Facilities Manager,
- Fixed Route Operations Manager, and
- Mobility Operations Manager.

The following organizational chart describes the roles and reporting structure of the agency.



**Figure 5: Organizational Chart Describing the Structure of Jefferson Transit from Jefferson Transit Transit Development Plan 2024-2029**

## 2.2.2 Fleet and Facilities

Jefferson Transit has three primary facilities: 4 Corners, Haines Place Park and Ride, and Olympic Connection Operation Facility. Constructed in 2015, 4 Corners is JTA's administrative and operating hub, it is home to most of the agency's administrative staff, dispatch, scheduling, and all maintenance activities. 4 Corners also has two bus bays, a shelter for waiting passengers, public washrooms, and protected bike parking. The facility is located about six miles southwest of downtown Port Townsend. JTA's primary transit hub is the Haines Place Park and Ride located approximately one mile west of downtown Port Townsend. Haines Place is equipped with four bus bays, a large parking lot with 350 spaces, public washrooms, a weather-protected canopy, covered bike parking, and a customer service center open from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Eleven of the twelve fixed route services operated by JTA originate or terminate at Haines Place, while most out-of-town routes connect to the 4 Corners hub. On the other side of Jefferson County, the Olympic Connection Operation Facility in Forks is the operations and administration hub for the Jefferson Transit Olympic Connection.

Jefferson Transit operates a fleet of 54 revenue and non-revenue vehicles. Revenue service vehicles are those that carry Jefferson Transit passengers and can be broken into four types that reflect JTA's four service categories, these include: Fixed-route, Dial-a-Ride paratransit, Jefferson Transit Olympic Connection, and Vanpool revenue service vehicles. These account for 34 of Jefferson Transit's 54 vehicles. JTA also operates a fleet of 20 non-revenue vehicles that serve supporting operational and maintenance roles for the agency. Description of Jefferson Transit's fleet of revenue vehicles can be found below, while further details about both revenue and non-revenue vehicles can be found in Appendix A – Fleet inventory.

- Fixed route revenue service vehicles:
  - 13 Gillig low-floor diesel buses, ranging in age from 2011-2022
  - 1 Ford F550 cutaway diesel bus, from 2013
  - 1 Gillig low-floor electric bus, from 2023
- Dial-a-Ride paratransit revenue service vehicles:
  - 4 Dodge Caravan SXT vans, from 2013
  - 4 Ford E450 cutaway diesel buses, ranging in age from 2019 to 2023
- Jefferson Transit Olympic Connection revenue service vehicles:
  - 4 Ford F550 cutaway diesel buses, ranging in age from 2017 to 2023
- Vanpool revenue service vehicles:
  - 5 Dodge Caravans, ranging in age from 2009 to 2013
  - 2 Chevrolet Express G3500 vans, from 2018

In the future, JTA has plans to add an additional maintenance bay and facilities maintenance building at the Four Corners Hub, further invest in electric vehicle infrastructure, procure fifteen replacement and expansion vehicles by 2030, and initiate a comprehensive upgrade to the Haines Place Park and Ride. These investments in fleet and facilities will support reduction of greenhouse gas emissions while enabling further growth in JTA services. The current state of JTA services can be found in the section below.

## 3 SERVICE REVIEW

### 3.1 Service Overview

Jefferson Transit operates three core types of service: Fixed Route, Dial-a-Ride, and Vanpool. These services are described in the following sections.

#### 3.1.1 Fixed Route Services

JTA services allow residents and visitors to travel to key destinations within the county and offer connections to several transit agencies in neighboring counties. JTA services connect to communities including Port Townsend, Port Hadlock, Irondale, Chimacum, Port Ludlow, Quilcene, Brinnon, and several other rural communities. Out of the county, Jefferson Transit services connect to Forks and Sequim in Clallam County, Amanda Park in Grays Harbor County, Triton Cove in Mason County, and Poulsbo and Kingston in Kitsap County. These connections enable Jefferson Transit users to travel to destinations in Port Angeles, Bremerton, and Seattle with convenient transit connections. There remain destinations within Jefferson County that are underserved by JTA, identification and evaluation of transit demand in these areas will be a key output of the comprehensive operations analysis going forward.

Fixed-route conventional services operated by JTA can be categorized into four groups:

- **Port Townsend service:** Primarily serve Port Townsend, these routes include 2, 3, 4, 11A, and 11B.
- **Tri-Area service:** Connecting the Tri-Area (Port Hadlock, Irondale, and Chimacum) to Port Townsend via Haines Place, 4 Corners. These routes include the 6A and 6B.
- **Regional connection service:** Out-of-town services that connect Port Townsend with Jefferson County communities, rural areas, and population centers in other counties. Out-of-town services include Routes 1, 7, 8, and 14.
- **The Jefferson Transit Olympic Connection (JTOC)** is a separate out-of-town service that is completely segmented from the remainder of the fixed route service area. It connects rural communities on the western side of Jefferson County. While JTOC is a scheduled route, it does operate as a life-line deviated service. Riders requesting deviated service, within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile from the fixed route, must call dispatch in advance to secure their ride.

As of October 2024, JTA services run from 5:15a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with services spanning 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Saturdays. Jefferson Transit does not provide services on Sundays. Service frequencies range between the different routes and categories. On some routes frequencies can be every 30-minutes at peak times, while others, particularly out-of-town routes, are operated only a few times each day. Maps of the existing fixed route network are provided in Figure 6 and on the following pages.

### 3.1.2 Dial-a-Ride Paratransit Service

In addition to conventional fixed-route services, JTA operates the Dial-a-Ride (DAR) paratransit service for riders with disabilities that present barriers to use of conventional transit. To access DAR services customers will register with JTA; once registered they are able to call and book trips with Jefferson Transit reservationists. Bookings can be made to pickup and drop-off a customer to any location in Jefferson County that is within three-quarters of a mile from a fixed route service. Trips can be booked for any time that JTA is operating fixed-route services within that service area. DAR also makes twice-a-week trips to areas of Jefferson County not currently served by fixed route services on Marrowstone Island, Kala Point, and Cape George.

### 3.1.3 Vanpool Service

As noted in section 2.3.1, Jefferson Transit also owns several vehicles to support a Vanpool program. Vanpool programs enable groups of people and employers to use agency vehicles to commute through carpooling. Jefferson Transit's vanpool program was shuttered in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and, while reinstated, has not had significant interest. Jefferson Transit still has seven vehicles which could be used if a Vanpool or micro transit program were implemented.

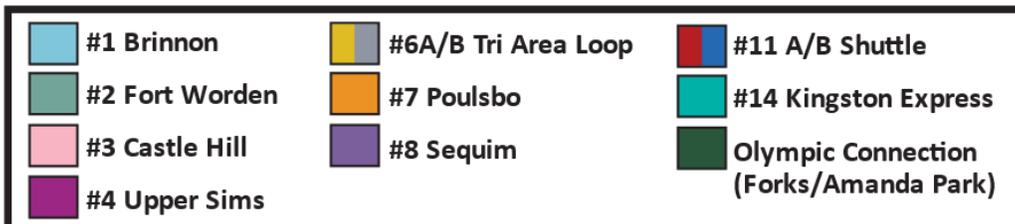
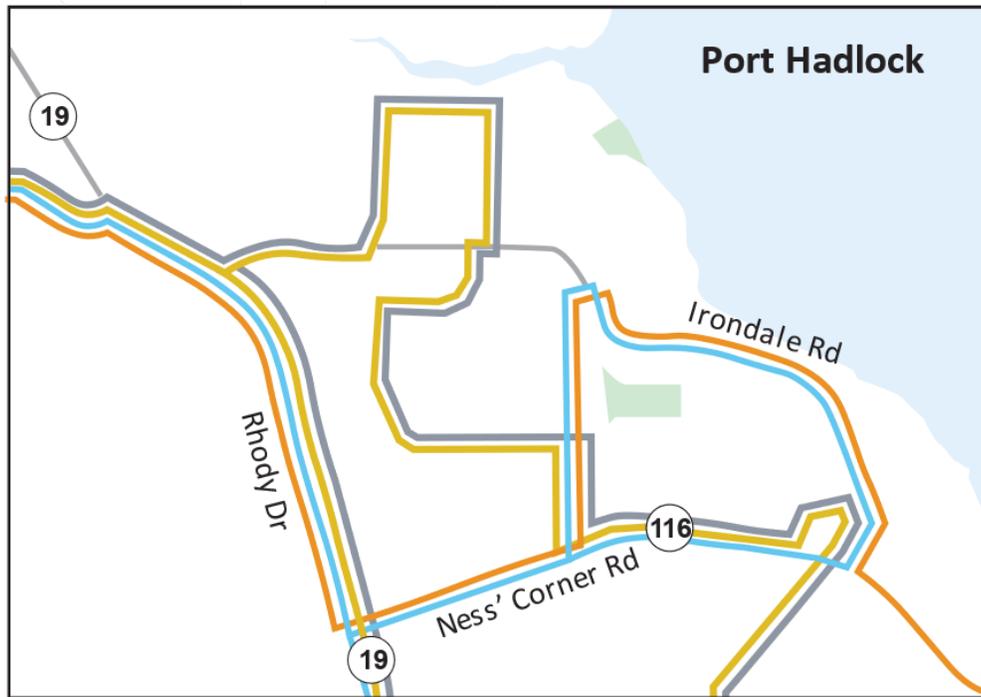
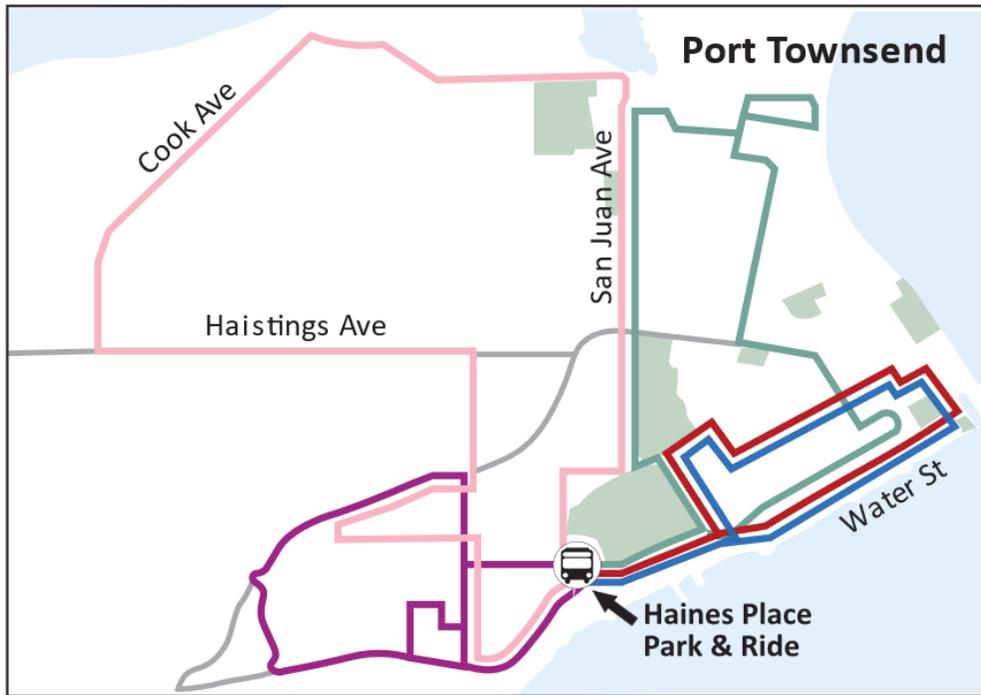
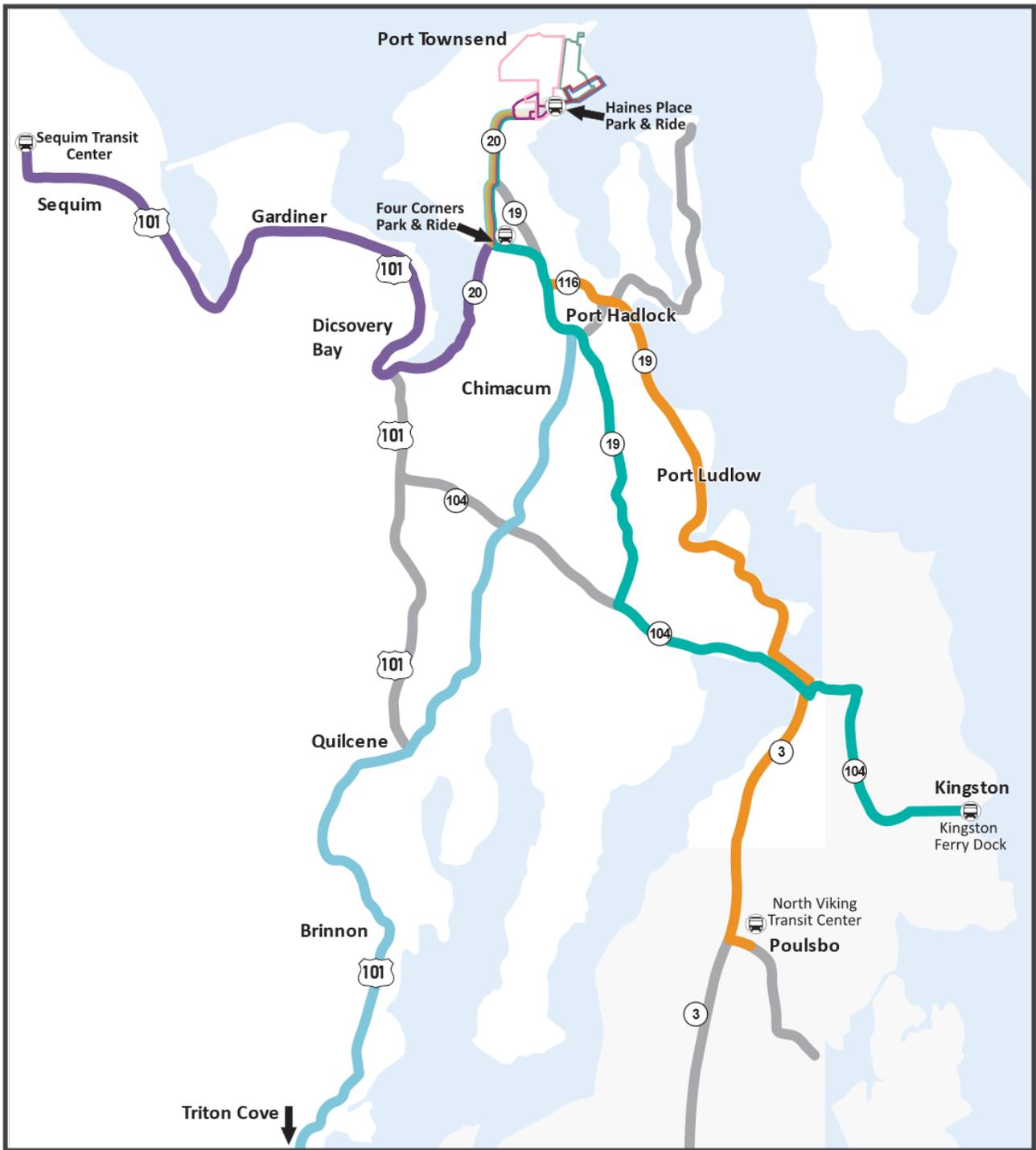


Figure 6: Port Townsend and Tri-Area Services (Source: JTA)



 #1 Brinnon	 #6A/B Tri Area Loop	 #11 A/B Shuttle
 #2 Fort Worden	 #7 Poulsbo	 #14 Kingston Express
 #3 Castle Hill	 #8 Sequim	 Olympic Connection (Forks/Amanda Park)
 #4 Upper Sims		

Figure 7: JTA Regional Connection Routes (Source: JTA)

## 3.2 Service Analysis

JTA ridership and performance information was analyzed to assess service performance. The analysis begins with a system-wide assessment before progressing with an increasingly granular assessment.

### 3.2.1 System-Wide Performance

JTA ridership has continually increased and is approaching overall ridership experienced in the years prior to the pandemic. The projected 2024 ridership, based on the data from the first nine months of the year, is expected to approach 240,000 trips (not including DAR).

As stated in Section 3.1, JTA fixed routes can be grouped into four types and their performance has varied over the years. As shown in Figure 8, the Port Townsend routes account for more than half (59%) of the overall ridership with both the Tri-Area and Regional Connector routes combining for over a third (35%) of riders. Note that while it is included in the overall ridership in Figure 8, the service provided by JTA during the Wooden Boat Festival is not illustrated.

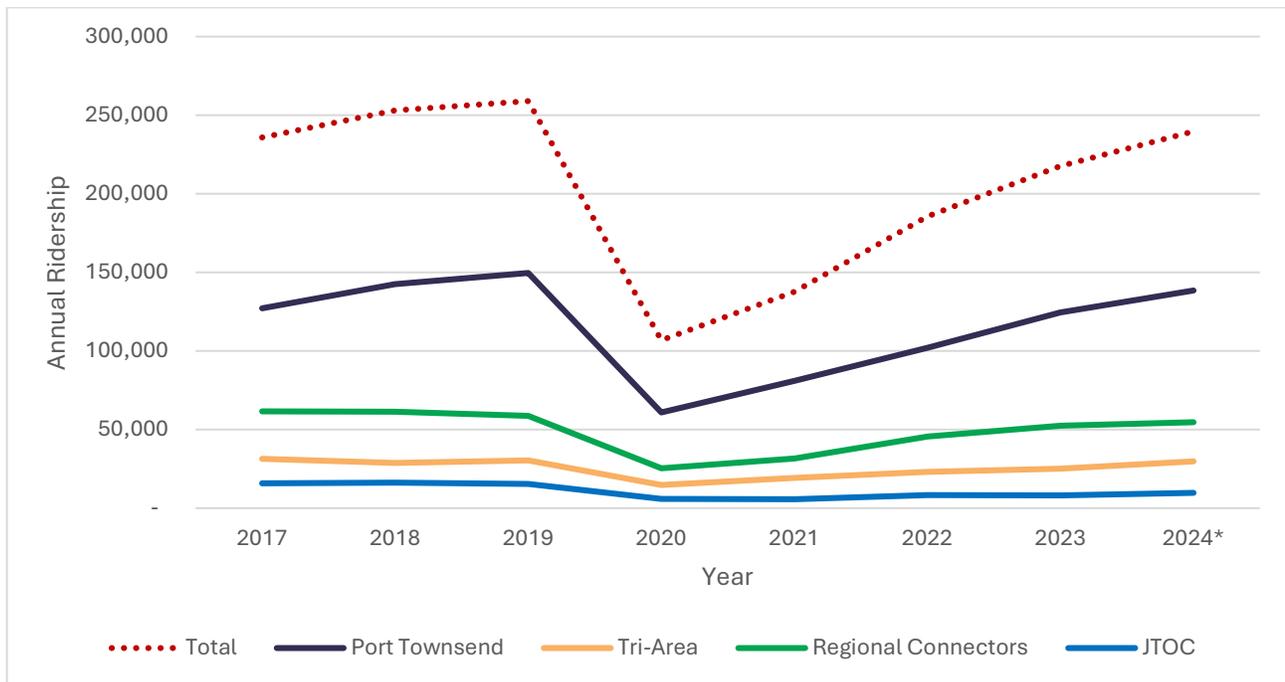


Figure 8: JTA Annual Ridership (2017-2024)

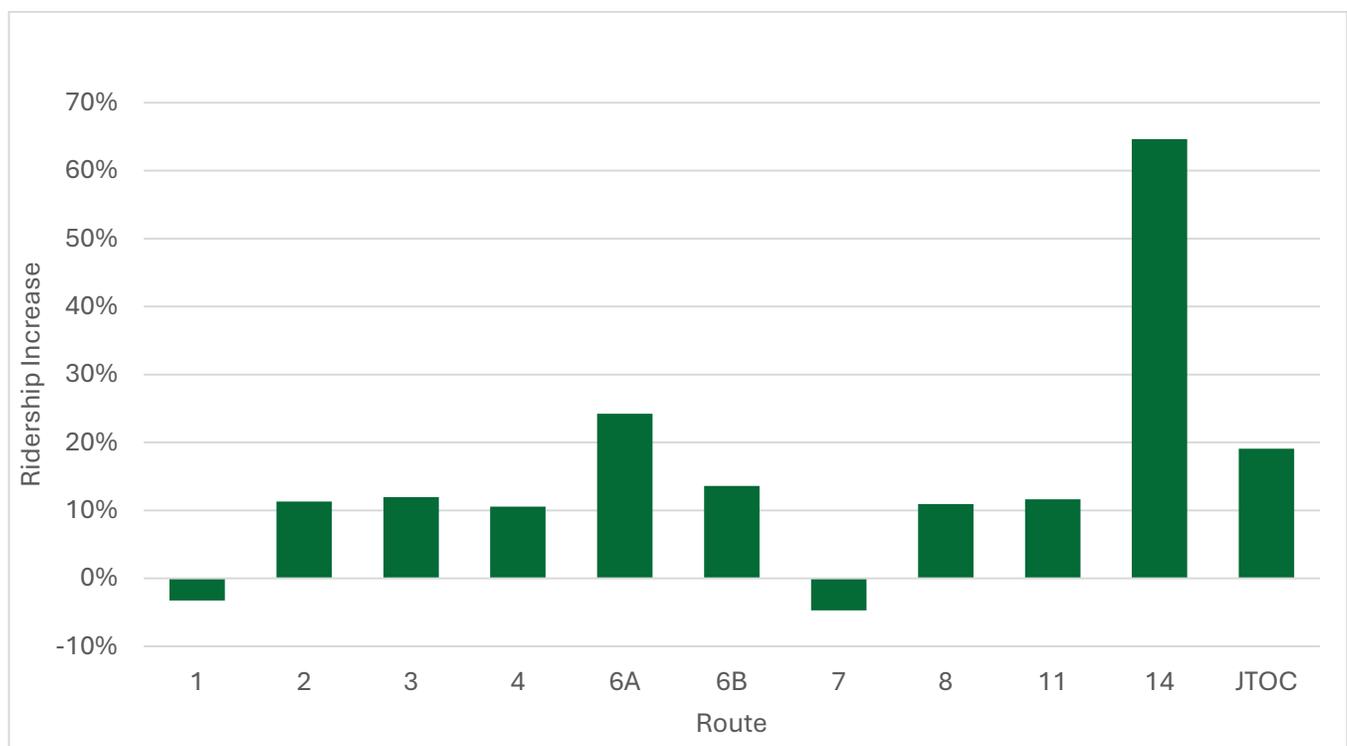
### 3.2.2 Routing Performance

While JTA ridership has continued to grow across the system, a deeper analysis into the route-by-route performance, as shown in Figure 9, indicates that growth has differed by route from 2023 to 2024. Growth among the Port Townsend routes is fairly consistent with all routes experiencing between an 11% and 13% growth in 2024. The two Tri-Area loops routes are experiencing an average growth of approximately 19%. There is a noticeable difference among the growth rates between the two loops, however it only accounts

for a difference of 300 riders through the first nine months of 2024. The disparity can be attributed by the fact that other than 2023, Route 6A has been a slightly more popular route than Route 6B and ridership in 2024 is reflecting that return to its typical pattern.

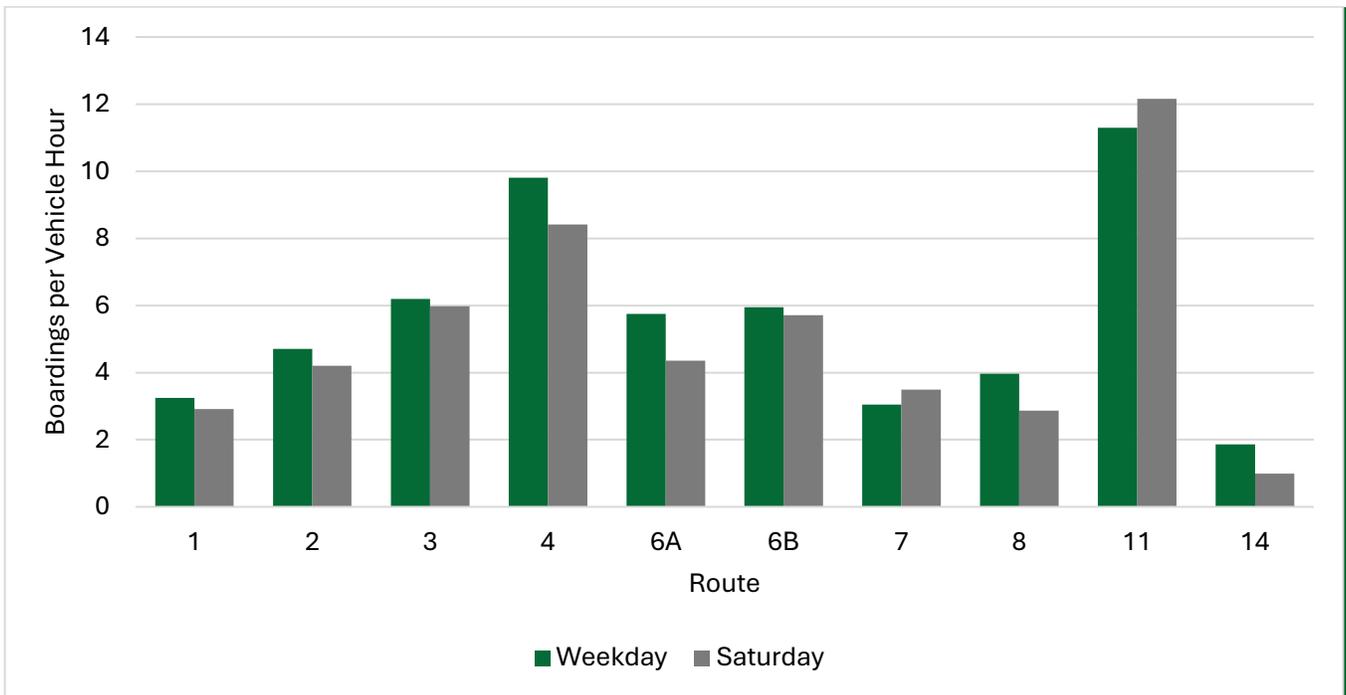
As for the regional connector routes, both the Brinnon (Route 1) and Poulsbo (Route 7) routes have experienced slight reductions in overall ridership in 2024. The Brinnon route experienced declining ridership prior to the pandemic and the projected 2024 volume is anticipated to be similar to that of 2019. In contrast, the Poulsbo route in 2023 and 2024 are noticeably lower than 2017-2019, which indicates a revised ridership plateau. While the Sequim (Route 8) route is also experiencing a similar adjustment to a new normal with respect to its annual volume, it is still experiencing noticeable growth in 2024.

Among all routes, Kingston Express (Route 14) is showing a growth rate that is significantly higher (65%) than the rest of the system. Since the service launched during the pandemic and is only in its first year of fare free service it is expected that the Kingston Express will continue to grow at a pace significantly higher than the rest of the system as the route’s ridership continues to mature over the coming years.



**Figure 9: 2024 Ridership Growth (January to September)**

Figure 10 illustrates the boardings per vehicle hour (BpH), a key performance indicator when assessing performance, for each route by weekday and Saturday. Note that the ridership data spans from July 2023 to July 2024. Additionally, boardings per trip data was not available for the JTOC and was thus not assessed.

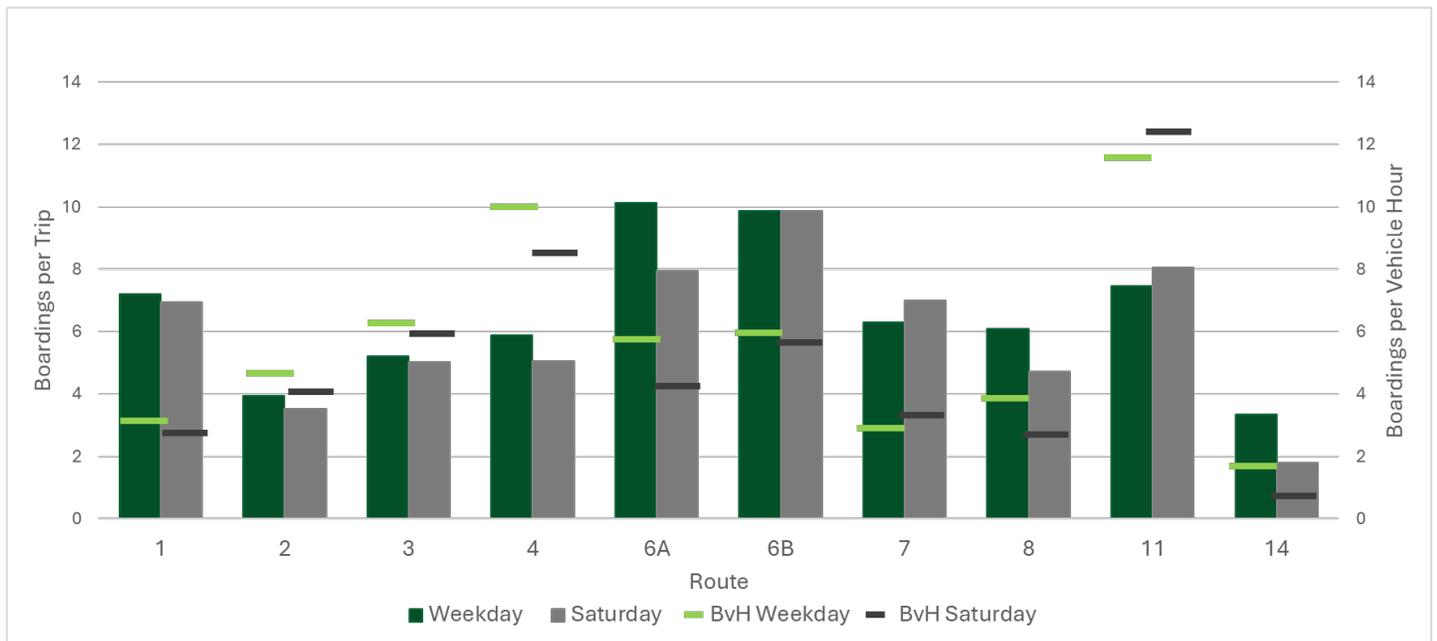


**Figure 10: Boardings per Vehicle Hour (2023-2024)**

The results displayed in Figure 10 highlight that the most productive routes, according to BpH, are the Upper Sims Loop (Route 4) and the Shuttle (Route 11A & 11B). Given that both routes cover significant population areas in Port Townsend and have short trip time (20-25 minutes), it is no surprise that they are the best performing routes by this metric. In contrast, all of the lower performing routes, according to BpH, are the regional connector routes. Given their significantly higher trip time (70-90 minutes) compared to the Port Townsend routes, they would expect to have lower BpH.

Despite greater trip time than Port Townsend routes, the two Tri-Area loops (Route 6A and 6B) have similar or better route productivity to the Fort Worden (Route 2) and Castle Hill (Route 3). This would appear to indicate that there is noticeable demand within the Tri-Area communities to use public transit as a means to connect locally (within the Tri-Area) and to Port Townsend. Meanwhile, both Route 2 and 3 have noticeably lower route productivity compared to the other Port Townsend routes, which suggests that these routes are candidates for service adjustment.

While BpH can be a helpful indicator for route efficiency, in a rural context it can distort the importance of longer routes that service the less populated communities in the County as well as provide connection to neighboring transit agencies. Figure 11 illustrates two different methods to assessing the usefulness of a route. The columns (aligned with the primary axis) illustrate ridership as boardings per trip, whereas the horizontal lines (aligned with the secondary axis) represent the same BpH that were presented in Figure 10.



**Figure 11: Comparison of Ridership Productivity and Average Ridership by Trip (2023-24)**

The results in Figure 11 show that the Port Townsend routes have a lower boardings per trip compared to BpH, and in contrast all other routes have a greater boardings per trip than BpH. While this is not a surprising result, it does provide an alternative perspective to assess the longer routes (non-Port Townsend) routes. For instance, the average weekday riders per trip are higher on the Tri-Area, Brinnon, Poulsbo, and Sequim routes than all Port Townsend loops apart from the Shuttle.

Like with BpH, the Tri-Area loops are strong performers, which continues to indicate the potential for increased service to this area. As for the Fort Worden route, it is not only still performing poorly as compared to the other Port Townsend routes, but when compared to most regional connectors, it is producing less boardings per trip.

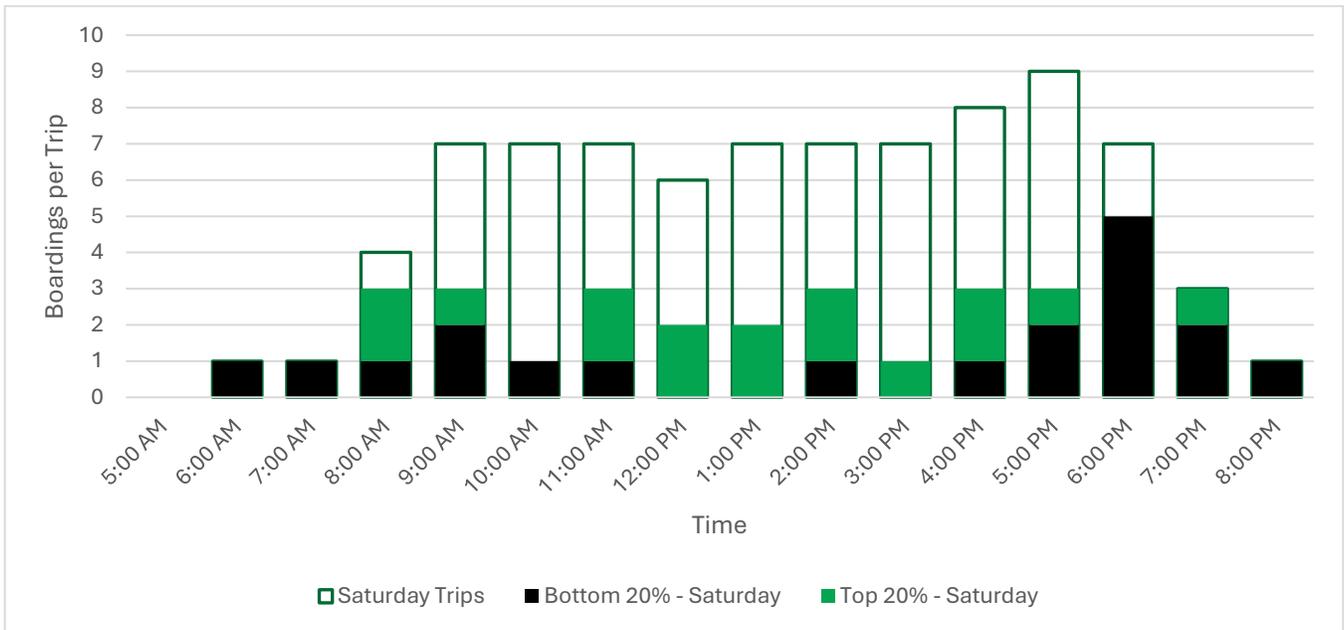
### 3.2.3 Time of Day Analysis

Next, using the boardings per trip metric, a temporal assessment of existing JTA service was completed to uncover insights into how JTA services are used throughout the day. Figure 12 illustrates the number of trips (by start time) per hour and identifies when trips in the bottom and top 20<sup>th</sup> percentile by BpH are occurring. Ridership is at its lowest both proportionally and overall, before 9 a.m. and after 6 p.m. on weekdays. In contrast, the busiest trips tend to take place between 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. While not shown graphically, the results are similar when using BpH rather than boardings per trip.



**Figure 12: Busiest Trips by Time of Day (Weekdays)**

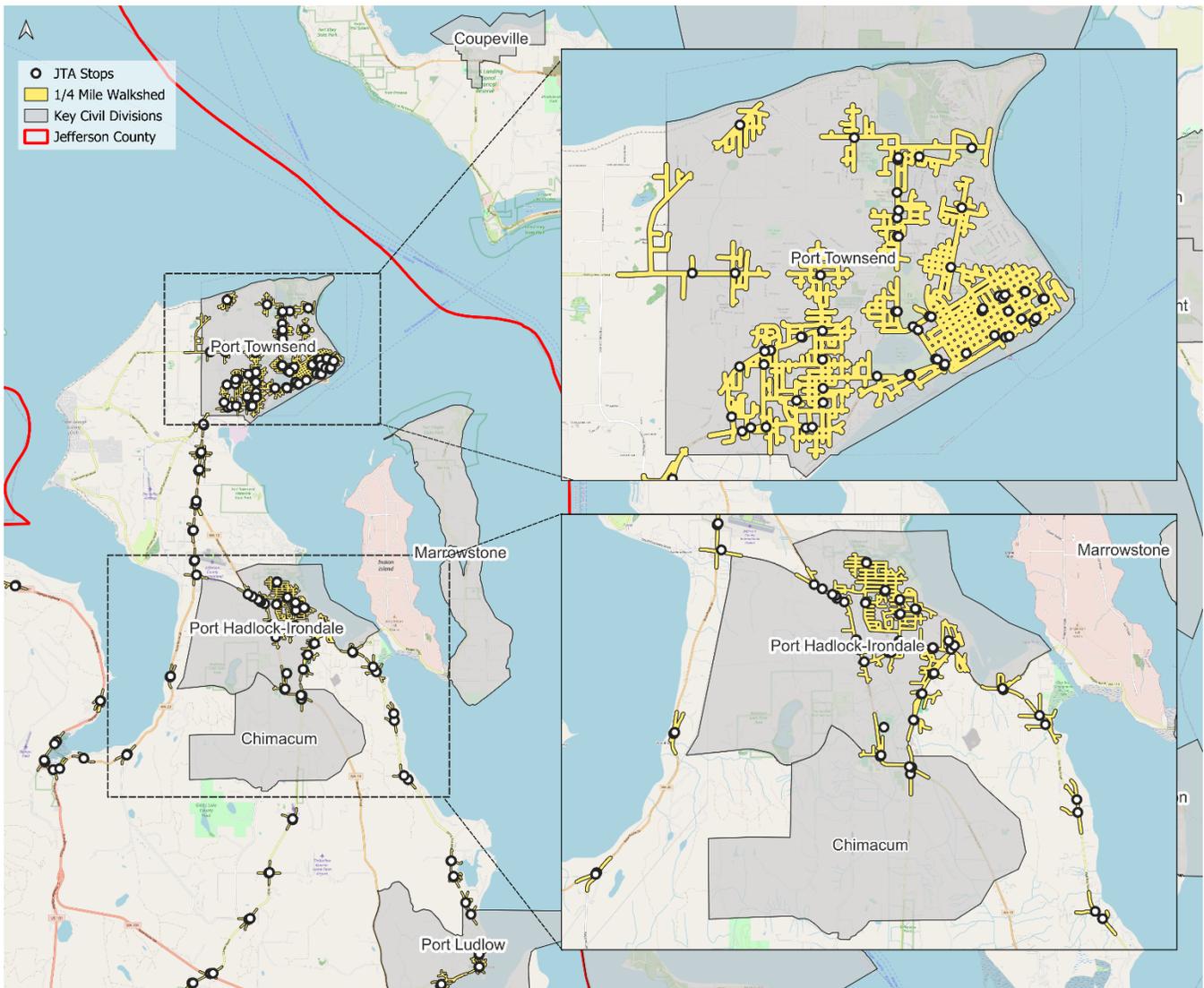
The results are similar when assessing Saturday ridership in Figure 13. While the top 20<sup>th</sup> percentile trips are better spread out. Most of the bottom 20<sup>th</sup> percentile trips occur after 5 p.m.



**Figure 13: Busiest Trips by Time of Day (Saturdays)**

### 3.2.4 Coverage Analysis

The coverage of the existing fixed route network was assessed to evaluate access for residents to the JTA network. The coverage area was determined by assessing the number of households within a quarter-mile walking distance from a bus stop within the County that provides service during AM and PM peak times.



**Figure 14: Coverage Area of Port Townsend and Tri-Area**

Given the rural layout of Jefferson County, it is not surprising that coverage within the County is noticeably less than 50%. As shown in Table 1, JTA provides service to 35% of the County. Beyond the bus stops in the network, JTA permits flag stops for roads along an existing route that has a speed limit of no more than 25 mph. Accounting for those stops, the coverage for the County increases to 37%. The main gaps in the service network include but are not limited to Cape George, Bridgehaven, and Port Ludlow. As it pertains to Port Ludlow, while there is some service along Oak Bay Road with the Poulsbo route, the layout of the community is such that there is limited access within a quarter mile walk to the nearest bus stop.

As shown in Table 1 (following page) and Figure 14, coverage in Jefferson County’s two largest population centers is much stronger. Coverage in Port Townsend, with and without flag stops, is the strongest in the County. The Tri-Area coverage is noticeably increased by the presence of flag stops, increasing from 53% to 62%. Identifying this distinction for the Tri-Area coverage area is important, given the likelihood that many residents are unaware of this policy.

**Table 1: JTA Service Coverage**

Area	Coverage	Coverage (including flag stops)
<b>Jefferson County</b>	35%	37%
<b>Port Townsend</b>	63%	64%
<b>Tri-Area</b>	53%	62%

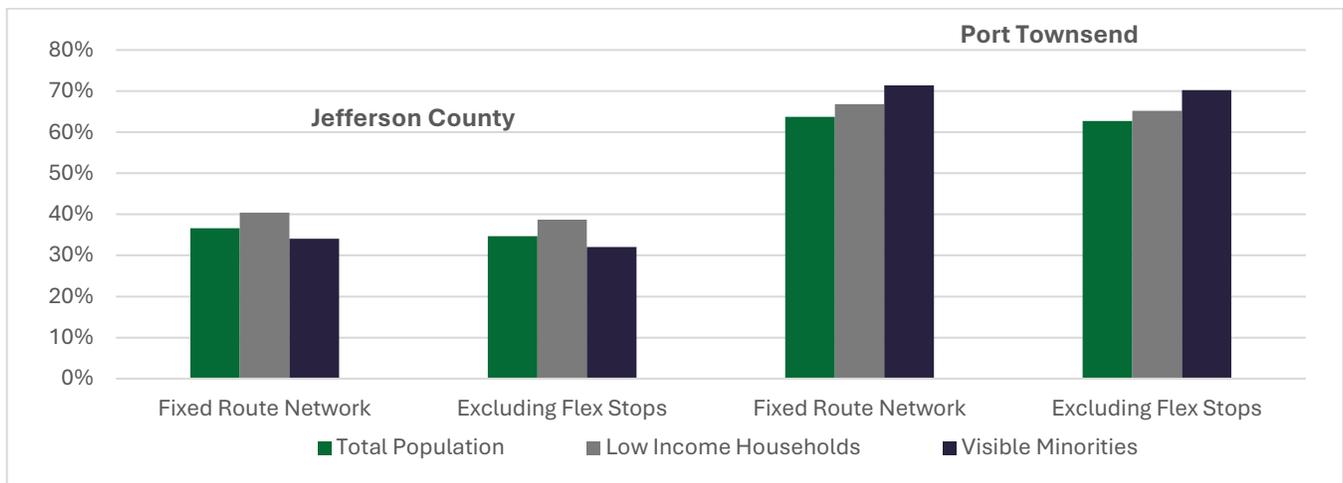
### 3.2.5 Equity Assessment

The coverage analysis provides an opportunity to better understand access to transit for specific demographic groups. By incorporating Decennial Census and American Community Survey information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau in addition to the coverage area analysis, service coverage for the following groups was assessed:

- **Low-income households:** Defined as households with an annual income under \$30,000 by the 2022 American Community Survey.
- **Visible minorities:** Defined as population identifying as Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, or Two or More Races within the 2020 Decennial Census.

The analysis was carried out at a County-wide level as well as within Port Townsend. The demographic and socio-economic data provided by the U.S Census did not allow for a reliable, detailed assessment of the Tri-Area or other communities beyond Port Townsend due to misalignment of geographic boundaries.

Figure 15 shows how these two equity-deserving groups compare to the total population. From a County-wide perspective, low-income households (40%) have slightly more coverage, while visible minorities (34%) have slightly less coverage than the total population (37%).

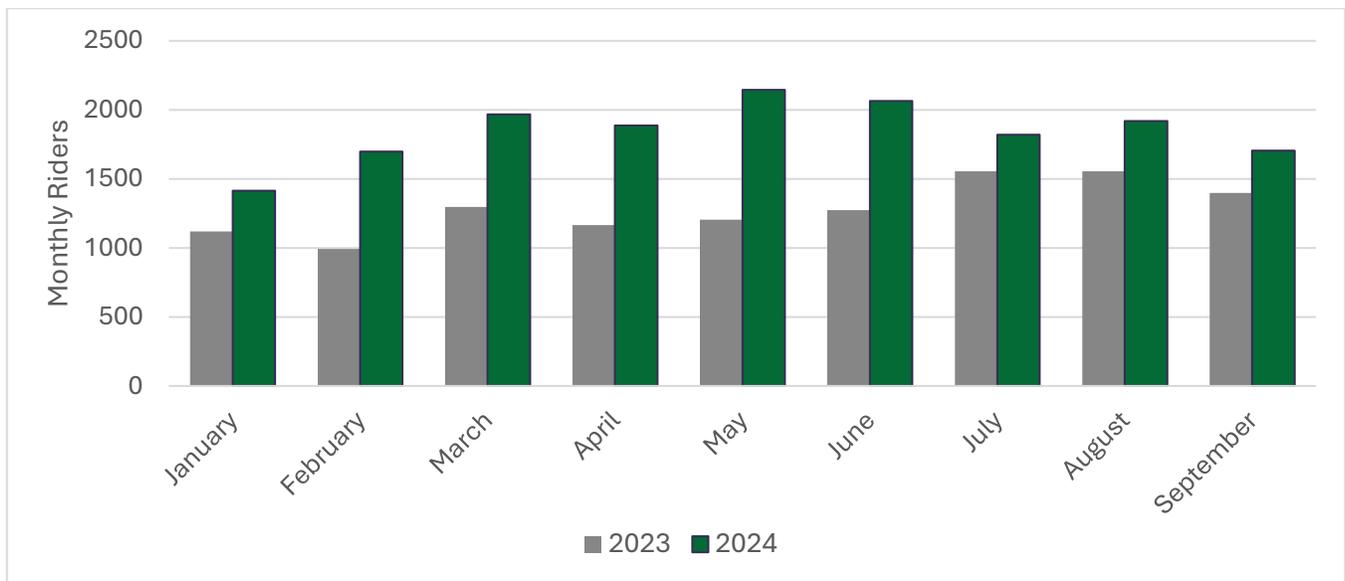


**Figure 15: Coverage for Equity-Seeking Groups**

Within Port Townsend, both low-income households (67%) and visible minorities (71%) have more coverage than the total population (64%). Whether at the County level or just in Port Townsend, the difference in relative coverage when excluding flag stops is minimal.

### 3.2.6 DAR Analysis

The system-wide assessment indicated considerable growth for DAR services over the past year. In contrast to other services, DAR surpasses pre-pandemic ridership in 2023 with nearly 16,000 trips and is on pace to reach just under 24,000 in 2024, which would result in a nearly 50% year-over-year increase. As shown in Figure 16, ridership has grown in each month in 2024 with considerable growth in the Spring and Summer months.



**Figure 16: DAR Month-to-Month Comparison (2023-2024)**

While spatial analysis was limited for DAR, a high-level origin-destination table was developed to indicate where DAR trips are starting and ending. The values in Table 2 indicate that over three-quarters (76%) of DAR trips start and end within Port Townsend. The next most common origin-destination (18%) are local between Port Townsend and the Tri-Area. The remaining trips (6%) are either local to the Tri-Area or connecting to other communities within the DAR service area.

**Table 2: Origin-Destination Distribution for DAR (2023-2024)**

Origin	Destination		
	Port Townsend	Tri-Area	Other
Port Townsend	76%	9%	1%
Tri-Area	9%	3%	<1%
Other	1%	<1%	<1%

As stated in Section 3.1, the DAR service span aligns with the existing fixed route network and therefore the limited use of the service outside of Port Townsend and the Tri-Area, which account for 94% of trips, could be attributed in part to that.

### 3.3 Business Model

As a fare free service, JTA’s primary source of revenue is derived from a 0.9% local sales tax on retail sales within the County. The sales tax currently accounts for about 75% of revenue, while the remaining balance is provided through government grants and contributions. Prior to adopting a fare free service, JTA’s farebox recovery was 7-8%, which aligns with many rural transit agencies.

A detailed account of JTA’s operating finances in 2023 and projected 2024 are provided in Table 3. Note that these values do not necessarily correspond with the budgeted values but reflect the actual or projected costs. In recent years, while the sales tax has steadily increased, JTA has maintained a conservative estimate in their budget to protect itself against any sudden drop in retail sales in the County.

**Table 3: JTA Revenue and Expenses (Source: JTA Transit Development Plan)**

	2023 (Actual)	2024 (Projected)
<b>Revenue</b>		
Operating Revenue	\$ 18,183	\$ -
Sales Tax	\$ 7,740,773	\$ 8,282,628
Local Grants/Contributions	\$ 18,855	\$ 22,437
State Grants/Contributions	\$ 1,406,842	\$ 1,674,141
Federal Grants/Contributions	\$ 1,087,735	\$ 1,294,405
Investment Income	\$ 823,318	\$ 963,282
Other	\$ 3,812	\$ 4,537
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 11,099,518</b>	<b>\$ 12,241,430</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Operations	\$ 2,813,305	\$ 2,897,704
Haines Place	\$ 38,298	\$ 39,447
Kingston	\$ 158,236	\$ 162,983
Maintenance	\$ 1,946,416	\$ 2,004,809
Administrative	\$ 1,055,333	\$ 1,086,993
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 6,011,588</b>	<b>\$ 6,191,936</b>
<b>Net Income (Before Transfers Out)</b>	<b>\$ 5,087,930</b>	<b>\$ 6,049,494</b>

JTA’s Capital Improvement Plan includes allocation of funding for maintenance of State of Good Repair for the fleet along with multiple capital projects targeted at enhancing service delivery and operational efficiency. While capital funding for fleet replacement is provided by the state government, expanding the fleet is not. Therefore, as JTA continues to explore fleet electrification, there must be consideration given to

how the size of the fleet may need to expand to maintain the current level of service and how those new vehicles will be funded.

Finally, following the 2008 recession, JTA developed budgetary reserve policies to ensure that the service would not be affected by disruptions to its revenue stream. In recent years, investments for both operating and capital reserves have performed well enough to where the operating reserve is approaching its maximum. At the end of 2023, JTA’s Reserve & Fund balance was over \$24 million and projected to steadily increase over the next five years.

## 4 STAFF, COMMUNITY, AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Significant efforts were made to engage with staff and with the public. A mix of in-person and virtual, synchronous and asynchronous activities were leveraged to engage as diverse a group of people as possible. In-person engagements included refreshments (i.e., snacks and drinks at the Open House and pizza for drivers) and a kids’ station was also available at the Open House to encourage parents with children to participate. Attendance at the engagement events was lower than expected, but the quality of engagement was strong. The lower attendance rate is aligned with a broad industry trend of less turnout at public engagement opportunities, frequently attributed to engagement fatigue and post-pandemic changes in habits. A summary of the engagement activities is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Summary of engagement activities**

Event Description	Date	Who Participated
<b>Public Survey:</b> Delivered online via Microsoft Forms and on paper copies made available on the bus and at JTA locations.	Sep 17 to Oct 14, 2024	177 respondents.
<b>Open House:</b> Hosted at the American Legion in Port Townsend. This was done in collaboration with the JTA Climate Action Plan consultants, Peak Sustainability. Included two live presentations with Q&A periods and engagement boards for attendees to engage with outside of the presentation times.	3:30 – 7:30pm Sep 17, 2024	About 30 attendees.
<b>Student Focus Groups:</b> Visited two classrooms at Port Townsend High School in collaboration with the JTA Climate Action Plan consultants,	Sep 17, 2024	About 50 students.

Event Description	Date	Who Participated
Peak Sustainability. We engaged students and asked about their experience with transit and what would make transit a more attractive mode choice to them.		
<b>Virtual Focus Group:</b> Hosted online via zoom, in collaboration with the JTA Climate Action Plan consultants, Peak Sustainability. Delivered a short presentation followed by engagement activities similar to the boards at the Open House.	6 – 8pm Sep 23, 2024	About 10 attendees.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting:</b> Hosted in-person at JTA offices at Four Corners during the sprint, with a group of individuals representing different organizations and perspectives.	1 – 2pm Aug 22, 2024	Nine attendees, representing the Transit Advisory Group, school board, healthcare, housing, and local riders.
<b>Staff Discovery Meetings:</b> Took place primarily in-person during the sprint. This includes dedicated meetings and shadowing during the sprint. Meetings were organized around the topics of finance, operations, customer service, transit technology, planning and scheduling, dispatch, and fleet and facilities.	Aug 20 to Sep 5, 2024	Seven staff, including senior staff and dispatchers.
<b>Driver Pop-Up:</b> Hosted in the driver break room with several boards to engage drivers on opportunities for improvement to operations. Some additional conversations with drivers also took place during the sprint when LTRT staff rode the buses.	Sep 16, 2024	About 10 drivers and supervisory staff.

## 4.1 Discovery and Staff Engagement Findings

The findings from engaging with staff were invaluable to understanding JTA, its context, and its history. The findings identified areas for further analysis and research. These have been incorporated into other sections of this report and will feed into the next phase of the COA. This section highlights some key findings related to operations and customer experience that staff shared.

Broadly across the organization, there is a strong sense of teamwork, commitment, and trust amongst staff. This was emphasized by drivers who shared that they trust JTA leadership and appreciate their deep understanding of operations. That said, driver recruitment and retention is an ongoing challenge for JTA, resulting in high amounts of overtime hours for drivers. It is important to note that driver recruitment is not a unique challenge to JTA compared to its neighboring counties and the transit industry more broadly.

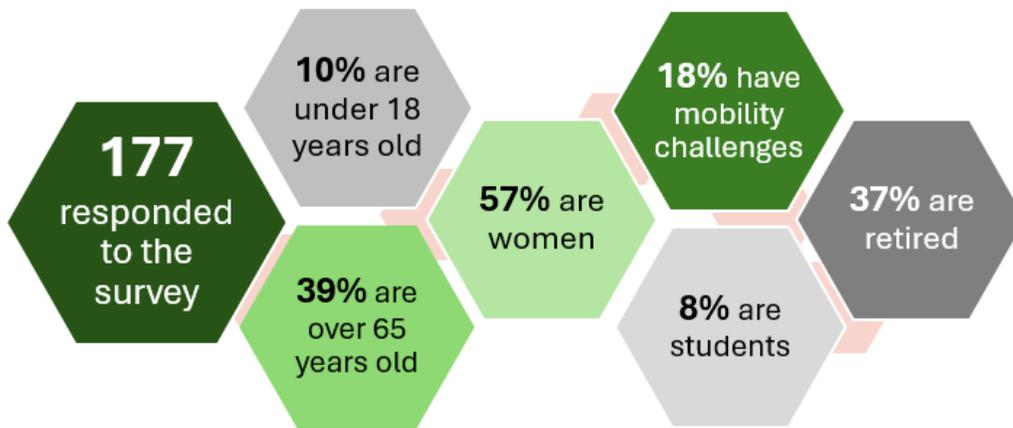
Another key observation is the increase in Dial-a-Ride trips and applicants/users. This has increased workload for staff who are determining eligibility of DAR applicants and also for dispatchers who are responsible for scheduling trips alongside monitoring of fixed-route and DAR operations.

Battery Electric Buses (BEBs) were also raised in numerous contexts across meetings. Specifically, there was interest in better understanding how BEBs will impact operations, maintenance, and overall finances given their significant capital cost. Staff also expressed interest in transit technologies and identified some specific technologies that are due for replacement or of interest to customers (e.g., a “where’s my bus?” app).

Among customer service issues, a common request was for more service (e.g., Sunday service, greater span, more frequency). Another challenge is related to knowing where the bus is and reading schedules, which JTA has been making progress on through new point-to-point schedules. It should be noted that a new service alert (Simplify) and an updated website were introduced in 2024 to assist with improving customer experience.

## **4.2 Public Engagement Findings**

The findings from the various engagement activities provided perspectives from a diverse set of the community on their current use of JTA services and priorities for the future. The details of the engagement findings are presented in more detail in Appendix B – What We Heard: Transit Study Round 1 Engagement Summary. At a high level, we were able to hear from diverse perspectives across the community, as shown in the results from the demographic survey questions in the survey (Figure 17). The results skew towards transit users and Port Townsend residents according to the survey (63% used transit in the last year and 63% live in Port Townsend).



**Figure 17: Snapshot of Who We Heard from in the survey**

Additionally, we heard from both transit users and non-users, with 63% of survey respondents indicating they used JTA services in the past year, and about 15% of the student focus group indicating they regularly use transit. When non-users were asked about why they do not use transit, having access to a better alternative was the most discussed reason, followed by transit stops not being available where they live or want to go. Overall, driving either alone or with others was the most common transportation modes indicated.

Generally speaking, there are high degrees of satisfaction and pride related to JTA services. People are happy that JTA is fare-free and appreciate that many JTA routes connect with neighboring counties and ferries, enabling further connections to Seattle for example. When looking at elements of JTA’s service that were rated the least satisfactory, the bottom four are ‘I don’t have to wait long to take a trip’, ‘I can go to all or most of the places that I want to on transit’, ‘I am satisfied with the bus stop infrastructure’, and ‘I don’t have to walk far to access transit’. These highlight some of the key areas that the public indicated they wanted to see improvements on, but also emphasize the challenges in providing transit services across a large, rural community. Increased frequency was a desire communicated by many engagement participants, and highlighted as a means of making transit more convenient and attractive for people not currently using transit. For some people who live in areas where transit does not currently run or runs infrequently, however, they felt that having a base amount of coverage across the county before increasing frequencies would be more equitable.

One engagement activity involved presenting a spectrum of options to prioritize the types of connections that were important to participants: within their local community, across Jefferson County, or beyond Jefferson County. Most participants were more interested in better connections across and outside of Jefferson County. Local connections were not highly prioritized by many participants. This may be because existing JTA services provide good local connections for places like Port Townsend, but also that people are able to get rides from friends and family for short, nearby trips, but not for longer trips. The strong

interest in better connections outside Jefferson County also aligns with comments related to connecting to ferries and neighboring counties.

Reflecting on the accessibility of the service, the large majority of respondents with disabilities agree that transit is accessible. That said, bus stop infrastructure was identified as an area of concern, both as it relates to safety and also to accessibility. There is a high degree of variability in terms of what stop infrastructure is available (e.g., presence of shelters, curb cuts) and the connectivity between stops and the sidewalk network, which is concerning for users.

Thinking about the different elements of JTA’s mission, “reliable public transportation” was identified as the most important by survey respondents. Users want to have confidence in the service and know exactly when buses will arrive. Requests for a “where’s my bus” application was a common suggestion, as was a trip planning tool.

Overall, the public is supportive of JTA and wants to see an expansion of service and increase in ridership. There are a lot of ideas for how JTA can grow and these will be considered further in the COA process.

## 5 GUIDING FRAMEWORK (5 PAGES)

In order to advance the COA, the consulting team has developed a guiding framework to support further evaluation, design and prioritization of operational enhancements. This guiding framework was developed following a workshop with JTA senior leadership and select board members, where initial results of the current state analysis were presented and several activities were undertaken to identify and prioritize operational needs.

### 5.1 SWOC Assessment

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) Assessment was the keystone activity of the senior leadership workshop. Following a presentation of our current state analysis and engagement feedback, workshop participants highlighted key areas of strength and weaknesses in the current services as well as external opportunities and challenges that could impact near-term and long-term operations.

**Table 5: Summary of findings from the SWOC Assessment**

Assessment Area	Key Findings
<p><b>Strengths:</b> Areas where the current organization and transit services show strength and leadership through performance, governance or customer service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong management team who is willing to collaborate across the whole organization.</li> <li>• Strong financial condition and reliable funding.</li> <li>• Regional connections are core to the service.</li> <li>• Residents are proud of the service.</li> </ul>

Assessment Area	Key Findings
<p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Areas where the current organization and transit services are weaker and lag in performance, governance or customer service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dial-a-Ride service is outgrowing capacity.</li> <li>• Certain routes are long and circuitous, leading to long travel times.</li> <li>• Significant coverage gaps in smaller and more remote communities.</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of service among certain equity-seeking groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b> External factors that present unique opportunities that the organization could leverage to improve transit performance, customer service or governance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New technologies can enable more flexible, demand-responsive services (e.g., microtransit).</li> <li>• Collaboration with large employers, school districts, to get more residents on the bus.</li> <li>• Leverage relationships with neighboring agencies to improve regional connections.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges:</b> External factors that present unique challenges that may hinder the ability for the organization to be successful in their improvement initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hood Canal Bridge is a consistent threat to important transit connections to Kitsap Transit.</li> <li>• Ferry services are unreliable, making connections challenging.</li> <li>• Long-term funding for transit improvements is not always reliable.</li> <li>• Hiring and retaining drivers is increasingly difficult amid an ageing community.</li> </ul>

## 5.2 JTA Strategic Objectives

Following the SWOC Assessment, workshop participants reflected on the key findings to identify and prioritize strategic objectives for the organization. The purpose of these strategic objectives is to provide a broad set of goals to assess future recommendations. Strategic Objectives also provide direction for appropriate quantitative metrics and Key Performance Indicators that will support detailed evaluation of these recommendations. These strategic objectives fall into two categories: Service Objectives and Organizational Objectives.

## 5.2.1 Service Objectives

The analysis of the SWOC Assessment findings identified four primary service objectives that relate to how transit operates and serves the broader community. Each of the objectives are described within this section, with a brief description and sample metrics that can support the evaluation of service and operational improvements against each.

Services are a convenient, safe and comfortable way to travel throughout the county.

Residents and visitors to Jefferson County have a variety of transportation needs, despite geographic barriers and significant rural areas. Transit service should allow residents to travel safely and comfortably where they would like to travel. Improving the convenience of transit services will reduce the dependence of travelers on private cars and ensure that residents can get where ever they want to go across the county. Some potential evaluation metrics could include:

- Transit mode share as a percentage of total trips take throughout the county, and
- Transit coverage (including both stops and flag stops) on various days of the week, during important travel times (e.g., morning and afternoon weekday peak periods, weekday and weekend midday periods, evenings, etc.).

Services connect residents with a vibrant community, enabling access to employment, education, health and community services.

While regional connections to communities in Kitsap and Clallam Counties provide residents with access to amenities and employment opportunities in larger urban centres, important connections and opportunities exist within vibrant communities across Jefferson County. Transit services should provide convenient and reliable access to opportunities within and beyond Jefferson County so that residents can access good jobs, education and healthcare while also connecting to community services and social opportunities. Some potential evaluation metrics could include:

- Number of employment, education and healthcare facilities accessible to residents by transit on weekdays or weekends.
- Number of parks, libraries, community hubs and recreation facilities accessible to residents by transit on weekdays or weekends.

- Number of community service centers, shelters, food banks and other facilities accessible to vulnerable residents by transit on weekdays or weekends.

Services are environmentally sustainable, facilitating multi-modal travel within and beyond Jefferson County.

Effective and efficient mass public transportation is among the most efficient and sustainable modes of transportation. Supporting a transition to a zero-emissions fleet while improving the convenience of transit will further support reduction in transportation emissions by reducing the reliance on private vehicles. Transit services should be integrated well with other sustainable transportation modes, including cycling, e-scooters and other micromobility within Jefferson County, and by connecting to neighbouring transit and ferry services facilitating zero- and low-emissions travel throughout the region. Some potential evaluation metrics could include:

- Extended transit coverage when considering bikeable distances (e.g., under 2 miles) from a transit stop.
- Number of potential connections to routes from neighboring transit and ferry services (e.g., within 30-minutes of a scheduled trip).
- Availability of shared micromobility (e.g., bike and scooter share) near transit stops.
- Number of transit routes served by zero-emissions vehicles.

Services are reliable and accessible to all, regardless of age, ability or where they want to travel.

Transit services are critical to the well-being and community participation of all members of the community, regardless of disabilities, age, or where they need to go. Ensuring that services are both accessible and reliable for some of the most vulnerable residents in Jefferson County will ensure that everyone can participate in the community and get access to important social services. Some important evaluation metrics could include:

- Transit coverage by community, at different times-of-day or days-of-week.
- Number of bus stops with accessible features, such as shelters, benches and concrete pads.
- Number of bus stops accessible to destinations within 500 feet by a continuous sidewalk.
- Percentage transit coverage by accessible transit stops within 500 feet versus ¼ mile.

## 5.2.2 Organizational Objectives

The analysis of the SWOC Assessment findings identified two primary organizational objectives that relate to how JTA strives to do right by their riders, staff and community. Each of the objectives are described within this section, with a brief description and sample metrics that can support the evaluation of service and operational improvements against each.

JTA is financially responsible, providing services that are of high value to the community.

Ensuring that transit services are financially responsible depends on making pragmatic decisions with sales tax and grant funding from the state and federal governments. This includes right-sizing transit services based on demand while committing to reasonable standards of service countywide, ensuring that all communities feel service is distributed equitably and appropriately across Jefferson County. Some evaluation metrics to consider include:

- Total ridership per service-hour invested, evaluated at a network level as well as at a route level.
- Total operating cost per service-hour, evaluated at a network level.
- Service-hours per capita, evaluated at a network level, and at a community level.
- Operating reliability, evaluated at a route level based on on-time performance and number of completed trips.
- Customer satisfaction rate, evaluated through a combination of annual surveys and record of complaints and compliments.

JTA is a choice employer, enabling service growth and resilience through a capable and collaborative workforce.

Maintaining a strong and capable workforce is important for the success of transit services. By encouraging collaboration across all levels of the organization, JTA can help to solve operational challenges while new employees are empowered to contribute to novel and unique solutions. Some evaluation metrics to consider include:

- Number of shift-types for regular transit operators and staff, including various types of operator shifts to accommodate different schedules and work-life balance.
- Average tenure of staff by department, such as operators, maintenance, operations supervisors, administration, etc.
- Employee satisfaction, evaluated through annual surveys.

## 6 NEXT STEPS

Following the acceptance of the current state report, consulting staff will begin preparing detailed future-state analysis as part of the COA Options Analysis task. This task will include preparing:

- a transit market study to evaluate the potential demand for transit services in the near- and mid-term,
- conceptual transit service design alternatives, and ridership potential for each,
- transit service delivery model and supporting technology assessment, and
- detailed transit service options.

The analysis and evaluation of these conceptual and detailed transit service options will consider the Strategic Service and Organizational Objectives previously discussed in Section 5. As options are refined through greater detail, the consulting team will qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate several of the proposed metrics, as well as others refined in consultation with JTA staff.

The results of this next task will be refined through consultations with staff and community partners through a series of workshops before preparing a draft COA report inclusive of the proposed alternatives. This draft report and subsequent engagement with the JTA Board and the public is expected for second-quarter 2025, with the final report and JTA Board presentation anticipated in June 2025.

# APPENDIX A – FLEET INVENTORY

## 2024 Jefferson Transit Agency Fleet Inventory

### Fixed Route Revenue Service Vehicles – 15

<i>Count</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Make</i>	<i>Model</i>
2	2011	Gillig	Low-floor 35-foot bus
1	2011	Gillig	Low-floor 29-foot bus
1	2013	Ford	F550 35-foot cutaway bus
2	2018	Gillig	Low-floor 35-foot bus
2	2018	Gillig	Low-floor 30-foot bus
1	2019	Gillig	Low-floor 29-foot bus
2	2020	Gillig	Low-floor 35-foot bus
2	2020	Gillig	Low-floor 29-foot bus
1	2022	Gillig	Low-floor 29-foot bus
1	2023	Gillig	Low-floor 35-foot electric bus

### Dial-a-Ride Paratransit Revenue Service Vehicles – 8

4	2013	Dodge	Grand Caravan SXT 17-foot van
2	2019	Ford	E450 Cutaway 24-foot bus
2	2023	Ford	E450 Cutaway 24-foot bus

### Jefferson Transit Olympic Connection Revenue Service Vehicles – 4

3	2017	Ford	F550 Cutaway 29-foot bus
1	2023	Ford	F550 Cutaway 32-foot bus

### Vanpool Revenue Service Vehicles – 7

2	2009	Dodge	Grand Caravan 14-foot van
3	2013	Dodge	Grand Caravan SE 17-foot van
2	2018	Chevrolet	Express G3500 19-foot van

### Administrative Fleet of Non-Revenue Service Vehicles – 6

1	2010	Ford	Escape XLS
2	2018	Ford	Explorer
1	2021	Ford	Explorer
2	2022	Ford	Mach E electric vehicles

<b>Maintenance Fleet of Non-Revenue Service Vehicles – 14</b>			
<i>Count</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Make</i>	<i>Model</i>
1	1984	Chevrolet	Flatbed Truck
1	1999	Hydro	Pressure Washer
1	1999	Mercury	Mountaineer
1	2007	Chevrolet	Uplander
1	2007	Chevrolet	Amerivan
1	2007	Interstate	Box Trailer
1	2010	Toyota	Forklift
1	2013	Ford	F250 XL
1	2016	Snorkle lift	
1	2016	Tennant	S30 Sweeper
1	2017	Tilt trailer	22' 16+6 21K Flatbed trailer
1	2019	Freightliner	Walk-in Van
1	2020	LS tractor	MT2255S Tractor
1	2023	Ford	F350 XL

# APPENDIX B – WHAT WE HEARD: TRANSIT STUDY ROUND 1 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This appendix provides additional details on the findings from the public and stakeholder engagements listed in Table .

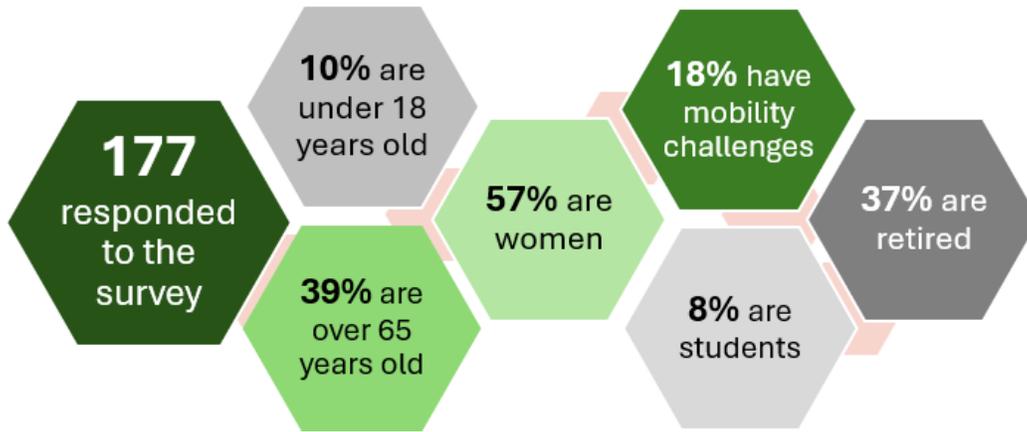
**Table 6: Summary of public and stakeholder engagement activities**

Event Description	Date	Who Participated
<b>Public Survey:</b> Delivered online via Microsoft Forms and on paper copies made available on the bus and at JTA locations.	September 17 to October 14, 2024	177 respondents.
<b>Open House:</b> Hosted at the American Legion in Port Townsend. This was done in collaboration with the JTA Climate Action Plan consultants, Peak Sustainability. Included two live presentations with Q&A periods and engagement boards for attendees to engage with outside of the presentation times.	3:30 – 7:30pm September 17, 2024	About 30 attendees.
<b>Student Focus Groups:</b> Visited two classrooms at Port Townsend High School in collaboration with the JTA Climate Action Plan consultants, Peak Sustainability. We engaged students and asked about their experience with transit and what would make transit a more attractive mode choice to them.	September 17, 2024	About 50 students.
<b>Virtual Focus Group:</b> Hosted online via zoom, in collaboration with the JTA Climate Action Plan consultants, Peak Sustainability. Delivered a short presentation followed by engagement activities similar to the boards at the Open House.	6 – 8pm September 23, 2024	About 10 attendees.
<b>Advisory Group Meeting:</b> Hosted in-person at JTA offices at Four Corners during the sprint, with a group of individuals representing different organizations and perspectives.	1 – 2pm August 22, 2024	Nine attendees, representing the Transit Advisory Group, school board, healthcare, housing, and local riders.

## Who we heard from

The engagement activities were designed to hear from the entire community, with some targeted efforts to reach specific segments (e.g., high school student focus groups). The mix of in-person and virtual engagement was designed to be accessible for a diverse audience. The survey specifically asked demographic questions which provides additional information on who we heard from. Among the 177 respondents, approximately 10% are under 18 years old, 39% are 65 years old and over, 18% have mobility challenges and 57% are women. In comparison, according to the 2023 US Census estimates, 11.0% of the Jefferson County population is under 18 years old, 42.1% are 65 years old and over, 13.2% have a disability and 51.3% are female. While the number of respondents is not generally considered a complete statistical

sample, the demographics represented in the survey generally align with US Census data for Jefferson County.



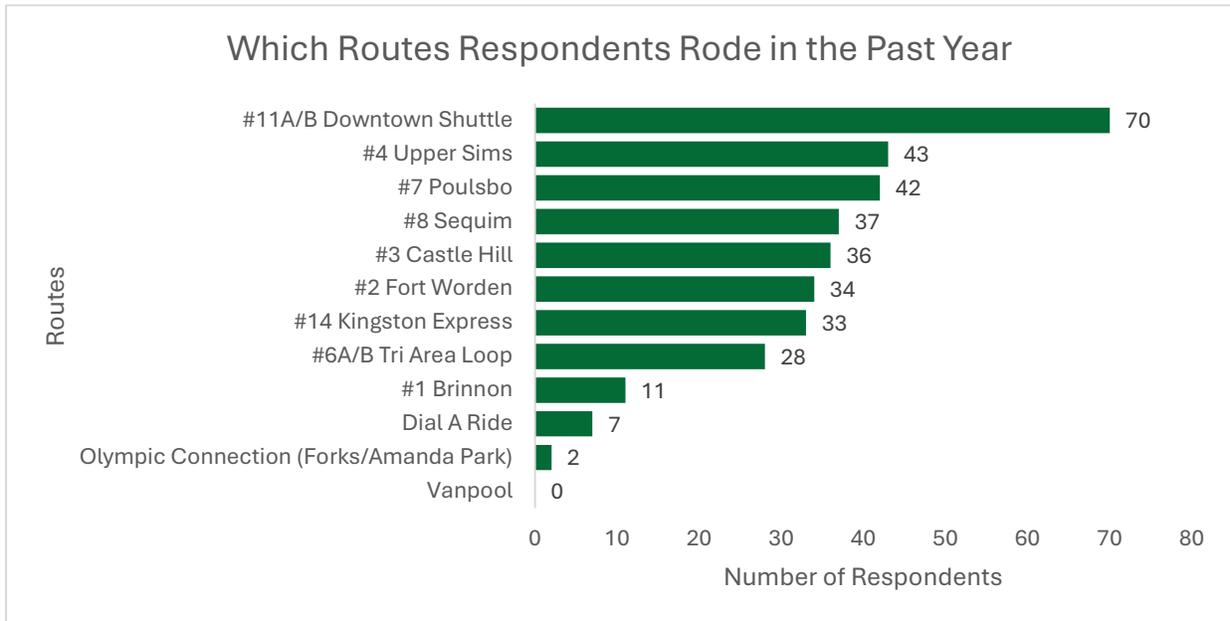
**Figure 18: Snapshot of Who We Heard from in the survey**

The student focus groups at Port Townsend High School engaged older high school students, so likely 17 or 18 years of age. The Open House and Virtual engagements were open to the public, so demographic information about those attendees is unknown.

With respect to where people are from, approximately 63% of survey respondents primarily reside in Port Townsend, 8% in the Tri-Area, 5% in Port Ludlow, 4% in South County, 4% in Cape George, 6% in other areas of Jefferson County, and 9% outside of Jefferson County. For the other engagement activities, it is unknown where participants live. The in-person engagement activities were conducted in Port Townsend due to venue availability, access to transit, and overall logistics. This may mean that most participants are from Port Townsend. However, some students specifically mentioned living near Cape George and Port Hadlock in particular which suggests the student focus groups represented a broad geographic area. With the general focus on Port Townsend and the high rate of survey responses from Port Townsend residents, it is possible that residents from other parts of the county (e.g., South County, Tri Area) are underrepresented in the engagement findings.

## Current JTA services

Reflecting on the current JTA services, we heard from both current users and non-users. Of all survey respondents, 63% (112 individuals) used JTA Transit Services in the past year. Among these users, 37% rode at least weekly, and 55% rode at least monthly. The #11A/B Downtown Shuttle was the most popular route, with 70 respondents riding, while the Olympic Connection Route (Forks/Amanda Park) was the least used, with only 2 respondents riding.



**Figure 19: Which Routes Respondents Rode in the Past Year**

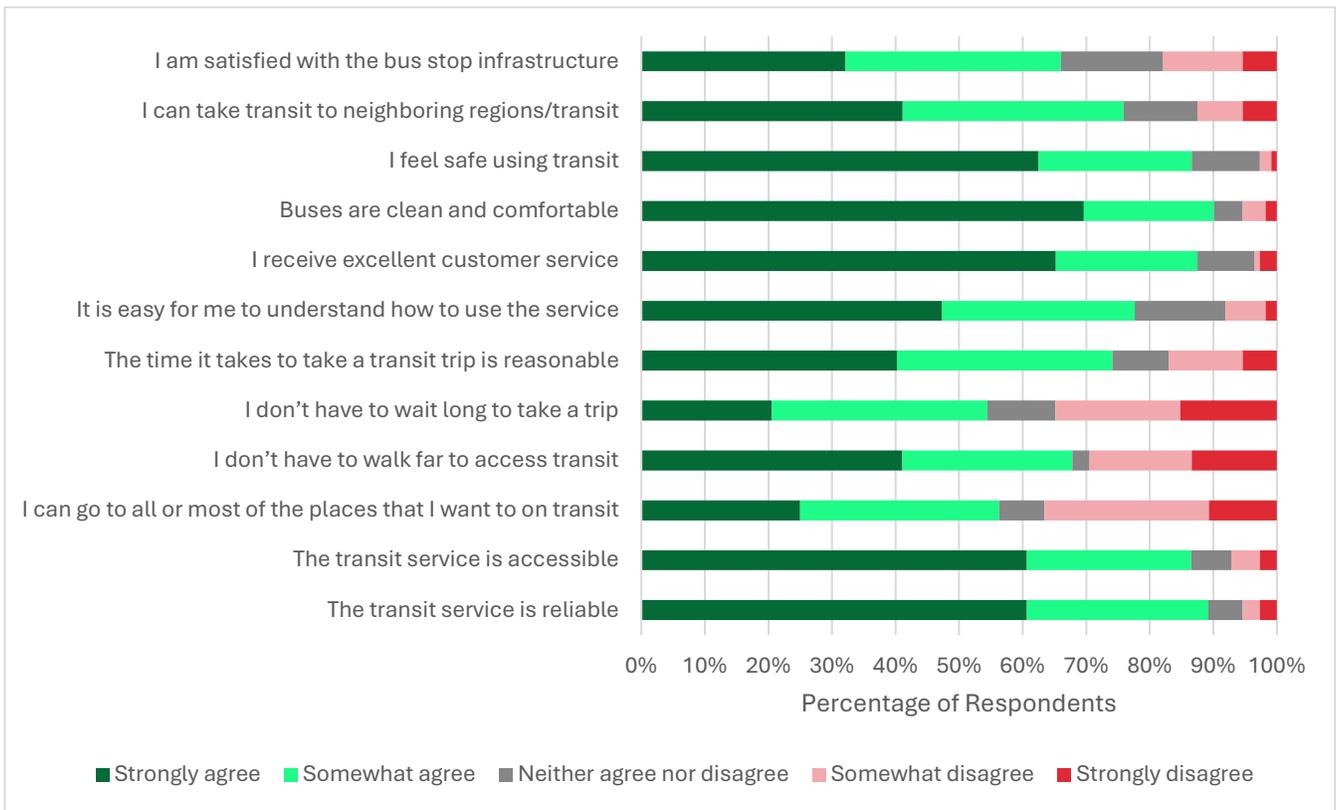
The student focus groups similarly had a mix of users and non-users. From a few students who used to use JTA services, they seemed to greatly reduce or stop using transit once they were able to drive themselves or carpool with friends. Among non-users, most students did not seem to know much about JTA services or where routes currently go. When asked about why they do not use transit, students mostly agreed that they had better alternatives. A couple of students mentioned that their parents had concerns about how safe public transit is. Contrastingly, students who used transit regularly noted that they felt safe, and in particular attributed feeling safe to the helpful and kind JTA drivers.

Attendees at the other engagement activities seemed to mostly be transit users and/or transit advocates who were interested in the success of JTA.

Among survey respondents who have not used transit in the past year (37%), the top reason for not using transit was that they had access to a better alternative (59%), followed by having no stops near where they live or want to go (41%). Only five respondents that were non-users (7%) selected not understanding the schedules as a reason for why they do not use transit.

The current system generally performs well in customer experience, with 80-90% of survey respondents agreeing that the service is reliable, accessible, safe, and offers excellent customer service, with clean and comfortable buses. Additionally, 70-80% agree that transit trip times are reasonable, the service is easy to understand, and it provides access to other regions and neighboring counties' transit.

However, less than 70% agree that they can reach most destinations via transit, don't have to walk far to access it, don't have to wait long for trips, and are satisfied with bus stop infrastructure such as shelters, benches, and lighting.



**Figure 20: Percentage Distribution of Agreement Levels on Statements**

Among respondents with a disability or mobility challenges that impact their transit use, 91% agree that the transit service is accessible. Nevertheless, only 55% are satisfied with the bus stop infrastructure, which suggests that people with disabilities may be more reliant on the Dial-a-Ride service. However, only 32% of respondents with a disability are certain that they are eligible for the Dial-a-Ride service, which highlights the growing need for both DAR and accessible stops.

Among respondents whose primary residence is outside Port Townsend but within Jefferson County, only 48% agree with the statement, 'I don't have to walk far to access transit.' In contrast, this figure rises to 77% for those residing in Port Townsend. This suggests a difference in experience of the transit system between Port Townsend residents and the rest of the county.

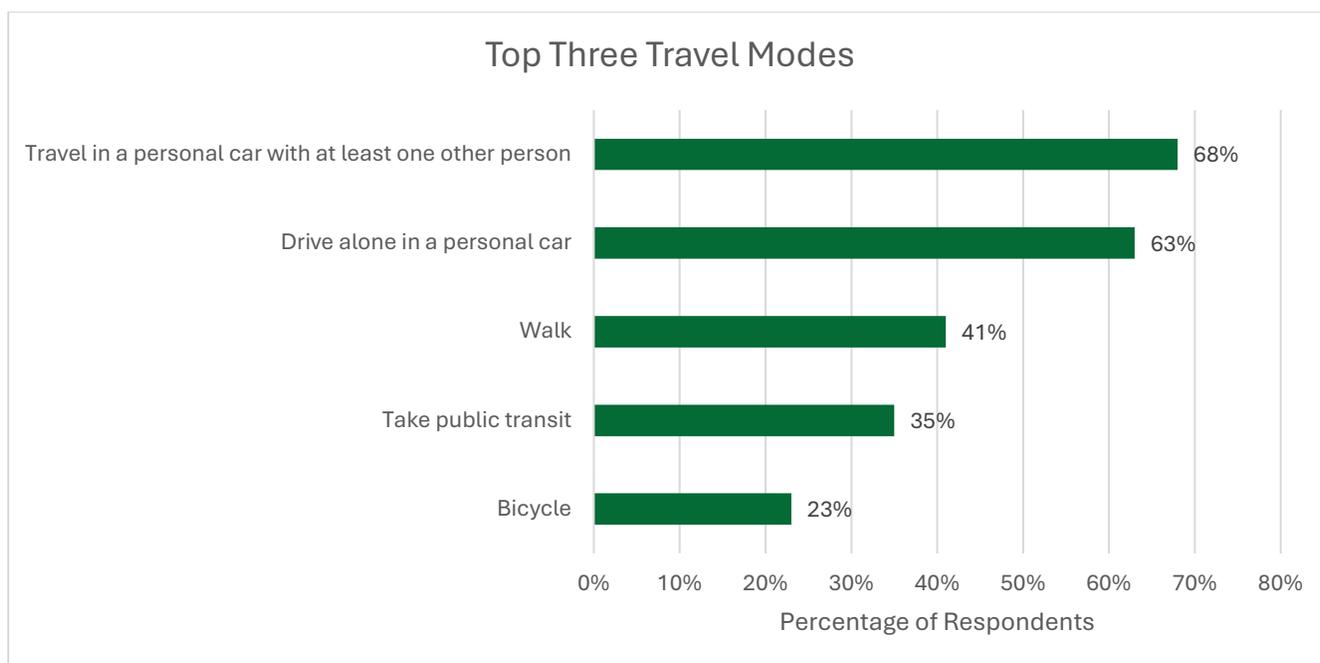
Considering the feedback from other engagement activities, there is a strong appreciation of the JTA services. In particular, many people are proud of the fact that JTA is fare-free and participants highlight that drivers are helpful and friendly. When asked about suggestions for improvements, participants at the Open House and Virtual Focus Group mentioned having later service, Sunday service, and improving reliability and on time performance.

## Travel patterns and needs

Understanding travel modes, patterns and needs is crucial for transit system planning and analysis, and public engagement activities provide valuable insights into these aspects. The survey shows the two

predominant travel modes are driving alone in a personal car and traveling in a personal car with at least one other person among respondents. Approximately 65% of respondents identified each as one of their top three most common travel modes. Combined, these modes account for 93% of respondents selecting at least one of them.

However, this trend shifts significantly among respondents with a total household income under \$20,000 before taxes last year. In this group, only 50% chose "driving alone in a personal car" as one of their top three modes of transportation. In contrast, 61% ranked "taking public transit" among their top three travel modes, compared to just 35% of all respondents. This underscores the irreplaceable role public transit plays in offering accessible and affordable transportation, particularly for low-income groups.



**Figure 21: Top Three Travel Modes**

Regarding travel patterns, key destinations that respondents mentioned within Jefferson County include downtown Port Townsend (44), Safeway (30), Fort Worden (30), QFC (26), Port Hadlock (26), Chimacum (20), uptown Port Townsend (17), the hospital (11), and the Port Townsend Public Library (11). These locations are currently served by various JTA routes. Outside Jefferson County, the most frequently mentioned destinations are Sequim (64), Poulsbo (40), Silverdale (37), Seattle (26), Seattle–Tacoma International Airport (15), Kingston Ferry Terminal (13), and Bainbridge Ferry Terminal (11). JTA provides direct routes to Sequim, Poulsbo, and the Kingston Ferry Terminal. From these locations, passengers can connect with other transit services or agencies to reach the remaining destinations.

When discussing key destinations with the student focus groups, a couple students highlighted that they do not have a lot of service where they live (one lived in the Tri Area and one in Quilcene) and that infrequent service means that they need to plan carefully when using transit to go to Port Townsend. A

couple of students mentioned that the Kingston Express was very helpful to get to Seattle in the summer months and that more options for that route would be beneficial.

In the other engagement activities, participants acknowledged that there is good coverage of Port Townsend overall and that increased frequency would increase the convenience of the service. One of the most common topics of comments were related to the connections to ferries. Most comments were positive and highlighted the smooth connection to the fast ferries. Fewer comments highlighted that the connections both to ferries and other counties should be scheduled to minimize wait times at connection points. Some participants mentioned that connections within Jefferson County are more challenging, for example transferring between different JTA routes at Haines Place.

## Priorities for the future

One of the main goals of the public engagement activities is to pinpoint the areas where customers want JTA to improve and to set future priorities. Survey respondents frequently highlighted the need to **improve the reliability** of JTA services. “Reliable public transportation” was identified as the most important element of JTA’s mission. Some respondents noted that buses sometimes depart earlier or later than scheduled, suggesting that a real-time location tracking tool could enhance service reliability. Additionally, six respondents highlighted that the lack of accessibility features is a barrier to using transit, underscoring the need for improvements such as sidewalks, curbs, wheelchair ramps, and shelters. Furthermore, as noted in Section , only 55% of respondents with mobility issues are satisfied with the current bus stop infrastructure. These improvements can be crucial steps towards making public transportation more accessible and dependable for all users.



*“Some stops around Port Townsend do not have a curb to get in or off from, making the distance between the street and bus higher than I’m comfortable with even if the bus is lowered.”*

– Survey Respondent

Service **span and coverage** are often highlighted as key areas for future improvement from respondents. ‘The bus doesn’t run when I need it’ and ‘There are no stops near my home or destination’ were ranked among the top three reasons respondents chose not to use JTA. In the past year, 7% of respondents frequently had to cancel plans or appointments, while 15% did so occasionally, due to a lack of access to transportation. Extending service hours on Sundays, late nights (especially during summer), and early mornings, along with increasing frequency on certain out-of-town routes (e.g., #1 Brinnon, #14 Kingston), were frequently mentioned as areas for improvement. Some respondents also suggested improving

transfers with other transit services by aligning schedules with the Coupeville ferry and the #7 Poulsbo route to enhance integration with the Kitsap ferry. In terms of service coverage, many respondents expressed a desire for JTA bus routes to be extended into areas such as Cape George (22), Jefferson County International Airport (22), Kala Point (11), and Marrowstone (6).



*“(We need) additional services for Cape George, Kala Point, Marrowstone where our older populations live and need access to medical services.”*

– Survey Respondent

**Safety, cost-effectiveness, and environmental sustainability** were highlighted as other future priorities. Respondents identified "safe public transportation" and "cost-effectiveness" as the second and third most important missions for JTA. Ensuring the system remains safe was frequently mentioned in responses to open-ended questions. Many respondents also suggested using smaller buses to improve cost-effectiveness and adopting electric buses to reduce emissions.



*“Having electric buses that we can see on a GPS screen, and that are on time and frequent and free would be my dream.”*

– Survey Respondent

Another engagement tool that was used to gauge the relative importance of different priorities was a trade-offs “dotmocracy”. Three trade-offs were presented, and participants were invited to place a sticker with their vote of where along the spectrums they were. The three trade-offs were:

1. Better frequency or more coverage.
2. Longer span of service on weekdays and Saturdays or service on Sunday.
3. Better connections within my local community, across Jefferson County, or outside of Jefferson County. This trade-off had three stated opinions, with connections across Jefferson County being the mid-point between the other two options.

The trade-offs were presented four times: to both student focus groups, at the Open House (see Figure 23 on page B-ix), and the Virtual Focus Group (see Figure 22 on the following page). With respect to the first trade-off related to frequency and coverage, there was a diversity of opinion and lack of consensus among

the different engagement participants. The Open House participants had more support closer to better frequency, but all three other groups were relatively spread out. One motivating factor of picking better frequency was related to an increased convenience that makes transit a more attractive mode and could perhaps increase ridership. Others who chose more coverage considered frequency a “luxury” and wanted to see more equitable access through more coverage.



**Figure 22: Results of the Trade-Offs Dotmocracy for the Virtual Focus Group**

Regarding the trade-off of Sunday service versus greater service span on other days of the week, three of the four groups were grouping closer to greater service span on other days of the week. While a good number of participants placed their sticker right in the middle for this trade-off, very few went to the far side of the spectrum and wanted Sunday service without a longer span of service on the other days of the week. Participants’ rationale for picking longer span of service on weekdays and Saturday often included the improved usefulness of transit that runs earlier and later. One student highlighted that they don’t feel safe walking home in the dark and that later transit service could provide a safer alternative.



# **APPENDIX C - PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF SERVICE PRINCIPLES.**