

# Sitka Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordinated Plan, July 2020 to June 2025





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*Sitka Tribe of Alaska Transit Director Gerry Hope and Center for Community Transportation Program Administrator Connie Sipe discuss the RIDE public transit program during a public meeting on Aug. 28, 2019, at Harrigan Centennial Hall in Sitka.*



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# Overview

This Five-Year Plan for Coordination of Public and Human Services Transportation for Sitka contains an evaluation of community characteristics, a stakeholder assessment, an inventory of existing transportation services, and a list of goals and priorities. It also provides a description of the unmet transportation needs in the region as determined through various analytical methods such as updates on prior human service agency and transportation provider interviews, demographic research, local public meetings, and conversations with local stakeholders. This planning effort is the foundation for a series of approaches to address current and projected unmet transportation needs for people with low incomes, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. The intent of this document is to create a guide for local decision-makers as they consider advances in the coordination of transportation resources within Sitka.

This five-year plan meets the requirements for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) required local coordinated transportation plan as set forth in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act ("FAST"). 49 U.S.C. Section 5310, signed into law in December 2015. The FAST Act succeeded the previous federal transit authorization, called MAP-21, and kept the MAP-21 requirements for coordination planning for federally funded projects.

Any reader of this plan must know that no agency in Sitka, not the public transit providers, nor any other agency is funded by a grant, or required by any laws to implement this plan. This plan discusses possible strategies, and provides the background data and a planned focus for continued work in Sitka on better use of transit and human service agency transportation resources. This plan is not a promise of implementation; it is a source of knowledge and a shared vision of where coordination efforts in Sitka may try to go in the future.

The planning process was undertaken by the Center for Community (CFC) and Sitka Tribe of Alaska. The three primary transit providers in Sitka (CFC, Sitka Tribe, and SESS-Southeast Senior Services) have other transit plans and work obligations (per funding sources) that fully occupy their current staff resources. The human service agencies in Sitka also have other mandates and goals that occupy their staff. However, as all of these agencies find staffing resources, unmet client needs, or funding opportunities, they can turn to this Plan to guide their shared efforts to improve transportation in Sitka for human service clients as well as the general public.

## **Plan for July of 2020 through June of 2025.**

This is Sitka's fourth public transit-human services coordinated transportation plan. It is the second updated plan built upon what was Sitka's first "professional" coordination plan for the period of July 2010 through June 2015. This new plan replaces the Plan for the Period of July 2015 through June 2020.

The objectives for this planning effort are to more accurately and carefully (1) establish the current and future needs of Sitkans and visitors to Sitka for community transportation and gaps in existing service, (2) determine the resources available and lacking to meet the needs, (3) create strategies to develop public transit, human services transport, and private sector transport options to fill gaps, and (4) develop the most effective means and models for coordinating (sharing) resources.



## WHY A COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN?

In December 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act ("FAST", which reauthorized the Surface Transportation Act. As part of this reauthorization, grantees under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311), and Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339) grant programs must meet certain requirements in order to receive funding through FAST.

In addition to federal funds available through the FAST Act, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities/Alaska Community Transit program offers grants through the Alaska Mental Health Trust program to nonprofit and governmental organizations that serve Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries. A coordinated public transportation plan allows us to maximize our resources while eliminating gaps in service.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the FAST Act requirements is that projects from the programs listed above must be part of a "locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan." This transportation plan is required to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation services, human services providers, and the general public.

Transportation coordination has been increasing across the nation because the benefits of coordination are clear. According to the Federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility's (CCAM) United We Ride information, nationally, \$700 million could be saved if transportation providers would coordinate their individual resources which are dedicated to providing transportation. This conservative estimate is based on a study conducted by the National Academy of Science's Transportation Research Board (TRB), but it highlights the fact that transportation resources (funding, people, vehicles, and services) could be more effectively utilized to provide more transportation for communities.

Coordinated transportation is now an eligibility requirement for the following FTA grant programs:

**Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)** – This program (49 U.S.C. Section 5310/FAST ACT Section 3006) is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. States apply for funds on behalf of local government authorities, private nonprofit agencies, and other public transportation providers. Capital projects are eligible for funding. Most funds are used to purchase vehicles, but other eligible expenses include acquiring transportation services under contract, lease or other arrangements, operating assistance, and state program administration..

**Formula for Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311)** – This program (49 U.S.C. Section 5311/FAST Act Section 3007) provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states and Indian tribes to support public transportation in rural areas with populations less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. States and Indian tribes apply for funds, with states applying on behalf of local government agencies, private nonprofit agencies, and other public transportation providers. Planning, capital, operating, job access and reverse commute projects are eligible for funding, and so is the acquisition of public transportation services. Section 5311 incorporates low-income populations as a formula factor.

**Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339)** – This program (49 U.S.C. Section 5339/ FAST Act Section 3017 provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. States and designated recipients that operate or allocate funding to fixed-route operators apply for funds on behalf of public agencies and private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation, including those providing services open to a segment of the general public, as defined by age, disability or low income.

**Alaska Mental Health Trust Program** – The State of Alaska established the Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHT) to channel revenues earned from lands deeded to the state by the federal government expressly for the benefit of Alaskans who experience mental illness. Each year the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority funds the Coordinated/Non-coordinated Transportation Program for the benefit of all the beneficiaries identified by the trust’s board of directors, including those with mental illness, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer’s and other dementias, chronic alcoholism, and traumatic brain injury. At times the Alaska Legislature also adds a contribution from the state’s general funds through the capital budget. Nonprofits and governmental organizations that serve AMHT beneficiaries are eligible to receive funds. Planning, limited operating or start-up projects, purchase of rides (such as through cab vouchers), the purchase or repair of vehicles, equipment and technology, and match for federal transportation projects all are eligible to receive AMHT funds. ([http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdpnlng/transit/hs\\_funding\\_amht.shtml](http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdpnlng/transit/hs_funding_amht.shtml))

One of the prerequisites to apply for funding under these federal FAST Act and state AMHT programs is participation in the creation of a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This five-year human services and public transportation coordination plan is the first step for Sitka toward satisfying that application requirement. The plan is a living document that may be amended as new organizations join the effort in future years.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This report contains information gathered from a variety of sources to help support the key findings and recommendations emerging from this plan. The community background and demographics sections include information gathered from the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Division of Community and Regional Affairs community profile database, the Sitka Economic Development Association (SEDA) Sitka, Alaska, and its recent publication, McDowell Economic Profile Report 2019, the City of Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030, and various databases of the U.S. Census Bureau, including the Bureau’s American Community Survey. In addition, other information for these sections was obtained from national census and weather data, and from state economic and human services data.

For the inventory of resources and services and gaps in service sections, each coordinated group member was asked to update prior gathered data. This helped us get an idea about what services already are provided in Sitka, including fixed-route public buses, paratransit, and other transportation services provided or sponsored by social service agencies in town.

Each coordination group members were invited to the public and stakeholders’ meeting on August 28, 2019. A second public meeting focused on senior citizen transportation needs was held during lunch time at the Swan Lake Senior Center of August 29, 2019. The general public participated in the planning process through these two community meetings and a community





*Sitka community members read handouts while listening to presentations about the RIDE public transit service during a public meeting on Aug. 28, 2019.*

survey posted online and distributed on the RIDE and Care-A-Van buses, and an opportunity to comment on or testify about the final version of the plan. Our outreach included newspaper press releases, radio PSAs, Facebook, and more.

Once we had our stakeholder and community input, the draft version of the plan was made final. Finally, a resolution was submitted to our local governmental agency (the governing Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska) for approval.

# Community Background

The City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, is a town of just under 9,000 people (give or take a few each year) located on the western coast of Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska. Sitka's population is on a gradual decline as of SFY2020, with several significant issues affecting a downward population trend.

According to the Technical Draft of the City of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan 2030, these are the issues around population of our community.

## Migration and an Aging Population

Arguably the most significant issues facing Sitka today are:

- There are a shrinking number of child-bearing age residents and children in Sitka – resulting in more deaths than births in the future.
- More people are moving away from rather than moving to Sitka.
- The number of Sitkans age 65 and older, and especially those age 80+, is projected to grow rapidly over the next 25 years.

Sitka was Alaska's original capital, until Juneau became capital in 1906, and features a rich mixture of Tlingit, Russian and American culture. Sitka is the only large community on Baranof Island, with most of the other communities being small fishing villages such as Port Alexander, Port Armstrong, Port Walker, Baranof Warm Springs, and a few fish camps. Sitka and most of the rest of the Southeast Alaska region are located in the Tongass National Forest, and the Sitka National Historical Park (one of the nation's smallest national parks) is located near downtown Sitka.

The City and Borough of Sitka, which includes almost all of Baranof Island (except a small sliver near Port Alexander) and part of nearby Chichagof Island, is the largest city in the United States by land area (2,870 square miles), water area (1,941 square miles) and total area (4,811 square miles). Sitka is larger than the areas of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. However, the core part of Sitka only has about 14 miles of paved road from end to end along the coast and barely extends more than a mile or so from the shore due to mountains that rise out of the sea. Most of Sitka's urban core is within a two-square-mile radius of downtown, making it a popular location for walkers and bikers. Sitka is 93 air miles SSW from the state capital in Juneau, 590 air miles SE from Anchorage, and 850 air miles NW of Seattle.

Sitka is located in a temperate rain forest, which means there's usually a misty rain falling much of the year but the temperatures are cool and mild. The average annual rainfall in Sitka is 86.72 inches, and the average annual snowfall is 33 inches. August typically is Sitka's warmest month, with an average high of 62 degrees and an average low of 53 degrees and an average rainfall of 6.85 inches. January usually is the coldest month, with an average high of 40 degrees, an average low of 32 degrees, and average rainfall of 8.39 inches and average snowfall of 10 inches. The sidewalks can be difficult to walk during the winter because of frequent freezing rain turning to ice.

Being located on an island, Sitka is off of Alaska's road system. There are short roads to get around town, but no road connections to other communities. The state-operated Rocky Gutierrez Airport features several daily Boeing 737 flights from Alaska Airlines, with Delta Airlines providing seasonal summer service between Sitka and Seattle, along with other commercial and charter flights using





*Center for Community Transit Program Administrator Connie Sipe gets feedback about the Care-A-Van paratransit program from Sitka residents during lunch on Aug. 29, 2019, at the Swan Lake Senior Center.*

smaller planes. The Alaska Marine Highway System, aka the state ferry or Blue Canoe, provides passenger and car ferry service to Sitka once or twice a week, depending on the season or vessel repair/maintenance status. Sitka gets most of its freight by barge from two companies, Samson Tug and Barge and Alaska Marine Lines/Northland Services. When people travel from Sitka, they usually go to Juneau, Ketchikan, Anchorage, Seattle, or one of the nearby villages in the region (Kake, Angoon, Hoonah, etc.).

Sitka is the only Alaska community to hold at the same time a Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists (bronze 2008, bronze 2012, and silver 2016) and a Walk Friendly Community designation from the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center's Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (bronze 2013 and bronze 2017). Bicycle Friendly Community designations are for four years, and Walk Friendly Community designations are for five years, but communities can reapply before their current designation ends. According to the 2011-15 five-year average from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Sitka has the highest percentage of people who bike to work of any community in Alaska with more than 750 population (5.2 percent, more than 10 times the national average and five times the state average). Sitka also has one of the highest percentages of people who walk to work of any community in Alaska (15.1 percent). Alaska has the highest percentage of walking commuters of any state (6.0 percent) because so many of Alaska's communities are off the road system and small.



# Service Provider Capabilities

## OVERVIEW

Evaluation of service provider capabilities and the structure of transportation resources in Sitka provides coordinated transportation planners with the necessary foundation for implementing changes that will complete and improve the network of transportation resources. Multiple components of community outreach activities were used to encourage public and human service agency transportation providers and users to participate in the coordination planning efforts, to include focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

An understanding of existing resources, vehicle utilization, and financial information is necessary prior to implementation of new coordinated approaches to service for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes. The summary and vehicle utilization tables at the end of this chapter provide an overview of the vehicle inventories and utilization, hours of service, and passenger eligibility for each of the participating organizations (where information was provided by those organizations).

The ultimate goal for organizations in Sitka that provide, purchase, or use transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and the general public is to improve upon the existing network of services to create new efficiencies so that programs can provide more service with the existing level of funding. If services are to be expanded in the future, additional funding will be necessary. This document outlines several coordination strategies to be explored that can be accomplished through coordination of existing resources as well as strategies that can only be implemented with additional funding.

Certain coordinated transportation stakeholders are eligible for additional funding through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 Program, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities; Section 5311 Program, Formula for Grants for Rural Areas; Section 5339 Program, Bus and Bus Facilities; and through the Alaska Mental Health Trust Program. Criteria for eligible applicants to the Section 5311 and 5339 programs are as follows:

- Public entities, including tribes, providing public transit services; or,
- Private, nonprofit entities designated by local government to provide public transit services.

Criteria for eligible applicants to Section 5310 are as follows:

- Private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporations;
- Public bodies identified by the state as lead agencies in a coordination project; or
- Public bodies that certify that no private, nonprofit corporations exist within their jurisdiction for the provision of elderly and disabled transportation.

Organizations that are not eligible applicants for Section 5310 or state AMHT funds may still benefit from those programs through agreements with eligible organizations and they should seek partnerships and formal contractual agreements with an eligible applicant in order to achieve the coordinated transportation goals.

## INVENTORY OF SERVICES AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Key public and human service agency transportation stakeholders in Sitka were invited to update the prior Plan's information about the existing transportation resources utilized for their consumers.

Stakeholders that provide transportation described their services and resources. Other organizations that purchase trips from a third-party provider or arrange transportation on behalf of their consumers expressed several common interests regarding the unmet transportation needs of their consumers and the general public in Sitka. Below is a list of the stakeholder organizations that provided updated information in 2019.

- Center for Community, Employment Enhancement Program
- Center for Community, Services for Persons with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities
- Center for Community, Infant Learning and Parents as Teachers
- SAIL (Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Inc.)
- Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska, the RIDE, (FTA to tribe grant)
- Swan Lake Senior Center, Care-A-Van and the RIDE paratransit contractor
- Youth Advocates of Sitka (YAS)

## **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES BY ORGANIZATION**

The following paragraphs take a consumer or public transportation-focused view of the stakeholder organizations that participated in the interview process. Each organization is unique in its approach. Some organizations directly operate transportation, some purchase transportation from third parties, some advocate or refer consumers to available transportation resources, and others have a combination of approaches (i.e., purchase and provide transportation for consumers or the public).

### **Organizations that Directly Operate, Administer, and/or Purchase Transportation to the general public or to an “open” constituency of human services clients.**

#### **Center for Community (CFC)**

Center for Community (CFC) is a non-profit provider of home and community-based services for people with disabilities, older adults, and others who experience barriers to community living in Alaska. CFC’s central administration is in Sitka, but CFC provides services throughout several towns and villages in Southeast Alaska. The organization in Sitka is eligible for FTA Sections 5310 and 5311, and state AMHT funding. It currently receives Section 5310 and Section 5311 funding. CFC provides services through five programs:

- **Independent Living Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities** – A list of services pertaining to “learning about living” and “habilitation” are included in this program. Habilitation includes supported living, supported employment, in-home supports, and day habilitation (community activity). Clients are encouraged to exercise, taught to ride public transit, and exposed to social opportunities. For all of these clients, CFC staff provide ongoing case management to help the client or family navigate through all the state public assistance, Medicaid, and health and social service programs’ requirements and services.

- **In-Home Care Services to Adults with Physical Disabilities and Seniors** – Adults with disabilities include anyone age 21 to 65 who struggles with a disability that was caused by an accident or disease. Seniors include anyone older than age 65 who needs assistance to stay at home alone safely, or whose family caregivers need support. CFC provides care coordination for many of these clients, as well as in-home care services with CFC direct service workers: including “hands-on” personal care, assistance with chores, or respite for caregivers. CFC currently serves more than 300



people a year with various combinations of in-home care services.

- **Early Learning/Infant Learning** – This ongoing program receives referrals of 0- to 3-year-old children to screen the children for developmental delays. The program also provides therapies to children and instructional support to parents. The CFC has received several years of Small Projects Grants from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and offers twice-weekly toddler playgroups to work with emotional development of toddlers and to support parents.

- **Employment Enhancement Services (“Welfare to Work Services”)** – Adults, who receive welfare cash assistance (“TANF”) because they have minor children and where the parents are of working age (between 18 and 65), are supposed to be moved off of cash assistance under federal and state welfare reform. The CFC program provides welfare-to-work counseling and job services to all non-tribal clients in Southeast Alaska.

- **Public Transit for Community of Sitka** – In fiscal year 2019, Sitka’s the RIDE system – managed by a collaborative effort between Center for Community, Sitka Tribe of Alaska and Southeast Senior Services – delivered 61,443 one-way passenger trips. The RIDE is a fixed-route bus service operated by STA (described in detail later in this section). Complementary paratransit services are operated by Southeast Senior Services at Swan Lake Senior Center under a contract from Center for Community, and operated in conjunction with transportation services for the elderly or younger Medicaid waiver clients, funded by several other grants secured directly by Southeast Senior Services from state, federal, private, and tribal sources. Fixed-route and paratransit services are open to the public and many of the regular riders are individuals with developmental or physical disabilities.

Three of the five programs at CFC include transportation: Community Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities; Employment Enhancement Services; and the RIDE fixed-route and paratransit. The following tables outline the transportation that is provided for each program.

### **CFC – COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

<b>Client eligibility:</b>	Individuals of all ages who have developmental disabilities
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
<b>Peak Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 2-5:30 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Two types: (1) Demand Response (but only with other scheduled services provided by CFC staff who must escort client), and (2) Independent client travel on fixed route buses using human services vouchers.
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Seven sedans or station wagons for individual trips with escort support staff.
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	One full-time program assistant manages the staff and client use of the vehicles. Training specialist staff members must provide a mandatory staff escort while providing supportive

services to clients, while incidentally driving the vehicles. There are no dedicated drivers on staff. There is low potential for coordinating these trips with other transportation providers.

<b>Annual Trips (one-way):</b>	Approximately 8,500 (Due to the nature of the customer needs, trips typically are scheduled with one passenger per trip.)
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$20,000 (approximately, for vehicle depreciation, fuel, maintenance, but no salary costs). Does not include the costs of vouchers.
<b>Cost Per Trip:</b>	\$2.35 for (approximately).(Does not include Vouchers)
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Various CFC program grants or the Medicaid Waiver Program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

### **CFC — EMPLOYMENT ENHANCEMENT SERVICES**

<b>Programs:</b>	Purchased Bus Pass Program and Gas Stipend Program
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Adults age 18 to 65 who receive welfare cash assistance, have children at home, and are moving from welfare to work.
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Purchased trips through bus passes or taxi vouchers, also Stipends to fuel client cars
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	0
<b>Annual Trips Purchased:</b>	Transportation for about four clients/families per month, number varies over the year, between 8 and 10 clients annually
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$4,800

### **CFC — INFANT LEARNING PROGRAM**

<b>Programs:</b>	Vouchers for Human Service Clients
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Parents/caregivers of infants through 3 year of age who are enrolled in the Infant Learning Program. (Beneficiaries Alaska Mental Health Trust).
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Free vouchers on fixed route buses for human services clients.
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	0



<b>Annual Trips Purchased:</b>	None purchased
<b>Programs:</b>	Vouchers only
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	0.00
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	CFC's 5310 or AMHT grant for Vouchers for Human Services Clients.

### **CFC — THE RIDE FIXED-ROUTE AND PARATRANSIT**

<b>Programs:</b>	Fixed Route and Paratransit
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	(Fixed Route) General Public and (Paratransit) Individuals who are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) eligibility and people age 60 or older
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., both fixed route and paratransit Saturday and Sunday by advance appointment only, about five hours per weekend day (weekend service is for paratransit only)
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Fixed Route and ADA Paratransit
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Ten buses total (five CFC-owned, three owned by Catholic Community Service, two owned by Sitka Tribe). STA also owns a pickup truck with snow blade for clearing out around passenger stops.
<b>Annual Ridership FY19:</b>	60,606 both fixed route and paratransit 53,714 fixed route 7,738 paratransit/senior rides.
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$1,039,719 (fixed route) \$310,564 (paratransit)
<b>Cost Per Trip:</b>	\$19.36 (fixed route) \$46.95 (paratransit)

Note: TOTAL COST for fixed route system per in FY19 was \$1,039,719. (Cash resources of \$828,682 and in-kind match of \$211,037).

TOTAL COST for Paratransit/Senior Transit in FY19 was \$362,902  
\$329,303 cash resources, including fares  
\$33,598 in-kind local match

<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	FTA Section 5311, FTA Section 5310, AMHT Purchased Services, AoA Title III and XI, City of Sitka, FTA Section 5339
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Capital and over \$290,000 of local in-kind match (from Sitka Tribe of Alaska and donations of bus stops, parking spaces, TV and radio advertising, etc.)

In addition to the programs directly provided by CFC in Sitka, the agency facilitates coordination of resources throughout the community and successfully writes grants to assist many local nonprofit organizations.

As of FY2020, under the public transit program, CFC has Memoranda of Agreements/Contracts with a number of social service agencies in Sitka that receive free vouchers for their clients on the RIDE. Examples of such inter-agency agreements include: Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services, SEARHC Behavioral Health, Youth Advocates of Sitka, Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Social Services of Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

CFC also has MOAs for contractual purchases of passes and tickets on behalf of the clients of the State offices of Vocational Rehabilitation, Children's Services, and others.

### **Sitka Tribe of Alaska – the RIDE (formerly known as “the Community RIDE”)**

The RIDE is the fixed route public transportation service in Sitka. In 2002, CFC issued an RFP for a provider of fixed-route services on two proposed routes. Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) was the successful bidder under the RFP process. From 2002 until the present, STA has operated the RIDE's first two fixed routes (Red and Blue Lines) under a contract from CFC that included CFC's leasing of buses owned by CFC to STA for use on the fixed routes.

In 2007, Sitka Tribe secured its own Tribal Transit grant from the Federal Transit Administration, and has since that time applied its grant plus some of the tribe's funds from Indian Reservation Roads to the operation of a third fixed route — the Green Line — that is linked to and coordinated as an integral part of the RIDE's overall fixed route system. The Green Line, like all routes, is open to the general public. However, the route was designed to serve designated tribal housing, medical and educational facilities, and tribal citizens with low incomes.

Under the Congressional reauthorizations of the federal transit laws, known as the MAP 21 and then the FAST ACT, the federal formula for funding to Tribal transit operators was changed, and this caused a two-thirds reduction in the amount of the annual federal transit grant to Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Also in 2007, the Tribe received a Congressional earmark grant for the “transit needs of Sitka,” which allowed the tribe to purchase two more RIDE buses and a truck and plow for snow removal at passenger shelters on the routes. The tribe's buses and CFC's leased buses are used interchangeably on any of the three fixed routes.

Catholic Community Service, also known as Southeast Senior Services (SESS) has a contract from CFC to provide complementary paratransit service for all three fixed routes. CFC, as the grant recipient for FTA Section 5311 and 5310 funds, provides operating and administrative revenue for both the fixed route services, and for the contract for paratransit services.

Continued funding for the transit system remains a challenge, and STA's funding from several federal and tribal sources is now about one-third of what it was in the 2007-2013 period.

Other than an annual payment to cover fuel and maintenance for the SESS paratransit buses, the City

and Borough of Sitka had not been a regular financial contributor to the transit/paratransit system in Sitka. In 2014, the City made a one-time contribution to the system to help offset some of STA's funding losses. Since that year, the City has contributed \$25,000 each year to transit.

Today, CFC, STA, and Southeast Senior Services continue to work in coordination to operate three fixed routes and complementary paratransit service in Sitka. Daily hours of operation for public transportation are Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Transportation is not provided on six holidays — New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Alaska Day (Oct. 18), Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. One route — the Green Line — operates on a 30-minute frequency; while the other two routes (Red Line and Blue Line) operate on about 60-minute frequencies. The RIDE is open to the general public and all vehicles are wheelchair accessible. The fare structure is described as follows:

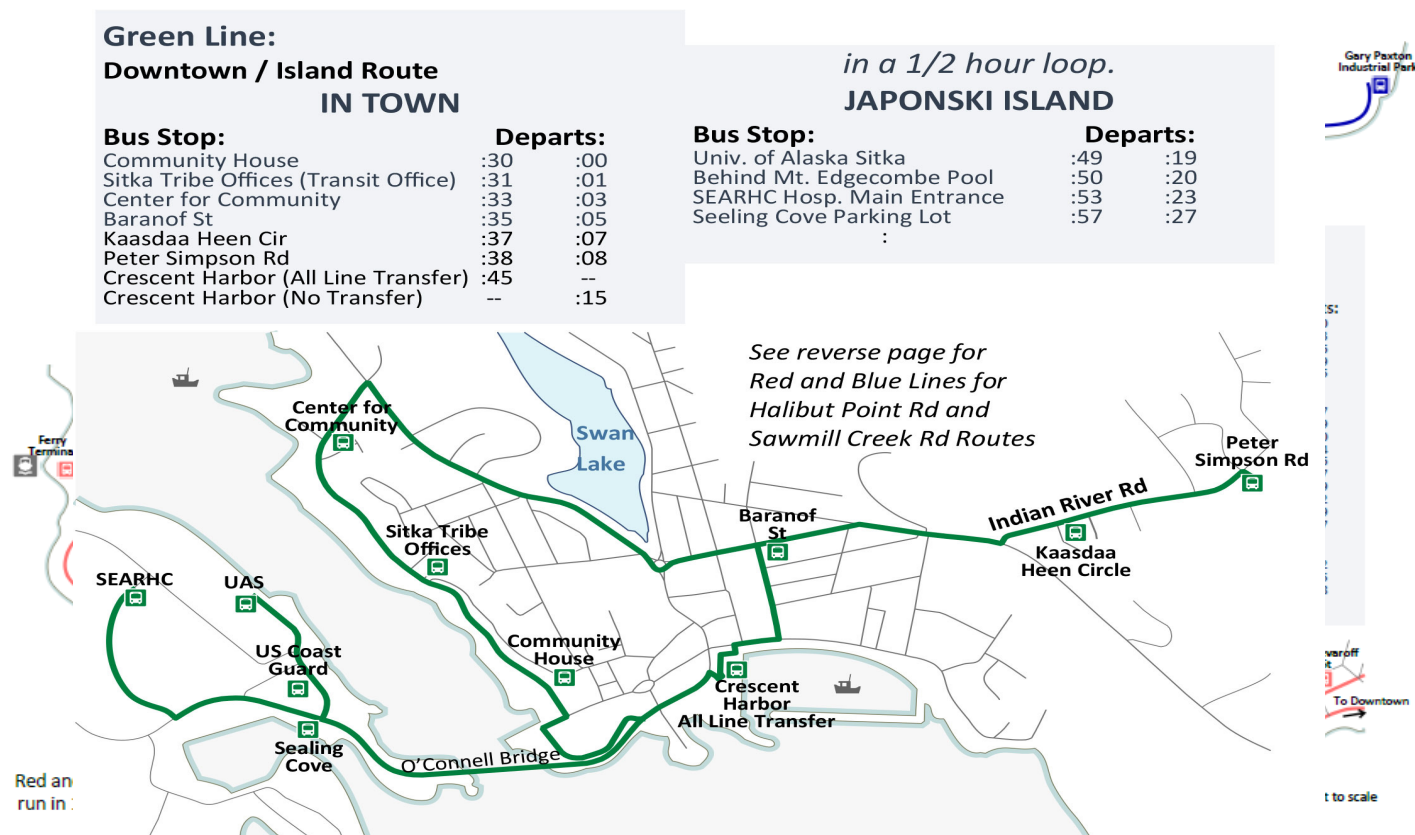
<b>One-Way Pass</b>	\$2 adult	\$1 seniors/children/disabled
<b>All-Day/Daily Pass</b>	\$5 adult	\$3 seniors/children/disabled
<b>12-Ride Pass</b>	\$20 adult	\$10 seniors/children/disabled
<b>Monthly Pass</b>	\$50 adult	\$25 seniors/children/disabled

A child is any passenger age 6-18 years old, a senior is age 60 or older.

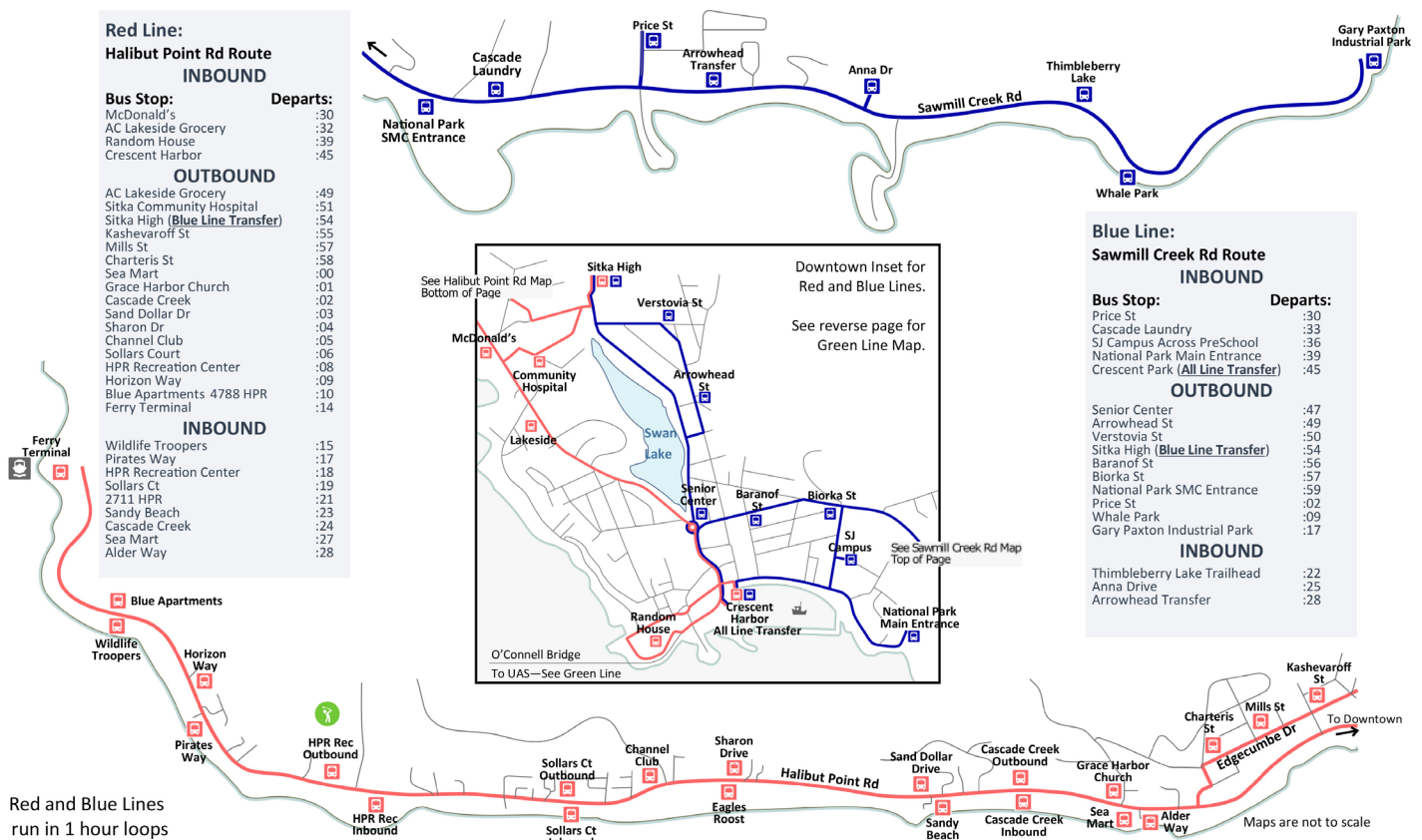
Bus passes are sold on the vehicles or may be purchased in advance at any of the following locations:

- Sitka Tribe of Transit Office, 256 Katlian St. (upstairs)
- Old Harbor Books
- Sea Mart Grocery Store

Route bus stops are shown on the schedules attached in the Appendices and shown here in excerpts.







Each route and associated stops are illustrated on the map on the preceding pages. As listed above and illustrated on the map, all three routes meet at the Crescent Harbor transfer point in downtown Sitka. Because it is a transfer point where all routes can be accessed, Crescent Harbor is the busiest stop for the system.

In State Fiscal Year 2019's records (the RIDE fixed route buses provided 53,141 rides, a decline from 2014.

CATEGORY (Fiscal Years)	2007	2009	2014	2019
Total one-way trips (rides)	28,172	39,410	58,686	53,714
Revenue vehicle hours	9,216	9,216	9,945	9,906
Rides per revenue vehicle hour	2.84	3.93	5.90	5.36

COSTS are shown under Center for Community Section, earlier in this Plan section. The Tribe also expends approximately \$90,000 per year from its direct federal Tribal Transit grant.

The \$90,000 of Tribal Transit grant expenditures brings the TOTAL COST for fixed route system to \$1,039,719. (Cash resources of \$828,682 and in-kind match of \$211,037).

The RIDE receives funding for operating, administrative, and capital expenses through the following resources:

- FTA Section 5311 (rural transit);
- FTA Section 5310 (elders and persons with disabilities)
- Tribal Transit funds;



*Center for Community Transit Program Administrator Connie Sipe gives a presentation about paratransit services during lunch at the Swan Lake Senior Center in Sitka on Aug. 29, 2019.*

- Tribal Transportation Program;
- Passenger fares.
- \* FTA Section 5339 (Capital)
- Alaska State General Fund match pool
- Alaska Mental Health Trust (for human services transportation)

In terms of capital expenses, CFC owns five buses— two 29-foot buses and two 24-foot buses, all leased to STA for fixed route use. STA also owns two 24-foot buses and a snowplow truck. CFC owns one 20-foot bus that is leased to Catholic Community Service for paratransit services.

## **Maintenance**

Sitka Tribe of Alaska is still endeavoring in 2019 to secure a real estate location to build a maintenance facility. The maintenance facility will have two (2) maintenance bays and space to wash one transit vehicle at a time. The facility will also have office space and space for a driver training room. As this plan goes to press, STA is seeking a suitable site.

## **Paratransit**

Paratransit services for the RIDE are provided by Southeast Senior Services (SESS) working out of the Swan Lake Senior Center. Paratransit is provided as described in the following paragraphs.



## HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY AND SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

### Care-A-Van – Swan Lake Senior Center/Southeast Senior Services (SESS)

Southeast Senior Services is part of Catholic Community Service, a private non-profit organization that provides door-to-door demand response transportation in Sitka for anyone age 60 and older and for any person with a disability, regardless of his or her age. Southeast Senior Services (SESS) operates Sitka's complementary paratransit service, Medicaid transportation, and meal delivery services out of the Swan Lake Senior Center. Transportation provided by SESS is locally known as Care-A-Van.

Southeast Senior Services has provided transportation to seniors since 1974, prior to the development of the RIDE. Southeast Senior Center is a long-time coordination partner with CFC and the RIDE.

#### **CARE-A-VAN SERVICES (as of SFY2019)**

<b>Programs:</b>	Paratransit, Medicaid transportation, Transportation for Seniors
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Adults age 60 and older and individuals with disabilities of any age
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.  Saturday and Sunday, 8:45 a.m. to 2 p.m., by reservation Note: Pre-reserved trips on Saturday and Sunday are provided only to Seniors, with both seniors and ADA paratransit-eligible riders able to call on the day and receive a ride if space is available around the pre-reserved trips.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Door-to-door demand response
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Four vans for 6-10 passengers, one van not wheelchair accessible
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	One full-time and three part-time drivers, one manager (shared with other Swan Lake Senior Center services), one assistant/scheduler (shared with other Swan Lake services)
<b>Annual Trips Provided:</b>	7,738 (SFY2019)
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$362,902 \$329,303 cash resources, including fares \$33,598 in-kind local match
<b>Cost Per Passenger Trip:</b>	\$46.95

Transportation Funding Sources: FTA Section 5311 through CFC, City of Sitka, Older American Act Funds, Fares, Donations, Medicaid billings

Trip reservations are strongly encouraged at least 24-hours and up to seven days in advance. The scheduler will work late reservations into the schedule, if possible. In fact, the schedulers are well known for their caring attitude and tendency to find a way to provide transportation that is needed.

#### **Fare Structure and Eligibility**



Passengers older than 60 years ride for free but donations are accepted. The suggested donation amount is \$1 per trip. Passengers younger than age 60 are required to pay a fare of \$2 per one-way trip. Passenger fare revenue is forwarded to Center for Community under the contract with Care A Van.

The scheduler attempts to schedule trips in 15-minute increments and schedules multiple passengers on a vehicles whenever possible. The Swan Lake Senior Center receives multiple calls per day for trip requests and cancellations, according to the interviewee. As of SFY2019, CFC's paratransit contract with Care-A-Van pays \$192.42 flat rate per day for dispatch services (through Section 5310).

Passengers younger than age 60 may be granted temporary eligibility for paratransit services based upon a brief registration and a referral from a medical professional. To obtain permanent paratransit eligibility, a person younger than 60 must then complete a comprehensive application, and submit a thorough medical evaluation to demonstrate why the disability of the applicant prevents applicant from being capable of using the fixed route buses.

Eligibility for ADA Paratransit services is determined by Center for Community. If found eligible for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services, a rider of any age will have priority for rides and will receive an ADA card that will give him or her short-term access to paratransit services in other communities.

## **Driver Training and Policies**

Drivers are required to consent to a background check prior to working for the center and must agree to random drug testing. Drug testing is conducted through Beacon. Driver training is provided through the main office, and all drivers are required to participate in training.

## **Funding**

The sources of revenue for SESS transportation services in Sitka are as follows:

- Center for Community (paratransit contract Sections 5311 and 5310);
- Medicaid Waiver billing receipts;
- Title III grant of the Older Americans Act through the State of Alaska;
- Title VI of Older Americans Act, through two pass-through grants from with Sitka Tribe of Alaska;
- Passenger contributions and fares;
- In-kind donations from the City and Borough of Sitka (fuel and maintenance); and
- Local fundraising.

The City of Sitka contributes to the senior transportation program by providing all fuel, by providing all SESS vehicles with maintenance services at the City Garage, and by providing the Swan Lake Senior Center building where the transportation program is one of several programs being operated.

Annual transportation operating expenses for SFY 2019 were reported by SESS and Center for Community as follows

Three of the vehicles used for paratransit service are owned by SESS and were purchased through grants received through Alaska Department of Transportation and the Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHT). SESS obtains fuel for vehicles by direct donation from the City and Borough of Sitka. Center for Community purchased a paratransit vehicle with federal 5339 funds in SFY2019, and this vehicle is leased to SESS for use in providing paratransit services.

## **Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services**

Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose primary purpose is to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of mental illness and/or substance abuse in the lives of youth, adults and families. The agency does this by providing caring professional and therapeutic services. Sitka Counseling offers a variety of outpatient/group treatment services; children, adult and family services; mental health; co-occurring and substance use disorders. The diverse backgrounds of staff enable the agency to provide an individual approach to the problems which confront our clients in Sitka and Yakutat.

Programs offered by Sitka Counseling include:

The two **Residential Treatment** programs have the capacity for 12 beds (six men and six women) and are designed to provide a 'family style' environment, with peer support in a Level 3.1 substance treatment program. During treatment, transportation is used and clients are encouraged to use the RIDE. If the RIDE is not available, the staff on duty will drive the agency SUV vehicle. The program focuses on assisting clients in attaining/maintaining abstinence; establishing a quality program of recovery; integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders; making healthy connection to the community; and achieving economic self-sufficiency. These goals are achieved in three distinct phases. The average resident stays 4-6 months.

**Sitka Counseling** offers outpatient counseling services to youth, adolescents, adults, couples and families who need assistance with mental health, addictions and emotional problems. Both of our locations are on the RIDE bus routes, and clients are encouraged to use public transportation. We do not have designated outpatient transportation.

The **Harbor Lights** program offers confidential support for individuals experiencing symptoms of a mental illness, which negatively impacts their daily lives. The adult severe mental illness program serves 45 clients and offers clients transportation in our sedan to appointments, activities, shopping and events. There also are about 15 clients who use the RIDE daily with the vouchers provided by CFC through a grant from Alaska Mental Health Trust.

The **Family Center** program services 35 clients providing services that are structured, safe, secure, nurturing environment where the children learn to express and manage their emotions. This allows them to develop essential skills to better function at school, home and in the community. They have a van, which is used daily for client pick-up/drop-offs, and also provides transportation for the evening family parenting classes.

**River's Edge Property** is a six-unit apartment complex on Flume Circle (off Indian River Road) for individuals who qualify for HUD Section 8-11 housing. The tenants use the RIDE and have their own vehicles.

### **SITKA COUNSELING AND PREVENTION SERVICES**

<b>Programs:</b>	Continuum of behavioral health assessments and treatment programs
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<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Individuals with behavioral health issues, transportation for residents and outpatients
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<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Varies by Program
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Demand Response, Door-to-Door Client Transportation
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Four — One 12-passenger 2007 Chevrolet Express van, one four-passenger 2011 Subaru Legacy sedan, one eight-passenger 2014 Honda Pilot SUV; and one eight-passenger 2016 Chevrolet Traverse.
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	Agency staff (no dedicated drivers) operate vehicles
<b>Annual Trips Provided:</b>	Not Tracked
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$4,167.41 fuel, \$1,451.12 maintenance Sitka Counseling also purchases bus passes for the RIDE
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Grants obtained by CFC for the benefit of Sitka Counseling and Medicaid agency revenue (projected)

### **Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL)**

Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) is an Aging and Disability Resource Center and a Center for Independent Living nonprofit organization that serves anyone with a disability and seniors older than 60. SAIL is currently serving 145 consumers.

Anyone who is eligible for the program also is eligible for transportation provided by SAIL for Outdoor Recreation and Community Access (ORCA) program activities. SAIL operates one 15-passenger wheelchair-accessible vehicle for ORCA program activities. SAIL provides transportation for approximately 20 passengers per week. Staff are trained to operate the vehicle and drive as part of their daily responsibilities. SAIL staff spends about six hours per week driving clients.

SAIL also distributes fixed route bus Voucher provided to it by Center for Community under CFC's purchased services grant.

### **SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING (SAIL)**

<b>Programs:</b>	Outdoor Recreation and Community Access (ORCA) Home visits for equipment and home modification assessments RIDE Vouchers distribution to persons with disabilities
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Individuals experiencing disabilities and seniors
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Three to four days per week between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Demand Response, door-to-door—vouchers for fixed route
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	One 2005 Ford F450 Cutaway 15 passenger, two-wheelchair bus



<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	Two staff members operate the vehicle
<b>Annual Trips Provided:</b>	416
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$965.92 fuel, \$212.50 maintenance
<b>Cost Per Passenger Trip:</b>	\$3
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Fees, grants and donations

**Youth Advocates of Sitka (YAS)**

Youth Advocates of Sitka is a nonprofit community mental health program that serves children between the ages of 5 and 21 years and their families. Any youth who is diagnosed as severely emotionally disturbed is eligible for services provided by YAS. The programs include group and individual therapy, residential programs, and skills development. YAS operates four programs.

**YAS Community Mental Health Program** — Outpatient/school-based treatment and accompanying mental health and rehabilitative services are made available to all eligible students in the Sitka School District, as well as students attending Mount Edgecumbe High School and the SEER School (a local private school for grades K-8). Mental health services, including mental health intake assessments and individual, group and family therapy, also are made available to all residents at the Hanson House Level III residential treatment facility.

**YAS Therapeutic Foster Care Program (TFC)** — Therapeutic foster care is a program for children and youth ages 5 to 21 whose special needs can be met through services delivered from adults who are trained, supervised and supported by agency staff. The resource parents play a key role in implementing a comprehensive, client-focused and individualized therapeutic environment for the child placed in their home setting. The program provides clinician-driven intervention that assists children and youth in working toward their long-term treatment goals. In therapeutic foster care, the positive aspects of a nurturing, supportive and healthy family environment are combined with active and structured treatment interventions.

YAS staff, the resource parents, the client, the client’s family members (as appropriate) and other professionals work as a team to develop a treatment plan for each child. Resource parents are the primary people who implement the in-home treatment components as determined by the treatment team. Treatment is carried out under the clinical direction of qualified agency staff. Resource parents receive intensive support, consultation, and initial and ongoing training by program staff.

**YAS Hanson House Program** — The Hanson House Program is a Level III residential treatment facility, which also can serve as a Level II emergency shelter in certain circumstances. The Hanson House is licensed to work with up to 10 youth ages 10 to 18, and will maintain a minimum client-to-staff ratio of 5-1. Clients in the program develop a treatment place with a clinician, and the clinician and program staff will provide direction and interventions to help the youth achieve their short- and long-term goals. In addition, residents engaged in the Hanson House program are provided with group therapy five days each week, individual therapy at least once each week, and family therapy and substance abuse counseling on an as-needed or as-prescribed basis. The Hanson House operates on a phase system,

where clients are expected to complete treatment work and progress to higher phases of the program that coincide with greater privileges and responsibilities.

The Hanson House program strives to maintain a homelike environment, and uses a positive peer culture model to encourage youth to hold themselves and their peers accountable to each other and the program. Program staff will provide structure and support to clients in the facility and during activities in the community, and will encourage youth to grow socially, academically and emotionally.

**Youth Drop-In Center** — The Family Resource Center youth drop-in center (FRC) focuses on four areas when working with each client:

1. Building independent living skills;
2. Community outreach activities;
3. Prevention services; and
4. Connecting youth to resources in Sitka.

YAS skills trainers under the direction of the FRC program coordinator provide support to youth across programs as well as community youth who access the FRC on a drop-in basis. YAS staff who work with youth ages 14 to 21 are trained in the transition into independence process (TIP). The TIP model is an evidence-supported practice based on published studies that demonstrate improvements in real-life outcomes for youth and young adults with emotional/behavioral difficulties.

Bus stops for the RIDE fixed-route service are located near the Hansen House and the Youth Advocates of Sitka main office. Students who are able to safely manage fixed-route service are encouraged by YAS staff to utilize the bus stop. CFC, through a grant from AMHT, provides Youth Advocates with the RIDE bus passes for clients who use the public transit routes.

Youth Advocates of Sitka operates a 12-passenger Chevy van and two eight-passenger Honda Pilots, and all three vehicles were purchased by CFC on behalf of YAS with AMHT or 5310 funds. YAS also uses a five-passenger Ford Focus.

## **YOUTH ADVOCATES OF SITKA**

<b>Programs:</b>	Community mental health with focus on youth
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Youth (ages 6-21) and their families
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	24 hours
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Demand response client transportation
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Four (one 12-passenger van, two eight-passenger Honda Pilot SUVs, one eight-passenger Ford Transit van).
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	Agency staff (not dedicated drivers) operate the vehicle
<b>Annual Trips Purchased:</b>	3,200 (estimated, does not include new van or Smoothie Truck)
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$7,047.14 fuel, \$983.53 maintenance
<b>Average Cost Per Trip:</b>	\$2.51

**Transportation Funding Sources:** Various federal, state and local program grants, agency revenues from Medicaid.

### **Social Services Program, Sitka Tribe of Alaska**

Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Social Services Program joined the CFC Vouchers program part-way through SFY2019, and continues in SFY2020 to distribute the CFC free fixed route vouchers to clients who present as being in one of the five categories of Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries. STA Social Services also buys vouchers and bus tickets to distribute to other clients who do not fit the AMHT Purchased Services voucher grant's criteria.

The following description of the services at STA Social Services is taken from their website:

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program**

The Indian Child Welfare Act only applies to cases where children are taken into protective custody by the state or in adoption and guardianship cases. The terms of ICWA do not apply to divorce or child custody cases between private parties. The program's main goal is to reunify Native children — who have been taken into protective custody by state agencies — with their birth parents. If that is not possible, the ICWA caseworker works to ensure that that child's Native culture and the child's Native identity are protected.

### **Tribal Family Caseworker / Outreach Caseworker**

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Family Caseworker works with families to strengthen and empower them through advocacy with programs outside the Sitka Tribe of Alaska which provide services to our tribal citizens. The Tribal Family Caseworker is available to listen, to support, and to assist you and your family to navigate stressful situations successfully.

### **General Assistance**

- General Assistance - BIA Welfare. Monthly assistance for any BIA/CIB-eligible client
- Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Emergency Assistance for STA tribale citizens that live in Sitka six months or more, income eligible
- Child Care Assistance (CCDF) Must apply through state and TANF childcare assistance before applying to STA Childcare Assistance

## **SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM, SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA**

**Programs:** Various, see website quote above

**Client Eligibility:** Tribal Citizens of any age



<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Vouchers, purchased or free for fixed route buses
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	0
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	0
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$4,800 for purchased tickets and vouchers. (not including the AMHT free vouchers).
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Various federal, state and local program grants, including AMHT funds through CFC

### **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION COSTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE CLIENT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The inventory and assessment efforts in this study involved attempts to work with local human service agencies to determine their cost for operating transportation services. For all but Center for Community, Sitka Tribe, and Southeast Senior Services, the costs are approximate. This lack of detailed information is not the fault of the human service agencies. Rather, it is reflective of the clear problem that exists with respect to FTA's new emphasis on coordination of human services transportation – entities that operate such transportation services as part of other program services often cannot determine the fully allocated costs, and for the most part, have no incentive to do so.

Some advocates for coordination of human services transportation assert that this inability to fully document cost of transportation service provision may result in human service organizations not making informed management decisions with respect to participation in a coordinated transportation system. On the other hand, human service providers often feel that efforts to “coordinate” their transportation services do not adequately respect the linkages between client transportation and other client services, especially not the state or federally mandated requirements to keep the service and the transportation linked in order for the provider agency to receive payment under various programs, especially Medicaid.

It is imperative for planners, state funding agencies of transportation or human services, and local transit providers to recognize the disparity among client transportation services delivered by different programs. Differences in service delivery methods, reporting, and eligibility requirements can create disparities in reporting transportation costs. These differences are compounded by the fact that no single law or statute created human service agency programs. Unlike Federal Transit Administration-sponsored programs, which are all codified under a single piece of authorizing legislation, there is no legislative or statutory uniformity on how human service transportation is to be reported or delivered.

### **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES for PUBLIC or FOR HUMAN SERVICES CLIENTS**

CFC undertook to update the prior inventory of tribal and private human service agency transportation providers.

There are 27 vehicles operated by one governmental (Sitka Tribe) and five private non-profit human



*Center for Community Transportation Program Administrator Connie Sipe, right, listens to a question from Sitka resident Cheryl Enloe, left, during a lunch public meeting about the Care-A-Van paratransit program on Aug. 29, 2019, at the Swan Lake Senior Center.*

services organizations in Sitka including 15 passenger vehicles (vans and sedans), one maintenance vehicles, and 11 buses. All of these organizations provide transportation for older adults, individuals with low incomes, and/or people with disabilities, or the general public.

Currently, coordination among the organizations primarily is occurring at the level of some sharing of grant-writing responsibilities for obtaining capital funds for vehicles. Human service agencies depend upon a variety of funding sources including sources dedicated for Natives, older adults, people with disabilities, or individuals with low incomes. The scope of most human services funding programs limits the population to which organizations can offer rides.

# Needs Assessment

## DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

Sitka is located on the west coast of Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska, facing the Pacific Ocean. No roads connect Sitka to the rest of Alaska. The distance to Juneau is 95 air miles (30 minute flight time). Anchorage is 592 air miles (2.8 hours flight time) and Seattle, Wash., is 862 air miles (2.8 hours flight time) from Sitka. The land area of the Sitka Borough is 2,873.98 square miles. The average high and low temperatures in Sitka are approximately 49 and 39 degrees, respectively.

The City and Borough of Sitka is a unified home rule municipality created in 1971. It is governed by the Assembly composed of seven members, one of whom is the Mayor. The chief administrative officer is the city manager, who serves at the pleasure of the Assembly. In addition to the city and borough government, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, a federally recognized Indian tribe, holds local governmental responsibilities and powers related to tribal citizens and lands in Sitka. Exhibit II.1 provides a view of the Sitka and Japonski Island area and the major roadways. As illustrated on the map, all major roadways are located near the coast of the island. Exhibit II.2 offers a closer view of the location of major roads in Sitka.

## POPULATION

The population of Sitka in 2015, according to the Sitka Economic Development's data, was 8,929 people. This is a turnaround from Sitka's 2000 U.S. Census population of 8,835 and 2007 Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development estimate of 8,644. Until recently, Sitka's peak population was 8,891 people in 1995 and there had been gradual declines in population from 1995-2007. From 1985 through 1995 Sitka's population rose from about 8,180 people.

### Population Density

Sitka has a population density of 3.15 people per square mile. According to the U.S. Census data from 2010, the block groups with the highest and moderately high densities of persons per square mile were located in and around downtown Sitka. The higher concentration of population is likely due to access to roads and amenities. The population density was low across the undeveloped portion of Baranof Island.

### Population Projections

According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development report Alaska Population Projections 2012 to 2042 (<http://labor.state.ak.us/research/pop/projected/pub/popproj.pdf>), Sitka's population is expected to decrease from 9,055 in 2012 to 8,894 in 2027, 8,724 in 2032, 8,520 in 2037, and 8,300 in 2042. The population of the Southeast Alaska region is expected to drop from 74,423 in 2012 to 71,170 in 2042 (with a slight rise in population in 2017 and 2022 before the decrease).

As of 2019, the City of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan 2030 points out the declining population trend currently underway: (quote from Plan below)

*"Based on historic patterns of births, deaths, and in and out migrants to Sitka, AKDOLWD is projecting that after a five-year period of steady population – which Sitka is in now – the population*



*will begin a slow, steady decline. Projected population decline in Sitka is based on two trends: 1) A shrinking number of child-bearing age residents and children in Sitka- resulting in more deaths than births in the future and 2) More people are moving away rather than moving to Sitka. In addition, the number of Sitkans age 65 and older, and especially those age 80+, is projected to grow rapidly over the next 25 years.”*

## **Population Distribution by Age**

The 2019 McDowell Report of Sitka’s Economic Profile, published by the Sitka Economic Development Association points out the very significant “age trends” facing Sitka.

*“An important socioeconomic trend in Sitka is the community’s aging population. In 2018, 16% of the population was over 65 years of age. By 2030, 23% of the population will be over 65, according to ADOLWD projections. The increase in the senior population reflects a “bubble” of 55 to 64-year-old residents moving into retirement age.”*

Using the McDowell Report figures on age cohorts, the age group in Sitka that is of typical working age (between the ages of 20 and 64 years) is the most numerous age group but is projected to gradually decline in number between 2018 and 2030. In terms of potential workers, ages 20 through 64, in 2018 this cohort was 5,216 persons, accounting for 60.29 percent of Sitka’s population. By contrast, in 2030, the working age cohort will decrease to 4,820 persons, and account for a decreased percentage of the populace, at only percent.

As Sitka’s population ages there will be more demand for paratransit services, since many seniors are unable to drive themselves and they may not have family in town to take care of them.

## **Individuals with Disabilities**

Counting the disabled population in any community presents challenges. First, there is a complex and lengthy definition in the implementing regulations. The definition of the disabled is found in 49 CFR Part 37.3. The definition of disability reads:

*“Disability means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.”*

The definition, when applied to public transportation applications, is designed to permit a functional approach to disability determination rather than a categorical definition. In a functional approach, the mere presence of a condition that is typically thought to be disabling gives way to consideration of an individual’s abilities to perform various life functions. In short, an individual’s capabilities, rather than the mere presence of a medical condition determines transportation disability.

## **Survey of Income and Program Participation**

In an effort to make a more appropriate estimation of individuals with a disability in Sitka, as it pertains to their ability to utilize transportation, the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) was used. The SIPP is characterized by an extensive set of disability questions; generally, the SIPP is the preferred source for examining most disability issues. The reason for this preference is the similarities between questions posted on the SIPP survey and the ADA definition of a disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities.” For persons 15 years and over, the SIPP disability questions cover limitations in functional activities (seeing, hearing, speaking, lifting and carrying, using stairs, and walking); in Activities of Daily Living (ADL) such as getting around inside the home, getting in or out of bed or chair, bathing, dressing, eating and toileting, and in Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) such as going outside the home, keeping track of money or bills, preparing meals, doing light housework, and using the telephone. The SIPP also obtains information on the use of wheelchairs and crutches, canes, or walkers; the presence of certain conditions related to mental functioning, the presence of a work disability, and the disability status of children.

## **Approach**

Using the indices or incidence rates for specific disabilities derived from the SIPP, an imputed estimate of the number of individuals, by age group, has been calculated for the area. These estimates for 2015 and 2020 are found in the two charts on the pages following this section.

Data collected in the SIPP do not permit consideration of persons with multiple disabilities. Moreover, the definitions employed can be directly related to the concepts in 49 CFR Part 37.3 definitions with respect to “activities of daily life.”

## **Findings**

Using disability and population projections for the State of Alaska, for the year 2017, over 31 percent of the population age 65 and older reported having one or more disabilities, according to the United States Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. This was the highest percentage of the five age groups reported. Also, almost 12 percent of the working age cohorts in Alaska (ages 18-64) reported one or more disability.

## **INDUSTRY AND LABOR FORCE**

### **Employment and Unemployment**

The top industries in Sitka are commercial and charter fishing, manufacturing, government, tourism, healthcare and social services, retail trade, education, science, and the arts.

According to City of Sitka’s Comprehensive Plan 2030, Sitka’s workforce

*“.. (2016/2015) is 54% private sector, 23% self-employed business proprietors, 6% state government, 5% federal government, and 2% local government. There were 4,228 average annual employees in Sitka in 2016; this ranged from a high in August of 5,127 to a low in January of 3,652. An estimated 40% of Sitka workers are not Sitka residents (2015). Total wages in 2016 was \$183.5 million. The average monthly wage in Sitka was \$3,616.”*

The City Plan 2030 also notes:

*“There were about 60 fewer (1%) employees in 2016 compared to 2015. Since 2006, Sitka has shed about 200 average annual jobs, led by a drop in federal jobs and private service-providing jobs.”*

**Exhibit II.8: 2015 Estimated Count of ADA Eligible Population, Sitka**

	Ages 15-24 Years		Ages 25-64 Years		Ages 65 Years and Over		Total
		Sitka		Sitka		Sitka	Sitka
Disability Status	Percent		Percent		Percent		
Total Population by Age		1,079		4,695		1,261	7,035
Disability Status							
With a Disability	0.208	224	0.163	765	0.523	660	1,649
Severe	0.137	148	0.108	507	0.369	465	1,120
Not Severe	0.07	76	0.055	258	0.154	194	528
Seeing/Hearing Disability							
With a Disability	0.067	72	0.048	225	0.205	259	556
Severe	0.014	15	0.009	42	0.044	55	113
Not Severe	0.053	57	0.039	183	0.161	203	443
Walking/Using Stairs							
With a Disability	0.114	123	0.08	376	0.382	482	980
Severe	0.059	64	0.036	169	0.221	279	511
Not Severe	0.055	59	0.044	207	0.161	203	469
Had Difficulty Walking	0.094	101	0.065	305	0.318	401	808
Severe	0.051	55	0.031	146	0.195	246	446
Not Severe	0.043	46	0.034	160	0.123	155	361
Had Difficulty Using Stairs	0.092	99	0.065	305	0.312	393	798
Severe	0.031	33	0.018	85	0.119	150	268
Not Severe	0.061	66	0.046	216	0.193	243	525
Used a Wheelchair	0.012	13	0.007	33	0.045	57	103
Used a Cane/Crutches/Walker	0.041	44	0.022	103	0.169	213	361
With an Activities of Daily Life Limitation	0.036	39	0.025	117	0.123	155	311
Needed Personal Assistance	0.02	22	0.013	61	0.071	90	172
Did not Need Personal Assistance	0.016	17	0.012	56	0.052	66	139
Number of ADLs or IADLs for which assistance was needed							
One or more	0.048	52	0.031	146	0.163	206	403



**Exhibit II.9: 2020 Estimated Count of ADA Eligible Population, Sitka**

	Ages 15-24 Years		Ages 25-64 Years		Ages 65 Years and Over		Total
		Sitka		Sitka		Sitka	Sitka
Disability Status	Percent		Percent		Percent		
Total Population by Age		1,058		4,432		1,475	6,965
Disability Status							
With a Disability	0.208	220	0.163	722	0.523	771	1,714
Severe	0.137	145	0.108	479	0.369	544	1,168
Not Severe	0.07	74	0.055	244	0.154	227	545
Seeing/Hearing Disability							
With a Disability	0.067	71	0.048	213	0.205	302	586
Severe	0.014	15	0.009	40	0.044	65	120
Not Severe	0.053	56	0.039	173	0.161	237	466
Walking/Using Stairs							
With a Disability	0.114	121	0.08	355	0.382	563	1,039
Severe	0.059	62	0.036	160	0.221	326	548
Not Severe	0.055	58	0.044	195	0.161	237	491
Had Difficulty Walking	0.094	99	0.065	288	0.318	469	857
Severe	0.051	54	0.031	137	0.195	288	479
Not Severe	0.043	45	0.034	151	0.123	181	378
Had Difficulty Using Stairs	0.092	97	0.065	288	0.312	460	846
Severe	0.031	33	0.018	80	0.119	176	288
Not Severe	0.061	65	0.046	204	0.193	285	553
Used a Wheelchair	0.012	13	0.007	31	0.045	66	110
Used a Cane/Crutches/Walker	0.041	43	0.022	98	0.169	249	390
With an Activities of Daily Life Limitation	0.036	38	0.025	111	0.123	181	330
Needed Personal Assistance	0.02	21	0.013	58	0.071	105	184
Did not Need Personal Assistance	0.016	17	0.012	53	0.052	77	147
Number of ADLs or IADLs for which assistance was needed							
One or more	0.048	51	0.031	137	0.163	240	429

The McDowell Sitka Economic Profile Report 2019, published by the Sitka Economic Development Association, points out that the 2018 workforce in Sitka totaled, 4,408 workers, including both the employed and those unemployed but seeking employment. Furthermore, the Profile outlines that the annual unemployment rate in Sitka has decreased steadily from 2011 to 2019, standing at 4.8% in March 2019. As of 2019, Sitka had the lowest unemployment rate among all urban areas in the state.

## **Employment and Earnings**

The City of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan 2030 notes:

*“Sitka residents earned approximately \$568 million in total personal income in 2015. This is a 4% increase over 2014 community income of \$545 million. When sources of income are tallied and divided by the total population, Sitka had the 5th highest per capital personal income in Alaska at \$64,122 (2015). The majority of Sitka’s income, 66%, came from work earnings, wages, and benefits.”*

The Sitka Economic Development Association (SEDA) reported that the per capita annual income in Sitka in 2012 was \$40,200. SEDA reports that Sitka’s labor force is “highly educated and considered to be industrious, creative and independent minded.” Based on 2008-2012 American Community Survey data, more than 91 percent of the population age 25 and older were high school graduates or higher while 35 percent had a bachelor’s degree or higher. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development lists Sitka with an average monthly labor force of 4,403 with a peak on 5,257 in August. (McDowell Report)

The industries that make up the highest percentage of local employment include health care (16.8 percent), seafood (12.8 percent), government (15.3 percent), and services (14.3 percent).

## **Major Employers**

The top 10 major employers in Sitka, as of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 were as follows — SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) with 612 employees, Sitka School District 219, U.S. Coast Guard 209, City and Borough of Sitka 155, Mount Edgecumbe High School 154, Hames Corporation 150, Sitka Tribe of Alaska 134, and Sitka Pioneer Home 105. Employment numbers are based on average monthly employment and include full-time, part-time, and temporary employees. (Data from Sitka Economic Development)

## **ECONOMIC PROFILE**

### **Household Income Measures**

According to the City of Sitka's Comprehensive [Technical] Plan 2030, 58% of Sitka households earned less than \$50,000 annually, and 32% earned less than \$25,000. The chart below, taken from the City’s Plan, shows further details about income distribution.

**Figure 8- Income Distribution in Sitka**

	Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	Number of Returns			% Total Income	% All Returns
		All*	Joint Filers*	Single Filers*		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$303,677,000</b>	<b>4,650</b>	<b>1,610</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
\$1 under \$25,000	\$17,706,000	1,500	90	1250	6%	32%
\$25,000 under \$50,000	\$41,428,000	1,140	210	730	14%	25%
\$50,000 under \$75,000	\$45,412,000	730	330	290	15%	16%
\$75,000 under \$100,000	\$42,288,000	490	320	130	14%	11%
\$100,000 under \$200,000	\$88,717,000	660	540	100	29%	14%
\$200,000 or more	\$68,126,000	130	120	**	22%	3%
<i>Source: IRS 2014 Tax Returns for zip code 99835      * All includes joint, single, head of household, and other filers</i>						

## TRAVEL TO WORK

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimates for the five-year period of 2013 to 2017 project that 60.9 percent of the Sitka workforce age 16 years and over drove alone to work. Another 24.7 percent carpooled, 15.6 percent walked to work, and 2.9 percent biked. Only 1.4 percent used public transportation excluding taxis. Nearly 5 percent worked at home. (Figures updated July 2019)

## MAJOR TRIP GENERATORS

The term “trip generator” is used to describe locations where concentrations of people are likely to live (apartment complexes, nursing homes, etc.) or where people are likely to travel to meet their shopping, child care, health care, educational, or employment needs. The maps in Exhibits II.12, II.13, II.14, and II.15 illustrate the major trip generators in Sitka including major employers, health care facilities, human service agencies, and schools or youth programs. As illustrated by the exhibit, most, but not all, generators are located on the RIDE fixed bus routes. At the time of the last five-year plan, Silver Bay Seafoods and the industrial park were not served by fixed route bus service, but that service and a bus stop were added by the RIDE in 2018.

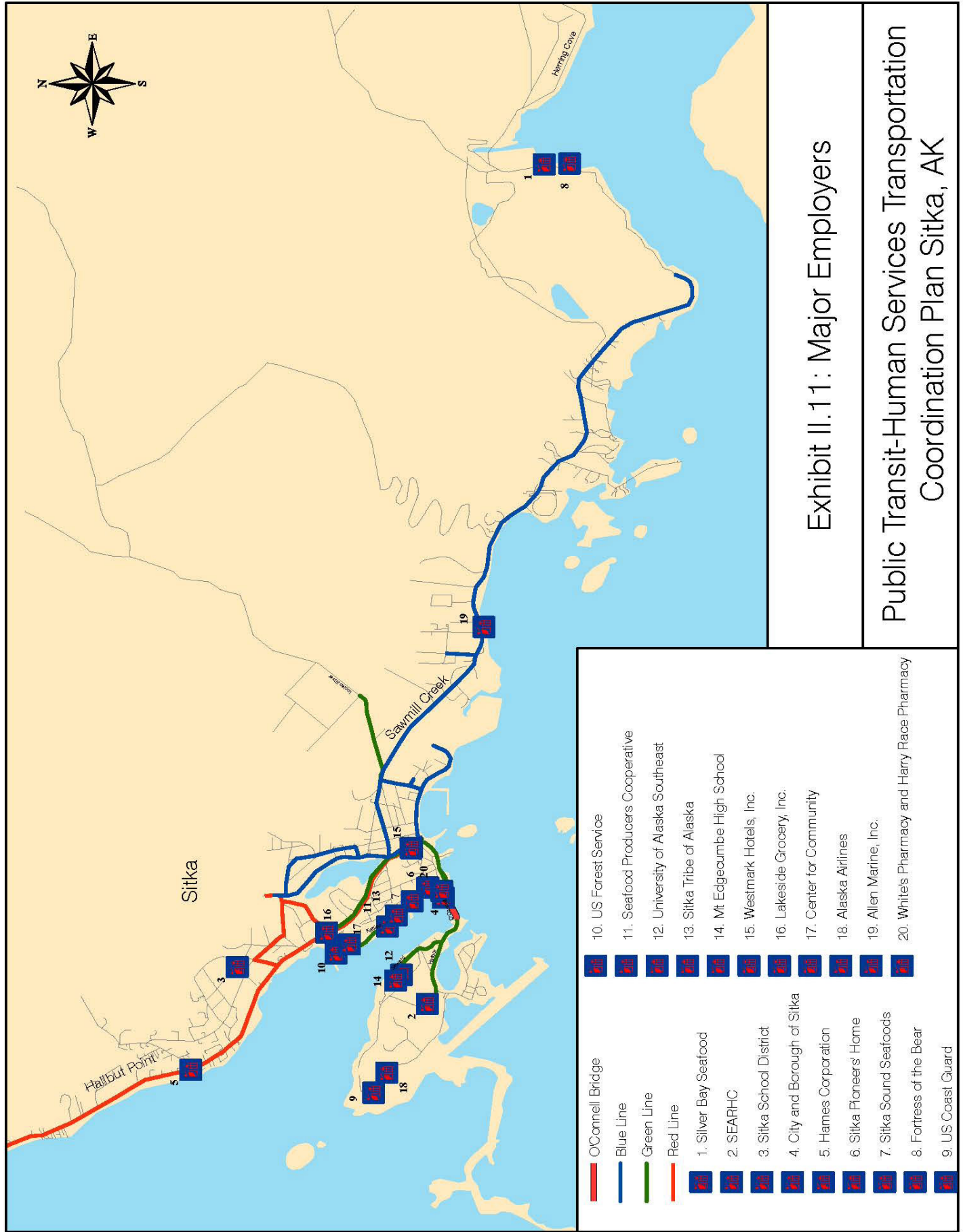
## SUMMARY

Sitka is projected to experience a slight decline in population over the upcoming decade, with the population decreasing by approximately two (2) percent between 2006 and 2030. By 2018 estimates of the United States Census Bureau, 9.2 percent of individuals in Sitka are below poverty level. The increasing population of Sitka individuals with needs associated with aging, or with fixed or lower personal income will present ongoing challenges for service providers in all areas, including healthcare, childcare, employment, education, and recreation. In turn, the demand for transportation will remain a salient issue.

As Sitka’s largest age group (25 to 64 years) ages and moves into retirement, their need for transportation will grow. The face of Sitka will change further as the age group of 65 years and older increases in size to equal the number of young children (0 to 14 years) and the group of individuals entering the workforce (15 to 24) remains the smallest portion of the total population.

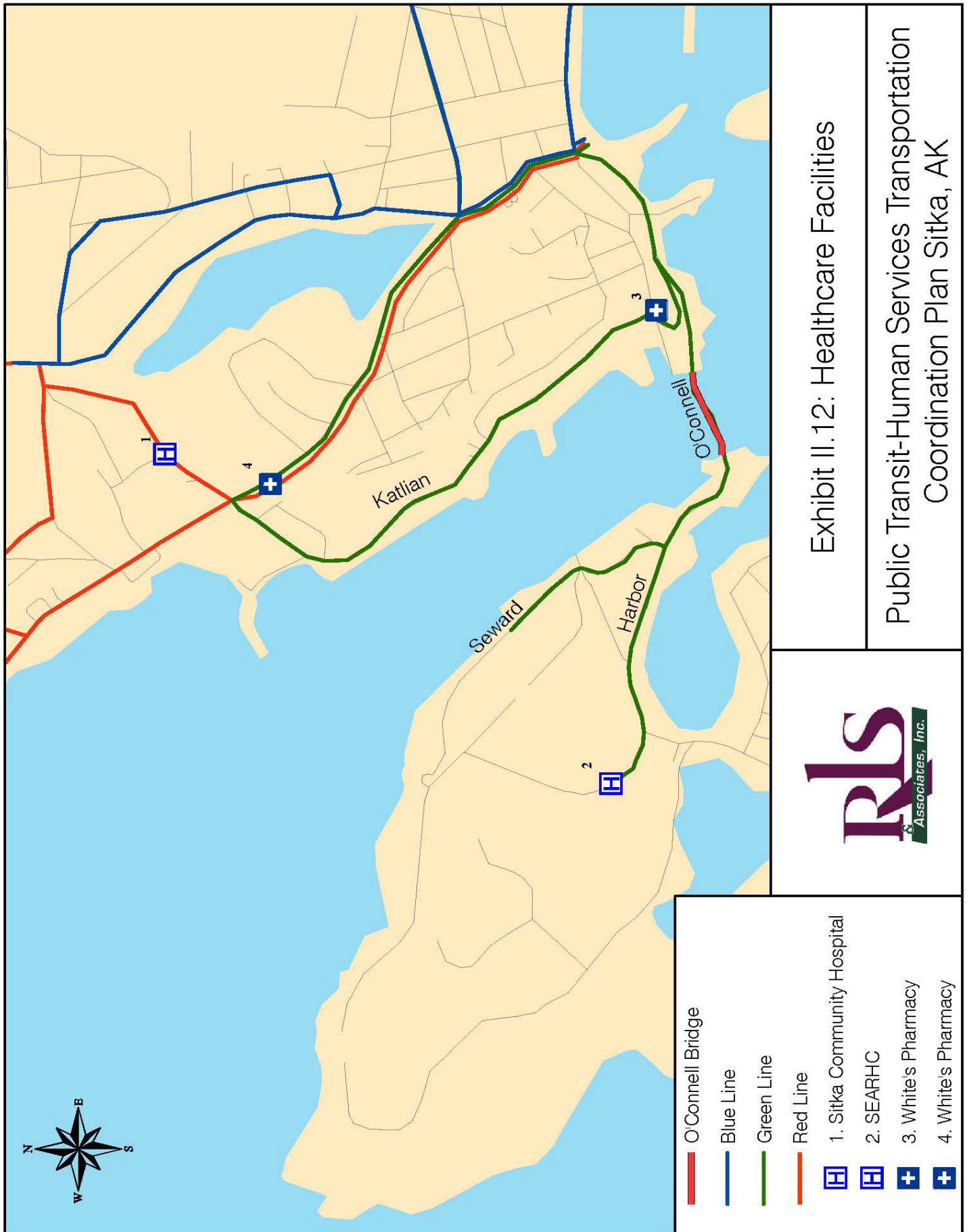
1. To Sitka’s advantage, the highest concentration of trip generators is in the downtown area and along the existing bus routes. Due to limited roads, the distance between residential locations





## Exhibit II.11: Major Employers

# Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Sitka, AK







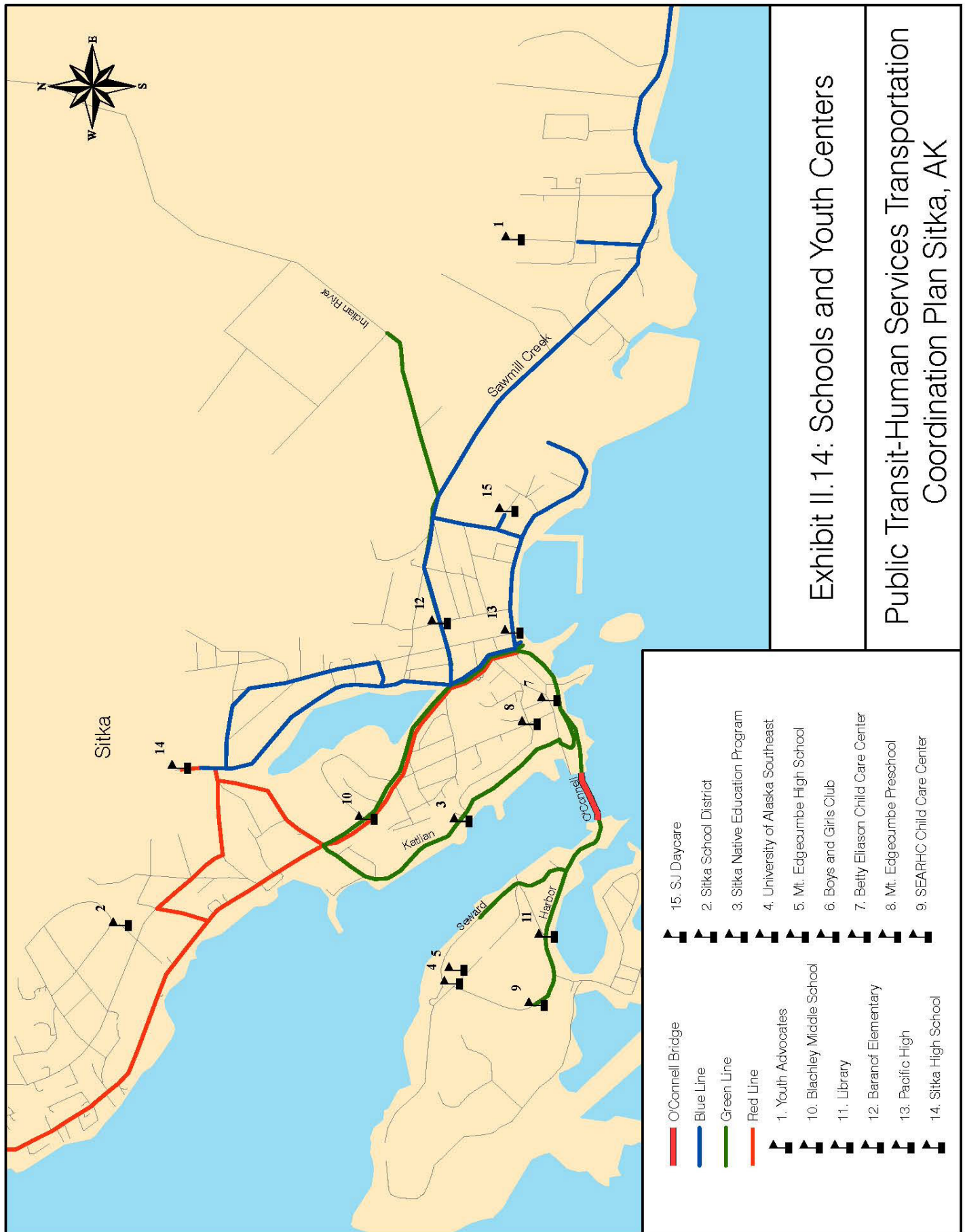


Exhibit II.14: Schools and Youth Centers

Public Transit-Human Services Transportation  
Coordination Plan Sitka, AK

and work sites is short. Another advantage to mobility in Sitka is the close proximity between most major trip origins and destinations. The most pressing current challenge for access to trip generators is the same as the most pressing challenge for Sitka transit in general: the need for more hours and more days of service.

# Needs and Gaps in Service

## OVERVIEW

For this report we attempted to contact local human service agencies, the user-stakeholders of public transit, and the general public to solicit input and request participation from individuals or organizations that could potentially be impacted by the coordinated transportation planning process. Appendix A includes documentation and outreach efforts included in this project and the participation in local public meetings. This chapter provides a summary of the outreach efforts and results. Outreach efforts for the local general public and stakeholders included the following:

- One general public meeting and stakeholder workshop;
- One public meeting focused on senior needs;
- A survey of the current the RIDE and Care-A-Van passengers; and
- A survey opportunity for the general public.

## GENERAL PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

CFC and Sitka Tribe of Alaska hosted one local hearing and stakeholder workshop on August 28, 2019, to discuss unmet transportation needs and gaps in service for older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and the general public. The local manager of the Care-A-Van paratransit program) also attended and participated.

Invitations to the meeting were distributed via email to organizations in Sitka who represent older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and/or the general public. The general public was invited and notified of the meeting through multiple large block ads and public service public announcements in the Daily Sitka Sentinel newspaper (see Appendix for newspaper announcements) and through notices on Facebook.

A list of meeting participants is included in the Appendix. Also included are the handouts distributed at the meeting, which included some history and needs of the transit/paratransit system, and meeting notes detailing some public comments.

During the workshop, the facilitator dedicated a portion of the time to defining coordinated transportation and explaining its potential benefits. She outlined basic coordination aspects for the stakeholders who were becoming involved for the first time, as well as intermediate level coordination aspects that could be used to help Sitka progress toward new levels of coordinated transportation efficiencies.

Following the presentation, the workshop members were asked to identify public and human service agency transportation and mobility issues, successes, and challenges in Sitka. Discussions focused on transportation for the general public, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

The transportation needs, gaps, duplications, and challenges discussed during the public meeting are included in the summary section at the end of this chapter.



## HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY/SENIOR CENTER AND GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEYS

A survey of the general public, human service agency/senior center clients, and current public transit riders was conducted from July 1, 2019, through Aug. 5, 2019. The same survey was distributed to each constituency, and a copy of the survey and the survey results is included in the Appendix. The survey was published online using Survey Monkey, and it was advertised on several occasions through the Daily Sitka Sentinel (daily newspaper), KCAW-Raven Radio's community calendar (about every 3-4 days), on the RideSitka.com website (<http://www.ridesitka.com>) and on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SitkaRide>), and shared in several Sitka groups).

Paper copies of the survey also were distributed on the RIDE and Care-A-Van buses. Data from the paper copies of the survey were manually inputted into the Survey Monkey site so we could use the site's data analysis features. To encourage survey participation, we offered a random drawing for one \$100 and two \$50 gift cards from Sea Mart grocery store. In all, we received 60 survey responses.

**Ridership frequency** — On this question, the top response was Occasionally with 40.00 percent. The next response was a tie between 3-5 times per week and Not At All (18.33 percent each), followed by a tie between Every Day and 1-2 times per week (11.67 percent each).

**Type of RIDE used** — In this category, the majority of people used the RIDE fixed-route service (blue buses) with 86.54 percent. There were 7.69 percent who used the Care-A-Van paratransit service (white buses), and 5.77 percent used both.

**Main reasons to use the RIDE/Care-A-Van** — This question allowed multiple responses, and the top result was Work (56.86 percent). The next response was Shopping (50.98 percent), followed by Doctor's Appointment (37.25 percent), Social (35.29 percent), Other (27.45 percent), and a three-way tie between Social Service Agency Appointment, Cultural Events, and School (5.88 percent each).

**Benefit from using public transit/paratransit in Sitka** — Most respondents (53.45 percent) said having public transit/paratransit services in Sitka was very important in their daily lives. The next responses were moderately important in my daily life (18.97 percent), and a tie between important for my daily life and not important in my daily life (13.79 percent each).

**Adequacy of hours and days of service** — The next two questions asked for a yes/no response, with people responding no being able to add comments about how their needs weren't being met. There were 33 Yes responses and 19 No responses on the question about the current hours of bus service meeting transportation needs, and there were 23 Yes responses and 28 No responses to the question about the current days of services meeting people's needs (if an answer wasn't Yes or No, but it listed a need, it was recorded as a No response).

Some people who answered Yes replied with comments about the need for more service. The most common comments were about the need to have transit service later at night on weekdays, with many people suggesting running until 9 or 10 p.m. though a couple said they work jobs that end at midnight. A couple of people also asked for earlier morning service, especially in the summer. Many people also said they'd like to see at more weekend service, especially on Saturdays so they can shop or go to various local trailheads to hike. Several others noted they'd like to be able to go to church on Sundays. A couple of Care-A-Van users asked that limited weekend hours be expanded, if possible.

**Days you use public transit/paratransit service** — The next question asked which days people

used the RIDE/Care-A-Van services, and the five weekdays all had responses of more than 70 percent (people could choose more than one answer). The top day was Wednesday (84.78 percent), followed by Tuesday (80.43 percent), Friday (76.09 percent), Monday (73.91 percent), and Thursday (71.74 percent). People who use the Care-A-Van on weekends said they use it more on Sunday (4.35 percent) than Saturday (2.17 percent). Please note that these percentages are low because people who use the RIDE (blue buses), which don't run on weekends, also answered this question and skewed the results.

**Adequacy of routes getting people where they need to go** — This question was similar to the hours and days of service adequacy questions above, where people answered yes or no, then commented on what needs weren't being met. Nearly everybody said the routes were adequate (48 Yes, 7 No), but even some of the people who answered Yes said they'd like to see the Green Line go to the airport (either for work or because they have B&B guests). A few people said they have problems with some of the long distances between stops, especially if they're carrying groceries or a toddler. A couple of respondents said they live uphill from their closest bus stop, which makes carrying groceries difficult.

**Type of passes purchased** — The top response for this question was Do Not Purchase Bus Pass (37.93 percent), followed by Multiple-Ride Punch Card (31.03 percent), a One-Way Single Ride Pass (17.24 percent), and Monthly Pass (13.79 percent).

**How people travel to work, training, appointments, activities** — This was a question where people could select more than one response. The top answer was the RIDE (blue buses) with 56.90 percent, followed by walk (48.28 percent), drive yourself (43.10 percent), ride with a friend (25.86 percent), taxi cab (18.97 percent), bicycle (15.52 percent), the Care-A-Van white buses (12.07 percent), other (5.17 percent), and don't go (3.45 percent).

**Rank priorities for the RIDE to expand services, if funding becomes available** — This question asked people to rank four priority choices for expanding services. Most people only ranked three of the four choices (the fourth was Other), and some people only picked one priority.

Adding limited services on Saturday and Sunday (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) was the top priority (45.28 percent ranked it No. 1), with full Saturday service (6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.) having the next highest No. 1 rankings (38.30 percent). Other expanded services had 13.66 percent No. 1 rankings, followed by expanded weekday service (to 11 p.m. on M-F) had 11.76 percent No. 1 rankings. Expanded weekday service had the highest No. 2 rankings (43.14 percent), followed by full Saturday service (31.91 percent), and limited Saturday/Sunday service (18.87 percent). Expanded weekday service had the highest No. 3 rankings at 31.37 percent, followed by limited Saturday/Sunday service (26.42 percent) and full Saturday service (25.53 percent).

**A new question: How much funding should the City and Borough of Sitka contribute to the RIDE** — This question told riders that the RIDE currently has a budget of about \$700,000 a year and the City and Borough of Sitka only contributes about \$55,000 to that total. It asked people what level of funding they thought the city should contribute. The top answer was \$100,000 (39.29 percent), followed by the current \$55,000 (21.43 percent), \$150,000 (12.50 percent), no funding (10.71 percent), \$200,000 (8.93 percent), and \$250,000 or more a year (7.14 percent).

**Best way to inform people about the RIDE/Care-A-Van service** — This was another question that allowed multiple responses. The top answer was Facebook or other social media (60.34 percent), followed by website (55.17 percent), newspaper (41.38 percent), rider guide (36.21 percent), radio (27.59 percent), a flier/poster inside the bus (25.86 percent), and the least effective means was television (5.17 percent).

**Age of survey takers** — The top age group to respond to the survey was age 30-49 (35.59 percent), followed by age 50-64 (33.90 percent), age 65 or older (18.64 percent), and age 19-29 (11.67 percent). We received zero surveys from people age 18 or younger, so the next time this plan is updated it is suggested some paper copies of the surveys be placed in the local high schools and middle schools to make it easier for students to respond.

**Annual household income** — The top income group using the RIDE/Care-A-Van service was those making \$50,000 or more a year (33.33 percent). The next income group was those making \$25,000 to \$49,999 (26.79 percent), followed by \$10,000 to \$24,999 (21.43 percent), and those making \$9,999 or less (17.86 percent).

## **SUMMARY OF UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND GAPS IN SERVICE:**

The following list of unmet transportation needs and gaps in service is based on comments made at our public meetings, as part of the survey process, and through email. Many of these needs, even those mentioned as far back as 2010 or in forums since that time, still aren't being met due to funding issues.

- **Employment Related Transportation:**
  - Weekend transportation, early morning (before 6:30 a.m.), and late evening weekday transportation (at least until 10 p.m.) is needed to support shift workers at both smaller employment centers and at major employers (such as the SEARHC hospital and health care campus).
  - Passengers need a shorter ride time on the fixed-route service. Currently, some people feel that transfers and indirect service on the routes make public transit inconvenient.
- **Child Care and Youth Transportation Issues:**
  - Transportation is needed to childcare centers that is convenient enough to allow parents to drop off a child before continuing on the transportation provider to the parent's worksite. Currently, even when the fixed route serves the childcare center, the nature of a fixed-route schedule and the frequency of service do not allow the parent time to utilize the bus for childcare and employment.
  - Afterschool transportation for students is needed and no longer efficiently provided. An option for students to go home after afterschool programs (around 7:30 p.m.) is needed.
  - Mount Edgecumbe High School students have fewer hours in town for recreation and some would prefer to ride a vehicle rather than spend time walking into town.
- **Accessible Transportation Issues:**
  - Public transit routes do not go into enough neighborhoods where residents could conveniently access bus stops.
  - Long-term care consumers and other hospital patients need more affordable transportation between the airport and ferry and the hospitals (non-stretcher transport).
- **Vehicles and Capacity:**
  - Sitka's human services agencies need to replace aging small vehicles (i.e., sedans and minivans), which they use for trips with single or few client passengers.



- **Lower Fares for Transportation:**
  - Individuals with low incomes need a bus pass option that offers a discount but costs less than \$50.00 per month for the general public. Many passengers cannot afford to spend \$50.00 all at once on a bus pass, so they purchase daily passes and cannot use the discount offered with the multi-trip passes.
  - Affordable transportation options to and from the airport for early and late flights are needed.
  - Currently, private taxis serve the airport, but many people cannot afford taxi fare.
- **Limited Hours and Days of Service:**
  - Transportation service during the weekday early morning hours (before 6:30 a.m.) to serve individuals with early appointments.
  - Weekend transportation service to support, shopping, and social trip purposes. Popular weekend destinations include downtown Sitka, church, library, skatepark, movies, and Market Center.
  - Weekday evening transit service until after 10 p.m. to support social and entertainment trip purposes.
- \* **Improved Local Government and other Support and Information Sharing:**
  - **Human service agencies and transportation providers need to advocate for an increase in local government financial support of public transportation in Sitka.**
  - **Human service agencies and all organizations need to improve information sharing about the transportation services offered in Sitka.**
  - **Healthy Community:**
    - The general public would like to have an option to use public transit to access recreational trails for hiking and biking. Current bus routes do not access some trailheads.

## **CHALLENGES TO COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION**

Results of the stakeholder and public meetings indicated the following challenges to meeting the unmet transportation needs and gaps in service through coordination:

- Currently, human service agencies are providing transportation for their clients because they need to fill gaps. However, many of those agencies are not aware of the actual fully allocated cost for providing those trips. Gathering information about the actual costs for providing transportation was a time consuming, and in some cases impossible, task for many of the human service agencies.
- One of the primary challenges to improving transportation in Sitka is the lack of local government's financial participation. Public transit receives very limited financial support from the City and Borough of Sitka. Transportation advocates would like to explore the possibility of receiving a portion of the City sales tax, millage/property tax, or cruise ship head tax.
- The RIDE would like to expand into evening hours and weekend services with its fixed

routes (and paratransit). Without significant increases in local government financial contribution, such expansion to become a “comprehensive” public transit system is not likely to become a reality. Without the RIDE becoming “comprehensive” by providing at least six days a week and evening hours, Sitka residents cannot decide to “rely” upon public transit.

While there are challenges to implementing coordination among varied transportation providers, services, and funding sources, it is important to note that transportation coordination is successfully implemented throughout the country, and certain aspects of coordination already exist in Sitka. Therefore, issues such as guidelines for the use of funding and vehicles, unique needs presented by different populations served, should challenge, but not stop, a coordination effort. There are many resources available to assist communities as they coordinate transportation.

The next chapter outlines potential coordinated transportation strategies to address the needs and gaps in transportation service that were identified through outreach efforts.

## COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### OVERVIEW

For the 2020-2025 Plan, Any reader of this plan must know that no agency in Sitka, not the public transit providers, nor any other agency, is funded by a grant to, or required by any laws to implement this plan. This plan discusses possible strategies, and provides the background data and a planned focus for continued work in Sitka on better use of transit and human service agency transportation resources. This plan is not a promise of implementation; it is a source of knowledge and a shared vision of where coordination efforts in Sitka may try to go in the future. (Plan coverage is dated July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2025.)

The three primary transit providers in Sitka (CFC, Sitka Tribe, and SESS) have other transit plans and work obligations (per funding sources) that fully occupy their current staff resources. The human service agencies in Sitka also have other mandates and goals that occupy their staff. However, as all of these agencies find staffing resources, unmet client needs, or funding opportunities, they can turn to this Plan to guide their shared efforts to improve transportation in Sitka for human service clients as well as the general public.

In general, the concept of coordination in Sitka has widespread support from local human service agencies and transportation providers. Several organizations have already experienced the benefit of coordinating to purchase vehicles and share operating expenses. Bringing new levels of coordination into reality will require additional support from local funding sources. It also will require a constant effort for the human service agencies and public and private transportation providers throughout the area to be aware of the benefits of sharing transportation resources and proactively coordinating. Creating efficiencies in this manner will permit organizations to utilize resources in a manner that creates will permit them to use their resources to benefit the most people.

There are numerous success stories in Sitka that demonstrate the impact of coordinating resources, including the public transit fixed routes and complementary paratransit services that are operated cooperatively by Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Center for Community, and Southeast Senior Services, using a variety of funding sources funneled variously through the three partners. Another coordination success is the grant writing success of CFC in obtaining small vehicles for use by human service agencies, such as the 2019 van obtained by CFC and then “leased” to Youth Advocates of Sitka for that agency’s programs. In 2019, CFC also succeeded in getting a grant –and new 2019 station wagon–for its own program of services to persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

While these are excellent examples of coordination, the stakeholders who participated in this study indicated a willingness to continue to expand and enhance local efforts. The primary goal of transportation providers in Sitka is to fill gaps in transportation services in an effort to improve the services for human services clients and the overall quality of life for Sitkans.

Opportunities for improving the coordination of transportation services must nurture a trusting relationship between participating organizations by clarifying objectives and costs, ultimately facilitating the desire to move and the actual movement of the participants toward a more coordinated approach to transportation and mobility throughout Sitka.



## COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Achieving coordinated transportation goals will take time, effort, and in most situations, additional funding. Therefore, it is recommended that the stakeholders consider the following goals and objectives as a starting point from where they can continue to improve human service agency and public transportation service. Continued discussion about potential coordination strategies and prioritizing coordinated transportation goals will be critical to refining a feasible implementation plan on which to base funding and service design decisions through 2025.

Preliminary principles on which Sitka's coordinated transportation service goals and strategies are based were first developed in 2010, during the creation of the 2010-14 Coordinated Plan, and they are still valid going into the 2020-2025 time period of this plan. They are as follows:

***Principle #1:*** Maintain the successful services and transportation programs and reduce unnecessary gaps and duplications in transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low-incomes, and the general public.

***Principle #2:*** Invest in programs and actions that improve community access to employment, health care, agency sponsored programs, and activities that improve the quality of life for Sitkans.

***Principle #3:*** Provide incentives for projects that emphasize coordination and collaboration.

***Principle #4:*** Assure access, safety, and security for the mobility of individuals, groups, and stakeholders served.

Six goals developed by local transportation stakeholders in 2010 to build upon these founding principles for coordinated transportation are outlined below. These goals have been implemented where funding made it possible in the nine years since 2010. These goals continue to serve well for SFY2021 - 2025. Each goal is supported based on the input provided by participating organizations and the general public.

***Goal #1:*** Improve Awareness of Public and Coordinated Transportation Opportunities and Establish a Shared Community Approach for Improving Transportation Service and Resource Management.

***Goal #2:*** Share Resources and Skill Sets to the Highest Appropriate Level of Benefit for All Participating Organizations.

***Goal #3:*** Enhance Transportation to Support Employment for People with Low-Incomes, Individuals with Disabilities, and the General Public.

***Goal #4:*** Secure Adequate Support to Keep Up With the Increasing Costs of Sustaining Public Transportation Service.

***Goal #5:*** Plan for Realistic Expansion Existing Public and Human Service Agency Transportation Service.

***Goal #6:*** Increase and Improve Accessible Services for Individuals with Disabilities and People with Low Incomes.

Priorities for human services transportation seem not to have changed much since the development of the 2010-14 plan, when the consulting team presented preliminary coordinated transportation objectives based on the needs assessment and outreach efforts. Stakeholder human services agencies were asked to prioritize each of the objectives over the five-year planning horizon. Stakeholders who were not able to attend the meeting were invited to participate by responding to an email. Through this prioritization exercise, the study participants ranked coordinated transportation objectives in order of priority.

Two factors were considered when determining the appropriate level of priority for each objective and strategy. First, stakeholders prioritized strategies based on the perceived level of need. Second, transportation service providers evaluated the feasibility of implementing each strategy based on existing local capital and operating resources, funding, and facilities. Priorities are described below in terms of Immediate, short-term, mid-term, and long-term. Goals may be achieved through the stated objectives and strategies or through a newly devised strategy created by the local stakeholders.

Implementation priorities are based on current conditions and are subject to change. For example, strategies that are listed as immediate in this plan but lack sufficient staffing to support immediate implementation may be re-categorized as short- or long-term until appropriate staffing levels can realistically be achieved. Similarly, if funding for a long-term strategy is achieved sooner than expected, that strategy will be re-categorized and implemented sooner. Local human service agencies and transportation providers are encouraged to re-evaluate objectives and Implementation Strategies to be Explored for feasibility on at least an annual basis.

**OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES TO BE EXPLORED**

The following sections outline the objectives and implementation strategies to be explored as local human service agencies and transportation providers work toward achieving the stated coordinated transportation goals and or refining them as appropriate to meet changing needs of the community.

**Goal #1: Improve Awareness of Public and Coordinated Transportation Opportunities and Establish a Shared Community Approach for Improving Transportation Service and Resource Management.**

**Objective 1.1: Continue the activities of the Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee as the forum and clearinghouse for the coordination of local public transit services and human services transportation issues, networking, and mutual support.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**1.1.1:** Twice a year, request participation in the Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee from key stakeholders in Sitka; human service agencies, transportation agencies, educational entities, health-care providers, and tribal and city governments.

Priority:	Immediate and on-going
Parties Responsible:	All key human service agency and public transportation stakeholders select a representative of their organization to actively participate in the Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee. The advisory committee will be an advisory body for the coordinated transportation effort in Sitka.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership on the RIDE or Care-A-Van as members begin to work together and awareness of available services and unmet needs improves.

Performance Measures:	Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee re-invites key stakeholder participation at meetings to be held at least twice per state fiscal year.
Potential Costs:	No additional funding required if the advisory committee is invited and meetings convened by the lead public transit agency.

**Objective 1.2: Establish a Framework for Coordinating Transportation Resources to Maximize the Capacity and Effectiveness of Existing Resources.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**1.2.1:** Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)/Contracts with all human service agency, public, and private transportation service providers that are participating in the coordinated effort. The MOUs should include the specific coordination activities in which the organization will participate. All transportation providers should share trip schedules and vehicle availability (use the vehicle utilization chart in this document as a starting point).

One planned step as of Plan publication: fixed-route RIDE to work with Mt. Edgecumbe high school administration to facilitate their students using the RIDE services when coming into downtown or to Sitka high school for classes or events.

Priority/Implementation:	Mid-Term.
Parties Responsible:	Local public, private, and human service agency transportation providers.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time involved in preparing and negotiating MOUs.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership and productivity through shared schedules if empty seats are filled on existing trips.
Performance Measures:	Number of MOUs/Contracts developed; Number of agencies sharing schedules; Dollars saved in bulk purchases; and Number of shared rides.
Potential Costs:	No additional costs. For some agencies new agreements to share trips could result in overall cost containment.

**1.2.2:** Use existing the RIDE or other websites to improve access to transportation information and services. Possibly develop a blog about unmet transportation needs. A blog is an effective way to share information with passengers and the community.

Priority:	Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA, SESS and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time involved in setting up the website information, monitoring and responding to the blog, and updating the site.

Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership in response to improved access to information.
Performance Measures:	Set-up webpage and blog; Number of hits on webpage; Number of new young riders (target high school students); Number of new riders on public transportation; and Improved access to community resources.
Potential Costs:	Additional cost for website capability.

**1.2.3:** Educate the public about wheelchair accessibility of all the RIDE fixed-route buses and other human service agency vehicles.

Priority:	Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA, SESS and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time for STA to work with public education opportunities.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership on the RIDE by individuals that require a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
Performance Measures:	Develop outreach/educational materials about Sitka's accessible transportation partners; Number of materials distributed; Number of passengers using wheelchair accessibility features on vehicles; Number of trip requests for passengers who need a wheelchair accessible vehicle; and Improved access to community resources.
Potential Costs:	No additional costs.

## **Goal #2: Share Resources and Skill Sets to the Highest Appropriate Level of Benefit for All Participating Organizations.**

### **Objective 2.1: Seek Opportunities to Share Maintenance Facilities and Specialized Technicians.**

#### Implementation Strategies to be explored:

**2.1.1:** Develop formal agreements to coordinate the use of the planned STA transit maintenance facility and mechanic.

Priority:	Long-Term.
Parties Responsible:	STA should take the lead.



Staffing Implications:	None.
Capital Requirements:	None. (Facility planned)
Ridership Implications:	None.
Performance Measures:	Number of organizations utilizing the facility; Number of road calls; Amount of maintenance costs; Number of major repairs;
Potential Costs:	Costs associated with operating a maintenance program could be shared with coordinating organizations.

## **Objective 2.2: Explore Joint Purchasing Opportunities.**

### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**2.2.1:** Continue to coordinate grant-writing activities for access to transportation resources of all types: planning, administration, operating, and capital.

Priority:	Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	CFC, STA and SESS.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time for investigating opportunities and developing grant applications and eligible programs.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	None.
Performance Measures:	Number of joint grant-writing activities; and, Amount of funding received through joint grant-writing opportunities.
Potential Costs:	Costs are associated with staff time.

## **Goal #3: Enhance Transportation to Support Employment for People with Low-Incomes, Individuals with Disabilities, and the General Public.**

### **Objective 3.1: Find Opportunities to Help Make It Easier for These Residents to Use Public Transit.**

#### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**3.1.1:** Explore funding opportunities to continue a voucher/pass program for human services agency clients that partially subsidizes rides on public transit, which is transportation that will support employment for those clients.

Priority:	Mid- to Long-Term.
Parties Responsible:	CFC, STA, SESS and local employers.

Staffing Implications:	Staff time to plan the program and secure grant funding to support it. After set-up, administration of the program should be managed through STA, CFC, or SESS.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	In SFY19, nearly 9,000 rides on fixed route were used by clients of human services agency eligible for the vouchers.
Performance Measures:	Administration of the program planned; Funding for administration secured; Local funding to purchase vouchers secured; Number of vouchers provided after implementation; Client satisfaction.
Potential Costs:	Subsidy for purchasing the vouchers must come from local sources.

#### **Goal #4: Secure Adequate Support to Keep Up With the Increasing Costs of Sustaining Public Transportation Service.**

##### **Objective 4.1: Create Opportunities to Support Existing Public Transportation Service.**

###### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**4.1.1:** Support Sitka Tribe of Alaska's participation in national effort by tribes to favorably influence the funding methodology and amount of federal funding for the federal Tribal Transit program. Support STA's involvement with advocacy regarding the 2019-2020 reauthorization of the Federal Transit Act.

Priority:	Immediate and Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to participate with other tribes, and with Community Transportation Association of America on advocacy efforts.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential increase Tribal Transit funding to Sitka Tribe, allowing possible expansion of services.
Performance Measures:	Increased funding, and favorable funding methodology changes to be included in the 2020 reauthorization of the Federal Transit Act.
Potential Costs:	None known.

**4.1.2:** Develop outreach activities with a focus on attracting new riders to fixed route service. Examples could be appropriate marketing strategies for youth and young adults (i.e., websites, Facebook, presentations at school, or the RIDE public transit as a school project’).

Priority:	Immediate and Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA, CFC, and SESS.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to develop and deploy campaign.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Increase in new riders.
Performance Measures:	Number of new media approaches deployed; Number of new riders on fixed route service; and, Customer/Passenger Satisfaction.
Potential Costs:	Costs for developing marketing materials and new media outlets will be incurred.

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**4.1.3:** Work with other transit providers in Alaska and the Alaska Mobility Coalition to advocate with the Dunleavy Administration and the 2020 Legislature for restoration of State funding for match to community transportation, and for services and small vehicle purchases needed to serve beneficiaries of the Alaska Mental Health Trust.

Priority:	Immediate and Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to participate with other tribal providers and with Alaska Mobility Coalition on advocacy efforts.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential restoration of at least \$30,000 annually in State match to the Sitka transit system’s budget. Potential restoration of services and small capital funding that will enhance services in Sitka, of both transit and the human service agencies. These restorations of funding would prevent reduction of services in SFY2021.
Performance Measures:	Restoration of funding from State.
Potential Costs:	None known.

## **Goal #5: Plan for Realistic Expansion Existing Public and Human Service Agency Transportation Service.**

### **Objective 5.1: Find Ways To Fund Expanded Weekday Hours and Add Weekend Service.**

#### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.1.1:** Explore possible funding sources, if any (eg, local government funding) and select an eligible applicant to apply for funding to expand demand response service, at least for Saturdays.

Priority/Implementation:	Mid- to Long-Term. This opportunity received high ratings from stakeholders for implementing immediately, but would need to follow 4.1. Sections 1 and 2.
Parties Responsible:	Eligible applicant and service provider(s).
Staffing Implications:	None.
Capital Requirements:	Possibility for using existing vehicles for the Saturday service should be explored by preparing an analysis of vehicle utilization from all participating providers (see Chapter III). If new vehicles are required, explore the possibility of applying for Section 5310 (20% local match is required).
Ridership Implications:	None.
Performance Measures:	Local match secured; and Grant application submitted (if any grant funds available). Contract agreements are established; at the fully allocated cost.
Potential Costs:	Costs to be determined by the aspects of the planned service expansion.

### **Objective 5.2: Explore the possibility of expanded hours of public transit service on weekdays.**

#### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.2.1:** Study the feasibility to implement demand response transportation on weekdays after 7:30 p.m. As ridership increases to at least seven passengers per hour, the mode of service could change to point deviation. (Fixed-route service would require complementary paratransit but point deviation does not.) If demand is appropriately documented and funding is secured, expand service to extend from 7:30 p.m. to at least 10 p.m.

Priority:	Long-Term. Expand hours to 10 p.m. within 1 to 5 years.
Parties Responsible:	STA, CFC, and SESS. Service provider could be a private, public, or non-profit operator.



Staffing Implications:	Additional part-time drivers and a scheduler/dispatcher on-duty during all operating hours.
Capital Requirements:	No additional capital requirements if existing human service agency or public transit vehicles can be coordinated. However, existing vehicles may need to be replaced more frequently due to increased operation.
Ridership Implications:	Ridership for the service provider will increase.
Performance Measures:	Determine the most appropriate operator for the service; Identify size of vehicle appropriate to meet demand; Number of trips provided during evenings; Number of no-shows; Number of passengers who are able to maintain employment; and, Customer satisfaction.
Potential Costs:	Expenses will be determined based on administrative expenses, hours and level of service provided.

**Objective 5.2: Improve accessibility to bus shelters for fixed-route stops.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.2.2:** Seek funding to expand the number of accessible bus shelters along the RIDE fixed routes.

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing until shelters are procured.
Parties Responsible:	STA.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE routes.
Performance Measures:	Number of boardings and alightings at new bus stops; and Number of passengers with disabilities on the RIDE.
Potential Costs:	Staff time involved.

**Objective 5.3: Improve accessibility to fixed-route service outside the downtown core by creating more scheduled stop points, and by implementing flag-stop drop-off service**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.3.1:** Open discussions with Dept. of Transportation regarding setting up more designated passenger

stop points both inbound and outbound, on the two State highways: Sawmill Creek Road and Halibut Point Road

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing until more stop points are permitted.
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE routes.
Performance Measures:	Number of boardings and alightings at new bus stops; and Number of passengers with disabilities on the RIDE.
Potential Costs:	Staff time involved.

**5.3.2:** Open discussions with Dept of Transportation regarding fixed-route buses allowing passengers to disembark from the buses by a flag-stop service, on the two State highways (outside the downtown core).

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing until flagstop drop-offs ts are permitted.
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE routes.
Performance Measures:	Increased ridership.
Potential Costs:	Staff time involved.

**5.3.3:** Replace aging fleet of fixed route and paratransit vehicles to reduce operating costs of maintenance and to improve stability and reliability of transportation services to the public.

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	For CFC, raising 20% required capital match.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE buses (some

will be kneeling buses).

Performance Measures: Increased ridership.

Potential Costs: Staff time involved.

**Goal #6: Increase and Improve Accessible Services for Individuals with Disabilities and People with Low Incomes.**

**Objective 6.1: Continue to seek capital and operating funding for cost effective, energy efficient methods to meet specialized transportation needs of particular human service agencies, for persons with disabilities or persons in the low-income category.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**6.1.1:** Seek funding to purchase a small fleet of small vehicles for human service agencies rather than purchasing a large van or cutaway to provide a trip that could be safely and comfortably provided with a smaller, more efficient vehicle.

Priority: Short-Term.

Parties Responsible: CFC, SESS, STA, and local human service agencies.

Staffing Implications: Staff time required to explore funding opportunities and submit grant applications.

Capital Requirements: The Sitka community would work with local agencies to purchase replacement vehicles or supplement existing fleets as necessary with smaller vehicles.

Ridership Implications: More appropriate use of vehicles (smaller vehicles for trips with a few passengers and larger vehicles for more passengers) will increase capacity and allow all providers to provide efficient service for riders.

Performance Measures: Identify funding to purchase small vehicles; and,  
Determine the most appropriate size vehicle mix to meet needs.

Potential Costs: Cost for purchasing vehicle(s) to be determined based upon the type of vehicle(s) required.

## **PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF THE PLAN**

The plan was presented to the Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska on October 2, 2019, at which time a quorum was present. Public comment on the plan was made available during the Council agenda's time for comments. Public comments received in advance of the Council meeting were presented to the Council during the meeting. No amendments were recommended. The plan was adopted with a vote of nine in favor, zero against, and zero absent. Tribal Resolution 2019-107 for the Authorization to Accept the Five-Year Plan for Coordination of Public Transit and Human Services Transportation in Sitka, July 2020 through June 2025, is provided on the following pages. The plan originally was scheduled to be presented to the Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska on September 18, 2019, but an agenda snafu pushed the adoption vote back to the next tribal council meeting.





Sitka Tribe of Alaska  
456 Katlian Street  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
907-747-3207  
Fax: 907-747-4915

**Tribal Council Resolution 2019-107**

Authorization to accept the five-year plan for coordination of Public Transit and Human Services  
Transportation in Sitka

- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska is the federally recognized tribal government for more than 4,445 enrolled tribal citizens in Sitka, Alaska organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 as amended; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska is responsible for the health, safety, welfare and cultural preservation of its tribal citizens and their use of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's traditional territory; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska's traditional territory reflects the lands and waters Historically and presently the stewardship responsibility of the Sheet'ka Kwaan and such are composed of the western side of Baranof Island, the greater reaches of Peril Strait, southwestern portions of Chichagof Island and the myriad islands as well as the waters between these locations; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska currently supports and participates in the Sitka public transit system, by way of in-kind contributions, contracted services, coordinated operation of Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Tribal Transit grant to expand and enhance public transit in Sitka, and the pass through of Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Title VI funds from the Older Americans Act to assist in provision of the Care-A-Van services for the elders of Sitka; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska recognizes that Sitka Public Transit provides economic and social benefits to the community by providing access to school, work, shopping, healthcare, cultural events, and social events; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Public Transit has been engaged in the creation of a Five-Year Plan for continued Coordination of Public Transit and Human Services Transportation in Sitka; including an assessment of resources and needs in transportation, including Sitka local opinion by conducting a public meeting, interviews with key stakeholders, and community-wide surveys; and
- WHEREAS,** the lead transportation staffs of the three primary stakeholders in Sitka Public Transit, namely, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Center for Community, and Southeast Senior Services, have reviewed and endorsed the Plan for Coordination effective July 2020 through June 2025, and recommend its adoption by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Council; and
- WHEREAS,** the lead staff of the three primary stakeholders acknowledge to and advise this Council that the adoption of the 2020-2025 Plan does not require any of the stakeholder agencies to carry out activities suggested in the Plan; rather, the adoption of the Plan presents opportunities to the community of Sitka to better coordinate the provision of transportation services for citizens of our community, and the adoption of the Plan positions the community of Sitka, and various

agencies, to take advantage of various external funding opportunities for which the existence of a community coordination plan is an eligibility criterion; and

**WHEREAS,** the Federal Transit Administration requires the elected governing body of a local government to accept the Plan; and

**WHEREAS,** the Council of Sitka Tribe of Alaska is recognized by the Federal Transit Administration as the elected governing body of a local government; and


**WHEREAS,** the availability of the 2020-2025 Plan for public review has been advertised at least twice via the local newspaper, social media, and the local public radio station's community calendar, and posted on the website, [www.ridesitka.com](http://www.ridesitka.com); and

**WHEREAS,** the Sitka Tribal Council provided opportunity for public comment on the Plan at its regularly scheduled and advertised Council meeting, with the Council having the power to adopt the Plan with recommended revisions based upon public testimony;


**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** the Sitka Tribal Council accept the "Five Year Coordinated Transportation Plan for Human Services in Sitka, for July 2020 through June 2025."

#### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at a duly called and convened meeting of the Tribal Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, held on October 2, 2019, at which a quorum was present by a vote of 9 IN FAVOR, 0 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAIN, 0 ABSENT.

  
KathyHope Erickson – Tribal Chairman

Attest:

  
Nancy Douglas – Tribal Secretary

## GLOSSARY OF COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION TERMS

**Accessibility** – The extent to which facilities are barrier-free and usable by people with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs. (Source: American Public Transportation Association (APTA))

**Accessible vehicle** – A transportation vehicle that does not restrict access and is useable and provides allocated space and/or priority seating for people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

**Accident reports** – The report(s) a driver must complete and submit as directed when involved in an accident, regardless of the severity. Each transportation provider should keep an accident package in each vehicle so that the driver can easily open and follow the directions in the event of an accident. This package should include, but is not limited to, who to call, blank forms for written statements from each passenger describing the accident, blank forms for written driver statement, and written information on what to do immediately following the accident (e.g., make sure each passenger is safe, how to assist all passengers to exit the vehicle, and other pertinent information that may assist the driver and make the situation as stressless as possible for all involved).

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990** – The ADA is wide-ranging federal, civil rights legislation that prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ADA assures that people with disabilities have full access to all public facilities throughout the United States, including transportation. To this end, this legislation defines the responsibilities of, and requirements for, transportation providers to ensure that transportation is accessible to people with disabilities.

**Advocate** – A person or a group that speaks in a supportive manner on behalf of a person or group of people. Transportation advocates speak in support of transportation services for the general public, low-income individuals and families, older adults, and/or those with intellectual disabilities.

**APTA** – American Public Transportation Association, an international organization that represents the transit industry, including bus, rapid transit, and commuter rail.

**Base fare** – The price charged to one adult for one transit ride; excludes transfer charges, zone charges, express service charges, peak period surcharges and reduced fares. (APTA)

**Branding** – Branding is the marketing of a specific name, logo, slogan, and design scheme for a specific service. In coordinated transportation services, a logo and slogan is established and used by all partners to create a unified message.

**Cancellation** – A trip that was scheduled by a service consumer that was later cancelled prior to the vehicle being dispatched to the pickup location.

**Capital assistance** – Financial assistance available from federal, state, or local governments for transit capital expenses (not operating costs); such aid may originate with federal, local or state governments. (APTA)

**Capital costs** – Costs of long-term assets of a public transit system such as property, buildings, and vehicles. (APTA)

**CDL** – Commercial driver's license, a driver's license required to operate any type of vehicle which has a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 lb or more for commercial use; transports quantities of hazardous materials that require warning placards under Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, or that is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver. These regulations apply to all public, private, and coordinated transportation providers.

**Community transportation** – The coordination of transportation resources within a community, in an efficient and effective manner to provide safe and reliable transportation services for all citizens.

**Consolidated human-service transportation system** – Operated in one of 2 ways: 1) A provider that operates its own transportation services and assumes the role of the lead public transportation agency in the community to provide transportation services to area human service agencies on a contractual basis, or 2) a private provider that contracts with the lead public transportation agency in the community to provide transportation services to human service agencies.

**Contract revenue** – The amount of funds paid by an agency on behalf of its clients to a third party for client transportation services. Funds are used to offset the total costs of the transportation program.

**Coordinated human-service transportation system** – Human service agencies and/or transit systems cooperating to coordinate some aspect of transportation, such as passenger trips, the sharing of vehicles, schedules, personnel, and maintenance facilities. May also include the consolidation of services, and coordination of purchasing, training, and grant writing, as appropriate.

**CTAC** – Coordinated Transportation Advisory Committee, a committee established to advise the governing board of a coordinated transportation program.

**Days and hours of service** – Published days and hours that transportation services are provided to the general public and/or an agency's clients. It is advisable to include these in brochures and websites to help increase ridership.

**Demand-responsive system** – Any system of transporting individuals, including the provision of designated public transportation service by public entities and the provision of transportation service by private entities, including, but not limited to, specific public transportation service, which is not a fixed-route system. (FTA)

**Donation (as used in transit)** – A contribution to a transportation provider in place of a set fare either solicited or encouraged.

**Fare(s)** – The price paid by passengers for their one-way trip with a transportation provider. Fares can be paid by cash (usually exact change is required), token, ticket, transfer, voucher, pass or other acceptable means as established by the transportation provider.

**Farebox revenue** – Total revenue collected, including cash, token, ticket, transfer, voucher pass, or other acceptable means as established by the transportation provider in a timeframe, usually reported daily. Farebox collections are usually reported monthly, quarterly, or annually in the transportation provider's financial data. It is also known as passenger revenue.



**Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** – A division of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers federal funding programs for public transportation organizations.

**Financial data** – Financial data includes, but is not limited to, the charges and costs of providing services (operating and capital), revenues generated from services (farebox and contract revenues), and revenues from other sources (grants and local match).

**Human services transportation system** – A transportation system, which provides transportation services exclusively to the clients of human services agencies.

**Local match** – Funds required by a funding source to match the money awarded. Usually a percentage of the overall costs associated with the project. An example would be a 20-percent match is usually required for capital purchases made with Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 grant.

**No show** – Term used to describe a scheduled trip that was not cancelled by the passenger but when the driver arrived to pick up the passenger, he or she was not available for the trip.

**On-time performance** – Refers to the percent of scheduled trips that were provided within the pickup window (usually 15-30 minutes before or after the scheduled pickup time).

**Outreach** – Efforts by the individual members of the CTAC, the governing board, or its agents to share ideas or practices with other organizations, groups, specific audience and the general public. Outreach includes the education of its audience about the benefits of transportation services for all segments of the population. It also includes listening to feedback to assure services are meeting the transportation needs of the community.

**Public hearing** – A public hearing is a formal meeting held to set aside time for public testimony on a particular subject matter for which a notice was published in the official newspaper or a common website of the region. It is a mandatory meeting if required by a funding source and must meet state public access laws, if applicable.

**Public meeting** – A public meeting is held to notify the public of a new service or happening within the coordinated transportation program. A public meeting is held to notify the public about a change that comes about as a result of a public hearing. These meetings must meet state public access laws, if applicable.

**Purchasing agency** – An organization or human service agency that purchases transportation services from a third party for its clients.

**Ridership change(s)** – Changes in the level of passengers transported within a measurable time period. Changes are usually measured as either increases or decreases.

**RTAP** – Rural Transit Assistance Program, a program of the Federal Transit Administration, with both a National component and a State component, dedicated to creating rural transit solutions through technical assistance, partner collaboration and free training and other transit industry products.

**Service consumer** – Any individual who uses the transportation services for transportation to origins and destinations, regardless of whether or not a fare was rendered to the driver.

**Transportation provider** – An organization, company, human service agency, or other entity that provides transit services for its clients and/or the general public either on a donation or fare basis.



*Sitka Tribe of Alaska Transit Director Gerry Hope and Center for Community Transportation Program Administrator Connie Sipe discuss the RIDE public transit program during a public meeting on Aug. 28, 2019, at Harrigan Centennial Hall in Sitka.*

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This Five-Year Plan for Coordination of Public and Human Services Transportation for Sitka contains an evaluation of community characteristics, a stakeholder assessment, an inventory of existing transportation services, and a list of goals and priorities. It also provides a description of the unmet transportation needs in the region as determined through various analytical methods such as updates on prior human service agency and transportation provider interviews, demographic research, local public meetings, and conversations with local stakeholders. This planning effort is the foundation for a series of approaches to address current and projected unmet transportation needs for people with low incomes, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. The intent of this document is to create a guide for local decision-makers as they consider advances in the coordination of transportation resources within Sitka.

This five-year plan meets the requirements for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) required local coordinated transportation plan as set forth in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act ("FAST"). 49 U.S.C. Section 5310, signed into law in December 2015. The FAST Act succeeded the previous federal transit authorization, called MAP-21, and kept the MAP-21 requirements for coordination planning for federally funded projects.

Any reader of this plan must know that no agency in Sitka, not the public transit providers, nor any other agency is funded by a grant, or required by any laws to implement this plan. This plan discusses possible strategies, and provides the background data and a planned focus for continued work in Sitka on better use of transit and human service agency transportation resources. This plan is not a promise of implementation; it is a source of knowledge and a shared vision of where coordination efforts in Sitka may try to go in the future.

The planning process was undertaken by the Center for Community (CFC) and Sitka Tribe of Alaska. The three primary transit providers in Sitka (CFC, Sitka Tribe, and SESS-Southeast Senior Services) have other transit plans and work obligations (per funding sources) that fully occupy their current staff resources. The human service agencies in Sitka also have other mandates and goals that occupy their staff. However, as all of these agencies find staffing resources, unmet client needs, or funding opportunities, they can turn to this Plan to guide their shared efforts to improve transportation in Sitka for human service clients as well as the general public.

## **Plan for July of 2020 through June of 2025.**

This is Sitka's fourth public transit-human services coordinated transportation plan. It is the second updated plan built upon what was Sitka's first "professional" coordination plan for the period of July 2010 through June 2015. This new plan replaces the Plan for the Period of July 2015 through June 2020.

The objectives for this planning effort are to more accurately and carefully (1) establish the current and future needs of Sitkans and visitors to Sitka for community transportation and gaps in existing service, (2) determine the resources available and lacking to meet the needs, (3) create strategies to develop public transit, human services transport, and private sector transport options to fill gaps, and (4) develop the most effective means and models for coordinating (sharing) resources.

## WHY A COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN?

In December 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act ("FAST", which reauthorized the Surface Transportation Act. As part of this reauthorization, grantees under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310), Formula Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311), and Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339) grant programs must meet certain requirements in order to receive funding through FAST.

In addition to federal funds available through the FAST Act, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities/Alaska Community Transit program offers grants through the Alaska Mental Health Trust program to nonprofit and governmental organizations that serve Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries. A coordinated public transportation plan allows us to maximize our resources while eliminating gaps in service.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the FAST Act requirements is that projects from the programs listed above must be part of a "locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan." This transportation plan is required to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation services, human services providers, and the general public.

Transportation coordination has been increasing across the nation because the benefits of coordination are clear. According to the Federal Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility's (CCAM) United We Ride information, nationally, \$700 million could be saved if transportation providers would coordinate their individual resources which are dedicated to providing transportation. This conservative estimate is based on a study conducted by the National Academy of Science's Transportation Research Board (TRB), but it highlights the fact that transportation resources (funding, people, vehicles, and services) could be more effectively utilized to provide more transportation for communities.

Coordinated transportation is now an eligibility requirement for the following FTA grant programs:

**Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)** – This program (49 U.S.C. Section 5310/FAST ACT Section 3006) is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. States apply for funds on behalf of local government authorities, private nonprofit agencies, and other public transportation providers. Capital projects are eligible for funding. Most funds are used to purchase vehicles, but other eligible expenses include acquiring transportation services under contract, lease or other arrangements, operating assistance, and state program administration..

**Formula for Grants for Rural Areas (Section 5311)** – This program (49 U.S.C. Section 5311/FAST Act Section 3007) provides capital, planning, and operating assistance to states and Indian tribes to support public transportation in rural areas with populations less than 50,000, where many residents often rely on public transit to reach their destinations. States and Indian tribes apply for funds, with states applying on behalf of local government agencies, private nonprofit agencies, and other public transportation providers. Planning, capital, operating, job access and reverse commute projects are eligible for funding, and so is the acquisition of public transportation services. Section 5311 incorporates low-income populations as a formula factor.

**Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339)** – This program (49 U.S.C. Section 5339/ FAST Act Section 3017 provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. States and designated recipients that operate or allocate funding to fixed-route operators apply for funds on behalf of public agencies and private nonprofit organizations engaged in public transportation, including those providing services open to a segment of the general public, as defined by age, disability or low income.

**Alaska Mental Health Trust Program** – The State of Alaska established the Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHT) to channel revenues earned from lands deeded to the state by the federal government expressly for the benefit of Alaskans who experience mental illness. Each year the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority funds the Coordinated/Non-coordinated Transportation Program for the benefit of all the beneficiaries identified by the trust’s board of directors, including those with mental illness, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer’s and other dementias, chronic alcoholism, and traumatic brain injury. At times the Alaska Legislature also adds a contribution from the state’s general funds through the capital budget. Nonprofits and governmental organizations that serve AMHT beneficiaries are eligible to receive funds. Planning, limited operating or start-up projects, purchase of rides (such as through cab vouchers), the purchase or repair of vehicles, equipment and technology, and match for federal transportation projects all are eligible to receive AMHT funds. ([http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdpnlng/transit/hs\\_funding\\_amht.shtml](http://dot.alaska.gov/stwdpnlng/transit/hs_funding_amht.shtml))

One of the prerequisites to apply for funding under these federal FAST Act and state AMHT programs is participation in the creation of a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This five-year human services and public transportation coordination plan is the first step for Sitka toward satisfying that application requirement. The plan is a living document that may be amended as new organizations join the effort in future years.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This report contains information gathered from a variety of sources to help support the key findings and recommendations emerging from this plan. The community background and demographics sections include information gathered from the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Division of Community and Regional Affairs community profile database, the Sitka Economic Development Association (SEDA) Sitka, Alaska, and its recent publication, McDowell Economic Profile Report 2019, the City of Sitka Comprehensive Plan 2030, and various databases of the U.S. Census Bureau, including the Bureau’s American Community Survey. In addition, other information for these sections was obtained from national census and weather data, and from state economic and human services data.

For the inventory of resources and services and gaps in service sections, each coordinated group member was asked to update prior gathered data. This helped us get an idea about what services already are provided in Sitka, including fixed-route public buses, paratransit, and other transportation services provided or sponsored by social service agencies in town.

Each coordination group members were invited to the public and stakeholders’ meeting on August 28, 2019. A second public meeting focused on senior citizen transportation needs was held during lunch time at the Swan Lake Senior Center of August 29, 2019. The general public participated in the planning process through these two community meetings and a community





*Sitka community members read handouts while listening to presentations about the RIDE public transit service during a public meeting on Aug. 28, 2019.*

survey posted online and distributed on the RIDE and Care-A-Van buses, and an opportunity to comment on or testify about the final version of the plan. Our outreach included newspaper press releases, radio PSAs, Facebook, and more.

Once we had our stakeholder and community input, the draft version of the plan was made final. Finally, a resolution was submitted to our local governmental agency (the governing Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska) for approval.



# Community Background

The City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, is a town of just under 9,000 people (give or take a few each year) located on the western coast of Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska. Sitka's population is on a gradual decline as of SFY2020, with several significant issues affecting a downward population trend.

According to the Technical Draft of the City of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan 2030, these are the issues around population of our community.

## Migration and an Aging Population

Arguably the most significant issues facing Sitka today are:

- There are a shrinking number of child-bearing age residents and children in Sitka – resulting in more deaths than births in the future.
- More people are moving away from rather than moving to Sitka.
- The number of Sitkans age 65 and older, and especially those age 80+, is projected to grow rapidly over the next 25 years.

Sitka was Alaska's original capital, until Juneau became capital in 1906, and features a rich mixture of Tlingit, Russian and American culture. Sitka is the only large community on Baranof Island, with most of the other communities being small fishing villages such as Port Alexander, Port Armstrong, Port Walker, Baranof Warm Springs, and a few fish camps. Sitka and most of the rest of the Southeast Alaska region are located in the Tongass National Forest, and the Sitka National Historical Park (one of the nation's smallest national parks) is located near downtown Sitka.

The City and Borough of Sitka, which includes almost all of Baranof Island (except a small sliver near Port Alexander) and part of nearby Chichagof Island, is the largest city in the United States by land area (2,870 square miles), water area (1,941 square miles) and total area (4,811 square miles). Sitka is larger than the areas of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. However, the core part of Sitka only has about 14 miles of paved road from end to end along the coast and barely extends more than a mile or so from the shore due to mountains that rise out of the sea. Most of Sitka's urban core is within a two-square-mile radius of downtown, making it a popular location for walkers and bikers. Sitka is 93 air miles SSW from the state capital in Juneau, 590 air miles SE from Anchorage, and 850 air miles NW of Seattle.

Sitka is located in a temperate rain forest, which means there's usually a misty rain falling much of the year but the temperatures are cool and mild. The average annual rainfall in Sitka is 86.72 inches, and the average annual snowfall is 33 inches. August typically is Sitka's warmest month, with an average high of 62 degrees and an average low of 53 degrees and an average rainfall of 6.85 inches. January usually is the coldest month, with an average high of 40 degrees, an average low of 32 degrees, and average rainfall of 8.39 inches and average snowfall of 10 inches. The sidewalks can be difficult to walk during the winter because of frequent freezing rain turning to ice.

Being located on an island, Sitka is off of Alaska's road system. There are short roads to get around town, but no road connections to other communities. The state-operated Rocky Gutierrez Airport features several daily Boeing 737 flights from Alaska Airlines, with Delta Airlines providing seasonal summer service between Sitka and Seattle, along with other commercial and charter flights using



*Center for Community Transit Program Administrator Connie Sipe gets feedback about the Care-A-Van paratransit program from Sitka residents during lunch on Aug. 29, 2019, at the Swan Lake Senior Center.*

smaller planes. The Alaska Marine Highway System, aka the state ferry or Blue Canoe, provides passenger and car ferry service to Sitka once or twice a week, depending on the season or vessel repair/maintenance status. Sitka gets most of its freight by barge from two companies, Samson Tug and Barge and Alaska Marine Lines/Northland Services. When people travel from Sitka, they usually go to Juneau, Ketchikan, Anchorage, Seattle, or one of the nearby villages in the region (Kake, Angoon, Hoonah, etc.).

Sitka is the only Alaska community to hold at the same time a Bicycle Friendly Community designation from the League of American Bicyclists (bronze 2008, bronze 2012, and silver 2016) and a Walk Friendly Community designation from the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center's Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (bronze 2013 and bronze 2017). Bicycle Friendly Community designations are for four years, and Walk Friendly Community designations are for five years, but communities can reapply before their current designation ends. According to the 2011-15 five-year average from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Sitka has the highest percentage of people who bike to work of any community in Alaska with more than 750 population (5.2 percent, more than 10 times the national average and five times the state average). Sitka also has one of the highest percentages of people who walk to work of any community in Alaska (15.1 percent). Alaska has the highest percentage of walking commuters of any state (6.0 percent) because so many of Alaska's communities are off the road system and small.

# Service Provider Capabilities

## OVERVIEW

Evaluation of service provider capabilities and the structure of transportation resources in Sitka provides coordinated transportation planners with the necessary foundation for implementing changes that will complete and improve the network of transportation resources. Multiple components of community outreach activities were used to encourage public and human service agency transportation providers and users to participate in the coordination planning efforts, to include focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

An understanding of existing resources, vehicle utilization, and financial information is necessary prior to implementation of new coordinated approaches to service for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes. The summary and vehicle utilization tables at the end of this chapter provide an overview of the vehicle inventories and utilization, hours of service, and passenger eligibility for each of the participating organizations (where information was provided by those organizations).

The ultimate goal for organizations in Sitka that provide, purchase, or use transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and the general public is to improve upon the existing network of services to create new efficiencies so that programs can provide more service with the existing level of funding. If services are to be expanded in the future, additional funding will be necessary. This document outlines several coordination strategies to be explored that can be accomplished through coordination of existing resources as well as strategies that can only be implemented with additional funding.

Certain coordinated transportation stakeholders are eligible for additional funding through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 Program, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities; Section 5311 Program, Formula for Grants for Rural Areas; Section 5339 Program, Bus and Bus Facilities; and through the Alaska Mental Health Trust Program. Criteria for eligible applicants to the Section 5311 and 5339 programs are as follows:

- Public entities, including tribes, providing public transit services; or,
- Private, nonprofit entities designated by local government to provide public transit services.

Criteria for eligible applicants to Section 5310 are as follows:

- Private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporations;
- Public bodies identified by the state as lead agencies in a coordination project; or
- Public bodies that certify that no private, nonprofit corporations exist within their jurisdiction for the provision of elderly and disabled transportation.

Organizations that are not eligible applicants for Section 5310 or state AMHT funds may still benefit from those programs through agreements with eligible organizations and they should seek partnerships and formal contractual agreements with an eligible applicant in order to achieve the coordinated transportation goals.

## INVENTORY OF SERVICES AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Key public and human service agency transportation stakeholders in Sitka were invited to update the prior Plan's information about the existing transportation resources utilized for their consumers.



Stakeholders that provide transportation described their services and resources. Other organizations that purchase trips from a third-party provider or arrange transportation on behalf of their consumers expressed several common interests regarding the unmet transportation needs of their consumers and the general public in Sitka. Below is a list of the stakeholder organizations that provided updated information in 2019.

- Center for Community, Employment Enhancement Program
- Center for Community, Services for Persons with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities
- Center for Community, Infant Learning and Parents as Teachers
- SAIL (Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Inc.)
- Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska, the RIDE, (FTA to tribe grant)
- Swan Lake Senior Center, Care-A-Van and the RIDE paratransit contractor
- Youth Advocates of Sitka (YAS)

## **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES BY ORGANIZATION**

The following paragraphs take a consumer or public transportation-focused view of the stakeholder organizations that participated in the interview process. Each organization is unique in its approach. Some organizations directly operate transportation, some purchase transportation from third parties, some advocate or refer consumers to available transportation resources, and others have a combination of approaches (i.e., purchase and provide transportation for consumers or the public).

### **Organizations that Directly Operate, Administer, and/or Purchase Transportation to the general public or to an “open” constituency of human services clients.**

#### **Center for Community (CFC)**

Center for Community (CFC) is a non-profit provider of home and community-based services for people with disabilities, older adults, and others who experience barriers to community living in Alaska. CFC’s central administration is in Sitka, but CFC provides services throughout several towns and villages in Southeast Alaska. The organization in Sitka is eligible for FTA Sections 5310 and 5311, and state AMHT funding. It currently receives Section 5310 and Section 5311 funding. CFC provides services through five programs:

- **Independent Living Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities** – A list of services pertaining to “learning about living” and “habilitation” are included in this program. Habilitation includes supported living, supported employment, in-home supports, and day habilitation (community activity). Clients are encouraged to exercise, taught to ride public transit, and exposed to social opportunities. For all of these clients, CFC staff provide ongoing case management to help the client or family navigate through all the state public assistance, Medicaid, and health and social service programs’ requirements and services.

- **In-Home Care Services to Adults with Physical Disabilities and Seniors** – Adults with disabilities include anyone age 21 to 65 who struggles with a disability that was caused by an accident or disease. Seniors include anyone older than age 65 who needs assistance to stay at home alone safely, or whose family caregivers need support. CFC provides care coordination for many of these clients, as well as in-home care services with CFC direct service workers: including “hands-on” personal care, assistance with chores, or respite for caregivers. CFC currently serves more than 300



people a year with various combinations of in-home care services.

- **Early Learning/Infant Learning** – This ongoing program receives referrals of 0- to 3-year-old children to screen the children for developmental delays. The program also provides therapies to children and instructional support to parents. The CFC has received several years of Small Projects Grants from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, and offers twice-weekly toddler playgroups to work with emotional development of toddlers and to support parents.

- **Employment Enhancement Services (“Welfare to Work Services”)** – Adults, who receive welfare cash assistance (“TANF”) because they have minor children and where the parents are of working age (between 18 and 65), are supposed to be moved off of cash assistance under federal and state welfare reform. The CFC program provides welfare-to-work counseling and job services to all non-tribal clients in Southeast Alaska.

- **Public Transit for Community of Sitka** – In fiscal year 2019, Sitka’s the RIDE system – managed by a collaborative effort between Center for Community, Sitka Tribe of Alaska and Southeast Senior Services – delivered 61,443 one-way passenger trips. The RIDE is a fixed-route bus service operated by STA (described in detail later in this section). Complementary paratransit services are operated by Southeast Senior Services at Swan Lake Senior Center under a contract from Center for Community, and operated in conjunction with transportation services for the elderly or younger Medicaid waiver clients, funded by several other grants secured directly by Southeast Senior Services from state, federal, private, and tribal sources. Fixed-route and paratransit services are open to the public and many of the regular riders are individuals with developmental or physical disabilities.

Three of the five programs at CFC include transportation: Community Services for Persons with Developmental Disabilities; Employment Enhancement Services; and the RIDE fixed-route and paratransit. The following tables outline the transportation that is provided for each program.

### **CFC – COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

<b>Client eligibility:</b>	Individuals of all ages who have developmental disabilities
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
<b>Peak Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 2-5:30 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Two types: (1) Demand Response (but only with other scheduled services provided by CFC staff who must escort client), and (2) Independent client travel on fixed route buses using human services vouchers.
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Seven sedans or station wagons for individual trips with escort support staff.
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	One full-time program assistant manages the staff and client use of the vehicles. Training specialist staff members must provide a mandatory staff escort while providing supportive

services to clients, while incidentally driving the vehicles. There are no dedicated drivers on staff. There is low potential for coordinating these trips with other transportation providers.

<b>Annual Trips (one-way):</b>	Approximately 8,500 (Due to the nature of the customer needs, trips typically are scheduled with one passenger per trip.)
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$20,000 (approximately, for vehicle depreciation, fuel, maintenance, but no salary costs). Does not include the costs of vouchers.
<b>Cost Per Trip:</b>	\$2.35 for (approximately).(Does not include Vouchers)
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Various CFC program grants or the Medicaid Waiver Program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

### **CFC — EMPLOYMENT ENHANCEMENT SERVICES**

<b>Programs:</b>	Purchased Bus Pass Program and Gas Stipend Program
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Adults age 18 to 65 who receive welfare cash assistance, have children at home, and are moving from welfare to work.
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Purchased trips through bus passes or taxi vouchers, also Stipends to fuel client cars
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	0
<b>Annual Trips Purchased:</b>	Transportation for about four clients/families per month, number varies over the year, between 8 and 10 clients annually
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$4,800

### **CFC — INFANT LEARNING PROGRAM**

<b>Programs:</b>	Vouchers for Human Service Clients
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Parents/caregivers of infants through 3 year of age who are enrolled in the Infant Learning Program. (Beneficiaries Alaska Mental Health Trust).
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Free vouchers on fixed route buses for human services clients.
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	0

<b>Annual Trips Purchased:</b>	None purchased
<b>Programs:</b>	Vouchers only
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	0.00
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	CFC's 5310 or AMHT grant for Vouchers for Human Services Clients.

### **CFC — THE RIDE FIXED-ROUTE AND PARATRANSIT**

<b>Programs:</b>	Fixed Route and Paratransit
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	(Fixed Route) General Public and (Paratransit) Individuals who are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) eligibility and people age 60 or older
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., both fixed route and paratransit Saturday and Sunday by advance appointment only, about five hours per weekend day (weekend service is for paratransit only)
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Fixed Route and ADA Paratransit
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Ten buses total (five CFC-owned, three owned by Catholic Community Service, two owned by Sitka Tribe). STA also owns a pickup truck with snow blade for clearing out around passenger stops.
<b>Annual Ridership FY19:</b>	60,606 both fixed route and paratransit 53,714 fixed route 7,738 paratransit/senior rides.
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$1,039,719 (fixed route) \$310,564 (paratransit)
<b>Cost Per Trip:</b>	\$19.36 (fixed route) \$46.95 (paratransit)

Note: TOTAL COST for fixed route system per in FY19 was \$1,039,719. (Cash resources of \$828,682 and in-kind match of \$211,037).

TOTAL COST for Paratransit/Senior Transit in FY19 was \$362,902  
\$329,303 cash resources, including fares  
\$33,598 in-kind local match

<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	FTA Section 5311, FTA Section 5310, AMHT Purchased Services, AoA Title III and XI, City of Sitka, FTA Section 5339
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Capital and over \$290,000 of local in-kind match (from Sitka Tribe of Alaska and donations of bus stops, parking spaces, TV and radio advertising, etc.)

In addition to the programs directly provided by CFC in Sitka, the agency facilitates coordination of resources throughout the community and successfully writes grants to assist many local nonprofit organizations.

As of FY2020, under the public transit program, CFC has Memoranda of Agreements/Contracts with a number of social service agencies in Sitka that receive free vouchers for their clients on the RIDE. Examples of such inter-agency agreements include: Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services, SEARHC Behavioral Health, Youth Advocates of Sitka, Southeast Alaska Independent Living, Social Services of Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

CFC also has MOAs for contractual purchases of passes and tickets on behalf of the clients of the State offices of Vocational Rehabilitation, Children's Services, and others.

### **Sitka Tribe of Alaska – the RIDE (formerly known as “the Community RIDE”)**

The RIDE is the fixed route public transportation service in Sitka. In 2002, CFC issued an RFP for a provider of fixed-route services on two proposed routes. Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) was the successful bidder under the RFP process. From 2002 until the present, STA has operated the RIDE's first two fixed routes (Red and Blue Lines) under a contract from CFC that included CFC's leasing of buses owned by CFC to STA for use on the fixed routes.

In 2007, Sitka Tribe secured its own Tribal Transit grant from the Federal Transit Administration, and has since that time applied its grant plus some of the tribe's funds from Indian Reservation Roads to the operation of a third fixed route — the Green Line — that is linked to and coordinated as an integral part of the RIDE's overall fixed route system. The Green Line, like all routes, is open to the general public. However, the route was designed to serve designated tribal housing, medical and educational facilities, and tribal citizens with low incomes.

Under the Congressional reauthorizations of the federal transit laws, known as the MAP 21 and then the FAST ACT, the federal formula for funding to Tribal transit operators was changed, and this caused a two-thirds reduction in the amount of the annual federal transit grant to Sitka Tribe of Alaska.

Also in 2007, the Tribe received a Congressional earmark grant for the “transit needs of Sitka,” which allowed the tribe to purchase two more RIDE buses and a truck and plow for snow removal at passenger shelters on the routes. The tribe's buses and CFC's leased buses are used interchangeably on any of the three fixed routes.

Catholic Community Service, also known as Southeast Senior Services (SESS) has a contract from CFC to provide complementary paratransit service for all three fixed routes. CFC, as the grant recipient for FTA Section 5311 and 5310 funds, provides operating and administrative revenue for both the fixed route services, and for the contract for paratransit services.

Continued funding for the transit system remains a challenge, and STA's funding from several federal and tribal sources is now about one-third of what it was in the 2007-2013 period.

Other than an annual payment to cover fuel and maintenance for the SESS paratransit buses, the City



and Borough of Sitka had not been a regular financial contributor to the transit/paratransit system in Sitka. In 2014, the City made a one-time contribution to the system to help offset some of STA's funding losses. Since that year, the City has contributed \$25,000 each year to transit.

Today, CFC, STA, and Southeast Senior Services continue to work in coordination to operate three fixed routes and complementary paratransit service in Sitka. Daily hours of operation for public transportation are Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Transportation is not provided on six holidays — New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Alaska Day (Oct. 18), Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. One route — the Green Line — operates on a 30-minute frequency; while the other two routes (Red Line and Blue Line) operate on about 60-minute frequencies. The RIDE is open to the general public and all vehicles are wheelchair accessible. The fare structure is described as follows:

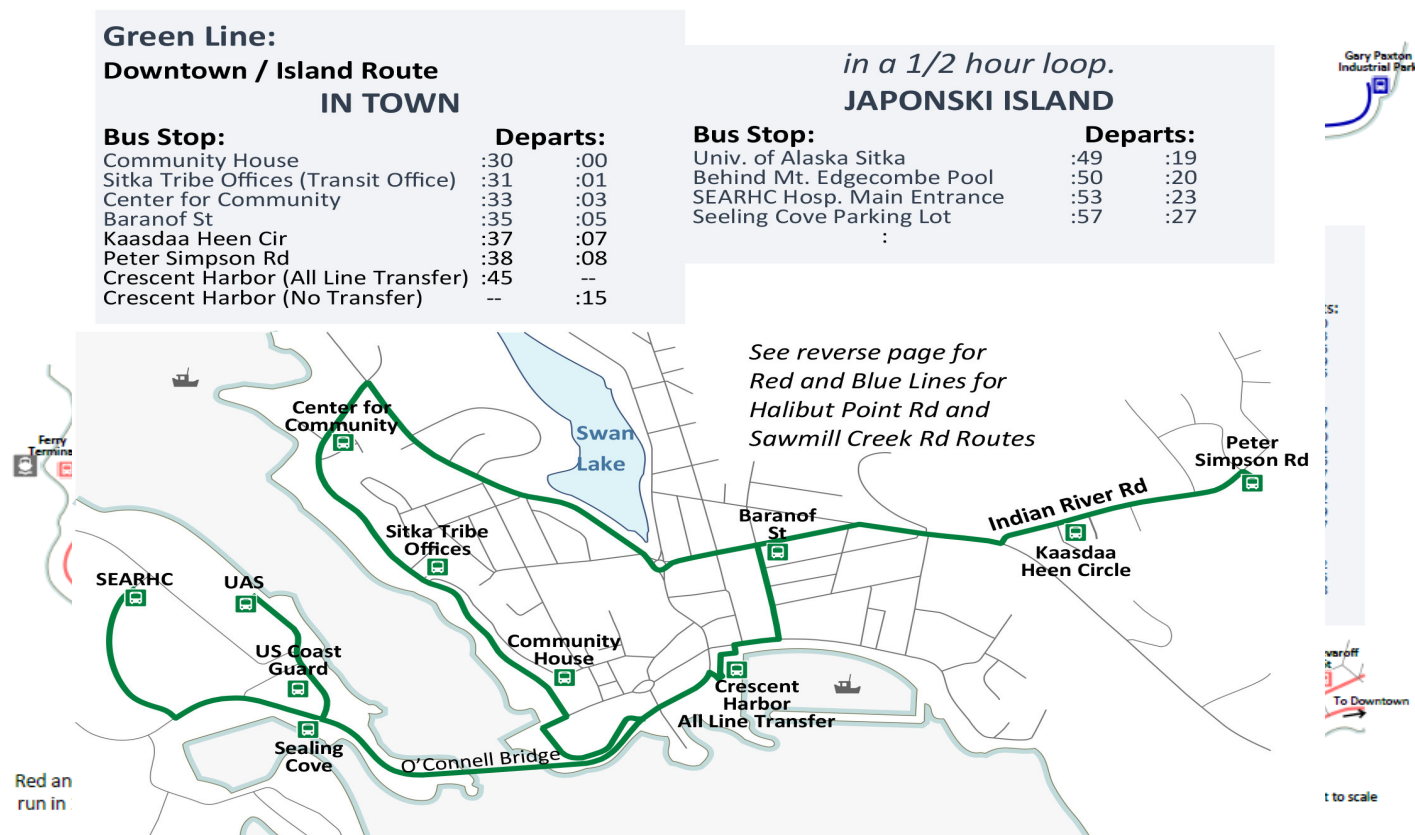
<b>One-Way Pass</b>	\$2 adult	\$1 seniors/children/disabled
<b>All-Day/Daily Pass</b>	\$5 adult	\$3 seniors/children/disabled
<b>12-Ride Pass</b>	\$20 adult	\$10 seniors/children/disabled
<b>Monthly Pass</b>	\$50 adult	\$25 seniors/children/disabled

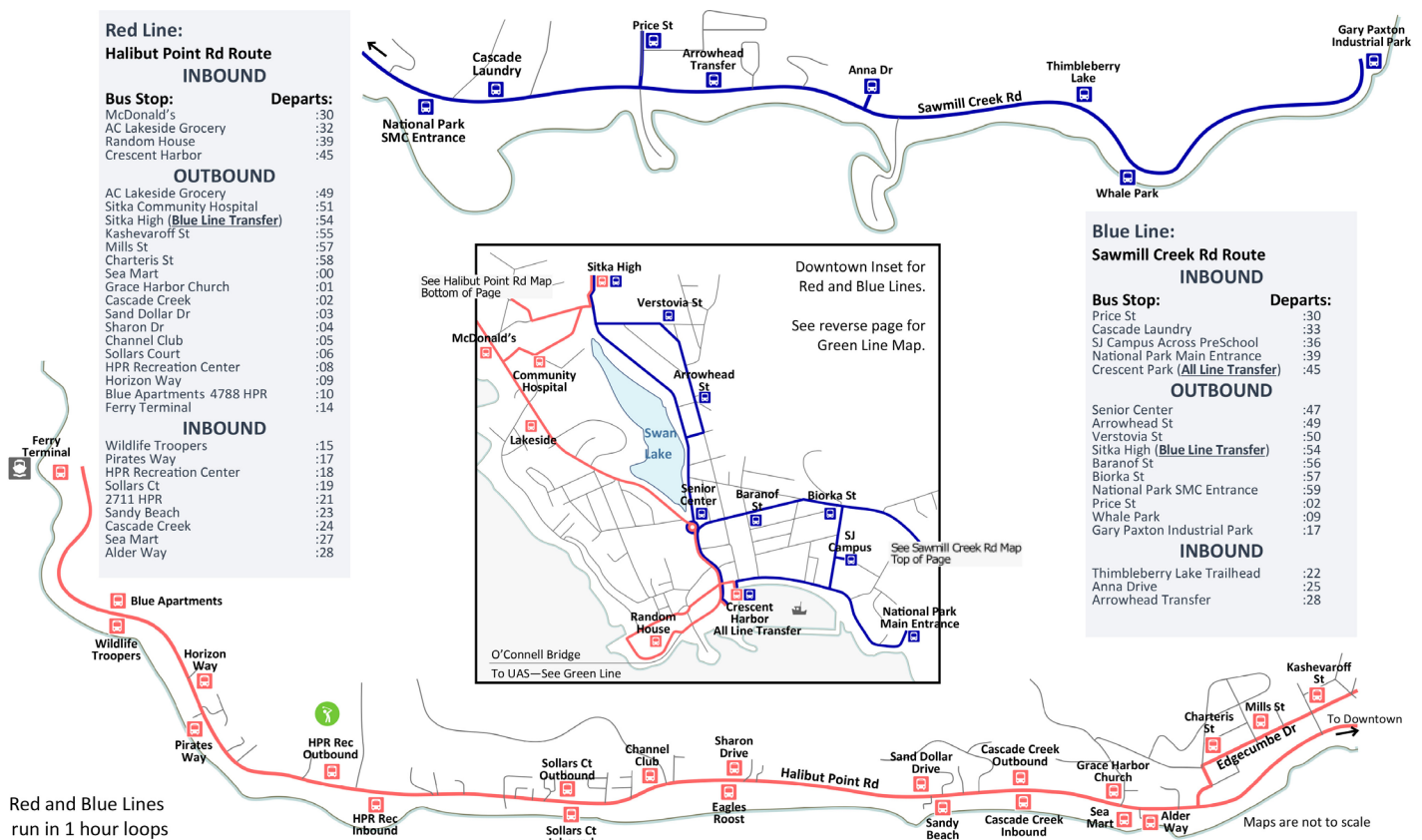
A child is any passenger age 6-18 years old, a senior is age 60 or older.

Bus passes are sold on the vehicles or may be purchased in advance at any of the following locations:

- Sitka Tribe of Transit Office, 256 Katlian St. (upstairs)
- Old Harbor Books
- Sea Mart Grocery Store

Route bus stops are shown on the schedules attached in the Appendices and shown here in excerpts.





Each route and associated stops are illustrated on the map on the preceding pages. As listed above and illustrated on the map, all three routes meet at the Crescent Harbor transfer point in downtown Sitka. Because it is a transfer point where all routes can be accessed, Crescent Harbor is the busiest stop for the system.

In State Fiscal Year 2019's records (the RIDE fixed route buses provided 53,141 rides, a decline from 2014.

CATEGORY (Fiscal Years)	2007	2009	2014	2019
Total one-way trips (rides)	28,172	39,410	58,686	53,714
Revenue vehicle hours	9,216	9,216	9,945	9,906
Rides per revenue vehicle hour	2.84	3.93	5.90	5.36

COSTS are shown under Center for Community Section, earlier in this Plan section. The Tribe also expends approximately \$90,000 per year from its direct federal Tribal Transit grant.

The \$90,000 of Tribal Transit grant expenditures brings the TOTAL COST for fixed route system to \$1,039,719. (Cash resources of \$828,682 and in-kind match of \$211,037).

The RIDE receives funding for operating, administrative, and capital expenses through the following resources:

- FTA Section 5311 (rural transit);
- FTA Section 5310 (elders and persons with disabilities)
- Tribal Transit funds;





*Center for Community Transit Program Administrator Connie Sipe gives a presentation about paratransit services during lunch at the Swan Lake Senior Center in Sitka on Aug. 29, 2019.*

- Tribal Transportation Program;
- Passenger fares.
- \* FTA Section 5339 (Capital)
- Alaska State General Fund match pool
- Alaska Mental Health Trust (for human services transportation)

In terms of capital expenses, CFC owns five buses— two 29-foot buses and two 24-foot buses, all leased to STA for fixed route use. STA also owns two 24-foot buses and a snowplow truck. CFC owns one 20-foot bus that is leased to Catholic Community Service for paratransit services.

## **Maintenance**

Sitka Tribe of Alaska is still endeavoring in 2019 to secure a real estate location to build a maintenance facility. The maintenance facility will have two (2) maintenance bays and space to wash one transit vehicle at a time. The facility will also have office space and space for a driver training room. As this plan goes to press, STA is seeking a suitable site.

## **Paratransit**

Paratransit services for the RIDE are provided by Southeast Senior Services (SESS) working out of the Swan Lake Senior Center. Paratransit is provided as described in the following paragraphs.

## HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY AND SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

### Care-A-Van – Swan Lake Senior Center/Southeast Senior Services (SESS)

Southeast Senior Services is part of Catholic Community Service, a private non-profit organization that provides door-to-door demand response transportation in Sitka for anyone age 60 and older and for any person with a disability, regardless of his or her age. Southeast Senior Services (SESS) operates Sitka's complementary paratransit service, Medicaid transportation, and meal delivery services out of the Swan Lake Senior Center. Transportation provided by SESS is locally known as Care-A-Van.

Southeast Senior Services has provided transportation to seniors since 1974, prior to the development of the RIDE. Southeast Senior Center is a long-time coordination partner with CFC and the RIDE.

#### **CARE-A-VAN SERVICES (as of SFY2019)**

<b>Programs:</b>	Paratransit, Medicaid transportation, Transportation for Seniors
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Adults age 60 and older and individuals with disabilities of any age
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.  Saturday and Sunday, 8:45 a.m. to 2 p.m., by reservation Note: Pre-reserved trips on Saturday and Sunday are provided only to Seniors, with both seniors and ADA paratransit-eligible riders able to call on the day and receive a ride if space is available around the pre-reserved trips.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Door-to-door demand response
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Four vans for 6-10 passengers, one van not wheelchair accessible
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	One full-time and three part-time drivers, one manager (shared with other Swan Lake Senior Center services), one assistant/scheduler (shared with other Swan Lake services)
<b>Annual Trips Provided:</b>	7,738 (SFY2019)
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$362,902 \$329,303 cash resources, including fares \$33,598 in-kind local match
<b>Cost Per Passenger Trip:</b>	\$46.95

Transportation Funding Sources: FTA Section 5311 through CFC, City of Sitka, Older American Act Funds, Fares, Donations, Medicaid billings

Trip reservations are strongly encouraged at least 24-hours and up to seven days in advance. The scheduler will work late reservations into the schedule, if possible. In fact, the schedulers are well known for their caring attitude and tendency to find a way to provide transportation that is needed.

#### **Fare Structure and Eligibility**



Passengers older than 60 years ride for free but donations are accepted. The suggested donation amount is \$1 per trip. Passengers younger than age 60 are required to pay a fare of \$2 per one-way trip. Passenger fare revenue is forwarded to Center for Community under the contract with Care A Van.

The scheduler attempts to schedule trips in 15-minute increments and schedules multiple passengers on a vehicles whenever possible. The Swan Lake Senior Center receives multiple calls per day for trip requests and cancellations, according to the interviewee. As of SFY2019, CFC's paratransit contract with Care-A-Van pays \$192.42 flat rate per day for dispatch services (through Section 5310).

Passengers younger than age 60 may be granted temporary eligibility for paratransit services based upon a brief registration and a referral from a medical professional. To obtain permanent paratransit eligibility, a person younger than 60 must then complete a comprehensive application, and submit a thorough medical evaluation to demonstrate why the disability of the applicant prevents applicant from being capable of using the fixed route buses.

Eligibility for ADA Paratransit services is determined by Center for Community. If found eligible for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services, a rider of any age will have priority for rides and will receive an ADA card that will give him or her short-term access to paratransit services in other communities.

## **Driver Training and Policies**

Drivers are required to consent to a background check prior to working for the center and must agree to random drug testing. Drug testing is conducted through Beacon. Driver training is provided through the main office, and all drivers are required to participate in training.

## **Funding**

The sources of revenue for SESS transportation services in Sitka are as follows:

- Center for Community (paratransit contract Sections 5311 and 5310);
- Medicaid Waiver billing receipts;
- Title III grant of the Older Americans Act through the State of Alaska;
- Title VI of Older Americans Act, through two pass-through grants from with Sitka Tribe of Alaska;
- Passenger contributions and fares;
- In-kind donations from the City and Borough of Sitka (fuel and maintenance); and
- Local fundraising.

The City of Sitka contributes to the senior transportation program by providing all fuel, by providing all SESS vehicles with maintenance services at the City Garage, and by providing the Swan Lake Senior Center building where the transportation program is one of several programs being operated.

Annual transportation operating expenses for SFY 2019 were reported by SESS and Center for Community as follows

Three of the vehicles used for paratransit service are owned by SESS and were purchased through grants received through Alaska Department of Transportation and the Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHT). SESS obtains fuel for vehicles by direct donation from the City and Borough of Sitka. Center for Community purchased a paratransit vehicle with federal 5339 funds in SFY2019, and this vehicle is leased to SESS for use in providing paratransit services.

## **Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services**

Sitka Counseling and Prevention Services, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose primary purpose is to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of mental illness and/or substance abuse in the lives of youth, adults and families. The agency does this by providing caring professional and therapeutic services. Sitka Counseling offers a variety of outpatient/group treatment services; children, adult and family services; mental health; co-occurring and substance use disorders. The diverse backgrounds of staff enable the agency to provide an individual approach to the problems which confront our clients in Sitka and Yakutat.

Programs offered by Sitka Counseling include:

The two **Residential Treatment** programs have the capacity for 12 beds (six men and six women) and are designed to provide a 'family style' environment, with peer support in a Level 3.1 substance treatment program. During treatment, transportation is used and clients are encouraged to use the RIDE. If the RIDE is not available, the staff on duty will drive the agency SUV vehicle. The program focuses on assisting clients in attaining/maintaining abstinence; establishing a quality program of recovery; integrated treatment for co-occurring disorders; making healthy connection to the community; and achieving economic self-sufficiency. These goals are achieved in three distinct phases. The average resident stays 4-6 months.

**Sitka Counseling** offers outpatient counseling services to youth, adolescents, adults, couples and families who need assistance with mental health, addictions and emotional problems. Both of our locations are on the RIDE bus routes, and clients are encouraged to use public transportation. We do not have designated outpatient transportation.

The **Harbor Lights** program offers confidential support for individuals experiencing symptoms of a mental illness, which negatively impacts their daily lives. The adult severe mental illness program serves 45 clients and offers clients transportation in our sedan to appointments, activities, shopping and events. There also are about 15 clients who use the RIDE daily with the vouchers provided by CFC through a grant from Alaska Mental Health Trust.

The **Family Center** program services 35 clients providing services that are structured, safe, secure, nurturing environment where the children learn to express and manage their emotions. This allows them to develop essential skills to better function at school, home and in the community. They have a van, which is used daily for client pick-up/drop-offs, and also provides transportation for the evening family parenting classes.

**River's Edge Property** is a six-unit apartment complex on Flume Circle (off Indian River Road) for individuals who qualify for HUD Section 8-11 housing. The tenants use the RIDE and have their own vehicles.

### **SITKA COUNSELING AND PREVENTION SERVICES**

<b>Programs:</b>	Continuum of behavioral health assessments and treatment programs
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<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Individuals with behavioral health issues, transportation for residents and outpatients
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<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Varies by Program
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Demand Response, Door-to-Door Client Transportation
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Four — One 12-passenger 2007 Chevrolet Express van, one four-passenger 2011 Subaru Legacy sedan, one eight-passenger 2014 Honda Pilot SUV; and one eight-passenger 2016 Chevrolet Traverse.
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	Agency staff (no dedicated drivers) operate vehicles
<b>Annual Trips Provided:</b>	Not Tracked
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$4,167.41 fuel, \$1,451.12 maintenance Sitka Counseling also purchases bus passes for the RIDE
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Grants obtained by CFC for the benefit of Sitka Counseling and Medicaid agency revenue (projected)

### **Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL)**

Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) is an Aging and Disability Resource Center and a Center for Independent Living nonprofit organization that serves anyone with a disability and seniors older than 60. SAIL is currently serving 145 consumers.

Anyone who is eligible for the program also is eligible for transportation provided by SAIL for Outdoor Recreation and Community Access (ORCA) program activities. SAIL operates one 15-passenger wheelchair-accessible vehicle for ORCA program activities. SAIL provides transportation for approximately 20 passengers per week. Staff are trained to operate the vehicle and drive as part of their daily responsibilities. SAIL staff spends about six hours per week driving clients.

SAIL also distributes fixed route bus Voucher provided to it by Center for Community under CFC's purchased services grant.

### **SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING (SAIL)**

<b>Programs:</b>	Outdoor Recreation and Community Access (ORCA) Home visits for equipment and home modification assessments RIDE Vouchers distribution to persons with disabilities
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Individuals experiencing disabilities and seniors
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Three to four days per week between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Demand Response, door-to-door—vouchers for fixed route
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	One 2005 Ford F450 Cutaway 15 passenger, two-wheelchair bus

<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	Two staff members operate the vehicle
<b>Annual Trips Provided:</b>	416
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$965.92 fuel, \$212.50 maintenance
<b>Cost Per Passenger Trip:</b>	\$3
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Fees, grants and donations

**Youth Advocates of Sitka (YAS)**

Youth Advocates of Sitka is a nonprofit community mental health program that serves children between the ages of 5 and 21 years and their families. Any youth who is diagnosed as severely emotionally disturbed is eligible for services provided by YAS. The programs include group and individual therapy, residential programs, and skills development. YAS operates four programs.

**YAS Community Mental Health Program** — Outpatient/school-based treatment and accompanying mental health and rehabilitative services are made available to all eligible students in the Sitka School District, as well as students attending Mount Edgecumbe High School and the SEER School (a local private school for grades K-8). Mental health services, including mental health intake assessments and individual, group and family therapy, also are made available to all residents at the Hanson House Level III residential treatment facility.

**YAS Therapeutic Foster Care Program (TFC)** — Therapeutic foster care is a program for children and youth ages 5 to 21 whose special needs can be met through services delivered from adults who are trained, supervised and supported by agency staff. The resource parents play a key role in implementing a comprehensive, client-focused and individualized therapeutic environment for the child placed in their home setting. The program provides clinician-driven intervention that assists children and youth in working toward their long-term treatment goals. In therapeutic foster care, the positive aspects of a nurturing, supportive and healthy family environment are combined with active and structured treatment interventions.

YAS staff, the resource parents, the client, the client’s family members (as appropriate) and other professionals work as a team to develop a treatment plan for each child. Resource parents are the primary people who implement the in-home treatment components as determined by the treatment team. Treatment is carried out under the clinical direction of qualified agency staff. Resource parents receive intensive support, consultation, and initial and ongoing training by program staff.

**YAS Hanson House Program** — The Hanson House Program is a Level III residential treatment facility, which also can serve as a Level II emergency shelter in certain circumstances. The Hanson House is licensed to work with up to 10 youth ages 10 to 18, and will maintain a minimum client-to-staff ratio of 5-1. Clients in the program develop a treatment place with a clinician, and the clinician and program staff will provide direction and interventions to help the youth achieve their short- and long-term goals. In addition, residents engaged in the Hanson House program are provided with group therapy five days each week, individual therapy at least once each week, and family therapy and substance abuse counseling on an as-needed or as-prescribed basis. The Hanson House operates on a phase system,



where clients are expected to complete treatment work and progress to higher phases of the program that coincide with greater privileges and responsibilities.

The Hanson House program strives to maintain a homelike environment, and uses a positive peer culture model to encourage youth to hold themselves and their peers accountable to each other and the program. Program staff will provide structure and support to clients in the facility and during activities in the community, and will encourage youth to grow socially, academically and emotionally.

**Youth Drop-In Center** — The Family Resource Center youth drop-in center (FRC) focuses on four areas when working with each client:

- 1. Building independent living skills;
- 2. Community outreach activities;
- 3. Prevention services; and
- 4. Connecting youth to resources in Sitka.

YAS skills trainers under the direction of the FRC program coordinator provide support to youth across programs as well as community youth who access the FRC on a drop-in basis. YAS staff who work with youth ages 14 to 21 are trained in the transition into independence process (TIP). The TIP model is an evidence-supported practice based on published studies that demonstrate improvements in real-life outcomes for youth and young adults with emotional/behavioral difficulties.

Bus stops for the RIDE fixed-route service are located near the Hansen House and the Youth Advocates of Sitka main office. Students who are able to safely manage fixed-route service are encouraged by YAS staff to utilize the bus stop. CFC, through a grant from AMHT, provides Youth Advocates with the RIDE bus passes for clients who use the public transit routes.

Youth Advocates of Sitka operates a 12-passenger Chevy van and two eight-passenger Honda Pilots, and all three vehicles were purchased by CFC on behalf of YAS with AMHT or 5310 funds. YAS also uses a five-passenger Ford Focus.

**YOUTH ADVOCATES OF SITKA**

<b>Programs:</b>	Community mental health with focus on youth
<b>Client Eligibility:</b>	Youth (ages 6-21) and their families
<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	24 hours
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Demand response client transportation
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	Four (one 12-passenger van, two eight-passenger Honda Pilot SUVs, one eight-passenger Ford Transit van).
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	Agency staff (not dedicated drivers) operate the vehicle
<b>Annual Trips Purchased:</b>	3,200 (estimated, does not include new van or Smoothie Truck)
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$7,047.14 fuel, \$983.53 maintenance
<b>Average Cost Per Trip:</b>	\$2.51

**Transportation Funding Sources:** Various federal, state and local program grants, agency revenues from Medicaid.

### **Social Services Program, Sitka Tribe of Alaska**

Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Social Services Program joined the CFC Vouchers program part-way through SFY2019, and continues in SFY2020 to distribute the CFC free fixed route vouchers to clients who present as being in one of the five categories of Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries. STA Social Services also buys vouchers and bus tickets to distribute to other clients who do not fit the AMHT Purchased Services voucher grant's criteria.

The following description of the services at STA Social Services is taken from their website:

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program**

The Indian Child Welfare Act only applies to cases where children are taken into protective custody by the state or in adoption and guardianship cases. The terms of ICWA do not apply to divorce or child custody cases between private parties. The program's main goal is to reunify Native children — who have been taken into protective custody by state agencies — with their birth parents. If that is not possible, the ICWA caseworker works to ensure that that child's Native culture and the child's Native identity are protected.

### **Tribal Family Caseworker / Outreach Caseworker**

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Family Caseworker works with families to strengthen and empower them through advocacy with programs outside the Sitka Tribe of Alaska which provide services to our tribal citizens. The Tribal Family Caseworker is available to listen, to support, and to assist you and your family to navigate stressful situations successfully.

### **General Assistance**

- General Assistance - BIA Welfare. Monthly assistance for any BIA/CIB-eligible client
- Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Emergency Assistance for STA tribale citizens that live in Sitka six months or more, income eligible
- Child Care Assistance (CCDF) Must apply through state and TANF childcare assistance before applying to STA Childcare Assistance

## **SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM, SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA**

**Programs:** Various, see website quote above

**Client Eligibility:** Tribal Citizens of any age

<b>Hours/Days of Service:</b>	Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
<b>Mode of Service:</b>	Vouchers, purchased or free for fixed route buses
<b>Number of Vehicles:</b>	0
<b>Transportation Staff:</b>	0
<b>Annual Transportation Costs:</b>	\$4,800 for purchased tickets and vouchers. (not including the AMHT free vouchers).
<b>Transportation Funding Sources:</b>	Various federal, state and local program grants, including AMHT funds through CFC

### **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION COSTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE CLIENT AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The inventory and assessment efforts in this study involved attempts to work with local human service agencies to determine their cost for operating transportation services. For all but Center for Community, Sitka Tribe, and Southeast Senior Services, the costs are approximate. This lack of detailed information is not the fault of the human service agencies. Rather, it is reflective of the clear problem that exists with respect to FTA's new emphasis on coordination of human services transportation – entities that operate such transportation services as part of other program services often cannot determine the fully allocated costs, and for the most part, have no incentive to do so.

Some advocates for coordination of human services transportation assert that this inability to fully document cost of transportation service provision may result in human service organizations not making informed management decisions with respect to participation in a coordinated transportation system. On the other hand, human service providers often feel that efforts to “coordinate” their transportation services do not adequately respect the linkages between client transportation and other client services, especially not the state or federally mandated requirements to keep the service and the transportation linked in order for the provider agency to receive payment under various programs, especially Medicaid.

It is imperative for planners, state funding agencies of transportation or human services, and local transit providers to recognize the disparity among client transportation services delivered by different programs. Differences in service delivery methods, reporting, and eligibility requirements can create disparities in reporting transportation costs. These differences are compounded by the fact that no single law or statute created human service agency programs. Unlike Federal Transit Administration-sponsored programs, which are all codified under a single piece of authorizing legislation, there is no legislative or statutory uniformity on how human service transportation is to be reported or delivered.

### **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES for PUBLIC or FOR HUMAN SERVICES CLIENTS**

CFC undertook to update the prior inventory of tribal and private human service agency transportation providers.

There are 27 vehicles operated by one governmental (Sitka Tribe) and five private non-profit human





*Center for Community Transportation Program Administrator Connie Sipe, right, listens to a question from Sitka resident Cheryl Enloe, left, during a lunch public meeting about the Care-A-Van paratransit program on Aug. 29, 2019, at the Swan Lake Senior Center.*

services organizations in Sitka including 15 passenger vehicles (vans and sedans), one maintenance vehicles, and 11 buses. All of these organizations provide transportation for older adults, individuals with low incomes, and/or people with disabilities, or the general public.

Currently, coordination among the organizations primarily is occurring at the level of some sharing of grant-writing responsibilities for obtaining capital funds for vehicles. Human service agencies depend upon a variety of funding sources including sources dedicated for Natives, older adults, people with disabilities, or individuals with low incomes. The scope of most human services funding programs limits the population to which organizations can offer rides.



# Needs Assessment

## DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

Sitka is located on the west coast of Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska, facing the Pacific Ocean. No roads connect Sitka to the rest of Alaska. The distance to Juneau is 95 air miles (30 minute flight time). Anchorage is 592 air miles (2.8 hours flight time) and Seattle, Wash., is 862 air miles (2.8 hours flight time) from Sitka. The land area of the Sitka Borough is 2,873.98 square miles. The average high and low temperatures in Sitka are approximately 49 and 39 degrees, respectively.

The City and Borough of Sitka is a unified home rule municipality created in 1971. It is governed by the Assembly composed of seven members, one of whom is the Mayor. The chief administrative officer is the city manager, who serves at the pleasure of the Assembly. In addition to the city and borough government, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, a federally recognized Indian tribe, holds local governmental responsibilities and powers related to tribal citizens and lands in Sitka. Exhibit II.1 provides a view of the Sitka and Japonski Island area and the major roadways. As illustrated on the map, all major roadways are located near the coast of the island. Exhibit II.2 offers a closer view of the location of major roads in Sitka.

## POPULATION

The population of Sitka in 2015, according to the Sitka Economic Development's data, was 8,929 people. This is a turnaround from Sitka's 2000 U.S. Census population of 8,835 and 2007 Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development estimate of 8,644. Until recently, Sitka's peak population was 8,891 people in 1995 and there had been gradual declines in population from 1995-2007. From 1985 through 1995 Sitka's population rose from about 8,180 people.

### Population Density

Sitka has a population density of 3.15 people per square mile. According to the U.S. Census data from 2010, the block groups with the highest and moderately high densities of persons per square mile were located in and around downtown Sitka. The higher concentration of population is likely due to access to roads and amenities. The population density was low across the undeveloped portion of Baranof Island.

### Population Projections

According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development report Alaska Population Projections 2012 to 2042 (<http://labor.state.ak.us/research/pop/projected/pub/popproj.pdf>), Sitka's population is expected to decrease from 9,055 in 2012 to 8,894 in 2027, 8,724 in 2032, 8,520 in 2037, and 8,300 in 2042. The population of the Southeast Alaska region is expected to drop from 74,423 in 2012 to 71,170 in 2042 (with a slight rise in population in 2017 and 2022 before the decrease).

As of 2019, the City of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan 2030 points out the declining population trend currently underway: (quote from Plan below)

*"Based on historic patterns of births, deaths, and in and out migrants to Sitka, AKDOLWD is projecting that after a five-year period of steady population – which Sitka is in now – the population*

*will begin a slow, steady decline. Projected population decline in Sitka is based on two trends: 1) A shrinking number of child-bearing age residents and children in Sitka- resulting in more deaths than births in the future and 2) More people are moving away rather than moving to Sitka. In addition, the number of Sitkans age 65 and older, and especially those age 80+, is projected to grow rapidly over the next 25 years.”*

## **Population Distribution by Age**

The 2019 McDowell Report of Sitka’s Economic Profile, published by the Sitka Economic Development Association points out the very significant “age trends” facing Sitka.

*“An important socioeconomic trend in Sitka is the community’s aging population. In 2018, 16% of the population was over 65 years of age. By 2030, 23% of the population will be over 65, according to ADOLWD projections. The increase in the senior population reflects a “bubble” of 55 to 64-year-old residents moving into retirement age.”*

Using the McDowell Report figures on age cohorts, the age group in Sitka that is of typical working age (between the ages of 20 and 64 years) is the most numerous age group but is projected to gradually decline in number between 2018 and 2030. In terms of potential workers, ages 20 through 64, in 2018 this cohort was 5,216 persons, accounting for 60.29 percent of Sitka’s population. By contrast, in 2030, the working age cohort will decrease to 4,820 persons, and account for a decreased percentage of the populace, at only percent.

As Sitka’s population ages there will be more demand for paratransit services, since many seniors are unable to drive themselves and they may not have family in town to take care of them.

## **Individuals with Disabilities**

Counting the disabled population in any community presents challenges. First, there is a complex and lengthy definition in the implementing regulations. The definition of the disabled is found in 49 CFR Part 37.3. The definition of disability reads:

*“Disability means, with respect to an individual, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment.”*

The definition, when applied to public transportation applications, is designed to permit a functional approach to disability determination rather than a categorical definition. In a functional approach, the mere presence of a condition that is typically thought to be disabling gives way to consideration of an individual’s abilities to perform various life functions. In short, an individual’s capabilities, rather than the mere presence of a medical condition determines transportation disability.

## **Survey of Income and Program Participation**

In an effort to make a more appropriate estimation of individuals with a disability in Sitka, as it pertains to their ability to utilize transportation, the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) was used. The SIPP is characterized by an extensive set of disability questions; generally, the SIPP is the preferred source for examining most disability issues. The reason for this preference is the similarities between questions posted on the SIPP survey and the ADA definition of a disability.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) defines disability as a “physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities.” For persons 15 years and over, the SIPP disability questions cover limitations in functional activities (seeing, hearing, speaking, lifting and carrying, using stairs, and walking); in Activities of Daily Living (ADL) such as getting around inside the home, getting in or out of bed or chair, bathing, dressing, eating and toileting, and in Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) such as going outside the home, keeping track of money or bills, preparing meals, doing light housework, and using the telephone. The SIPP also obtains information on the use of wheelchairs and crutches, canes, or walkers; the presence of certain conditions related to mental functioning, the presence of a work disability, and the disability status of children.

## **Approach**

Using the indices or incidence rates for specific disabilities derived from the SIPP, an imputed estimate of the number of individuals, by age group, has been calculated for the area. These estimates for 2015 and 2020 are found in the two charts on the pages following this section.

Data collected in the SIPP do not permit consideration of persons with multiple disabilities. Moreover, the definitions employed can be directly related to the concepts in 49 CFR Part 37.3 definitions with respect to “activities of daily life.”

## **Findings**

Using disability and population projections for the State of Alaska, for the year 2017, over 31 percent of the population age 65 and older reported having one or more disabilities, according to the United States Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. This was the highest percentage of the five age groups reported. Also, almost 12 percent of the working age cohorts in Alaska (ages 18-64) reported one or more disability.

## **INDUSTRY AND LABOR FORCE**

### **Employment and Unemployment**

The top industries in Sitka are commercial and charter fishing, manufacturing, government, tourism, healthcare and social services, retail trade, education, science, and the arts.

According to City of Sitka’s Comprehensive Plan 2030, Sitka’s workforce

*“.. (2016/2015) is 54% private sector, 23% self-employed business proprietors, 6% state government, 5% federal government, and 2% local government. There were 4,228 average annual employees in Sitka in 2016; this ranged from a high in August of 5,127 to a low in January of 3,652. An estimated 40% of Sitka workers are not Sitka residents (2015). Total wages in 2016 was \$183.5 million. The average monthly wage in Sitka was \$3,616.”*

The City Plan 2030 also notes:

*“There were about 60 fewer (1%) employees in 2016 compared to 2015. Since 2006, Sitka has shed about 200 average annual jobs, led by a drop in federal jobs and private service-providing jobs.”*

**Exhibit II.8: 2015 Estimated Count of ADA Eligible Population, Sitka**

	Ages 15-24 Years		Ages 25-64 Years		Ages 65 Years and Over		Total
		Sitka		Sitka		Sitka	Sitka
Disability Status	Percent		Percent		Percent		
Total Population by Age		1,079		4,695		1,261	7,035
Disability Status							
With a Disability	0.208	224	0.163	765	0.523	660	1,649
Severe	0.137	148	0.108	507	0.369	465	1,120
Not Severe	0.07	76	0.055	258	0.154	194	528
Seeing/Hearing Disability							
With a Disability	0.067	72	0.048	225	0.205	259	556
Severe	0.014	15	0.009	42	0.044	55	113
Not Severe	0.053	57	0.039	183	0.161	203	443
Walking/Using Stairs							
With a Disability	0.114	123	0.08	376	0.382	482	980
Severe	0.059	64	0.036	169	0.221	279	511
Not Severe	0.055	59	0.044	207	0.161	203	469
Had Difficulty Walking	0.094	101	0.065	305	0.318	401	808
Severe	0.051	55	0.031	146	0.195	246	446
Not Severe	0.043	46	0.034	160	0.123	155	361
Had Difficulty Using Stairs	0.092	99	0.065	305	0.312	393	798
Severe	0.031	33	0.018	85	0.119	150	268
Not Severe	0.061	66	0.046	216	0.193	243	525
Used a Wheelchair	0.012	13	0.007	33	0.045	57	103
Used a Cane/Crutches/Walker	0.041	44	0.022	103	0.169	213	361
With an Activities of Daily Life Limitation	0.036	39	0.025	117	0.123	155	311
Needed Personal Assistance	0.02	22	0.013	61	0.071	90	172
Did not Need Personal Assistance	0.016	17	0.012	56	0.052	66	139
Number of ADLs or IADLs for which assistance was needed							
One or more	0.048	52	0.031	146	0.163	206	403



**Exhibit II.9: 2020 Estimated Count of ADA Eligible Population, Sitka**

	Ages 15-24 Years		Ages 25-64 Years		Ages 65 Years and Over		Total
		Sitka		Sitka		Sitka	Sitka
Disability Status	Percent		Percent		Percent		
Total Population by Age		1,058		4,432		1,475	6,965
Disability Status							
With a Disability	0.208	220	0.163	722	0.523	771	1,714
Severe	0.137	145	0.108	479	0.369	544	1,168
Not Severe	0.07	74	0.055	244	0.154	227	545
Seeing/Hearing Disability							
With a Disability	0.067	71	0.048	213	0.205	302	586
Severe	0.014	15	0.009	40	0.044	65	120
Not Severe	0.053	56	0.039	173	0.161	237	466
Walking/Using Stairs							
With a Disability	0.114	121	0.08	355	0.382	563	1,039
Severe	0.059	62	0.036	160	0.221	326	548
Not Severe	0.055	58	0.044	195	0.161	237	491
Had Difficulty Walking	0.094	99	0.065	288	0.318	469	857
Severe	0.051	54	0.031	137	0.195	288	479
Not Severe	0.043	45	0.034	151	0.123	181	378
Had Difficulty Using Stairs	0.092	97	0.065	288	0.312	460	846
Severe	0.031	33	0.018	80	0.119	176	288
Not Severe	0.061	65	0.046	204	0.193	285	553
Used a Wheelchair	0.012	13	0.007	31	0.045	66	110
Used a Cane/Crutches/Walker	0.041	43	0.022	98	0.169	249	390
With an Activities of Daily Life Limitation	0.036	38	0.025	111	0.123	181	330
Needed Personal Assistance	0.02	21	0.013	58	0.071	105	184
Did not Need Personal Assistance	0.016	17	0.012	53	0.052	77	147
Number of ADLs or IADLs for which assistance was needed							
One or more	0.048	51	0.031	137	0.163	240	429

The McDowell Sitka Economic Profile Report 2019, published by the Sitka Economic Development Association, points out that the 2018 workforce in Sitka totaled, 4,408 workers, including both the employed and those unemployed but seeking employment. Furthermore, the Profile outlines that the annual unemployment rate in Sitka has decreased steadily from 2011 to 2019, standing at 4.8% in March 2019. As of 2019, Sitka had the lowest unemployment rate among all urban areas in the state.

## **Employment and Earnings**

The City of Sitka's Comprehensive Plan 2030 notes:

*"Sitka residents earned approximately \$568 million in total personal income in 2015. This is a 4% increase over 2014 community income of \$545 million. When sources of income are tallied and divided by the total population, Sitka had the 5th highest per capital personal income in Alaska at \$64,122 (2015). The majority of Sitka's income, 66%, came from work earnings, wages, and benefits."*

The Sitka Economic Development Association (SEDA) reported that the per capita annual income in Sitka in 2012 was \$40,200. SEDA reports that Sitka's labor force is "highly educated and considered to be industrious, creative and independent minded." Based on 2008-2012 American Community Survey data, more than 91 percent of the population age 25 and older were high school graduates or higher while 35 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development lists Sitka with an average monthly labor force of 4,403 with a peak on 5,257 in August. (McDowell Report)

The industries that make up the highest percentage of local employment include health care (16.8 percent), seafood (12.8 percent), government (15.3 percent), and services (14.3 percent).

## **Major Employers**

The top 10 major employers in Sitka, as of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 were as follows — SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) with 612 employees, Sitka School District 219, U.S. Coast Guard 209, City and Borough of Sitka 155, Mount Edgecumbe High School 154, Hames Corporation 150, Sitka Tribe of Alaska 134, and Sitka Pioneer Home 105. Employment numbers are based on average monthly employment and include full-time, part-time, and temporary employees. (Data from Sitka Economic Development)

## **ECONOMIC PROFILE**

### **Household Income Measures**

According to the City of Sitka's Comprehensive [Technical] Plan 2030, 58% of Sitka households earned less than \$50,000 annually, and 32% earned less than \$25,000. The chart below, taken from the City's Plan, shows further details about income distribution.

**Figure 8- Income Distribution in Sitka**

	Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)	Number of Returns			% Total Income	% All Returns
		All*	Joint Filers*	Single Filers*		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$303,677,000</b>	<b>4,650</b>	<b>1,610</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
\$1 under \$25,000	\$17,706,000	1,500	90	1250	6%	32%
\$25,000 under \$50,000	\$41,428,000	1,140	210	730	14%	25%
\$50,000 under \$75,000	\$45,412,000	730	330	290	15%	16%
\$75,000 under \$100,000	\$42,288,000	490	320	130	14%	11%
\$100,000 under \$200,000	\$88,717,000	660	540	100	29%	14%
\$200,000 or more	\$68,126,000	130	120	**	22%	3%
<i>Source: IRS 2014 Tax Returns for zip code 99835      * All includes joint, single, head of household, and other filers</i>						

## TRAVEL TO WORK

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the estimates for the five-year period of 2013 to 2017 project that 60.9 percent of the Sitka workforce age 16 years and over drove alone to work. Another 24.7 percent carpooled, 15.6 percent walked to work, and 2.9 percent biked. Only 1.4 percent used public transportation excluding taxis. Nearly 5 percent worked at home. (Figures updated July 2019)

## MAJOR TRIP GENERATORS

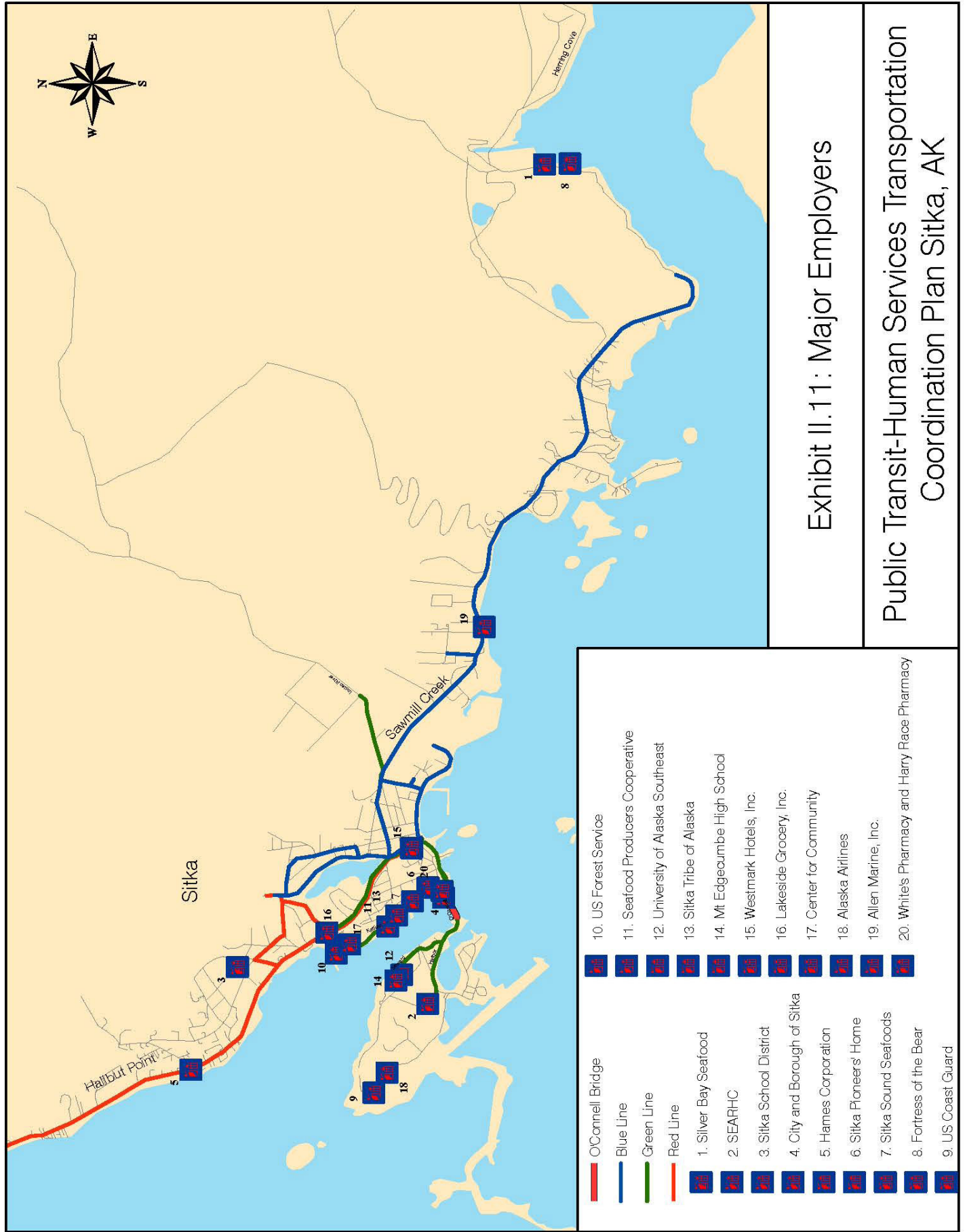
The term “trip generator” is used to describe locations where concentrations of people are likely to live (apartment complexes, nursing homes, etc.) or where people are likely to travel to meet their shopping, child care, health care, educational, or employment needs. The maps in Exhibits II.12, II.13, II.14, and II.15 illustrate the major trip generators in Sitka including major employers, health care facilities, human service agencies, and schools or youth programs. As illustrated by the exhibit, most, but not all, generators are located on the RIDE fixed bus routes. At the time of the last five-year plan, Silver Bay Seafoods and the industrial park were not served by fixed route bus service, but that service and a bus stop were added by the RIDE in 2018.

## SUMMARY

Sitka is projected to experience a slight decline in population over the upcoming decade, with the population decreasing by approximately two (2) percent between 2006 and 2030. By 2018 estimates of the United States Census Bureau, 9.2 percent of individuals in Sitka are below poverty level. The increasing population of Sitka individuals with needs associated with aging, or with fixed or lower personal income will present ongoing challenges for service providers in all areas, including healthcare, childcare, employment, education, and recreation. In turn, the demand for transportation will remain a salient issue.

As Sitka’s largest age group (25 to 64 years) ages and moves into retirement, their need for transportation will grow. The face of Sitka will change further as the age group of 65 years and older increases in size to equal the number of young children (0 to 14 years) and the group of individuals entering the workforce (15 to 24) remains the smallest portion of the total population.

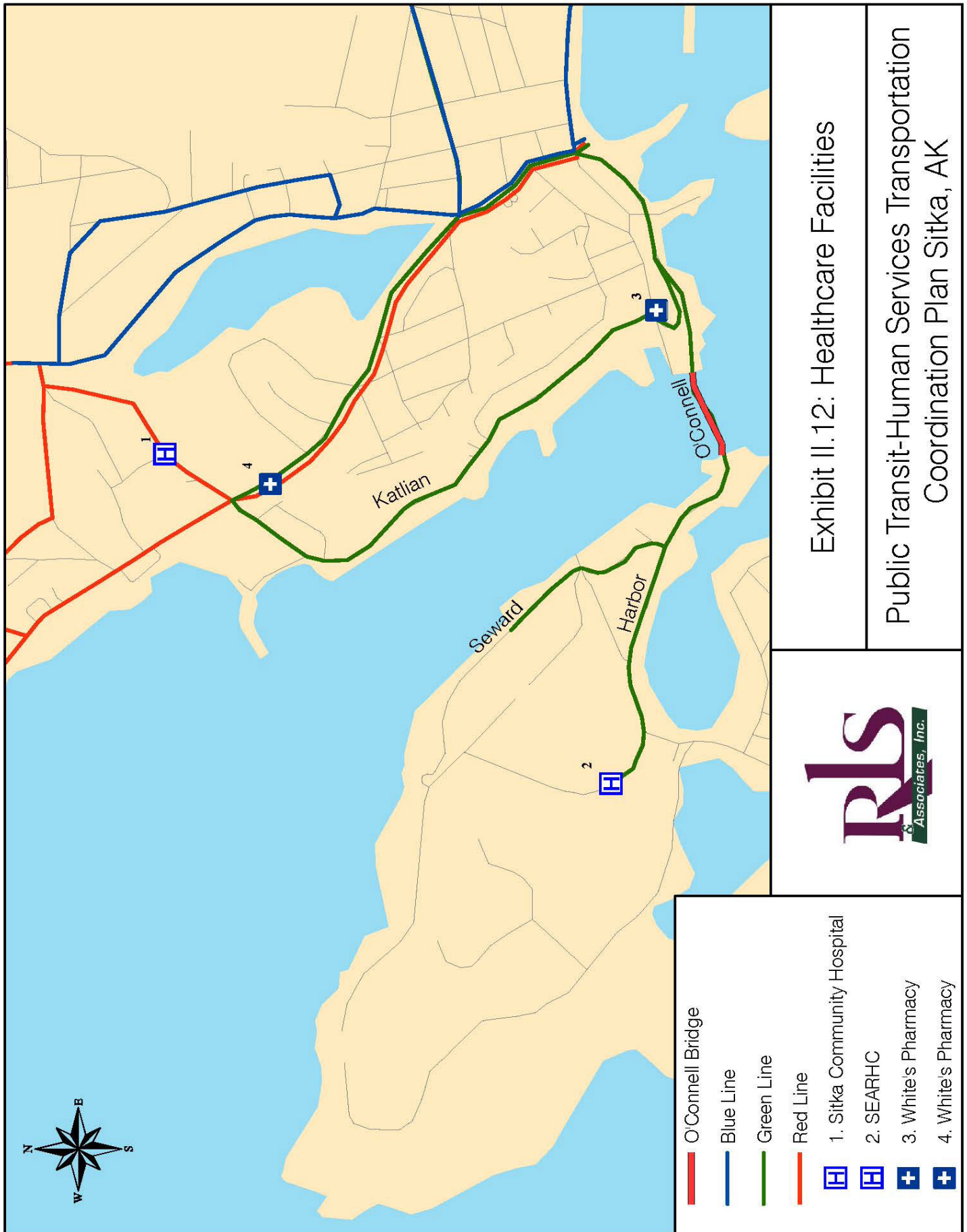
1. To Sitka’s advantage, the highest concentration of trip generators is in the downtown area and along the existing bus routes. Due to limited roads, the distance between residential locations



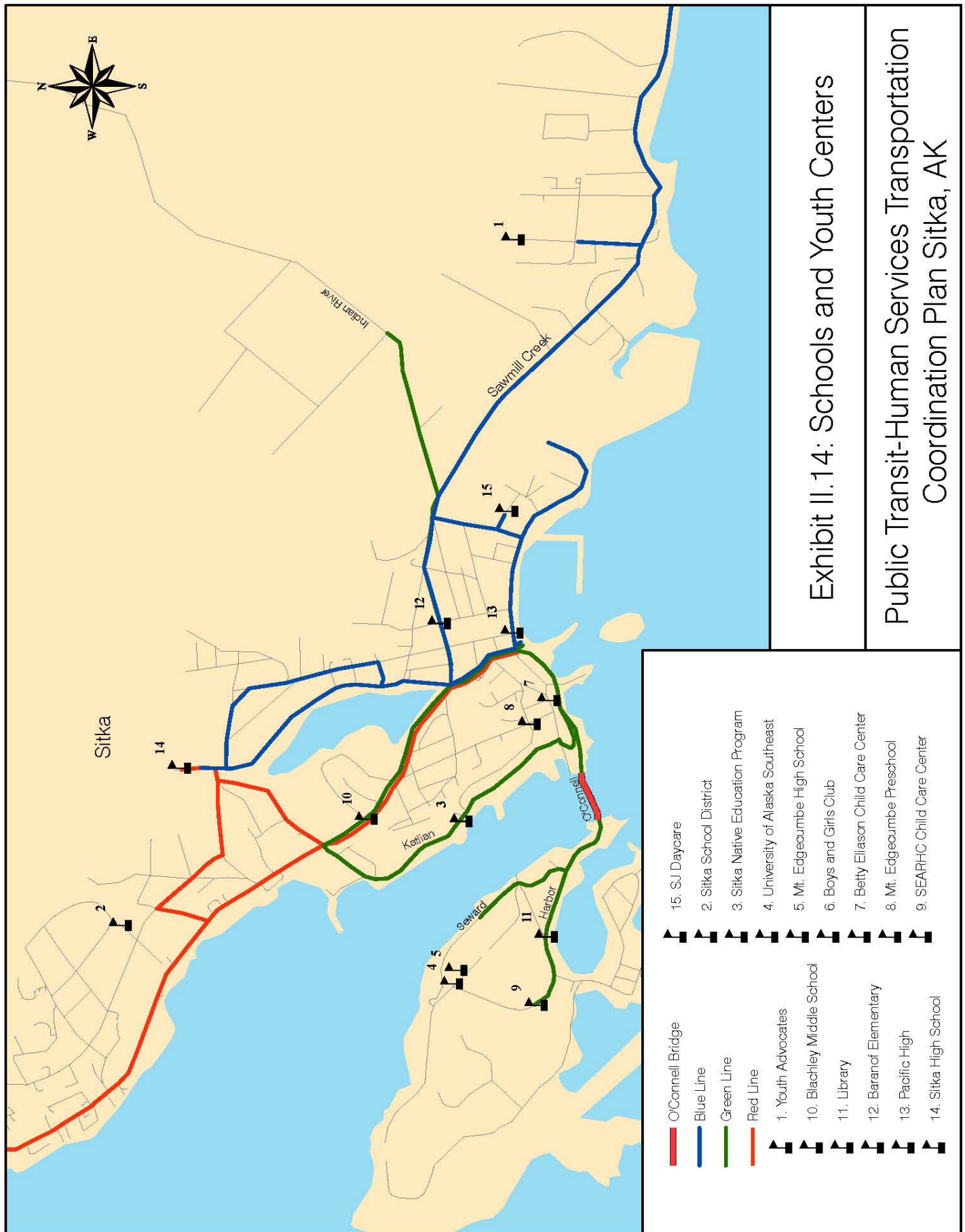
## Exhibit II.11: Major Employers

### Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Sitka, AK









and work sites is short. Another advantage to mobility in Sitka is the close proximity between most major trip origins and destinations. The most pressing current challenge for access to trip generators is the same as the most pressing challenge for Sitka transit in general: the need for more hours and more days of service.



# Needs and Gaps in Service

## OVERVIEW

For this report we attempted to contact local human service agencies, the user-stakeholders of public transit, and the general public to solicit input and request participation from individuals or organizations that could potentially be impacted by the coordinated transportation planning process. Appendix A includes documentation and outreach efforts included in this project and the participation in local public meetings. This chapter provides a summary of the outreach efforts and results. Outreach efforts for the local general public and stakeholders included the following:

- One general public meeting and stakeholder workshop;
- One public meeting focused on senior needs;
- A survey of the current the RIDE and Care-A-Van passengers; and
- A survey opportunity for the general public.

## GENERAL PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

CFC and Sitka Tribe of Alaska hosted one local hearing and stakeholder workshop on August 28, 2019, to discuss unmet transportation needs and gaps in service for older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and the general public. The local manager of the Care-A-Van paratransit program) also attended and participated.

Invitations to the meeting were distributed via email to organizations in Sitka who represent older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and/or the general public. The general public was invited and notified of the meeting through multiple large block ads and public service public announcements in the Daily Sitka Sentinel newspaper (see Appendix for newspaper announcements) and through notices on Facebook.

A list of meeting participants is included in the Appendix. Also included are the handouts distributed at the meeting, which included some history and needs of the transit/paratransit system, and meeting notes detailing some public comments.

During the workshop, the facilitator dedicated a portion of the time to defining coordinated transportation and explaining its potential benefits. She outlined basic coordination aspects for the stakeholders who were becoming involved for the first time, as well as intermediate level coordination aspects that could be used to help Sitka progress toward new levels of coordinated transportation efficiencies.

Following the presentation, the workshop members were asked to identify public and human service agency transportation and mobility issues, successes, and challenges in Sitka. Discussions focused on transportation for the general public, including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

The transportation needs, gaps, duplications, and challenges discussed during the public meeting are included in the summary section at the end of this chapter.

## HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY/SENIOR CENTER AND GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEYS

A survey of the general public, human service agency/senior center clients, and current public transit riders was conducted from July 1, 2019, through Aug. 5, 2019. The same survey was distributed to each constituency, and a copy of the survey and the survey results is included in the Appendix. The survey was published online using Survey Monkey, and it was advertised on several occasions through the Daily Sitka Sentinel (daily newspaper), KCAW-Raven Radio's community calendar (about every 3-4 days), on the RideSitka.com website (<http://www.ridesitka.com>) and on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SitkaRide>), and shared in several Sitka groups).

Paper copies of the survey also were distributed on the RIDE and Care-A-Van buses. Data from the paper copies of the survey were manually inputted into the Survey Monkey site so we could use the site's data analysis features. To encourage survey participation, we offered a random drawing for one \$100 and two \$50 gift cards from Sea Mart grocery store. In all, we received 60 survey responses.

**Ridership frequency** — On this question, the top response was Occasionally with 40.00 percent. The next response was a tie between 3-5 times per week and Not At All (18.33 percent each), followed by a tie between Every Day and 1-2 times per week (11.67 percent each).

**Type of RIDE used** — In this category, the majority of people used the RIDE fixed-route service (blue buses) with 86.54 percent. There were 7.69 percent who used the Care-A-Van paratransit service (white buses), and 5.77 percent used both.

**Main reasons to use the RIDE/Care-A-Van** — This question allowed multiple responses, and the top result was Work (56.86 percent). The next response was Shopping (50.98 percent), followed by Doctor's Appointment (37.25 percent), Social (35.29 percent), Other (27.45 percent), and a three-way tie between Social Service Agency Appointment, Cultural Events, and School (5.88 percent each).

**Benefit from using public transit/paratransit in Sitka** — Most respondents (53.45 percent) said having public transit/paratransit services in Sitka was very important in their daily lives. The next responses were moderately important in my daily life (18.97 percent), and a tie between important for my daily life and not important in my daily life (13.79 percent each).

**Adequacy of hours and days of service** — The next two questions asked for a yes/no response, with people responding no being able to add comments about how their needs weren't being met. There were 33 Yes responses and 19 No responses on the question about the current hours of bus service meeting transportation needs, and there were 23 Yes responses and 28 No responses to the question about the current days of services meeting people's needs (if an answer wasn't Yes or No, but it listed a need, it was recorded as a No response).

Some people who answered Yes replied with comments about the need for more service. The most common comments were about the need to have transit service later at night on weekdays, with many people suggesting running until 9 or 10 p.m. though a couple said they work jobs that end at midnight. A couple of people also asked for earlier morning service, especially in the summer. Many people also said they'd like to see at more weekend service, especially on Saturdays so they can shop or go to various local trailheads to hike. Several others noted they'd like to be able to go to church on Sundays. A couple of Care-A-Van users asked that limited weekend hours be expanded, if possible.

**Days you use public transit/paratransit service** — The next question asked which days people

used the RIDE/Care-A-Van services, and the five weekdays all had responses of more than 70 percent (people could choose more than one answer). The top day was Wednesday (84.78 percent), followed by Tuesday (80.43 percent), Friday (76.09 percent), Monday (73.91 percent), and Thursday (71.74 percent). People who use the Care-A-Van on weekends said they use it more on Sunday (4.35 percent) than Saturday (2.17 percent). Please note that these percentages are low because people who use the RIDE (blue buses), which don't run on weekends, also answered this question and skewed the results.

**Adequacy of routes getting people where they need to go** — This question was similar to the hours and days of service adequacy questions above, where people answered yes or no, then commented on what needs weren't being met. Nearly everybody said the routes were adequate (48 Yes, 7 No), but even some of the people who answered Yes said they'd like to see the Green Line go to the airport (either for work or because they have B&B guests). A few people said they have problems with some of the long distances between stops, especially if they're carrying groceries or a toddler. A couple of respondents said they live uphill from their closest bus stop, which makes carrying groceries difficult.

**Type of passes purchased** — The top response for this question was Do Not Purchase Bus Pass (37.93 percent), followed by Multiple-Ride Punch Card (31.03 percent), a One-Way Single Ride Pass (17.24 percent), and Monthly Pass (13.79 percent).

**How people travel to work, training, appointments, activities** — This was a question where people could select more than one response. The top answer was the RIDE (blue buses) with 56.90 percent, followed by walk (48.28 percent), drive yourself (43.10 percent), ride with a friend (25.86 percent), taxi cab (18.97 percent), bicycle (15.52 percent), the Care-A-Van white buses (12.07 percent), other (5.17 percent), and don't go (3.45 percent).

**Rank priorities for the RIDE to expand services, if funding becomes available** — This question asked people to rank four priority choices for expanding services. Most people only ranked three of the four choices (the fourth was Other), and some people only picked one priority.

Adding limited services on Saturday and Sunday (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) was the top priority (45.28 percent ranked it No. 1), with full Saturday service (6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.) having the next highest No. 1 rankings (38.30 percent). Other expanded services had 13.66 percent No. 1 rankings, followed by expanded weekday service (to 11 p.m. on M-F) had 11.76 percent No. 1 rankings. Expanded weekday service had the highest No. 2 rankings (43.14 percent), followed by full Saturday service (31.91 percent), and limited Saturday/Sunday service (18.87 percent). Expanded weekday service had the highest No. 3 rankings at 31.37 percent, followed by limited Saturday/Sunday service (26.42 percent) and full Saturday service (25.53 percent).

**A new question: How much funding should the City and Borough of Sitka contribute to the RIDE** — This question told riders that the RIDE currently has a budget of about \$700,000 a year and the City and Borough of Sitka only contributes about \$55,000 to that total. It asked people what level of funding they thought the city should contribute. The top answer was \$100,000 (39.29 percent), followed by the current \$55,000 (21.43 percent), \$150,000 (12.50 percent), no funding (10.71 percent), \$200,000 (8.93 percent), and \$250,000 or more a year (7.14 percent).

**Best way to inform people about the RIDE/Care-A-Van service** — This was another question that allowed multiple responses. The top answer was Facebook or other social media (60.34 percent), followed by website (55.17 percent), newspaper (41.38 percent), rider guide (36.21 percent), radio (27.59 percent), a flier/poster inside the bus (25.86 percent), and the least effective means was television (5.17 percent).

**Age of survey takers** — The top age group to respond to the survey was age 30-49 (35.59 percent), followed by age 50-64 (33.90 percent), age 65 or older (18.64 percent), and age 19-29 (11.67 percent). We received zero surveys from people age 18 or younger, so the next time this plan is updated it is suggested some paper copies of the surveys be placed in the local high schools and middle schools to make it easier for students to respond.

**Annual household income** — The top income group using the RIDE/Care-A-Van service was those making \$50,000 or more a year (33.33 percent). The next income group was those making \$25,000 to \$49,999 (26.79 percent), followed by \$10,000 to \$24,999 (21.43 percent), and those making \$9,999 or less (17.86 percent).

## **SUMMARY OF UNMET TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND GAPS IN SERVICE:**

The following list of unmet transportation needs and gaps in service is based on comments made at our public meetings, as part of the survey process, and through email. Many of these needs, even those mentioned as far back as 2010 or in forums since that time, still aren't being met due to funding issues.

- **Employment Related Transportation:**
  - Weekend transportation, early morning (before 6:30 a.m.), and late evening weekday transportation (at least until 10 p.m.) is needed to support shift workers at both smaller employment centers and at major employers (such as the SEARHC hospital and health care campus).
  - Passengers need a shorter ride time on the fixed-route service. Currently, some people feel that transfers and indirect service on the routes make public transit inconvenient.
- **Child Care and Youth Transportation Issues:**
  - Transportation is needed to childcare centers that is convenient enough to allow parents to drop off a child before continuing on the transportation provider to the parent's worksite. Currently, even when the fixed route serves the childcare center, the nature of a fixed-route schedule and the frequency of service do not allow the parent time to utilize the bus for childcare and employment.
  - Afterschool transportation for students is needed and no longer efficiently provided. An option for students to go home after afterschool programs (around 7:30 p.m.) is needed.
  - Mount Edgecumbe High School students have fewer hours in town for recreation and some would prefer to ride a vehicle rather than spend time walking into town.
- **Accessible Transportation Issues:**
  - Public transit routes do not go into enough neighborhoods where residents could conveniently access bus stops.
  - Long-term care consumers and other hospital patients need more affordable transportation between the airport and ferry and the hospitals (non-stretcher transport).
- **Vehicles and Capacity:**
  - Sitka's human services agencies need to replace aging small vehicles (i.e., sedans and minivans), which they use for trips with single or few client passengers.



- **Lower Fares for Transportation:**
  - Individuals with low incomes need a bus pass option that offers a discount but costs less than \$50.00 per month for the general public. Many passengers cannot afford to spend \$50.00 all at once on a bus pass, so they purchase daily passes and cannot use the discount offered with the multi-trip passes.
  - Affordable transportation options to and from the airport for early and late flights are needed.
  - Currently, private taxis serve the airport, but many people cannot afford taxi fare.
- **Limited Hours and Days of Service:**
  - Transportation service during the weekday early morning hours (before 6:30 a.m.) to serve individuals with early appointments.
  - Weekend transportation service to support, shopping, and social trip purposes. Popular weekend destinations include downtown Sitka, church, library, skatepark, movies, and Market Center.
  - Weekday evening transit service until after 10 p.m. to support social and entertainment trip purposes.
- \* **Improved Local Government and other Support and Information Sharing:**
  - **Human service agencies and transportation providers need to advocate for an increase in local government financial support of public transportation in Sitka.**
  - **Human service agencies and all organizations need to improve information sharing about the transportation services offered in Sitka.**
  - **Healthy Community:**
    - The general public would like to have an option to use public transit to access recreational trails for hiking and biking. Current bus routes do not access some trailheads.

## **CHALLENGES TO COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION**

Results of the stakeholder and public meetings indicated the following challenges to meeting the unmet transportation needs and gaps in service through coordination:

- Currently, human service agencies are providing transportation for their clients because they need to fill gaps. However, many of those agencies are not aware of the actual fully allocated cost for providing those trips. Gathering information about the actual costs for providing transportation was a time consuming, and in some cases impossible, task for many of the human service agencies.
- One of the primary challenges to improving transportation in Sitka is the lack of local government's financial participation. Public transit receives very limited financial support from the City and Borough of Sitka. Transportation advocates would like to explore the possibility of receiving a portion of the City sales tax, millage/property tax, or cruise ship head tax.
- The RIDE would like to expand into evening hours and weekend services with its fixed

routes (and paratransit). Without significant increases in local government financial contribution, such expansion to become a “comprehensive” public transit system is not likely to become a reality. Without the RIDE becoming “comprehensive” by providing at least six days a week and evening hours, Sitka residents cannot decide to “rely” upon public transit.

While there are challenges to implementing coordination among varied transportation providers, services, and funding sources, it is important to note that transportation coordination is successfully implemented throughout the country, and certain aspects of coordination already exist in Sitka. Therefore, issues such as guidelines for the use of funding and vehicles, unique needs presented by different populations served, should challenge, but not stop, a coordination effort. There are many resources available to assist communities as they coordinate transportation.

The next chapter outlines potential coordinated transportation strategies to address the needs and gaps in transportation service that were identified through outreach efforts.

## COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### OVERVIEW

For the 2020-2025 Plan, Any reader of this plan must know that no agency in Sitka, not the public transit providers, nor any other agency, is funded by a grant to, or required by any laws to implement this plan. This plan discusses possible strategies, and provides the background data and a planned focus for continued work in Sitka on better use of transit and human service agency transportation resources. This plan is not a promise of implementation; it is a source of knowledge and a shared vision of where coordination efforts in Sitka may try to go in the future. (Plan coverage is dated July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2025.)

The three primary transit providers in Sitka (CFC, Sitka Tribe, and SESS) have other transit plans and work obligations (per funding sources) that fully occupy their current staff resources. The human service agencies in Sitka also have other mandates and goals that occupy their staff. However, as all of these agencies find staffing resources, unmet client needs, or funding opportunities, they can turn to this Plan to guide their shared efforts to improve transportation in Sitka for human service clients as well as the general public.

In general, the concept of coordination in Sitka has widespread support from local human service agencies and transportation providers. Several organizations have already experienced the benefit of coordinating to purchase vehicles and share operating expenses. Bringing new levels of coordination into reality will require additional support from local funding sources. It also will require a constant effort for the human service agencies and public and private transportation providers throughout the area to be aware of the benefits of sharing transportation resources and proactively coordinating. Creating efficiencies in this manner will permit organizations to utilize resources in a manner that creates will permit them to use their resources to benefit the most people.

There are numerous success stories in Sitka that demonstrate the impact of coordinating resources, including the public transit fixed routes and complementary paratransit services that are operated cooperatively by Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Center for Community, and Southeast Senior Services, using a variety of funding sources funneled variously through the three partners. Another coordination success is the grant writing success of CFC in obtaining small vehicles for use by human service agencies, such as the 2019 van obtained by CFC and then “leased” to Youth Advocates of Sitka for that agency’s programs. In 2019, CFC also succeeded in getting a grant –and new 2019 station wagon–for its own program of services to persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

While these are excellent examples of coordination, the stakeholders who participated in this study indicated a willingness to continue to expand and enhance local efforts. The primary goal of transportation providers in Sitka is to fill gaps in transportation services in an effort to improve the services for human services clients and the overall quality of life for Sitkans.

Opportunities for improving the coordination of transportation services must nurture a trusting relationship between participating organizations by clarifying objectives and costs, ultimately facilitating the desire to move and the actual movement of the participants toward a more coordinated approach to transportation and mobility throughout Sitka.

## COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Achieving coordinated transportation goals will take time, effort, and in most situations, additional funding. Therefore, it is recommended that the stakeholders consider the following goals and objectives as a starting point from where they can continue to improve human service agency and public transportation service. Continued discussion about potential coordination strategies and prioritizing coordinated transportation goals will be critical to refining a feasible implementation plan on which to base funding and service design decisions through 2025.

Preliminary principles on which Sitka's coordinated transportation service goals and strategies are based were first developed in 2010, during the creation of the 2010-14 Coordinated Plan, and they are still valid going into the 2020-2025 time period of this plan. They are as follows:

***Principle #1:*** Maintain the successful services and transportation programs and reduce unnecessary gaps and duplications in transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low-incomes, and the general public.

***Principle #2:*** Invest in programs and actions that improve community access to employment, health care, agency sponsored programs, and activities that improve the quality of life for Sitkans.

***Principle #3:*** Provide incentives for projects that emphasize coordination and collaboration.

***Principle #4:*** Assure access, safety, and security for the mobility of individuals, groups, and stakeholders served.

Six goals developed by local transportation stakeholders in 2010 to build upon these founding principles for coordinated transportation are outlined below. These goals have been implemented where funding made it possible in the nine years since 2010. These goals continue to serve well for SFY2021 - 2025. Each goal is supported based on the input provided by participating organizations and the general public.

***Goal #1:*** Improve Awareness of Public and Coordinated Transportation Opportunities and Establish a Shared Community Approach for Improving Transportation Service and Resource Management.

***Goal #2:*** Share Resources and Skill Sets to the Highest Appropriate Level of Benefit for All Participating Organizations.

***Goal #3:*** Enhance Transportation to Support Employment for People with Low-Incomes, Individuals with Disabilities, and the General Public.

***Goal #4:*** Secure Adequate Support to Keep Up With the Increasing Costs of Sustaining Public Transportation Service.

***Goal #5:*** Plan for Realistic Expansion Existing Public and Human Service Agency Transportation Service.

***Goal #6:*** Increase and Improve Accessible Services for Individuals with Disabilities and People with Low Incomes.

Priorities for human services transportation seem not to have changed much since the development of the 2010-14 plan, when the consulting team presented preliminary coordinated transportation objectives based on the needs assessment and outreach efforts. Stakeholder human services agencies were asked to prioritize each of the objectives over the five-year planning horizon. Stakeholders who were not able to attend the meeting were invited to participate by responding to an email. Through this prioritization exercise, the study participants ranked coordinated transportation objectives in order of priority.



Two factors were considered when determining the appropriate level of priority for each objective and strategy. First, stakeholders prioritized strategies based on the perceived level of need. Second, transportation service providers evaluated the feasibility of implementing each strategy based on existing local capital and operating resources, funding, and facilities. Priorities are described below in terms of Immediate, short-term, mid-term, and long-term. Goals may be achieved through the stated objectives and strategies or through a newly devised strategy created by the local stakeholders.

Implementation priorities are based on current conditions and are subject to change. For example, strategies that are listed as immediate in this plan but lack sufficient staffing to support immediate implementation may be re-categorized as short- or long-term until appropriate staffing levels can realistically be achieved. Similarly, if funding for a long-term strategy is achieved sooner than expected, that strategy will be re-categorized and implemented sooner. Local human service agencies and transportation providers are encouraged to re-evaluate objectives and Implementation Strategies to be Explored for feasibility on at least an annual basis.

**OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES TO BE EXPLORED**

The following sections outline the objectives and implementation strategies to be explored as local human service agencies and transportation providers work toward achieving the stated coordinated transportation goals and or refining them as appropriate to meet changing needs of the community.

**Goal #1: Improve Awareness of Public and Coordinated Transportation Opportunities and Establish a Shared Community Approach for Improving Transportation Service and Resource Management.**

**Objective 1.1: Continue the activities of the Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee as the forum and clearinghouse for the coordination of local public transit services and human services transportation issues, networking, and mutual support.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**1.1.1:** Twice a year, request participation in the Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee from key stakeholders in Sitka; human service agencies, transportation agencies, educational entities, health-care providers, and tribal and city governments.

Priority:	Immediate and on-going
Parties Responsible:	All key human service agency and public transportation stakeholders select a representative of their organization to actively participate in the Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee. The advisory committee will be an advisory body for the coordinated transportation effort in Sitka.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership on the RIDE or Care-A-Van as members begin to work together and awareness of available services and unmet needs improves.

Performance Measures:	Human Services-Public Transportation Advisory Committee re-invites key stakeholder participation at meetings to be held at least twice per state fiscal year.
Potential Costs:	No additional funding required if the advisory committee is invited and meetings convened by the lead public transit agency.

**Objective 1.2: Establish a Framework for Coordinating Transportation Resources to Maximize the Capacity and Effectiveness of Existing Resources.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**1.2.1:** Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)/Contracts with all human service agency, public, and private transportation service providers that are participating in the coordinated effort. The MOUs should include the specific coordination activities in which the organization will participate. All transportation providers should share trip schedules and vehicle availability (use the vehicle utilization chart in this document as a starting point).

One planned step as of Plan publication: fixed-route RIDE to work with Mt. Edgecumbe high school administration to facilitate their students using the RIDE services when coming into downtown or to Sitka high school for classes or events.

Priority/Implementation:	Mid-Term.
Parties Responsible:	Local public, private, and human service agency transportation providers.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time involved in preparing and negotiating MOUs.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership and productivity through shared schedules if empty seats are filled on existing trips.
Performance Measures:	Number of MOUs/Contracts developed; Number of agencies sharing schedules; Dollars saved in bulk purchases; and Number of shared rides.
Potential Costs:	No additional costs. For some agencies new agreements to share trips could result in overall cost containment.

**1.2.2:** Use existing the RIDE or other websites to improve access to transportation information and services. Possibly develop a blog about unmet transportation needs. A blog is an effective way to share information with passengers and the community.

Priority:	Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA, SESS and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time involved in setting up the website information, monitoring and responding to the blog, and updating the site.

Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership in response to improved access to information.
Performance Measures:	Set-up webpage and blog; Number of hits on webpage; Number of new young riders (target high school students); Number of new riders on public transportation; and Improved access to community resources.
Potential Costs:	Additional cost for website capability.

**1.2.3:** Educate the public about wheelchair accessibility of all the RIDE fixed-route buses and other human service agency vehicles.

Priority:	Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA, SESS and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time for STA to work with public education opportunities.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potentially an increase in ridership on the RIDE by individuals that require a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
Performance Measures:	Develop outreach/educational materials about Sitka's accessible transportation partners; Number of materials distributed; Number of passengers using wheelchair accessibility features on vehicles; Number of trip requests for passengers who need a wheelchair accessible vehicle; and Improved access to community resources.
Potential Costs:	No additional costs.

**Goal #2: Share Resources and Skill Sets to the Highest Appropriate Level of Benefit for All Participating Organizations.**

**Objective 2.1: Seek Opportunities to Share Maintenance Facilities and Specialized Technicians.**

Implementation Strategies to be explored:

**2.1.1:** Develop formal agreements to coordinate the use of the planned STA transit maintenance facility and mechanic.

Priority:	Long-Term.
Parties Responsible:	STA should take the lead.

Staffing Implications:	None.
Capital Requirements:	None. (Facility planned)
Ridership Implications:	None.
Performance Measures:	Number of organizations utilizing the facility; Number of road calls; Amount of maintenance costs; Number of major repairs;
Potential Costs:	Costs associated with operating a maintenance program could be shared with coordinating organizations.

## **Objective 2.2: Explore Joint Purchasing Opportunities.**

### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**2.2.1:** Continue to coordinate grant-writing activities for access to transportation resources of all types: planning, administration, operating, and capital.

Priority:	Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	CFC, STA and SESS.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time for investigating opportunities and developing grant applications and eligible programs.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	None.
Performance Measures:	Number of joint grant-writing activities; and, Amount of funding received through joint grant-writing opportunities.
Potential Costs:	Costs are associated with staff time.

## **Goal #3: Enhance Transportation to Support Employment for People with Low-Incomes, Individuals with Disabilities, and the General Public.**

### **Objective 3.1: Find Opportunities to Help Make It Easier for These Residents to Use Public Transit.**

#### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**3.1.1:** Explore funding opportunities to continue a voucher/pass program for human services agency clients that partially subsidizes rides on public transit, which is transportation that will support employment for those clients.

Priority:	Mid- to Long-Term.
Parties Responsible:	CFC, STA, SESS and local employers.



Staffing Implications:	Staff time to plan the program and secure grant funding to support it. After set-up, administration of the program should be managed through STA, CFC, or SESS.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	In SFY19, nearly 9,000 rides on fixed route were used by clients of human services agency eligible for the vouchers.
Performance Measures:	Administration of the program planned; Funding for administration secured; Local funding to purchase vouchers secured; Number of vouchers provided after implementation; Client satisfaction.
Potential Costs:	Subsidy for purchasing the vouchers must come from local sources.

#### **Goal #4: Secure Adequate Support to Keep Up With the Increasing Costs of Sustaining Public Transportation Service.**

##### **Objective 4.1: Create Opportunities to Support Existing Public Transportation Service.**

###### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**4.1.1:** Support Sitka Tribe of Alaska's participation in national effort by tribes to favorably influence the funding methodology and amount of federal funding for the federal Tribal Transit program. Support STA's involvement with advocacy regarding the 2019-2020 reauthorization of the Federal Transit Act.

Priority:	Immediate and Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to participate with other tribes, and with Community Transportation Association of America on advocacy efforts.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential increase Tribal Transit funding to Sitka Tribe, allowing possible expansion of services.
Performance Measures:	Increased funding, and favorable funding methodology changes to be included in the 2020 reauthorization of the Federal Transit Act.
Potential Costs:	None known.

**4.1.2:** Develop outreach activities with a focus on attracting new riders to fixed route service. Examples could be appropriate marketing strategies for youth and young adults (i.e., websites, Facebook, presentations at school, or the RIDE public transit as a school project’).

Priority:	Immediate and Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA, CFC, and SESS.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to develop and deploy campaign.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Increase in new riders.
Performance Measures:	Number of new media approaches deployed; Number of new riders on fixed route service; and, Customer/Passenger Satisfaction.
Potential Costs:	Costs for developing marketing materials and new media outlets will be incurred.

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**4.1.3:** Work with other transit providers in Alaska and the Alaska Mobility Coalition to advocate with the Dunleavy Administration and the 2020 Legislature for restoration of State funding for match to community transportation, and for services and small vehicle purchases needed to serve beneficiaries of the Alaska Mental Health Trust.

Priority:	Immediate and Ongoing.
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC
Staffing Implications:	Staff time to participate with other tribal providers and with Alaska Mobility Coalition on advocacy efforts.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential restoration of at least \$30,000 annually in State match to the Sitka transit system’s budget. Potential restoration of services and small capital funding that will enhance services in Sitka, of both transit and the human service agencies. These restorations of funding would prevent reduction of services in SFY2021.
Performance Measures:	Restoration of funding from State.
Potential Costs:	None known.

## **Goal #5: Plan for Realistic Expansion Existing Public and Human Service Agency Transportation Service.**

### **Objective 5.1: Find Ways To Fund Expanded Weekday Hours and Add Weekend Service.**

#### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.1.1:** Explore possible funding sources, if any (eg, local government funding) and select an eligible applicant to apply for funding to expand demand response service, at least for Saturdays.

Priority/Implementation:	Mid- to Long-Term. This opportunity received high ratings from stakeholders for implementing immediately, but would need to follow 4.1. Sections 1 and 2.
Parties Responsible:	Eligible applicant and service provider(s).
Staffing Implications:	None.
Capital Requirements:	Possibility for using existing vehicles for the Saturday service should be explored by preparing an analysis of vehicle utilization from all participating providers (see Chapter III). If new vehicles are required, explore the possibility of applying for Section 5310 (20% local match is required).
Ridership Implications:	None.
Performance Measures:	Local match secured; and Grant application submitted (if any grant funds available). Contract agreements are established; at the fully allocated cost.
Potential Costs:	Costs to be determined by the aspects of the planned service expansion.

### **Objective 5.2: Explore the possibility of expanded hours of public transit service on weekdays.**

#### Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.2.1:** Study the feasibility to implement demand response transportation on weekdays after 7:30 p.m. As ridership increases to at least seven passengers per hour, the mode of service could change to point deviation. (Fixed-route service would require complementary paratransit but point deviation does not.) If demand is appropriately documented and funding is secured, expand service to extend from 7:30 p.m. to at least 10 p.m.

Priority:	Long-Term. Expand hours to 10 p.m. within 1 to 5 years.
Parties Responsible:	STA, CFC, and SESS. Service provider could be a private, public, or non-profit operator.

Staffing Implications:	Additional part-time drivers and a scheduler/dispatcher on-duty during all operating hours.
Capital Requirements:	No additional capital requirements if existing human service agency or public transit vehicles can be coordinated. However, existing vehicles may need to be replaced more frequently due to increased operation.
Ridership Implications:	Ridership for the service provider will increase.
Performance Measures:	Determine the most appropriate operator for the service; Identify size of vehicle appropriate to meet demand; Number of trips provided during evenings; Number of no-shows; Number of passengers who are able to maintain employment; and, Customer satisfaction.
Potential Costs:	Expenses will be determined based on administrative expenses, hours and level of service provided.

**Objective 5.2: Improve accessibility to bus shelters for fixed-route stops.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.2.2:** Seek funding to expand the number of accessible bus shelters along the RIDE fixed routes.

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing until shelters are procured.
Parties Responsible:	STA.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE routes.
Performance Measures:	Number of boardings and alightings at new bus stops; and Number of passengers with disabilities on the RIDE.
Potential Costs:	Staff time involved.

**Objective 5.3: Improve accessibility to fixed-route service outside the downtown core by creating more scheduled stop points, and by implementing flag-stop drop-off service**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**5.3.1:** Open discussions with Dept. of Transportation regarding setting up more designated passenger



stop points both inbound and outbound, on the two State highways: Sawmill Creek Road and Halibut Point Road

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing until more stop points are permitted.
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE routes.
Performance Measures:	Number of boardings and alightings at new bus stops; and Number of passengers with disabilities on the RIDE.
Potential Costs:	Staff time involved.

**5.3.2:** Open discussions with Dept of Transportation regarding fixed-route buses allowing passengers to disembark from the buses by a flag-stop service, on the two State highways (outside the downtown core).

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing until flagstop drop-offs ts are permitted.
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	None.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE routes.
Performance Measures:	Increased ridership.
Potential Costs:	Staff time involved.

**5.3.3:** Replace aging fleet of fixed route and paratransit vehicles to reduce operating costs of maintenance and to improve stability and reliability of transportation services to the public.

Priority:	Mid-Term and Ongoing
Parties Responsible:	STA and CFC.
Staffing Implications:	Staff time must be dedicated to the project.
Capital Requirements:	For CFC, raising 20% required capital match.
Ridership Implications:	Potential for increased ridership from individuals with disabilities due to improved access to the RIDE buses (some

will be kneeling buses).

Performance Measures: Increased ridership.

Potential Costs: Staff time involved.

**Goal #6: Increase and Improve Accessible Services for Individuals with Disabilities and People with Low Incomes.**

**Objective 6.1: Continue to seek capital and operating funding for cost effective, energy efficient methods to meet specialized transportation needs of particular human service agencies, for persons with disabilities or persons in the low-income category.**

Implementation Strategies to be Explored:

**6.1.1:** Seek funding to purchase a small fleet of small vehicles for human service agencies rather than purchasing a large van or cutaway to provide a trip that could be safely and comfortably provided with a smaller, more efficient vehicle.

Priority: Short-Term.

Parties Responsible: CFC, SESS, STA, and local human service agencies.

Staffing Implications: Staff time required to explore funding opportunities and submit grant applications.

Capital Requirements: The Sitka community would work with local agencies to purchase replacement vehicles or supplement existing fleets as necessary with smaller vehicles.

Ridership Implications: More appropriate use of vehicles (smaller vehicles for trips with a few passengers and larger vehicles for more passengers) will increase capacity and allow all providers to provide efficient service for riders.

Performance Measures: Identify funding to purchase small vehicles; and,  
Determine the most appropriate size vehicle mix to meet needs.

Potential Costs: Cost for purchasing vehicle(s) to be determined based upon the type of vehicle(s) required.

## **PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION OF THE PLAN**

The plan was presented to the Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska on October 2, 2019, at which time a quorum was present. Public comment on the plan was made available during the Council agenda's time for comments. Public comments received in advance of the Council meeting were presented to the Council during the meeting. No amendments were recommended. The plan was adopted with a vote of nine in favor, zero against, and zero absent. Tribal Resolution 2019-107 for the Authorization to Accept the Five-Year Plan for Coordination of Public Transit and Human Services Transportation in Sitka, July 2020 through June 2025, is provided on the following pages. The plan originally was scheduled to be presented to the Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska on September 18, 2019, but an agenda snafu pushed the adoption vote back to the next tribal council meeting.



Sitka Tribe of Alaska  
456 Katlian Street  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
907-747-3207  
Fax: 907-747-4915

**Tribal Council Resolution 2019-107**

Authorization to accept the five-year plan for coordination of Public Transit and Human Services  
Transportation in Sitka

- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska is the federally recognized tribal government for more than 4,445 enrolled tribal citizens in Sitka, Alaska organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 as amended; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska is responsible for the health, safety, welfare and cultural preservation of its tribal citizens and their use of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's traditional territory; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska's traditional territory reflects the lands and waters Historically and presently the stewardship responsibility of the Sheet'ka Kwaan and such are composed of the western side of Baranof Island, the greater reaches of Peril Strait, southwestern portions of Chichagof Island and the myriad islands as well as the waters between these locations; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska currently supports and participates in the Sitka public transit system, by way of in-kind contributions, contracted services, coordinated operation of Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Tribal Transit grant to expand and enhance public transit in Sitka, and the pass through of Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Title VI funds from the Older Americans Act to assist in provision of the Care-A-Van services for the elders of Sitka; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Tribe of Alaska recognizes that Sitka Public Transit provides economic and social benefits to the community by providing access to school, work, shopping, healthcare, cultural events, and social events; and
- WHEREAS,** Sitka Public Transit has been engaged in the creation of a Five-Year Plan for continued Coordination of Public Transit and Human Services Transportation in Sitka; including an assessment of resources and needs in transportation, including Sitka local opinion by conducting a public meeting, interviews with key stakeholders, and community-wide surveys; and
- WHEREAS,** the lead transportation staffs of the three primary stakeholders in Sitka Public Transit, namely, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Center for Community, and Southeast Senior Services, have reviewed and endorsed the Plan for Coordination effective July 2020 through June 2025, and recommend its adoption by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska Tribal Council; and
- WHEREAS,** the lead staff of the three primary stakeholders acknowledge to and advise this Council that the adoption of the 2020-2025 Plan does not require any of the stakeholder agencies to carry out activities suggested in the Plan; rather, the adoption of the Plan presents opportunities to the community of Sitka to better coordinate the provision of transportation services for citizens of our community, and the adoption of the Plan positions the community of Sitka, and various



agencies, to take advantage of various external funding opportunities for which the existence of a community coordination plan is an eligibility criterion; and

**WHEREAS,** the Federal Transit Administration requires the elected governing body of a local government to accept the Plan; and

**WHEREAS,** the Council of Sitka Tribe of Alaska is recognized by the Federal Transit Administration as the elected governing body of a local government; and


**WHEREAS,** the availability of the 2020-2025 Plan for public review has been advertised at least twice via the local newspaper, social media, and the local public radio station's community calendar, and posted on the website, [www.ridesitka.com](http://www.ridesitka.com); and


**WHEREAS,** the Sitka Tribal Council provided opportunity for public comment on the Plan at its regularly scheduled and advertised Council meeting, with the Council having the power to adopt the Plan with recommended revisions based upon public testimony;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** the Sitka Tribal Council accept the "Five Year Coordinated Transportation Plan for Human Services in Sitka, for July 2020 through June 2025."

#### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at a duly called and convened meeting of the Tribal Council of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, held on October 2, 2019, at which a quorum was present by a vote of 9 IN FAVOR, 0 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAIN, 0 ABSENT.

  
KathyHope Erickson – Tribal Chairman

Attest:  
  
Nancy Douglas – Tribal Secretary

## GLOSSARY OF COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION TERMS

**Accessibility** – The extent to which facilities are barrier-free and usable by people with disabilities, including those using wheelchairs. (Source: American Public Transportation Association (APTA))

**Accessible vehicle** – A transportation vehicle that does not restrict access and is useable and provides allocated space and/or priority seating for people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

**Accident reports** – The report(s) a driver must complete and submit as directed when involved in an accident, regardless of the severity. Each transportation provider should keep an accident package in each vehicle so that the driver can easily open and follow the directions in the event of an accident. This package should include, but is not limited to, who to call, blank forms for written statements from each passenger describing the accident, blank forms for written driver statement, and written information on what to do immediately following the accident (e.g., make sure each passenger is safe, how to assist all passengers to exit the vehicle, and other pertinent information that may assist the driver and make the situation as stressless as possible for all involved).

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990** – The ADA is wide-ranging federal, civil rights legislation that prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The ADA assures that people with disabilities have full access to all public facilities throughout the United States, including transportation. To this end, this legislation defines the responsibilities of, and requirements for, transportation providers to ensure that transportation is accessible to people with disabilities.

**Advocate** – A person or a group that speaks in a supportive manner on behalf of a person or group of people. Transportation advocates speak in support of transportation services for the general public, low-income individuals and families, older adults, and/or those with intellectual disabilities.

**APTA** – American Public Transportation Association, an international organization that represents the transit industry, including bus, rapid transit, and commuter rail.

**Base fare** – The price charged to one adult for one transit ride; excludes transfer charges, zone charges, express service charges, peak period surcharges and reduced fares. (APTA)

**Branding** – Branding is the marketing of a specific name, logo, slogan, and design scheme for a specific service. In coordinated transportation services, a logo and slogan is established and used by all partners to create a unified message.

**Cancellation** – A trip that was scheduled by a service consumer that was later cancelled prior to the vehicle being dispatched to the pickup location.

**Capital assistance** – Financial assistance available from federal, state, or local governments for transit capital expenses (not operating costs); such aid may originate with federal, local or state governments. (APTA)

**Capital costs** – Costs of long-term assets of a public transit system such as property, buildings, and vehicles. (APTA)

**CDL** – Commercial driver's license, a driver's license required to operate any type of vehicle which has a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 lb or more for commercial use; transports quantities of hazardous materials that require warning placards under Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations, or that is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver. These regulations apply to all public, private, and coordinated transportation providers.

**Community transportation** – The coordination of transportation resources within a community, in an efficient and effective manner to provide safe and reliable transportation services for all citizens.

**Consolidated human-service transportation system** – Operated in one of 2 ways: 1) A provider that operates its own transportation services and assumes the role of the lead public transportation agency in the community to provide transportation services to area human service agencies on a contractual basis, or 2) a private provider that contracts with the lead public transportation agency in the community to provide transportation services to human service agencies.

**Contract revenue** – The amount of funds paid by an agency on behalf of its clients to a third party for client transportation services. Funds are used to offset the total costs of the transportation program.

**Coordinated human-service transportation system** – Human service agencies and/or transit systems cooperating to coordinate some aspect of transportation, such as passenger trips, the sharing of vehicles, schedules, personnel, and maintenance facilities. May also include the consolidation of services, and coordination of purchasing, training, and grant writing, as appropriate.

**CTAC** – Coordinated Transportation Advisory Committee, a committee established to advise the governing board of a coordinated transportation program.

**Days and hours of service** – Published days and hours that transportation services are provided to the general public and/or an agency's clients. It is advisable to include these in brochures and websites to help increase ridership.

**Demand-responsive system** – Any system of transporting individuals, including the provision of designated public transportation service by public entities and the provision of transportation service by private entities, including, but not limited to, specific public transportation service, which is not a fixed-route system. (FTA)

**Donation (as used in transit)** – A contribution to a transportation provider in place of a set fare either solicited or encouraged.

**Fare(s)** – The price paid by passengers for their one-way trip with a transportation provider. Fares can be paid by cash (usually exact change is required), token, ticket, transfer, voucher, pass or other acceptable means as established by the transportation provider.

**Farebox revenue** – Total revenue collected, including cash, token, ticket, transfer, voucher pass, or other acceptable means as established by the transportation provider in a timeframe, usually reported daily. Farebox collections are usually reported monthly, quarterly, or annually in the transportation provider's financial data. It is also known as passenger revenue.

**Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** – A division of the U.S. Department of Transportation that administers federal funding programs for public transportation organizations.

**Financial data** – Financial data includes, but is not limited to, the charges and costs of providing services (operating and capital), revenues generated from services (farebox and contract revenues), and revenues from other sources (grants and local match).

**Human services transportation system** – A transportation system, which provides transportation services exclusively to the clients of human services agencies.

**Local match** – Funds required by a funding source to match the money awarded. Usually a percentage of the overall costs associated with the project. An example would be a 20-percent match is usually required for capital purchases made with Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 grant.

**No show** – Term used to describe a scheduled trip that was not cancelled by the passenger but when the driver arrived to pick up the passenger, he or she was not available for the trip.

**On-time performance** – Refers to the percent of scheduled trips that were provided within the pickup window (usually 15-30 minutes before or after the scheduled pickup time).

**Outreach** – Efforts by the individual members of the CTAC, the governing board, or its agents to share ideas or practices with other organizations, groups, specific audience and the general public. Outreach includes the education of its audience about the benefits of transportation services for all segments of the population. It also includes listening to feedback to assure services are meeting the transportation needs of the community.

**Public hearing** – A public hearing is a formal meeting held to set aside time for public testimony on a particular subject matter for which a notice was published in the official newspaper or a common website of the region. It is a mandatory meeting if required by a funding source and must meet state public access laws, if applicable.

**Public meeting** – A public meeting is held to notify the public of a new service or happening within the coordinated transportation program. A public meeting is held to notify the public about a change that comes about as a result of a public hearing. These meetings must meet state public access laws, if applicable.

**Purchasing agency** – An organization or human service agency that purchases transportation services from a third party for its clients.

**Ridership change(s)** – Changes in the level of passengers transported within a measurable time period. Changes are usually measured as either increases or decreases.

**RTAP** – Rural Transit Assistance Program, a program of the Federal Transit Administration, with both a National component and a State component, dedicated to creating rural transit solutions through technical assistance, partner collaboration and free training and other transit industry products.

**Service consumer** – Any individual who uses the transportation services for transportation to origins and destinations, regardless of whether or not a fare was rendered to the driver.

**Transportation provider** – An organization, company, human service agency, or other entity that provides transit services for its clients and/or the general public either on a donation or fare basis.