Chapter 3: Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Program in 2023

Evolution From Auto-based to Multimodal Transportation Metrics

In 2005, Bellingham transportation planners recognized that traditional auto-oriented level of service (LOS) methodology from the national Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) would not help Bellingham achieve its land use goals for infill development. In 2008, Bellingham staff and TranspoGroup consultants devised a multimodal method to meet the Washington State's GMA transportation concurrency requirements in a:

Transportation element that implements, and is consistent with, the land use element (RCW 36.70A.70 (6)) and

After adoption of the comprehensive plan by jurisdictions required to plan or who choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040, local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a locally owned transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development. These strategies may include increased public transportation service, ride sharing programs, demand management, and other transportation systems management strategies. For the purposes of this subsection (6) "concurrent with the development" shall mean that improvements or strategies are in place at the time of development, or that a financial commitment is in place to complete the improvements or strategies within six* years. **(RCW 36.70A.70 (6) (b)).**

**NOTE: Bellingham requires financial commitment within 3 years consistent with project funding on 6-Year TIP*

In 2008, Bellingham adopted BMC 13.70 Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Management to implement the first Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Program in Washington, which received the **2009 APA/PAW Award for Transportation Planning in Washington State**. A full account of Bellingham's evolution from traditional auto-based transportation performance metrics to innovative multimodal transportation metrics is available in an article titled *Moving Beyond the Automobile* on the City web site.

The Bellingham Comprehensive Plan Multimodal Transportation Chapter adopts a multimodal level of service (LOS) standards and BMC 13.70 as its Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Ordinance, as follows:

Policy T-21 Calculate "**Person Trips Available by Concurrency Service Area**" as Bellingham's adopted LOS standard to serve planned growth in different parts of the City. Per BMC 13.70 Multimodal Transportation Concurrency, Bellingham and the UGA are divided into Concurrency Service Areas (CSA) based on differing land use contexts and multimodal LOS is calculated for each CSA using the following performance measurements:

- Completeness of sidewalk network;
- Completeness of bicycle network;
- WTA transit capacity, transit route frequency, and transit ridership;
- Vehicle traffic volume to capacity; and
- Access to multiuse trails.

Policy T-22 Publish an annual report on adopted LOS standards and adequacy of the Citywide transportation system according to its Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Program (BMC 13.70) and the TRAM.

Bellingham's Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Program annually measures sidewalks, bikeways, multiuse trails, WTA transit service, and arterial street capacity in the context of various land use environments found within 20 Concurrency Service Areas (CSA) across the city ***(Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1)***.

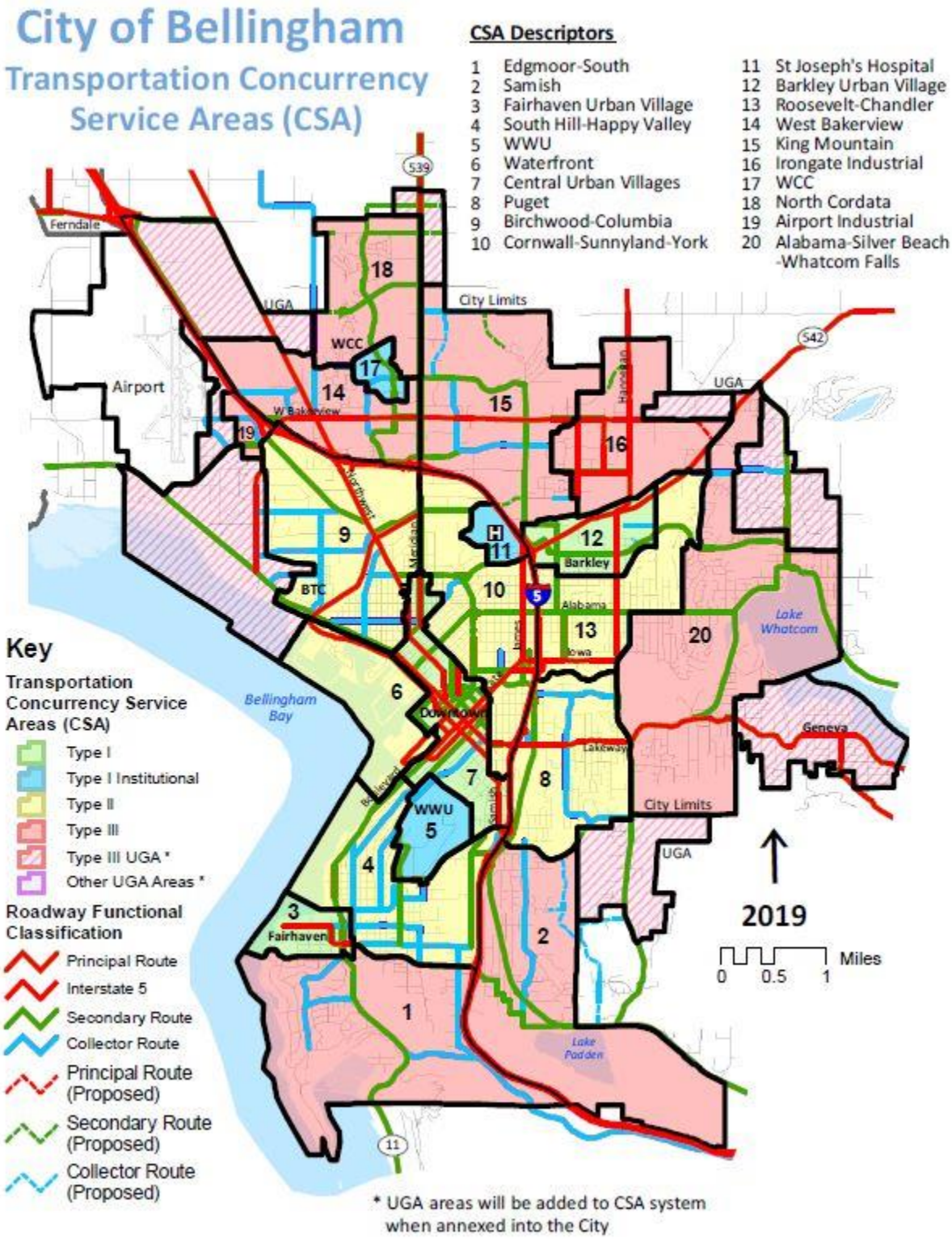

Figure 3.2. Bellingham's 20 Concurrency Service Areas (CSA) in 2023

Table 3.1 Person Trips Available (PTA) by Concurrency Service Area (CSA) in 2023									
	Sidewalks[1]		Multiuse Trails*		Bikeways[2]		WTA[3,4]	Auto[4]	2023
Concurrency Service Area (CSA)	%	Credit	%	Credit	%	Credit	Transit	Arterial	Net
	Complete	PTA	Complete	PTA	Complete	PTA	PTA	PTA	PTA[5]
1. Edgemoor/South	33%	0	51%	506	40%	0	50	795	**1,351**
2. Samish	26%	0	54%	507	89%	621	20	1,930	**3,078**
3. Fairhaven Urban Village	89%	780	63%	625	45%	0	250	1,040	**2,695**
4. South Hill-Happy Valley	61%	194	24%	237	44%	0	170	1,314	**1,915**
5. WWU IMP	87%	748	65%	653	75%	504	650	2,207	**4,762**
6. Waterfront District	58%	151	94%	939	81%	562	0	2,997	**4,649**
7. Urban Core (4 Villages)	91%	814	14%	144	67%	340	1,500	5,669	**8,467**
8. Puget	64%	229	33%	333	60%	154	220	2,934	**3,870**
9. Birchwood-Columbia	64%	245	16%	164	56%	101	400	1,688	**2,598**
10. Cornwall-Sunnyland-York	85%	628	27%	273	68%	324	700	2,656	**4,581**
11. St. Joseph's Hospital IMP	60%	208	50%	500	75%	500	150	2,091	**3,449**
12. Barkley Urban Village	86%	652	27%	273	76%	470	500	5,132	**7,027**
13. Roosevelt-Sussex-Chandler	75%	397	25%	254	68%	290	250	2,080	**3,271**
14. W. Bakerview-S. Cordata	69%	302	7%	69	66%	294	800	5,653	**7,118**
15. King Mountain	58%	125	12%	124	60%	160	400	4,304	**5,113**
16. Irongate Industrial Area	3%	0	0%	0	27%	0	0	3,387	**3,387**
17. WCC IMP	100%	800	0%	0	90%	645	550	2,559	**4,554**
18. North Cordata	72%	357	50%	500	87%	597	650	3,285	**5,389**
19. Airport Industrial	78%	398	0%	0	0%	0	100	772	**1,270**
20. Whatcom-Alabama-Silver	60%	155	91%	914	60%	152	350	1,619	**3,190**
Totals	**66%**	**7,183**		**7,015**	**44%**	**5,714**	**7,710**	**54,112**	**81,734**

** Includes only "bicycle-friendly" trails as defined in TRAM Chapter 7*

Notes:

1.) "Percent complete" sidewalks reflects degree of completeness by CSA of "Primary Pedestrian Network" in 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan from the list of 357 sidewalk infill and crosswalk projects.

2.) "Percent complete" bikeways reflects degree of completeness by CSA of "Primary Bicycle Network" in 2014 Bicycle Master Plan from the list of 215 Bikeway improvement projects.

3.) In June 2021, WTA adjusted transit service on some routes in Bellingham. In February 2022, the WTA Board approved a 20-year long-range transit plan titled WTA 2040.

4.) PTA for WTA transit and Auto/Vehicle are derived from select transit and vehicle data collection measurement points on arterial streets throughout the City. Transit data is collected by WTA and Auto data is collected by Public Works. WTA and auto count data from 2019 due to radical changes in transit ridership and auto travel from COVID-19 global pandemic.

5.) Annual net PTA is derived from the compilation of all five variables (Sidewalk, Bikeway, Multiuse Trails, WTA Transit, and arterial traffic counts); minus PTA used by development proposals; minus a 500 PTA reserve in each CSA to avoid violating Bellingham's adopted multimodal LOS standards.

The **2023 TRAM** demonstrates that Bellingham's Multimodal Transportation Concurrency methodology is integrating multimodal transportation system capacity within various land use contexts in Bellingham and is further promoting both the Comprehensive Plan and GMA goal of directing new development toward compact, mixed-use urban areas where adequate transportation services and facilities are most available.