

# Transportation Access for Everyone: Washington State

Produced by the Disability Mobility Initiative, Disability Rights  
Washington

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# Introduction

For too long, transportation policy has been written by and for drivers. For those of us who cannot drive or cannot afford to drive, this creates major barriers for us to access school, jobs, medical care, grocery stores, religious services and everywhere else we need to go in order to fully participate in our communities.

In November 2020, the Disability Mobility Initiative began interviewing people from every legislative district in our state who are nondrivers. From these interviews, we created the Transportation Access for Everyone story map.

These stories reflect the experience of nearly a quarter of our state's population, a figure that is likely to increase as a larger percentage of our population ages out of driving. We know that Black, Indigenous and people of color, immigrants, poor people, seniors and disabled people are much less likely to have a driver's license or access to a car<sup>1</sup> and are more likely to be transit reliant.<sup>1</sup> At the same time people of color, and people living in rural areas and on tribal lands face greater risks of being killed in traffic collisions because our communities lack accessible pedestrian and transit infrastructure,<sup>2</sup> a trend that we have seen increase because of the suburbanization of poverty.<sup>3</sup>

With our years of lived experience using buses, bikes, wheelchairs and our sneakers to live our lives and participate in our communities, we are the transportation experts who best know our barriers and needs, what does and does not work.

## Disability Mobility Initiative

The Disability Mobility Initiative is a program of Disability Rights Washington, a private non-profit organization that protects the rights of people with disabilities statewide. Our mission is to advance the dignity, equality, and self-determination of people with disabilities. We pursue justice on matters related to human and legal rights. Disability Rights Washington is a member organization of the National Disability Rights Network and serves as the designated Protection and Advocacy agency for Washington state.

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<sup>1</sup> Semuels, Alana. "No Driver's License, No Job," *The Atlantic*, 15 June 2016.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/06/no-drivers-license-no-job/486653/>

<sup>2</sup> Washington Traffic Safety Commission. "Pedestrian Safety Advisory Council 2018 Annual Report."

[http://wtsc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2019/01/FINAL-2018-PSAC-Annual-Report-.pdf](http://wtsc.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2019/01/FINAL-2018-PSAC-Annual-Report-.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Sightline Institute. "Combatting the Suburbanization of Poverty," 17 April 2016.

<https://www.sightline.org/2017/04/26/combating-the-suburbanization-of-poverty/>

# Acknowledgements

Deepest gratitude for everyone who took the time to interview with us and for sharing your stories. We recognize that this can be an intensely personal act, especially for those of us who have deeply internalized ableism, racism and confront other structural inequities that have misled us to believe our perspectives carry less value. Many story map participants also reached out to their personal networks to make new connections so we could expand the work, others shared critical feedback and helped us edit this document. Special thanks to our interns and fellows, Abby Griffith, Amandeep Kaur, Bianca Johnson, Charlie Howe, Kimberly Kinchen, Krystal Monteros, Micah Lusignan and Vanessa Pruitt..

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We especially want to thank the organizational partners that went a step further and directly conducted interviews with their constituents — Elmview, Living Well Kent and People for People. Special thanks to those that read and shared resources and ideas for our analysis and recommendations — Hopelink, Transportation Choices Coalition, Move Redmond and the Seattle Department of Transportation.

# Legislative District 1

## Joanie



**“It’s really hard to be dependent on somebody else to get you where you need to go. You just lose a lot of confidence and independence having to rely on other people for simple things. I live in suburbia, and the closest store is over a mile away, and our bus stop is about a half a mile away up a road that has no sidewalks. So I’m delighted I have options with my husband. But not everybody does. And I think about these people —how do they get around? How do they get to the store? It’s scary for the future for me.”**

Joanie lives in Kirkland. She is losing the ability to drive, and now only drives very short distances to the grocery store. For the most part, she relies on her husband to drive her, though in the pandemic she has started walking a lot more and realized that she’s actually able to walk more places in her community than she realized. She has noticed that the sidewalks in her area are in terrible condition, and are often blocked by foliage or vehicles, which means that she has to walk in the street. She knows a friend who lost the ability to drive and intentionally moved next to light rail. Joanie is not sure what the future holds for her, especially as the pandemic ends and she wants to start going places again.

**“Even though my friends and family and my husband see how hard it is for me, I’m sure that they don’t get it. And it’s hard to know what to say to them to explain it. But they’ll say ‘Oh, just give me a call, I’ll give you a ride.’ Yeah, okay, that could be six times a day. You don’t really mean that?”**

## Amanda



**“As someone who wants to bike more places, it’s frustrating to see the lack of infrastructure for anything but cars. We can get grants to make roads wider and wider, but I’ve lived in Bothell for almost 30 years and the sidewalk network is still incomplete. The improvements just don’t seem to be prioritized.”**

Amanda lives in Bothell with her husband, her five-year-old son, her father, who uses a wheelchair, and her brother, who is autistic and cannot drive. They are trying to become a one-car household both for both the environment and for personal enrichment, so she has started walking more, and she wants to bike more often. Her brother exclusively walks and buses around the county. Sidewalks in the Snohomish County part of Bothell where her family resides are intermittently available and rarely cover an entire route. Amanda finds it frustrating that there always seems to be money to make roads wider, but improving

pedestrian and bike safety doesn't seem to be a priority. Now that she walks more, she is continually surprised by how much problem-solving she has to do to stay safe when sidewalks end and shoulders narrow. She'd like electeds to spend some time walking from their homes to run errands to get a better idea of how patchy and unsafe walking around Bothell neighborhoods can be. Even something as simple as walking to the nearest park is a safety risk because of inadequate sidewalks on the nearest arterial. For Amanda, an accessible Washington State would have frequent local transit, both so that people who can't drive have reliable transportation, and to increase ridership amongst those who choose driving to save time. She would include safe walking routes on the transit mapping tool. Amanda would also be more creative with infrastructure, to help expand who can walk and bike. One example is a bike escalator from Norway, which lets people put their front tire in a rack to help people get their bikes up steep hills.

**"There is a great park within walking distance of our home, but there is a busy road with only a slight shoulder for part of the walk. I don't walk with my child on that road — we drive to the park instead. It's just too risky. My brother walks that same road to get to the bus, and sometimes I will see him coming home. It's jarring to see how close he has to walk to cars to get out of our neighborhood. He wants the independence of handling his own transportation and trades some of his safety for it. It just shouldn't be an either/or situation."**

**"People seem to think that, wherever they can drive, someone can walk. But when you're actually a pedestrian on those roads, on that tiny strip of shoulder, or walking in the grass because there is no shoulder, it's a totally different experience. It's a lot more intimidating when you're outside the car."**

## Jo Ann

**"In order to travel to Evergreen Hospital in Kirkland to see my neurologist, I would have to take TAP, transfer to Dart and then transfer to King County ACCESS. This would be completely exhausting; especially since it involves three transfers. It is so easy just to walk out to the garage and put your keys in the ignition and go. If I could drive, it would only take 20 minutes."**

Jo Ann lives in Bothell, Washington. She uses TAP Transportation around town, which is offered through Homage Senior Services. TAP takes her to the grocery store, LA Fitness, the dentist, and hair appointments; but when she needs to go to her neurologist or other doctor appointments in another county, she has to transfer from TAP to DART to King County ACCESS.

**"The transportation services that we have are wonderful - the drivers and the coordinators are absolutely wonderful people. They do their best to make it happen for you and sometimes they are unable to do so when I am going to a place that is outside of their service area."**

## Legislative District 2

### Courtney

Courtney lives in Tenino outside of the area served by transit. She has to rely on family for rides. She wishes there was transit service where she lives so she could be better connected.

# Legislative District 3

## Eric



**“If I missed the bus or the bus is not on schedule, really, then it's hard to get around.”**

Eric lives in Spokane, Washington. Eric usually takes the bus to get around, or she gets rides from her partner. When Eric applies for a job in the Spokane area, she always tries to apply for a job that is within walking distance of where she lives, or near a bus route. When she worked as a substitute paraeducator, there were only two schools in the district that she could consistently get to for jobs. Also, Eric wishes to have access to transportation to get to green, open space as well as farm stands. Eric mentioned that in Spokane, many reasonably dense and walkable areas with a lot of farm stands and “agri-tourism” opportunities (e.g. the area encompassing most of the Green Bluff Grower's Association) are not accessible by transit. Also, in addition to the recreational value of agri-tourism, the produce tends to be cheaper than farmer's markets or grocery stores. Eric would like to see Spokane Transit Authority develop something similar to King County Metro's Trailhead Direct program, which provides access to accessible, rural hiking/outdoor recreation. Right now, neither is easily accessible for people who do not drive in Spokane. If Eric wants to go somewhere, she has to ask her partner to drive her, and she hopes that her partner also wants to go there. If there was more accessible public transportation in the area, Eric would travel independently instead of taking her partner's time whenever she wants to go places.

**“The transit network is structurally unequal for people who cannot drive.”**

## Kate



**“We take the bus more now, because we haven't figured out a way to bike that works well with a five-year-old. My daughter loves taking the bus and not having to wear a seatbelt. It's liberating for her.”**

Kate lives in Lower South Hill in Spokane. She prefers to walk, bike, and use the bus. She bikes the one-and-a-half miles to her office downtown when the weather is good and walks in the winter when the weather is less friendly for biking. Since Kate had her daughter five years ago, the family takes the bus more because they haven't figured out a good system for bicycling through downtown with a young child that fits within her budget. Her daughter loves taking the bus. They do have a car but only use it for things like doing big grocery shopping trips or trips outside public transit areas. Kate feels mentally healthier when she is biking and walking, so being able to combine her commute to work with physical activity is valuable to her. She doesn't have too many barriers, living so close to downtown, but she knows that in many places and on many bus routes people



have to wait an hour between buses, and that can be challenging. Kate sees an equitable and safe community as one where people will respect the rules of the road and people of all abilities feel safe.

## Linda C.



Linda is a retired professor who lives in Spokane. She gets around by foot, bike, and public transportation. Rarely, such as at a late hour, she'll call a taxi. When she's traveling around other parts of the state, Linda mostly uses Amtrak and Greyhound, though she wishes there were better inter-urban transportation options. Linda thinks the Spokane bus routes are really terrific and can essentially get you everywhere you need to go in the city. She's often surprised how many folks are completely unaware that the bus can get you places. The biggest barrier to her is the lack of frequency on some routes, especially those that run only once an hour. She wishes more people were willing to ride transit because of the environmental and public health impacts. Her dad was a chemist, and so she grew up hearing about how the exhaust from cars was poisoning us, as well as

the planet. She gets super frustrated when she sees people idling their cars, knowing what the impacts are of breathing those emissions.

## Debra M.

**"Using a walker on a bus isn't easy. It's not like a wheelchair, where they can raise the seat and buckle you in. I have a rolling walker with a seat. And you can't really fold that up."**

Debra lives in Spokane and usually gets around using the bus or SMS, Special Mobility Services, a medical transportation company that takes people to medical appointments. She doesn't drive because she was in a crash in 2007, and didn't have insurance, which led to her license being suspended. She still hasn't been able to pay her ticket. Even if she were able to pay her ticket, on her income she couldn't pay the \$54 to get her license. Two of Debra's biggest barriers to getting around are the cost of the bus and the difficulty of using her walker on the bus. The bus just keeps getting more expensive, and even the reduced fare pass is \$30 per month, which is still a lot on her income. A low-income pass would be much more helpful. As a disabled person, Debra finds that using the local transit system with a walker is very difficult, and not just getting to and from the bus stops. Her walker doesn't fold up easily, and it's hard to move around and to allow other passengers to pass. Sometimes friends will take her to the grocery store, but they have their own medical appointments, and working around their schedules is hard. Debra wants people who can drive, and especially people who ask, "Why don't you just get a car?" to understand that it's not that easy — some people don't have the money to do that. And some people cannot work because they have a disability. She wants elected leaders and decision makers to know that they need to fund transportation better so that the cost is not so prohibitive for low-income people. They need to live on what she lives on for one month and see what it is like. Debra thinks things would change very fast if leaders tried that.

## Delaine

Delaine lives in Spokane and recently completed a college program. She hopes to further her education in animation and arts. Delaine says transportation services like Uber and Lyft are too expensive and are not an option for her, so she has to rely on the bus and sometimes door-to-door service to get to and from school and other places in her community. Delaine is low vision and she wants drivers to be aware of pedestrians and road safety. When she gets off the bus, she fears drivers might hit her while she is crossing intersections. She says some drivers do not always pay attention to pedestrians. She has been cut off while crossing streets with her white cane and says it can feel really dangerous when walking. She says drivers should not be in such a rush, they should give pedestrians a chance at intersections or crosswalks. Some drivers don't understand what it's like to rely on public transportation, probably because they don't need it. But if they depended on these services and had to walk to a bus stop, they would also want drivers to slow down. Delaine says this would make her traveling experience better and safer.

## Anthony

Anthony lives in Spokane and has been a bus rider for the last 25 years. He relies on the bus system to meet his everyday needs as well as getting back and forth to work. He enjoys traveling and especially cooking as a chef, which is his current occupation. One of the barriers Anthony faces when riding the bus is that the actual bus route schedule is not consistent with the online bus schedule. He uses an app to inform him of any bus delays, but says it needs to be updated with the estimated time. Because the bus schedule time is not reliable, he often ends up being late to work. As a nondriver, Anthony would like drivers to know what it's like depending on public transit for everyday needs. Without the bus, it would be impossible for him to get to work, and other sources of transportation are not an option for him. Without the bus, he would be unemployed and unable to make a living. Anthony believes that having accessible transportation is not only important for him, but it provides access to education, employment, including for the elderly and those with disabilities.

## Legislative District 4

### Nick



**“I used to drive, and the thing I don’t think people who can drive understand about taking the bus is how much longer it takes to go places.”**

Nick works for Lighthouse for the Blind and lives in Liberty Lake. He uses fixed-route transit most of the year, but uses paratransit in the winter because the lack of snow clearing blocks access. The biggest barriers he faces using fixed route transit are when he goes to downtown Spokane for work and has to navigate construction or other barriers on the sidewalks and the bus system stops and routes. Nick is hard of hearing, and sometimes has a difficult time communicating with bus drivers about where the bus is located. This has even become more difficult with the extra barriers and masks blocking sound further. As a result, he’s gotten off in the wrong place, and had trouble navigating. He wishes there were better navigation options to locate bus stops. For example, Soundscapes, a Microsoft accessibility app, will tell him there’s a bus stop, but not which side of the street it is on. At

Spokane’s downtown transit center, he wishes there were tactile markings — even just a carpet that ran along the main path through the interior of the station — so he could navigate from one end to the other without getting disoriented.

### Frank

**“I would use fixed-route buses, but I can’t walk very far. And also I’m very slow crossing the street. I feel very vulnerable crossing the street real slow. The cars are going so fast [and] people seem to be distracted.”**

Frank is a retired engineer who lives in Benton City and uses paratransit. He is very busy with playing music, and also volunteers with the Talking Book and Braille Library and the American Council for the Blind. Frank also serves as president of his local chapter of the United Council for the Blind. Frank lost his sight while in his teens, but was still able to graduate from college and pursue a career in engineering. Due to knee problems, Frank is not able to walk very long distances. The bus stops near where he lives are too far away, and he doesn’t feel safe crossing streets because he walks pretty slow these days. Even using his white cane, he’s worried cars won’t stop. Also, in some areas sidewalks don’t connect and not all intersections have crosswalk signals, which makes it pretty impossible to get around walking. So Frank uses paratransit because it feels safer, and he appreciates the drivers providing assistance getting on and off the bus. Frank believes that better access to transportation plays a key role in having equal opportunities in the disability community.

# Legislative District 5

## Amy



**“I had to attend a 90-minute meeting in Carnation, 20 minutes from where I live, and, using the local transportation, to be picked up at home, taken to the meeting, picked up after the meeting and brought back home took seven and a half hours door to door. I had to attend those meetings but doing so took up my entire day because the buses are so limited and infrequent.”**

Amy lives in North Bend. She usually drives, but after an injury she wasn't able to drive for a few months, and used a wheelchair. When she wasn't able to drive, she came to realize how difficult it was to get around the rural area she lives in, where there is very little transportation infrastructure, and almost no weekend transit service. In her ideal world, everyone in the Snoqualmie Valley could easily get where they need to go by bus. It would give her peace of mind that if she couldn't drive for some reason, she could still get where she needed to go. Also, for individuals living on low income in this area, having affordable, convenient transit would mean that all the money currently being spent on car payments, fuel, maintenance and insurance could be spent on things that mean more — while also putting more money into local economies.

**“In a rural area where there are so few options for mobility, transportation is life. Many people live more than five miles from the nearest store or clinic, and the roads were not set up to be walkable – or even bikeable in many cases. So if the goal is to have a thriving, resilient community, start by making sure that there is safe, affordable, accessible, sustainable and convenient transit. Create a baseline of service for the community so that people can plan their lives and their work and play around it.”**

## Caitlin

**“I'm afraid that with such a small margin for error that if a driver is just a little distracted, they could hit me.”**

Caitlin lives in Maple Valley and Seattle and is a student at UW. She usually walks or takes the bus to get around. It's a struggle to get from her family's home in Maple Valley and her place in the University District. It's also difficult for her to commute from Seattle to Auburn for work, as it takes her about three hours on multiple buses. From her family's house in Maple Valley the car commute is only 20 to 30 minutes, but by bus it takes almost two hours. Caitlin wants to take more shifts at her work and her boss would like her to be able to take shifts when someone calls in sick. But it's too difficult for her to justify the time of commuting. Caitlin absolutely enjoys walking and feels like it gives her a chance to get more exercise and be more active. Caitlin expresses frustration, though, with not being able to walk safely in her community. In her neighborhood in Maple Valley many roads don't have sidewalks — there's just a little white line separating her from the fast cars traveling on the same path as her. Caitlin grew up not going out much because of not having access to a car. It is also a hassle for her to constantly have to ask people for rides. It can tend to leave Caitlin feeling like a burden. Caitlin wants better sidewalks and transportation options for herself and her community.

## Rachel



**“My [paratransit pickup] windows are from 5:30am to 6am to get to work by 7:30. If I was to Uber there directly or if I was to drive I would be there in like 45 minutes.”**

Rachel lives in the Four Corners area of Maple Valley. To get around, she uses ACCESS and a combination of cabs, transportation service companies and ride hail. As a legally Blind person, she can't drive. In the past, the \$1.75 fare has been a barrier to her. Refilling her ORCA card can be difficult, because it requires her to go to specific stores, and where they're located means that she has to get someone in a car to drive her. She ends up paying a lot in cash because she hasn't gotten her card filled, and she usually ends up paying \$2.00 because she's not going to carry around a bunch of quarters. Another barrier is that on paratransit, she never knows if they'll be stopping to pick up other riders or not, so she's not sure if she'll get to a location when she planned, or she'll be getting there half an hour or more early. Rachel would live closer to her job in Issaquah, but housing there is much more expensive than where she lives in Kent, and so she spends one and a half to two hours each way getting to work. Rachel has had a difficult and really threatening situation with a cab driver who didn't drop her off at the right address, and then physically grabbed her in a way that left a bruise. Now she's really wary of drivers who don't know how to work with and support low-vision folks.

**“I could ask you for a ride, but I don't want to ask you, I'm not gonna ask, because I know it's gonna be inconvenient for you.”**

## Eddie

**“I've done this rough estimate, if it takes fifteen minutes to drive, if you're going to take the bus, just times that by four. So it's going to take roughly an hour to get there.”**

**“You have to be very mindful of where you live, so you have fewer options of where you can live. For example, my rent's gone up and I can't really afford it easily, but moving's going to mean I can't get to work or my commute grows by an hour and a half.”**

Eddie lives in Maple Valley and mainly rides King County Metro fixed-route buses to get to where he needs to go. In emergencies, he uses Uber or Lyft. He is legally Blind and has been told he could get a limited daytime license, but he's worried about endangering other people, and also, with it getting dark early, he wouldn't be able to get home from work. Eddie spends a lot of time commuting to work — it's two hours of his day he could be doing something else. In order not to be late to work, he often finds himself there 30 minutes or an hour early. Eddie says that he can be a good worker, but is seen as not reliable because he can't drive. There are two bus routes that run to Maple Valley — one only runs once an hour, and the other only runs at peak morning and evening rush hour times. He has had some people tell him, “Do you think I like commuting from Olympia to Seattle?” to which Eddie responds that he would never even be able to consider such a commute. It's not just that it's unrealistic, it's actually impossible. Carrying groceries is also a challenge and he spends most of his days Sundays dealing with food shopping for the week.

Not having a car puts strain on Eddie's relationships, especially with romantic partners and family members. He says while they will help and give him rides when he needs it, he feels it makes them resentful. Eddie walks friends through this scenario of imagining that they had no other choice but to ask friends or family for help. The friends generally say that they'd ask for help then, because they have no other choice, and Eddie explains that yes, you'd ask for help, but that doesn't mean that you'd feel good about it, and that it's his entire life. He also points out that owning a car and making car payments is one of the stepping stones to getting a house or a mortgage or bigger forms of credit, because that's one of the gateways for building credit.

**“There’s just destinations that are out of my physical reach. It's like there’s a sweet spot. If I can take a plane or train I’m fine. But if a place is too close to catch a plane to, but too far to catch a bus to, I'm probably not going there, like, ever.”**

# Legislative District 6

## Alco



**“The bus is a wonderful mobility aid, because if you have to run errands, paratransit doesn't work too well if you've got four or five places you have to go.”**

Alco is a Blind retiree who lives in Spokane. She's been a transit rider since she was 16, and used the bus to visit clients when she was a case manager at Services for the Blind. She's been taking paratransit during COVID because she is in a high-risk group, and appreciates the service, but she loves the independence the bus gives her and feels it is more flexible than paratransit when she has multiple destinations. The block she lives on can be difficult to navigate without accidentally ending up walking in the

street, because there are so many driveways. For Alco, a more accessible community would include improved sidewalks. Another barrier are intersections, because she can't tell which intersections allow drivers “free turns” that conflict with her crossing the street.

**“My whole block is nothing but driveways in and out of apartments. It's really dangerous because you can be walking in the street and not realize it until you hit the curb.”**

## Alexann



**“The buses do not run all the time where I live. I have had to leave campus events to make it to the bus before the last one leaves to make sure I get home.”**

Alexann is an undergraduate student at Eastern Washington University in Cheney and is low vision. She uses public transportation to get around. Alexann's two biggest barriers to getting around are that bus stops aren't always well-lit or in a well-lit part of town, and that when it snows, the buses often get stuck, so she has no transportation on those days. She would like for people who can drive — and especially elected officials — to take buses and understand just how much longer it takes to get around, and that means having to plan more time for travel to avoid being late.

## Brian K.



**“Could you live your life without having to pre-schedule everything a day ahead? My guess is, it would be quite a shock to you. You ran out of milk and have to go down to the store? Okay, well, you’ll have to wait till tomorrow.”**

Brian is a retired senior lecturer who lives in Spokane. He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when he was 50. He gets around using paratransit, transit, and a van that accommodates his motorized wheelchair. His biggest barriers to getting where he needs to go are a lack of accessible doorways, curb cuts, and sidewalks with such large cracks or bumps that he can’t navigate them. He prefers fixed route transit, but, when it snows, he can’t get to buses. If ride-hails were required to follow ADA guidelines he would just use those. For Brian, an accessible community would be one that really embraces universal design, design for people with and without disabilities. He finds Las Vegas, NV to be incredibly ADA friendly in many ways, with curb cuts everywhere and plenty of ramps and elevators. In addition to funding more vans and drivers, Brian thinks that paratransit could operate with more flexibility, such as using smaller vans for people who don’t need lifts, or offering some market-rate trips like a ride-hailing service, with revenue going to transit agencies. Technology could be leveraged to make paratransit more convenient for users.

**“Before I retired I had to be in Cheney four hours a day, to teach my classes, do office hours, and so on. When I started relying on public transportation and paratransit, that four hours would sometimes be thirteen or fourteen hours just because of transportation issues. That’s ridiculous and shows an utter disregard for the value of my time.”**

## Melanie



**“There’s a lot of impatience on the part of people who drive. They need to understand that two minutes for them could be five to 30 minutes for me. Wait two minutes so that I don’t have to wait half an hour.”**

Melanie lives in Spokane, and she normally gets around by the bus, but she also bikes or walks shorter distances in nicer weather. She has tried to get a license a few times but she’s never gotten to the point where she is comfortable enough to take the test. Her biggest challenges are that it can be hard to ride the bus without having to pay additional fare, especially on the weekends when service is less frequent. Transfers are only good for two hours, so if a bus is late she might have to pay double. And there are not enough bus stops. Melanie has to do all of her errands on Monday, one of the days she has off work, and that puts a lot of pressure on a single day. Another challenge is that there aren’t many bike lanes in the city. It can get hazardous, because drivers don’t like bicyclists riding in the



road, but she doesn't want to ride on sidewalks if there are people there. There's a lot of honking and swerving from drivers, and more than once a driver has hit the back wheel of her bike, though luckily she hasn't been injured. There are a lot of trails in her area and people do walk but if you end up off the trail, there aren't many sidewalks. And crossing signals take forever. She does a lot of errands around Division Street and it takes a long time for the light to change. That can be the difference between catching the bus or missing it, waiting for the next one, and then having to pay additional fare. Melanie would like leaders to know that in the name of disability rights, safe roads, and better, people first cities, she supports free public transportation.

**"Buses stop running so early on the weekends. They should be running later, because more people are out having fun. Wouldn't you prefer them to take the bus and not try to drive themselves when they've been drinking?"**

**"There needs to be more investment in public transportation. More people would use it, and it would fix a lot of issues with the roads. It becomes a snowball of good things."**

# Legislative District 7

## Cody Shane

**“I don’t think people who drive realize people with disabilities are isolated, because certain people with disabilities can’t drive. Being a passenger and being limited to where the bus goes limits you. I would like to go to Olympia and talk on behalf of people with disabilities, but I can’t because I don’t have transportation, unless I fly, which could be really expensive for me.”**



Cody Shane lives in Chewelah and rides a bike to get around his community. He loves living in Chewelah, and finds it pretty easy to get around on his bike, especially since he knows all the side streets and how to avoid the highways. He does wish that towns in Stevens County were more bike friendly, with bike lanes and better snow clearing. And he thinks that cities should be responsible for clearing snow off sidewalks, rather than leaving it to property owners. To get to Spokane or Colville, Cody Shane rides the Real Resources bus. The Real Resources bus runs once a day, departing Chewelah at 7:15 a.m. and returning at 4:30 p.m. That schedule really limits what kinds of jobs he can have. And, it’s not very convenient if you want to run an errand and not wait all day for the return trip. There’s no weekend service. The Gold Line bus also goes through Chewelah and runs twice a day, but it can cost almost \$50, so Cody Shane can’t afford to ride it regularly. If he had more affordable and frequent bus options, Cody Shane would be able to have dinner with his family, or visit his friends in Spokane more often,

and do things like go to the movies. He dreams of bus service with 30-minute frequency and of train stations in rural towns, so you could get from Colville all the way to Seattle in a day.

## Trevor

**"There are car share options that are not that expensive. But it's still expensive. If you had a car you would think it was not a good value. So a lot of people don't use it for that reason, including me."**

Trevor is a UW student living in the U-District who usually gets around riding the bus and walking. He grew up in Deer Park, outside of Spokane, and before he moved to Seattle for college he did own a car and drive — just to get from Deer Park to his rural farmland home was a 20-minute drive. When he started going to community college south of Spokane, he would drive sometimes as much as three hours a day. When he goes back to visit he flies or takes a bus to downtown Spokane or Deer Park, then usually gets picked up by someone who is driving. Other options are challenging. He has noticed that the price of housing in Spokane has really gone up a lot recently, to the point where he wonders if the lower cost of living there probably no longer offsets the cost of driving like it used to. Trevor deliberately chose to get rid of his car when he moved to Seattle both because he knew it would be a financial burden and because it just seemed impractical in a bigger city like Seattle. In his neighborhood in Seattle, he does a lot of walking, or plans bus trips that have connections where he can pick up what he needs, or he will sometimes get things like groceries delivered. Using transit does require that he plan a bit more, especially at night when bus runs less often stop running at all. There are buses to a lot of places beyond the city, but the wait times are longer. His biggest challenge is going places farther outside of the city, to see friends and especially for recreational outings like hiking or visiting another part of the state.

# Legislative District 8

## Vanessa

**"A lot of those who are Blind and visually impaired are on a fixed income and Lyft and Uber are very expensive."**

Vanessa lives in Kennewick, Washington. She uses Dial-a-Ride to get around. It is a door-to-door service, but requires Vanessa to schedule trips 24 hours in advance. Vanessa does not use the city bus because she does not always feel safe crossing the busy streets she would have to cross to get to bus stops. Vanessa would like more flexibility with the service so she would not have to schedule everything in advance, like a trip to the grocery store.

**"There are many streets to cross to get to the bus stop and not all drivers are always mindful of Blind or visually impaired people even though we use white canes."**

## Javier

**"My ideal community would all be walkable and bikeable. Workplaces, homes and shopping would all be close enough to comfortably walk and bike to. They say building up instead of sprawling helps that."**

Javier lived in Kennewick and relies on riding his bike and riding Ben Franklin Transit to get around. The biggest barriers he faces are how spread out things are — for example the distance between downtown Pasco and uptown Richland. He also gets frustrated by there being a lot of broken glass on the roads, which causes flats, which are expensive to fix. In the winter the bicycling and walking paths get super icy and are hardly ever salted or plowed. Finally, on parts of his route with no bike lanes or share the road signs, like on Kennewick Avenue from Olympia to Moraine, drivers will yell and honk at him, which he finds jarring and gives him anxiety. He thinks our elected leaders have a moral obligation to work towards moving us away from car dependence, because cars are a "public health detraction."

**"Cars are expensive for people and as public infrastructure. They are isolating, loneliness machines. We gotta phase 'em out, and phase in way more public transit."**

## Ronni

**"Right now I can walk to and from my car at work. But if I had to go all the way to a bus stop, the first bus stop is about four blocks away, and I wouldn't be able to walk that by myself."**

Ronni lives in Kennewick. She usually drives to get around right now but for a while she wasn't able to walk, she had to depend on someone else to take her places. She got to a point where she felt like she couldn't make any appointments because she didn't know when those people would be available to give her rides. She contacted her MCO at her medical insurer to let them know she needed rides to her medical appointments for aftercare for her surgery, and they got those rides set up for her. Ronni's disabilities are unseen and cause joint degradation that especially affects her knees and hips. When she first couldn't walk, she had to use her walker and put most of her weight on top of the walker to take

steps. Ronni didn't do much in the way of going out because she feared being hit by a driver or getting stuck somewhere and being unable to walk back, especially because the sidewalks in her area are in bad shape. Some places inside city limits have no sidewalks at all, and there is no accessible way to get to bus service areas. There are accessible traffic signals downtown, but not beyond.

## Dirk

Dirk lives in Richland and uses paratransit to get around in his community. His biggest barriers are setting up Dial-A-Ride. Scheduling it and also having to wait outside for the drivers to find him is a hassle, especially in the winter. The pick-ups are often late because of traffic, and it is difficult for him to get to his appointments on time. Dirk would like people who can drive to, for just one day, imagine what it is like being someone who can't drive by using the bus system to see how much of a hassle it can be.

## Angie

**“More bus shelters are needed for the elderly and disabled. Bus shelters provide safety and a comfortable place to sit in between a long trip.”**

Angie is a nondriver who resides in Richland and relies on the city bus to get around. While on the bus, Angie appreciates bus drivers announcing their destination over an external speaker when pulling up to a bus stop. She also appreciates that there is also priority seating near the front entrance reserved for people with disabilities, which makes it easy to get on and off the bus. There are some things she wishes could be improved — for example, more bus stop waiting shelters would be a benefit while waiting for the bus. Angie walks nearly 10 minutes to her nearest bus stop, and says she wishes it wasn't so far away, especially when the weather isn't great. Angie believes that with a better transportation system, it will encourage riders to use the bus. So would giving more riders a secure and comfortable place to sit and protection against the weather.

## Kimberly G.

**“Inflexible pick-up windows and advanced scheduling requirements on paratransit are some of the biggest challenges I face. I'd like more investment in technology in the transit system, like on-demand technology that will keep riders in the loop with travel notifications. That would increase my confidence in paratransit and alleviate a lot of high-stress situations.”**

Kimberly lives in Kennewick and uses Dial-A-Ride for transportation. One of Kimberly's barriers with using Dial-A-Ride is long waits for pick-ups to return home. Usually her appointments end sooner than she expects and has to wait since paratransit is not flexible enough. Another barrier for Kimberly is trips to the grocery store, especially if she has frozen food. The ride home can take an hour, in addition to the time waiting for Dial-A-Ride to arrive for pickup. That's not enough time to keep her frozen foods from thawing. She would like the waiting process to be reduced so that she can get to her destination in a reasonable time.

## Janice

**“Having on-demand service provides flexibility and reduces time spent on scheduling and dispatching.”**

Janice lives in Richland and counts on door-to-door service called Dial-A-Ride to get around. Dial-A-Ride is a paratransit service for people who are not able to ride the fixed route transit system due to a condition or disability. She has used this service for about 30 years and is thankful for the transportation service. Even though Janice is married to a sighted husband who doesn't mind driving her around, she still enjoys taking paratransit to commute because it gives her a feeling of confidence and independence. One thing about this service Janice often used was a feature called “will call.” “Will call” was a feature that allows commuters to make a return ride on demand, but Dial-A-Ride no longer provides this service feature. This feature was very useful and gave Janice more flexibility with trip planning. On-demand service would give paratransit customers more freedom as well as a better traveling experience.

## Jody

**“One of the biggest challenges for people with vision loss is finding reliable transportation.”**

Jody is an elderly woman who lives in Richland and uses Dial-A-Ride to get around in her community. For Jody, vision loss started at an early age. She quickly realized that she had to depend on other transportation options like paratransit, which is now her main source for travel. Jody is a frequent Dial-A-Ride user and travels to places like the fitness center, supermarkets, appointments and everywhere her busy lifestyle requires. She uses a walker but there are still not a lot of places she can get to on foot. The nearest bus stop is too far away from her home and doesn't feel safe walking because some drivers don't always look out for the safety of pedestrians. Jody is grateful paratransit service exists for people with limited mobility options and feels that it takes care of her needs. Jody believes that it is important that the Blind community stay proactive in expressing their transportation needs because this is a community where access to reliable rides allows people to maintain their independence.

## Bryan L.

**“I'm sure where a driver might say, 'I'm gonna do this, I'm gonna do that,' whereas [as a nondriver] you want to be able to get where you're going when you need to be there. But you might go on a real circuitous route.”**

Bryan lives in Richland and currently relies on his wife as his main source of transportation. He is a nondriver and currently teaches Blind and visually impaired people audio technology from home. He was a paratransit rider for many years while he worked as a Braille and computer instructor at the Edith Bishel Center for the Blind in Kennewick. Now he is semi-retired and spends more time with his family. Riding paratransit can be inconvenient because trips are circuitous — the shuttle makes frequent stops picking up and dropping off passengers. Having his wife drive is convenient and eliminates the stress of getting to his appointments too late or too early, but he knows that owning your own vehicle is a privilege that not everyone has. He would like drivers to be aware of people who use wheelchairs, white canes or any mobility aids and keep everyone's safety in mind.

## Janet E.

**“The return ride on paratransit is too long of a wait before getting home.”**

Janet lives in Kennewick and uses paratransit to get around in her community, which helps Janet access her community and maintain her independence. She enjoys using paratransit and says she is thankful for the service. But sometimes the paratransit trips can take a long time before getting back home or to your next destination. For example, it can take up to an hour to get home because the driver has to drop off and pick up other passengers, which is rough when Janet isn't feeling well. Other transportation options, such as Uber, seem to be too expensive, especially if you are a frequent commuter and for longer distances. With the current economic crisis and fuel prices, it's just not feasible for Janet to use ride-hail. Despite the long waiting time on the paratransit bus, Janet understands how essential paratransit is in helping her navigate in her community and is grateful to have this service.

# Legislative District 9

## Deborah

**“The biggest issue here is actually a lack of sidewalks to get to public transit. I do like using public transit when I can because it's predictable, you know when you'll be going, when you'll be coming back. You have a bit more control than with paratransit. It's good to get out and do things for yourself, on your own schedule and your own time.”**

Deborah lives in Clarkston with her husband, who is also Blind. They moved there to be closer to family, including her 90-year-old father. In Clarkston, Deborah primarily relies on paratransit. She would prefer to walk and take fixed route transit because of the predictable schedules, but because there aren't sidewalks where she lives, and there are a number of intersections that are too dangerous to cross and lack accessible pedestrian signals, she finds herself reliant on paratransit. Deborah wishes there were sidewalks, and that those that do exist were better maintained, knows that the grass and lack of curb ramps make the sidewalks that do exist in Clarkston inaccessible to many people. Deborah also struggles with the lack of transit connections to nearby communities, like Pullman or Spokane. The only option to get to those places is to hire a taxi, which is usually prohibitively expensive. She feels trapped by the lack of options, and the assumption that everyone drives and can easily get to the airport in Pullman in 40 minutes. That's just not an option for her.

**“There's generally an assumption that we need to just take care of you in some way. It's just like, assumed, well, of course, you'll need paratransit. And, in fact, I think I do because there aren't sidewalks. But the issue is, we think about taking care of people, we don't think about making things actually work for people. It's like, 'We do everything we can for you.' That's actually the problem.”**

## Brooklyn

**“One thing I just miss out on is independence and kind of being able to do things by myself.”**

Brooklyn is legally Blind and is originally from Richland. Now she is studying at Washington State University in Pullman. In Richland, she normally gets around by having her mom or sister drive her places. She would take the city bus, but it takes too long and runs infrequently. The routes don't go places she needs, and many bus stops in Richland aren't indicated and some are even located in gravel ditches, where there's no sidewalk. Brooklyn missed out on having more internships in her senior year because of how limited her options were with places she could get to by herself. Using the buses in Seattle during her time in a summer youth program was a lot easier. Brooklyn thinks that a lot of people who can drive think that nondrivers all can qualify for paratransit/Dial-A-Ride, but that's not the case. She has to rely on fixed-route buses.

In Pullman, Brooklyn walks most places and catches the bus to get around the city. She's even able to walk and see friends who also live on campus. But she's limited in where she can live and has spent a lot of time trying to find apartments near campus and on a bus route. She also ends up eating a lot of snack food and eating in the dining halls more than she wants to because it's hard to buy and transport heavy groceries. There's a city that's fifteen minutes away by car that Brooklyn can't get to, because there are

no bus routes to get there. That's where the Costco is, and people hang out in that town all the time, but she can't get there because there's no transit route.

Brooklyn wants drivers to understand how much easier it is to get around with a car, like being able to go to the store in five minutes. If Brooklyn is going to Walmart, she has to plan a three hour chunk of time in order to go. This makes it nearly impossible for Brooklyn to go after class, because it's generally already late and dark. Especially in the winter when it gets dark at 4pm., the darkness really limits her because she can't get places in the dark.

## Heather N.

**“The app is never accurate about when the bus is gonna show up. And they don't update it so it's very, very slow. And they don't always announce when a bus is going to be delayed or when it's not running to a certain stop.”**

Heather is a visually impaired college student currently living in Pullman, Washington. She most often travels her city by bus or by having her roommate drive her. One difficulty that Heather has come across is that the app used by Pullman's transportation department is often inaccurate. Displaying inaccurate arrival times, incorrect stop information, and confusing schedule details are par for the course for this transit app. On multiple occasions the faults in the app have caused Heather to be late to classes, including on her first day. The bus schedules in Pullman change from summer to school year, which has led to additional confusion. Another barrier that Heather faces is that there are no buses between Pullman and the nearby city of Moscow, Idaho, where many events are held. The lack of transportation between these two cities has caused Heather to miss out on participating in activities. Even when buses are available, they do not always announce their stops due to them being old, donated buses from other counties. Heather wishes that drivers would stop parking at bus stops.

**“My first day of classes, I was actually running late because I had to call the [transit agency] in Pullman and be like, ‘Hey, where's the bus?’ And they said, ‘Oh, we're not stopping at that stop today. If you walk up to the other street, we are stopping at the other stop.’ I had to walk up the street to the other stop.”**

## Martin

**“If you don't drive, it's always timing. Timing is key.”**

Martin is a visually impaired individual living in the Tri-Cities area. He relies primarily on his cousin to transport him to and from his destinations. But because of rising gas prices, this has become more difficult. Martin's cousin is sometimes unavailable to drive Martin. This has caused Martin to miss out on experiences and activities on multiple occasions. Because Martin does not often utilize the bus system in his area, his transportation options are limited. This lack of transportation often causes Martin to arrive late to scheduled plans. Martin wants drivers to be patient with those who do not drive for whatever reason it is they do not to drive.



**“If there's events going on and the buses aren't running at a certain time, or my cousin's unable to take me because she's somewhere else, due to [my] not driving, I miss out on a lot.”**

# Legislative District 10

## Heidi

Heidi lives in Mount Vernon. She has a disability that makes it difficult for her to drive, and also difficult for her to ride public transit. She gets sick when she's exposed to hot or cold temperature extremes, and from sensory overload, and that's unavoidable with transit. She finds that even medical transport services can't accommodate her disability. She mostly gets rides from caregivers but they aren't available a lot of the time. This, and the lack of accessibility at destinations, keeps her home more than she would prefer.

## Jeffrie

**"The first time I rode the bus, it was a disaster. I did everything wrong. I took the route that took twice as long to go to the IGA [supermarket]. When I went home I got off the bus with a bag that had a bottle of wine in it and I dropped it and it broke into a thousand pieces. I also had to go to the bathroom and didn't know what to do. So that first time was pretty challenging. I didn't ride again for a while."**

Jeffrie is a retired landscaper who lives on Camano Island. He gets around on Island Transit and sometimes walks. He doesn't drive because he got rid of his truck, which was a gas hog and broke down a lot, and also because he doesn't have the right eyeglass prescription right now to see well enough to drive — he is extremely nearsighted. Once, as Jeffrie was leaving an appointment with an eye doctor, the doctor angrily told him that he had "no business being behind the wheel of a car." He was puzzled at the doctor's anger but later realized the doctor must have thought Jeffrie had driven to his appointment. The first time he rode the bus, it was an overall disaster, and he didn't ride again for quite a while. But now, Jeffrie says he doesn't really have any real barriers to getting around, and likes that he knows all the drivers and they know most of the passengers. When he can't take transit he can get a ride. His son takes him to church on Sunday, for instance, and he'll get rides from friends when he needs to. He used to bike sometimes, too, but he gave away his bicycle. Jeffrie likes that the bus is so safe, and is a low-carbon way to get around. He also enjoys the social aspect — he says it "perks a person up" to ride the bus and see other people.

**"If something goes wrong, they have backup buses. It's totally opposite if you have a breakdown in your own private rig and you don't have a significant other with another vehicle."**

## Alicia

**"I use Hopelink and TAP. I have transportation. Hopelink provides medical rides. TAP provides rides for shopping. I don't have many options. I cannot use the Stanwood Senior Center. No bus stops near me. TAP does not run on weekends." — Alicia, Stanwood**



# Legislative District 11

## Karla

Karla lives in Renton and uses the bus to get around. One barrier for her is that as a young woman, she fears someone will hurt her. She would like bus stops to have some type of security or protection so she always feels safe. Karla would like her elected leaders to plan for the community that uses buses, and to know that the buses should be kept clean and sanitized.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Olga

Olga lives in Fairwood and rides the bus. Her biggest barrier is that she has to take three buses to get to her destination. That takes time away from her that she could use for things like exercise or enjoying her family. Olga's ideal community would be just like her current community, but with more transportation options. She'd like her elected leaders to know that Fairwood needs another transit route.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Bob S.



**“Small obstacles can really add up over the course of a walk or a bike ride. Like a car that's parked partway in the driveway, so it's blocking the sidewalk. Or two, three cars sitting in the bike lane that you have to navigate around. It's all these little things that add up so that when you get to your destination, you've had 10 to 15 little obstacles. Whereas if you were in a car, you just drive by and maybe there's a pothole or something, but you don't really notice anything. It's much more streamlined for drivers.”**

Bob lives in Tukwila and commutes to his office clerk job in downtown Seattle, alternating between riding his bike or taking the bus and light rail. He loves biking because it is calming, and he loves riding transit because of the downtime it provides him. He knows if he drove, he wouldn't have these breaks in his day. Riding transit, Bob finds the longer waits for evening or weekend service hours a barrier to getting to where he needs to go. For biking, it's the lack of infrastructure. For instance, there's a grocery store less than two miles from where he lives, but he has to navigate through traffic that's getting on and off a major freeway interchange. He hopes that someday getting places without a car won't require as much calculation and planning — that you won't have to anticipate all the obstacles that you have to navigate around.

**“A more accessible world would feel a lot more peaceful. I really think of it as being a much more stress-free and peaceful kind of world.”**

## Sarah



**“I think people who can drive don’t realize the planning that goes into riding transit. You have to know what time the bus leaves, so you can get to the stop. You have to make sure you have the right payment, the right amount of cash if you don’t have a card. You have to plan in case there is traffic. And if you end up being really early, you have to know the place that you’re going to wait. Is there a place for you to sit, or will you have to hang out outside?”**

Sarah lives in Tukwila and gets around using public transit because she has never had a driver’s license. Before COVID, she would take the bus to baseball games, to movies, grocery shopping and to go see musical theater productions. When she lived with her parents in the East Hill area of Kent, the bus only ran at peak commute times in the morning and the evening. There was no transit service on the weekends or during the weekday. Now she lives near light rail in Tukwila and enjoys having better access to train and bus service. It does still take much longer to get to places like Federal Way, North Seattle or Bellevue, which limits where Sarah can look for jobs. She wishes bus stops were located closer to essential locations, not just in cities but in suburban areas as well. She wishes bus routes were better designed to allow transfers without long wait times, especially when connecting commuter trains to bus routes.

**“I’ve had a couple jobs where I would be able to take the Sounder train home and then have to transfer to a bus. And there was always that missed connection because the bus would arrive early and they didn’t stay, which is understandable, but at the same time, it’s a train station. You think they would wait till the train arrived. There needs to be some interconnectedness between the different types of transit.”**

**“The buses would basically only run at peak time, in the morning and in the evenings to get people to and from work. Nothing on the weekends, so people could go to the store. Nothing during the day for parents who want to maybe take a kid to the park.”**

## Teaera

**“I miss so much about driving: not having to wait for somebody to get you, not having to be on somebody else’s time, arriving just when you want to arrive somewhere because you can work the timing and map things out yourself.”**

Teaera lives in Tukwila and uses paratransit to get around. She lost her vision six years ago and misses the convenience of driving. With paratransit, she gets frustrated that the pickup and dropoff windows are so large. She also has had a lot of trouble with the vehicles going to the wrong side of her apartment building and then missing her pickup. If the vehicle leaves, they won’t come back, and she is only able to call dispatch, not the driver directly, if she can’t find them. She would use Lyft instead, but it’s too expensive. Her dream is to get a well-paying job so she can afford to take Lyft everywhere. Teaera lives close to light rail but doesn’t feel comfortable riding the train by herself. Additionally, she’s tried getting

travel training, but there are high-speed roads between her apartment and the light rail station that aren't safe for her to cross. She is able to walk to the nearest grocery store in her neighborhood with some assistance from her twelve-year-old son.

**“You know, being on ACCESS [paratransit], it's difficult. Even today, I got here 30 minutes early, because they are allowed to get you here thirty minutes before your window. That's a lot of time.”**

## Legislative District 12

### Jenelle



**“The long bus commute is one of the reasons I probably will choose not to keep working in Wenatchee. But there are a lot more job opportunities for me in Wenatchee than in Leavenworth. There's only one clinic here in town for me to work at if I want to keep working in mental health.”**

Jenelle is a Blind mom who lives in Leavenworth, Washington. She takes the bus to her job at a mental health clinic in Wenatchee three days a week. The bus stop is too far for her to walk to so her husband drives her. She must leave home at 6:30 a.m. A car trip to Wenatchee is 30 minutes, but the bus stops in many towns along the way, which makes her commute 90 minutes each way. In the dark and icy winter months it's especially hard. Jenelle thinks the bus is a great way to travel, but if she could redesign the transportation system, she would include more and safer sidewalks and more frequent bus stops, and she would give each town on her route its own dedicated express bus to Wenatchee.

**“What I used a lot to get from Leavenworth to Seattle was the airport shuttle. But it's pretty expensive - it's about \$50 each way. I did take the train a few times, but it was very inconvenient, it only leaves one time of day at six in the morning, and there's often delays, it's not reliable and I can't count on it. Getting longer distances from out here is really difficult. If I were to use the train and bus routes to get from Leavenworth to Olympia, it would take me close to 12 hours, door to door. It's a ridiculous amount of time for travel.”**

# Legislative District 13

## Stephanie



Stephanie lives in Ellensburg and recently got a power wheelchair after using a manual wheelchair for a long time. She requires a wheelchair van to get around town. Stephanie shares her residential provider's wheelchair van with two other clients, so many times she can't go somewhere she wants because the van is not available, and she often misses social events when that happens. The sidewalks near her house often have large cracks or other deterioration, and the streets frequently have potholes, which are hard to navigate with her wheelchair. She is hesitant to get out for walks when the sidewalks aren't in good shape. Stephanie would want her own personal wheelchair van so she would never have to miss social events when the van is reserved for medical appointments. And she wants our

government to do a better job at maintaining sidewalks and roads so they're accessible to everyone!

*Story provided by ElmView.*

## Yessica\*

**"Desde que me enteré del autobús que va a Wenatchee de Moses Lake, es el que utilizo para ir a mis citas médicas o cosas personales. Siempre tenía que depender de familiares para que me llevaran y a veces el mismo día del viaje me decían que siempre no me iban a poder llevar. Este servicio me ha hecho sentir independiente y los que manejan el autobús me hacen sentir bienvenida. "**

### **Translation:**

Ever since I found out about the bus going to Wenatchee from Moses Lake, it's the one I use to go to my medical appointments or for personal trips. I always had to depend on relatives to take me and sometimes on the day of the trip they would cancel on me. This service has made me feel independent and the drivers make me feel welcomed.

*\*Yessica is a pseudonym. Story provided by People for People.*

## Isabela\*

**"Yo utilizo el wawa y mira, Ruben es un amor. Él siempre se asegura que yo me suba al autobús con ayuda de él. Si no fuera por el wawa yo no pudiera ir a todas mis citas que voy a Wenatchee. Mi hija trabaja y no seguido puede atenderme. Si no fuera por el wawa de ustedes no hubiera**

**quien me llevara a mis citas, dios los bendiga. Yo siempre cuando monto el autobús dono de lo poquito que tengo para que no cancelen estos servicios.”**

**Translation:**

I use the bus and look, Ruben is a love. He always makes sure that I get on the bus with his help. If it weren't for the bus I wouldn't be able to go to all my appointments that I go to in Wenatchee. My daughter works a lot and is not able to take me to all of my appointments. If it weren't for your bus there would be no one to take me to my appointments, God bless you. When I ride the bus, I always donate what little I have to show my gratitude and so that you won't cancel this service.

*\*Isabela is a pseudonym. Story provided by People for People.*

## Ted\*

Ted lives in Cle Elum and walks and rides his bike to get around. He works in Easton, which is about 13 miles from his home via interstate 90. Ted cannot drive, and there is no reliable public transportation in his area. This means he relies on others for transportation to his job. Sometimes, if his transportation person has to cancel, he misses work, and this puts him at risk of losing his job. Many times he will ask his transportation person to make a stop at various community services on the way home, like the bank or the gas station. If they say no, and the business is not within walking or biking distance, he has to wait for someone else to help him access these places. Ted appreciates that Cle Elum is a relatively safe place to ride a bike to get around. He would benefit greatly from a commuter bus system that serviced upper Kittitas County, which is more rural and doesn't have formal public transit.

*\*Ted is a pseudonym. Story provided by ElmView.*

## Mary Anne

Mary Ann lives in Ellensburg and uses a walker in her home and a manual wheelchair outside her home. She does not live within walking distance of downtown, so to get anywhere she needs her staff to transport her or she uses the HopeSource bus. Mary Ann's manual wheelchair does not do well in snow or ice, and not everyone shovels their sidewalk in the winter here. She also needs to have someone with her to go anywhere since she can't push her own wheelchair and does not have access to an electric one. Mary Ann loses out on the sense of agency you have when you can move yourself places. She also frequently misses out on social activities when her staff are unable to take her.

*Story provided by ElmView.*

## Felipe

**“A couple of years ago I wanted to go to Yakima on the weekend to help with voter registration at the farmers market. I couldn't do it because there's no transit going there on the weekends. There's a lot of events down there that I miss out on.”**

Felipe lives in Ellensburg and he gets around by walking and riding the bus. Felipe feels very fortunate to have a free transit system that runs seven days a week in the city, but when he wants to go to neighboring cities, he does not have many choices. Felipe doesn't don't know a lot of people in



Ellensburg and traveling to places like Yakima, where he has friends, is a bit challenging. He cannot get to Yakima or other neighboring cities easily especially, on the weekend, unless he gets a ride. Felipe is so lucky to live in a part of the city that has a better transportation system, especially between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., but he would like people who live outside the city to have easier options for using transit, too.

## Ariana

**“In Ellensburg, the buses close at around 6:00 or 7:00pm. So there's really not an option for late night travel in case someone's working late.”**

Ariana is a visually impaired college student living in Ellensburg. Ariana most often travels by bus. One barrier she faces is that the buses in Ellensburg stop running between 6:00 and 7:00pm. This makes night traveling near impossible for Ariana. Another issue she has come across is that buses only come every 30 to 60 minutes. Missing one bus can lead to an avalanche of delays. The signs in Ariana's area are not accessible for her due to their lack of contrasting colors. During the winters, the sidewalks are cleared infrequently. This makes walking in winter especially difficult.

**“The sidewalks are not cleared and so if you're traveling in Ellensburg it's hard to tread through the snow. Last winter we had two feet of snow.”**

## Jaime M.

**“In summer my mom likes to go walking, it's a small town. We do more walking in the street because there are blocks that have no sidewalks”**

Jaime is currently a student at the Orientation Training Center in Seattle's Columbia City neighborhood to learn navigation skills as a Blind person. He stopped driving five years ago. He is from Quincy, Washington. In Seattle, he gets around walking, riding the bus and the light rail. He likes having transit access, but finds the lighting in the underground stations too dark, especially the Beacon Hill Station. The low light makes it hard for him to find the elevators. He also has trouble locating bus stops because there are so many poles that all seem the same and it's hard to tell which one is the bus stop.

In Quincy, there's no transit, so he gets around walking and getting rides from family. He has to get rides any time he needs to go to another town, like for doctor's appointments. Walking in Quincy is okay in the summer, but much trickier in the winter with snow and ice. He also often walks in the street because there's not sidewalks. In Seattle, walking around on sidewalks he will often get hit in the face by branches and plants that aren't trimmed back and are blocking the sidewalk. Garbage cans left in the middle of the sidewalk are also a barrier. And in both Quincy and Seattle cracked sidewalks are a tripping hazard. He wishes there were more signals with APS in Seattle, and in Quincy he wishes there were more than two lights in town. The rest of the intersections are marked with little flags that you're supposed to grab to cross so that drivers see you. He has to go way out of his way to cross the street at one of these signalized lights, but he doesn't trust that traffic will yield to him if he tries to cross somewhere else. There

are two markets within walking distance from where he lives, and he much prefers one to the other because the entrance is right off the sidewalk. The store with the big parking lot he has to cross to get to the entrance doesn't feel safe. He's worried that he'll get hit by cars. It would be easier for him to get around if there were APS at every crossing, and if the streets themselves had tactile markings along the crosswalk so it would be easier for him to keep his orientation and not get turned around while crossing.

**“In my town, we have only two lights [traffic signals]. Other places, you have to grab the little flag so people can feel that you're going to cross. For Blind people, you don't know if the car is going to stop, but to just go all the way to the light and come back where you want to go is so far.”**

# Legislative District 14

## Nevaeh

**“As far as walking around in public, I use a cane. It prevents me from falling on all the bumps, dips and rocks that might be in the road or sidewalk. I don't walk that much on my street because there are no sidewalks, and I live off the highway so it's kind of unsafe. If there were sidewalks, I would walk more because it would be safer. I enjoy walking around on a sunny day, and also walking to coffee shops. So that sidewalk would be put to good use. Another way I get around is by car. As a matter of fact, that's how I get around a lot of the time. I go to the store and multiple different places using that form of transportation. In conclusion, I have many different ways to get around, and being Blind doesn't stop me one little bit.”** - Nevaeh, Legally Blind 7th Grader in Bingen, Washington.

## Aileen



**“One of the bigger barriers is that sidewalks are atrocious in many places. Sometimes they are completely non-existent. And we're in the part of the year where there's a great deal of ice.”**

Aileen lives in Yakima. Before Covid, she used the bus to get around, but now she and a friend will walk or hire a cab. She finds herself walking to a Safeway that's further, but the sidewalk next to the closer Safeway is in such bad condition, it makes the extra distance worth it. Aileen is low vision and has never been able to drive, but she doesn't qualify for paratransit. This is particularly hard right now in the pandemic as she's worried about taking transit with other riders. She has lived in other parts of the country with more robust transit systems. She particularly loves systems where different bus routes stop on different blocks, so as you're waiting for a bus, you don't have to worry about getting on the wrong one. She would move to somewhere with better transit in a “heartbeat,” but she lives on SSI and can't afford rents in those places. And she does love Yakima, having raised her family here and having built a community of friends. She just wishes people thought more about people in Yakima who don't have cars or can't drive — especially in this moment in the pandemic when everything has become drive thru only.

**“This is a really beautiful area of the country. And I've overall liked living here despite the things that I complain about. I've also got some fantastic friends. I've gotten to do things I never would have gotten to do living in a bigger city. So you know, so on the whole, my life here is great. It could be better with better transit.”**

## Reg



**“There aren’t always safe places to wait. The Greyhound station is at a convenience store. Even in 10-degree weather, you can’t go into the store, and there’s not even a shelter. It’s just another part of the overall transportation story that things have gotten harder instead of easier.”**

Reg is a Blind assistive technology specialist at the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind in Yakima, where he and his wife live. He gets around using paratransit. He describes his work as his dream job, helping people get jobs and the right computer equipment.

Reg and his clients depend on reliable public transportation to do and keep their jobs, because many of them cannot afford a car or cabs. And if bus schedules don’t align perfectly with work schedules, that’s a problem. He knows people who have lost jobs because they aren’t able to drive. Transit service doesn’t run after 6 p.m., so Reg can’t go anywhere at night, for instance, to practice with the band he plays in. Reg would like to see bus service run earlier and later, with free service like Olympia adopted recently, and technologies in use elsewhere, like fillable monthly passes with RFID chips so people don’t have to carry cash and use tickets, that could be adapted in Yakima.

**“A lot of people [who can’t drive] live on their own and don’t have a way to be a part of the community. I hope that they can find a fair and equitable way to fund these services because there are a lot of people that need them.”**

# Legislative District 15

## Allyson

**“A visit to the doctor's office or a friend's house could take five or even seven hours round-trip, when it used to take only three hours. There is also a pause every day between 10:45 a.m. and 1:45 p.m. for lunch in this schedule. This is difficult enough that I rarely use the bus system anymore. I requested access to the Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service due to that change in the buses.”**

Allyson lives in Selah, which is about 5-10 minutes by car from Yakima. It used to be about ten minutes to get to downtown Yakima by bus as well. However, the Selah bus system no longer connects with the Yakima one, meaning you have to transfer to another bus once you get to Yakima to get to the transit center. The Selah shuttle schedule is not synced with the Yakima bus schedule, so riders often have to wait an extra hour in each direction due to missed connections. Allyson requested Dial-A-Ride service, which she primarily uses now, but they are only allowed to go to destinations that are  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile or closer to the fixed-route line, except for medical appointments. She's able to use Dial-A-Ride to get to medical appointments and some shopping, but it doesn't allow her to visit friends or family. Neither offers Sunday service. Allyson says her inability to get to Yakima actually hurts the economy — even before the pandemic she found herself shopping almost entirely online instead of supporting local businesses because the transportation was too difficult.

**“Both systems [fixed route and paratransit] shut down around 6 p.m., making it impossible to use either system to do anything in the evening away from home. I have been unable to attend numerous non-medical but important events due to this early closure, including social meetups like book clubs, NAMI classes, or even things like movies and dinner. I come from the St. Louis area, where buses run until after midnight, and wasn't really expecting that when I moved here. I can't imagine what it would be like to try and get back and forth from a job if I worked in Yakima. All of these issues combined have also left me increasingly isolated.”**

## Humberto

**“The biggest barrier for me is the inequitable, inaccessible and unfair transit system that we have in Yakima.”**

Humberto lives in Yakima and is completely Blind. In 2018 he graduated from Central Washington University with a degree in education. Humberto mainly gets around by taking paratransit or fixed-route buses. But the bus system in Yakima isn't very reliable so he sometimes gets rides from his parents. In bigger cities like Seattle, bus stops are announced along with connection points, but there's nothing like that in Yakima. He likes riding the bus, but sometimes the Yakima bus system doesn't turn on announcements, or they are not loud enough. Also, there are no sidewalks where Humberto lives, so getting to the bus stop is unsafe — in some areas he has to walk on the street with busy traffic. Humberto is unemployed. He usually gets an email from the workforce program in Yakima one day before job fairs. But sometimes the emails come too late in the day for him to be able to schedule a paratransit ride, because paratransit does not take reservations after 5 p.m., so he misses out on attending job fairs. Another of Humberto's biggest barriers is not being able to travel independently in his town.

**“When it snows, people clear the snow from the roads for people to drive safely, but pedestrians, strollers, wheelchairs, and people who use White Canes don't have that same safe experience as people who can drive, because of piling up all the snow on top of bus stops and sidewalks.”**

## Brendan

**“My main source of transportation is [to] ride with friends. Or if I need anything, I ask my dad.”**

Brandon lives in Yakima and has mostly relied on rides from friends and family to get around. He is about to start college, though, and so anticipates riding the bus, as he has when he's done college prep programs.

**“The bus is pretty important because it gets me where I need to be in a reasonable time.”**

## Jim



**“It was just a year and a half ago, I was driving. I did not ever understand just how big transportation is in your life. I could go to Yakima, I could drive to LA if I wanted to, drive down to Vegas for the weekend. The world is open to you. But when you can't drive all of a sudden, everything gets smaller. I certainly think that that's something that most drivers are not really aware of, how important transportation is to us. The number one thing is transportation, whatever you're doing.”**

Jim is from Moxee, Washington, outside of Yakima. He's currently living in Seattle attending classes with the Department of the Services for the Blind. Jim lost his sight over the last two years, and is adapting to life without driving. When he's back home in Moxee, there is no public transit, and it would be a \$25-\$50 Uber or Lyft ride for him to get into town, so he finds himself relying on his family. In Seattle, he finds himself mostly limited to the places within a short walk from light rail stations, as he's less comfortable using the bus network. He's hoping to find a job that will pay well enough to live in Seattle, but because of how expensive rent is, he's not sure he'll be able to stay.

**“You have to plan for everything. Because if you're taking a train and then a bus and a transfer, if you miss that bus, it might be 30 minutes, if it's still even running that route. So you've got to be ultra organized in planning for everything. As a driver, I can never remember thinking about that, I just never did.”**

**“I have tons of family. And any one of them I can call upon and they'll come and get me if they have free time. But I feel like a burden to them. It's not the same as just doing it yourself.”**

# Legislative District 16

## Vivian



**“Don’t be afraid to hop on the bus and see where it goes.”**

Vivian lives in Walla Walla and walks or takes public transportation to get around. She’s generally pretty happy with the public transportation system in Walla Walla and thinks it’s a great system for a city of its size. The biggest barrier she faces is the weather, which she admits isn’t something anyone has much control over. She feels like Walla Walla is pretty responsive about responding to complaints about broken or missing sidewalks, but sometimes you have to wait until they get the funding to repair it. She also says that as a Blind transit rider, finding the bus stops can be tricky, but because so many of the drivers know her, or know to slow down and check with someone who has a service dog, she doesn’t have too much trouble catching the bus. She loves riding the bus because it’s a good place to meet people. She loves making those connections. She wishes more people would ride the bus and drive less,

but realizes that people feel inconvenienced by bus schedules that go every 30 minutes or every hour.

**“Our transit over here has a transit board. And a couple of years ago, they had a meeting and I attended, and one of the board members had never ridden a bus until that day. And I thought, well, that’s a prerequisite in my book, kids. You got to ride before you can be on the board in my book. People are just really stuck in their cars.”**

## Joe R.



**“A lot of people I know rely on the bus. Without the bus they’d be in a world of hurt. Especially people over 65 — a lot of people are not fortunate enough to have a car.”**

Joe lives in Prosser. He is 77 and uses transit because he doesn’t like to drive and he doesn’t like to ask his kids to drive him. He uses the community transit provider People for People if he wants to go to a doctor’s appointment. Joe has been taking transit a long time and partly likes it because he likes people and considers himself “a talker.” One barrier Joe sees often is the lack of bilingual drivers — sometimes people ask drivers questions but seem embarrassed to admit they don’t understand what a driver has told them. Joe sometimes helps interpret in these cases, and he helps a lot of people out this way. Joe also takes the bus to Costco. From the stop, people have to run across a street with heavy traffic. If they can’t run, they have to walk about a half hour via a safer route. He would like to see a traffic signal at that bus stop.

**“Leaders have to get on the bus and see what it’s all about, and see what the drivers go through.”**

## Jaime



**“I wish the world was more accessible. I think most people don’t realize the things they take for granted. I don’t think they realize that people like me don’t have a lot of those freedoms. Being someone that was independent prior to being disabled, it’s been hard to get used to depending on a ride. Without driving, we’re stuck home, people like myself. And there are people worse off than myself. I’m fortunate to have a few people that I can depend on, but there are people who definitely don’t have that support system whatsoever.”**

Jaime is an activist and wheelchair user who lives in Pasco. He is the founder of the Tri-Cities Justice Alliance, an organization that fights systemic racism and has a podcast called Brown, Bearded and Disabled. Right now he has a caregiver that can drive him where he needs to go, but if his caregiver or his family and friends aren’t available to give him rides, he uses paratransit. He finds it really difficult, as a spontaneous person, to have to schedule everything a day in advance. He’s had to miss concerts and other events. It’s been a hard adjustment since he used to be able to drive. He lives in an older neighborhood in Pasco with sidewalks that are cracked and uneven. The city has tried to repair them, but there are still places that he can’t get through by himself in his wheelchair. He gets demoralized about going out because there are so many little obstacles to navigate through the crumbling sidewalk infrastructure.

**“With the global pandemic, a lot of people got to feel what people like myself experience — isolation, and having to stay indoors. I was prepared for this pandemic, not because I wanted to be, but because I don’t have a ride to get up and go anytime I want to.”**

## Heather M.



**"A lot of Ubers park across the street and expect you to see them. And then they leave."**

Heather is Blind and lives in Walla Walla. She most often gets around by getting rides with friends, but sometimes uses Dial A Ride or Uber. Dial A Ride only runs during limited hours and in the same coverage area as fixed-route buses, and doesn't operate on weekends. Heather sometimes feels guilty asking friends for rides, so she tries to spread around her requests. Ubers can be challenging to use if the pick up location is not at her house, because she can't see them driving up. Random strangers will ask if they can wait with Heather until her ride arrives. Sometimes that is appreciated, but she's an adult, and sometimes it's uncomfortable. Her biggest barriers are having to rely on others — she wants to be able to just do things on her own. With Dial A Ride, the main barrier is the time constraint, because you have to allow an hour on either end of the trip, and you have to schedule at least 24 hours in advance and hope they have availability. Although there are a few things she's had to miss out on, for the most part, she gets to do what she wants to do. When Heather first moved here and



was working with a mobility trainer, they tried walking around her neighborhood to find which bus stops she could use. But the larger intersections she would have to cross to get to those stops don't have accessible signals. They tried and tried, but some intersections gave Heather panic attacks, and eventually Heather gave up. So while she walks around her neighborhood for leisure, she doesn't walk to get around beyond her neighborhood. Heather wants people who can drive to understand that even though she listens closely to all the traffic patterns, she fears a driver who isn't paying attention will make a turn when she thinks it's clear to walk. Drivers don't realize that visually impaired people have to listen to read traffic, so that, for example, if large semi-trucks drive down the road, Heather can't hear other traffic she needs to hear. She likes the concept of EVs, but they are so quiet that she can't tell when they have stopped. Heather would like elected leaders to know that Walla Walla needs more accessible traffic signals and bus stops in barrier-free, convenient locations and that roundabouts are a nightmare for Blind people. Walla Walla is putting in roundabouts all over town. They had conversations with the United Blind of Walla Walla, but it didn't seem to matter — it felt like lip service so they could say they asked Blind people.

**"The way that visually impaired people navigate crossing roads is by listening to parallel traffic, and other traffic. So you listen for the stops and the starts and in which directions those things are happening. But at roundabouts, drivers never stop."**

## Bernie

**"I'm limited in how many bags of groceries I can travel with on paratransit. Sometimes that makes it hard to get all of the items I need. That leaves me no choice but to ask for help or to stay home."**

Bernie lives in Kennewick and his main source of transportation is Dial-A-Ride. One big barrier for him is that he is not able to quickly schedule a return ride home on Dial-A-Ride, especially after grocery shopping. There is a waiting period before he can get picked up and he cannot always predict what time he will complete his shopping. Sometimes he is left waiting outside in rough weather. Another challenge is that Bernie sometimes has to rely a lot on friends, asking them to take him to and from where he needs to go. Bernie has used fixed-route public transit but found it difficult navigating while trying to locate his correct bus stop. Bernie would like people to know that being a non-driver is not easy when you don't have accessible transportation such as having audio and braille displayed on bus stop signs. Bernie is currently employed and would like transportation to be more flexible and accessible for his business and regular day to day tasks.

## Deborah P.

Deborah is an elderly woman with vision loss who lives in Kennewick and relies on a door to door service called Dial-A-Ride. One of her biggest barriers has been that it's been very hard to adapt to using public transit because crossing the street is so hard. Drivers do not always look out for pedestrians and Deborah has been hit several times while using the crosswalk. She is terrified to walk independently and often refuses to leave home, which prevents her from getting everyday errands taken care of. Another barrier is that the door-to-door service she depends on is not always flexible. Dial-A-Ride requires 24 hours before scheduling your appointment, and it does not give the ability to add on additional appointments on demand. Due to this inflexibility she has missed out on appointments. She wants the ability to schedule on-demand transportation appointments. Deborah would like drivers to understand they have a lot of

responsibility for pedestrian safety and they should take more precautions so that she is able to safely cross the street.

## Rose

Rose lives in Pasco and depends on friends and Dial-A-Ride to get around in her community. One barrier for Rose is that Dial-A-Ride requires her to schedule her appointments 24 to 48 hours ahead of time and she has to observe a 2-hour waiting period between Dial-A-Ride appointments. This is a little problematic for Rose because she often has back-to-back appointments and can't always predict what time her appointments will end. Rose says the waiting time is the hardest part. She would use paratransit more if she knew what time she was going to be picked up, similar to the way using trains or public transit works. To improve her travel experience Rose would like to have a transportation system that provides on-demand service with real-time location and estimated arrival information.

## Sherry

Sherry lives in Kennewick and uses Dial-A-Ride for traveling around her community. Sherry is a frequent Dial-A-Ride passenger and the service is important to her. Sherry relies on this service to get to and from her doctors appointments, but the waiting period on the return back home can be very long and tiring. For now, these long waits are Sherry's only option. She hopes for a better travel experience, but Dial-A-Ride is beneficial and essential in maintaining her independence. Sherry believes that investing in better transit service could transform the transit system. Drivers could arrive at places faster and help commuters get to and from their destinations sooner.

## Janine

**“On paratransit, the return ride can take up to an hour and half before getting home. The bus sometimes travels from town to town just to get to my destination.”**

Janine lives in Kennewick and uses paratransit to get around in her community. She uses this door-to-door service for going to places such as her medical appointments and doing weekly shopping. She also uses a scooter, which is her personal transportation and convenient for her daily use. Janine is no longer a driver, but says that not having a driver's license should not limit her freedom and independence. After the loss of her driver's license, she did grieve this change in life. But with the help of her scooter, which provides additional mobility, Janine is able to travel more. Her scooter can fit on most vehicles, including paratransit, which allows her to travel further. People who take paratransit usually have to schedule their trip at least two business days in advance. On paratransit, Janine has to travel with passengers to other destinations before her final stop, which can mean long, out-of-the-way routes. Paratransit used to allow you to call for pickups from a destination on demand so you didn't have to pre-schedule a specific time and could get a ride when you were ready to return. Unfortunately this feature, called “will call,” is no longer available. Janine knows how important paratransit is in accommodating her transportation needs and would like to have the option to use “will call” again.

## Bill

**“The only thing I can't do is see. I still do a lot of the same activities I did when I could see, it just takes me longer to do them. Like yesterday, the neighbor brought over his tractor to rototill our garden. So I've got a garden. I mean, they're not real big plants, just tomatoes, cucumbers. I don't get too crazy and plant stuff we wouldn't need.”**

Bill lives in Finley and rides paratransit to get around in his community. Bill has been using paratransit for 20 years, since he lost his vision. He uses it to go places such as medical appointments and lunch and shopping. Bill says losing his vision never stopped him from engaging in an active and fulfilling life. He is involved in his community and serves as a board member for the Edith Bishel Center for the Blind located in Kennewick. In his free time, he enjoys gardening and spending time with family. Bill believes that transportation is essential in creating independence and improving his quality of life. It also gives him the ability to stay connected to family and friends and access his health care needs. One barrier Bill faces is that he needs drivers to assist him door-to-door, so paratransit options that only provide "curb to curb" service and limit how much the driver can help outside the vehicle won't work for him. He appreciates that Ben Franklin Transit provides door-to-door service, which he feels meets the needs of more people with different kinds of disabilities.

## Latrisha

**"I use Dial-A-Ride on Sundays, for church and stuff. So I was glad to see that they are operating on Sundays. That was a nice addition."**

Latrisha lives in Pasco and rides paratransit to navigate in her community. She started out using this service as her vision was declining and now she has been using this service for 15 years as her main source of transportation. Latrisha takes paratransit to get to places such as the fitness center, appointments and the hair salon. She's grateful there's service on Sundays so she can get to church. Unfortunately, she does not take paratransit to the grocery store because there's a restriction about how many grocery bags you can take on the bus. She also has trouble scheduling pickups from the grocery store because on paratransit, customers are asked to estimate their pickup time upon reserving their reservation. However, determining that time can be difficult, especially if the store is crowded and you can't find your items. Drivers will wait no more than three minutes for the rider upon arriving at the scheduled pick up time. If you are not prepared to board when the bus arrives, it is considered a "No Show" that can lead to a suspension of your ability to ride paratransit. Overall, Latrisha finds paratransit service accommodates most of her transportation needs and provides reliable assistance.

## Patricia

**"When I am on the bus, I feel very safe."**

Patricia lives in Kennewick and takes paratransit to navigate in her community. She has been taking this service for 12 years. She likes that it has a lift that provides access to her as she uses her wheelchair. She uses paratransit to go to the grocery store and to medical appointments. In her free time, she volunteers and crafts. A barrier for her is that paratransit doesn't run on holidays, which makes it difficult for her to get together with family members and friends. Patricia is a single woman who lives alone. Not having transportation on holidays only makes her feel more isolated. Because she needs wheelchair-accessible transit, if paratransit isn't running, her only option is to stay home. She is grateful that Sunday service was recently added since paratransit is the only way she can connect with family and friends. She believes that pushing for more investment in transit and paratransit will create jobs and will keep our economy growing and strong.

## Robert O.

**“If you took away everybody’s car keys for a month, they [would] probably have a good idea what trying to get public transportation is like. I see people run around, jump in their cars and drive places. That’s what makes me jealous when I can’t, to be honest.”**

Robert lives in Kennewick and has been a paratransit rider for five years. He is active in his community and relies on paratransit to get around. He also used to ride the fixed route bus but says that public transit is not safe enough for him. Public buses tend to be extra crowded, and, with the COVID pandemic, it was just too much of a risk. Robert has considered other sources of transportation, such as hiring a driver to take him around, but right now it makes more sense for him to ride paratransit. Riding transit is less expensive and produces less air pollution. Robert believes that paratransit provides a benefit to the community and makes life better for everyone who depends on the service.

## Charles K.

Charles is a resident from the city of Pasco and depends on door-to-door (paratransit) service for navigating in his community. He has been riding this service for about five years and says without this service it would be hard to get to and from places. He used to be a public transit rider but says it is much more convenient and safer for him to travel with door-to-door service. In his free time Charles enjoys going out for dinner and spending time with friends and family. One barrier for Charles is the option to be able to get to and from in the time he prefers. He would like to have the opportunity to catch door-to-door transportation whenever he wants to go somewhere. He would also like drivers to be patient while pedestrians are walking and crossing streets. Charles has witnessed too many accidents and says that most drivers are impatient and do not take time to watch out while on the road. Charles believes the need for transportation is essential not just for him but it improves community mobility and it is something that our society depends on.

# Legislative District 17

## Harry



**“What I discovered when I quit driving is that the world is set up for cars. When I walked places and had to cross streets, I’d hope there was a sidewalk — sometimes there wasn’t. But just because you don’t drive, your life isn’t over. You still have a lot to give your community.”**

**“My family is all around the state but it’s hard to get there to see them, and it’s hard to get around when I am there. I’d like the freedom to visit.**

Harry lives in Vancouver, where he works with regional and national organizations to bring shuttle-type transit services to rural Washington. Harry is the board chair of the Human Services Council, and serves as the chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for C-Tran. Harry has had a seizure disorder his whole life, and for many years he drove. He knew it wasn’t ideal, but he thought he didn’t have a choice. He knows a lot of people feel the same way. In 1995, he was in a bad accident that made him realize how severe his seizure disorder actually was. He gave up driving so he would not hurt anyone. Harry’s injuries make getting a bus difficult, so he mostly uses paratransit. One barrier is the lack of curb cuts — Harry can walk but cannot always lift his legs over curbs. It was hard to make his full-time job work with transit schedules, so he doesn’t work full-time now. He also participates in fewer social activities. A lot of Harry’s family lives in Camas and Wenatchee, but the lack of transit makes it hard to visit. He would like the transportation system to be a lot friendlier and provide more freedom and mobility to him and people like him and help them feel more connected.

**“I have a very serious seizure disorder, and the heat puts stress on my body, which can cause more seizures. The seizures I have are compulsive. The best way to describe them is that my whole body is out of control and in convulsions for up to an hour at a time. Every day during extreme weather I spend the entire day in more fear knowing that the chances of my having a seizure have increased tenfold. Also, public transportation can shut down during extreme weather. Usually there are fewer buses available, and Portland shuts down the entire Max train system. That puts a huge amount of pressure on those of us who rely on it for simple tasks, let alone major tasks such as going to the doctor or getting to work. Suddenly, as people with disabilities, we have added pressures!”**

## Vaughn



**"More affordability means moving further out. Moving further out means more limited transportation."**

Vaughn is a Blind Legal Studies Master's student who currently lives in Vancouver. Most of Vaughn's routine errands, such as a trip to the bank or grocery store, are within a 20-40 minute walk. However, with infrequent bus schedules and limited routes, some of his trips can take upwards of three hours. As the winter months roll around or when he has time-sensitive meetings, like a doctor's appointment or a job interview, he finds himself relying on expensive ride-sharing apps. Vaughn finds that accessibility and affordability often compete. He'd prefer to live somewhere with better transit, but housing is too expensive. Frequent, affordable, and diverse transit would let Vaughn volunteer, contribute to the local economy, exercise, and gain meaningful employment.

**"My message to the representatives in Olympia is to think about what you're taking away from the disabled population, the low-income population, or even those who may not be comfortable driving a car. You're taking away employment opportunity. You're taking away the ability for us to stimulate the economy by spending. You're taking away health benefits by limiting where we can go to exercise."**

## Ory Ann

**"If I could I would drive myself, because public transit takes more time than driving from point A to point B and sometimes the bus does not go the direction I would like to go."**

Ory Ann is low vision and lives in Vancouver, Washington. Sometimes she takes the bus to get around, or she gets rides from her family. Ory Ann lives very close to bus route 30, which is just a few blocks away from her house, but the northbound stop does not have a bus shelter. It would be much easier for Ory Ann to find the bus stop if there was a covered shelter because finding the bus pole as a visually impaired person is difficult. And at some stops the bus poles are pushed onto the grass. Ory Ann would like to see covered bus shelters at every bus stop because having a bus shelter makes it easier for Blind or visually impaired individuals to find stops. She thinks drivers should be fined not just for running red lights but also for not stopping for pedestrians crossing the street. She finds it very disorienting when drivers turn in front of her — it makes her feel lost even if she knows where she is at.

# Legislative District 18

## Katie



**“It is important that I have a job so I can be a little independent and be a part of the community.”**

Katie lives in La Center with her family. She has a job in Vancouver and isn't able to drive or to take the fixed route commuter bus that goes from La Center to the Vancouver Transit Center. Because of her disability, it's not safe for her to wait alone at the transit center, so she needs something that provides door-to-door service. Unfortunately, La Center is outside of the area where C-Tran, the local paratransit provider, offers service. Katie has been getting rides from her caregiver to her job, but that caregiver is leaving, and her family hasn't been able to find a replacement. The disability services that Katie receives allow the caregiver to be reimbursed mileage for driving Katie to and from work, but not for the caregiver's time, which makes finding someone more difficult. Katie looked for work in La Center, but there weren't a lot of office-type businesses there that would be a good match for her skills, and so the only job she found, after a couple of years of searching, was in Vancouver. Katie really doesn't want to give up the job — she loves being able to earn money and afford things that she wants. She wishes there was paratransit or another shared shuttle service that she could use to get to work.

## John F.

**“The bus close to my house stops running at 7 p.m. and if I miss that bus I am out of luck. I usually have to plan well ahead. Even if the bus ran until 8, it would be helpful.”**

John lives in Washougal and he is Blind. John usually gets around by taking the bus or he gets rides from his partner. He has two buses close by, but they both stop running at 7. Not only that, in the Washougal area it is very difficult for a Blind person to identify the bus sign because the speed limit sign and bus sign feel almost the same. Sometimes people who cannot see might end up waiting for the bus at the wrong sign and end up missing the bus. Making bus stops easier to distinguish from other street signs would help prevent John and other Blind people from missing the bus.

**“I have been riding the bus for quite a while, but I sometimes confuse the bus sign with the speed limit sign here in Washougal. One time, the driver told me that I was standing at the speed limit sign that was about 20 yards before the bus sign, but luckily, I was close enough to the bus stop, the driver saw me.”**

# Legislative District 19

## Nancy



**“Because I was a deputy coroner in a rural county, I saw how many people are as isolated as I have become. When you cannot drive for whatever the reason, you are totally isolated. Just because of transportation, you shouldn’t be forced to leave. You shouldn’t be forced to move out of your home in order to be able to get to the grocery store or to the doctor. And if you get right down to the nitty gritty, now there’s nowhere you can afford to rent anyway in the cities.”**

Nancy lives on the Wishkah River north of Aberdeen with her two adult sons, who are disabled. Nancy is losing her vision and no longer drives. They all rely on Grays Harbor Transit paratransit. They live on the edge of the service boundary, and worry that if funding was cut they would lose reliable transportation access. There’s a service that provides rides to medical appointments, but Nancy can’t use that because she can’t bring her sons with her, and she cannot leave them home alone. Nancy remembers there used to be a twice-weekly route through Grays Harbor County but budget cuts eliminated that service. Now the only option is paratransit, which only serves a limited geographic area. Nancy wants to emphasize that people who can’t drive are taxpayers and community members, and that their transportation needs should be met, just like the state subsidizes the transportation needs of people who drive.

**“Transit is great. But with the budgets the way they are, that service is always very tenuous. And over the years it has been reduced. We had a bus that came twice a week, which meant it came twice a day — it went into town around the big loop and would drop people off. And then it came back. And if you missed the bus, the joke was you had to wait till Thursday, because the bus only came on Tuesday and Thursday. But at least it was a bus. And at least it was a way to get to town for appointments and grocery shopping. That was stopped when the budgets got too tight.”**

## Bridget



**“You have to be within two miles of the nearest city bus stop to be picked up by the CAP (Community Action Plan) bus. I am five miles away. I don’t even have the option of walking because there are no sidewalks and it’s not safe. That would be a really nice thing to have.”**

Bridget is a visually impaired resident of Longview who is working to become an early childhood educator. Her disability income is not enough for her to live on her own, so she lives with her parents, five miles outside city limits, with no access to public transit. Bridget has difficulty planning anything because she depends on her parents and their schedules. If she had better transportation she would see her doctor more often, instead of letting some appointments slide. Bridget’s



ideal accessible community would have sidewalks everywhere to make it easier to get around, audio alerts at all crosswalks, sidewalk ramps that make it easy for the visually impaired to find and stay in the crosswalk, and city bus routes that were more interconnected.

**“Audio alerts on crosswalks in Longview no longer work and many never had them. There are only single ramps on corners so that you are forced into the intersection, with no markers for the visually impaired to find the crosswalk. The city just paid a lot of money to redo the ramps and not a single one is visually-impaired friendly.”**

## Chad

**“I’d like to see Vancouver connected with La Center, Richfield with Kelso and Longview, Woodland with Kalama. If you had some kind of system, that would bring more of an influx of people, and also job opportunities.”**

Chad is a low vision writer who has traveled extensively since he went Blind two years ago. He’s a big Anthony Bourdain fan and has been trying to visit all the restaurants Bourdain profiled. Chad takes Amtrak and light rail when he goes up to Seattle, and is comfortable using Uber and Lyft. In Longview, he uses paratransit, and is pretty satisfied with the service. He does miss going to Cannon Beach or other places on the coast, which used to be something he did frequently after work when he could drive. He used to work at Ilani, a casino about 30 miles from where he lived, and found that there weren’t any transit options for him or other employees. He really thinks large employers, like the casino, could benefit if workers could find ways to share rides. And he thinks that there should be more true ride sharing options for people who live in more rural areas and can’t drive.

**“I’ve only been out of driving and Blind for two years. So I’m still doing whatever I want to do, just in a different way. I have such a surrounding of people. If I have to, if I need something, I have somebody that if they can’t do it today, they’ll do it tomorrow.”**

## Nikki



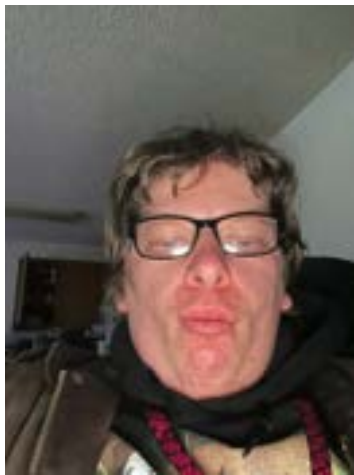
**“As a mom you want to give your kids everything in the world. But there’s so many things we’ve missed because our public transit isn’t frequent or accessible. I missed two of my older daughter’s high school choir concerts, which is devastating.”**

Nikki is a legally Blind mom of two living in Longview with her husband, who is also Blind. They primarily use paratransit to get around. The bus near them runs on a one-way route on a busy, four-lane street. If they don’t want to ride the entire bus loop all the way around, they have to walk several long blocks to find a crosswalk to catch it later on its loop. Many streets have no sidewalks, which makes getting around difficult. There is no Uber, and taxis are too expensive on their SSI income, except for emergencies. The lack of transportation options can really limit their family. Nikki and her husband can’t really go out for date nights because buses stop running at 7pm and paratransit isn’t available past 6:30. As an adult she doesn’t want to ask her parents to drive them to and from date night. It has also made it difficult for her daughters when they participate in school activities. They looked into moving to Vancouver but found bus passes were \$60 per person,

which is not affordable for their family. Nikki appreciates the transit they do have, but it needs better connections and schedules, shelters at bus stops for rainy days, and accessible apps so riders can track buses. It's very difficult to get out of town, so Nikki would also like better transit connections from Longview to the beach and bigger cities near them.

**"There are a lot of rules with things like paratransit. If something happens last minute and I can't get on my bus, because my daughter is suddenly sick or something, I risk getting marked as a no-show. Too many no-shows means I'm suspended from the service. If I'm suspended from the service, I have no ride."**

## Greg



**"The sidewalks need to be updated more, with tactile bumps for the crosswalks. There's maybe two or three accessible crosswalks in this city [Longview]."**

Greg lives in Longview and gets around walking and with paratransit. He previously lived in Gray's River, but moved to Longview to have access to paratransit. In Gray's River, the bus ran twice a day. Once, he missed the last bus and had to spend \$200 on a cab to get home. Greg's dream is for his community to have a fixed-route transit system that was accessible to him, because trying to get paratransit pickups scheduled can be difficult. He's missed doctor's appointments before because of that. He also wishes more of the sidewalks had tactile bumps at the crossings, and for more accessible places, with audible signals, to cross the street in Longview. At night, he's able to see the light colors change, but because of his light sensitivity, during the day, he has to risk crossing by just listening for traffic.

## Grethel

**"I have a two-year-old and a five-year-old. When I have a dentist appointment, I have to have my husband drive me there because paratransit does not go there. So, we have to take the whole family to my dentist."**

Grethel is low vision, and she lives in Kelso. She gets around by taking paratransit or getting a ride from her husband. Grethel can go anywhere in the Kelso/Longview area using paratransit but it does not take her to other nearby cities like Rainier, where her dentist is. To go beyond the Kelso/Longview area, she has to rely on her husband. Her lack of independence as a non-driver is challenging for Grethel. She would like paratransit to offer service to more cities, not just the city she lives in.

## Michael X.

**"I have multiple issues: CTE, seizure disorder, lumbar compression fractures and damaged disks, gastroparesis, FM, peripheral neuropathy to name the worst. I cannot ride upright in a car more than a couple miles before the pain and inflammation become too much. I receive \$996 per month,**

**out of which I pay rent, utilities, buy non-food household items, etc. There are no medical transportation agencies available where I live. All of my specialists are over two hours away. I have talked with Medicare and Medicaid, and they do not cover medical transport unless I switch to a spenddown (deductible) plan, which I cannot afford. If I was working and earning this amount, there would be no spenddown. I feel this is discrimination based on the source of my income being disability [income] instead of [from] employment.” — Michael, Ocean Park**

## Rose

**“You don’t really get it until you’ve gone through stuff like this yourself, because then you know what it’s like to be in this situation.”**

Rose lives in the Grays Harbor community of Hoquiam, Washington. Rose travels using her wheelchair, walker, and occasionally she gets rides from her caregiver. But she stays home most of the time due to difficulties transporting or traveling via wheelchair. Rose wants to use paratransit, but the application is sixteen pages long and is complicated. Rose’s caregivers can’t transport her wheelchair, which is a big reason she wants to qualify for paratransit. Rose doesn’t feel safe traveling on the street since she knows someone in a wheelchair who was hit by a car driver. Rose wants drivers to give pedestrians more space on the road, especially in crosswalks. She also wants all the lights to be red for a few seconds more just so that she and others can have a little more time to get across the street. She also would also like more accessible grocery shopping. Rose would like to pick out her own produce, but has to rely on workers, who give her bad produce sometimes, or her daughter-in-law, who doesn’t have a lot of spare time.

## Crystal

**“There’s no longer an Uber in this town. My Uber guy retired.”**

Crystal lives in Sequim. She normally gets around by walking or asking for a ride. Crystal had a stroke and figuring out the bus system or getting around can be extremely difficult. After living in Sequim for five years, Crystal just now secured her reduced fare permit. She hasn’t been able to really figure out the fixed route transit system, and she’s frustrated by the long waits for paratransit pickups: they make her wait two to three hours after her appointment is over just to get picked up. Until the local Uber driver retired, she mostly relied on him. Now she relies on her neighbor for rides, and when the weather is warmer, she can walk to the grocery store. She is curious to try out the new on-demand shuttle service Clallam Transit recently started offering, though she was having difficulty getting registered through the website. She wishes there were more transit options. Crystal says it’s emotionally isolating, disheartening, and humiliating to be dependent on others. Crystal misses out on socializing, museums, festivals, cultural celebrations, and Indian restaurants. Crystal wants drivers to not take the ability to drive for granted and understand that it inhibits Crystal’s mental health by having to be isolated the majority of the time. Crystal enjoys being home, but also misses just being able to go wherever she wants to go at any time.

**“I want people to get in touch with their empathy and humanity and to see the world through our eyes.”**

# Legislative District 20

## Joshua



**“Transit helps a lot of people. And it ensures that people who would not have that freedom, of getting to the place they want to be, be allowed to have that.”**

Joshua lives in Centralia and takes the bus for transportation. He loves his local public transit provider — Twin Transit — because the drivers are great and it’s a simple, easy-to-understand system. Joshua uses transit to get to Walmart, the grocery store, to restaurants and to his work. He does wish there were accessible sidewalks in his community. He also wishes the transit routes went to more places in the community. He thinks more people would ride transit if the routes weren’t so limited. He would love to see a route that connects to Olympia, because he thinks a lot of people who commute to

Olympia for work could save a lot of money on gas. Joshua would also love to see routes to Grand Mound and Napavine.

**“I believe that Twin Transit is doing the best they can in the pandemic, striving to provide the best quality service they can for customers.”**

## Rene C.

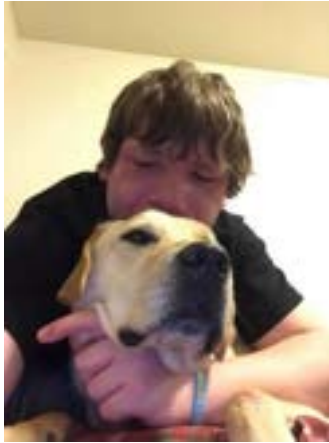


**“There is absolutely no public transportation where I live....It's beautiful here, and I love it, but not having accessible transportation to travel independently is tough.”**

Renee lives in Kalama and is low vision. There is a CAP (Community Action Program) bus that runs every two hours, but it’s five miles away from her home. Since she does not have access to public transportation where she lives, she relies on her roommate and her family to get around. Renee previously lived in Vancouver, where she was able to use the bus system, and which she found to be fairly good. There, she had much more opportunity to do things completely independently than she does in Kalama. Renee likes traveling independently, and is not comfortable always asking people to give her a ride to go and do

things because she is used to being independent. That limits what she chooses to do outside her home. Renee would like to see the accessible bus service close to her house so she can travel independently.

## Gabriel



**“The bus doesn’t run on the weekends, and it’s really upsetting when you can’t do what you want to do because the bus does not run.”**

Gabriel is low vision and lives in Centralia. He gets around by walking or by taking a bus. Sometimes he asks his parents to give him a ride. For Gabriel, it is not even easy to identify the bus stop sign because they only put the sign on the pole, and that is not accessible for visually impaired person. Also, there is no bus shelter. If it is raining or snowing, there is no covered area to wait for the bus. Other barriers for Gabriel are not having accessible traffic signals to cross the street safely, and the buses not announcing stops. Gabriel would like to see a stop call-out system, accessible bus signs where he could put in the bus stop number, and it would tell him how far out the bus is from his location, and bus shelters so that if it is raining or snowing and he missed the bus, he could stay under the shelter.

**“I walk to get places in this neighborhood because sometimes you can’t really count on the bus system.”**

## David G.

**“If I cannot drive anymore because my vision gets worse, I will not have any transportation because there is no reliable transit here in Rochester.”**

David lives in Rochester, and he is legally Blind in one eye and profoundly deaf. He only drives during daytime hours because driving in the dark has become difficult due to his glaucoma. He continues to drive to get around because there is no reliable transit system in Rochester. David's biggest barrier is that if his vision continues to get worse and he is unable to drive even in the daytime, he will no longer be able to get around independently. He would like to move to Vancouver, where he currently serves as a board trustee to Washington School for Deaf. The transit system is better there. But he cannot afford to live in Vancouver on his Social Security Disability Income, so David must commute between Rochester and Vancouver for his meetings.

# Legislative District 21

## Amandeep



**“Some bus stops don’t have shelters and it’s hard for people to be waiting for over half an hour in the winter, especially for people with a disability or a Blind person. Sometimes if you miss one bus, you have to wait two hours for the next one. It’s not a good service for people who rely on public transportation.”**

Amandeep is a Blind student who lives in Lynnwood and attends Everett Community College. She gets around using the bus. One challenge is that the buses she needs don’t stop very close to campus. Another is that bus announcements aren’t loud enough, so at busy and loud stops, it’s difficult to hear if the bus is the one she needs. Amandeep finds that TransitApp is the most accurate app and has the best voice function. She’s missed buses and had long waits using other apps. In Amandeep’s ideal community, transit stops would have Braille signage consistently posted, with route numbers, direction of travel, and schedule details. Going to downtown Seattle would be much easier, so she could meet friends, go to meetings, and go out to eat more often.

**“I am worried about service cuts to public transit because in the Blind community, not all Blind people have good jobs. Students and others are struggling financially, and Uber is expensive.”**

## Bill



**“I can go down to Seattle and it may take me two-and-a-half or three hours to go 40 miles. And that’s kind of ridiculous. Especially the timing of all these buses.”**

Bill and his partner live in Lynnwood and are both nondrivers and wheelchair users. They primarily rely on fixed-route and paratransit, and they chose the Pacific neighborhood because of the transit access. But with the pandemic, service has been cut, including Sundays, and they’ve had to give up church. They own a van that caregivers can use to provide rides. Bill says the weather and inaccessible sidewalks are two of the biggest barriers he faces. He avoids traveling to areas he isn’t familiar with or isn’t confident that he’ll have the sidewalk and curb ramps he needs. Sometimes he’ll have to go out into car traffic to get through an area. Other times, he’ll be forced to turn around and go home when he reaches an inaccessible area. Bill also has difficulty when all the wheelchair places are taken on a bus. Both Bill and his partner use wheelchairs, and so if they want to get on a bus together, they have to hope that no one else is using that flexible seating. Or they have to separate. Bill actually got stuck in Seattle once when there wasn’t a wheelchair spot available on the last bus. Bill also wishes drivers had more training on working with people who use wheelchairs, and that the schedules had more flexibility so that drivers felt less rushed when securing wheelchair users.

**“You know that you have to be at the bus stop at a certain time, and you leave early only to find out there’s five other wheelchairs at the bus stop, just trying to get the same bus. Then you got to**

wait for three other buses to take those five other people before you get on a bus.”

## Erica



**“There are people who are going around with a checklist of ADA requirements, and they don’t have people with various disabilities in the room when they’re designing transit and streets. A lot of disabled people only have the energy for 10 or 15 hours a week of work. So they have zero chance of getting into the room. We need funding to bring these people into the room where these things are designed.”**

Erica lives in Edmonds. She mostly takes the bus because that is the only way she can travel with the heavy, motorized wheelchair that her disabilities require, and the wheelchair doesn’t fit in her car. Erica’s greatest barrier is just getting around. Often, when bus drivers are behind schedule they will leave her at stops, sometimes multiple times at the same stop on the same day. Some transit agency wheelchair lifts and buses are designed better than others, but some can cause motion sickness or don’t work for people with multiple disabilities. Erica’s ideal accessible community would have sidewalks on every street, including smaller residential streets, and many more resources directed to transit and increased frequency, so she could just know that a bus will be going her way every 15 minutes.

**“I like to be able to move around my community and Seattle and enjoy the area I live in. And I’m blocked from doing that as much as people who legislators think of as their typical constituent. I feel like I’m not a consideration when things are being built.”**

## Micah



**“Eight-five percent of the world functions without a car. Let’s just normalize public transit. Let’s normalize paratransit. At the core it’s about providing access and opportunity.”**

Micah is a Blind UW student studying to become a high school English teacher. He works for the Department of Services for the Blind, teaching high school students independent living skills. He moved from Kent to Seattle and finds the University District is much more accessible for him. He gets around mainly by walking, but takes the bus if it is too far to walk. Micah can now walk to most places he needs to go. But his family is in the SeaTac/Des Moines area and it takes him two hours to visit. He used to go down and spend the night because he didn’t want to have to catch public transit in the dark when the buses run less often. He knows that some Blind people prefer paratransit because they feel overwhelmed using the bus and light rail, but he found the paratransit application process too complicated. The biggest barriers he sees have to do with finances, seeing people having to move farther from the city to afford living, and those places don’t have good transportation or other resources.

**“In some countries it’s very normalized for people who are Blind to go into trades such as massage therapy, so that they can be an active contributing member of society. It’s not complicated, it’s providing the access. They even have sidewalks that are tactile. The whole system is made to be accessible to everyone.”**

## Amanda S.



**“There is a bus route where I live but it only comes once an hour.”**

Amanda lives in Marysville, and she is legally Blind. Amanda graduated with her Master's degree in Divinity last summer. She gets around by taking the bus, and rides from her family and friends. She is not always comfortable asking people to give her a ride because everyone has a different schedule. Sometimes even asking someone for a ride causes her some anxiety. Amanda occasionally takes Uber, but it's more expensive. She wants to either move to a small city where she can walk around and not need transportation or a bigger city where there's more transportation options available, but that is not easy. Going to school, church, work, and other places between her hometown and Seattle 30 miles away can sometimes be a nightmare. Amanda would like to see accessible and frequent bus service

operate close to her home so she can travel independently.

**“Whenever I call or text somebody asking for a ride I start to wonder, are they going to get back to me or not? Should I call a second person? There are times I would rather walk, even several miles, than deal with the anxiety of finding a ride.”**

## Amanda B.

**“Sometimes traveling by bus can be difficult for a hard of hearing person because you could end up getting off at the wrong stop because the internal signs inside the buses don't always display the right stops or they are not working. Some bus drivers announce the stops, but a Deaf person like me cannot hear the announcements.”**

Amanda lives in Edmonds. Currently, Amanda gets around by driving, but before the pandemic, she relied on the bus to get to work or anything she needed to do in Seattle. Amanda is hard of hearing and doesn't use sign language, but can read people's lips. If there are physical barriers on the bus when the driver is announcing stops, Amanda is not able to understand those announcements. Amanda worries about getting off at the wrong bus stop if the signs inside the bus are not working, or getting on the wrong bus. Amanda would like to see clear directions and working signs on the bus, so she doesn't worry about getting confused all the time when she rides.

**“There are many different bus systems in the Puget Sound area, and not all of them function the same. If you do not know the bus route or if you have to transfer to a different bus, or things like that, it can be very challenging. Especially if you are not familiar with the different bus stops and if you are not sure if you are going the right direction.”**



## Carrie



**“I’ve lived in Lynnwood most of my life and so I know all the streets to go on. So I’m leaving the library and then I crossed the street and the sidewalk was all torn up. And then they had put the button for the crosswalk behind some barrel, underneath tape. You don’t know what sidewalks you can cross over because it says sidewalks are closed.”**

Carrie lives in Lynnwood near the Ashbery Park and Ride. She uses a combination of DART, ACCESS, the regular bus, and sometimes ride-hail if she needs it. The biggest barriers she faces currently is with all the construction blocking sidewalks. She has a difficult time finding the push buttons to cross the street because of things constantly shifting with the construction. She’s lived in Lynnwood most of her life, but with the recent changes in transit routes, and with the opening of the light rail, she’s found it very difficult and disorienting to get places she used to be able to get more comfortably. She will have to ask strangers for help, but it can be difficult getting the help she needs because people don’t understand or want to understand that she’s legally Blind and can’t see things. It takes a lot of advance planning for her to get around, and it takes a lot of energy and focus to try to stay oriented or get oriented when she arrives somewhere.

**“Sometimes I can’t get to certain places that I want to. People who drive in a car, they could just hop in their car. Like my sisters wanted me to be at their house, an hour and a half to get up to Marysville, and maybe it takes them like 15 minutes driving. For me, it takes planning.”**

## Laura A.

“The hardest thing is I sometimes get off [work] really late, and the buses don't run past midnight. Then I have to literally walk it from the South Everett freeway station all the way home. Sometimes I don't get home until one or two o'clock in the morning.”

Laura lives in Everett, Washington. She gets around using a combination of paratransit and public transit. She also uses a powerchair when she needs to travel more than a few steps. One of the barriers she faces is snow and ice on sidewalks, as well as lack of curb ramps or when sidewalks aren't well maintained. Her other major barrier is transit schedules, in particular late night service. Laura works events at the stadiums in the Seattle area, and sometimes events will get out later than midnight, after transit service has ended. On these nights, she has to leave work early and lose paid hours because she needs to get home before the transit service disappears. Sometimes, she's lucky and can get rides from co-workers so she doesn't have to miss work. Other times, she'll get to the South Everett freeway station and then have to roll home five miles in the dark because local transit service has stopped running. She grew up in a rural area with no transportation options at all, and so she really appreciates that she lives in an area now that is served by both Snohomish County Community Transit and Everett Transit, as well as some of the Sound Transit commuter buses. Laura is really looking forward to the extension of the light rail to Everett because it will make getting into Seattle faster, though if she could fix anything right now it would be to get Sound Transit to keep the elevators working, especially on the downtown stations and at Northgate. She also wishes Sound Transit communicated with the stadiums more so that service would be guaranteed to keep running until the large events get out.

“I would fix the Link light rail in downtown Seattle. They are not keeping track of elevators being broken. Oh my god, it's so bad. It's like they don't understand the importance of the elevator to get to a platform, why it's so important to have that for somebody in a wheelchair.”

## Legislative District 22

### Michael



**“I don't miss the fact that I don't drive because of my cerebral palsy. I mean, some days I wish I could drive a car, I'm not gonna kid you about that. But if you think of everybody, we got more congestion on the roads than we can handle. You put more buses on the road, you get more people on the buses. It's kind of wild that we pit people who drive cars against people who don't. It doesn't seem to make much sense. We're all in this together.”**

Michael lives in Lacey and relies on the bus and Dial-A-Ride to get where he needs to go. Michael worked for the Mariners, and before COVID he commuted to Seattle by bus. To be at work at 4:15 p.m., he would leave his house at 11 a.m., in case the first bus he wanted to take already had two wheelchairs on board. His dream is that the Sounder will someday run all the way to Olympia so he wouldn't have to make multiple transfers or worry about whether there is room for his wheelchair. He also wishes there were more public restrooms for people who have long commutes. Because there aren't wheelchair

accessible taxis or ride-hails in Lacey, public transit and paratransit are Michael's only options. He hopes someday they will be available 24/7, so he can go where he wants to go.

**“Transportation is not an elite thing. It's for everybody because everybody's affected by it. If you can't get around, you're limited to what you can do and what you can be. I'm a person who wants to go somewhere. If I go somewhere I'm going to most likely spend some money. Well, you got to give me the opportunity to get somewhere to do that. That's all.”**

## Liberty

**“I have a law degree and a masters degree in public policy. I can be a tremendous business benefit. But I can't work when I can't get transportation. And a lot of us who are disabled are taking much lower wages because of things like transportation.”**

Liberty is a single mom of two daughters living in Lacey. She has Charcot's disease, which prevents her from standing or walking more than a few feet at a time. She uses the bus and paratransit. Paratransit requires users remain at each destination for a certain amount of time. If her errand is quick and she has to wait without a place to sit, it can compound her condition. The lack of consistency and coordination between paratransit services makes traveling to another county difficult. A trip to doctors in Tacoma, just 22 miles away, takes nine hours. Reservations have to be made five days in advance, so Liberty has to pay for a ride-hail there is an emergency, which adds up quickly on her low income. One of her daughters is autistic, and to avoid overstimulating her they might have to wait for another bus if the first one is too crowded. Liberty would like to see all vans and buses be truly accessible to everybody, and more paratransit with better and more cross- and inter-county coverage. She thinks it's important for people to know that accommodations like curb cuts and transportation services are good for everybody.

**“I homeschool my kids and there are fantastic beach naturalist programs on the coast. It's a great educational opportunity. But there is no way to get there. There is not even any way to get to Priest Point Park in our area, transit doesn't get you there.”**

## Mitchell



**“There's the issue of sidewalk cracks on some of the older sidewalks. If you hit a bump that you weren't aware of because it was hidden on the other side, and fly over the bump, your chair could really jolt left or right and cause serious injury.”**

Mitchell lives in Lacey and uses fixed route and paratransit service for transportation. As a wheelchair user, the biggest barrier he faces is the lack of accessible sidewalks. Sidewalks are often too narrow to navigate safely, and where curb ramps do exist, they are misaligned, forcing him out into oncoming traffic. Often, when he's riding the bus, inadequate sidewalks at bus stops make it difficult and dangerous to roll on and off. He sometimes has to use the street to get on or off, which is dangerous. Mitchell has observed that sidewalks are in much worse repair in Washington State than other places he's lived. There's a real lack of adequate pedestrian lighting. He wishes transit providers could pay

drivers more to work on holidays, so that more drivers would be available to increase holiday service. He's struggled to get around on the four holidays a year that have no bus service. Mitchell also wishes there were better evening transit and paratransit services, so that people could get home from work at six or seven. Mitchell suggests that instead of investing in new routes, transit companies should increase frequency on existing routes that currently run only once an hour — he thinks more people would ride if they ran every 30 minutes.

In January 2020, the transit system in Olympia, Washington, Intercity Transit went entirely fare free. Mitchell not only appreciates the ease of access because he doesn't have to struggle to pull out a fare or a pass, he also appreciates the lack of conflict. He's had the police called before when he didn't have the right type of transit pass using the Pierce County transit system and using the transit system in Los Angeles. The removal of the fare box also creates more space at the front of the bus which makes it easier to navigate on and off. Mitchell hopes Intercity Transit remains fare free so that everyone can get where they need to go, whether they can afford fare or not. And he hopes that other transit systems follow the lead of Intercity Transit and go fare free.

**“I've traveled the bus eight years on Intercity Transit. It's easier to get on and off [now that it's fare free]. I think it's easier because for those that can't pay the fare, always having to ask for help.”**

## Clark

**“How do you get around your community? I don't. The only time I leave my apartment is to take trash out, check the mailbox. If I leave apartment grounds it is to get groceries or a money order for bills. I can't use the city bus. I get lost. Last time I got lost, I called 911 and got told this is for emergencies only and hung up on. A nice older lady paid for a taxi ride home.” — Clark, Olympia**

## Joseph

**“I am 72, and after an incident in a parking lot in May 2021, my wife asked me not to drive anymore, and I agreed. I still walk fine, and we live in Olympia's South Capitol Neighborhood, so I can still walk to places nearby; my wife drives me to the mall or hardware stores when I need to buy things for home improvements. I seldom take the bus because it usually takes longer than walking.” — Joseph, Olympia**

# Legislative District 23

## Zackery



**“Knowing this is where the driveway intersects, this is where the street is, just having that clear decisive-like ability to tactilely know that’s what’s going on is very important, whether you’re using a cane or a guide dog, your feet and your hands are picking up vibrations to tell you what’s going on.”**

Zackery is a recent college graduate living with blindness in Kitsap County. He travels with a white cane, navigation apps, and a parrot named Oreo that’s missing his right foot due to an incubator egg accident, and together they help each other with their disabilities. While drivers worry about traffic, Zackery worries about walking into someone, accidentally stepping off the curb and getting hit, and crossing the street at the wrong time as a Blind person. Zackery would love to see more accessible travel options for at-risk pedestrians. He greatly appreciates nice, roomy, easy sidewalks to follow, with very distinct tactiles. Zackery feels that his small town’s highway-centric set-up limits his options given he relies on his own two feet to get around or a friend to drive. Now, with COVID, he doesn’t use door-to-door services because he’s extremely high-risk. Even still, he acknowledged not everyone has access to the multiple apps he uses to fill the gaps in his travels — whether it be environmental recognition software or audible mapping.

**“There’s very little ability to hear, especially with quiet cars now. As a Blind person, long-range detection with your ears can be easily tricked. Even if the wind’s blowing or it’s raining or there’s white noise from traffic or people talking, it can get really dangerous, and I’ve been doing this for 25 years.”**

## JR and Kat



**“It’s hard even with my guide dog to know where the bus stops really are at the transit station. The station uses the same kind of bumps at their curbside stops that are used to indicate there is an ADA ramp. Kat thought she was at a curb ramp and rolled off the edge in her chair and got hurt.”**

Kat and JR live in Bremerton. Kat is legally Blind and uses a powerchair. JR is Blind and uses a guide dog. They get around using paratransit and the bus. JR will sometimes walk while Kat takes transit, and JR takes transit and ferries to his job as a machinist, in Seattle. One big barrier is that there are no real sidewalks on their street or bus stops near their home. They now have to walk a mile to Walgreens to get her medication, since a bus stop was recently moved farther away. Using ACCESS, the paratransit service, requires a reservation at least 24 hours in advance and a half-hour window for pick up. ACCESS can also move the pickup time forward or backward by up to one hour. It’s difficult for Kat to plan her day when she has so little control over her transportation. If Kat has to go farther from home and is worried she won’t be able to get an ACCESS ride back, she has to bring her charger with her because she will have to wheel it home. There is a nearby

bus stop JR takes to the fast ferry to get to work in Seattle, and a nearby bus Kat can take if she needs to go to Silverdale. But doing things closer to home can actually be harder because there is only very limited Saturday service and no Sunday service. They can only use the few accessible ride-hail cars for doctors appointments — not only is the minimum \$25 charge expensive on Kat’s fixed income, she is required to provide an annual letter from the doctor. For JR, it’s difficult even with his guide dog to know where the bus stops are actually located at the transit station, which has resulted in Kat being injured. JR has noticed that the ORCA disabled ferry pass costs more than a standard pass, and that’s not accessible. He wants elected leaders to make transit more accessible for people with disabilities. Kat would like elected leaders and decision makers to consider what it is like to navigate with a disability, and see how difficult and exhausting just trying to get around can be.

## Kris



**“On a typical day before COVID, I would get up and catch the 7:15 a.m. bus outside my apartment, take a three-minute bus ride down to the ferry terminal, where I would switch buses to the 390. The 390 would take me out to the Poulsbo Park & Ride. At that point I would switch to a bus that would take me down to Silverdale Park & Ride. At Silverdale Park & Ride, I would then switch on to another bus that would get me into Bremerton. That was my commute. It took two hours. It’s a 30- to 40-minute drive.”**

Kris lives on Bainbridge Island. Her main mode of transportation is fixed route buses, though she also uses a Dial-A-Ride service since moving to Bainbridge Island. The main barrier Kris faced before COVID was that buses nearby home only came during “commuter” hours, so if she wanted to go somewhere mid-day, later in the evenings, or weekends, she had to use Dial-A-Ride. But Dial-A-Ride buses also served as peak hour fixed-route buses, so she was limited to requesting trips that finished by 3:30 p.m., so the driver could serve the fixed routes. Transit also stops running at 8 p.m., which makes evening activities difficult. Adjusting to using Dial-A-Ride after many years of using fixed route transit was also a challenge, because Kris wasn’t used to planning where and when she wanted to go 24 hours in advance. Having lived on Bainbridge and in Mason County, both places with a lot of water, she wishes there were more privately operated passenger-only ferries, like there used to be, which would encourage more people to not drive and reduce road congestion. Her two-hour bus trip from Bainbridge to Bremerton would be a 30-minute ferry ride. Kris wishes elected leaders would take the time to ride transit, even if they think they’re “too busy,” because it would give them a much better sense of what our transportation system needs.

**“I raised my two kids, and I used buses all the time to get to school, to bring them home from school, to get to doctor’s appointments, to get them to friends’ houses. Transit allowed us to participate independently in music lessons, in sports, in art, and other activities where we didn’t have private transportation. Some of what we had to do was network for rides with friends and family and their friends. But you don’t always want to rely on others for your transportation.”**

# Legislative District 24

## Steph



**“My chair has gotten stuck on sidewalks in Port Angeles trying to use corners that don’t have curb cuts. I called the city and they p told me, ‘Well, it’s a low priority.’ I don’t know if they have done anything since.”**

Steph is a student in Port Angeles who relies on the bus and paratransit to get around in her power chair. Steph says she gets around pretty good in her chair, and she lives close to services she needs, like grocery stores. But her chair has gotten stuck in places that have no curb cuts; the city told her they are a low priority to add. The inconsistencies getting paratransit were confusing — she was told different things about requirements by different people. She has missed rides when drivers didn’t ring her doorbell. She’s found navigating between Jefferson County and Clallam County transit to be difficult. Steph used to live in Gardiner, in Jefferson County, with her mom. To catch the Clallam County transit bus into Sequim, she had to somehow cross Highway 101, which wasn’t safe, so her mom

helped her advocate to get cross-county paratransit service from home to the Sequim transit center. She’d like for more buses to serve Edmonds more quickly and to get a ferry to visit family on Whidbey Island. Right now it takes a whole day.

**“Highway 101 is sketchy to cross. It’s scary even with little to no traffic. You never know. When I have to cross it to catch the bus, I’m like, ‘When do I go? When do I go?’ I wish there were slow lights by the bus stop warning drivers to be aware of pedestrians.”**

## John



**“I live uptown and my wheelchair has good range, so I can go downtown for theater or concerts. But there are other places I can’t go, like Ft. Worden. It is only two miles from home, but the roads have no sidewalks. I’m just not comfortable riding on the side of the road.”**

John has ALS and lives in Port Townsend. He uses a power wheelchair and uses dial-a-ride to get to local medical appointments. Prior to COVID he used the scheduled buses to go to the grocery. When John moved to Port Townsend in 2013, he made sure his new home had a bus stop close by because he

has had mobility challenges since 1971 when he was hit head on by a drunk driver. The Traumatic Brain Injury he sustained in that crash impaired his left leg. In 2017, he was diagnosed with a form of ALS that has caused muscle atrophy in his right leg and right arm. Prior to getting his power wheelchair in 2018, he used a walker. He stopped driving in 2017. He does feel more limited now that he cannot drive. He

needs to plan more in advance, and Jefferson transit buses do not operate on Sunday when some of the local events John would like to attend occur. He avoids going out at night, even just to the library across the street, because it is too hard to see uneven places on the sidewalk and he is afraid he will go off the edge. Every three months, he needs to go to Swedish Hospital in Seattle to attend a four-hour ALS clinic. He uses a combination of public and private transit for the trip but must get lodging in Seattle and return home the next day because transit service is not available to return home before dark. John finds that overall Port Townsend has been responsive to the local disability community's work to get the city to put in proper curb cuts and make sidewalk repairs. He is grateful that the Jefferson Transit buses are accessible and that the drivers are always helpful. It would be ideal to have wheelchair accessible taxi service in Port Townsend, like Seattle has, so that he would have an option for unexpected transportation needs as well as for times when buses are not running. A morning connection by Jefferson Transit or Dungeness transit to the early Kitsap fast ferry from Kingston to Seattle would help John make the round trip to Seattle without an overnight stay. He also would love if the Dungeness Transit bus made a stop at the Swedish Cherry Hill campus in addition to the stop at the First Hill campus. That extra half-mile he has to navigate on a cold, rainy day makes this long journey even more difficult.

**"I have to plan in advance. It used to be that if I needed something to make dinner, I could just jump in the car and go down to the co-op. Now I don't have that option. I have my groceries delivered every two weeks."**

## Kyle

**"I'm a big proponent of public transportation. We don't need all these cars on the road. The road maintenance is incredible. The accidents are incredible. If there was service here that could provide the transportation needs for the people, I really think ridership would go way up."**

Kyle is a Blind disability advocate and a retiree who lives in Sequim. He worked for Clallam Transit for several years as a customer service agent and has also worked for the paratransit system. Kyle is fortunate enough to live close to the Sequim Transit Center so he can catch the bus to Port Angeles. But for some trips he still needs to use paratransit. And he knows from his work in the transit agency that many folks live too far away from the fixed-route service to use it because the routes in Clallam County are so limited. To cut costs, paratransit service is also restricted. Riders have to re-apply to qualify and are increasingly denied. Kyle is also frustrated at the different rules between different counties — for example, dogs are allowed on Jefferson County buses, but not on Clallam ones. But underlying this all, Kyle believes the fundamental problem is that there simply isn't enough funding for transit for small communities to provide adequate transportation for the disabled and elderly, and he hopes the legislature will address this need.

**"I think people, myself included, need more access to the wonderful places up here in Clallam County. And basically, there isn't access via public transportation right now. It would open up possibilities for everybody. I'm focusing on disabled people. But let's broaden that to seniors. Let's broaden it to Joe Blow. He has a car. If there's a good option other than to drive it, people are gonna jump on it. Because driving is expensive. You've got insurance, you've got car maintenance, you've got gasoline."**



## Victoria



**"I'm currently in school, but whenever I need to look for a job, I want to keep my radius very small, because I'm always just nervous if I go for something longer distance that I'm just gonna have too much trouble getting back and forth. So that kind of sucks, because I'll see an opportunity where I think, 'Oh, this could be really fun.' But it's just too far."**

Victoria is a college student who lives in Port Angeles and does not yet have a driver's license. She mostly gets around by bicycling and walking, but when she needs to travel longer distances, like to Port Townsend or Forks, she uses the bus. Her biggest barriers when biking are that there just aren't always bike lanes, which means she has to drive her bike really close to traffic, "which is never nice." Also, roads that might be in fine condition for cars aren't always good for biking. She'd like to be able to bike more on sidewalks, because that would feel safer. Downtown Port Angeles has a lot of sidewalks, but they start to disappear the farther you get from downtown. Transit normally works out pretty well for her, but sometimes there are huge gaps between buses, as much as three hours. Another one of Victoria's biggest struggles relying on biking and public transit is that when she needs to look for a job, she has to look only in the immediate area, so she knows she won't have trouble getting to and from work. Victoria would like buses to run more frequently, and a more up to date system that lets her purchase a day pass or monthly pass online. Victoria's parents didn't have a car, so she didn't have a lot of exposure to driving, and she's developed a slight fear of it. She also doesn't really have a means to practice driving. But she does want to eventually start the process and, if she could afford it, to have a car of her own. She'd like people who can drive to understand that getting around without a car is a lot harder, and they shouldn't make assumptions about people who use public transit. And they should be willing to support public transit. Victoria would like elected leaders to know that investing in public transportation is really important. Not only does it help underserved communities, but if public transportation was given the sort of attention it needs, more people would use it, and that would benefit the environment and the community.

## Robert

**"From my house, it takes a half hour or 45 minutes to walk to the grocery store, depending on which one I go to. It is a lot faster for me to walk to the store than it is to wait for the bus to show up."**

Robert lives in Port Townsend and is low vision. Robert and his family get around by walking, mostly because they do not have a reliable transportation system where they live. The bus only runs once an hour, so he can walk to the store and return home faster than waiting for the bus.

When Robert goes to the grocery store, he brings his yard wagon and 40-gallon tote, and bus drivers don't like him bringing his wagon and tote. When Robert tried to take the bus to go to the grocery store the bus driver told him that he would be the one to be kicked off the bus if someone needed to use the ADA space. When Robert goes to the grocery store, he puts reflectors on his wagon so drivers can see him crossing the streets, but most of the time drivers do not stop for him. Robert has been asking the city for 20 years to put in a sidewalk so he and his family can travel safely, but the city still has not added a sidewalk. Robert's biggest barrier is the lack of sidewalks in some areas, the lack of crosswalks to cross streets safely, and the lack of reliable transportation where he lives. Another barrier for Robert and his family is that they miss out on social events that happen in town, like the boat festival, because the buses stop running at 6:30 p.m. Once, his grandkids had dentist appointments in Jamestown. Robert and his wife tried to get them a ride with a nonprofit ride service, but no drivers were available, and the other ride option required paperwork that would not have been processed until after the appointments. Robert would like to see frequent bus service, crosswalks on the streets close to his home, and sidewalks.

## Leah

**“We don't even have Lyft or Uber here. All we have is one taxi, which doesn't run on Sundays, it only runs on certain hours on Saturdays, and there is no bus past 6:40 p.m. that can drop us off. The first bus we can catch is at 7:30 in the morning. When I was attending college, we had to literally get up at 5 a.m., walk two miles to the bus depot, and then catch a bus to another town. We spent about five hours traveling every day, plus a two-mile walk. It was exhausting.”**

Leah lives in Port Townsend. Leah and her family normally get around by walking because public transportation is not reliable where they live. She sometimes takes Dial-A-Ride, but Dial-A-Ride does not let her bring her family with her. If Leah wants to use Dial-a-Ride she has to go by herself. She also has to give them 48 hours' notice, so it can't be used for emergencies. Since Leah's town does not have Lyft or Uber, it would be very helpful for Leah and anybody who depends on public transit if Dial-A-Ride took the family where they want to go. Leah's husband Robert who is also visually impaired have been walking for miles to just get groceries for the family. Nine years ago, Leah asked the city to put in a crosswalk on the street close to her house so she and her family can cross the street safely. The city still has not put in a crosswalk, so she has started posting about it on social media. Sometimes Leah has to cross that street holding her twin grandkids in her left hand and her guide cane in her right hand. Without a crosswalk, it is not safe for Leah and her family to cross the street.

# Legislative District 25

## Matt



**"Public transportation is obviously a good thing. But it is stressful. It might be a good idea to loosen up the restrictions. Sometimes people are having a bad day and if they are short a dollar, just try to make it work instead of telling them they have to get off the bus."**

Matt lives in Puyallup. He uses a power wheelchair in an accessible van driven by his mother. When he goes out on his own, the lack of sidewalks in many places can be a barrier. He has to pay very close attention. He used to take the bus, but it takes too long to get to the places he needs to go, and getting turned away for lack of room was a pretty frequent occurrence. He once tried taking the bus to Southcenter Mall, but it was crowded and took so long to get there that he couldn't take his time because he needed to get a bus home. When the bus did come, a man in the ADA space would not move, so Matt had to wait for the next bus.

Paratransit shuttles are a last resort because the policies are too restrictive to work for him. There are no accessible taxis in Puyallup. Matt knows there will come a time when he will need to rely on public transit, and he's not looking forward to it. He would prefer to have more options for door-to-door services. Matt would like leaders to know that public transit is a good thing, but it is unnecessarily stressful for riders. Policies should be less strict, so that people aren't turned away for lack of fare. It would be faster to just let people on, too, instead of delaying riders. He has seen a mom with a young child waiting at a bus stop alongside fast, dangerous traffic be refused boarding for not having full fare.

**"I'm 28 and I like to have a good time and do 28-year-old things. But sometimes my mom doesn't want to drive me, which is understandable. But it can be difficult."**

## Linda M.



**"The shuttle is a shared ride service -- there can be other passengers on the shuttle whose destination or pick up is in the vicinity of where you are going or coming from. It's sometimes a long trip to get where you're going. So you have to be willing to wait a little if you know before you are picked up because there's an hour on either side of pickups and drop offs. You have to build that into your calendar when you schedule."**

Linda lives in Tacoma and uses the paratransit shuttle to get around. She uses Pierce Transit primarily, but also transfers to King County paratransit. This shuttle is her sole form of transportation. It allows her to be independent and do the things she needs to do, like getting to her MS support group, shopping, meeting friends, and her volunteer work in Tacoma. She also

transfers to the King County system to access medical treatments at Swedish. She wishes there was an easier way to connect to paratransit service in Thurston County. Linda really appreciates paratransit service, and she wants everyone to know how essential it is for people like herself. And she wishes that the service areas weren't so limited, because she knows of people who need transportation assistance, but live outside paratransit service boundaries. She is also excited about a pilot program that provides on-demand rides. She used it recently to get a haircut, and really appreciated that it came to pick her up right away, rather than having to wait an hour after her appointment as she would have had to for paratransit.

## Rosa

**“The biggest barriers I encounter is that I can't get to transit because it takes about an hour and a half from where I live to walk there. The shuttle [paratransit] does not come to my area because I don't qualify for it.”**

Rosa lives in the South Hill area of Puyallup. She gets around by relying on her husband and kids for rides. She has been a nondriver for two and a half years. The biggest barrier she encounters in her area is that the nearest bus stop takes her half an hour to an hour to walk to, and Rosa only qualifies for three paratransit trips a month. She wishes she could get paratransit to pick her up more frequently, or that the bus ran along the main road where she lives. Rosa appreciates that the crosswalks where she lives have audible signals, but she wishes more areas had these accessible signals. She also notices a lot of cracks in the sidewalks that need to be repaired. If she is dropped off at a central location like the mall, Rosa is okay to get around because the bus stop being right there. Rosa misses on things because she doesn't always have a ride and needs people with her. She would like to go places herself sometimes.

**“I'm very stubborn. And I make sure that my family helps me. But I have missed a few events that I want to go to because I can't get a ride. And then I'd like to be able to try to do things like go on my own, but I always have to have someone with me.”**

## Shannon

**“Because I live with three other adults but sometimes their schedules don't work when I need to go and do something.”**

Shannon lives in the South Hill area of Puyallup. She has been a nondriver for five years. Shannon relies on her husband and family to get around a lot but it is difficult to coordinate schedules, make sure there's a vehicle available and someone available to drive it. Shannon also uses Pierce Transit's paratransit shuttle. It is hard for Shannon to get on and off the shuttle because of the retinopathy in her feet. She also must plan 24 to 48 hours in advance to book a ride. Shannon doesn't like that cars fly through her neighborhood. Because of how fast they go, Shannon doesn't feel safe walking around. There are also truncated domes for her to be able to tell where the crossing is; she can't tell the difference between a curb and a driveway entrance. She misses out on going shopping. The grocery store and the neighborhood pharmacy are the easiest to get to because they are right there. She wishes she had an autonomous vehicle to make it easier for her to get around. Shannon also wishes that people understood how to assist someone with visual impairments. Too often people pull or tug her in ways that aren't safe when they are trying to guide her.

**“Coming from Puyallup to come to the OTC (Department of the Blind’s Orientation Training Center) Seattle was a big excursion for my family because of traffic and closed roads and just bringing me here at the times that they had to bring me.”**

# Legislative District 26

## Jamin



**"I like my freedom and being able to get out on my own and not have to depend on other people, to just have independence. Paratransit takes care of that for me, it gets me to my appointments, it gets me to grocery shopping. I've used these services for all kinds of stuff. It's a godsend."**

Jamin has lived in Port Orchard since 2010. He has been using transit and paratransit for the last ten years. The process for getting paratransit service was slow and difficult when he first arrived, but Jamin depends on the service to get him where he needs to go, and he calls it a "godsend." Jamin uses a scooter for mobility, so he can't navigate stairs or steps. The main street in town, Bay Street, has sidewalks, but they are so horrible that he has fallen down trying to catch an ACCESS bus. A lot of other roads barely have sidewalks or if they do they are really narrow and unsafe, forcing him and others to use the roadway to get through. If Jamin could make his community more accessible, sidewalks would be built wider and maintained well.

**"We are your constituents, people that deal with disabilities....What if I was your mother or your son or daughter? A key element to me living a productive life is being able to go see people or get out and go watch the beautiful downtown view we have at the bay, or walk down by the water. We deserve to get around....Give us what we need to live a productive life."**

## Debbie



**"If they would have buses that run more than just every hour, if they could do that every half hour it would be so cool. That's what I would want."**

Debbie is a legally Blind person from Bremerton. She loves spending her free time knitting and being active in the Blind community. She travels around Bremerton and other cities in Kitsap County using the fixed route bus or ACCESS. Unfortunately, the bus stop closest to her house recently closed, so she had to start using ACCESS more often. One barrier to ACCESS is that appointments can only be made between 8:00 am and 4:00pm and the service does not run on Sundays. Debbie enjoys attending church each Sunday and, due to the lack of transportation, has to rely on her daughter to take her to and from services. This has caused Debbie stress over whether or not she will be able to attend church events, and she wishes Sunday service would be reinstated. When her destination is not far enough to require a bus or ACCESS, Debbie chooses to walk. One of the traffic lights close to Debbie's house has been broken for quite some time

now. But by far the most pressing issue Debbie faces while walking through Bremerton is the uneven sidewalks. The uneven, wobbling sidewalks makes traveling with her white cane challenging.

**"Some of the sidewalks are very unlevel. Because I use the mobility cane and I sometimes will catch the cracks so I have to stop and then start again, I usually don't walk in my neighborhood too much."**

# Legislative District 27

## Luke



**"I am a Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) customer and the DVR office is probably 15 minutes away from me, but to get there by bus takes an hour or more. So unless I want to take up my whole day using the bus, I just get a ride, because taking a one-hour bus ride to the DVR office just doesn't make any darn sense."**

Luke is a student at UW who lives in Tacoma. He uses the bus to get to school, which he finds pretty convenient because there are a lot of transit stops downtown where campus is. Before COVID, service had been increasing, with some routes increasing in frequency from every 60 minutes to every 30 minutes. Some places are super hard to get to by bus. Luke lives 15 minutes from the DVR office but the bus ride is an hour, so he gets a ride when he needs to go there. Luke has heard of people with challenges because so much bus service ends at 7 p.m. He knows that for people who use paratransit, having to schedule so far in advance is burdensome, and qualifying to use the service to begin with is its own separate burden. Luke is hoping that by the time the pandemic is over and campus re-opens, the Tacoma Link extension will be done. He'll be able to take just one bus to the Stadium District and then transfer to Link instead of having to figure out his bus transfer options. He thinks transit does provide some level of independence, but thinks people who drive have the most independence. Luke would like people who don't ride transit to understand that when you depend on transit, you're dependent on the transit schedule. If the bus only runs every hour and you need to be somewhere at 3 p.m., you might have to arrive 30 minutes early. And if you miss a bus, you're going to be very late.

**"One thing I'm really hoping is that by the time we return to campus the Tacoma Link extension will be done. I'll be able to take a bus to the Stadium District and take Link to campus so I won't have to figure out the kajillion bus stops downtown. I can say, 'Okay, the bus arrives at the Stadium District at this time. That means I need to take the Link in enough time to get there by X time to then get home.'"**

## Hayley



**"I've often been told to just memorize where things are, but would you expect a sighted person to do that? Of course not! It would be nice if there was just a Braille number so I know what bus route it was."**

Hayley is a Blind mom who lives in Tacoma with David, her husband, who is low vision, and their two kids. They live in the Fircrest neighborhood, less than a mile from where David grew up. Hayley and her family get around using a combination of public transportation and ride-hailing services. Some of the biggest barriers for Hayley are lack of sidewalks on the street she lives on, and lack of accessible pedestrian signals. Without an audible signal, it's really difficult for Hayley to find the push button to request a walk signal. She also



wishes there was Braille signage on the bus stop poles, so she could tell what is a bus stop versus a utility pole. At the transit center near her house, she wishes there was Braille on all the bus stops poles, so she knows for sure she's waiting in the right spot.

**“So I know this bus stop because there’s a shelter over it, but that’s not always like that. I often can’t tell if it’s a bus stop, or a utility pole with the same shape and same texture.”**

## Sky



**"I'm really thankful because anytime I've lost my wallet or anything like that, [the drivers have] let me get on the bus. And I've just paid afterwards."**

Sky lives in Tacoma and gets around using the bus or sometimes by walking. Sky doesn't yet have a driver license, partly because it costs several hundred dollars to take driving classes, but plans to eventually get one. They spend part of their week in Port Angeles, where they work. One big barrier is that the bus they catch from Port Angeles to head back to Tacoma only comes twice a day. Mornings are really hard to get on the bus because they work from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.. It's not very realistic to catch that morning bus, and if they miss it, the next one doesn't come until evening. Other barriers are that snow and rain make getting around very difficult, especially because they need glasses to see. Late buses are another problem — some routes constantly run late. Another challenge is that a lot of people driving cars are very hostile to them when they are walking, in crosswalks and sometimes even on the sidewalk. They and their friend have had several near misses at the same crosswalk near the Port Angeles transit center four times in the last two months. Sky would like elected leaders to know that the buses need to more consistently be on time so people don't miss them. The Clallam Transit route 123 should have more buses run during the middle of the day because a lot of people want to come to Port Angeles. They think the bus would get more riders if there were more service. Sky also wants electeds to know that the bus drivers' are very nice, their jobs are important, and they should be recognized for that.

## Grace



**"I can't go out on evenings or weekends anymore because there is no way to reliably get home. If the Tacoma bus routes ran later and had more options, my world would be so much richer. As it is, I feel stuck and homebound even though the world is beginning to open back up from the pandemic."**

Grace is a single parent living in a neighborhood in the north end of Tacoma. In recent years they developed a degenerative neurological condition and now use public transportation to get around. Grace previously used to bike commute a lot, but now they are unable to bike or drive. Prior to the pandemic, they could rely on ride-hailing services when the buses weren't running, but now there are hardly any drivers in their area. Grace can sometimes get rides from friends or family to run errands or grocery shop. But they primarily use public transit — and their biggest barrier is

that the bus schedules in their neighborhood are extremely limited, especially on evenings and weekends.

**"I want our lawmakers to understand how life changing it is to lose the ability to drive, and to go from having amazing mobility and freedom to having very little independence. It's shown me just how inadequate our public transportation system is for giving non-drivers the same transportation freedoms as others, and I can say from experience that we need more buses in more neighborhoods, with routes that run through the evening and more often on the weekends."**

## Husai

**"If the announcements aren't turned on I really have no idea where I am going."**

Husai is Blind and he lives in Tacoma. He usually gets a ride from his parents to get around. He lived in Vancouver for 8 or 9 years and was used to taking public transit there, but in Tacoma, he's still getting familiar with stops and locations. So although there is a bus stop just a block from his home, he hasn't started using transit a whole lot in Tacoma just yet. Some barriers for Husai are that bus announcements aren't turned on — he's had to ask drivers if they are on, or to turn them on. He's been in situations where drivers didn't understand why he needed to get off at a certain stop and didn't realize he or his group of friends were visually impaired, and had to explain that certain stops are easier to use than others. In the past, he's been concerned about using transit when traveling with other friends who are visually-impaired and are not used to riding transit — Husai wanted them to feel safe on transit and feel secure that they will get off together without any worries. Husai would like to see more transit systems have the kind of accessible machines that TriMet in Portland has: they have Braille and sounds so you know what you are doing.

## David E.

**"My son's in basketball on Tuesday nights. Sometimes he has to be there on Saturdays. School is only a mile away, but there are no convenient buses that run over there. If it weren't for a kind neighbor who takes him, we would have missed out."**

David lives in Tacoma and is low vision. His wife is legally Blind, and they and their children mostly get around using Lyft or what David likes to call the Ankle Express — walking. His biggest barriers are that there are not enough buses running to places they need to go, or the frequency is so limited that it's just faster or as convenient to walk. He's been reluctant to use transit during the pandemic. But Lyft also presents barriers, including the lack of available Lyft drivers. When Seattle required Lyft to pay drivers better rates, fewer drivers operated in Pierce County. David also experiences a lot of cancellations when using Lyft. Once his family was trying to return home from dinner in Lakewood, and the same driver canceled on them twice. Another big barrier is that because of COVID everyone has to sit in the back seat, but many Lyft vehicles don't accommodate David's family of four. At times he's had to send his family home first and then get a second car. David has also had quite a few problems trying to patronize fast-food places during the pandemic, since many chains have only operated drive-throughs. Some locations worked out arrangements with him, but they depend on certain staff being present, and David points out that this doesn't solve the larger problems or help others who can't use drive-throughs. David would like electeds and other leaders to know that he would like these kinds of barriers broken down to allow people who don't drive, whatever the reason, to be served, whether it is at a drive-through or

elsewhere. He would also like more thinking outside the box with ride hail. He knows some cities have established passes, discounts, vouchers, or other pricing levels for ridehail to make it more affordable, and to solve issues like how people who don't use smartphones can access ride hail.



## Maddi

**“Somebody could always argue, ‘Well just don't go out at night, don't go out when it's dark outside.’ My response would be, ‘In a profession where everybody works late, everybody who has a nine-to-five job is gonna work overtime, and is gonna work late, you can't tell me that you've never walked out of your workplace when it's been dark outside.’”**

Maddi is a visually impaired individual from northeast Tacoma who has dreams of becoming a sound designer. Maddi most commonly uses buses to get around but he has experience with most forms of public transportation. Bus lines that travel to northeast Tacoma are few and far between. Ubers, Lyfts, and taxis become very expensive very quickly. Both of these combined have left Maddi feeling severely socially isolated. One of the barriers that Maddi faces when using Tacoma's bus system is that commute times for people who ride the bus are double those of people who drive. Maddi attended an arts high school in another part of Tacoma. His two-hour commute each way would leave him exhausted. When groups of sound designers meet up in Seattle, Maddi would love to join them to gain experience and watch experts in a field that interests him, but he says that the long commutes make the meetings not worth the experience. Transit centers are also challenging to navigate. Bus terminals are difficult to locate, signage is too high and the lettering is too small to read. These, combined with the noise and general confusion make an overall unpleasant experience. Maddi would appreciate it if bus terminal sign posts had a button you could press to hear the bus terminal number and which lines stop at that terminal. Another resource that Maddi would enjoy is a transit app that includes everything from more accurate arrival and departure times and better directions to bus terminals and stops. He also expressed that more advertising for currently existing transit apps would be beneficial for both visually impaired individuals and others. Maddi also would like drivers to be more attentive while pedestrians are crossing streets.

**“I've always been scared of the unpredictability of traffic and drivers. I have no idea what that driver behind that wheel is going to do when they see me.”**

# Legislative District 28

## Blake



**“Many times, I waited up to 30 minutes for the next bus because the lift did not work, or the bus was full of passengers who would not give up their seat. I wish resources were in place for passengers like me so that we do not need to pad so much extra travel time just to get to our destinations on time.”**

Blake uses a power wheelchair and lives in University Place. He is the volunteer training development coordinator for People First. He uses local buses to get around Pierce County and to attend work meetings in Seattle several times a month. Blake lives near a main bus line that is within five minutes of his home and his route to the bus stop has an accessible sidewalk, accessible curb ramps, and a signalized crosswalk. The biggest barrier Blake encounters is the lack of bus service in Pierce County overall. If he needs to transfer, it’s challenging because most other routes run less frequently. Pierce County transit policy is to not allow him to board if the wheelchair area is already occupied. He has to wait for the next bus, which can be a long time if the headways are at 30-minute intervals. He has to pad in a lot of extra travel time for any trip in case this happens. Sometimes he’s just given up waiting for the next bus and gone home. Blake would include more frequent transit that runs from early in the morning to late night, seven days a week, and would like for buses to have room for stroller parking.

**“I would change how transit is funded. Sales tax is very volatile and disproportionately impacts low-income people like me.”**

## Esmeralda

**“When it comes to certain things, finding a right time to do things is hard. If you're taking public transit, you're not going to be able to just pick a time and be wherever you want to be at the time you want to. Be there either early, or you're late.”**

Esmeralda is a visually impaired college student currently attending Tacoma Community College. When unable to have a friend or family member drive her to a destination, she will use public transportation. One issue that Esmeralda faces relying on public transportation is a lack of control over her schedule. An hour and a half commute turns into three hours. Forgetting a textbook turns into a day trip. Uncertainty about when she will arrive at her final destination has caused Esmeralda concern during her years navigating her urban environment. When Esmeralda finds herself needing to be somewhere at a specific time, she faces another barrier. Trying to find somebody who is able to drive her becomes difficult. Whether they are busy, unwilling, or too far away, finding timely transportation can be almost impossible. Esmeralda wants people who can drive to appreciate the fact that they have a lot more autonomy over their life — they can do something that not a lot of people can do for one reason or another.

**“Say you try and get a ride, [and] you don’t have people that are willing to do that, at least people that you know. Maybe everyone’s busy, or maybe people are just kind of not wanting to do that. And that’s definitely a difficult thing — to try and have people work you into their schedule.”**

## Jacob C.

**“Some areas in Pierce County aren’t really covered by the shuttle, or are very time based. I can only go someplace between certain times, which aren’t the times that I need to be there. Some bus stops close down super early, like 6 pm. What if I wanted to hang out with some friends? Well I can’t because I have to take the bus home at six.”**

Jacob lives in Tacoma near University Place and is a student at Bates Technical College. He uses a wheelchair and gets around rolling as well as taking Pierce County Transit and paratransit (the Pierce Transit paratransit Shuttle). One of the biggest challenges are the limited routes or times he can take the shuttle, and how long it takes to get somewhere transferring between different routes if he does try to take the fixed route bus. He also often prefers the shuttle because so many of the sidewalks are missing or crossings are inaccessible. One particular spot is that his mom lives on Day’s Island, but the sidewalk on the bridge to the island is too narrow for his chair and doesn’t have a ramp, so he has to roll in the street to cross to get to her house.

It’s relatively simple for Jacob to get to school at the Bates College central campus, but when he needs to go to the south campus, it can be really challenging because there are so many missing sidewalks in South Tacoma. Both the paratransit/Shuttle and many fixed route bus routes stop running at 6 pm, so he’s really limited in being able to go out and socialize with friends in the evenings. There are no wheelchair accessible taxis or ride hail in Pierce County. He really wishes there was an accessible taxi service, because he can’t always plan everything 24 hours in advance, which is what is required for him to call for a paratransit/Shuttle reservation.

**“There are sidewalks that are really difficult to navigate, to the point where I have to roll off of driveways and cross the street illegally. There’s lots of times I have to take a detour or go down like three blocks to then find a ramp that will take me across the street. It takes me so much longer to get someplace than someone else. A car ride from my house. To Bate’s Central Campus is about 20 minutes, but for me to take the bus there, it’s about an hour ordeal that requires lots of planning.”**

## Legislative District 29

### Krystal



**“I was trying to get to a Kmart on South Tacoma Way once. The bus dropped me off across the street. The sidewalk was fine but when I turned to go down toward the crosswalk, the sidewalk turned into loose gravel. My wheelchair’s small tires dug in and I couldn’t push myself out. I could see across the street to where I was trying to go, but I couldn’t get to the crosswalk.”**

Krystal lives in Tacoma and uses a wheelchair. Her biggest barriers are the lack of sidewalks and not knowing if there are going to be curb cuts or sidewalks when she’s going somewhere she hasn’t been before. Krystal would like elected officials to start thinking about public transportation and sidewalks as going together instead of as two separate things. In her ideal community, sidewalks would have no cracks, private as well as public spaces would be accessible, and all taxi services would be accessible. Bus routes would be placed to avoid barriers for wheelchair users and to make sure it was easy to get on and off the bus.

**“Some routes stop on inclines. How is a wheelchair user supposed to even wait at that bus stop without rolling backwards? Or maybe the incline will be on grass. How do you expect me to get on grass and then the ramp to get on the bus when I’m already inclined in the weirdest position?”**

### Donovan



**“I moved to Lakewood from Bremerton two years ago. Transit in Bremerton was more convenient than here because the town wasn’t so spread out. But over here I have Section 8 housing, so it’s more affordable. It was more a choice about housing than transportation.”**

Donovan has a brain injury and lives in Lakewood. He gets around by bus and he’s very comfortable doing so — it gives him independence and mobility. Donovan does not use paratransit because he doesn’t qualify for Pierce County paratransit services. He is able to attend brain injury support groups in Bremerton, Puyallup, and Tacoma using transit. But, service cuts have made it harder and less convenient to get around. Donovan no longer goes to movies and can only plan on doing one thing every day because it takes so long to get to his destination and back. One example is that the bus to the grocery store is right across the street from the store, but only comes twice an hour. There’s no place on the bus to put his groceries. When he gets off, he has to walk two blocks and cross the street to get to his apartment, which is not easy when carrying his groceries. Donovan would like bus stops to be located closer to where he needs to go, with more frequent service and more routes going more places, and more shelters and benches at bus stops for when he has long waits or it’s raining.

**“I don’t think elected leaders really understand what it’s like to try to use a bus that only runs once an hour to go where you need to go. You’ve got to wait around for it or you have to decide to do something else. Spend money on transit so we don’t have to wait an hour to get around. We need a transit system that is convenient to use.”**

## Ivanova



**“Legislators don’t understand the pain and agony standing in the rain at a bus stop. Or having to be stuck at a crosswalk and missing your bus. Can you imagine waiting in the rain another hour, waiting for the next bus? ”**

Ivanova is a disabled advocate and mom who lives in Tacoma. She mostly takes transit, though since the pandemic she’s been relying a lot on her husband, who can drive. That means that she doesn’t go anywhere during the day, and often doesn’t get out until the weekend.

Ivanova can’t wear a face mask, and so when she rides transit she uses a face shield, but feels like that blocks enough of her vision that it’s too difficult to see where she is and navigate safely. When riding transit, Ivanova has trouble standing and waiting at bus stops because of her arthritis. She wishes more bus stops had shelters and benches, and that transit ran more than once or twice an hour. Ivanova also wishes there was more transit outside of urban areas, because she would love to live somewhere more rural, with more trees and mountains.

**“Bus shelters are really important for accessibility. Not all of us can stand in the rain. It makes me feel sick, and it's painful. When someone’s at a stoplight in a nice little car, they’re not stopped at a crosswalk in the rain. That’s a different experience. And I wish they would understand that.”**

## Lisa T.



**“We live two miles from the nearest bus stop and there are no sidewalks the entire way and that makes it even more difficult to travel independently.”**

Lisa is legally Blind. She lives in Tacoma, Washington and gets around by bus. Her biggest barrier is that she has to walk two miles from her house along a road without any sidewalks to catch a bus to go to doctor’s appointments, grocery shopping or anywhere. That makes it hard to travel independently. Another barrier is how long it takes to get things done during the day — it makes it difficult for her to do things without asking someone to take her. She hopes that someday bus stops go in on the main street, 176th Street, close to her house. That would make things much easier because that would be a 5-to-10-minute walk at the most for her and her family. Lisa would like people who

can drive to understand that public transit is her family’s vehicle. When it is not accessible, they are stranded. It is imperative to have accessible transit everywhere.

**“When I had to go to Children’s Hospital with my son, we left at 6 a.m. and didn’t get home until 6 p.m. It took up our whole day going to a doctor appointment...It’s kind of like a part time job, being on the buses all day.”**

## Tyler

**“If you take away the bus from rural communities, you are taking away the cheapest option for those who cannot use Uber or Lyft. Many of those locations are so rural that Uber and Lyft may not be options in those cities or towns in any case.”**

Tyler is low vision and lives in Lakewood. He normally uses Uber or the bus. He is new to the city, and he is learning the bus system in Lakewood right now. If he wants to go somewhere that taking the bus is not an option, he tries to use Uber or Lyft but he knows he is fortunate to live in a city that has those options and he is mindful of those who don’t have the same kind of transportation access. Tyler wants to see more bus service in rural areas for people who cannot afford to use ride-hail services.



# Legislative District 30

## Lilly



**“When I was walking I didn’t really realize how different it was for people who have disabilities. Now that I am disabled I’m like, ‘Whoa, you have to change your whole life around just to make sure that you can get into a place.’”**

Lilly lives in Federal Way and uses paratransit. She would prefer to take public transit because of the long waits for paratransit, but it’s not safe because there are no sidewalks or curb ramps near her home. Lilly lives in King County but all her appointments are in Tacoma and Pierce County, so she has to schedule trips on paratransit three days ahead. It’s so much work and hassle that she sometimes misses her appointments. Lilly also doesn’t see her friends as often as she would like. She ends up spending a lot of time home alone, and she knows that is not good for her mental health. Her dream community would have ramps instead of stairs, and a lot of sidewalks that all have curb cuts. She would like leaders to experience what being disabled is like for just one day so they can see how difficult transportation is.

**“Transportation is hard. It’s another thing that we have to think about and already have a lot of things we have to think about. Transportation should go more smoothly. We have a right to accessibility.”**

## Claudia

Claudia lives in Auburn and takes the bus, usually the 184 and 160. The biggest barriers for Claudia are that sometimes when she needs the bus to get to work, it doesn’t stop because there are already a lot of people on board. Claudia doesn’t speak a lot of English, and so it’s not always simple to ask for directions or ask the driver questions she might have. She would like elected leaders to know that the bus needs to run more frequently, and that, above all, that bus stops be better equipped for hot and cold weather.  
*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Ismael

Ismael lives in Auburn and rides the bus. He has to take several buses to get to work. One big barrier for Ismael is that when he goes to work, sometimes the bus doesn’t stop because there are too many people on it already. One difficulty is that right now, not all riders follow the preventative measures for COVID. Ismael would like elected officials to know that there are people who have emotional and behavioral conditions who have to use public transit and drivers need to be trained to help those riders.  
*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## AJ

**“I miss out on a lot of my nieces’ and nephews’ birthdays when they are held at super-fun kiddy places — there are no buses that run there.”**

AJ lives in Auburn and gets around using transit. She mostly depends on transit because it costs \$400 to take driving lessons and she doesn't feel comfortable paying that much. But her mom also prefers transit and doesn't like AJ to be in cars because her mom lived with a relative who she used to get rides from when she was young, and that relative got in a lot of crashes. AJ describes it as being similar to PTSD. AJ's biggest barrier to getting around on transit is that the buses run late so often. That's a problem because she needs to be to work on time. She has to leave 30 or 45 minutes earlier to make sure she can get where she is going to on time. She would like bus agencies to do a better job of training drivers — sometimes they are not nice, even when a rider has not done anything wrong. She was recently boarding a bus and it was taking her longer than usual to get out her bus pass. The bus driver yelled at her. Sometimes drivers let people on the bus even though they have been disruptive, like trying to break windows, or using drugs, or even peeing on the bus. It makes AJ a little more wary of getting on the bus and makes her feel like she needs to just be a little more aware of her surroundings. She also notices that the places the bus routes go don't always make sense, like stops on side streets instead of main streets. AJ would like people who drive to just be more patient around buses. She would like elected leaders and decision makers to go into the community and talk to people who ride transit, because most of them drive and don't know what it is like to take public transit.

**“It would be nice if you were to go out into the community and get real feedback and real, actual comments about what it's like riding public transportation before you make decisions.”**

**“Drivers need to stop trying to jump in front of the bus because you want to turn. I've seen that happen so many times. It's not going to be the bus driver's fault if you actually get in an accident. Just be patient. It's fine.”**

# Legislative District 31

## Dawna



**“This transit system has been a blessing to me ever since I moved up here to Enumclaw....There’s a lot of us in Enumclaw who need this bus. Please keep this bus running.”**

Dawna lives in Enumclaw and works in Auburn. She uses public transit to get around. She rides fixed-route DART to get to work and home, and other routes to doctor’s appointments and other resources in Auburn and Kent that aren’t available to her in Enumclaw. Before an unsafe living situation forced her to move, she had a car and a driver’s license. To get a new driver’s license, she would have to go to the department of licensing location in Kent, which isn’t close enough to a bus route, so she needs to arrange a ride. But overall, transit works well for Dawna’s needs, with the routes running on time and with good connections. Dawna says the transit system has been a blessing to her since she moved here and it concerns her when she sometimes hears rumors that service to Enumclaw might be cut — a lot of people depend on these routes. When she doesn’t have fare some drivers let her ride anyway; once she gets paid, she pays double fare. Dawna lives only a block away from the bus stop, which helps make the system work well for her, but she would like elected officials to know that the drivers are good and take passengers’ safety seriously — they deserve raises.

# Legislative District 32

## Lynn



**“Driving is a very isolated experience. You can’t really see who’s living in your community. How can you really appreciate how best to represent people, when you don’t have a good picture of the whole community?”**

Lynn is a former speech therapist and elementary school teacher who gets around by driving and using transit. A bike crash in 2012 left her with a traumatic brain injury, and she could not drive during her rehabilitation. After Lynn was permitted to drive again, she was diagnosed with a seizure disorder. For about a year, he walked or took the bus everywhere. Today, she takes medication that allows her to drive. Losing her access to driving during her recoveries helped Lynn see how many people don’t have a car and can’t drive, and the role that transit plays in supporting so many people in the community so they aren’t left to be shut-ins. She likes meeting new people on the bus, especially when she finds they share things in common. When she first started riding and was less certain, other riders were friendly and supportive in helping her figure out how to get where she needed to go.

**“I really believe that we have to look outside of ourselves and our own situations to people who don’t have resources to make sure that everyone can be as included and fully functional as possible. It just makes for a better society, and community.”**

## Renee L.

**"Waiting for the bus can be quite scary. Riding the bus is better than just waiting for the bus, where you're just standing alone in the dark. Especially if no one's around."**

Renee lives in the Greenwood neighborhood of Seattle. She normally gets around by borrowing cars or by carpooling. Before the pandemic she would take the bus or walk. At the beginning of the pandemic she stopped taking the bus because she was living in a multi-generational household and didn't want to put her family at risk. Overall Renee feels she is able to get around pretty well. The buses near her place run every 15 to 20 minutes, which isn't bad, and it's just a 5-minute walk to the bus stop. But some routes are circuitous, which eats up time, so she has to plan ahead a lot, especially to determine if she will have enough time to go and return. There are trips that would take 10 minutes by car that can take 45 minutes or more by bus. She can't just decide out of the blue to go to a meeting or hang out with friends. She has friends who can drive so she doesn't feel like she misses out on too much, but there are longer trips she has to really consider whether or not she will do, like going to Tacoma to see a friend, because it would take so long. It's nice to have a car for late nights when buses stop running. Some buses don't feel safe at night — it depends whether there are more people on board. And waiting for the bus can feel scary at times. Renee would like people who drive to understand that she just can't get up and go, she has to get a ride, and, if a ride isn't available, she may have to take a potentially long bus ride.

## Peggy

**"Once an hour buses are rough. You miss one and you're out in the cold in the rain....I guess they just figure people don't go anywhere on Sundays, but that's not the case."**

Peggy lives in the Bitter Lake area of Seattle and mostly gets around using the bus. She no longer drives because it's way too expensive to have a car. Her biggest barriers are that sometimes, especially on Sundays, there are hour-long waits between buses, and some routes don't even run. She took a day off of work to do her holiday shopping because the bus doesn't run enough on Sundays and she wanted to avoid the Saturday shopping crowds. Trying to get connections and the time it takes to get around can be challenging. Peggy's son and his girlfriend live in Snohomish. Visiting them takes her a couple of hours and three buses. Until the new Northgate Link station opened, she could take one bus all the way to her job on Capitol Hill. Now Peggy's commute requires her to take a bus to Northgate and transfer to Link. It doesn't take much longer, but the added transfer is an inconvenience. She misses out on going to things like sporting events because these days she feels less comfortable going downtown by herself. Peggy wants people who do drive to understand that they need to be more patient and considerate with people who aren't driving — she experiences many drivers turn right when she is trying to cross the street, not looking for pedestrians. Some bus stops are very close to the street — it's quite scary when people drive too fast, sometimes almost coming up on the sidewalks. Peggy would like elected leaders to know that they should add more bus routes, especially for Sundays.

# Legislative District 33

## Jessica



**“Sidewalks are a big issue because they’re uneven in some places. My wheelchair has a hard time getting over the bumps. And if the curb cut is not visible, sometimes it’s hard to see where to get up.”**

Jessica lives in Kent and relies on paratransit for transportation. Getting to places outside of King County is difficult because she has to switch between paratransit providers, for example, to try to visit friends in Tacoma. Paratransit scheduling also makes travel difficult. It’s hard to never know exactly when you’re going to get picked up. She wishes she had more options for accessible taxi service that ran 24/7. Also, in her neighborhood, the sidewalks aren’t in great condition, and the cracks and bumps and lack of curb cuts block

access. Lack of sidewalk lighting makes it even more treacherous, because she can’t necessarily see the things she needs to navigate around.

**“People talk all the time about getting rides [from ride-hailing companies], but people in chairs can’t do that. It’s limiting for us, people with disabilities, to get around without having to schedule exact times for everything.”**

## Hisako

**“For people who can drive and go wherever they want to whenever they want to, I want them to understand, there are people who can’t. When I was able to do that, getting a car and driving wherever I wanted to, it was a privilege.”**

Hisako lives in Kent in the West Hill neighborhood. She gets around mostly by getting rides from her kids, mostly her son and his wife. As a wheelchair user, her biggest barrier is lack of wheelchair accessibility when she needs to go places. This is mostly a barrier when she wants to go to other people’s houses and there are steps. She wants people who can drive to realize that it’s a privilege, and she also believes that having better public transit could benefit everyone, even people who can drive, because it would reduce the number of cars on the road, improve congestion, and reduce environmental pollution.

**“In this country, public transportation is not always convenient or available. It’s more of a necessity for people to drive. Because otherwise, it limits where they can work and so forth. But I probably know people who would rather not drive if they don’t have to.”**

## Erick

Erick lives in Des Moines and uses the bus to get around. The biggest barriers for Erick are safety and that he has to walk a couple of blocks on dark streets to get home. Erick has been robbed and had

stopped taking the bus because he was afraid. Erick finds that buses can be dirty. He would like electeds to know that maybe bus stops should have surveillance cameras, and that better bus stops are needed.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Vianey

**“They tend to pick me up two hours early. Sometimes there'll be picking up more people or dropping them off -- that's kind of frustrating, especially if you want to get there earlier.”**

Vianey lives in Federal Way and she uses ACCESS [paratransit] to get where she needs to go. Vianey doesn't like the timing process with ACCESS. She says they may get her to her destination really early or right at her appointment time. Vianey finds that ACCESS works well to get from her house around King County where she lives, but it's much harder to go places outside of King County because she has to wait a long time for other transportation services in other cities to meet up with ACCESS. One of her favorite places is to take ACCESS to the mall where she can walk around. She wishes ACCESS ran 24-hours a day, which would be particularly helpful for people who work at night. Vianey thinks people in charge of buses, sidewalks, and roads should have more consideration for people with all disabilities. She wishes there were Braille everywhere, and that there were more audible directions to help with people with vision problems. She also wishes there were separated and safe places for people in cars, people walking and people riding bikes to be able to get around without being in each other's way.

**“I am very, very independent with ACCESS. I don't even ask for rides from my family members because they are busy. If I can't use ACCESS for some reason I will actually call a cab.”**

## Ziauddin and Forohar

When they arrived to the Kent area from Afghanistan, they relied on the bus system. Usually there were long stretches of time between buses and it was hard to keep their young children occupied. Many of the bus stops in Kent don't have covered areas, so the family was caught in bad weather. Today, the family has one car and Forohar takes the kids out to the park via the bus when the car is in use.

## Shogofa

Shogofa has no car and no driver's license. She relies on the bus system to get around. Unfortunately, there are no sidewalks on the path to the nearest bus stop and it can be a dangerous stretch of road. Also, she has found that the bus stops are very far apart in her area, and she wishes there were one closer.

## Nazanin

Nazanin buses to Highline College for class. Sometimes the bus schedule changes seemingly without notice and the buses arrive too early or too late for her to get to school on time. Overall, the bus system is very safe, and the sidewalks are in good condition. There are stops close to her home.

## Mahjabin

Mahjabin attends Highline college and has run into issues with the timing of the bus. She has found that the bus schedules are sometimes inconsistent.

## Marziah

Marziah rides the bus around Kent when the family car is not available. She feels that the bus stops are too far apart and there have been times when she's been standing at a stop and the bus passes her. In the past, she has witnessed fights between patrons on the bus and she feels less safe getting around this way.

## Muntadher

**“Buses are all over in my area. I hope the bus system in my area does not change because it is nice to have the reliable service to get around.”**

Muntadher lives in Kent and walks or takes the bus to get around. Sometimes his parents take him places. Muntadher rides from school to Kent Station to go out with friends. He uses an app to look up bus schedules, and finds that it's easy to get around and figure out which buses to catch. Muntadher enjoys that he has a free transit pass through school. He wishes there was more weekend service because it's a free day for him.

**“I don't really go on the weekends, because it's a different schedule.”**

## Nidal and Faisal

**“The bus schedule is not accurate, this is the problem, especially since the weather here is cold. Sometimes I am on the other side, and the bus is coming, and I want to run.”**

Nidal lives in Kent and takes the bus or light rail around two times a week to get to Seattle. Her adult son Faisal cannot drive so he takes the bus. He takes the bus around three times a week to go shopping. The bus is about a three-minute walk from their home. Faisal has allergies and when people smoke, especially weed, on the buses, it makes his allergies worse. Nidal wishes they would clean the buses more so they don't smell, and have more rules on the bus — maybe a rule not to eat or drink on the bus, because there is often spilled food or drinks. Nidal also wishes the bus schedule was more accurate. She's found herself trying to run to catch the bus across busy streets when she's about to miss it.

## Sarah

**“I live close to the school but I have a problem. They don't have a sidewalk from my house to the school.”**

Sarah lives in Kent and can drive, but her household only has one car and so when her husband takes the car to work, she rides the bus with her kids. She wishes there were more seating at bus stops, and shelters for when it rains. She also wishes the drivers would be more patient when she's getting on the bus with her kids in the stroller and trying to get the stroller secured. She worries because she does not want her kids to accidentally fall.

**“I feel safe when I take my kids on the bus, but sometimes the driver does not wait until we sit down before taking off, and that scares me.”**



## Tamah

**“I came here in 2015 and I didn’t have [a] license, so I always used the bus.”**

Tamah lives in Kent and does not have a driver’s license. She has kids and she is also a college student. Her family has one car that her husband drives to work. She finds the train from Kent station can often be late, but the bus is super reliable. She does worry about safety on the bus, and sometimes she can feel unsafe when other passengers are yelling. She also sometimes has trouble fitting her stroller on the bus. But overall, she is very happy taking the bus.

**“My mom takes the bus, my dad goes to work.”**

— Tamah’s child

## Hussein

Hussein is a high school student who lives in Kent. He gets rides from his dad, walks, and bikes. When it’s raining he takes the bus. For biking, he wishes more streets had bike lanes.

## Salema

Salema lives in Kent and uses the bus for transportation. She is worried about air pollution and thinks it’s important to not have as many cars for air quality. She finds taking the bus to be convenient.

## Aleez

Aleez takes the bus to get around, and to go to work. The bus schedule works well for him. It’s comfortable and he appreciates that the bus has air conditioning. It takes about 15 minutes for him to get to work. Fares are not a barrier for him and he feels safer on the bus than in a car.

## Nabaa

**“Always my husband driving me and my kids – to school, to shopping, to have fun outside, to the park – anything.”**

Nabaa and her family recently moved to Seattle. She drives now for transportation, and only walks places for exercise. Previously they lived in Madison, Wisconsin. When they moved to Seattle, Nabaa got a driver’s license. Before that, her husband had to drive her and her kids everywhere. She does not ride the bus because it is too confusing to her as an immigrant and English-language learner.

**“For me, to get the bus, is very hard for me, because we are here, a new person.”**

## Faryal

**“I take the bus everywhere, and the bus system here is very good.”**

Faryal lives in Kent and takes the bus for transportation. She wishes it felt safer to ride with her kids.

## Oroba

**“When I moved here, I did not speak the language, but I understood the transportation system quickly.”**

Oroba lives in Kent. Oroba is an elderly woman who takes the bus everywhere she wants to go. She is very pleased with the transit system in her neighborhood and lives close to the bus stop.

## Amy K.

**“I rely on the bus a lot as well as family and friends. Oh, and of course, walking. The biggest barrier for me is time. Taking the bus takes a lot of time out of my day since it can take 2-3 times more than a car ride to and from a place. Another side barrier is my mental health. It takes a lot for me to plan ahead for my bus rides and hope that I have enough energy and that my anxiety attacks don’t pop up out of nowhere before I head somewhere.”** — Amy, Des Moines

Andrew T.

**“The grocery store is only three to four miles from my house. If I had a car, it would be a half an hour trip. But taking the bus, it’ll be a two-to-three-hour thing.”**

Andrew lives in Bremerton and mostly gets around walking. He walks to and from work, which is two miles from his house. Sometimes he takes the bus, especially to go longer distances, like to doctor’s appointments. He also has family who live in the area and friends who he rides with to get to their houses or other social activities. Andrew had a driver’s license before he lost so much vision that he could no longer drive. He intentionally bought a house that is within two miles of his office, the ferry terminal, and a gym, so that he can access all these major destinations by walking. He relies on living close to the places he needs to go, and also having a transit stop close by. Without this proximity, he would have to work remotely, take much longer trips on transit, or rely more on rides from friends and family. Andrew hopes that light rail continues to get built out so that it’s an option for more trips in more communities. He also wonders if autonomous vehicles will provide more mobility options for people who can’t drive and want to live in more rural areas.

**“I think people just really take it for granted how convenient the car is. It’s like you go to the store and then you swing by the post office, then you go visit a friend and then you go home. It’s stringing together multiple trips. With the bus that’s harder, that would take a full day.”**

# Legislative District 34

## Frankie



**"Especially over here in West Seattle with the bridge out, it would be nice to see people who are driving downtown stop, and take the bus. I think that would help them understand how important transit is for those of us who use these buses who don't have another way to get around."**

Frankie is a proud Piegan Blackfoot native (from Brocket, Alberta, Canada) and artist who lives in West Seattle. He uses the bus to get around. He used to drive, but his car was a gas hog that had a lot of other problems. He works on Capitol Hill, so even if he had his car, he would take the bus because the bridge is out. He is able to get to work on time, before his co-workers who have cars. For Frankie the bus is a warm and safe place and people are nice. Several months ago, the bus driver had to stop very quickly to avoid a collision; the driver did a great job of making sure everyone on the bus was okay. Frankie is always impressed with how well the drivers handle things that come up. He has plans to create performance art that will take place in or around public transit after the pandemic. Frankie is a very schedule-oriented person who likes to arrive on time or early, especially for important appointments. Since he now relies on the bus, it is difficult for him when the bus runs very late or just doesn't show up. More frequency and consistency would be better. He thinks many people misunderstand what riding the bus is like, and he especially would like to see elected leaders try it out.

**"There's a lot of misunderstanding about the bus. I think politicians especially should take a walk in our shoes for a day. I always feel safe on the bus. I've always been impressed with how well the drivers handle things. Yes, there's some awkward people who get on. But that's life."**

## Annie



**"As a person who's been riding the bus and taking pretty much mostly transit for the last 10 years. I feel much better protected knowing that there are people out there who are doing work like this."**

Annie and her husband live in the Boulevard Park neighborhood of King County, just north of Burien. Annie enjoys the ease of public transit, allowing her to catch up on work or make a phone call all while commuting. Previously living in the Downtown Seattle area, Annie notes the difficulty navigating public transit in her new neighborhood. Though a grocery store is a reasonable distance from her home, with no bus routes in that direction Annie must rely on her husband, who drives, to round up groceries. If Annie needs to commute Downtown, it is a 10-minute walk across a busy intersection with intermittent sidewalk accessibility. She must make this journey quickly, as buses come every 30 minutes during peak commute hours and take even longer at night.

**“I think that there’s nothing more important than giving people the quality of life to know that they have the ability to get up and leave their house and go wherever they want without having to concern themselves with riding in a Lyft or getting a ride from a friend.”**

## Tanisha



**“I often use my wheelchair in the road. I’ve had people yell at me that it’s not safe, and I understand, but they don’t understand. If I get thrown off the sidewalk into traffic because there’s a root or an uneven piece of the sidewalk, that is not safe.”**

Tanisha lives in West Seattle and gets around on Metro buses and her wheelchair. The biggest barriers she experiences are sidewalks that don't have curb cuts or that turn into dirt paths or roads without notice, forcing her to turn around and go all the way back and find someone's parking garage or driveway to use. Snow is an issue when it gets cleared from the road and pushed onto the curb, blocking curb cuts, which means Tanisha can't leave her house. There is a lack of east-west buses in West Seattle so she has to go all the way north to go west, even to get to Lincoln Park, which is directly west of her. Cuts in service mean it is taking more time to get places. Tanisha would like to see better training and consistency with Metro drivers. For example, letting people who need the ramp get on first or last, and where to properly tie down a wheelchair. She'd also like more designated ADA seating, like the newer RapidRide buses have. On multiple occasions she's had to wait for the next bus, or two, simply because both ADA spaces were occupied. A more accessible community for Tanisha would have many more ramps, clear curb cuts, more consistent bus schedules, shelters at all bus stops for rainy days, and more light rail.

**“When it snows they sweep all the snow out of the road but they push it up onto the curb and curb cuts. So I’m literally unable to leave my house, because I can’t get out.”**

## Shannon

**“My neighborhood has been full of construction for the past two years, so I feel like I'm living in a construction zone 24/7. It's brought a lot of barriers because a lot of the sidewalks are torn up and there's always detours.”**

Shannon lives in West Seattle. She is a Blind student who attends a local Seattle community College. She relies on public transportation and takes the King County Metro 60 bus to get to school, which runs through Georgetown and Beacon Hill to campus on Capitol Hill. The constant construction around her neighborhood, and Seattle more generally, makes access difficult. There are constant detours, and she is always running into construction barriers and signage. Another barrier she experiences is that there is an unhoused people encampment surrounding the area where she used to catch the 60, which blocks her access. She now gets off and on at the next stop. These barriers also make it difficult for her to transfer between buses when she needs to switch routes — in particular to get from her home to her doctor's appointments — so now she has to bring a family or friend with her to help her navigate.

**“The people who park their vehicles on the sidewalks block my way. I encounter them a lot when I am walking around in my neighborhood, especially on the street next to my home. Sometimes I have to walk in the street to get around.”**

## Marci

**“The 55 and 56 only run for a couple of hours in the morning. There used to be all-day service to downtown. When they put in the Rapid Ride C, they cut service and connected those routes to the Rapid Ride. Now it takes me an extra 15 to 20 minutes to get downtown.”**

Marci lives in West Seattle and she is Blind. Most of the time she gets around on the bus and by walking, although sometimes she will use rideshare or get a ride from her husband. During the pandemic, she stopped using the bus for several months and relied on her husband for transportation. Marci’s biggest barrier is the lack of frequency of the bus service near her home. When the Rapid Ride C line went in, the two express routes that stop right across the street from her apartment, the 55 and 56, which used to run directly downtown all day, were cut back. Now they only run downtown during peak hours. Now if she needs to go downtown in the middle of the day, like when she needs to catch a bus to get to a doctor appointment on Capitol Hill or take Link to go to UW Medical Center, she has to take one of those buses and transfer to the C line to get downtown. It can add anywhere from 10 to 25 minutes to her trip. That can be frustrating. Sometimes, Marci’s bus will arrive at the Alaska Junction transfer when the C line is just about to leave. She is still able to run from one end of the block to the other end to catch it. A couple of years ago, though, she had a broken toe. There was no way she would try running to catch the C then—she would just have to wait. Marci wants drivers to be safe, but the plexiglass installed during the pandemic to protect them is hard for her to hear through because she now wears hearing aids. She’d like for drivers to use the microphone to speak to her. And, sometimes the announcements inside the bus about the next stop don’t work or can’t be heard over the air conditioning. Another challenge, especially downtown, is when several buses arrive at the same time. Drivers are supposed to look for riders like her with canes, and pull up to the front of the bus stop. But they often pull out without stopping. So Marci sometimes has to run up and down the bus stop to check for buses behind the first bus. Marci would like people who drive to understand that they need to do better at watching for pedestrians, especially if they are turning right on red or are pulling up to a stop sign. She’s had a lot of near misses when people stop only at the last minute.

**“When I’m walking, sometimes I can’t hear cars coming up behind me....If I hear a car driving toward me I usually stop because I don’t trust that they will actually stop and look if I were to just start walking across the intersection. I don’t trust them to actually stop at the intersection before they turn. I’ve had lots of near misses, where the car turns and then puts on its brake in a screech.**

## Nicole



**"I will still drive if somebody else needs me to. I was coming back from Spokane with my mom. She couldn't see over the pass because her eyesight isn't as good as it used to be. So I drove the pass, which was terrifying. I can drive if I wanted to. But if I have any other option I will do whatever it takes to avoid driving."**

Nicole lives in West Seattle and gets around on transit and by walking and biking. When she used to drive she got into one major and one minor collision; since then she's been very nervous about driving and avoids it as much as possible. She can get around Seattle pretty well without many barriers, but going anywhere beyond Seattle involves a lot of waiting or planning, especially on the weekends when buses only run every 30 or 60 minutes. Last year her fiance was living in

Pullman. Nicole would have to take the one train that goes to Spokane and arrives in the middle of the night, and then do a long bus ride to Pullman or have her fiance drive all the way to Spokane to pick her up. Her in-laws are in Burien and her parents live in Bellevue, and both those trips are 20- to 30-minute walks from the bus stops. She is recovering from recent surgery that temporarily prevents her from bicycling, which has been challenging because using her folding bike with the bus speeds up a lot of her trips. Being able to bike has made a huge difference in her ability to get around. She's thankful Seattle allows bicycling on sidewalks because otherwise she would probably not be biking. Nicole would like people who drive to understand that the benefits of car ownership do not outweigh the drawbacks for her, to actually think about what they do in their daily life that requires a car, and to consider that if they live in an urban area it could be a lot easier to give up a car than they think. She also wants people to know that once you learn how to use them, buses are really nice. Nicole would like elected leaders to fund more transit in smaller communities, including Pullman, Tacoma, Spokane, and the Olympic Peninsula — she wants to be able to go all those places more easily on transit.

**"I had surgery recently. That means I can't bike. And that has made it even harder because I don't have the bike to speed up these ridiculously long trips. Which, let me tell you, it's very annoying that Google Maps is really bad at combining those two. They recommend a four-minute Lyft four as opposed to an eight-minute bike ride. They don't understand that you can take a bike to a bus."**

## Isabel

**"One of the problems is that the bus does not arrive when it should. I have the app on my phone and I check when the bus arrives, but then it doesn't arrive at that time and then I have to wait another hour."**

Isabel lives in White Center and travels by bus. The bus stop is conveniently three blocks from her house, and she feels like she can get everywhere she needs to go on the bus: downtown, Tukwila, Bellevue, and her doctor's appointments on First Hill. Her biggest concern is how unsanitary she feels the buses are, both when they are full and when there are many passengers who are homeless or haven't showered in a long time. This had made her unwilling to travel with her grandchildren, whom she cares for during the summer. In recent years, they have spent a lot of time going to different places together while she teaches them how to ride the bus, but she has not felt comfortable doing it this summer. In addition, she has had problems with buses being late or not arriving, which means she has to wait an hour for the next

bus. During the pandemic, this was a problem when the number of passengers per bus was limited, and full buses passed her and she had to wait. If she could change anything, she would like the buses to be cleaned more often. Isabel would like people who drive their own cars to consider taking the bus or carpooling, because it's better for our environment and healthier for all of us.

**“During the pandemic, there was a limit on the number of passengers they allowed, so the bus wouldn't stop and you had to wait for the next one. I wouldn't know how long I would have to wait at the stop for the next bus. I wouldn't know how late I was going to be trying to get where I was going, because I wouldn't know which bus I could get on...because of the passenger limit. Many times, I had to cancel appointments because I was so late. And when I tried to reschedule, I would have to wait two or three months to get another appointment.”**

*Thanks to Latino Community Fund for connecting us to Isabel.*

## Olga

**“It's expensive at \$2.75 or \$3.50 [to pay for transit], and if you're gone for a long time you have to pay again. It adds up to a lot of money.”**

Olga lives in White Center and has relied on the bus to get around for 30 years. Her vision is unreliable and she is worried about crashing if she tries to drive. Olga finds the bus system to be very reliable. She also travels with her 11-year-old son, who has a disability. Olga is glad that her son is learning to get around on the bus. Olga does not have an ORCA card and pays in cash. The cost of the fare can really add up, especially if the transfer period expires and you have to pay again for a second trip. Another barrier is the fear she feels for her son when people on the bus start fighting. She is forced to move to the front or back of the bus to try to avoid getting in the middle of these fights and getting hurt. She would also like more frequent service on weekends because waits can be much longer.

*Thanks to Latino Community Fund for connecting us to Olga.*

# Legislative District 35

## Kevin



**“Transit absolutely builds communities. Before COVID we all went to the big box stores at the same time. We talk, we share stories, we share recipes, we build friendships. I refer to us as a little town, helping each other and helping our broader community. And our drivers are our mayor.”**

Kevin is a retired professor living in rural Mason County with his wife Becky. Kevin is Blind, as is Becky, so they depend on paratransit and some volunteer services to get around. Kevin has cancer so he needs to make frequent 45-minute trips on paratransit to Olympia for specialty care. He is active in working with nonprofits and on disability access with transportation agencies. Kevin and Becky remain very active in their community, and public transit is the main way they stay connected to that community. But transit cuts have forced them to reduce how often they

attend church, see friends, or enjoy the outdoors. Kevin’s vision for transit-reliant people in rural communities is to increase transit service and to improve communication using GPS or other digital tools to allow riders to track where their paratransit rides or buses are so they can have more control over their time. He sees how often transit drivers function as social workers, helping riders, and he would like to make training available to help drivers connect riders to resources.

**“Transit is important to my brothers and sisters with disabilities. You can’t count riders per mile per budget with us, because we have no other choice. We have to get out, just like anyone else. Now is not the time to dial back. We need the state’s full support.”**



# Legislative District 36

## Jazmine



**"My neighborhood isn't perfect but one reason I live there and want to stay there and want it to be accessible to everyone is that it's a complete neighborhood. It has all the important things you need within walking or rolling distance like grocery stores, childcare, doctor's offices, and outdoor spaces of all sizes."**

Jazmine is an educator living in lower Queen Anne in Seattle. She gets around mostly by bus, bike, or walking. Recently she got an e-bike to be able to make trips without having to supplement with the bus. Mercer Street is a huge barrier for her community. It is a mile-and-a-half on-ramp to the freeway. There are several hospitals, doctors offices and medical centers right there that people aren't able to access from one side — the crosswalks are useless because drivers treat it like it's a continuous freeway, blocking the entire intersection. Other barriers are a lack of east-west bus connections, and good bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Jazmine has been walking more in her neighborhood during the pandemic and noticed many dangerous sidewalks or a lack of sidewalks. She was bicycling on a trail early in the pandemic to get from Queen Anne to Ballard. It took her through bridges and then to the Ballard Locks, but they were closed because of the pandemic. She had to go backtrack and go far out of her way. Jazmine would like electeds who have never needed to navigate the world without access to a car to spend a week trying to get where they need to go, like picking up a week's worth of groceries and going to work and back. The transit system doesn't work for a lot of people and that's why they have cars. Jazmine thinks that is exactly the reason to fund transit — to make it better and more effective so people start riding. For Jazmine, an accessible community would look a lot like her neighborhood because although it isn't perfect, it has all the important things that people need within walking or rolling distance.

**"So much funding gets funneled into adding car lanes and expanding I-5 as an excuse to not support our transit systems. We need to fix the buses first, fix the sidewalks first. We need to start with the things that everybody can access, first."**

## Jim P.



**"I'm on somebody else's timeline. If buses aren't running frequently, sometimes I have to wait half an hour for another bus to come. If I were driving, I could hop in my car and take off and maybe deal with traffic, but I at least still call my own shots."**

Jim lives in Greenwood in North Seattle and works at the Department of Services for the Blind. Before the pandemic to get to work, he used to take King County Metro routes 5 or E. He wishes he had light rail closer to where he lived, and he also wishes the buses ran with more frequency. He also finds route changes due to construction really frustrating. He knows that some

people might think people who can't drive are "lucky" because we don't have to deal with the stress of driving and traffic. But what they don't understand is how much more limited his transportation options are, and how frustrating it can be if you miss a bus or a bus is delayed and you then are late or miss the thing you were trying to go to.

## Lynn D.



**“Transportation barriers have impacted me in many ways, especially getting around independently to the University of Washington, my doctors, shopping, and socializing. During COVID, my mother was very sick, then died. I was unable to see her often because of the transportation issues.”**

Lynn is a 2021 University of Washington graduate, lives in Ballard in northwest Seattle, and is visually impaired. She normally gets around by walking but will sometimes use a combination of ride-hail and buses. Lynn's biggest barrier is that bus service in her area has been cut. She is hoping that they do not decide to completely cut route 17, the bus closest to her home. She purchased her house because there was a bus stop located a few feet from her front door. Lynn used to take the 17, which ran to downtown in the morning and back to her neighborhood in the afternoon. Sometimes she takes route 40, but has to walk eight blocks. In recent months, during my walks, she's encountered frightening threats and anti-Asian epithets. Lynn had a kidney removed last year and is still recovering her energy, and is back to walking a couple of miles a day near her neighborhood. She avoids paratransit because she's participated in King Country's Metro Access board meetings and heard so many testimonies from others about how difficult and undependable it is, but she realizes she will likely need to start using it in the future. She would like drivers to understand that driving is a privilege they should recognize and should be more aware of safety when they are in a hurry to get around. Lynn would also like them to understand how important it is for people who can't drive to be oriented to their surroundings, in particular when using ride-hail.

**“One time, trying to get an Uber, my finger slipped and hit the wrong location [in the app]. At least I had enough eyesight to see that the direction that I was heading was not where I needed to go. Now, I make sure that the drivers know where I'm going before I get in.”**

## Kristin G.



**“Once you get off the main roads, the buses disappear.”**

Kristin is a visually impaired person living in Seattle. She typically navigates the city using local bus systems. When she needs to travel to a more residential part of the city or outside of King County, Kristin uses ridehail apps such as Lyft or Uber. One barrier that Kristin faces while traveling independently is that GPS systems are often faulty when trying to locate entrances to bus terminals, businesses, and other buildings. Kristin often has to ask for assistance when trying to find building entrances due to address numbers being difficult to find or having lettering that is too small to read. When searching for building numbers or even while crossing the street, strangers will come up to Kristin and grab her white cane or her arm. While Kristin acknowledges that, most of the time, these strangers are well-intentioned, this makes her very uncomfortable. She is well able to navigate independently and these strangers distract her from navigating. Buses in King County are often unreliable when it comes to schedules. This causes Kristin to frequently be late to meetings and her other plans. Kristin wants drivers to understand that she’s low vision and that gesturing and very minimal prompts to get her attention are not effective.”

**“Acknowledge me and use your words with me. [That] would mean a lot. The cane’s out, I’m very visibly Blind.”**

# Legislative District 37

Jim



**“Most people are pretty good about recognizing when someone with differing abilities will need to go from point A to point B. But sometimes you have to remind them, hey, I'm a pedestrian, I need to get here too. Hey, that's a sidewalk, don't park on it. Or don't park in front of the ramp, or as you're driving along and you're near a crosswalk, don't stop in it, and if you're about to enter an intersection and there is someone in the crosswalk, whether it's painted or not, stop for that person — it's the law.”**

Jim lives in Center Park Apartments, a Low Income Public Housing (LIPH) community in the Rainier Valley. If it's dry and not too cold, he uses his power chair to get around and shop for groceries, visit friends and family, go to the doctor, go to the bank, go out to lunch or dinner , and other errands. But most of the time, he uses King County Metro buses or other transit buses or light-rail trains, depending on where he's going. The biggest barrier he faces are sidewalks that are in bad repair or missing, though he knows at this point what routes to take to avoid the worst sidewalks. The bad repair of sidewalks on Rainier is where he notices this the most, between I-90 and McClellan, but he notices the many other sidewalks and curb ramps that are also in bad repair. In places where curbs are too low or non-existent, bus drivers may not be able to lower the wheelchair ramp at an accessible angle. That was a problem for a long time at the bus stop next to Center Park, but it was repaired recently. He wishes people were more aware that many pedestrians have disabilities, and need you to not park on the sidewalk or block the curb ramp. He would also like to see every intersection have curb ramps, as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA; this is now required under a Federal court order in Seattle. He also wishes there was more flexible space in all transit buses so people with wheelchairs weren't competing with people with strollers, grocery carts or service animals for a spot on the bus.

**“While the tie-down areas are supposedly reserved for people with disabilities, they are frequently occupied by people with full shopping carts, which can't be collapsed easily or by people with strollers, which usually have small children in them, and service animals, which are usually large dogs. This leaves no room for mobility-device users. This is a design issue that affects mobility-device users, people with strollers or shopping carts, and those with service animals, and it needs to be addressed now.”**

## Erin



**“An inch represents a foot if you're in a wheelchair. If you go over a bump, it's like you're going over a whole foot of a bump when you're walking regularly. When you're trying to go three blocks down the street on your side of the street, sometimes you have to go a nine-block radius to get to where you're going.”**

Erin lives in South Seattle and uses a power wheelchair to get around, even at home. She lives close to light rail and that provides her a lot of mobility. She also rides the bus. Erin prefers light rail because sidewalk conditions are such that bus drivers sometimes can't lower the ramp, so she has to get off at a later stop. And when bus stops are full of dirt and dead leaves, she can't help but drag all that on the bus with her. She also appreciates that light rail has more room to navigate in a power chair; on buses she has to try to parallel park. Lack of smooth sidewalks and curb ramps also creates barriers for Erin. She enjoys going to newer places like Bellevue where sidewalks are so much smoother. Trying to get around the older area where she lives, she'll often have to detour to the other side of the street or travel extra blocks to avoid inaccessible cracks, puddles or missing ramps. She's had her 400-lb wheelchair get jammed in a crack before, and had to ask passersby for help. She wishes the curb ramps at intersections were better aligned, so you could cut directly across rather than having to weave out of your way, through traffic, to get back on the sidewalk. And while she knows it's going to take some time to get all the sidewalks fixed, she wishes at least the ones around light rail stations were more accessible.

**“When it's darker and you're going on the street [because the sidewalk is blocked], then you get people yelling at you, ‘Get out of the road, idiot!’ I don't have time to sit down and explain why I had to do that. I'm pretty easy going about things, but when someone's yelling at you, and it's pouring down rain and it's dark, and all you're trying to do is go home, it's a little frustrating.”**

## Anna



**“Transportation is one of our biggest opportunities to combat the climate crisis. So as we envision a society that is less reliant on driving, who better to learn from than people who aren't driving? Disabled folks and other people who don't have access to cars need to be our climate crisis thought leaders!”**

Anna is a low-vision mom who lives in the Brighton neighborhood of Seattle with her son and partner. Anna was born and raised in rural Thurston County. She left Washington for 20 years, but moved back after the birth of her son to be closer to family. Anna has never had a driver's license, and so she has always tried to live close to reliable transit and in areas with sidewalks and biking infrastructure. In Seattle, she uses the bus, the light rail, running and biking to get where she needs to go. The biggest barriers she faces currently is the lack of direct transit connections to Olympia, so she could more easily visit family and get support with childcare. She also wishes Seattle had more

dedicated regional multimodal trails, like the Loop in Tucson, that provide low-stress connections to be able to get around Puget Sound, Anna is also frustrated that there aren't requirements for ride-hailing like Uber, Lyft, Via or other on-demand services to provide car seats — she'd like to see requirements for this added so parents can use these services.

**“We have to make choices. If we actually want a future where we have salmon, where communities near highways have healthy air to breathe, where we all have choices to walk/roll, or ride transit around our communities, we need to say NO to all new highway construction.”**

## Edward



**“If we had accessible transit systems everywhere, it would be better for us and there is going to be less pollution, and that is better for the environment.”**

Edward is Blind and lives in Seattle. He usually gets around by bus, train, Uber, and sometimes he gets rides from his parents. For Edward, the transit system in Seattle is better and much more accessible compared to the transit system in Vancouver, where he went to school. Edward's favorite thing about Seattle's transit system is that bus stops are announced clearly and the speakers are loud enough for him to hear. The big barrier Edward finds in Seattle is that there are no audible pedestrian signals that allow him to safely cross streets, and the truncated domes on sidewalks are difficult to find.

Edward would like accessible transit systems everywhere, and thinks it's important for people to carpool or share rides with other people to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.

## Roberto



**“A trip that might take someone who is driving 40 minutes, just going down the freeway, it becomes a whole project when you have to go via public transit. You have to take two or three buses and time them well, so there is not too much spacing in between them but you also run the risk where your next bus might leave before you arrive, and then you have to wait half an hour, one hour, for the next one. That 40 minute trip that someone takes driving on the freeway becomes an hour and a half, two hour trip. And then once you get there and do what you want to do, then you have to repeat that same trip back.”**

Roberto lives in Rainier Beach in Seattle. He primarily gets around on the light rail and buses, and occasionally ride hail when public transit isn't accessible. For example, when he goes to Highline Medical Center in Burien, even though there's decent transit service, the lack of sidewalks means he has to be in the street with cars which feels too risky, so he has to pay for a ride hail, spending \$45-\$60 every trip to the doctor. Hands down, the biggest barriers he encounters are the lack of sidewalks and lack of accessible crossings. He can't rely on his vision to always see the crossing signals when there aren't

tactile pedestrian buttons. Roberto has been legally Blind since birth, and while he's known low-vision folks who have cheated the system to get driver licenses, that wasn't something he feels comfortable with, considering he'd be putting other people at risk. Relying on public transit does make it harder to get places. Roberto has a bucket list of things he's wanted to do since he moved to Western Washington six years ago, things like going to the state fair, that just haven't been feasible with relying on transit. Grocery shopping is also more difficult. Roberto usually relies on a friend for rides or orders through a shopping app, but neither is as easy, cheap or convenient as it would be if he could drive to the grocery store.

**“We end up paying more to be in a more accessible location. I was living in Kent and paying a very decent, desirable price for the rent. Just to be closer to work and closer to places where I need to be. I ended up moving to a place where I'm paying three times the rent I was paying in Kent.”**

## Christian\*

Christian lives in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle and uses the bus to get around. He loves Metro and feels that the transit system is very useful to him. His main concern, for safety reasons, is sharing the bus with people in mental health crisis. If he could change anything, he would make bus service more frequent on weekends.

*\*Christian is a pseudonym. Thanks to Latino Community Fund for connecting us to Christian.*

## Marta

**“They are bus stops without benches to sit on, or if there are any, some homeless people take over those benches by putting all their belongings there. So even when it rains, you can't shelter or wait there.”**

Marta lives in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle and uses the bus or train to get around. She lives right next to the bus and train station, which makes it very convenient. The train usually goes faster, but if it's early she often takes the bus. One thing she would like is more benches at bus stops. She finds that many stops don't have benches, or if they do, they are occupied by people who live in bus stops or use them to store their belongings. She travels downtown frequently, but doesn't go much further than Seattle. She also tries to do all her errands in the morning, as it feels safer than doing it in the afternoon. This is mainly because she doesn't feel as comfortable traveling alone. Part of her fear is that some of the other passengers seem to be in mental health crises and will get on the bus screaming or fighting, or with their pants down. She wishes the drivers could stop some of these more aggressive people from getting on the bus. She does not have an ORCA card and pays with cash, but would like to have one.

**“When I go to run errands or visit people, I try to get everything done in the morning so I can be back at 2pm. I don't go after 2pm for security.”**

*Thanks to Latino Community Fund for connecting us to Marta.*

## Christina

**"Once I was in the elevator going to the train, another passenger started insulting me, saying things like 'Go back to your country, you don't belong here.' I have been invited to take an English class in South Park, it is in the afternoon. I would not have a problem on the way out, but on the way back it would be at night and I am very scared."**

Christina lives in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Seattle and gets around using the train and bus. She doesn't have a license because she can't see well enough to drive. Christina does not ride at night because she is afraid of other riders who are aggressive or insult others. Other passengers have shouted racist things at her, and once she was alone in an elevator with a man who threatened her with two large lighters, like the ones used to light stoves. Christina has limited vision and had a bad fall trying to catch the bus when the sidewalk and bus stop were blocked by people living on the street with their belongings. She tripped trying to get through this blockage, where tree roots had grown and deformed that part of the sidewalk. Her right arm still hurts from the fall and she has had to continue to work through this pain. Her other challenge is that the bus routes and schedules in the Madrona area are never what is written.

**"I have a lot of medical appointments, so I travel frequently. If I had the opportunity to get a bigger discount [on the bus fare], it would help. I don't earn much. I don't have anyone else, I'm alone here."**

**"Everything has its pros and cons. Driving is stressful due to traffic. I've been traveling like this by bus for many years, and I'm used to it. I can go from north to south, from east to west on the bus."**

*Thanks to Latino Community Fund for connecting us to Christina.*

## Martha

**"Some of the bus stops don't have posted times, and it could make me late for work and if your phone battery is dead, or you didn't bring your phone, you wouldn't be able to see the times."**

Martha lives in Seattle and uses the bus to get around. She wishes more bus stops would include posted times, because she often finds herself waiting not knowing when the bus will arrive. She would really like digital signs that say when the bus is supposed to arrive, but she has noticed that many of these are broken where they exist, and the paper timetables are often missing as well. She is also concerned about safety on the bus, especially when traveling with her young children as a result of passengers being drunk or yelling and harassing the driver and other passengers.

**"It is really dangerous to wait for the bus in many places. It is dangerous for us and when we travel with children. Especially when someone yells at the driver, it's dangerous because it diverts the attention of the driver and other passengers."**

*Thanks to Latino Community Fund for connecting us to Martha.*



## Kadin

**“I bus everywhere. It's mostly okay, except benches are so few and far between. I can't stand for very long so when I do find a bench, but it's full, it's frustrating. Also because I'm young, old people don't believe me when I say I'm disabled so I'm constantly battling with access to shared resources (like benches or ADA computers in the library) because I don't 'look disabled enough' or because 'I'm more disabled than you.' Also, not all bus drivers kneel the bus, which makes it difficult even on my best days to board the bus.”**

## Annette

**“Since I can't jump in a car and go where I want to go, I have to plan out my route and my errands. I have to figure out what things I can do, and I need to learn how to do things differently.”**

Annette is currently a resident at the Orientation and Mobility Training Center in South Seattle. She gets around primarily by walking. Annette has been a nondriver for two years and gets around primarily by walking. She struggles though with feeling comfortable walking places because she's at high fall risk and she struggles feeling tactile markings. She especially struggles when things block the sidewalks. She misses out on going to church because she doesn't have rides. She orders groceries online and has to get rides to the pharmacy or when she needs to go grocery shopping in person. She says that city planners need to really educate their employees about the needs of people with sight limitations, and that they also need to take ownership of keeping pedestrian pathways clear.

**“I'm a high fall risk because of my diabetic neuropathy. So I do not walk confidently -- I'm working on that.”**

## Sarah\*

**“Since I've lost my vision, I can't trust that I can get somewhere in a timeframe that I want to.”**

Sarah lives in Skyway, at the south end of Seattle. Sarah gets around by relying on rides from husband, sons, neighbors, and Lyft. Sarah says since she has lost more vision, she doesn't feel comfortable walking around in her area, especially Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, which is very busy. It's hard for her to get to where she needs to get to because of vision loss. In her area there are very bad sidewalks with huge cracks and she has to walk a block to get to the nearest crosswalk. Sarah wishes the branches and trees on the sidewalks would be trimmed so they wouldn't block the sidewalks. Sarah says knowing and being familiar with your surroundings audible system on the public. It's easier for her to get to work because it's close to where she lives and she can rely on her husband or Lyft though she says the last time she took Lyft they did not stop in front of her house and she could not find the car. This was harder too because it was an electric vehicle that doesn't make as much noise, so she couldn't hear it. She also has a difficult time staying oriented to where she is when she's on the bus or in ride hail. She wishes there were more audible announcements and that bus drivers were more helpful. Sarah would love a personal driver to get her around.

**“ACCESS [paratransit] would be a lot more accessible if they were a little more proactive in how they schedule and how they route plan.”**

*\*Sarah is a pseudonym*

## Quincy

**“They should fix the sidewalks better, they should. You get a lot of cracks on sidewalks. You don’t want to break nothing when you’re walking.”**

Quincy has been a nondriver all his life. He lives in Skyway and uses a white cane, paratransit and King County Metro when it’s possible. He finds that ACCESS paratransit] meets his needs pretty well. He doesn’t feel like he misses out on things because of transportation barriers. He wishes sidewalks were in better shape, and that there were audible signals (APS) at every intersection.

**“I would fix the sidewalks, fix the light systems, fix the transportation, how they pick up people, make it easier.”**

# Legislative District 38

## Jay



**“The bus is my major mode of transportation when I need to go somewhere.”**

Jay lives in Marysville and uses the bus to get around. The biggest barriers for him are how long the bus trips are, and the lack of sidewalks. Because of missing sidewalks or curb ramps, he prefers to bring someone with him to help him if he gets stuck. When the bus stop doesn't have a sidewalk, he needs someone to push him up because the angle of the ramp is too steep for him to get up on his own — another reason he prefers to try to have someone travel with him. He also wishes transit service was expanded on weekends and to run later in the day. It used to not run on Sundays, and he used to be stuck at home, so he does appreciate that there is now some Sunday service.

## Marilee



**“For a while, I lived right in downtown Everett. I could go on the spur of the moment very easily. Buses were very close by....I'd like to just go to the mall on the spur of the moment. And they don't even have bus service there now on Sundays. That's the day I would most likely want to just get out.”**

Marilee lives in Everett. She relies on paratransit, fixed route buses, friends, family and walking to get around. Her biggest barriers are the time it takes to plan a trip — checking schedules, making a paratransit appointment, and making sure she has a way back. It's hard to make appointments, like going to the doctor, with all of that. Marilee has tried DART and ACCESS but they were both late and then ate into her schedule by 45 minutes or an hour. With some bus routes, it can take two and a half hours for a 20-minute ride. It's also extremely frustrating that the different transit systems don't connect well. All of the systems go through Everett Transit Station — Marilee thinks it shouldn't be that hard to make good connections. Even just adjusting schedules by 5 minutes would improve connections. Whenever Marilee moves, she makes sure she is near a bus route and can get to the bus stop easily. She used to walk about two hours a day all over downtown Everett, but COVID has made it hard to get out and learn her new neighborhood with her cane. The sidewalks in Everett are unsafe, with lots of places her cane could get stuck and cause a fall. She's had falls and close calls. She often has to forgo doing things she'd like because she can't get a ride and the public transit trip time would take a full day. She would like people who have always been able to drive to know there's a huge amount of planning that anybody that drives a car never thinks about, and to park their cars and try to get around for a month by finding the bus or calling a friend to get there. You can't get off at the park and ride and get in the car and go the last little bit home. Is a bus available? Do you have enough time to

schedule with paratransit or should you walk instead? How many bus systems will you have to use to get where you need to go?

**“Having a bus route nearby is at the top of my list every time I move. Where is the bus stop, where are the bus routes? Are they in places where I can see it to get across the street? All of that enters into why I pick where I’m at.”**

**“I moved to a new neighborhood and with COVID haven’t been able to spend time learning my neighborhood with my cane well enough to feel safe walking. Sidewalks are not real safe in Everett, and I’ve had a lot of falls or close calls. There’s a lot of places where a cane could get caught. And if you’re not paying enough attention, it’ll take you down to the ground.”**

## Yu-Ann

**"Not having a car often leads to not having access to resources that I need, when I need them. In high school I was trying to access resources available to low-income students. They're all in downtown Seattle. From Bothell, even taking the express bus would take an hour or an hour and a half."**

Yu-Ann lives in the U-District, where she goes to college, and Everett, where her family lives. She mostly uses the bus and Link, but sometimes will use a car. A big barrier for Yu-Ann is just the time it can take using transit. Last summer she had to take the bus and Link to the airport every day, which could take up to an hour and a half each way. She also finds that east-west routes can be challenging — like getting to Fremont, which is pretty close, but can take 30 or 45 minutes by bus. Downtown can take anywhere between 15 and 45 minutes. Although time is her biggest barrier, sometimes riding the bus can feel a little unsafe, like when there are just a couple of other people riding. Yu-Ann will be a little more on guard at these times. Yu-Ann studies construction. Visiting construction sites often means walking 15 minutes after she gets off the bus, very early in the morning when construction starts, alone, which can be uncomfortable. When she was in high school, Yu-Ann lived in Bothell. Her parents didn't have time to drive her around so she missed out on a lot of extracurricular activities. She doesn't feel that she misses out as much being without a car in Seattle, but there are things she would do more often if she had a car. She would like people who can drive to understand that not having a car often leads to not having access to resources that people need.

**"My next internship is in Belltown, which is not that far away. But I'm going to have to walk 10 to 15 minutes to get to my bus stop. And then take another 20 to 30 minute bus ride, then walk another 10 minutes or so."**

## Deborah W.

**"I go to Bellingham to see my daughter a lot and I have a granddaughter on the way, so I will be visiting them as often as I can. It's way cheaper to go to Bellingham with a bike on a bus than to drive. I don't really have the extra money to pay for the extra gas to get that far."**

Deborah lives in Everett and works as a caregiver near Aurora Village. She gets around by bus and riding a bike because she had her driver license suspended after she got in a wreck. She's in a program to regain her license, and she's hoping to get it back and be able to drive again very soon. Her main barrier with the bus is getting home from work on weekend evenings. Deborah doesn't get off work until after 10 p.m., and the Saturday buses stop running at 10. She'd like the weekend bus schedules to run as late as the weekday schedules so she could catch the 11 p.m. bus. She was kind of surprised to find that there are no later buses on Saturday. She rides the Interurban trail a lot, and bikes at night and hasn't had too many troubles with that. Loading bikes is very convenient on the Community Transit SWIFT buses and Deborah really likes that. It's a little tougher to load bikes on other buses. Another barrier for her while taking the bus is the time it takes to go long distances — it's much faster to drive. But Deborah is probably going to keep using the bus and her bike a lot because it's less expensive, especially since her car insurance is going to go up and she still has to pay her tickets.

**"I ride all over the place. You can get almost anywhere on a bike and a bus. It's a little harder to walk because my commute from here is 25 minutes. It's five or 10 minutes on the bike."**

## Kelsey



**"Sometimes, you have to walk a very long way to get to the bus."**

Kelsey is low vision; she lives in Marysville. Since the pandemic her family drives her around, but before that she used the Community Transit bus system. A couple years ago when Kelsey was working at the Lighthouse for the Blind, she commuted from Snohomish County to Seattle every morning. She had to be at work before the bus by her house started running. So, Kelsey had to walk a mile every day in the dark, rain and snow to begin the commute to get to work. Her commute was two and a half hours each way. On Sundays a lot of the routes only run once an hour, which is very limiting to some people, especially those on fixed income.

**"Once you get into the city there are many different forms of transit, but rural areas have almost none."**

# Legislative District 39

## Judy



**“I think legislators should have immersion experiences with people who take transit. Buddy up with a lifelong mass transit user. Put yourselves in our shoes.”**

Judy and her husband are Blind retirees who live in Sedro-Woolley. They use a combination of Skagit Transit, paratransit and fixed route buses to get around. When deciding where to live, Judy and her husband have always made sure they are located close to transit, and they check nearby intersections they will have to cross to ensure the area is accessible. Things have become more difficult because of COVID transit cuts. Service hour cuts have eliminated their ability to attend church service midweek and attend other meetings after five. Judy has gotten around independently since she was a teenager with a cane or guide dog, but in recent years crossing streets has become more difficult, because of the difficulty of hearing hybrid electric vehicles and an increase in right turns on red. Hybrids/EVs can be dangerous because they are silent, and she needs the engine noise to read traffic. Allowing right turns on red means car after car keeps turning when she has the light, with no space between them before the light turns again, forcing her to wait for another light cycle, or longer. She would like elected leaders to know that mass transit is a community service: anyone who lives long enough will have a disability and may find themselves not able to drive, so it's important to keep mass transit funded.

**“Being Blind, it’s great to take paratransit when you have to go outside the bus service area. But I don’t know if the legislature realizes that there are many disabled folks who need fixed route transit.”**

## Joe K.



**“It’s the views. It’s the ability to sit and read. It’s the ability to trust a professional driver, you know, to not have to worry about the road. Make sure you’re going to get off at the right bus stop. It’s also so beautiful.”**

Joe has low vision and lives in Skagit County. Before the pandemic he took the bus everywhere, as well as the light rail to Seattle. Infrequent transit that runs only once an hour or half hour is the biggest barrier for Joe. The lack of reliable transit access has made it too difficult for Joe to have a regular job. Joe loves riding transit because you don’t have to worry about the road, you can just sit and watch the view. But he recognizes that good transit, especially light rail, is expensive to build, and that once it’s built, everyone wants to live nearby, which then prices out the truly needy. Joe believes

sidewalk construction should be part of our stimulus bill, and would be a much better use of taxpayer dollars than building additional highway lanes for single-occupancy vehicles.

**“The thing I don’t think politicians get about transit is the need for remote access to the meetings. Lots of times the transit board meetings are scheduled for the convenience of the board members and staff, not the public. So they’re scheduled at like 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. in a bus barn. And it takes hours [on transit] to get there, to tell agencies what riders need.”**

## Heidi H.

**“I like TAP. I realize they are doing the best they can. But they are limited. All my appointments [usually in Monroe or Everett] have to be midday. Sometimes I can’t get appointments for two or three months down the road....I was supposed to get behavioral health care, but the closest place my insurance covers is 100 miles away. Obviously when [TAP] can only get you to a midday appointment, they’re not going to be able to take you 100 miles.”**

Heidi lives in Gold Bar and gets around using TAP, a paratransit service for people in areas that aren’t served by DART. Right now she uses it to get to medical appointments in Monroe or Everett. Heidi used to live near Alpine Lakes Wilderness, but moved to Gold Bar to be closer to services and transportation. She occasionally uses transit, but she can’t walk very far, and the Community Transit route leaves very early and returns late in the day. Heidi used to be able to ride her bike sometimes, but once, a driver almost ran her down in a crosswalk, and she had other close calls. These days she is unable to ride at all. Her biggest barrier is getting reliable transportation. So, even though she lives closer to transportation now, she still feels “left in the lurch.” TAP does a good job, but the lack of availability is a problem. She misses doctors appointments, and sometimes puts off doing things she shouldn’t put off. Most recently, she was in bed for five days with a spasm, and her doctor wants her to get tests and x-rays, but she may not be able to get there. Before COVID, she was able to get rides from friends at times, but they have kids or things to take care of in their own lives, and Heidi hates to keep asking. Heidi would like to see more sidewalks along Highway 2, which has long sections without sidewalks or even a shoulder, which is especially dangerous in ski season. It can take her 15 minutes to cross the highway when she needs to get to the other side. In the past she used a nearby trail, but it’s on a steep hill. Heidi would like people who drive to understand that they should be more concerned about the safety of motorcyclists, bicyclists, or pedestrians, and she wants elected leaders to know that her transportation experience is just not good — it’s very hard for her to get anything accomplished.

**“I haven’t been anywhere except to the grocery, post office, and doctors appointments in forever, because it’s just so hard to get around.”**

## Patty

Patty lives in Arlington and has not had a driver’s license in many years due to her glaucoma. She gets around thanks to a friend who picks her up for bible study and church. Bible study is Wednesday, so she does her grocery shopping then. If she has a doctor’s appointment she will use the senior services bus, TAP. She does have to call well in advance, sometimes as much as a couple of months ahead.

One of her daughters lives a couple of hours away and visits occasionally, but Patty enjoys being independent, living by herself and keeping busy taking care of the trees and plants on her 5-acre property. Overall, she doesn't feel like she is missing out on things she would like to do, although her 19-year-old cat died last year and she would like to have an animal again. But, getting to the vet would be a problem and Patty doesn't want to "put obstacles" in her way.

Patty would like elected leaders to know that she is very grateful that she can call senior services for transportation for her doctor's appointments. The drivers are wonderful and friendly. Before her husband passed away, he would use the service to get to his dialysis appointments, and that's how she first started to get to know the drivers over the years.

## Susan

**"[When you are used to driving] you're so used to thinking, 'Oh, I think I'll go there.' Well, no you won't either. You have to constantly be thinking of how you can arrange to do something. Oftentimes, there is no way to arrange it. It's a huge transition. You feel kind of helpless."**

Susan lives in Arlington and depends on TAP to get around. She moved from Everett to live in a mother-in-law apartment at her grandson's house with him, his wife and their children, about three years ago when she began to have problems with low blood sugar and diabetes. Shortly after the move, her macular degeneration advanced, so she had to give up her license and sell her car. Susan was grateful to have found TAP. But using the service is very limited and requires careful advance planning, including booking at a week in advance. During COVID, it is only available for medical appointments, and there is never weekend or evening service available. The lack of convenient transportation has taken Susan away from "everything I knew" including clubs she was active with in Everett. She loved book clubs and adult learning classes but she's not sure that she'll be able to do those things again. Sometimes she is able to visit friends on the weekends if her family can take her, but they can't always be available for her that way. Her daughter says the family is also grateful that TAP is available so that they know Susan can get to appointments, which frees up some of their time to do more fun things with her. In a more ideal community, the TAP would run later and on weekends, so that Susan could do things after 5 pm and on weekends, like going to plays and movies with people in her club. And, the ability to make appointments the day before she needed a ride would be "amazing." She would like people who can drive to understand that when you have to get around without a car, you have to plan and plot ahead for days, and constantly be thinking about how you can do what you need to do. Susan would like elected leaders to know that transportation varies a lot depending on where you live. She knows it might not be ideal in metropolitan areas, but it's better than in rural areas, and in Arlington there is much more she could do to keep her mind healthy if she had adequate transportation.

**"I don't need shopping so much. But [I miss] the socialization. I belong to a ladies club. They have a lot of activities that they're not doing now, but they'll start up again after COVID. I would love to be able to do all those. But I won't be able to, given the limited transportation."**



# Legislative District 40

## Joy

**“I love it here and I have a lot of friends. I have subsidized rent here, And I wouldn't have that anywhere else. I mean, where I would have to live on the mainland would not be nearly as beautiful.”**

Joy is a retired teacher and news producer who lives on Lopez Island. She needs to travel off the island for frequent medical treatment to prevent further vision loss, but since the pandemic started, the county transportation provider she relied on to get off the island is no longer able to provide rides. So, Joy has to hire someone to drive her. It's not only a stretch for her fixed income, she is also unable to bring her mobility scooter with her because the person she hires to drive her can't fit the scooter in their vehicle. Without her mobility scooter, Joy has to have someone push her in a wheelchair, which limits her independence. Joy loves living on Lopez because it's where her friends and community are, and she loves how the senior center provides wonderful support, from rides to hearing assistance. She looks forward to the day when she's able to use the community transit provider again to get to medical appointments with her mobility scooter.

## Stoney



**“The primary reason I stopped using a car 20 years ago was a combination of the ecological effects of the car system and the safety effects, but riding a bicycle is just more fun! It's also better for your health. A funny thing that goes on is that people assume that it's a great inconvenience to have to use a bicycle. And they are always offering rides or saying, can I pick something up for you? You know, every once in a while, if I have something big and bulky I've got to transport, I do need someone with a car. But 99% of the time bicycling is just the way I get around. And it's very nice that they're concerned, but there's a mental operation that assumes the 'normal' way to get around is by car.”**

Stoney lives in Bellingham and sold his car 20 years ago. He's within walking distance of downtown, and rides the bus when he wants to travel far distances. His default is to ride his bike. Stoney loves how he can connect with other people when he's riding his bike or walking in a way that's not possible if you're sealed off in a car. The most challenging part of getting around for Stoney is riding or crossing arterials because of the high speed of cars. In particular, I-5 creates a major barrier through Bellingham because there are so few crossing points. The places where you're supposed to cross feel very dangerous because drivers are “jamming the pedal to the metal” to try to accelerate on and off the highway. Stoney believes that building infrastructure that increases safety for people walking and riding bikes increases safety for people in cars, too, because everyone has to slow down and crashes are less severe.

**“They say, you know, the American way, it's even expressed as the American Dream, is to have a house in the suburbs, a single family residence on your own lot. I don't know if it's intended as a subsidy for cars, but it sure works that way.”**

## Lily



Lily lives in Friday Harbor. She is 19 and currently has to rely on her mom to drive her everywhere. She wishes she could drive herself, but in lieu of that a door-to-door shuttle option would be terrific. It would allow her to get to her exercise classes or young adult support group when her mom can't drive her. Lily loves nature and loves being able to go hiking in all the beautiful parks in the San Juans. But as soon as the pandemic is over, she's looking forward to getting to go to the movies again.

## Clayton



**“I’m the outgoing type. I’m always going somewhere. I don’t want to have to depend on my parents all the time. Or my friends all the time. It might be inconvenient for them. It’s hard finding good transportation.”**

Clayton lives in Friday Harbor. He relies on his parents for rides. It’s hard sometimes because sometimes his parents are working when he needs to get a ride to his job, which means he has to ask a co-worker for a ride. Aside from asking friends and family, Clayton’s only option is to hire a private taxi, but most providers don’t offer service to people with wheelchairs. Clayton wishes there was some sort of shuttle that could provide wheelchair accessible rides. Despite the transportation barriers, Clayton loves Friday Harbor because of how small it is, and how convenient and close together everything is when you live on a small island. He does really wish it was easier to go places, though.

## Bruce



**“I believe that if I didn't have this group of friends, I'd already be in assisted living. Friends do things I can't; they happily help me out and take me where I need to go...but it's difficult for them to take me to the mainland because my cart is so heavy. The senior van has a ramp and can take me. But I'm not the only one out here on the island who needs to get to medical appointments on the mainland. So we need that to get straightened out.”**

Bruce lives in Lopez Village and uses an electric mobility cart to get around. Most people consider it a scooter, but it is heavier and harder to tip over — Bruce describes it as “more than a motorized wheelchair, but less than a car.” Bruce got polio when he was three and grew up and lived most of his life before the ADA was passed. Back then, it was more common for people to assume that disabled people were “stupid,” and employment discrimination was legal. He feels fortunate that he had great mentors in his life and has been able to build and sail boats, be in a band, and design houses. Almost everything Bruce needs is within rolling distance: the market, the pharmacy, the medical clinic where he gets check ups, the community center, the farmers market, the bakery, and the taco trailer. His cart has good range, but some friends' homes and the hardware store are too far away to reasonably reach using his cart. Although Lopez Island has almost no sidewalks outside the village, relatively low speed limits on the island keep traffic slowed down. His primary barrier right now is that he doesn't have a way to get to doctor's appointments on the mainland as a result of COVID restrictions. Another challenge is the cost of his mobility cart. His bare-bones cart cost more than \$6,000. He feels fortunate that Medicare covered 80 percent of the cost — he knows that many people require mobility devices with features that can cost more than \$100,000.

## Leslie



**“The buses don't go everywhere...Especially some of the more outlying places, like rural areas. The bus to Lynden only runs twice a day and that is pretty limiting.”**

Leslie lives near Bellingham, outside city limits. She is Blind and uses buses, shuttles, trains, light rail, and planes both within the state and nationally to get around for work and for social engagements. Leslie's biggest barrier is not having frequent bus service and that buses don't go everywhere she wants to go. Also, Leslie has to cross a fairly busy road that does not have a crosswalk or an accessible pedestrian signal so she can get to the bus to go places. She waits until she doesn't hear any cars and then hurries

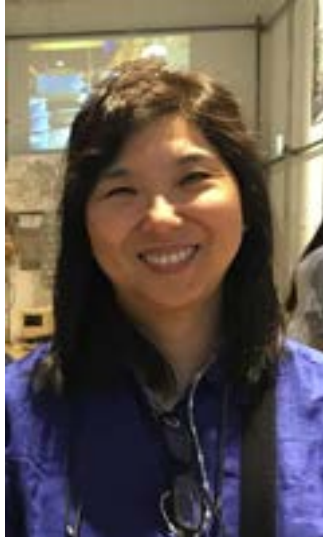
to cross the busy street that does not have an accessible traffic signal. Taking Uber and Lyft does not work as well for Leslie due to the fact she travels with a service dog. She misses out on so many social events in her town because of lack of transportation access. Leslie would like a reliable transit system, a crosswalk and an accessible pedestrian signal on the street closer to her house so she can travel independently.

## Leah

**“I am autistic and have not yet been able to get my driver's license at age 25. My sensory, processing, fine motor, and attention skills have made driving a difficult and sometimes scary experience for me. But my main transportation, the bus, often also has barriers, particularly prior to COVID. Crowding, noise, smells, and small talk are difficult for me, and I often have to use a lot of energy to take the bus. In environments like buses, people are also often quite judgmental of people who are visibly disabled or neurodivergent. I am less visibly disabled than many, but I am still not able to make eye contact. I often stim visibly, and can feel self-conscious about that. I also have anxiety around having panic attacks, or sensory meltdowns in public places, I have to keep my ‘masks’ tightly on. But the bus allows me to have freedom and not worry about if I can drive, and better transit systems make that easier. I have lived in both Israel and NYC, which have highly developed transit systems, which allow much more ease in getting to different locations. Although buses and subways help, I think the biggest difference is having access to long-distance trains and inter-city bus systems, which allow access to more remote locations. While living in Israel I could easily travel between cities, and even small towns using a combination of trains and buses, all for quite cheap, whereas in Washington it is extremely expensive to get anywhere by train. Reinvigorating our passenger rail system would increase accessibility, create numerous jobs, and provide an alternative to carbon-heavy travel by car and plane.” — Leah, Sudden Valley.**

# Legislative District 41

## Megumi



**“It’s tough enough if you don’t have a car and can’t afford one. But on top of that, if you are disabled, you can’t even get to the bus stop. You can’t even find a place to go when you get off the bus.”**

Megumi lives on Mercer Island. Megumi gradually lost her vision as a result of retinitis pigmentosa. She began driving less frequently until her daughter convinced her to give up her license about eight years ago. Now, when her partner is away she uses ride-hailing or will take buses to downtown Seattle or Bellevue. Megumi’s biggest barrier is the long, hilly 20-minute walk to the transit center. Most of the streets on the route to the transit center do not have traffic lights or audible crossings, which is scary. Ride-hailing works well if drivers pick her up from home, but not downtown. The drivers don’t understand Megumi’s low vision and that she can’t identify the color or model of a car. She grocery shops every 10-14 days and stocks up so she doesn’t have to ask friends to take her more often. She doesn’t go to yoga or her Buddhist temple as often now, and she visits friends less often.

**“It would be really nice if there was more of the Go Go Grandparents type of program in the state that ADA can support to make mobility a lot easier for disabled people.”**

## Clara



**“When I lived in Seattle I would walk a lot. In Sammamish though, I can’t really walk anywhere.”**

Clara recently graduated with her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Washington in Seattle and moved back to her family’s home in Sammamish. It’s deep in the suburbs, so even to get to a bus stop, she has to be driven. So, if Clara wants to catch the bus, she has to plan ahead, and sometimes driving takes longer than anticipated. Once, trying to get by bus from Bellevue to her fellowship in Seattle, she was hours late. First, Google Maps led her into a fenced off area as she tried to find the bus stop she needed to be at. Then, instead of getting on the 545, she got on the 540. Even trying to visit her romantic partner is a struggle. He offered to drive Clara back home if she caught the bus to their house. But just getting from Sammamish to his house in Shoreline would take three hours. People will assume, “You have a bus pass, so you can get anywhere.” But many people with access to a personal car don’t understand what a struggle it can be to time everything just right when taking the bus, especially when transfers are involved. Taking the bus seems like it should be easy, but planning routes is taxing, and her whole commute can be thrown off if just one thing is off. And Clara doesn’t enjoy that she’s not in control of her time when she takes the bus. She wants decision makers to know that although the current public transportation system

has been a blessing to her in many ways, she has also suffered much stress and confusion as a result of its issues. She recently returned to driving for the sake of her mental health, even though it costs her much more financially, and it is not as good for the environment. She knows she is very privileged to have that choice, but not everyone does - so she would like leaders to consider investing in public transit to make it more easily accessible!

**“I have to factor in my physical limits. I know if Google Maps says it’ll take me twenty minutes to walk, it’ll take me much longer than that.”**

# Legislative District 42

## Sarahbeth



**“Paratransit is not accessible to parents. You must carry and install your own car seat and sometimes wait up to an hour for a pick up with a kid who is uncooperative or overwhelmed and tired. It is often unsafe to install a car seat onto the paratransit buses.”**

Sarahbeth is a disabled mom who lives in Bellingham. She used fixed route transit for years and years, but as her mobility decreased with her disability, she started to use paratransit. However, with her young kids, Sarahbeth really struggled. The paratransit provider would only allow her to bring one child with her, and when she tried to bring her youngest, who was in a rear-facing infant car seat, they were unable to get it to be properly secured in the bus, nor was the transit provider able to modify the seats so that the car seat could be securely attached. As her child got older, Sarahbeth was unable to physically carry the larger bucket seat style car-seat required. She wishes that paratransit providers took into consideration the needs of

parents and caregivers — kids of disabled parents need to go places too. Providing some vehicles that accommodate infant car seats, or with built-in bucket-style car seats (like some school buses do), would help make it possible for disabled parents to get where they need to go. Sarahbeth has had to purchase a vehicle to be able to get around with her children, and she knows other moms in Bellingham who are essentially housebound because paratransit doesn’t meet their needs as parents..

**“The bus administration insisted they only had to accommodate me but not my child. I feel this is a sexist [loop]hole in law and policy, and it purposely keeps disabled parents from transporting their children.”**

## Harley



**“My mom can't live alone. And so I am scurrying to find a home so she can move in with us. And every time I look at a listing, I have to pull up the paratransit map. And so every time I look at a listing, it's like, okay, what's the address? Then I have to google the address, then I have to compare it to the paratransit map to see, which day of the week does it have service? Is it Monday through Saturday, daytime service only? Is it Monday through Sunday with evening service? Or does it fall into one of the other categories where it's only Monday and Tuesday or Tuesday and Thursday? I can't live just anywhere.”**

Harley is a wheelchair user and advocate for people with disabilities who lives in Bellingham. Her biggest transportation barrier is the sidewalks, when they’re missing curb cuts. She also finds it frustrating that fixed route transit buses only have spots for two wheelchairs. There are a lot of folks in the community who use that space.

Harley has also noticed that the doorways and passageways on Amtrak are very narrow, making it difficult if not inaccessible for wheelchair users, and she wishes more buildings generally had push-button doors for accessibility. She is also impacted by where transit and paratransit can go. She tried moving to Orting to be closer to her grandkids, but had to move back to Bellingham because there was no bus service there.

**“There is not a single wheelchair-accessible taxi in my county. Not even the limo service has a wheelchair accessible vehicle. If there's an emergency, I won't be able to get to the hospital to take care of my loved one.”**

## Kristin N.



**“I've loved biking since I was five years old and my dad let go of the seat. I was hit in 2010 and had devastating physical injuries, including a brain injury. I was in rehab for a year and I have to have at least an hour of vigorous exercise every day. Bicycling helps with that; it helps keep me mobile and flexible.”**

Kristin lives in Bellingham. She owns a car but she gets around by bicycle whenever possible. She recently moved to the King Mountain neighborhood, which is much less bikeable than her old neighborhood. Her biggest hurdle is James Street, and the fact that because I-5 cuts through Bellingham, and there are only five places you can cross to get to the other side of town. James Street is the way Kristin usually gets downtown. It's a super-busy street with only a very narrow shoulder, poor visibility and high-speed traffic. She used to take a trail part of the way, but the trail was just closed for road renovations and she doesn't know long it will be closed. Kristin has to go two miles out of her way to get around the highway. From Kristin's perspective, any form of transportation that isn't car-based is not taken seriously. Prior to the construction of a new overpass at Baker View, a state rep's office called her to ask what she'd like to see included, but although her suggestions were inexpensive, none of them were incorporated. It felt like a waste of her time. In 2010, Kristin was hit by a driver. Her injuries included a traumatic brain injury and required a lot of rehabilitation. Bicycling helps her ongoing recovery. When people comment that she must be really brave to continue riding, she tells them it is more a case of anger than fear. Biking is intrinsic to who she is; she's been in love with it since she first learned to ride when she was five, and “no one is going to take away from me what makes me me.” She does have moments of PTSD, like when a big truck comes up alongside her, but she can't give up bicycling. She wrote a book about her experience, *On Silver Wings: A Life Reconstructed*. If Kristin were in charge of transportation, she would change the car-oriented planning process to include bikes, pedestrians and wheelchair mobility in all plans.



## Steve



**“The bus that goes to the major hospital in Bellingham only runs once an hour, and it does not run to the hospital at all on Sundays.”**

Steve is visually impaired and grew up in Bellingham. He walks and uses public transportation to get around. Steve’s visual impairment means he has the option of signing up for paratransit. But that’s not a reliable choice because he can’t schedule it the same day. Paratransit also stops running at the same time as fixed-route service. Steve would like to see more bus routes in the city and to the hospital, and for buses to run later at night instead only until 9 or 10 p.m.

## Griffith



**“The buses usually run every half an hour, and it’s not more than five minutes’ walk to the bus stop from where I live, but the bus route itself is pretty confusing. For example, it is not really detailed on how to get places. I kind of just have to figure it out as I go.”**

Griffith lives in Lynden, near the Canadian border, and he usually gets around by walking or taking the bus. His biggest barrier is just how time-consuming and inconvenient transit can be. If he misses the bus, he has to wait another half hour. Or it can be confusing because he has to go to different bus stations to transfer to another route, becoming a big hassle. Griffith would like people who can drive to understand that people who rely on transit can’t just jump in the car and go to the places, you have to plan it, whether it’s a couple days in advance or on the same day. Public transit would be better for Griffith if he did not have to transfer to two or three buses and spend hours traveling to get to places that take 15 or 20 minutes by car.

## Laura

**“I never had a license due to seizures. Needing to go places that aren’t just doctors appointments and grocery stores is hard. Socializing is hard. I’m agoraphobic, so public, crowded places are not my thing. Just being able to get in a car and saying, ‘Hey, I need to go here, can you take me here?’ would be so awesome. It’s not like I don’t have money to share for gas. I do, I just can’t drive. I would like to be in the car sometimes going places and not at home by myself.”** — Laura, Bellingham

# Legislative District 43

## Kimberly



**“The return on investment in reliable transit is enormous. It allows people like me who can’t afford to drive to live our lives independently. It gives others the option to not drive, especially low-income households who struggle with the cost of car ownership. And when we are coming up so close on climate catastrophe, a big investment in transit would absolutely pay off.”**

Kimberly is a freelance writer who lives in Seattle. She and her partner get around using transit, biking and walking. One big barrier she encounters is poor transit frequency on non-peak hours even at major hubs. When she took night classes in Edmonds, if she didn’t leave class early, that would add 60 to 90 minutes to her trip home. If she wants to do things farther away from home, it can be a logistical challenge to make sure all the train and bus schedules line up. She has had public agencies refuse to accept her state ID and require her to find someone with a driver’s license to confirm her identity. Her and her partner chose to buy a small condo on Capitol Hill because houses in areas with access to good transit and biking were expensive, and it was important to live in a neighborhood where they can get to everything they need easily, and remain independent as they start to get older. Investments she would like to see are dedicated lanes to speed up buses, and flexible features on buses and trains like folding seats to increase capacity for mobility devices and strollers and groceries, or rear-boarding with bike ‘ramps’ like Community Transit’s SWIFT buses have, and overhead racks with ample room, because so many people don’t just use transit for commuting, they use it for everything in everyday life.

**“When you use transit, you see the world differently. I would sometimes commute to school to Edmonds on the Sounder. You can relax and just look out on the Sound and absorb the waterfront. It’s hard to take that ride and *not* imagine how much better all of our lives would be if people could more often sit back and relax and read a book, or read to your kid, or just stare out the window and enjoy the beautiful part of the world we live in.”**

## Kristi



**“I find it very hard to walk without finding someplace to plop my butt for a minute to rest. On some of the [bus] routes that I use, they may or may not have shelters, but a lot of them have taken the seating out as a way to expressly forbid the homeless from sleeping there. Well, you also take the seats out for those of us that need it. I find that that’s been a problem for me.”**

Kristi lives in senior housing in Seattle’s First Hill neighborhood, where her doctor, grocery store, pharmacy and favorite pizza place are no more than three blocks away. To travel farther from home, Kristi relies on King County Metro buses; she cannot use scooters, and ride-hail services are too

expensive. As she's gotten older, Kristi needs to sit frequently because she's found it more difficult to walk, so it's been frustrating to find so many benches removed from bus shelters. Another barrier Kristi experiences is taking the [KC Metro route] 2 to budget-friendly Grocery Outlet. The bus stops at an uneven curb with a clump of weeds, right in front of a tree. "For anyone with a disability, it's difficult to negotiate. Then, when you come back with a full shopping cart, and you're expected to reverse that, it's a little tough." Kristi loves Metro's work to make transit free for low-income people because she knows it's essential for everyone to go to appointments, to get shopping done, to visit family, and to do all the other things people need to do in life. She loves when people bring their kids or dogs on to the bus, and has met many interesting and wonderful people while riding. In Kristi's ideal world, a better transportation system would include lighting and seating at bus shelters, as well as transit maps and signage that tell riders when the next bus will arrive.

## Rian



**"If I'm going somewhere that is not within a 10- or 15-minute walk of a bus stop, I have to think about whether I really need to go there. And if I do need to go there, I need to figure out a way to get there."**

Rian lives in Seattle and gets around by walking and using the bus. His biggest barriers when walking are the lack of safe crossings across major streets like Aurora Avenue. The limited frequency and service areas of many routes is a barrier in using the bus. For Rian, a fully accessible and equitable community would be one where people who don't drive can easily, affordably and quickly travel without having to spend a lot of time planning routes, connections and schedules. Rian wants decisionmakers to know that he thinks that a lot of people who have access to driving view other transportation infrastructure as a nice addition to car infrastructure that can occasionally help them get point to point, but they don't think of it as a central way that people get around. He believes that having everything structured around cars as a default is a problem for the climate and a problem for people who use other systems for all of their transportation needs. Rian sees that there's never the same kind of requirement for people to make a case for building car infrastructure that there is for making a case to build other transportation infrastructure.

**"I think the pandemic has taught a lot of people what it feels like being constrained and limited in where they can go. Many people who use transit, or bike or walk already knew what that kind of constraint feels like. That feeling is enabled by choosing to continue to invest in cars over people. We can make different choices and enable people to travel differently around the region. And we should."**

## Mike

**"In Seattle there's lots of construction and so many times I've gotten off the bus at a familiar spot to find it feels like overnight the environment has changed and there's blockages due to construction or roadwork. So, then all of a sudden I have to reevaluate my plan of how I was going to get to point A and point B."**

Mike lives in Seattle's Fremont neighborhood. He is Blind and travels by bus, walking or ride-hail. Right now he is working from home, but before the pandemic, he commuted to Kirkland. Usually he takes King

County Metro routes 5, 255, 44 and 62, and occasionally the 40. He sometimes uses ride-hail to get to places that aren't served by bus, or when he is in a time crunch. Other times he'll use ride-hail when he has to carry a lot of things back from the grocery store, but he can't always justify spending the money. He wishes people who drove would understand that sometimes taking transit can be stressful, and that people who have just arrived on the bus might be more frazzled than someone who was able to be in a "hermetically sealed bubble driving down the freeway listening to podcasts or KEXP." He also wishes more drivers were aware of how their behavior impacts pedestrians.

**"People are very focused on driving and they are not considerate to pedestrians. I was cut off crossing Fremont Ave the other day, because this person couldn't wait an extra split second for me to pass in front of their car. Look, you're in a two ton vehicle, maybe you could try to be a bit more conscious that people share the sidewalks and streets, besides you and your car? If you see someone trying to cross the street, give them some courtesy and let them cross."**

## Charlie



**"I love riding Metro! But little obstacles—lack of curb cuts, uneven sidewalks, no audible signals—add up to big, frustrating barriers!"**

Charlie is a high school student who lives in Seattle. He rides Metro to get to school and also to visit friends and attend activities. He loves the freedom and independence in getting to where he needs to go. The lack of auditory signals and curb cuts at pedestrian crossings make it hard for him to get safely to where he needs to go. Another barrier is long wait times —up to 45 minutes — on many bus routes. When Charlie walks to the bus stop at Lake City Way and NE 98th Street, he has to walk in the road because there are blackberry bushes where a sidewalk should be. Charlie would like more audible pedestrian signals so he knows when it is safe to cross the street, and more

curb cuts, pedestrian signals and sidewalks.

## Josie

**"As a young person, I want to be more environmentally conscious. But how can I reduce my footprint when the bus doesn't provide the service I need?"**

Josie, a student, lives in Seattle. Usually her parents drive her to activities and friends' houses. Sometimes she takes the bus or walks to places. Buses are a good option and allow her more freedom when the family is busy, but the timing is difficult and it takes longer to walk. It would be great if there were more direct bus routes. Josie sometimes misses out on socializing with her friends. She finds it difficult to go without a car because she has to find alternate routes to be able to do the things that she should be able to do. Josie hopes that there will be more bus routes to get her where she needs to go.

## Merlin

**"When I first went out in the wheelchair, I had a companion with me to make sure I didn't get trapped in an inaccessible spot. Once I'd scouted a few familiar routes, I was able to figure out how to avoid the worst barriers, and could travel by myself. I completely gave up traveling**

**anywhere I hadn't visited with a companion — there was no way to know in advance what barriers I might face, and I didn't want to risk getting stranded."**

Merlin lives in Seattle and gets around by walking and biking, and occasionally by transit. Merlin had a temporary disability and for several weeks was using a wheelchair. She came to really notice how many intersections were missing curb ramps and how many bus stops aren't very accessible for wheelchairs.. She was also shocked at how few drivers yielded when she was trying to cross the street. In Merlin's ideal community, residential streets would be local-access only, with diverters to prevent cut-through traffic, so crossing the street or walking in the street would not be terrifying and dangerous. Arterials would have frequent, well-marked crossings with sensors that would give a green light quickly for a person walking. She would dedicate substantial street space to bikes, so that she wouldn't need to choose between endangering herself by riding with fast-moving cars or competing for sidewalk space with people walking and rolling.

**"My ideal community would be designed with awareness that we are all only temporarily able-bodied. Street use would be planned with the understanding that streets are public, multi-use spaces, not just fire hoses for spitting out cars!"**

## Helen

**"Seattle has a good transit system but there are times when buses are late or early and it just sucks. It takes up my time."**

Helen lives in Seattle's Roosevelt neighborhood and usually gets around by walking or taking the bus. She takes the bus if her destination is farther than a 30-minute walk. Helen's biggest barriers are that there are times when she feels a little unsafe going out, especially after dark or if there is someone acting strange. In the latter case she typically will try taking a detour. Having a car isn't financially feasible for her, although she does eventually want to get a car, and she'd like to be able to get groceries with a car. One thing that stresses her out is if friends come over and it gets dark, she can't drive them home to make sure they are safe. Seattle's bus system is better than in her home state of Hawaii, where the buses only come every hour. But taking the bus is often inconvenient — if Helen needs to get to an appointment by a certain time, she has to go really early or risk arriving late. When she is late, sometimes places can work with her, but she feels bad if they have to accommodate her. She also has to spend time thinking about which bus to take and what time she will arrive, and that's time she could have spent on other things.

## Mona

**"Mount Vernon, most people just drive there, right, which totally makes sense. But my friend and I didn't have a car and we decided to go to a show in that town by busing. We had to bus for three and a half hours. Our original plan was to make four transfers, but then our last transfer, the bus wasn't working on that day. So we actually had to walk one and a half hours to get to town."**

Mona lives in the University District of Seattle. For the most part, getting around Seattle is pretty easy for her using the bus and walking. It's when she tries to get out of town that it gets more difficult. Recently, she and a friend tried to go to Mount Vernon. The last bus they needed didn't actually run on Sundays, and so they ended up having to walk an hour and a half. Mona just got a driver license this past summer,

but she doesn't have a car because she can't afford it. Even if she could, she couldn't afford parking at the UW campus. Mona doesn't go out much at night when it's dark, but she doesn't feel as scared as she knows other folks do, it's more that she would just rather be home. Overall, she's pretty happy to be able to live in a city like Seattle that has such good transit, it really isn't until she tries to leave the city that it becomes a hassle not having a car.

## Hannah



Hannah lives in Seattle and studies biochemistry at UW. She usually gets around by walking or taking the bus. Some of her barriers are that when it gets dark early in the fall and winter, it can feel scary walking the Ave in the U-District, especially as a woman. Also, to get to a lot of bus stops, Hannah has to cross freeway bridges where drivers go very fast. There are often overgrown shrubs, blackberry bushes, and debris on these sidewalks, forcing her to walk on the edge, which is frustrating and feels dangerous and scary. Hannah would like to see better maintained sidewalks along these kinds of bridges. She often travels between Lynnwood and the U-District, a trip that, including walks to and from the bus stops, waiting for the bus, and the bus ride itself, can take 90 minutes or more each way. Hannah does feel like she misses out on some things, especially because she has to do a lot of careful planning to minimize taking the bus and walking alone at night. Sometimes, to avoid traveling at night, she'll plan to spend the night at a friend's when visiting, and leave the next morning. Hannah frequently finds she has the walk signal in her favor but drivers turning left or right cut her off. Even when she waves her hand to get their attention, people often keep going. She grew up in Tacoma, where there are more large Yield to Pedestrians signs at intersections, and Hannah thinks drivers need more of these reminders in Seattle. Her ORCA card isn't active on her student ID when school is not in session, and some drivers have refused her boarding when she's tried to pay using an app that is supposed to be accepted. Hannah would like to see better technology — she knows that in other countries, you can just tap your debit or credit card to board a bus. Then, refilling an ORCA card would be one less thing people would need to worry about. She thinks everywhere should have the kind of transit frequency she has in the U-District, where buses come every 10 or 20 minutes. Hannah would like people who can drive to understand when pedestrians have the right of way, and yield, and also to be more aware of pedestrians in general, especially on main roads with fast traffic, which she points out are where bus stops are usually located.

## Tenley

**"When I hear funding is going down for the buses, I get so angry. Because people like me, and for people who have physical disabilities, oh, my god. The limitations to where you can go and the length of time to get to places can be really problematic and difficult."**

Tenley lives on Capitol Hill in Seattle and gets around by walking and riding transit. She can drive, but can't afford a car on her disability income. When her frequent treatments were at Swedish Ballard, an Uber trip cost between \$5-10, and she used Uber to avoid the long, complicated bus trips between Capitol Hill and Ballard. Now Uber is way too expensive. Tenley was excited about the potential for carshare, but that is also too expensive. Most of her appointments are now on First Hill. Often, the bus takes longer than walking. But she isn't allowed to walk immediately after certain treatments, so at those

times she has to take an Uber home. She doesn't think light rail has been done that well - when she gets off at Husky Stadium to go to appointments at UW Medical Center, it's a long trip to the street, and then crossing a busy street. Then there are bus stops like the one nearest SODO Costco. It's a couple of blocks' walk, has no seating or shelter, and is on a gravel patch without a sidewalk. Tenley has gotten drenched in the rain there waiting for the bus. In a more ideal world, hospitals and Metro would partner so that she could get medical transport home after her treatments so that she didn't have to pay for an Uber. Bus stops would always have sidewalks, shelter, and lighting, and Metro would have a better trip planner on its site, similar to One Bus Away. It would be easier to add money to ORCA cards. She would like elected leaders to know that they should have to use transit for at least a week, so they could see the types of difficulties people come up against, and wishes they had more compassion and understanding for how much is involved in figuring out how to get somewhere. Tenley especially finds it upsetting that it's so difficult to take recreational trips on the weekends in our region.

**"I'm in a program called Path with Art for people with disabilities. It's amazing. You can go see a play or go to the opera, or something special like that...But to be able to get to cultural events is very difficult if you're a bus rider....If I wanted to go to the Lavender Festival or somewhere, you can't go to Port Townsend or Vashon Island on Saturday. It saddens me because I feel stuck on Capitol Hill. To go elsewhere is just too hard. You're limited on outdoor activity. That to me is a really big deal."**

## Lizzie



**"I feel like I know the city a lot better because I have to navigate it on foot and by bus and know other street names and stuff. It takes a lot of planning, it takes a lot of effort. I just, sometimes I just don't have the motivation to go places, because I know it will take a long time."**

Lizzie lives in the U District in Seattle and gets around mostly by foot, except when it's raining and she'll take the bus. She does notice the uneven sidewalks, and how bad drainage means there are a lot of puddles. Also, going downtown at night she'd prefer to use Uber or get a ride, because the stairways on the light rail can feel isolated and unsafe. A lot of people she knows have cars, but she doesn't want to ask her friends for rides all the time. And she feels frustrated that they can only afford to have cars because their parents are paying for everything, even the gas. She thinks riding transit and walking places has helped her get to know the city better, and also has helped her develop planning skills.

**"I think one good thing about transportation is that it's much more affordable. Sometimes they let people on the bus for free. I know a lot of people who are affected by homelessness can ride the bus when it's cold outside, they have heat on the bus. But people are very prejudiced against riding public transportation with those people affected by homelessness."**

## Shubhangi

**"Having fewer cars is more sustainable. It's more friendly to the environment. It's about accessibility and inclusivity, but it's also about the environment....The Pacific Northwest is supposed to be green."**

Shubhangi is a business school student who lives in Seattle in the University District. She normally gets around by bus and light rail, using her UW-issued U-Pass. She sometimes gets rides from friends, but it's awkward to ask for rides. But, the bus can take up a lot of her time, even to visit friends in relatively close places like Capitol Hill. She can't always spare that time, which she needs for work and school. She's missed out on relationships with friends, and, as a business student, while online meetings are fine, in-person communication is very important. One bright spot is that the light rail station used to be a 15-minute walk for her, but with the new stations opening, it's now just 4 minutes. Light rail is much better than traveling by car, and is saving her a lot of time. Still, Shubhangi has recently realized that even though she has been living here for three years, she doesn't really know the United States or even that much beyond Seattle because she can't travel outside of it very much. Shubhangi would like people who can drive to recognize that it is a privilege and to have some sympathy for people who can't. While for the most part she has what she needs right now, once she graduates buying a car will feel like a necessity. But the city has so much to offer people — she wants the city to be more accessible with more light rail and more buses.

## Jarred

**"People need groceries, people need amenities, people need to get to their work and back from their work, and not having a private car means they have to manage their time to the utmost highest degree compared to someone with a car."**

Jarred lives in Seattle and he gets around by walking everywhere most of the time because for Jarred walking is faster than taking the bus. He is an undergraduate student attending the University of Washington. One reason he doesn't use the bus sometimes is that unless he is going with friends, a 20-minute ride by car would require three buses and three hours. He sometimes worries about his safety with so many people getting on and off the bus. Also, it can be confusing to plan out his entire ride and remember which buses he needs to use to get where he is going. Right now he gets a bus pass through the University of Washington, but he worries about how expensive it will be when he is no longer in school and will have to pay for an ORCA card in full. Jarred would like to see more reasonable bus fares and less confusing bus routes.

## Jessie

**"Some of my friends live in Shoreline or Lynnwood and it's pretty hard to find a bus to where they live. So in order to get there. I may need to take two buses, or take a bus and then walk for twenty minutes."**

Jessie lives in Seattle and gets around by walking and public transit. She doesn't have a license and right now driving is too expensive for her anyway. Time and timing are two of Jessie's biggest barriers with walking and taking transit. She can't always find the bus stops she needs close by, which means taking the time to walk. It can take a lot of time to use the bus to visit friends in Shoreline and Lynnwood. And when she was in college and was commuting between the University of Washington and Bellevue, where



she lived with her family, if she missed the last bus from the university at night, she would have to take a bus to downtown, then get on a bus to Bellevue, and then walk 10 to 20 minutes home. She would worry about missing the bus of the night, not just because of the need to take an extra trip downtown, but because as a young Asian American woman, she was concerned about her safety, though she describes herself as cautious rather than scared. Jessie is Deaf and Hard of Hearing so she has to be extra mindful of her surroundings, especially in the dark. Distance is also a barrier for Jessie, as she would love to go to the beach and hike more. Jessie misses out on going to the San Juan Islands, Olympic National Forest, Mt. Rainier, and Leavenworth. These kinds of trips are difficult for her, as she has to work around the schedules of friends who do have cars. The new light rail stations that recently opened have actually added twenty minutes to her commute. Before, Jessie would either carpool or ride Lyft to go up north, so that she didn't have to deal with an hour to hour and a half trip just to go to Lynnwood. Jessie has ridden public transit in Japan, which she found much more easy, convenient and overall much better than it is in Seattle. She would like people who can drive to know that it's not always easy not having a car, especially during the pandemic. Jessie understands that some people are not able to use public transit and require the use of a car, but she wants people who have the means and live in the city to consider riding public transportation, because it would help with expenses, reduce carbon emissions, and support the environment.

## Ashley



Ashley lives in the University District in Seattle. She studies Business and Econ in the Foster School of Business at the University of Washington and works two jobs. She normally gets around by taking the bus, link, or by walking. Ashley is uncomfortable with the idea of driving, and she doesn't have a car available to practice. She could take the bus to work, but that usually takes 30 minutes. It's only a 20- to 30-minute walk, so she usually walks, even though she doesn't really enjoy walking. She does it because that's what she needs to do to get around. One barrier for Ashley is how much time it can take to plan her trips, and not knowing just when the bus might actually arrive. She has to show up early or risk missing the bus. It's a lot of time she could spend on work or school. Long trips are especially challenging. Ashley went to a pumpkin patch in Snohomish, a trip that required several bus transfers and two and a half hours each way. Ashley feels pretty safe on public transit. But she definitely feels unsafe walking around as a woman in Seattle. She had an increased fear as an Asian American woman during the start of the

pandemic when many of her Asian friends faced harassment. Ashley wants people who can drive to know that there's a lot of unpredictability when you don't have a car. It's part of why she tends to run late.

## Alexander

**"I don't take paratransit. I absolutely refuse to take it. Why would I take a service that's going to keep me two and a half hours on the bus when I am trying to go to a place that only takes 27 minutes on a fixed-route bus? It doesn't make sense to me."**

Alexander lives in Seattle, and he is completely Blind. He lives in the University District and works at the Lighthouse for the Blind, and he relies on public transportation to get around. Alexander's biggest concerns are being late to work or other appointments when taking paratransit. Alexander wishes that on-demand shuttle systems like Via to Transit were available in the part of Seattle where he lives (he even partnered with Via to give them help with accessibility). Alexander also wants to see further training for bus drivers working with disabled people. He's had drivers automatically touching him to guide him to the seat when he does not like being touched.

## Annika

**"I did get a driver's license as a teenager. But driving is very stressful, makes me anxious, and I know I'm not very good at it. I had a much better experience taking public transportation and not having the stress of driving. But now I'm dealing with the stress that comes with public transportation."**

Annika lives in Seattle on First Hill and works in Auburn. She gets around using public transit, but that can be spotty in Auburn, so she also uses Uber and Lyft. She got a driver license as a teenager, but, for multiple reasons, she no longer has one. A big part is financial — she's only been out of college for a couple of years, has student loans to pay off, and that makes it hard to save for a car. But she also finds driving stressful and doesn't like doing it. Taking transit was a much better experience, and she moved to Seattle last year thinking public transit would be better than it actually is. Her biggest barriers are that, especially in Auburn, there are parts where routes just don't exist, or where 30- or 60-minute frequency doesn't allow her to have much control over her time or schedule. A related barrier is that when she has to take multiple buses, the schedules don't line up and that makes it easy to miss a transfer. She sometimes feels like she is always running late, and it can take a lot of time away from her. There are some upsides, like not having to worry about parking a car. Annika does feel like she misses out on get-togethers with co-workers, which are usually at places you have to drive to, and she doesn't want to have to ask for a ride there and back. She also misses out on hiking and outdoor trips around the state. That's part of the appeal of living here, but it's tough being unable to explore. Annika wants electeds to know that they need to make transit a more viable option for getting around, especially in Auburn, where it doesn't feel like a respected way to get around, and to make schedules that are more realistic and run more frequently, and make sure stops don't leave people standing in mud in the middle of nowhere.

**"I have had a driver's license before and I could get one. But there's obviously lots of people who can't for so many reasons. I want people to see the potential in public transit, I want to see the value and ask, how can we make it better?"**

**"There are some bus stops that, even though my phone tells me it is a bus stop, I get the feeling like, *Is this legit? Is anyone coming? Am I really supposed to be here?* Because it kind of feels like I shouldn't be. Versus an actual nice stop with a bench, where you're like, *Okay, this is the bus stop.*"**

## Brooklyn G.

**"I want people who can drive to understand that I can't see you. Don't yell at me. Don't tell me 'you can go now.' It's clear that they view me as less than them when they use that aggressive tone. I'm**

**doing my best out here. I'm likely not going because my brain is trying to process the information around me. I'm trying to process the noise of the crosswalk, if it does make noise, I'm trying to process where every single car is going. I'm trying to process what pedestrians are doing around me. Combined with just the input of the city, environment, and especially at night, that's very difficult."**

Brooklyn is an incoming student at UW in Seattle, where they also completed a summer internship. The rest of the time they live with their father in Vancouver, WA. They have a vision impairment. In Seattle they walk, bus, or use light rail. In Enumclaw, they would take the bus, but their parents would drive them a lot.

Their biggest barrier in Seattle is when taking the bus, they can't hear the stops most of the time — there's a lot of variation among the buses. Street crossings can also be difficult. Some of the crossings don't "talk" and places in the city with a lot of big buildings can be confusing. The sidewalks at Westlake Park in downtown Seattle are the same color as the street, which is confusing. Some intersections near where they stayed during their internship were confusing because there were no "talking" crossing and it seemed like traffic would just keep coming and coming. There was a bus stop near their housing but they would get off at a stop farther away because it was actually closer to an easier crossing. Sometimes crosswalks and ramps direct them to the middle of the intersection, diagonally, instead of straight across, which "isn't great or ideal."

When their family moved to Enumclaw, Brooklyn was looking forward to being able to walk to school and because of that, participate in a lot more extracurriculars, have an easier time making friends, and having a social life. Two days before school started, the district said they didn't have resources and that Brooklyn would have to continue at their previous school in Auburn. The Enumclaw district set up transportation for Brooklyn, but the ride didn't show up about 60 percent of the time during the first weeks, so their stepdad ended up being paid by the district for the 30-minute drive to school.

Brooklyn would like elected leaders to know "that drivers are the problem — ignorance is the issue, and education is so important." They'd like everyone to experience a month without a car, using public transportation, because then people would understand things like how it is impossible to hear things on the buses and that walking 30 minutes every time you want or have to go somewhere isn't great.

Brooklyn thinks light rail is great — it's easy to hear the stops and it's very useful that it stops at every stop. If it went further they would not have to take Amtrak to those places, like Tacoma. In Brooklyn's ideal community buses would be more frequent, cities would be designed less for cars and more for humans, and for walking and biking, and public transportation would be more modern, so that more buses were electric.

# Legislative District 44

## Leigh



**“King County’s paratransit serves 100 percent of King County. Snohomish County, where I live, is more like 40 percent. You need to fund these areas. This is where people are moving to be able to afford to live; people with disabilities are moving to more rural areas where there’s not transportation. It’s isolating them further and stifling their potential to contribute to their communities.”**

Leigh lives in Mill Creek. She is partially mobile and uses crutches. She relies on paratransit for shopping and to get to work in Everett.

Paratransit helps Leigh access her community and maintain her independence; she used it when she was a volunteer at PAWS. The inability to do things at the last minute and the time it takes to do any errand are both barriers she encounters using paratransit. Things that take most people 10 or 15 minutes take hours because paratransit requires booking days ahead and remaining at the destination for at least an hour. Leigh’s sister lives in Bothell, and can sometimes give her rides, but Leigh isn’t comfortable inconveniencing people that way. Ride-hails are expensive and not all ride-hail vehicles are accessible for her. She’d like a cost-effective form of transit readily available 24 hours a day. Leigh is curious about self-driving cars but doesn’t think they will be available in her lifetime.

**“I’ve brought up the idea of shortening the duration for how long people using paratransit have to be at a destination. Because you don’t want somebody with a disability, especially with immune issues or joint issues, waiting outside where it’s cold or wet or snowy or icy and it’s precarious. The feedback is, ‘We’ll look into it,’ but nothing gets done.”**

## Quinn



**"The bus schedules are pretty tight. I get off the bus. And then the next one comes in two minutes. So I'll sometimes end up missing a bus and being late to work. And that's extremely problematic. I'm worried that it's gonna happen enough to where I might lose my job. And that's a constant concern."**

Quinn is 18 and lives in Snohomish. He has been getting to his job in Lake Stevens and to friends' places using the bus. He is trying to get driving experience so he can get licensed, but his car is broken down right now. When he first started taking the bus a couple of months ago, figuring out where he needed to go and the schedule was very complicated, although it did get easier over time. Right now he doesn't have much need to leave the immediate area, but if he needed to, he thinks it could be a difficult process. His transportation experience would be a lot better if everything was within walking distance — when he lived in Lake Stevens he was able to walk to work. One big problem he has right now is that he can't get the bus home after nine p.m..

So after work, he sometimes has to walk about six miles to get home. He'd like elected officials to know that it would be 100 percent more helpful if buses ran later.

**"I don't really have support from my parents. So I've had to figure out a lot of this stuff on my own. And it's been a hard process."**

## Chris and Raven\*

**"Right now we're waiting because we missed the bus by two minutes, and we're waiting an hour for the next bus. It's just ridiculous." — Chris**

Chris and Raven live in Lake Stevens, where Raven grew up and where Chris's mom lives, after being priced out of the Bay Area, and partly due to the pandemic. They both get around by walking and taking the bus. Raven commutes by bus to Lynnwood, where they are starting a new job. Chris and Raven are excited for light rail to be extended. BART, the Bay Area light rail, was expensive, but it was also very convenient and went everywhere. Both Chris and Raven experience a number of barriers while riding the bus. Some bus drivers don't let Duke, their service dog, on, or insist that the dog has to be in a carrier. Raven is hearing impaired, and one barrier for them is that if they don't know their bus route well, it's way too hard to hear and miss the audio bus announcements. That means they have to pay a lot of attention to their phone to make sure they know where they are going, and they have to write it all down beforehand. For Chris, who is sensitive, it can be difficult to be so close to so many other people when the bus is crowded. Also, the lack of bus service, the number of transfers required, and the difficulty of figuring out how to get around have all kept Chris from joining groups they belong to — for example, recently they skipped a gathering because it was too hard to get to their meeting in Bellevue by bus. Chris and Raven agree that if they had a car they would go out a lot more, to the beach and other fun places. But owning a car would be way too expensive, and Raven let their driver's license lapse during COVID. For Chris and Raven, an ideal community would be one where most things were just a quick walk away, or just a single bus ride away, or with far fewer and less complicated transfers. Buses would be less expensive, and would have easy stops and travel everywhere they need to go. Chris and Raven would like elected leaders to know that there are some really unsafe bus stops around Lake Stevens. There's one at highway 9 where the crosswalk is marked to the median, but then there is not another crosswalk. They have to wait for traffic that is coming off highway 9 and it's very dangerous. They would also like leaders to know that bus trips require too many transfers, and that transfers are too complicated, and that more bus frequency is needed. They would like people who can drive to understand that there is a lot of privilege in owning a car and drivers should not look down on people who ride the bus — it's harder than you think.

**"I'm lucky enough that I can drive, but I don't have access to a car, and it's way too much money. Even if I could afford a car, the insurance, the gas, it's all too much right now." — Raven**

*\*Chris and Raven are pseudonyms.*

## William

**"I don't mind being picked up early, but not two or three hours before my appointment time. If I had an appointment time, say at 10 o'clock, I should be allowed to be picked up around 9 o'clock, versus around 8 o'clock or earlier."**

William lives in Darrington, Washington and gets around using ACCESS paratransit. He has been Blind since birth. Getting picked up super early by paratransit can be frustrating, sometimes a couple of hours before his appointment time. In Darrington, he can walk to the McDonald's, Denny's and restaurant called Casa Durango. If he could change things, he wishes there were more options for on-demand paratransit, so he could go places "in the drop of a hat." He also thinks the paratransit pickup was adjacent to the ferry terminal in Seattle, so he wouldn't have to cross the large and intimidating Alaska Way to get to his ride. He often takes the ferry to go visit friends.

**"The pickup point for the ferry docks, maybe it could be on the same side of the street, rather than having to cross the street."**

# Legislative District 45

## Colin

**“The bus stop that stops closest to my house does not actually have a crosswalk. I have to get off and wait for a safe moment to cross without any protection, or I have to go further up the street where there's a crosswalk with a flashing yellow light, but there's not a stop sign. And nobody's stopping for you, especially during rush hour. You have to take the bus another block to get to an actual red light and crosswalk. I'm an asthmatic with spinal damage -- you're asking me to go several blocks out of my way to just travel safely. And that can be a really big deal.”**

Colin lives in Woodinville near Avondale, in zy own words “pretty much the middle of nowhere.” Colin uses a cane or crutches and, on bad days, a manual wheelchair. Usually, Colin would take the bus everywhere, though sometimes zy is able to get rides from friends and family. Currently, the two King County Metro bus routes, near where Colin lives, the 931 and the 232, are indefinitely suspended. Even when they ran, the last bus ran at 7:30 p.m. on weekdays, with no service on weekends and no service in the middle of weekdays. Colin once got stuck in Redmond coming back from a doctor's appointment in Seattle. Colin's first bus got stuck in traffic, so zy missed the last bus home and had to pay for a super-expensive Uber. Colin has seen transit service where zy lives get worse and worse throughout the years, and zy is concerned that these cuts will remain permanent. The nearest bus stop now is a two-hour walk up a road with no sidewalks. The lack of sidewalks is a safety concern for Colin. When the buses stop on Colin's street, they have to park in the opposite lane of traffic to have enough space to get the ramp down. There's also no light to cross the street at the nearest bus stop.

**“They did a survey, and decided that not enough people were riding that bus, which was why they originally cut some of its hours. And then they decided still not enough people were riding the bus so they cut more hours, and still not enough people were riding the bus so they cut more hours and more trips. And like, as somebody who was riding the bus throughout that entire time, very consistently people who would get on the bus and comment to the bus driver that they couldn't reliably get anywhere anymore. The reason they didn't ride the bus anymore was because its schedule was so reduced that it was non-functional.”**

**“There's a lot of expectation that your schedule and your ability to do things will be exactly the same as somebody who drives. And then bafflement from people when they're like, ‘But wait, why do you have to leave at six,’ or ‘Why can't you go to this evening movie?’ or so on.”**

## Evelyn

**“Not even the main bus apps, Google Maps, the Puget Sound Transit website or One Bus Away, they're hardly trustworthy now because they all have documentation of the old routes and the old stops. But most of the buses don't go the old routes anymore. So I can't even trust those. I have to kind of go by instinct.”**

Evelyn is a student at the University of Washington and lives in Seattle, but still spends a lot of time in Sammamish with her family. When she's in Sammamish she shares a car with her family, but in Seattle

she won't drive because it's too expensive, stressful and her car could get damaged too easily. So in Seattle, Evelyn rides transit. Part of the reason she lives in a house with other students is because the bus routes to Sammamish don't run late nights, so she'd not be able to participate in social activities at school if she didn't live in Seattle. Evelyn has been frustrated by the consolidations of bus stops, and route changes that mean that the stop nearest to her house got eliminated. She used to be able to leave five minutes before her bus, but now she has to plan for 20 minutes before her bus. Also, with all the changes with COVID, she finds that a lot of the route planning apps have inaccurate information on routes and bus arrivals, and being a woman/femme means that she has to be worried about her safety and take extra precautions like finding other people to walk with, and carrying pepper spray. She finds being in Seattle very stressful compared to Sammamish, for a lot of reasons, but many related to how it is for her to get around using the transit system.

**“Traffic is always scary. I've been hit by a car once. February 2020, I was on my way to the bus to go down. I'm legally crossing the road, and there was a car turning left, and she didn't see me. I saw her turning left, and she didn't seem to be slowing down. And I probably had like a split second to realize that she was gonna hit me. And so I started jumping out of the way and I managed to make it so that only the corner of a car hit me so there wasn't any serious injuries.”**

Sara B.

**“Of course ACCESS isn't as convenient as my own car. But the drivers, going and coming home, were very kind and attentive, and it is a relief to leave the driving to them.”**

Sara lives in Kirkland and just recently applied for and qualified to use paratransit after she decided it was time to stop driving; she also depends on her daughter for some rides, and walks in her neighborhood. It has not been easy to adapt to not being able to drive, but using Metro ACCESS has been a good experience so far. She used it to go to a medical appointment, and found the drivers polite, patient, and attentive to her safety. She plans to continue using the service and is grateful for the option.



## Legislative District 46

### Maud



**“Not being able to get around the city because of lack of access is not an inconvenience — it significantly interferes with the ability to get necessities like health care, getting to work, getting food,, in addition to having a life: seeing friends, getting to council meetings, attending community events. It’s the difference between being able to have a life in the community and not have a life in the community.”**

Maud is a disability activist and lifelong crutch user who now also uses a powerchair. She does not drive or have a wheelchair accessible van, so she relies on public transportation. Maud lives in dread of snowy winters where the snow will block sidewalks and curb cuts and keep her trapped at home. She is also frustrated by the lack of sidewalks in Seattle, for instance, she has to navigate a stretch of Sand Point Way with cars if she’s trying to get to a city beach near her home. She is also frustrated that only two wheelchairs will fit on a bus. She could be forced to wait out in the weather without shelter or a restroom, and that causes adverse health impacts for her because of her disability.

**“We are always, it seems, an afterthought. Like, ‘Oh, it’s not accessible, oh, well, then you, you disabled person need to point that out to us. And maybe we’ll fix it, and maybe we won’t.’ You know, it’s been 30 years since the ADA was passed. So, at this point, I have lost patience with entities who say, we haven’t gotten to that access piece yet. Policymakers need to be accountable for seeing access as a non-negotiable necessity. We are not an exception. We are part of ‘We the People.’ And the rights that everyone without a disability has are the rights that we need policymakers to ensure people with disabilities have.”**

### Marti



**“When I had this medical condition pop up, I thought that riding the bus wasn’t cool. And that only people who didn’t have money rode the bus. That was just a really bad stereotype on my part. And now I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”**

Marti is a music teacher who lives in Seattle. She hasn’t driven for the last 25 years because of a health issue and so gets around by foot or by bus. She loves the “fabulous” bus service in her neighborhood that allows her to get downtown easily, as well as getting to medical appointments and other things she needs to use on a daily basis. To visit relatives in other parts of the state, Marti uses Amtrak. The biggest hurdle she faces is how long it takes to get some places — for example, from her home to the Eastside it takes an hour and 15 minutes by bus because she has to transfer three or four times. Marti knows that a lot of people right now can’t afford cars, and so they’re

riding transit. Her suggestion would be to run more routes more frequently, especially if elected leaders want to encourage more people to ride the bus and limit congestion on the freeways.

**“It’s very fortunate that I live where I live, because I’m three blocks away from a bus stop on either side. I don’t have to drive at all. And I really like that. I take the bus and catch up on my reading.”**

## Anisa



**“People who can drive have no idea what somebody who cannot drive goes through, especially somebody who cannot easily access public transportation. Having a car is very convenient. You don’t have to check the timing on the public transportation schedules. And you don’t have to wait. You don’t have to figure out in non-visual ways where the bus stop is or if the bus stop changed because of construction.”**

Anisa lives near Northgate. Before COVID, she used the bus to get around. When traveling to unfamiliar places, or when she has to change buses, Anisa prefers paratransit. If she has to go somewhere immediately, she’ll take a taxi or ride-hail. If she’s going further out of town, she tries to get a ride from friends. Anisa is an immigrant and is still learning orientation and mobility skills to navigate on her own as a Blind pedestrian and transit user. It can be difficult to navigate intersections or places where there are multiple bus stops. When paratransit or ride-hail providers expect her to find them, she has a difficult time and wishes those systems and drivers had better ways to locate and connect with Blind users. The paratransit system doesn’t allow drivers to communicate directly with customers, so she has to communicate through a dispatcher when trying to find her driver, which adds a lot of confusion. She really wishes she had more options to be able to get out of town and enjoy the outdoors. For example, she’d like to have transit options to the snow parks.

**“I had a hard time when I was going to the university because there was a lot of construction going on, and the bus stops were changing constantly. So the school police, or sometimes drivers or other people, had to flag me and let me know that the bus stop had moved, or that there was something blocking my way. It was not easy.”**

## Aurora



**"It's time. It's money. And then it's anxiety. And it's, *Can I afford to take the time, spend the money and go through the anxiety to get to work?* And some days, I can't, and I have to stay home, and then I'm not making money and then I can't afford transit and it snowballs."**

Aurora lives in Seattle and gets around on public transit and getting rides from friends. She has a permit to get her driver license, but right now she doesn't have time to get it, and finding a car and a place to learn is not easy. Aurora's biggest barrier is how much time it can take to get places. Getting to work in Shoreline can take 30 minutes if her transfer comes right away. Other times that second bus doesn't come for 30 minutes. Sometimes it doesn't even show up, which means an hour's wait until the next run comes. It especially "sucks" in the rain and cold. Transit can also be expensive. She might have to spend \$10 a day to get to and from work, and she doesn't have any other choice. Another barrier is that the bus doesn't run the whole way on the weekends. Aurora hasn't been comfortable using transit during the pandemic. She doesn't get to see friends as often as she'd like because some don't live near buses. One close friend's home requires a long walk uphill for the first half of the walk from the bus stop; the second half is on a very busy street that doesn't have a great sidewalk, which is scary. Another thing that makes her feel unsafe is bus stops that tend to accumulate a lot of trash. Those stops tend to be unlit and not as visible. When they get trashy it makes her feel like the likelihood of something happening to her there is higher, and she doesn't feel comfortable waiting there. The new Link stations don't help her and ones under construction won't, either. She likes the Transit Go App because it has all the modes on it, but if her phone dies she would be stranded. She'd like people who can drive to understand she cannot just spontaneously decide to do things — she has to plan her day around transit. Also, it can physically take a lot of her to walk from bus stop to bus stop — they are not always right next to each other. She would like elected leaders to know that they need to address how little information riders get. Aurora rides the 372 a lot. It was recently put on a long-term reroute because of construction. It took her days to figure that out because there wasn't good information available on the route, and the online maps still show the old route. Riders need information that is all current and to be kept in the loop with changes.

**"There's a lot of empty space in our transit system. Right now, if I want to get to the hospital from my house, it is three buses to get there, or two buses and a walk. I think that is ridiculous."**

## Sara T.

**"I like taking paratransit, but it doesn't always get us to where we want to go on time, or they get us there too early, or if you forget to make your appointment, then you are pretty much stuck."**

Sara lives in Seattle, and she is visually impaired. She usually uses fixed-route buses, light rail, and paratransit to get around. Recently she got a new job and has started relying on paratransit more often, to get to work. The fixed-route bus requires her to cross a very busy street, and has no accessible audible signal for her to cross safely. It's really hard for Sara to know when she should cross a busy street without that audible signal, and she doesn't want to get hit by a car. Also, Sara misses out when it comes to going to places outside of Seattle, because that takes a lot more transfers, a lot more planning, or the bus does

not even go to some areas. If she wants to go to Ocean Shores, she can't because there are no buses that go out there, and paratransit does not go that far out. Sara feels like by being dependent on transit to get around, she doesn't have a lot of choice, and it's not really accessible.

**"If you are disabled and can't drive, you have to find someone who can drive you there, or you cannot go to the small towns that you would like to visit. It means a lot of people who depend on public transit have no way to get to smaller cities independently."**

## Elliot



Elliot lives in Seattle. He normally gets around by taking the bus. Some of the challenges are that it is difficult to know where to get on and off the bus at different stops. Another barrier is that he lives near only one bus route, and it's a 15-minute walk. When it's raining, that 15 minute walk is a challenge. In the future, Elliot hopes that there will be more bus routes that serve his neighborhood.

**“Taking the bus is easier because you don’t get stuck in traffic. Also it is easier to take the bus because you don’t have to worry about driving and you can let someone else do the driving. It is quicker to take the bus because you don’t have to remember to take keys or use a navigation system. Another thing is that you don’t have to worry about watching for**

**pedestrians or bikers.”**

## Renee



**"Which bus route should I take? Do I even take the bus or do I walk? Do I bike? How would I dress? I don't want to be wearing my high heels, walking to the bus. Seattle is rainy. Which bag should I bring? And is it waterproof? Is it going to mess up my outfit? Do I wear something that's not waterproof?"**

Renee lives in NE Seattle and mostly relies on the bus for transportation. During the pandemic she initially began taking Uber, but now that she is vaccinated she is more comfortable taking the bus again. Renee's biggest barrier to getting where she needs to go is the amount of time bus trips can take, especially if the ride requires a transfer. Another barrier is the limited number of places she can get to by bus, so if a friend asks her to go somewhere, the first thing she has to think about is how she would get there and how much time it would take. Going hiking or otherwise getting out of the city is inconvenient if not impossible. Renee has definitely reconsidered just how much she

wants to go to parties and events and even getting groceries or meeting friends because of how long it can take to get there. Eventually she does want a car but right now it's not affordable, and she wouldn't want to spend money on something she probably isn't going to use that often right now, since she is in grad school. Sometimes she imagines how much less planning she'd have to do for things like getting groceries if she had a car — she wouldn't have to worry about time or how much she could carry. Other things she has to figure out are how she will get home safely if she's been drinking with friends on a Friday night. It can be uncomfortable waiting for the bus alone and walking to the bus, especially at night, and Renee doesn't want to be a target for harassment or worse. As a smaller, Asian woman she does worry about that. Renee would like people who can drive to understand how many steps she has to consider before she gets to her destination. She would create new solutions for these kinds of transportation problems, like adding bike lanes to many more roads and more stores closer to where people live.

**"I spent time in Denmark. Every single road has a bike lane. So it is very convenient. You can bring your bike on the train. Getting a bicycle there is as critical as getting a car here in the United States. You can't get anywhere without a bike there just like you can't get anywhere without a car here."**

## Mary

**"We live here too. We want to enjoy our neighborhood!"**

Mary lives in Lake City, Seattle and uses a car and wheelchair to get around. Broken or nonexistent sidewalks are the biggest barriers she experiences to getting around her community. Because of that, she says she misses out on things all the time.

## Willa

**"My partner is in a wheelchair and I use a walker. I sometimes have to walk in the street just because it's easier, even when the road is narrow."**

Willa is homeless and currently lives in the Lake City/Shoreline area. They normally get around by bus, walking and, occasionally, by car, when it's financially possible. Willa experiences a lot of barriers. Curb slopes impact Willa to the point where it can be more accessible to walk in the street. Another barrier is overgrowth on sidewalks that blocks or makes sidewalks difficult to walk on, or when snow gets plowed onto the sidewalk. This makes it nearly impossible for Willa to even get to transit and restricts their partner, who is in a wheelchair, to have to stay where they are and forfeit necessities. There's no traction on large hills. This makes traveling up or down on sidewalks very dangerous, especially when it rains. Willa must stockpile groceries and go extreme distances to get to simple places, because of the lack of accessible sidewalks. It can be uncomfortable to be on the bus for Willa, because drivers pack people in to where it's difficult to sit with their walker. Also with COVID and the flu it feels risky. Willa misses appointments sometimes, and they find their door-to-door shuttle provider Hopelink can be unreliable. For example, in the recent snow, Hopelink canceled all pickups. Willa thinks drivers should care about transit and sidewalks because gas prices continue to increase. As more people can't afford to drive, inaccessible sidewalks are going to become a problem for more people.

**"I can put groceries on my walker and my partner can put some in their wheelchair, but it's tough to get everything we need. Your carrying capacity is very limited and the time it takes to do anything is very extensive."**

## Ben

**"I have to either plan in advance, spend more money or more time."**

Ben lives in the Seattle area. Ben uses his bike most of the time to get around. For longer commutes, he uses the Link or bus. Some barriers that inhibit Ben from getting to where he wants to go include the availability and timing of bus routes. These limit him from getting to destinations like a specific place in

SeaTac. Certain bus routes are not available on weekends. There are gaps in schedules and it is not always feasible to wait for the buses he needs. He misses out on traveling freely. Ben wants people who can drive to know that there is lots of variability in public transit infrastructure. It is easy to go where transit coverage is good, but harder to go just two miles east of Capitol Hill.

## Alex

**“I couldn’t afford to pay for gas, so that’s why I don’t have a car.”**

Alex lives in the Capitol Hill neighborhood in Seattle. He gets around by taking the bus, light rail, and walking. There are two main barriers for Alex to get to where he needs to go. First, he has to constantly monitor his surroundings when he is walking or on public transit. He also has to be aware of potential threats from strangers. Second, Alex has to constantly check bus and light rail schedules so that he’s on time. It’s challenging to simultaneously stay aware of his surroundings and of transit schedules. Sometimes he misses out on attending concerts, open mics, and other local events. Alex wants people who can drive to know that the bus and light rail can be dangerous, and he thinks it’s probably safer to get around in the protection of a car. He still prefers public transit though, because it is much more affordable than driving. Also, you don’t have to worry about parking. Alex wants drivers to know that if they get tired of driving, they can come take the bus and the light rail.

## Cary

**“It is hard to see me in my wheelchair, I’m not very tall. So if I’m in a parking lot going into the grocery store or something, it can be really scary because I worry that somebody won’t see me.”**

Cary\* is homeless around the Lake City area. They normally get around using their power chair, buses, and Medicaid transportation to appointments. Buses are extremely overwhelming for Cary’s sensory issues. Sidewalks aren’t well maintained, so sometimes even if there is a sidewalk they have to go into the street because they can’t get over the bumps or the separated sides of a big crack. There also aren’t always curb ramps, which makes many places completely inaccessible. Cary also worries about getting hit by vehicles, especially in large parking lots or other places where drivers don’t notice Cary because they are in a wheelchair.

**“I can’t go into places with even just a step if there isn’t a ramp, so I miss out on those places. If there isn’t a curb cutout I end up needing to go into the street, which can be very dangerous and scary.”**

# Legislative District 47

## Andrew



**“One time I had stopped at Arby's to get myself dinner after work. And it's pitch black when I got out of the restaurant. I'm there cruising on one side of the road, hoping not to get run over. Because of all the headlights I couldn't really see. Some guy yelled at me and I'm like, 'Well, there's no sidewalk!'”**

Andrew lives in Covington and uses a walker or manual wheelchair to get around. He mostly gets rides from his caregiver, because he finds it difficult to use the bus. Andrew gave up on using buses because he was not able to use the ramps independently when they were so often angled too steeply as a result of missing or poorly maintained sidewalks at bus stops, and bus drivers aren't permitted to help push. He finds paratransit frustrating as well, because they always seem to show up an hour and a half later than scheduled. He used to live in Auburn and had a job with the Seahawks. Paratransit wasn't reliable, so his mom

would have to skip church to drive him to work.

The lack of curb ramps and sidewalks around Covington are also barriers. He ends up cutting through parking lots because the sidewalks won't connect, and he worries about getting hit by a car. He's had a lot of trouble trying to cross Highway 516, next to the Home Depot where he used to work. There's no curb cut at 185th street there — instead, he had to use a driveway and roll in the street. He wishes the lights along this highway were better timed for pedestrians, with more time to cross and shorter wait times. He's asked for changes, but Covington responded that they can't do much because Highway 516 is a state highway. He really wishes more sidewalks would get built, especially along main streets— it would save him a lot of time that he spends trying to detour through back streets and parking lots.

**“I'd make sure there were a lot of good smooth curb cuts, everywhere. And that you had 35 seconds to cross the street, like you do in Bellevue. At the highway intersections here you have about three seconds and then you almost get slammed. And the light takes 15 minutes to change.”**



## Khudhur

Khudhur lives in Kent and gets around using the bus. One of his biggest barriers is that the bus stop is so far from home — it's a long trip. He is an 80-year-old living with serious health conditions, and the bus doesn't go all the places he needs to go. The bus would be easier for him to use if he could leave using the back door instead of having to go all the way to the front.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Nidal

Nidal lives in Kent and gets around using the bus. Some barriers Nidal comes up against are the long waits for buses, and bus stops that are often far away. Nidal has asthma, so walking to distant bus stops is difficult for her. She would like her community to be safer. Nidal would like elected officials to know that more and closer bus stops are needed and fare should be lower.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Samj

Samj lives in Kent and gets around using the bus. Buses don't come on time; when that happens, Samj is unable to get to his appointments. In his ideal community, people would be less careless about following rules and laws. Samj would like elected officials to know that he needs the bus to come on time.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Yasir

Yasir lives in Kent and uses the bus to get around. One of the biggest barriers for Yasir is that he has trouble walking, and the bus stops are far away. In a more ideal community, other people would better understand his experiences. He'd like elected officials to know that more bus stops closer to the mall and medical centers are needed.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Joseph

**"It would be nice if there were public transit available to National Parks and beaches, and other tourist attractions. Recreation is pretty much impossible."**

Joseph lives in Auburn and gets around by taking the bus, the Sounder train, and riding his bicycle; he also walks. He has a driver license but he doesn't see well at night so stopped driving about 10 years ago. Having a car was expensive and he didn't use it enough to justify the cost. His biggest barrier is that taking the bus takes longer than driving, but he lives in a place with good access to transit, so overall he doesn't have a lot of barriers. One time the bike rack on the bus he was trying to take didn't fit his bike, although that's not a regular occurrence, and biking from bus stops to his destinations can save him a lot of time. Joseph takes transit to Tukwila station and then rides his bike the rest of the way to work in Renton. He will make the commute home by bicycle on trails if he has daylight. If he works late and it's dark, he doesn't ride in the traffic for safety reasons. Instead, he takes the bus back to Auburn station and then takes another bus or rides his bike back home. It would be better if bus stops were closer to

trailheads; Joseph rides the Interurban and Green River Trails a lot and his trips would be faster and safer if buses stopped at trailheads. Renton has done some work on making sure traffic signals detect bicycles, but there are still a lot of intersections that don't detect bicycles. He would like decision makers to know that his transportation experience would be better if bus trips were faster. It currently takes him an hour to get to work in Renton, which would be a 25- or 30-minute drive. He thinks bus schedules could line up better, have less wait time between transfers, and have routes that go longer distances.

## Rajwinder

**“Availability of public transportation in the area is one of the biggest barriers, as there are not many bus services in the Kent area. A lot of the routes have been cut so I must walk long distances to catch multiple different buses to get to [my] destination. Sometimes I [am] late because of routes changing and I have to walk for too long and miss the bus. I go from Kent to Bellevue for work and it takes a long time because of having to get different buses. A lot of time is spent just to get to a small distance.”**

Rajwinder lives in the Kent East Hill community and uses a variety of public transportation such as the bus, the Sounder train, and Link light rail. Sometimes her family members must drive her or she carools with coworkers. She finds the bus drivers are sometimes nice but can be very ignorant and rude. They don't respect passengers who don't speak English and treat her rudely. She has to rely on family members or friends who have a car and license.

**“For some people it is a lot of trouble to get around if they don't know how to drive or can afford a car and to pay for parking. [People who can drive] never have to plan their life according to other people and their availability to drive [them] places or bus schedules. They don't have to think about their safety or having to physically run to catch the bus. They should be happy they have money to buy a car and license.”**

## Weda

**“We have only one car, so I use the buses a lot.”**

Weda lives in Auburn. She can drive, but her household has one car and when her husband takes the car, she rides the bus. Everything works well for her with the bus, except she wishes there were bus shelters for waiting.

## Nilab

**“If I can drive, it's easier with the kids, but walking to the bus stop with my kids is harder.”**

Nilab rides the bus and drives. Her household has one vehicle, so when her husband goes to work with the car, she rides the bus.

## Saleha

**“The bus stop is a little far from our building. If it’s possible, it would be great to have the stop on the other side of the apartment complex.”**

Saleha uses the bus and finds it easy to get around, as there are a lot of buses. The bus stop near her apartment is a little far to access. She would love it if there was a bus stop closer to her apartment complex. She also wishes it had a bus shelter so she could be protected from the weather when she waits.

**“Sometimes, when [there’s] rain or sun, it’s hard to wait.”**

## Khadija

**“Sometimes I take the bus, sometimes I drive. Driving with my children is [better] because it’s easier. it takes a long time to wait for the bus, and it takes longer to get places.”**

Khadija lives in Auburn and both takes the bus and drives. When traveling with her children, she finds it much, much easier to drive because of the extra time it takes to wait for the bus and because of having to wait out in the weather.

**“We wait for a long time. Sometimes it rains. Sometimes it’s sunny. It’s not great for the kids because of the conditions.”**

# Legislative District 48

## Brian B.

**“I was in China. The sidewalks have Braille the full length of them. Wow! Yellow tile with bumps that change at intersections and corners. Blind people can tell there's a turn, and where the door to the store is, and where every intersection is.”**

Brian lives in downtown Redmond and uses a power wheelchair. He can drive and he can walk with leg braces and crutches, but finds transit works best for him, especially immediately after the frequent leg surgeries he must have. Brian is tall and after his surgeries he is unable to bend his knee completely. At these times, he can barely get on most Metro buses. He finds that the Rapid Ride and Sound Transit buses are better designed for wheelchair use. Brian is looking forward to light rail opening in Redmond. Brian uses bike lanes more than sidewalks right now because the sidewalks are bumpy, narrow, or lack curb cuts, and he knows he is not the only wheelchair users who prefers bike lanes to sidewalks. For Brian, a better transportation system would let him move through his community more easily with accessible beg buttons at all intersections or automated crosswalk signals, multiple elevators at each light rail platform in case one fails, or long ramps, wider sidewalks that are smooth and have curb cuts at all intersections, wider curb cuts that are easier to navigate, more ADA parking spots that accommodate vans, and for new commercial construction to require automatic doors. Brian would like infrastructure to be built more thoughtfully to be as accessible and user-friendly as possible.

## Fanda

Fanda lives in Redmond and gets around on public transportation. Fanda's biggest barriers are that a trip that is only 10 minutes away by car is a 30-minute trip by bus, and getting to Seattle is difficult. There have been times that when she's been in a hurry to catch the bus, she's forgotten her mask, and then missed the bus because she couldn't get on without the mask, so she was late to work. She would like masks available at each station or some way to buy a mask from the bus driver or get one for free. She would like elected officials to know that traveling during COVID has been hard.

*Story provided by Living Well Kent.*

## Legislative District 49

Abby



**"I barely see my family unless they come to pick me up, because there's no way I could get to my mom's house by taking public transportation."**

**"In 2019, when I was riding on a TriMet train in Portland, a fare enforcer asked me to show him my ticket purchase and I showed him my ticket. After showing proof of my ticket, the inspector insistently asked me for an Honor Citizen card. At that time, I did not know what the Honor Citizen card was (later I learned that the Honor Citizen card offers reduced fare to individuals with disabilities, people of low-income, and the elderly). I told the inspector that I do not have an Honor Citizen card and I do not know what an Honor Citizen card was, but the fare enforcer decided to continue stressing me out by asking me. I was sitting**

**down but I was holding my white cane in front of me. I am sure he knows that I am Blind. I was feeling very nervous and scared during the interaction because the enforcer's tone of voice felt very aggressive to me. Since this incident happened, I feel unsafe when riding the TriMet train. Especially when I am riding by myself. It causes me anxiety. Whenever I hear a fare inspector coming on the board, my body shakes, and I feel pain in my stomach."**

Abby is a Blind student at Washington State University, Vancouver. She lives in a low-income housing apartment complex and gets around on public transit but sometimes uses ride-hailing services. The two closest bus stops from her home are at least a 10-minute walk. Some of the biggest barriers for Abby are low bus frequency and the lack of bus stops. Her trip to school takes three buses and two hours. Abby grew up in Ridgefield, where she was unable to travel independently because there is no bus service there. She would like to see more rural public transportation in places like her hometown, and more bus stops with better frequency, especially in low-income communities. She would like wider, more accessible sidewalks for wheelchair users and Blind people like her so that she could more easily get around by walking.

**"There are rainy days and there are snowy days. I don't only go out in the summer and spring during beautiful weather. I have to get out and go places but it's not that exciting to stand at a bus stop an entire hour waiting for the bus. My situation during the heatwave was that if I had accessible transportation, I could [have gone] to the store to pick up the things I needed or gone somewhere cooler when my apartment was very hot. I have to walk very far away to catch a bus to go to the store or anywhere. If we had accessible transportation, such as a shuttle bus service that we could call and reserve within the hour or even same-day service, I would have used that. I wish we had an emergency vehicle or something to reserve the same day, because not everyone can afford to take a Lyft or an Uber all the time."**

## Betty

**“The more people can remain independent, the better self-esteem they have. It is ultimately less costly to the system for us to live independently and have accessible transportation to get to doctors’ appointments, grocery stores, visit people or go to church.”**

Betty is Blind and lives in the Minnehaha District in Vancouver. She primarily uses paratransit, but occasionally uses fixed-route buses. Betty has previously lived in New York City and a small town in Idaho, so she’s experienced using transit systems of all sizes. One barrier she currently experiences is a lack of good communication for the visually-impaired. Instead of telling her, “Take a seat,” drivers could say, “There is going to be a seat on your right two rows back.” Another challenge is the way service disruptions are announced, with a posted sign that isn’t useful for visually impaired people. Betty was a rehabilitation teacher for the visually impaired, and saw how much better off her clients were when they could avoid being institutionalized, and maintain independence, which transportation plays a critical role in supporting. If Betty could change the transportation system, paratransit would have more flexibility so she wouldn’t have to budget so much time for essential errands like grocery shopping, and she would make sure that sidewalks were maintained, free from bumps and cracks that make them difficult and unsafe for the visually impaired or people with walkers or wheelchairs to use. Betty would also have people who use the system included in the planning process, and ensure that agencies, staff, and drivers learn the different needs that people with different disabilities have. Each disability has its own unique demands and the more that drivers and service providers know, the better the system is for riders.

**“People are so used to going out their front door and jumping into their car, and never thinking about the condition of the sidewalk, because they don’t use it. Safety-wise it’s critical for people to have good sidewalks.”**

## Chris



**“[Finding housing] can be a struggle to figure out — can I walk to a grocery store if I need to, or is there a bus that can take me without having to transfer five times?”**

Chris lives in Clark County, very close to Vancouver. She has been legally Blind since birth, and her vision continues to steadily decrease over time; she expects to be completely Blind eventually. She depends on fixed-route buses, paratransit, and walking for mobility. Chris’s biggest barrier to getting around her community is that the area near her home has very few sidewalks, and the sidewalks that do exist are in terrible condition. There’s also a lack of audible crosswalk signals, which is frustrating. It would be easier for Chris to get around if the nearby bus routes ran more often. Some of C-TRAN’s routes run every 15-minutes, but routes near her run only every 30 or 60 minutes. It’s even harder to get

things done on the weekends, when the buses run even less often. When Chris moved here in 2002, the process involved many trade-offs. Finding a home close to fixed-route transit was important for her family. They would have liked to have found a place that was within walking distance to most places she needs to go, but they had to prioritize other considerations like affordability and transit access. Her family has considered moving, but there's a lot to think about, from Chris needing to learn her way around a new neighborhood, to remaining in the same area to keep her daughter in the same school, to the fact that she would have to go further into the suburbs where she'd have sidewalks but transportation wouldn't be as good and where services and amenities might be not be as nearby. If Chris could change the transportation system, she would start by making sure that more intersections have audible signals, especially at larger intersections.

**“At quieter intersections you don’t feel as unsafe as at busier intersections — crossing a two-lane road versus if you are trying to cross four or five lanes you are worried about getting from one side to the other without the risk of being hit by someone who is going 40 miles an hour.”**

**“People who drive, for them it’s easy. ‘I need milk, it’s easy, it’s a 10-minute drive.’ If I need milk, it takes me an hour to get to the closest grocery store and an hour to get back. They don’t grasp that, they think ‘Safeway is only two miles away.’”**

## Merribeth

**“I have to take two buses to get to the church that I prefer to go to. It could take me 10 or 15 minutes by car. But it takes me a good 45 minutes to an hour to get there, and I have to do the reverse on the way back home.”**

Merribeth has low vision and lives in Vancouver, Washington. She normally gets around by taking the bus, and sometimes by walking. The bus schedule can be difficult, especially when she's scheduled to work on weekends and the bus doesn't run early enough to get her there in time for her shift. She really dislikes having to tell her boss she can't start work till eight because the bus isn't running. Taking an Uber to work, even though it's only a mile and a half away, costs \$15 with tip, so Merribeth can't afford that on a regular basis. When the bus is late, it causes her a lot of anxiety, because she prefers to arrive places on time. She's actually been told at work that she clocks in too early, because leaves extra time in case the bus is late. Now if she arrives early, she must wait to clock in and start getting paid. If she drove to work, it would take 10 minutes, but getting to the bus and leaving time for it to be late, it takes her 45 minutes. So Merribeth's commute eats up an extra hour of her time each day. She wishes there were more crosstown bus routes, and that Vancouver would repair cracked and bumpy sidewalks. She's noticed the city investing a lot in curb ramps, but the sidewalks in between are still inaccessible because of lack of repair.

**“There's a situation a couple weeks ago...I was [at work] 45 minutes early. So I changed my clothes into my uniform. But then I still had a half an hour. So I clocked in and started working. It was good that I did because they needed my help. But then I told the assistant boss and he was like, “you need to have asked if you could clock in early like that.”**

**“I live in an apartment in a duplex. So we had a portable AC in our bedroom. We hunkered down in there with the dog. It was definitely cooler in there, but the portable AC was working so hard all 4**

days...I am glad I did not have to stand outside for a bus in that heat. I almost did on the way home from Church on Sunday, and it was 100 degrees at noon. I would have had to take 2 buses and walk a half mile to the 1st bus, and half mile from the 2nd bus to my apartment.”

## Bob C.



**“People who are Blind are double impacted, because we spend more on transportation, yet our earning potential is a lot lower.”**

Bob lives in Vancouver, Washington and he takes Uber, Lyft, or the bus. Bob lived in Snohomish County before, and when he wanted to go someplace a long distance from home, a big barrier was the length of time spent on the bus, or the lack of transportation that aligned with his scheduled activity. He wished he had transportation options that would get him to his desired destination in a comparable time to that of a sighted driver, rather than having to spend two or three times as long

reaching his destination.

## Heather



**“Not having accessible transportation makes it so much tougher to get out of the house and meet new people. I feel like when getting out and exploring we have to rely more on others.”**

Heather lives in Vancouver and is legally Blind. Her parents usually drive her where she needs to go, but she sometimes uses paratransit and ride-hail apps. She doesn't use fixed-route bus service because she has a prosthetic leg, and the bus stops are too far away for her to walk to. Heather's biggest barrier is not being able to leave the house whenever she wants. She would like to see a bus stop closer to her house, frequent bus service, walkable sidewalks, discounts on Uber and Lyft, or to be able to schedule paratransit rides for the same day when she

needs to go somewhere.

## David P.

**“We recently had the hundred-and-fifteen-degree weather. I do not have air conditioning; most people who live in low-income housing in Vancouver do not have air conditioning. And so, I was told I should go to a Cooling Center. But it was on a Sunday and C-TRAN does not have some buses running on Sundays. So, a lot of people like me who depend on public transportation had no way to get to a Cooling Center.”**

David lives in unincorporated Hazel Dell just north of the city of Vancouver. David identifies as Deaf Plus, meaning he is a member of the ASL Deaf Community and has an additional ambulatory disability, which is not always visible. David mainly gets around by walking or by taking the bus. He recently graduated



from Gallaudet University with his master's degree in social work. One big barrier for David is not being able to afford a car to get jobs that require one. In order to get and keep a job, David needs accessible transportation. With a car, he could obtain a job, volunteer more, and socialize. Some Deaf events are late at night on weekends, and he would have no way home, so he is unable to socialize as much as he'd like. David believes there should be no transit fares, and that funds taxpayers put into the system should be enough. If riders show an honored citizen card, David thinks that should suffice for payment. David knows fares are a financial barrier for many people, so they stay home instead. He also thinks it is important to have covered shelters near grocery stores and apartment buildings on bus routes. There are no seated stops between David's home and the transit center, which can make it very hard to keep groceries out of the rain when you are already tired of walking and standing and have no covered shelter for miles. Another barrier for the Deaf Community is when a bus driver makes verbal announcements. With background noises, he cannot always hear what is said. He has seen Deaf people visibly upset when they cannot get off at their stop due to a detour they were not informed about. David believes that any verbal announcements by the driver to all passengers needs to also be translated into text in the vehicle for things such as unplanned route changes. David would like the state to create and fund a free driving program for people who are Deaf to be trained professionally by local driving schools, and provide nonprofits grants to help Deaf and disabled low-income people ability to buy and maintain a used car.

## Leeann



**“One of the biggest barriers in Vancouver is not having services that are accommodating to people with disabilities, and in my opinion, people who have disabilities should not be punished because they have to ride public transportation.”**

Leeann, lives in Vancouver, Washington, and she normally gets around by taking public transportation, walking, rideshares, Uber, or Lyft, and she also gets rides from her partner. Leeann has been using the Clark County bus system since she was thirteen. The hardest part of commuting in Vancouver is that sometimes the bus drivers are not very courteous, and they have passed Leeann multiple times when she was waiting for at the bus stop, and she had to wait for another 30 or

45 minutes.

**“To people who are privileged enough to drive, and who are able bodied and do not deal with these systematic challenges navigating a bus system, I would tell them to treat us just as you would treat any other person you love and respect. We are still people, we still matter. It doesn't make us any less of an individual and it doesn't take away from our value just because we cannot drive.”**

## Miguel

**“When you are transit dependent, you can't really just plan things as you go. You can't just do things on a whim or have an emergency. You have to plan everything ahead of time and you don't have much flexibility to do basic things like going to the store.”**

Miguel is a Blind college student and lives in Vancouver. He gets around by taking Lyft, Uber, fixed-route buses and paratransit. He commutes from Vancouver to Portland Community College, which takes him an hour and a half each way. Not being able to drive impacts Miguel's entire life. His biggest barrier is not being able to schedule paratransit rides in the same-day period. Miguel would like to see improvements in the transportation system so that he does not have to spend most of his day commuting.