

King County Metro Access Paratransit

Equity Impact Review

January 2020



King County
METRO

Moving forward together

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Background and Purpose

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) established regulations requiring that public transit systems provide paratransit or other special transportation services to individuals with disabilities that is comparable to the level of services provided to people without disabilities who use the fixed-route system. This means that paratransit regulations “mirror” fixed route by providing services on the same days of the week, during the same hours of service, and in the same service areas, with no priorities on trip purpose and no patterns or practices that would limit access, such as excessively long trips or late trips.

King County passed the Ordinance to authorize ADA and the Community Transportation Program in 1999. The King County Ordinance expands federal regulations by adding additional services such as door-to-door and hand-to-hand service; subscription services (regularly scheduled appointments that occur over the same days of the week); reservations up to seven days in advance; extended hours; and expanded service areas along the eastern boundary of King County.

Access service is a transit service, which means there is a grouping of rides; there is a half hour pick-up window; pick-ups can be up to an hour before or after the requested time; rides can be used for any purpose; and customers can have a personal care attendant or companion ride along.

Access has a robust certification process that includes a pre-application to determine if one should apply for services, a functional evaluation, and, finally, a determination of eligibility. Some riders are fully eligible for rides, and some riders are conditionally eligible, when they meet certain criteria that deem them unable to use the fixed-route bus system.

Access has been providing service to King County since 1999. Services were provided by three agencies, First Transit (Call Center), Transdev, and Solid Ground (Operations) until the end of October 2019 when MV Transportation became Metro’s new Access provider. The Metro Accessible Services team provides oversight for the contracted services. Certification is processed by Accessible Services staff.

In June 2017, the King County Auditor’s Office published a report, “Access Paratransit: Action Needed to Address Cost, Quality, and Equity.” Listed below are the key findings regarding Equity:

1. Data suggest that Access serves only a small number of people with limited English proficiency and is likely underserving certain populations.
2. People with limited English proficiency face multiple barriers to receiving paratransit services, limiting their use of this essential service.

3. Transit collects information about language needs but does not use it to improve service quality or program accessibility.
4. Although tools for assessing equity are readily available, Transit has not used them to assess the Access program and is likely underserving certain groups.
5. Transit does not conduct proactive outreach about the Access program and is not collecting information for an Equity Impact Review.
6. Based on the Equity Impact Review and best practices, Transit should:
 - a. Develop community impact measures for the Access paratransit program
 - b. Include the metrics in its Access paratransit performance monitoring plan
 - c. Annually report on equitable access to the program

As a King County service provider, we recognize that equitable access to transportation and mobility is a determinant of equity. In response to the key Equity Findings, Access has committed to conduct an Equity Impact Review. King County's Equity Impact Review includes the following five phases:

1. Scope: Identify who will be affected/served, particularly King County priority populations
2. Assess equity and community context: Understand disparities, barriers, and potentially unintended consequences to priority populations
3. Analysis and decision process: Evaluate equity impacts to priority populations, integrate community voice in decision-making, and prioritize equity outcomes in final decisions
4. Implement: How is the County staying connected with communities most negatively impacted, including partnering with them to develop outcome and accountability measures, as well as implementation
5. Ongoing learning: How is the County listening, communicating, adjusting and co-learning with communities most negatively impacted to continuously be responsive to their priorities and concerns

Phase 1: Scope and identify who will be affected

The Equity Impact Review Phase 1 is to develop a scope of work based on two key questions, the first of which is:

- **Identify who is or will be affected; specifically consider impacts to low-income populations, communities of color, immigrants and refugees, and limited-English speaking residents.**

Access Services to residents who have low-income and to residents who are people of color

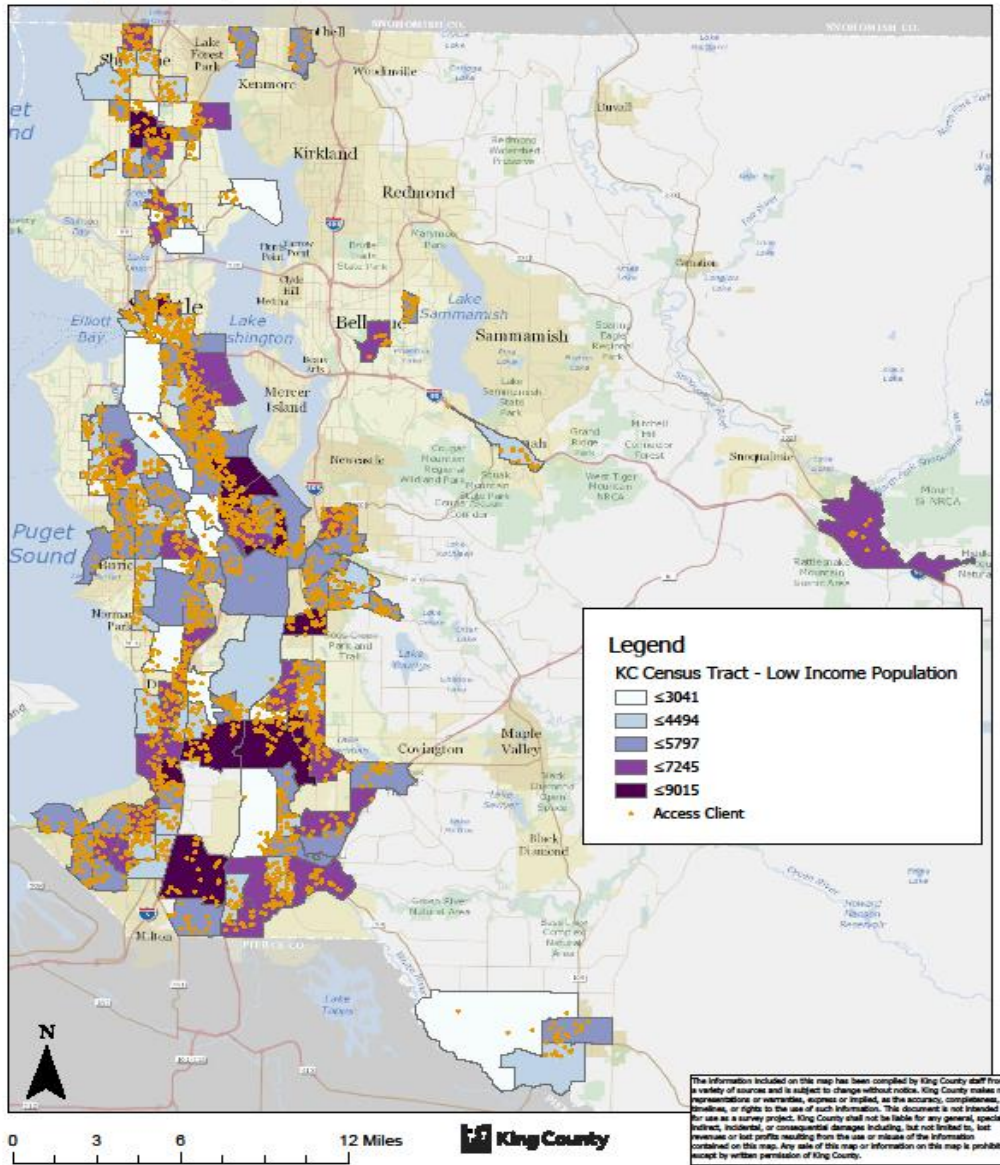
We have limited demographic and language information about our Access riders. King County currently has 13,942 (as of July 1, 2018) registered riders in its Access paratransit program. We currently do not collect extensive demographic data in adherence to this Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guideline: "Given the nature of ADA paratransit eligibility, an inherent degree of rigor and complexity in the process is often unavailable. However, as discussed in Appendix D to § 37.125, "the process may not impose unreasonable administrative burdens on applicants....Requesting extraneous or irrelevant information that has no bearing on ADA paratransit eligibility"-- FTA Guidance in Circular 4710.1 Chapter 9 – ADA Paratransit Eligibility states.

Our fixed-route system uses census tract data to determine potential minority and low-income ridership along that route. For low-income, fixed route defines a census tract as low-income if more than 24% of its population is below 200% of the federal poverty level and defines a census tract as minority if more than 37% of its population belongs to a minority group based on race, color, and national origin.

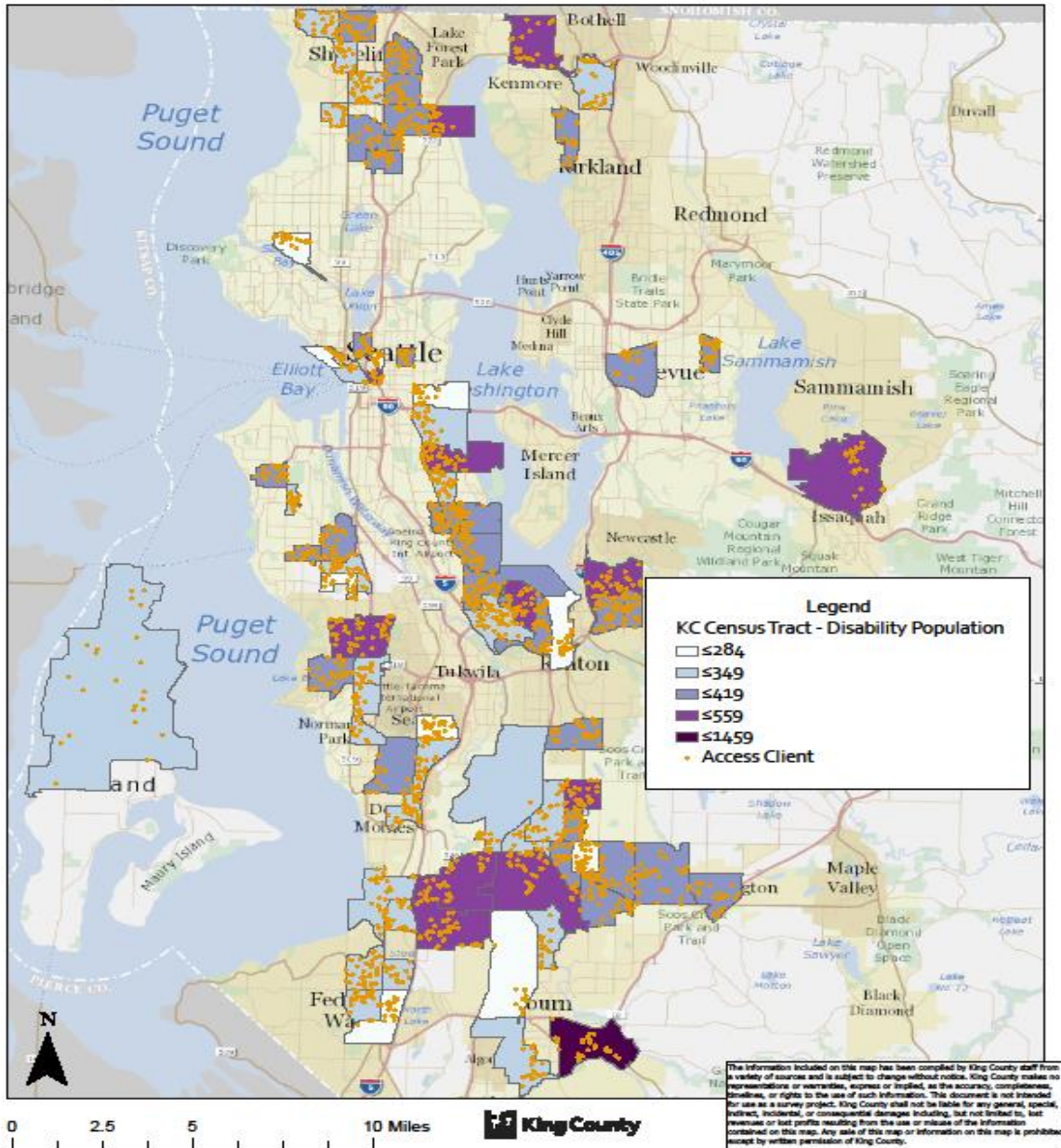
Access is able to identify where Access riders live. Using a similar method for data collection for fixed route, census tract data is used to identify low-income, minority (people of color), and disability percentages in each tract. This provided a very rough estimate of a baseline for demographic data for Access riders.

Using census tract data, we can estimate that 38% of Access riders are minority (people of color), and 29.4% are low-income. We can also use census block data to estimate minority ridership (low income is not available by census block). Using census block data, the percentage of Access riders that are minority increased to 39%. While these estimates are a best guess, a better understanding of the demographic data is needed.

King County Population Per Low Income Census Tract



King County Population Per Disability Census Tract

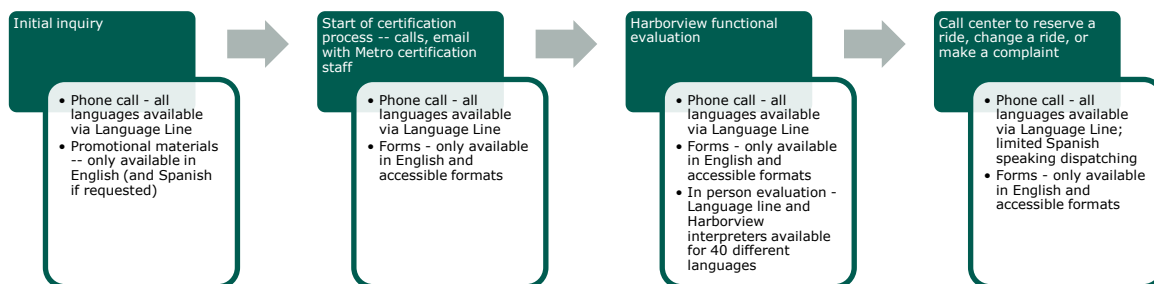


The table below shows that Access customers are low income and minority (people of color) at higher percentages than King County as a whole. People living with disabilities are about 4.8% of the population in King County; all Access customers would be included in this group either as disabled or unable to ride the fixed-route bus.

	King County	People living with disabilities in KC	Access customers
% low-income	24%	4.8%	29.4%
% minority	34%		38%

Access Service to residents with Limited English Speaking (LES) skills

A lack of equitable language access was a key finding in the audit; data suggest that Access serves only a small number of people who have Limited English Speaking (LES) skills compared to the need in these communities, and is likely underserving certain populations. Access riders interact with the system at several touchpoints:



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2017	Metro certification staff	Harborview Scheduling	Harborview in-person evaluation	Call Center
Number of annual contacts (phone)	9,245	3,926	3,550	14,163
Number of Language Line uses	385 (4.2%)	N/A	N/A	4,723 (33.3%)
Use of interpreters	0	132 (3.36%)	257 (7.24%)	1,149 (8%) (Spanish speaking agents)
Number of languages excluding English	22	40	40	30

We found that Harborview Medical Center used interpreters 3.36% of the time for appointment scheduling, or 132 times out of 3,926 referrals, and used interpreters for the evaluations for 7.24% of the time, or 257 times out of 3,550 evaluations, performed. Harborview provided interpreters for 40 different languages.

First Transit has an option in its call menu for Spanish and in 2017, of the 14,163 calls received from January 1st to December 31st of 2017, Spanish speaking agents handled 1,149 calls or 8% of total calls received. All other calls used the Language Line or found that an interpreter was not needed. Language Line usage for the Call Center for 2017 showed 4,723 calls that used the Language Line, roughly one third of call center usage.

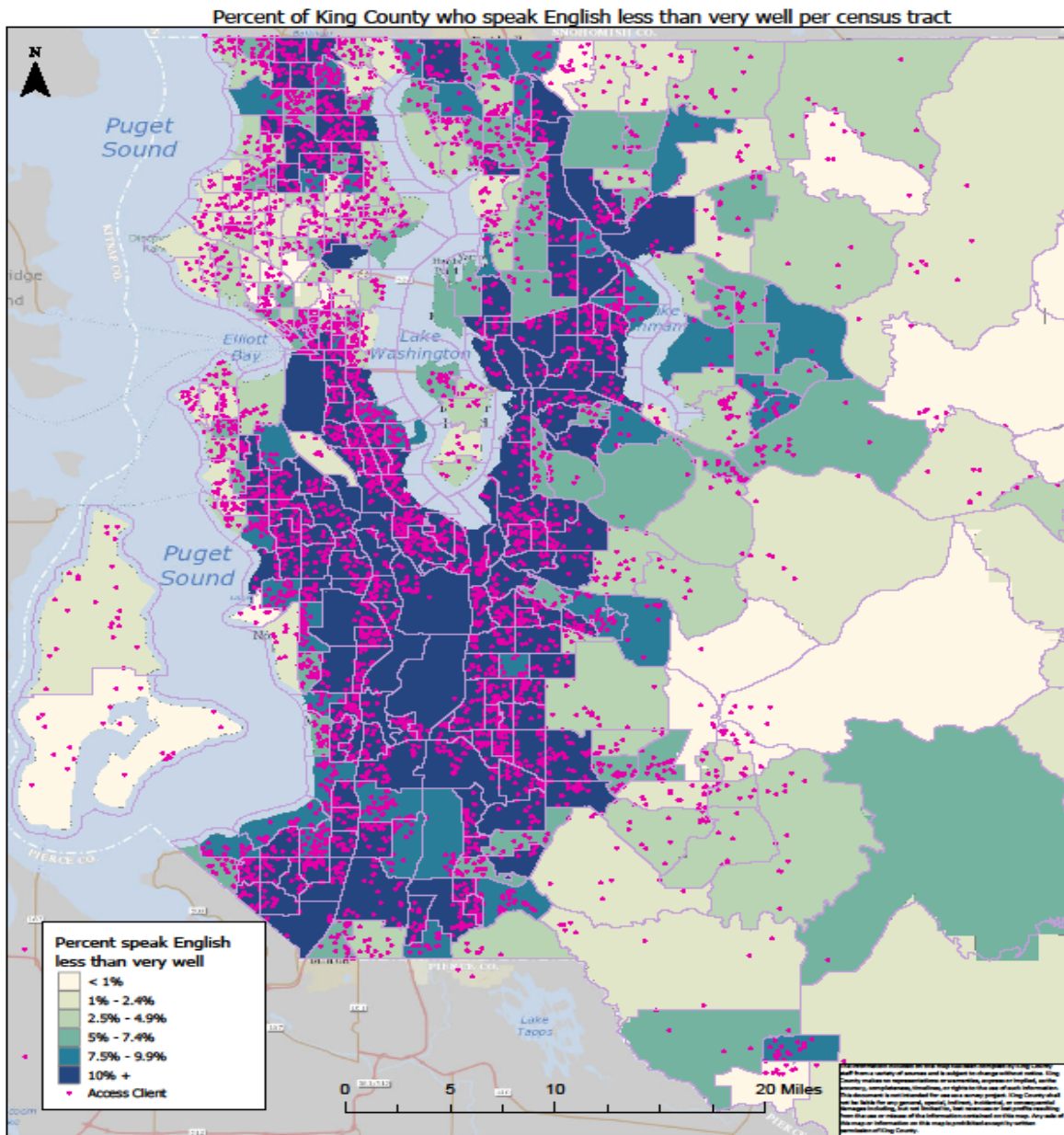
At the beginning of 2018, the Call Center began using caller id software that enables the Call Center to identify the caller and their preferred language prior to answering the call. This is only for customers who are currently in the Access database.

Metro Accessible Services Certification team answered 9,245 calls in 2017 and used the Language Line for 385 calls for 22 different languages. This accounted for 4.2% of the calls. In total, Harborview Medical Center, First Transit, and Metro Accessible Services staff used either Language Line or multilingual staff to provide services in over 45 languages. Refer to Table #1 in the appendix, which shows the different languages that were employed. The chart below shows the top five languages where interpreters were used including in person, multilingual staff, and the Language Line by the different sections that have customer interactions.

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HMC		Certification		FT Call center		King County	
Spanish	33.93%	Spanish	43.54%	Spanish	72.84%	Spanish	5.95%
Cantonese	11.05%	Arabic	8.50%	Cantonese	6.12%	Chinese	3.1%
Korean	6.94%	Cantonese	7.82%	Farsi	6.06%	Vietnamese	1.54%
Russian	6.68%	Vietnamese	5.78%	Russian	4.55%	African Languages	1.5%
Vietnamese	6.17%	Mandarin	5.10%	Vietnamese	2.58%	Tagalog	1.3%

According to the chart above, Access is providing interpretation for the number one language spoken in King County as the highest percentage. Chinese and Vietnamese (number two and three for the County) are also listed as one of the top five languages that Access provides interpretation services for riders and applicants.



Availability of Access Services materials in languages other than English

The King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan and Executive Order on Translation recommends tiers for language translation based on the percentages of people within King County who speak those languages as their primary language.

Availability of materials in other languages has been very limited. The Access Ride Guide is available in Spanish (printed form and the Accessible Services website) but other materials are in English only. The Accessible Services website uses the Google translate option (drop down menu) for translation of the website information. This is not clearly visible and not easily found on the webpage. While technology has created opportunities for access, not everyone has access to computers, tablets, and smartphones.

	Language	Avg Rank	Tier
First Tier: Materials Shall be Translated	Spanish	1	1
	Second Tier: Translation Recommended		
	Vietnamese	2	2
	Russian	4	2
	Somali	4	2
	Chinese	4	2
	Korean	6	2
	Ukrainian	7	2
	Amharic	8	2
	Punjabi	9	2
Third Tier: Translation Encouraged	Tagalog	10+	3
	Cambodian	10+	3
	Laotian	10+	3
	Japanese	10+	3
	Hindi	10+	3
	Arabic	10+	3
	Farsi	10+	3
	Igbo	10+	3
	Oromo	10+	3
	French	10+	3
Samoan	10+	3	

Key:
 First Tier: "Public Communication Materials" shall be translated into target language as soon as feasible within available resources.
 Second Tier: Translation of Public Communication Materials is recommended, depending on target audience.
 Third Tier: Translation of Public Communication Materials is encouraged, depending on target audience.

Below is a table of printed materials that are available for Access:

Accessible Service Eligibility Materials:	
Application	Bus ID Kits in yellow and white
Appeal brochure	Special Assistance Cards in pink and orange
Self-Assessment packet	Ride free brochures
Transit Instruction Brochure	Hand to hand rides information sheet
Taxi Scrip Brochure	Large Print versions of Application, Appeal Brochure, Ride Guide, and Special Assistance Cards are available
Access Ride Guide – also available on-line – English and Spanish	Materials also provided in Braille, audio cassette or CD when requested.
Downtown Seattle Accessible Map and Transit Guide – English and Spanish	

Current efforts to reach communities with Limited English Speaking skills are minimal

Outreach is provided by eligibility staff per requests from agencies, mostly for information regarding the eligibility process. This has been with agencies that have a historic relationship with Access. Metro Customer Communications and Services also staff major community events and will pass out printed materials in English and Spanish. Spanish materials are not requested very often. There is an effort by Metro to participate in identified communities to expand outreach with low income, people of color and First People's communities.

The Equity Impact Review Phase 1 is to develop a scope of work based on two key questions, the second of which is:

- **Identify the group of stakeholders and affected parties – including those who have historically not been or felt included or engaged – including their roles in decision-making.**

Based on the analysis above, language access is a key focus of this Equity Impact Review. Key informants and other agencies that work in the communities where language access is part of their scope of work were identified. These agencies' primary focus is providing language appropriate services for community members that experience English as a second language. The agencies that Access engages with were included as stakeholders, such as mental health services, senior services, medical appointments, and community outreach.

Access applied for and received an inclusion grant, funded by the Federal Transit Administration, to reach out to customers and get their feedback regarding Access Services.

By utilizing these modalities, Access wanted to hear about customers' experiences and identify key areas for improvement.

Language barriers identified by riders and non-riders

As part of an inclusion grant from the Federal Transit Administration, Metro conducted focus groups with four specific language communities (Spanish, Khmer, Somali, and Chinese) to gather feedback about Access services. Key themes that emerged were residents' significant challenges with the following aspects of Access services:

- Language access, including eligibility applications for Access, scheduling and reservations;

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- Interaction and communication with some drivers of the Access vehicles; and
- Using interpreters via the Language Line is time consuming, often waiting on hold until an interpreter is found.

Recommendations for Phase 1: Scope

Based on the themes identified by the focus group, it is recommended that the primary focus for this review to be Language Access, exploring barriers to services (after eligibility is established) and access to information about Access. It is also recommended that demographic data be collected in the next rider/non-rider survey that Metro will be distributing in the near future.

While the data indicates that interpreting services are used in over 50 languages, what are the challenges for limited English speakers to access information about Access, to use the Call Center to make reservations or to access customer services for complaints and service issues, and how can Accessible Services provide improved services to our limited English speaking riders?

Phase 2: Assess equity and community context

Access Services identified equitable language access as the focus of this Equity Impact Review (EIR). The assessing equity and community context phase includes three parts:

1. Learn about affected communities, employees', and/or stakeholders' priorities and concerns;
2. Know which determinants of equity will be affected by intended outcomes – both directly and indirectly;
3. Know how the proposed course of action will affect known disparities within relevant determinants.

Part 1: Learn about the priorities and concerns of affected communities, employees, and stakeholders

Our approach to this first part involved developing a survey, identifying key stakeholders in the communities who work with Limited English Speakers, and meeting with them to discuss the survey questions. The survey asked the following questions:

- What do you know about Accessible Services (Access)?
- Do you have any clients that you refer to Access?
- Who are the communities you work with?
- Do you have outreach workers?
- What do you see as barriers for clients to access services (for Access)?
- What would you suggest Access implement to improve access to our services?
- What are your thoughts about printed materials?
- What are your suggestions regarding language access for our services?
- How can we partner to better work with the community you work with?

These questions were used to structure dialogue with stakeholders about Access services.

Identifying key stakeholders and learning about priorities and concerns of affected communities:

Key stakeholders were identified in collaboration with Bookda Gheisar, who was the Senior Policy Advisor for King County's Office of Equity and Social Justice working with the Immigrant and Refugee Task Force. She was able to provide introductions and contacts with key agencies in the Immigrant and Refugee communities that often have

members who speak English as a second language. Also, some key stakeholders were identified based on the kind of referrals made to the Access programs, such as health care, mental health agencies, housing, and outreach programs. Following are summaries of the priorities and concerns noted by these stakeholders.

Public Health Access and Outreach Program

One of the key stakeholders identified is the Public Health Access and Outreach Program, which works in the community to connect people to medical providers, health insurance options, and other essential services from food and energy assistance to breast cancer and dental care options. This program provides outreach to all of King County and employs staff, who identify themselves as Navigators and are multilingual, to help community members access healthcare and other supported services.

When Navigators were asked if they knew about Access services, they knew it was a transportation service but did not have an understanding of the specifics of the program. They have referred clients to Access as they provide outreach to all communities in King County.

When asked about barriers for clients to access services, they emphasized there was not enough information about Access in the community. There was minimal community visibility of the program and a lack of understanding about how the program works. They recommended that Access provide outreach and training to community partners and participate in outreach events throughout the County.

When asked about printed materials, they wholeheartedly supported the availability of printed materials in other languages, particularly Spanish. Another way of improving language access is to provide training so they can help sign people up for Access. Their final thoughts about better partnerships included raising visibility of the program and to have more outreach to agencies.

Open Doors for Multicultural Families (Open Doors)

Open Doors for Multicultural Families is an organization that is dedicated to ensuring that people with family members with developmental/intellectual disabilities and special health care needs have equal access to culturally and linguistically appropriate information, resources, and services. Open Doors has been a strong participant in providing ongoing feedback to Access about services. The Executive Director has a personal stake in Access, as her son is a rider. Open Doors provided very detailed feedback about the eligibility process and scheduling rides and dispatch for Access.

Ginger Kwan, Executive Director, described the application process as “hard”. First, one has to call in for an application, then there is the pre-application, and then the application is sent out in English only. The applicant then has to figure out the level of services they are requesting and the number of documents that are needed to complete the application. Once the application is filled out, there is the need for a qualified professional to fill out additional paperwork.

“As an agency that works with multicultural families, this is a ‘daunting task’ for families.” As an agency, there is the need to support families with the application, the interview with Access staff (assessment), and the functional evaluation at Harborview (making the appointment). Many families don’t realize that Harborview is going to call them to set up the appointment. This is why communication is an issue in explaining the certification process to families and clients who want to sign up for Access. Open Doors refers many clients to Access from English as a Second Language families who are developmentally disabled. The Somali, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Kamai, Japanese, Russian, Filipino, South Asian are the main communities that they have language capacity to support. Open Doors has client advocates who work with families. When asked about the barriers for Access services, the application process is challenging and adding language makes it more difficult.

Open Doors suggests that Access communication can be improved with riders and family members. It is challenging to find out where a rider is (especially if the rider does not/is not able to verbally communicate with a family member). An app that allows one to track the rides like One Bus Away would be helpful. They noted experiences when clients were dropped off at the wrong location and staff and families were unable to understand where the rider was left.

Open Doors also suggests collaboration with language appropriate agencies to access services (provide funding, memorandums of agreements) to allow agencies to act as agents for Access. Families experience high anxiety because of the language barrier and disability. Another challenge is that fare collection only allows for cash or passes. Some riders have difficulty handling cash and fare collection is taken at the beginning of the ride; if the rider forgets and tries to pay at the end of the ride, fare isn’t accepted because it is already submitted on the mobile data computer.

For youth, Open Doors recommends using the Individualized Education Programs as documentation to determine disability since it is already vetted by professionals.

Open Doors would like to see printed material, such as applications and information, provided in different languages, including rider information. As for language access, Open Doors suggests that instead of using the Language Line and outside interpreters, contract with agencies who currently work with the clients to also work with Access. Creating partnerships with agencies that provide services to the communities they work with would better support families who need to use Access. Access should collaborate and provide funding (possible fee for service) for the agency’s staff to provide support to families as they go through the application and evaluation process. Pilot a program with agencies to determine how much time is needed to support families and the cost related to these services. Open Doors also recommended that Access staff meet with agency staff to train them about Access and other resources.

International Community Health Services (ICHS)

ICHS provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health services to improve the wellness of King County’s diverse people and communities. ICHS community

outreach program did not know much about the Access program. There was a previously funded position through AmeriCorps that would work with patients to find resources for transportation. Since that funding has ended, there is not a designated staff member who is tasked with finding resources for patients who need transportation. Currently, the Nurse Case Manager, who is new in her position, is tasked with the referrals. ICHS works in the Asian, Pacific Islander and all other communities. They also have staff that does outreach in the community for Diabetes and Breast Cancer. The Nurse Case Manager did not feel equipped to identify any barriers for clients and added that it would greatly benefit staff to have training about Access services. She supports having printed materials translated into different languages. She suggests that partnering with Access would include staff training and possible funding for a staff person to work on transportation needs for eligible patients.

Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA)

ReWA is a multi-ethnic organization that promotes inclusion, independence, personal leadership, and strong communities by providing refugee and immigrant women and their families with culturally and linguistically appropriate services. ReWA advocates for social justice, public policy changes, and equal access to services while respecting cultural values and the right to self-determination.

Afeworki Ghebreyesus is the Program Manager of the Employment and Training – Work Development program for ReWA. He has limited knowledge of Access services, understanding that it is for people with vision and physical disabilities and seniors. He also shared that elders who attend their community meetings do not know about the services. Case managers would make referrals as they have more direct contact with clients. They provide services to Middle Easterners, African, and Asian, low-income, immigrant and refugees; all communities focused on language access and have many multilingual staff members. The case managers, who are employment specialists, work with clients in the community. When asked about barriers, Afeworki pointed out there is limited information about Access services, for example, and who can benefit from services. There is no outreach to agencies about Access, including flyers about Access, and verbiage about services. There is also a lack of printed materials about services and programs. He suggests that providing outreach to agencies and communities would raise the visibility of Access and explain what services Access provides. As for printed materials, he recommends informational brochures in five to six languages and to utilize community partnerships for translations, making sure the translation is correct and easy-to-understand. Suggestions to partner better with the community ReWa works with include working with community case managers, attending some of the senior groups to present information about Access, and working with cultural navigators regarding the eligibility process.

El Centro de la Raza (El Centro)

El Centro is a voice and a hub for Seattle and King County's Latino community that advocates on behalf of their people and works to achieve social justice. Through their comprehensive programs and services, they empower members of the Latino community as fully participating members of society. They also work to raise awareness with the general public, and government, business and civic leaders about the needs of the Chicano/Latino community in the United States.

Raquel Garcia is the Senior Nutrition and Wellness Program Coordinator for El Centro. She has some understanding of Access services as many of the participants of the Senior Nutrition and Wellness program use Access for transportation. While she does not work directly with clients, she is the conduit for referrals to appropriate programs for clients. She works closely with SeaMar's Latino Senior Information and Assistance Program who have staff that work directly with seniors. They will assist with forms and paperwork.

El Centro works primarily with the Latino community and with any community members who come to El Centro for services. They have many programs, including a food bank that community members can access. El Centro programs also have multiple outreach staff who are multilingual. When asked about barriers to Access, she highlighted language barriers and said the application process is cumbersome. Access should make the process easier with use of the phone with intermediaries. Cost is also sometimes a barrier, as they get ticket books from the City of Seattle but often not enough to allow clients to use public transportation to reach their programs – particularly referring to the Senior Nutrition Program that provides meals, activities, and access to their food bank. She said there is a "gap group" who can't ride the bus but aren't eligible for Access and that Access should make it easier to qualify. She described this gap group as people who don't have the extra resources to pay for transportation. Although there are limited amounts of free tickets available for fixed route, there are minimal resources to pay for Access. She recommended that brochures be available in multiple languages, particularly in Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Tagalog.

Her suggestions regarding language access is to have more multilingual staff available as there are often long hold times when making reservations as they wait for connection to the Language Line. To better partner with the community, she recommends that Access create more intense visibility, participate in community events, and have more site visits and outreach.

Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS)

ACRS promotes social justice and the well-being and empowerment of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other underserved communities – including immigrants, refugees, and American-born – by developing, providing and advocating for innovative, effective and efficient community-based multilingual and multicultural services.

G De Castro, Director of Aging and Adult Services, and Faye Arreola, Director of Community Living Program, both shared they knew about Access because their program participants were riders. They described an issue where a rider who was attending a celebration of life; her ride showed up early and she missed her ride because the driver didn't wait. They do not specifically refer clients to Access but many of their clients, seniors over 65 years old, use Access. The Community Living Specialists (CLS) will refer to Access. They work with adults with disabilities and seniors, immigrants and refugees, with mostly Asian and Pacific Islanders as their focus, but also provide services to anyone that comes to the agency. CLS provide outreach, information, and assistance to community members. They also talked about the application process and described it as very challenging, especially because it is only in English. They also shared that wait times for scheduling/reservations are long as schedulers and dispatchers get the Language Line on the phone. To improve access to Access services, they recommend that translated materials be available, have Access representatives attend consumer gatherings to provide resources and information, and partner with community agencies to support consumers. They also suggested that Access coordinates with the City of Seattle Aging & Disability Department and train ACRS and other agency staff how to navigate the eligibility process. They finally suggested that Access partner with ACRS as a bridge for adults with disabilities and seniors, immigrants and refugees, and work on how to communicate and work with staff.

Mount Baker Housing (Mt. Baker Housing)

Mt. Baker Housing's mission is to improve lives and strengthen communities in southeast Seattle by creating quality, affordable housing and supporting their residents.

Sameth Mell is the Outreach and Resident Service Manager. He has some knowledge about Access services as some residents are Access riders, particularly those who are English speaking. He noted that the Southeast Asian residents don't use Access because of the language barrier. The residents of Mt Baker Village are from the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino, African American, East African, and Somali communities. They have staff who provide outreach in the communities and the resident services coordinator makes referrals and plans workshops for their residents and the community. They often partner with Asian Counseling and Referral Services for training and to utilize other resources. Some of the barriers to Access include the lack of knowledge about the services (community members don't hear about Access), minimal outreach to the community, as well as language capacity.

The eligibility process has minimal access points so that creates barriers for many of the residents who don't speak English and do not feel confident and comfortable to pick up the phone to talk to someone about the application. Also, once they are deemed eligible, they are reluctant to call and schedule a ride. There are considerable wait times to connect to the Language Line. Some suggestions to

improve access would be to fund community navigators who are able to bridge the cultural barriers and attain the necessary information regarding Access.

More visibility and outreach with the community is also recommended. Printed materials in multiple languages can help with increased visibility as well as one-on-one small workshops to educate community members and residents about Access services. Because some community members do not read or write, one suggestion is to create audio and/or visual media for informational purposes. The use of Facebook and other social media is also recommended. To improve language access, he recommends the use of cultural navigators, hiring multilingual staff, and utilizing community partnerships to address some of the cultural barriers.

Summary and recommendations from key stakeholders

In summary, after meeting with the key stakeholders, similar issues emerged:

- Lack of visibility in the communities about Access
- Lack of knowledge about Access services
- Eligibility process is challenging
- Language access is limited
- The need for printed materials in multiple languages
- The need to build community partnerships with agencies that work in the communities

Recommendations from key stakeholders include:

- Creating partnerships with them to provide culturally relevant, linguistically supported access
- Work with cultural navigators to bridge access to services
- Provide training to agency staff regarding Access services and programs
- Participate in community outreach and attend community events to provide information about Access
- Contract with agencies to support cultural/community navigators to assist applicants and eligible riders to get their rides
- Translate informational brochures and the Access application into multiple languages

The second part of the four-part Phase 2: Assessing equity and community context includes:

Part 2: Know which determinants of equity will be affected by your intended outcomes – both directly and indirectly.

Customers who may be eligible for Access but unable to navigate the intricate eligibility process without language support can be negatively impacted. For example, limited or no access to healthcare, groceries (including food programs), cultural events, community events or entertainment, access to other public services like housing, social services, and the judicial system.

According to the King County Community Health Needs Assessment 2018/2019, “4 in 10 of foreign-born residents’ report that they speak English less than “very well”. Language barriers can severely limit access to education, employment, and healthcare, making it difficult for immigrant families to maintain health and flourish in the community”.

The third part of the four-part Phase 2: Assessing equity and community context includes:

Part 3: Know how the proposed course of action will affect known disparities within relevant determinants. (Use quantitative data and/or gather new information.)

Based on the feedback and conversations with community partners, these are the proposed recommendations for Access

Increased Partnerships:

Create a pilot to work with a few agencies to determine the cost and time it would take to support a client/family through the eligibility process. Once the time and cost are determined, offer a “fee for service” partnership with key agencies to provide “cultural navigators” the resources to bridge the access gap for languages to the eligibility process.

Language Accessibility:

- Prepare informational brochures in the top tier languages identified by King County and translate the Ride Guide into two or three additional languages other than Spanish (which is already available).
- Provide the application documents in three to four of the top-tiered languages. Also, create a document and or audio/visual media in the languages that explains how to fill out the application, how to schedule a ride, and how to access services.

Outreach to improve Language Access:

- Provide trainings to community agencies about Access services.
- Attend cultural events and participate in community outreaches to raise visibility of the Access program.

The recommendations would create opportunities for LES community members who may be eligible for Access to complete the application for Access transportation services. This will increase their ability to shop for groceries, get to appointments for healthcare, participate in cultural events, socialize with other members of their communities, and improve the quality of their lives.

Phase 3: Analysis and decision process

Once recommendations are reviewed and approved, the pilot project will be mapped out, indicating participants and the scope of work. Current policies, programs, or projects should be included: KCMs language policies, which are currently in development; outreach programs including Access eligibility team; RideGuide, which is currently being updated; and survey opportunities. Budget will need to be identified to fund the pilot project. Other policies and procedures need to be reviewed by management to determine staffing needs and budget implications. Added features to software that the new contract requires will also have an impact on implementation of the recommendations. Primarily, budget determinations will be the key factors in moving the recommendations forward.

Phase 4: Implement. Are you staying connected with communities?

The Access Paratransit Advisory Committee has members from the disability community whose goals are to review and track key performance indicators for Access. This Committee meets monthly and provides feedback regarding Access services. Increased outreach to limited English speaking community members, and services will also provide feedback regarding Access services.

Phase 5: Ongoing Learning - listen, adjust, and co-learn with communities

With the suggested recommendations in place, Access will be able to implement the audit recommendation based on the Equity Impact Review and best practices, Transit should: a) develop community impact measures for the Access paratransit program; b) include the metrics in its Access paratransit performance monitoring plan; and c) annually report on equitable access to the program. Continue to meet with community partners to receive ongoing feedback regarding the changes in policies and practices with the new contract with MV and Accessible Services.

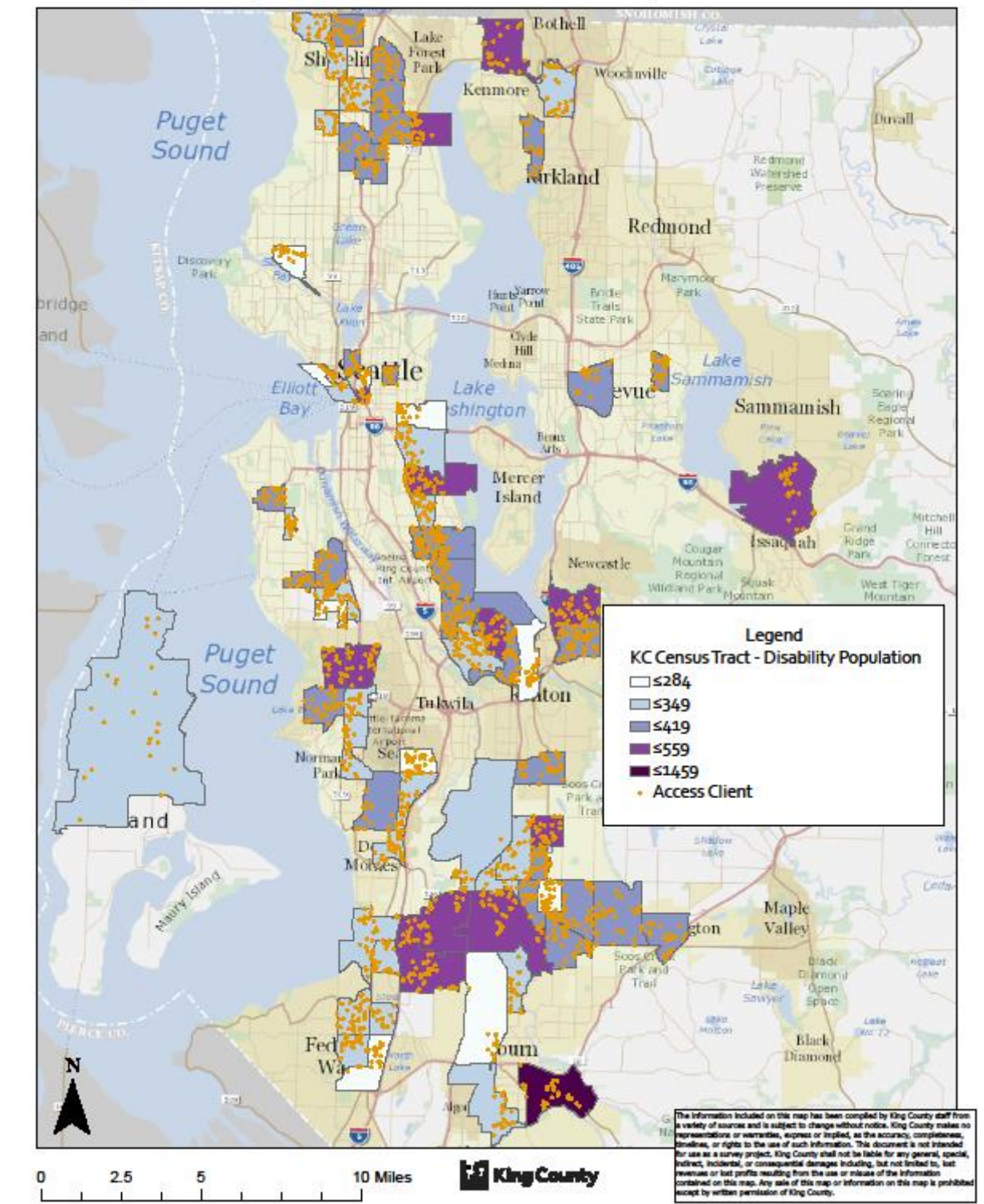
Access will contact community partners semiannually via one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders, possible focus groups, and community outreach. Once feedback is received, Access will evaluate and make adjustments in services to achieve its goal of increasing access to communities with Limited English Speakers.

APPENDIX

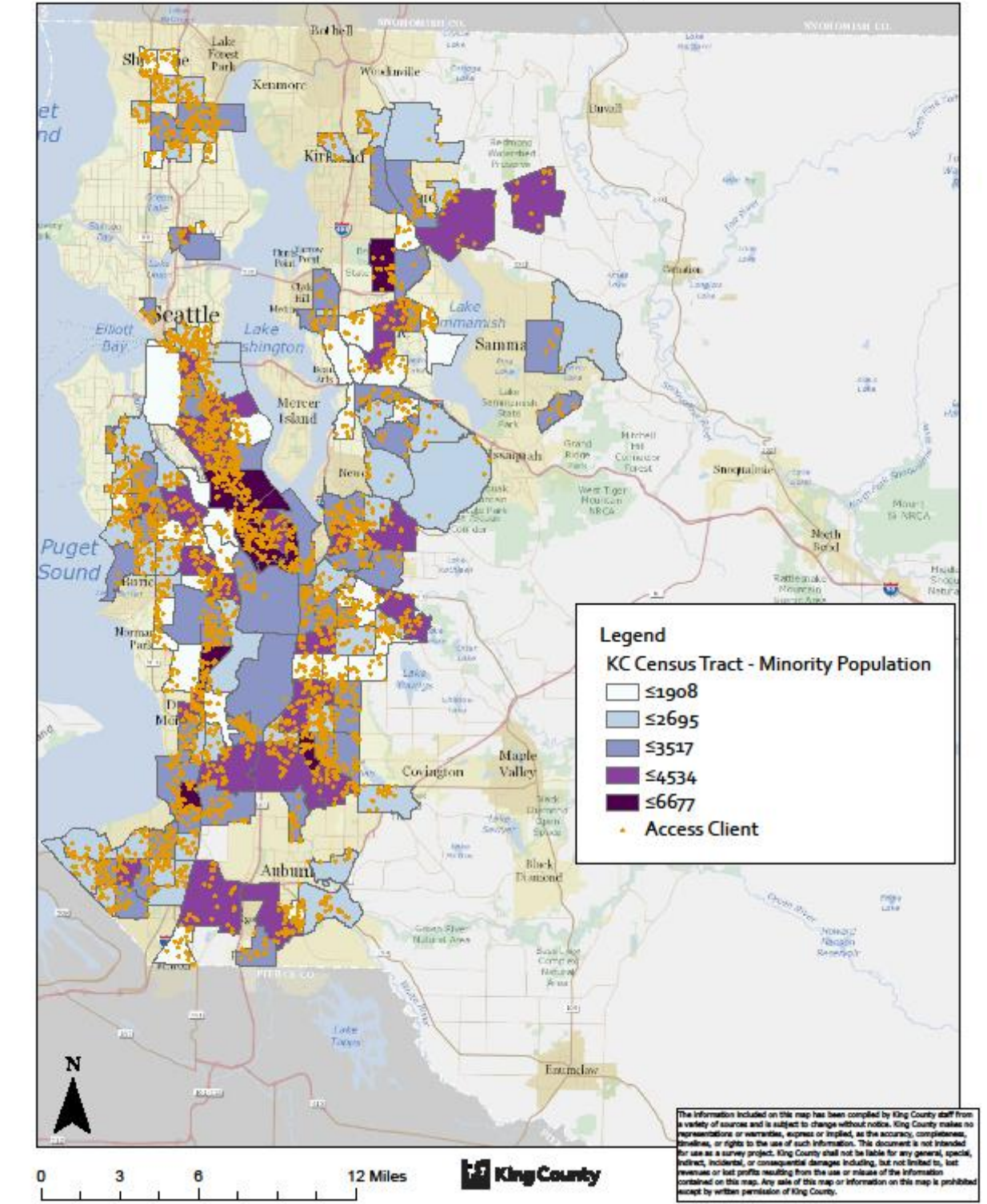
Table 1: Languages that were used by customers that required the Language Line and/or Interpreters

Akan	Chuukese	Korean	Romanian	Tigrinian
Amharic	Croatian	Kunama	Russian	Toisanese
Arabic	Farsi	Laotian	Samoan	Turkish
Armenian	French	Mandarin	Sign Language	Ukrainian
ASL/Tactile	Gujarti	Marshallese	Somali	Urdu
Bengali	Hindi	Mien	Spanish	Vietnamese
Bosnian	Hmong	Nepali	Swahili	
Bulgarian	Hungarian	Oromo	Tagalog	
Cambodian	Ilocano	Pashto	Thai	
Cantonese	Japanese	Punjabi	Taiwanese	

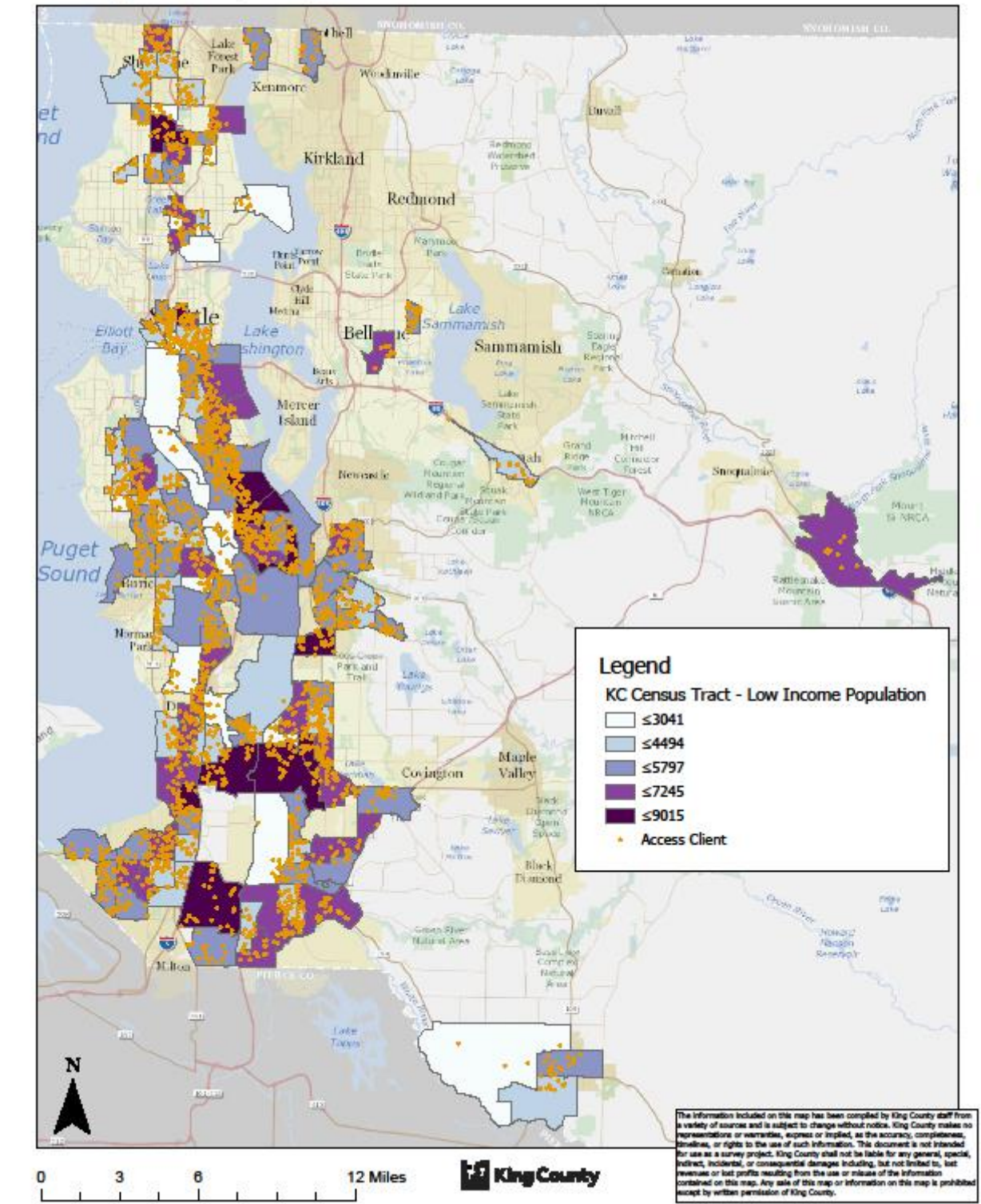
King County Population Per Disability Census Tract



King County Population Per Minority Census Tract



King County Population Per Low Income Census Tract



Percent of King County who speak English less than very well per census tract

