

Nisqually Rural Transit Feasibility Study



Mt. Rainier National Park is a major destination in the Pacific Northwest. Despite the fact that approximately 1.7 million people visit each year, there has been no way to travel to the park by public transportation. This has resulted in congestion, parking shortages, and concerns about the environmental impacts of vehicle emissions. Nelson\Nygaard addressed these problems by designing a regional rural transit system in the Upper Nisqually Valley which serves Mt. Rainier National Park and its gateway communities.

This study was funded and created under a cooperative agreement between the City of Tacoma Rail Division and the National Parks Service. It was part of a series of studies examining the feasibility of rail and transit connections between Tacoma, the Nisqually Valley and Mt. Rainier National Park. It was conducted in parallel with the Train to the Mountain Study, which assessed the feasibility of re-establishing passenger excursion train service between Freighthouse Square in Tacoma and the Mt. Rainier area.

A primary objective of the Nisqually Rural Transit Feasibility Study was to propose rubber-tire transit improvements that complement Train to the Mountain service and that can also operate as a stand-alone transit system in the event the excursion rail service is not implemented. To this end, Nelson\Nygaard developed a package of bus and shuttle services that support proposed excursion train service and addresses transporta-

tion needs in this rural area. In addition to designing phased service alternatives, Nelson\Nygaard outlined capital requirements, including vehicles, bus stop amenities, park-and-rides, and passenger transfer centers. The plan also included recommendations with respect to governance scenarios, funding opportunities, and implementation. Stakeholders have formed a regional body and are moving forward with Memorandum of Understanding to form a regional transit system.

Project Duration: 2007 (1 year)

Total Budget: \$210,000

For more information:

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