

**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Chris Simmons, Manager-System Planning

**Date:** July 17, 2023

**Subject:** Title VI Analysis – Zip Alderwood Shuttle

## **BACKGROUND**

Zip Alderwood Shuttle (“Zip”) is Community Transit’s on-demand microtransit service operating in the city of Lynnwood, WA. This pilot project was informed by a community engagement process that included input from a panel of volunteers, community surveys, and local businesses. Following a competitive procurement process, Community Transit contracted with Medstar Transportation of Yakima, WA to implement the operational components of this project. This project is funded by a federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant.

Service under the pilot began on October 20, 2022. A map of the pilot area is provided below. Within the area shown, Zip provides customers point-to-point rides dispatched via a call center or smartphone application from 5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m., seven days a week.



*Figure 1 - Zip Pilot Service Area*

Zip allows customers to connect directly to their residence, workplace, or any destination they choose within the service zone. The zone was designed to include important transfer points to local and regional buses, including:

- Lynnwood Transit Center
- Swamp Creek Park & Ride
- Community Transit Swift Blue Line (bus rapid transit)

Zip operates three vehicle types for this service:

- 2 Chrysler Voyager minivans in six-passenger configuration
- 2 Chrysler Voyager minivans in 3-passenger, ADA-accessible configuration with rear loading ramp
- 1 Hyundai Ioniq Hybrid sedan

Zip vehicles are branded to appear visually as Community Transit vehicles and feature the Community Transit logo.



Figure 2 - Zip Vehicle

Customers can book on-demand rides either by using Medstar’s free “GOIN’ – Rides for All” smartphone application (available for iOS and Android devices) or by calling a Community Transit phone number which transfers to Medstar’s customer service line. Customers calling this number may also choose to speak directly with Community Transit customer service staff to leave feedback or ask questions about Zip. Updates about booking status are sent to the customer through the GOIN’ application and/or through text messages.

Fares on Zip are the same as Community Transit’s local bus service: \$2.50 or less with youth 18 and younger riding free. Fares can be paid onboard with ORCA cards or cash, or at booking with a credit or debit card.

As a public transit service, trips on Zip may be shared with other customers. The same Rules of Conduct that apply to Community Transit’s bus service also apply to Zip.

### **PERMANENT SERVICE DESIGN**

Feedback was collected on an ongoing basis through customer comments. Additionally, a customer survey of 104 Zip riders was fielded in February and March 2022, with 74% of respondents belonging to underrepresented groups. Respondents were overwhelmingly positive in their review of Zip service, giving it the top Net Promoter Score of any Community Transit service at +65.

Based on this feedback, the permanent service design is proposed to remain substantially similar to the service provided at the end of the pilot period. The proposed service area is the same as the pilot area. The manner of booking the trips is proposed to be via a smartphone application or phone call to a service line to book the next available trip. Service hours are proposed to remain from 5:00 a.m. –

10:00 p.m., seven days a week. Vehicle provision is proposed to remain substantially the same or equivalent in permanent service, and variable based on customer demand. Fares remain the same as on local bus service. Trips may be shared, and the Rules of Conduct continue to apply.

A separate service evaluation will evaluate whether this service is to be provided through an outside contractor or using internal operations. That evaluation is separate from the analysis required by the agency’s Title VI plan, and the analysis here would be applicable under either scenario.

**TITLE VI ANALYSIS OVERVIEW**

As the Zip Alderwood Shuttle service has been in operation as a pilot project, staff is analyzing the service for permanent provision as a new service constituting a major service change, as a new service by definition is a change of greater than 25%. Since this service design is of a type that has not previously been provided by the agency, the service review standard is not explicitly contained within the agency’s 2022-2025 Title VI Plan (“Plan”). The Plan identifies that if there is a 20% difference in level of benefit between protected and unprotected populations, then mitigation measures in the service design must be made to reduce disparate impacts or disproportional burdens. The same 20% difference standard applies in this instance as well, but as a new service type the level of analysis is in two sections:

- Whether the service area as designed excludes areas of protected populations to create a 20% difference in the demographics from the overall service area, and
- Whether the service within the service area as designed provides a more than 20% difference between protected and non-protected populations.

**SERVICE AREA DESIGN**

To determine whether the service area is designed to create a difference between protected and unprotected populations, staff reviewed the characteristics of the proposed service area, the Census blocks immediately adjacent to the service area, and the area within a quarter mile of the service area. The overall demographics of each area are described in the tables below.

Area	Total Population	Minority Population	% Minority
Zip Service Area	46,272	20,550	44%
Within ¼ Mile	60,680	28,026	46%

*Figure 3 - Minority Population*

As shown in the above table, the area within a quarter mile of the Zip service area has 4% more proportion of a minority population. This is not a difference that exceeds the mitigation threshold for disparate impacts. This analysis could change if the service area was designed in some manner to somehow exclude a specific pocket of a protected population. However, as shown in the following graphic, this is not the case.

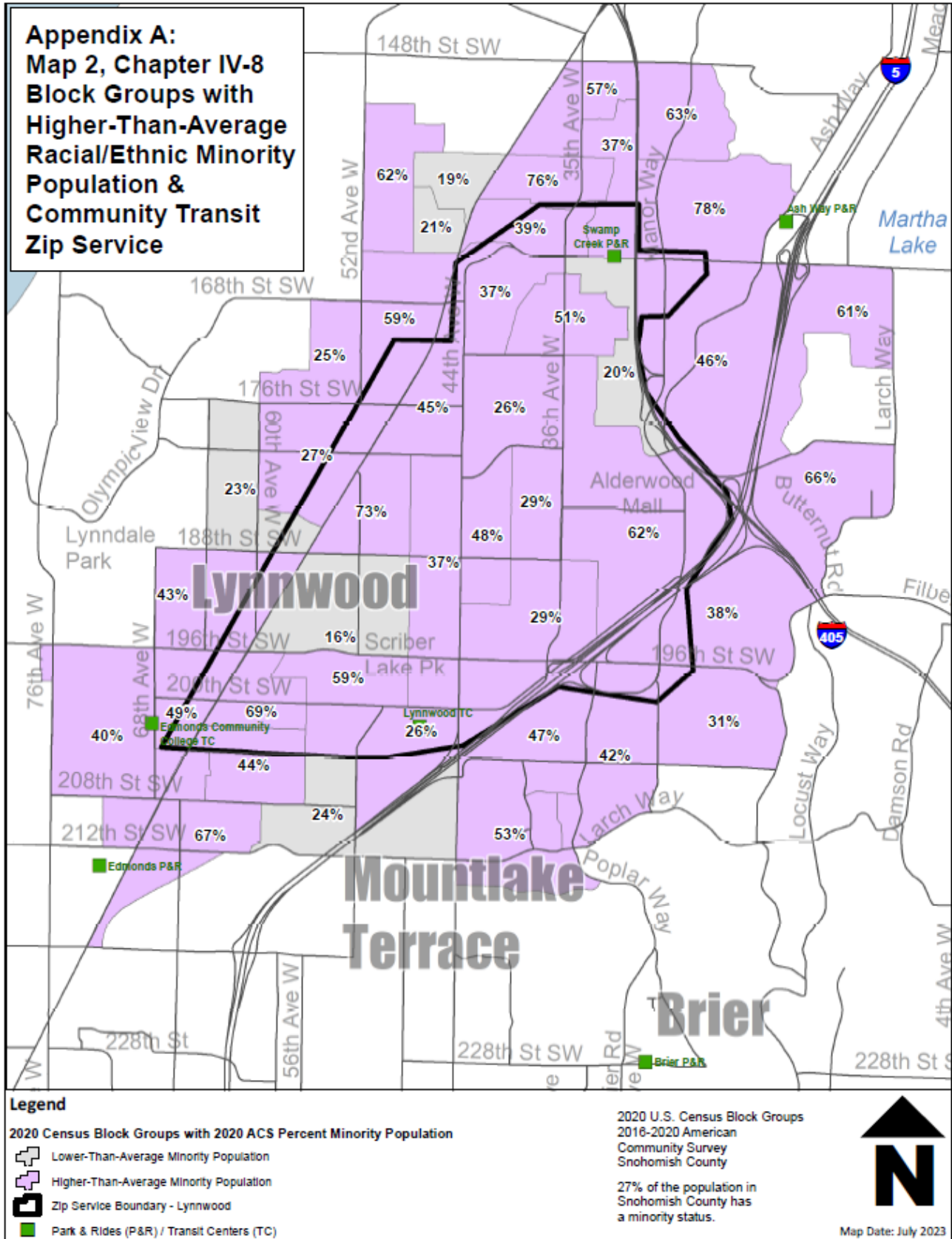


Figure 4 - Map of Service Area with Minority Population Averages by Block Group

Staff performed a similar review for the low-income population. Note that the difference between the two tables is a result of U.S. Census data reporting different populations for racial identification and income status.

Area	Total Population	Low Income Population	% Low Income
Zip Service Area	45,891	13,351	29%
Within ¼ Mile	60,077	17,098	28%

*Figure 5 - Low Income Population*

Again, the population within a quarter mile of the service area showed a 2% less proportion of low-income residents than the Zip service area. With the higher proportion of low-income residents residing within the service area, mitigation is not required. Also as before, this analysis could change if the area was drawn in such a way as to exclude a pocket of low-income residents.

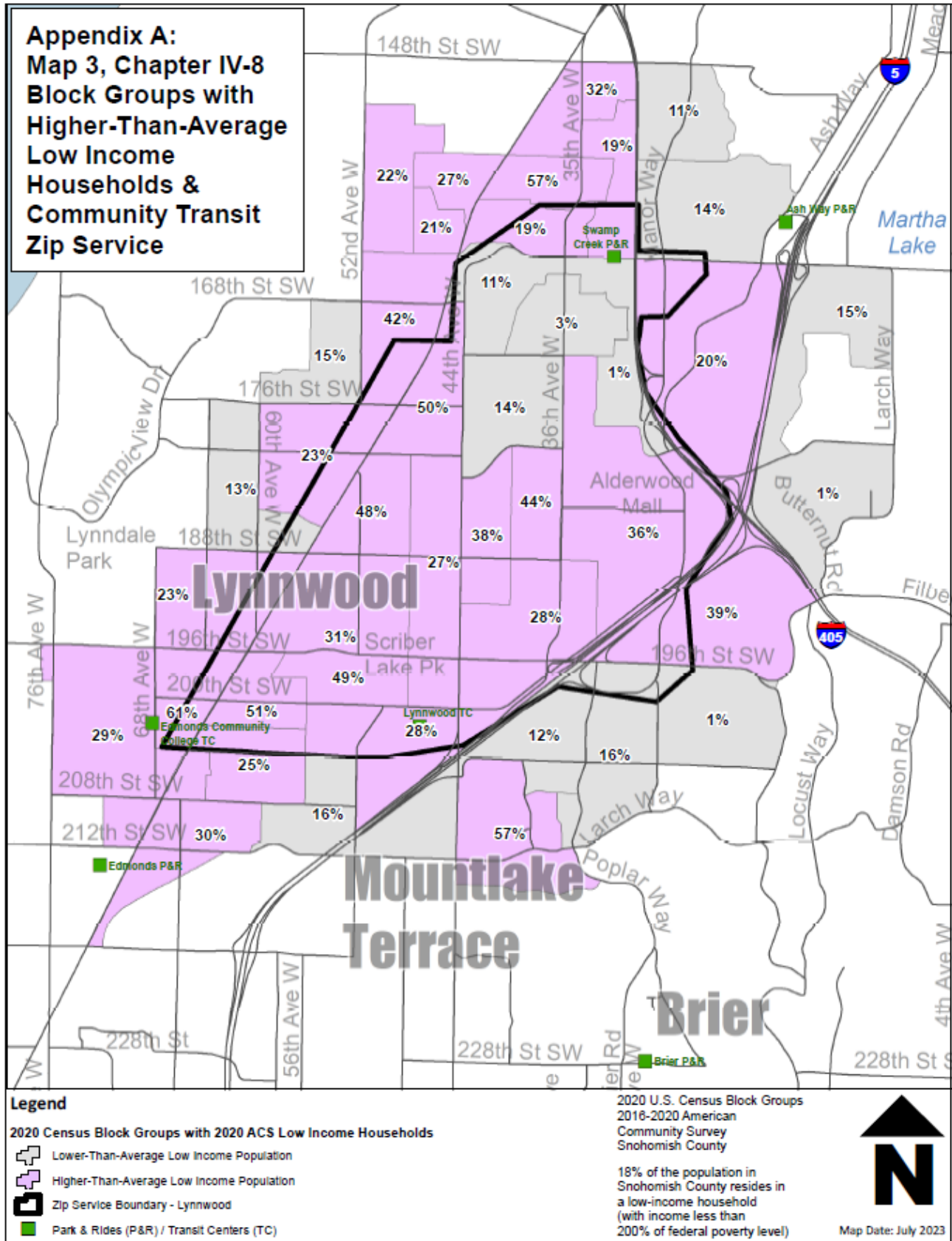


Figure 6 - Map of Low-Income Population by Block Group



The service area as proposed balances low-income inclusion with the available road network and connections to needed service areas, such as retail and medical offices, without boundaries that artificially leave out low-income populations from the service.

### **SERVICE PROVISION DESIGN**

The proposed service design maintains the use of passenger vehicles to provide service, with rides being booked by smartphone application or phone call to a service line. The hours of service are proposed to remain from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. throughout the designated service area without exception.

As there is no difference in service throughout the zone, there are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens placed on minority or low-income populations.

### **CONCLUSION**

As there are no disparate impacts or disproportionate burdens created by the service design that exceed the threshold set by the agency's Title VI Plan, there are no required mitigations to the service design.