

STRATEGIC PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

We are excited to present the first edition of Mason Transit Authority's Strategic Plan. The desire and goal is that this plan would guide MTA's decisions, set direction and be a growing document that is actively used along with our Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles to ensure long-range stability of the Authority as well as provide quality service to our customers and community.

The Strategic Plan was prepared with the assistance of two citizens and the MTA Leadership Team. Goals were established based on our Mission Statement to *provide transportation choices that connect people, jobs, and community, increasing the quality of life in Mason County*. Each team contributed to the foundation of the goals and objectives as well as the work plan by year. In the coming years, work plans will be reviewed for feasibility and set according to available resources. We anticipate that our Strategic Plan will grow and change as needed to reflect the changes in Mason County, the needs of riders and the capacity of MTA.

The Leadership Team will update the plan every year during the budget preparation process to align the strategic goals and objectives for the year as well as relevancy. In addition, with the yearly review, a report to the Authority Board will be given to track and report on Agency progress and performance. It is planned that future updates will also include input from a variety of sources and partnerships within Mason County through community forums, public meetings and surveys.

We look forward to adopting policies, budgets, projects and programs that will successfully deliver MTA's Strategic Plan. For the Leadership Team it means placing transit first so by improving our service to meet riders' needs within the capacity of funding and available resources. It also means developing partnerships within the community as well as other transit agencies to share information and resources for better efficiency and effectiveness.

This document will guide decisions regarding how we move forward. When faced with challenges or competing interests, we will use the Strategic Plan to look beyond the isolated situation and focus on the impact to MTA as a whole and the quality of service provided to the riders and the community. We anticipate there will be challenges to right-size MTA's capacity so long-range sustainability with a level of service that best serves Mason County will be ensured.

We know we cannot realize a successful Strategic Plan alone. It will take partnerships, both external and internal to reach the vision of excellent transportation services and choices throughout Mason County and beyond.

Danette Brannin
General Manager

LEADERSHIP

Mason Transit Authority Board (2021):

Sharon Trask, Chair, Mason County Commissioner
Sandy Tarzwell, Vice Chair, Shelton School District
Wes Martin, Grapeview School District
Randy Neatherlin, Mason County Commissioner
John Campbell, North Mason School District
Kevin Dorcy, City of Shelton Council Member
Matt Jewett, Soundside School District
Kevin Shutty, Mason County Commissioner
Cyndy Brehmeyer, Mary M. Knight School District

Non-voting Authority Board:

Greg Heidel, Bargaining Unit Business Representative, IAM and AW District 160
John Piety, Citizen Advisor to the Board

Mason Transit Authority Executive Management Team:

Danette Brannin, General Manager
Tracy Becht, Executive Assistant/Clerk of the Board/Public Records Officer
LeeAnn McNulty, Administrative Services Manager
Mike Ringgenberg, Operations Manager
Marshall Krier, Vehicle and Facilities Manager

WHO WE ARE

Mason County Public Transportation Benefit Area, doing business as Mason Transit Authority (MTA), is a Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) Authority, authorized in Chapter 36.57A RCW, located in Mason County, Washington. The service was approved by Mason County voters in November 1991, and MTA began providing public transportation in December 1992. The service area is all of Mason County, if road access is available, with connections to adjacent counties.

The proposition imposing a sales and use tax of two-tenths of one percent (0.2%) to fund public transportation was also passed in November 1991. These actions created the first extensive bus service ever in the county to be operated by either a public or a private provider, and it would be provided as a prepaid fare (fares paid through sales & use taxes) service. After the elimination of Motor Vehicle Excise Tax funds in 1999, voters approved a sales & use tax increase of four-tenths of one percent (.4%). This officially raised the taxing base to six-tenths of one percent (.6%) effective January 1, 2002. Mason Transit Authority then began to charge a fare for routes going out-of-county. The taxing structure remains the same today. Additional funding comes from federal and state grants, rental income and sales of maintenance services.

The Authority began with five wheelchair accessible body-on-chassis type buses that provided service on a general public Dial-a-Ride system. In May 1993, MTA decided to move ahead to a mix of routed and Dial-A-Ride services. Today, this mix of services is still in effect with other services added such as Worker/Driver Commuter Program, Vanpool and Volunteer Driver Program.

WHAT WE DO

MTA provides transportation services consisting of Fixed Route (local and regional deviated fixed routes, Worker/Driver commuter service to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) Demand Response, Vanpools and volunteers using private cars.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, hours of operation of the transportation service are 4:10 a.m. to 8:55 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 6:00 a.m. to 8:45 p.m. on Saturday. MTA operated twelve (12) Fixed Routes on weekdays and eight (8) routes on Saturdays that allow minimal deviated service to persons traveling off designated routes. Current hours of operation at the end of 2020 are 4:10 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 6:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. on Saturday. MTA now operates eight (8) Fixed Routes on weekdays and four (4) routes on Saturdays that allow minimal deviated service to persons traveling off designated routes. For a time, Saturday service was suspended. There is no service on Sunday, and either no service or reduced service on observed holidays. Dial-A-Ride service operates in rural areas where there is no fixed route service or where deviations are not possible as well as in populated areas of Mason County for people who have difficulty using the routed service. All Dial-A-Ride service is open to the general public. Riders using Dial-A-Ride can make a trip request up to two (2) weeks prior to the preferred pick-up time. All vehicles in MTA scheduled service are equipped with bike racks and are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Facilities include Johns Prairie maintenance base, the downtown Shelton Transit-Community Center and rented satellite mobile office in Belfair. The Administration Office will be moving to the Transit-Community Center early 2021. The majority of operations has moved to the T-CC to be closer to staff and customers. MTA supports a network of park and ride facilities that are located throughout the County by managing and providing routine maintenance for locations owned by Washington State Department of Transportation ("WSDOT"), the County or others.

CORE VALUES

We will strive to provide the best possible transportation experience for our users and improve mobility throughout Mason County, reaching to connect around the region, aiming to enhance the quality of life through opportunities in Mason County.

Our core values or competencies for our team include:

Inspirational Leadership – Takes initiative; acts decisively; creates an environment that motivates and challenges others; adapts to a variety of situations; develops fresh ideas that provide solutions to all types of workplace challenges; shares information, plans, develops, and implements our vision; promotes MTA's mission and values and models ways to achieve them.

Informed Decision Making – Researches data to grasp issues, draw conclusions, and solve problems resulting in sound solutions that, when judged over time, are aligned with MTA's vision and mission; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; identifies, assesses and manages risk while striving to attain objectives.

Transparency & Accountability – Builds trust and respect through consistently honest and professional interactions; uses public funds and resources appropriately; approaches each situation with a clear perception of organizational and political realities; recognizes the impact of alternative courses of action; assures that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization and its mission; seeks and builds strategic alliances and collaborative arrangements through partnerships to advance the mission of the organization; actively communicates decisions with stakeholders.

Respectful Relationships – Helps create a work environment that embraces and appreciates diversity; treats others fairly without regard to race, sex, color, religion, or sexual orientation; recognizes differences as opportunities to learn and grow by working together; establishes and maintains constructive relationships;

works to preserve the self-confidence and self-esteem of others; focuses on the situation, issue or behavior, not the person; takes initiative to make things better; models appropriate behaviors for others.

Personal Responsibility – Demonstrates integrity, honesty and ethical behavior; personally acknowledges and accepts responsibility for meeting expectations and correcting mistakes; exhibits self-control and responds to feedback non-defensively; executes principles of workplace safety; complies with all safety policies and procedures; takes responsibility for efficient, effective use of time, equipment, and resources.

Outstanding Customer Service – Provides accurate and timely information; understands and is responsive to our customers' objectives and needs; is accessible, provides timely and responsive replies to customer requests, emails, phone messages and mail; handles customer inquiries and complaints in a prompt, courteous and professional manner while adhering to rules and regulations; anticipates, assesses, responds to changing customer needs; consistently provides products and services that meet or exceed the expectations of the customers.

STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

MTA will attempt to integrate the Strategic Plan into all planning documents as a way to create consistency throughout all areas.

The framework for this Strategic Plan focuses on goals and objectives that will assist in achieving the vision and mission of the Agency and contribute to long-range planning and sustainability. The elements of this Strategic Plan are defined as follows:

- Mission: What we do
- Vision: What we want to be
- Guiding Principles: Guides the Agency's daily actions
- Team Culture: Drives our guiding principles through leadership, teamwork and excellence
- Goals: Goals set for the Agency that support the mission and vision
- Objectives: Specific ways the Agency can accomplish the goals

VISION, MISSION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES and TEAM CULTURE

MISSION: We provide transportation choices that connect people, jobs, and community, increasing the quality of life in Mason County.

VISION: Driving Our Community Forward

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES: We believe that public transportation and personal mobility are essential to the economic vitality, environmental stability and quality of life in Mason County. Our core values guide our actions each day.

- **Service Excellence:** We go beyond the expectations of our customers and provide inspirational leadership to deliver safe, comfortable and reliable service; we see today's best service as our motivation to make tomorrow's even better.
- **Safety:** We provide and enforce a safe and secure environment for our customers, community and teammates through awareness, consistent training, and allocation of resources.
- **Professionalism:** We conduct our work transactions with integrity, fiscal responsibility in the allocation of resources, and transparency. We engage the community in our decision making by sharing information and encouraging public involvement.
- **Teamwork:** We achieve our greatest success as a team. We embrace diversity, support and treat each other with respect, and use meaningful communication.

- **Partnerships:** We explore and build collaborative alliances with partners and community members to promote and advance our mission.
- **Innovation:** We constantly explore ways to improve. We celebrate inspiration, creativity, initiative and courage in all things to promote an exceptional customer service experience.

TEAM CULTURE: Our Team Culture drives our Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles through Leadership, Teamwork and Excellence. It is our belief culture is needed to provide guidelines on how people work together towards a common goal and how people treat each other. Team Culture is important in supporting each team member to feel they are part of something bigger than themselves and to feel engaged and satisfied with the work they do.



LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

MTA's long-range strategic vision is to provide safe and accessible transit services to the community that will enhance the quality of life in Mason County. We see MTA as a partner in the community providing transportation to essential services, jobs and social activities. Our commitment is to not only provide safe and accessible services but to provide services that are usable and meet the needs of customers. We know we must change as the community changes and we dedicate ourselves to that effort by understanding what our customers need and want then adjust where feasible. In addition, our strategic vision includes financial stewardship so we can continue the level of service our community has grown accustomed. This requires MTA to operate efficiently and effectively by using our resources responsibly.

Strategic Goals:

Safe and Secure
Effective Transportation Services
Financial Stewardship
Community Partnerships
Workplace culture of excellence

Safe and Secure

Objectives:

- Emphasize safety of our riders, citizens and employees in all aspects of our operations.
- Ensure training for a safe and secure experience for all and to eliminate preventable accidents.
- Provide technology and resources to support secure movement of buses.
- Proactive approach to safety throughout the agency to increase and improve security throughout the service area.
- Enforce transit rules and establish consistency of service to riders in a safe, accessible manner.

2021 Work Plan:

- Quarterly Driver training and refresher training as required.
- Change from flag stops to fixed stops in urban area of Shelton.
- Curbs or bollards in parking area next to building at Johns Prairie.
- Review WSTIP Best Practices for safety.
- L&I Inspection of T-CC and Johns Prairie facilities.
- Update Safety Manual and include an emergency safety plan.
- Adjust for any mandates to COVID-19.
- Roof replacement for the Radich Building

Effective Transportation Services

Objectives:

- Creating a positive transportation experience within all modes of MTA services that is reliable, accessible, equitable, safe, secure and comfortable for all users.

- Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.
- Strive to look for ways to improve service through a variety of tools including outreach, community meetings, service review and passenger amenities.
- Seek new opportunities to enhance the riders' experience through better route planning and additional services when feasible.

2021 Work Plan

- Review Dial-a-Ride services and hours to ensure efficiency and availability of resources.
- Seek new route opportunities.
- Conduct outreach for all service changes and new park & ride openings.
- Improve passenger amenities by providing apps and on-line scheduling.
- Benchmark route performance and discontinue or adjust low performing routes.
- Explore on-demand service in Shelton and Belfair.
- Waysign at T-CC for displaying estimated time of arrivals for fixed route.
- Internal assistance with Volunteer Driver Program transportation.
- Plan for restoring to full service (Pre-COVID) and adjust where needed to improve service.

Financial Stewardship

Objectives:

- Operate an efficient, cost-effective system.
- Maintain internal controls and compliance over public resources.
- Provide current, accurate and transparent financial data.
- Strive for a 5-year sustainability plan.
- Plan for future operational and capital needs through maintaining financial reserves.
- Proficiency in regulatory requirements through continuing education.
- Manage key financial indicators.

2021 Work Plan:

- Identify needed financial policies or manual to outline financial objectives.
- Review 5-year sustainability plan and adjust as needed.
- Continued work in records management.
- Plan for GASB changes on leases and other regulations.
- Plan financially for future service changes or increases.
- Review moving to cloud-based accounting software.
- Hire an Accounting Coordinator with high level accounting skills.

Community Partnerships and Responsibility

Objectives:

- Cultivate partnerships throughout the community.
- Participate in outside committees, regional planning organizations and boards.
- Participate in mentorship programs at local schools and colleges.
- Exemplify exceptional customer service that goes above and beyond.

- Provide transportation choices and support travel that uses less energy, produces fewer pollutants and reduces greenhouse gases in the region.
- Support efforts to mitigate traffic congestion throughout the region.
- Cooperative relationships with T-CC tenants and events.

2021 Work Plan:

- Conduct Community Conversations to solicit input regarding MTA services.
- Participate in community events as available.
- Promote partnerships with city, county and other entities by serving on committees, boards, supporting projects, and communication.
- Continue Park & Ride project (through 2023)
- Work with PR firm to promote MTA services to the community.
- Continue delivery assistance for Meals on Wheels and Commodity Boxes for senior centers.
- Transporting clients in cooperation with hospital and health department.

Workplace Culture

Objectives:

- Provide an atmosphere where employees are valued and respected.
- Develop and empower employees.
- Support the philosophy of team culture.
- Promote healthy dialogue on important issues.
- Encourage an active and engaged environment including Board of Directors.
- Be an employer of choice in Mason County.
- Focus recruitments in accordance with EEO Plan goals.

2021 Work Plan:

- Launch Communication Flow Plan.
- Continue the Employee Engagement Committee for seeking opportunities to improve the work environment.
- Strive to meet goals and objectives of EEO Program to broaden employment opportunities for all protected classes.
- Coordinate events with Employee Morale Committee.
- Create committee for Belfair office furnishings.
- Remodel T-CC Customer Service Office for space improvement. (Grant dependent)
- Encourage Castlight challenges.
- Create Uniform Committee to select new uniform items.
- Continue reviewing policies.

WORK PLAN

An annual Work Plan that serves as a “to-do” list of what the agency expects to accomplish for the year will be included in the Strategic Plan. Work Plan items will tie to an objective to ensure we are moving in a direction that supports our objectives and desired outcomes. Staff will monitor progress throughout the year and report to the Board on a quarterly basis the progress of each Work Plan item.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Agency will look for key issues and opportunities that may impact the goals of the Agency. Issues may be such things as funding, demographic changes, ridership decline or employee shortage. In looking at current issues impacting the Agency, Leadership will look for ways to minimize the impact and strategize ways to meet the strategic goals and objectives. Opportunities will often be present when issues arise. Leadership will look for new opportunities to improve services and enhance the community along with striving to meet each objective in the Strategic Plan.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND PLANNING

The Agency will set key performance indicators to measure how well the agency is performing with respect to the Strategic Plan goals and objectives. These indicators such as safety, ridership, financial stewardship will be measured and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure the Agency is moving in the direction expected.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed quarterly by the Executive Team to assess progress on the year’s work plan. A quarterly report will be given to the Board following the review and revisions, if necessary, will be discussed. On an annual basis, a summation of what was accomplished during the prior year will be presented.

As part of the annual budget process, the Leadership Team will set the next year’s goals and bring the work plan to the Board for input and suggestions when the draft budget is presented. The work plan will also be part of the public meetings on the budget.

Discussion of the Transportation Development Plan (TDP) will be part of the process of updating the annual work plan; the TDP will then be reviewed and updated when it is due. In all planning documents MTA prepares, the Strategic Plan will be incorporated where applicable.

MOVING FORWARD

We are excited to move forward with implementing this Strategic Plan in the hope that transportation options will continue to grow and be a viable choice throughout Mason County. Staff will use the Strategic Plan as a moving document to assist with bringing multimodal travel into the future to improve the quality of life for the citizens and to connect our community with surrounding communities whether it is for work or pleasure.