



## Existing Service Providers and Peer Comparison

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the existing transportation providers within the City of Seward and the surrounding communities of Lowell Point and Bear Creek. These agencies and organizations represent myriad nonprofit, for-profit, and private agencies. Not all of the providers reviewed are “transit agencies” in the traditional sense of the word. Rather, the various providers are entities that provide some type of passenger transportation service. A brief summary of each provider is presented; these were used when developing coordination strategies. This information is critical in determining what transportation resources exist in the study area. The main objective of this effort was to determine the extent to which these transportation providers serve the residents of this study area.

There are six human services agencies, one public school district, one trolley service, five taxicab companies, one tour company, one charter transportation service, and one intercity bus company that provide transportation within or to the Seward area. There is no public transportation provider in the area. LSC updated this information by disseminating a detailed questionnaire.

### HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

Most of these human service agencies are either private nonprofit agencies or government human service agencies. A profile of each human service agency was created as follows:

- Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC)
- Independent Living Center (ILC)
- Qutekcak Native Tribe (QNT)
- Seaview Community Services

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- Seward Senior Citizens, Inc.
- Seward Public Health Center

# ***ALASKA VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL CENTER (AVTEC)***

Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) is a program through the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The AVTEC's main campus is in Seward and has an Allied Health Department class offered at the AVTEC Anchorage training facility. AVTEC also has on-campus dormitories and off-campus housing available in Seward. This agency provides bus service to its students attending classes in the Applied Technologies Department and Port Avenue Facility to downtown Seward where its Administration and Enrollment and other offices, dormitory, and family housing are located.

## **Agency Information**

*Type of Agency:* State Government  
*Type of Service:* n/a  
*Funding Sources:* General Funds, Federal, Technical Vocational Education Program, State Training and Employment Program  
*Eligibility:* Students  
*Service Area:* Applied Technologies Department and Port Avenue Facility to Downtown Seward.  
*Fares:* n/a

## **Transportation Operating Characteristics**

*Annual Operating Budget:* n/a  
*Annual One-way Passenger-Trips:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Miles:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Hours:* n/a  
*Operating Days and Hours:* n/a

## **Vehicle Fleet**

*Size and Type of Fleet:* n/a

## **Vehicle Utilization**

n/a

## **Coordination**

n/a

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# INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER (ILC)

The Independent Living Center is a nonprofit organization mainly for persons with disabilities operated by people who experience disabilities. The agency has its main office in Homer with offices in Seward (to serve Cooper Landing, Moose Pass, and Seward), Soldotna (to serve the Central Kenai Peninsula), and the Kodiak Island, Valdez, and Cordova area. The agency's mission "is to assist persons with impairments to live as independently as possible in their own homes and in the communities of their choice." The agency provides information, referrals, education, employment opportunities, job placement, life skill development and assistance, older blind services (over the age of 55 years), and encourages participation in recreation programs. In Central Peninsula, Homer and Seward, in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT), the agency operates a subsidized taxicab voucher program that issues a \$5 token to subsidize rides with taxicabs by 50 percent. Participants can redeem vouchers for transportation for various purposes such as shopping and doctor appointments. This is possible in Seward by using stimulus funds as a pilot project. Since this is a client-directed program with no charges, employees and volunteers are reimbursed for gas purchases at the federal standard mileage rates. The agency has a funding source restriction and an agency policy that limits the number of vouchers issued per month. Some of the agency's unmet needs are lift-equipped taxicabs in Seward and Homer, the need for additional funds for the voucher program, and the need for a supported transportation program funded by AKDOT in Seward.

## **Agency Information**

*Type of Agency:* Private Nonprofit  
*Type of Service:* None. Pays for transportation through vouchers.  
*Funding Sources:* Mental Health Trust Authority Funds, FTA 5310  
*Eligibility:* Seniors and people with disabilities  
*Service Area:* Homer, Seward, Central Kenai Peninsula, and the Kodiak Island, Valdez, and Cordova area.  
*Fares:* Participants pay 50 percent of a \$5 token

## **Transportation Operating Characteristics**

*Annual Operating Budget:* n/a  
*Annual One-way Passenger-Trips:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Miles:* None  
*Annual Vehicle-Hours:* None  
*Operating Days and Hours:* 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## **Vehicle Fleet**

*Size and Type of Fleet:* None

## **Vehicle Utilization**

None

## **Coordination**

The agency coordinates with CARTS in Central Peninsula and the taxicab companies in the communities in which they serve. Some of the real or perceived barriers to coordination reported by the agency were turf issues, administrative burden required by DOT grantees, and lead agency requirements in the smaller communities of Homer and Seward.

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# **QUTEKCAK NATIVE TRIBE**

The Qutekcak Native Tribe (QNT) is a nonprofit tribal organization that serves the native community of Seward through social, cultural, and economic development programs.

## **Agency Information**

*Type of Agency:* Nonprofit Tribal  
*Type of Service:* n/a  
*Funding Sources:* n/a  
*Eligibility:* n/a  
*Service Area:* n/a  
*Fares:* n/a

## **Transportation Operating Characteristics**

*Annual Operating Budget:* n/a  
*Annual One-way Passenger-Trips:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Miles:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Hours:* n/a  
*Operating Days and Hours:* n/a

## **Vehicle Fleet**

*Size and Type of Fleet:* n/a

## **Vehicle Utilization**

n/a

## **Coordination**

n/a

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# SEAVIEW COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Seaview Community Services is a mental health agency that serves the Eastern Kenai Peninsula from Seward to Hope, Alaska. The agency's mission is to "provide community-based services that strengthen families, foster self-sufficiency and enhance quality of life." The agency provides a wide variety of programs such as mental health services, diagnosis and early evaluation, substance abuse and recovery services, residential care, community support networks, domestic violence and sexual assault emergency food and shelter services, youth and family programs, and senior and disability services. Transportation is provided using one wheelchair-accessible van. The agency also has four cars that are for private use only. The agency also pays for transportation services by giving cash or vouchers to individuals for transportation services. Clients, volunteers, or employees are reimbursed at the rate of \$0.50 per mile. The agency has a funding source restriction and an agency policy that restricts transportation to program clients. Some of the clients' unmet needs that the agency cannot serve are seniors who need transportation but do not meet grant requirements.

## **Agency Information**

*Type of Agency:* Private Nonprofit  
*Type of Service:* Demand-Response  
*Funding Sources:* Medicaid, Behavioral Health, Public Safety  
*Eligibility:* Program Clients  
*Service Area:* City of Seward  
*Fares:* Participants do not pay a fee

## **Transportation Operating Characteristics**

*Annual Operating Budget:* n/a  
*Annual One-way Passenger-Trips:* 720  
*Annual Vehicle-Miles:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Hours:* n/a  
*Operating Days and Hours:* Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

## **Vehicle Fleet**

*Size and Type of Fleet:* 1 wheelchair-accessible van

## **Vehicle Utilization**

Most of the trips provided are between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. with some exceptions.

## **Coordination**

None. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirement on certain clients and billing of client services restricts any coordination of transportation services.

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# SEWARD PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

Seward Public Health Center provides education, training, health care, and community support networks. The agency pays for transportation through Medicaid-approved vouchers that can be redeemed for pre-approved medical appointments. Transportation is paid for travel to Anchorage which is maybe twice a year.

## **Agency Information**

*Type of Agency:* Public  
*Type of Service:* Scheduled Fixed-Route  
*Funding Sources:* Medicaid  
*Eligibility:* n/a  
*Service Area:* Seward to Anchorage  
*Fares:* n/a

## **Transportation Operating Characteristics**

*Annual Operating Budget:* n/a  
*Annual One-way Passenger-Trips:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Miles:* n/a  
*Annual Vehicle-Hours:* n/a  
*Operating Days and Hours:* n/a

## **Vehicle Fleet**

*Size and Type of Fleet:* n/a

## **Vehicle Utilization**

n/a

## **Coordination**

n/a

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# **SEWARD SENIOR CITIZENS, INC.**

Seward Senior Citizens, Inc. provides lunches, meals on wheels, transportation, weekly shopping, and other health and recreational activities. The agency mission is to “insure honor, dignity, security and independence for the older Alaskan through support services to assist them in maintaining meaningful, quality lives.” The agency mainly provides transportation services to/from the senior center with the help of one 8-passenger wheelchair-accessible van. One of the clients’ transportation needs that the agency cannot serve is a trip to Anchorage from Seward.

## **Agency Information**

*Type of Agency:* Private Nonprofit  
*Type of Service:* Fixed-Route; Demand-Response  
*Funding Sources:* Title IIIB, Donations, United Way, fundraising, volunteer  
*Eligibility:* Seniors  
*Service Area:* Regularly provide services to Seward. We have never transported to Lowell Point in the last eight years.  
*Fares:* Participants do not pay a fee, but donations are accepted.

## **Transportation Operating Characteristics**

*Annual Operating Budget:* \$65,000  
*Annual One-way Passenger-Trips:* 2,000  
*Annual Vehicle-Miles:* 5,200  
*Annual Vehicle-Hours:* 1,000  
*Operating Days and Hours:* Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

## **Vehicle Fleet**

*Size and Type of Fleet:* 1 wheelchair-accessible van

<b>Type</b>	<b>Vehicle Make/Model</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Van	8-passenger or 6-passenger plus one wheelchair	2005	Wheelchair-accessible. Replacement year is 2015.

## **Vehicle Utilization**

The vehicle is used from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

## **Coordination**

n/a

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## **SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **Kenai Peninsula Borough School District-Seward**

This school district provides transportation to students that live or are enrolled in the Seward School District. This school district uses First Student as its contractor for providing transportation to students. Most transportation to students is provided on a fixed route unless they belong to special services where students have to be picked up/dropped off at their residence. Funding for transportation comes from the Department of Education.

## **PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS**

### **Seward Trolley Company**

The Seward Trolley Car Company provides scheduled shuttle service in the summer between the Cruise Ship Dock, downtown Seward, and several points of interest such as the Small Boat Harbor, Seward Museum, Downtown/Kawabe Park, Alaska Sealife Center, and Seward Library. A round-trip takes approximately 25 minutes and departs from the Cruise Dock every half-hour. An adult all-day pass costs \$15 and a child all-day pass costs \$8, while a single ride costs \$5 for an adult and \$3 for a child.

### **Glacier Taxi**

This taxicab company is based in Seward. Transportation is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Transportation is provided to Anchorage, Whittier, Cooper Landing, Soldotna, Kenai, Homer, and Moose Pass. The company charges a starting price of \$3, and then charges \$2.50 for each mile traveled. A waiting time of \$0.75 is charged per minute a taxicab is made to wait. A one-way trip to Anchorage or Kenai would cost approximately \$300. The company uses a fleet of minivans to provide transportation services.

### **Mike's Taxi**

This is a taxicab service based in Seward. Transportation is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week year-round. The agency employs a Yukon and a Suburban four-wheel-drive vehicle for providing transportation. The vehicles can accommodate up to eight passengers along with luggage. The agency plans to get two

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more vans (a 12 to 15-passenger van and a minivan) in a month. Transportation is provided mainly in the Seward area with transportation to the outlying areas of Kenai, Soldotna, and Homer. Transportation is also provided to the Anchorage airport. Transportation within the City of Seward is \$5 for a one-way trip. The company reported providing an average of 300 trips a week which works out to 15,600 passenger-trips per year. The company also provides charter taxi service anywhere in Alaska.

### **Phoenix Taxi**

This taxicab company also provides transportation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Transportation is provided within Seward and other areas such as Kenai, Anchorage, Soldotna, Homer, and others requested by passengers. Limited information was available from this taxi company.

### **PJS Taxi and Tours**

This locally owned and operated taxicab company has been operating since 1991. The company provides transportation 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The company has a fleet of six vehicles consisting of SUVs and minivans. Transportation is provided to Seward and other areas such as Whittier, Kenai, Soldotna, and Homer. A trip within the City of Seward is a flat fare of \$5. Transportation is provided to Exit Glacier, Sealife Center, a historic tour of Seward, trip to the train or transfer to the cruise ship, and to other destinations as requested by passengers. The company also provides charter service to Anchorage, Whittier, Kenai, and Homer.

### **Seward Cab**

This taxicab company is based in Seward. Transportation is provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week within Seward and other areas such as Kenai, Anchorage, Soldotna, Homer, and others requested by passengers.

### **Alaska Transportation Group**

This private company provides ground transportation in Alaska. The company offers private vehicle charters and shuttle services. Some of the main areas where

this company provides transportation are Seward, Whittier, Girdwood, Cooper Landing, Homer, Anchorage, Talkeetna, Denali National Park, Fairbanks, and Valdez. The company has an Anchorage airport shuttle that has scheduled transportation services to, from, and between Whittier and Seward, Alaska. The shuttle's scheduled bus service is available from May through September. A one-way trip from Seward to Anchorage is \$55 on the scheduled bus service. The company also provides transportation to passengers who are transferring from a cruise line and are beginning or ending their trip at Seward or Whittier.

### **Exit Glacier Guides**

Exit Glacier Guides is a company based in Seward that does guided glacier and hiking tours in the Exit Glacier area of Kenai Fjords National Park. The agency offers a shuttle ride from Seward's boat harbor to Exit Glacier Park every hour on the half-hour, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This ride costs \$10 for a round-trip. Customers at the park can then use the free tours offered by the rangers several times a day. The shuttle is operational from May 25 through mid-September. The agency employs waste vegetable oil-powered shuttles which cuts the fuel consumption of the vehicles by over 75 percent.

### **Seward Bus Line**

The Seward Bus Line is a private for-profit bus company from Anchorage that provides scheduled bus service year-round between Seward and Anchorage. The company also provides transportation north to Palmer, Wasilla, Talkeetna, Denali Park, and Fairbanks. The company does group tours to Kenai Peninsula, Girdwood, Portage, Whittier, Seward, Soldotna, Kenai, and Homer. The company's depot is located in midtown Anchorage at 3333 Fairbanks Street (next to the Moose's Tooth Restaurant). This company provides transportation from the airport, car rental, hotel, Whittier, and the Seward Cruise Ship dock. The agency uses a 14-passenger van or 22-passenger bus to provide this service. A one-way trip takes approximately 2.5 to 3 hours, departs from the Seward at 9:30 a.m., and reaches Anchorage at noon. The return trip leaves Anchorage at 2:30 p.m. and reaches Seward at 5:30 p.m. A one-way fare costs \$50 and a round-trip costs \$95 as long as the pick-up/drop-off is at the Seward/Anchorage Depots. If a passenger

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needs pick-up/drop-off from a hotel, airport, or a rental car company, there is a \$5 increase in fare.

## **SUMMARY**

Table IV-1 summarizes the human service agencies, tour company, public school district, and taxicab companies that provide some transportation services.

**Table IV-1  
Transportation Services in the Seward Area**

Number	Service Name or Sponsor Name	Agency Type	Annual Trips Provided	Annual Vehicle-Hours	Annual Vehicle-Miles	Annual Transportation Cost	Service Type	Passenger Eligibility	Days and Hours of Service	Fleet Information	Funding Sources	Service Area
<b>Human Service Agencies</b>												
1	Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC)	State Government	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Students	n/a	n/a	General Funds, Federal, Technical Vocational Education Program, State Training and Employment Program	Available for students attending classes in the Applied Technologies Department and Port Avenue Facility to Downtown Seward
2	Independent Living Center (ILC)	Private Nonprofit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	None. Pays for transportation through vouchers.	Seniors and people with disabilities	24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	None	Mental Health Trust Authority Funds, FTA 5310	Homer, Seward, Central Kenai Peninsula, and Kodiak Island, Valdez and Cordova area.
3	Qutekcaq Native Tribe	Nonprofit Tribal	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
4	Seaview Community Services	Private Nonprofit	720	n/a	n/a	n/a	Demand-Response	Program clients	Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	1 wheelchair-accessible van	Medicaid, Behavioral Health, Public Safety	Town of Seward
5	Seward Senior Citizens, Inc.	Private Nonprofit	2,000	1,000	5,200	\$65,000	Fixed-Route; Demand-Response	Seniors	Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	1 wheelchair-accessible van	Title IIIB, Donations, United Way, fundraising, volunteer	Regularly provide services to Seward. We have never transported to Lowell Point in the last 8 years.
6	Seward Public Health Center	Public	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Scheduled Fixed-Route	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Seward to Anchorage
<b>School District</b>												
1	Kenai Peninsula Borough School District-Seward	Public School District	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$5,461,863	Fixed-Route; Demand-Response (Special Services students receive pick-up/drop-off at residence.)	Students	Monday- Friday School Hours	n/a	Alaska Department of Education	Seward School District
<b>Private Transportation Providers</b>												
1	Seward Trolley Company	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Fixed-Route	General public	Every half-hour, summer only	n/a	Passenger fares	Seward
2	Glacier Taxi	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passenger fares	Seward and other areas such as Kenai, Anchorage, Soldotna and Homer
3	Mike's Taxi	Private For-Profit	15,600	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2 vehicles- 4-wheel-drive vehicles; On order: A 12-15 passenger van and a minivan	Passenger fares	City of Seward. Also provide trips to Seward and outlying areas - Anchorage, Kenai, Soldotna, Homer
4	Phoenix Taxi	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passenger fares	Seward and other areas such as Kenai, Anchorage, Soldotna and Homer
5	PJS Taxi and Tours	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6 vehicles	Passenger fares	Seward and other areas such as Kenai, Anchorage, Soldotna and Homer
6	Seward Cab	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passenger fares	Seward and other areas such as Kenai, Anchorage, Soldotna and Homer
7	Alaska Transportation Group	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Passenger fares	Seward, Whittier, Girdwood, Cooper Landing, Homer, Anchorage, Talkeetna, Denali National Park, Fairbanks, and Valdez.
8	Exit Glacier Guides	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
9	Seward Bus Line	Private For-Profit	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Scheduled Fixed-Route	General public	7 days a week One round-trip that departs Seward at 9:30 a.m. and arrives at Seward at 5:30 p.m.	2 vehicles- a 14-passenger van and a 22-passenger bus	Passenger fares	Seward and Anchorage. The company also provides service to Palmer, Wasilla, Talkeetna, Denali Park, and Fairbanks. Group tours are provided to Kenai Peninsula, Girdwood, Portage, Whittier, Seward, Soldotna, Kenai, and Homer.
Source: LSC Transportation Questionnaire, 2010.												

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## **COORDINATION INTEREST**

All agencies surveyed were asked to indicate the level of interest in a number of coordination strategies. Table IV-2 indicates the coordination level based on responses by various transportation providers. As shown in the table, Seward Senior Center is interested in all of the coordination activities. The Seaview Community Services strongly expressed interest in “Purchasing transportation services from another organization,” “centralized scheduling and dispatching,” and “participating in an organized countywide transportation marketing program.” As seen in the profiles, except for Independent Living Center (ILC), limited coordination activities exist.

**Table IV-2  
Coordination Interest**

	AVTEC	Exit Glacier Guides	ILC	QNT	Seaview Community Services	Seward Senior Center	Seward Public Health Center
Providing transportation services under contract to another agency or agencies.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	◐	●	n/a
Purchasing transportation services from another organization, assuming that the price and quality of service met your needs.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	●	●	n/a
Coordinating schedules and vehicle operation with nearby paratransit providers so that riders can transfer from one service to another.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	◐	●	n/a
Joining together with another agency to consolidate the operation of transportation services.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	◐	●	n/a
Adjusting hours or frequency of service.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	◐	●	n/a
Coordinating activities such as procurement, training, vehicle maintenance, and public information with other providers.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	◐	●	n/a
Centralized scheduling and dispatching.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	●	●	n/a
Participating in an organized countywide transportation marketing program.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	●	●	◐
<b>Note:</b> ● = Interested ◐ = Possibly Interested ○ = Not Interested n/a = Not Available							
Source: LSC Transportation Provider Survey, 2009.							

## **VEHICLE UTILIZATION**

To understand how existing vehicles are being used, the questionnaire included a chart with the fleet information, hours, and days of operation. The two main human service agencies—Seward Senior Citizens, Inc. and Seaview Community Services—provided information on their vehicle fleet. Table IV-3 shows the information by agency. As shown in the table, both these agencies provide transportation with one vehicle and transportation is limited to Monday through Friday. The table also shows that the existing fleet has limited capacity to accommodate general public transportation services for the Seward area between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. The vehicles could be available for other services before and after these times.

Table IV-3 Vehicle Utilization												
Agency	Before 8:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 Noon	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	After 6:00 PM
<b>Seward Senior Citizens, Inc.</b> Vehicle 1: A wheelchair-accessible van (Monday-Friday)												
<b>Seaview Community Services</b> Vehicle 1: A wheelchair-accessible van (Monday-Friday)												
 Hours of Operation												
Source: LSC Transportation Provider Questionnaire, 2010.												

## CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

LSC distributed a short questionnaire at the meetings so that stakeholders could distribute these surveys to their clients. While there is no statistical significance to the responses, the input represents the opinions of those participating. Appendix B includes a copy of the customer survey.

### Questionnaire Responses

There were a total of seven responses from Seward. All of these questionnaires were distributed at the Seward Senior Center. Five of the seven respondents provided comments on the transportation provided by the Seward Senior Center, one respondent provided comments on the Glacier Taxi, and one respondent provided comments on both the Seward Bus Lines and the Glacier Taxi service.

Passengers were asked to rate the quality of service provided by each bus/taxi service. The responses were poor, fair, good, and very good. Each category was given a numerical value from one to four, and the average response was then calculated for each attribute. The middle point of responses would be 2, so an average score of 3.0 or higher would indicate positive perceptions for that particular attribute. The responses are shown in Table IV-4.

<b>Table IV-4 Quality of Service</b>	
<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Average</b>
Driver safety	3.71
Appearance of drivers	3.57
Friendliness of office staff/dispatcher when you call for service or help using the system	3.57
Friendliness of drivers	3.57
On-time reliability	3.42
Times it takes to travel from place to place	3.42
Appearance of buses/vans	3.14
Bus/van goes where you need it to go	3.0
Hours of operation	2.83
<i>Source: LSC Survey, 2010 .</i>	

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In the survey, the attributes having the highest scores were driver safety, friendliness of drivers and friendliness of office staff/dispatcher when you call for service or help using the system with scores of 3.72, 3.57, and 3.57, respectively. The attribute with the lowest score was hours of operation with a score of 2.83.

### **Ridership Frequency**

Passengers were asked how often they ride the bus/taxi service. Three of the seven respondents reported using the Seward Senior Center service daily. Two respondents reported using the service several times a week. (One was referring to the service provided by the Seward Senior Center service, and the other was referring to the Glacier Taxi service.) One respondent reported using the Seward Senior Center service once a week, and one respondent reported using the Seward Bus Line/Glacier Taxi service less than once a month.

### **Purpose**

When respondents were asked what the primary reason for riding was, four of the seven respondents reported needing transportation for medical appointments or shopping. A small proportion of individuals also reported needing transportation for social purposes and trips for errands.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

Five of the seven respondents were female. The average age of the respondents was 72 years, ranging from 56 to 81 years. All of the respondents indicated that they were white.

Income plays an important role in determining transit ridership and transit needs in Seward. The most common annual household income of respondents from the surveys was \$7,500 to \$14,999. One respondent indicated that their annual household income was \$50,000 to \$74,999, and one indicated that their annual household income was \$15,000 to \$34,999.

Vehicle availability for households plays a key role in the demand for public transportation. Lack of a private vehicle influences people to use public transportation. This comparison provides an indication of the number of *choice riders* compared

to those who are *transit-dependent*. All of the respondents indicated that they do not have an operating vehicle available in their household which indicates that all of the riders are transit-dependent.

### **Additional Comments**

There was space left at the bottom of the survey for individuals to make additional comments. The comments mostly expressed the need for extending service by one or two hours to the transportation schedule currently provided by the Seward Senior Center. The comments emphasized that there was no transportation home from afternoon events at the Senior Center and since the agency's pick-ups ended at 1:00 p.m., it made it difficult to arrange therapy appointments at the new Mountain Haven. One comment on the Seward Bus Line was that the price of the round-trip should be cheaper or should have discounts for people who live in the community year-round. Riders are appreciative of the services provided by the Seward Senior Center and Glacier Taxi. They also like the drivers who pick them up.

### **PEER COMMUNITY ANALYSIS**

An important step in a "new" public transit system is a basic estimation of the type of service, operating budget, and performance measures that need to be met based on "peer" systems in other communities. Data for the comparisons were taken from the National Transit Database summaries and from recent LSC-completed projects. The peers selected for comparison are as follows:

- Sitka Tribe of Alaska - "The RIDE," AK
- Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit, AK
- Dawson County Urban Transportation District, MT
- Valley County Transit, MT
- Blackfeet Transit, MT

The communities selected for comparison were chosen using general criteria. The characteristics that were considered in this selection were similar population and the rural characteristics of the area. The performance measures presented provide a model depicting the approximate levels of service that need to be met for a new transit system to provide public transportation in the most cost-effective way.

## *Existing Service Providers and Peer Comparison*

Even though care was taken to find the closest matching peer communities, no two systems are exactly alike. Factors such as the type of service (modified fixed-route, demand-response, etc.), local fare policies, and quality of capital equipment can substantially impact the performance of the individual systems. This peer analysis, therefore, should be viewed as a rough gauge of a representative sample of similar systems, rather than an exact reporting.

### **Peer Statistics**

Table IV-5 shows the compilation of data on the peer communities. Seward Senior Transit is shown as a comparison at the bottom of the table, and averages for each of the categories are listed at the end of the peer communities. The peer comparison helps come up with a realistic target productivity level that a transit service in Seward can use to see how other peer communities are performing in public transit services. The peer communities were not restricted to a particular type of service offered by a transit system, but demand-response service and fixed-route with complementary paratransit service seemed to be the types of service offered by most similar-sized communities. All the populations listed were higher than Seward, which has a lower population (3,016 people) than the overall average of 9,460 persons. Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit is the only transportation program in the peer communities similar to Seward that has a large visitor population in addition to the permanent population of the area. The populations of the peers ranged from Valley County Transit with the lowest population of 6,771 people to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit which had the highest population with approximately 13,125 people.

**Table IV-5  
Peer Community Analysis  
Performance Measures**

Transit System - Location	Type of Service	Duration of Service	Area Population	No. of Vehicles	Annual Miles	Annual Hours	Annual Ridership	Operating Budget	Pass per Hour	Pass per Mile	Cost per Pass	Cost per Hour	Cost per Mile	Trips per Capita
Sitka Tribe of Alaska - "The RIDE," AK	Fixed-Route, Paratransit Service	M-F 6:30 am - 6:30 pm	8,747	4	109,155	9,928	39,230	\$515,034	3.95	0.36	\$13.13	\$51.88	\$4.72	4.48
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit, AK	Fixed-Route, Paratransit Service	M-Sat 5:15 am -9 pm; Sun 9:15 am - 4:15 pm	13,125	4	225,140	18,460	154,755	\$948,751	8.38	0.69	\$6.13	\$51.39	\$4.21	11.79
Dawson County Urban Transportation District, MT	Demand-Response	M-F 7:30 am - 5:00 pm	8,558	5	44,172	1,992	13,058	\$153,916	6.56	0.30	\$11.79	\$77.27	\$3.48	1.53
Valley County Transit, MT	Demand-Response	7 days a week, 24 hours of service	6,771	8	115,432	1,303	48,662	\$331,136	37.35	0.42	\$6.80	\$254.13	\$2.87	7.19
Blackfeet Transit, MT	Demand-Response	M-F 8 am - 4:30 pm	10,100	7	56,843	7,500	29,150	\$139,666	3.89	0.51	\$4.79	\$18.62	\$2.46	2.89
<b>AVERAGE</b>			<b>9,460</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>110,148</b>	<b>7,837</b>	<b>56,971</b>	<b>\$417,701</b>	<b>12.02</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>\$8.53</b>	<b>\$90.66</b>	<b>\$3.55</b>	<b>5.57</b>
<i>Seward Senior Center Transit, AK</i>	<i>Fixed-Route, Demand-Response</i>	<i>M-F 9 am -2 pm</i>	<i>3,016</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5,200</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>2,000</i>	<i>\$65,000</i>	<i>2.00</i>	<i>0.38</i>	<i>\$32.50</i>	<i>\$65.00</i>	<i>\$12.50</i>	<i>0.66</i>

Sources: NTD Data, LSC, 2010.

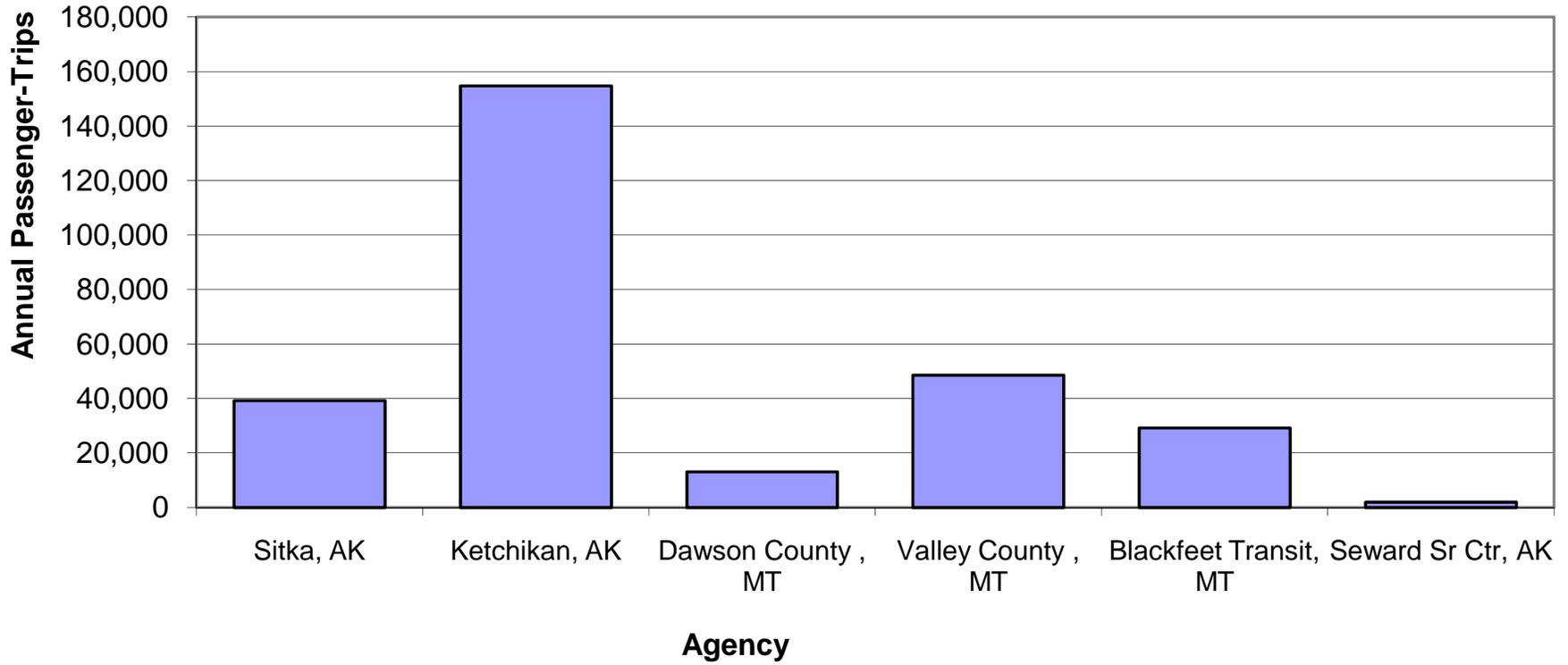
*Existing Service Providers and Peer Comparison*

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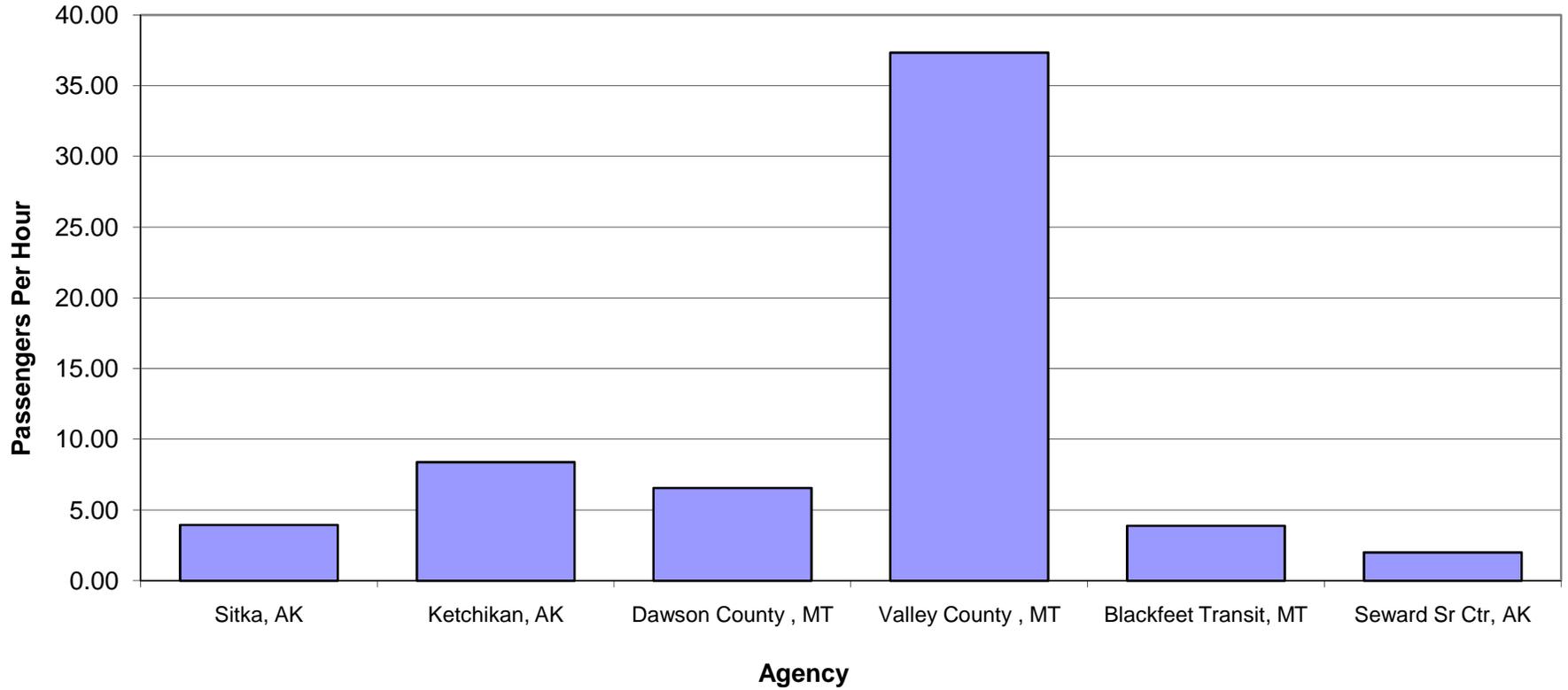
The following is a short narrative on the results of the peer analysis. The figures provided below reflect the peer communities' data in a graphical manner. Figure IV-1 presents the comparison of the annual ridership for the peer communities. The average of the five agencies was 56,971 annual trips. The highest ridership was from Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit with 154,755 annual passengers. The Seward Senior Center had a low annual ridership of 2,000 passengers because it provides transportation for seniors only.

Figure IV-2 shows the comparison of passenger-trips per hour by agency. Passenger-trips per hour were calculated for each of the five agencies, with an average of 12 passengers per hour. It is generally held that a productivity measure of two to six passengers per hour or fewer is the threshold for conducting demand-response operations. If a system exceeds the two to six passengers per hour threshold, the system should be considered for a switch to flex-route or deviated-route service to be able to meet those needs. If the passengers per hour exceeds the six passengers per hour, the system could consider a fixed-route service. Blackfeet Transit falls within the range for demand-response operations serving 3.89 passengers per hour, and Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit falls within the range for fixed-route/paratransit operations serving 8.38 passengers per hour. Valley County Transit serves 37.35 passengers per hour, making it the most efficient peer transit system under this criteria. Blackfeet Transit had the lowest passenger per hour with 3.89 passengers per hour. As mentioned before, the Seward Senior Center carries approximately two passengers per hour because it provides transportation for seniors only.

**Figure IV-1  
Annual Passenger-Trips**



**Figure IV-2  
Passengers Per Hour**



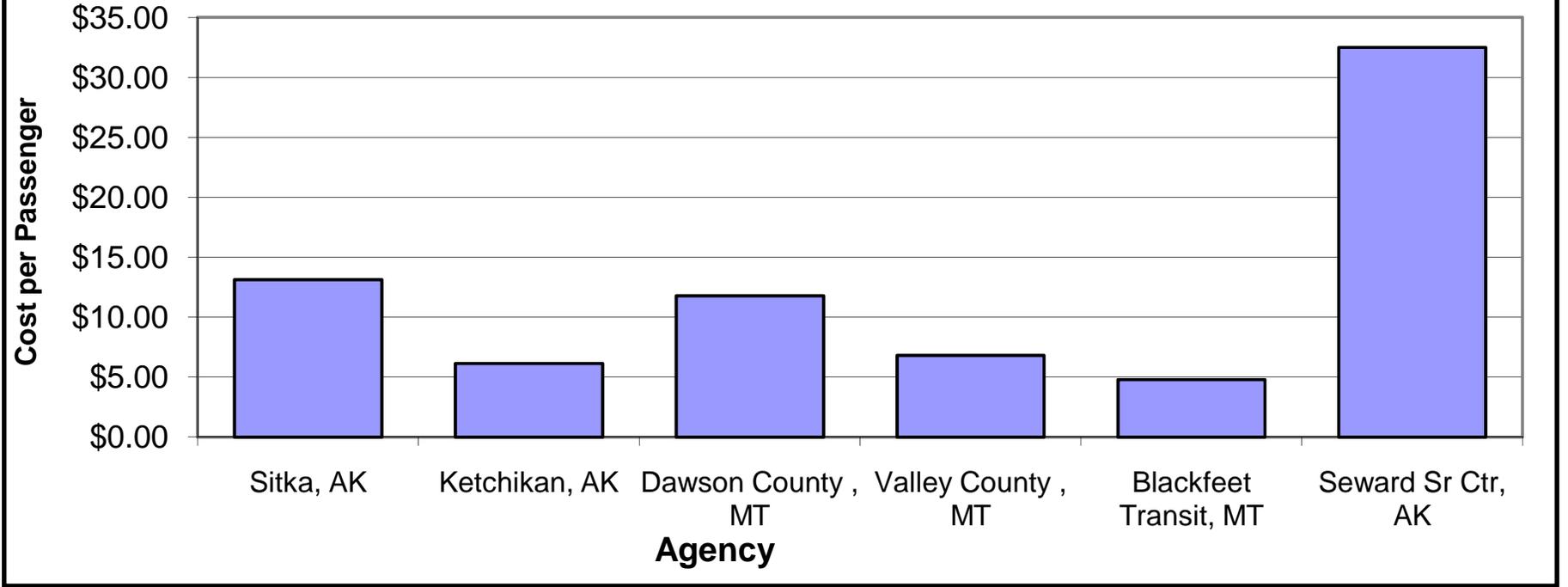
### *Existing Service Providers and Peer Comparison*

The average cost per passenger of \$8.53 was calculated for the five agencies. Figure IV-3 shows the comparison of the cost per passenger. The most cost-effective transit system of the peer systems is Blackfeet Transit with a \$4.79 cost per passenger. The most costly peer system is Sitka Tribe of Alaska's "The RIDE" with a \$13.13 cost per passenger. The Seward Senior Center cost per passenger was the highest of the communities at \$32.50.

Other averages calculated were the passengers per mile (at 0.46 passengers), the trips per capita (at 5.57 trips), the average cost per vehicle-hour (\$90.66), and the average cost per vehicle-mile at \$3.55.

The operating budget was also reported by each agency with an average of \$417,700. The highest operating budget of the peer communities is Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit at \$948,800. This is significantly higher than Seward Senior Center's transportation budget of \$65,000. Based on the peers, \$300,000 to \$400,000 would be the general operating budget for a public transportation service in the Seward area, based on its similar-sized populations.

**Figure IV-3  
Cost Per Passenger**



### **Peer Community Transit Services**

In order to get a better sense of the approximate cost of providing public transportation in Seward and its surrounding area, it is important to examine the types of services that peer communities provide. Three peer systems exclusively operate a demand-response service while two peers operate a fixed-route with a para-transit service. The type of transit system used by each peer system is shown in Table IV-5 (presented previously).

### **Summary**

In the analysis of the information presented in Table IV-5 and the previous figures, a pattern does arise. Based on the peer community analysis, Seward may need to choose their type of service depending on their budget and population. Ridership and trips per capita, on the other hand, are highly dependent on the quality and type of service in place.