

# Intercity Transit Road Trip **RECAP**

September 2022



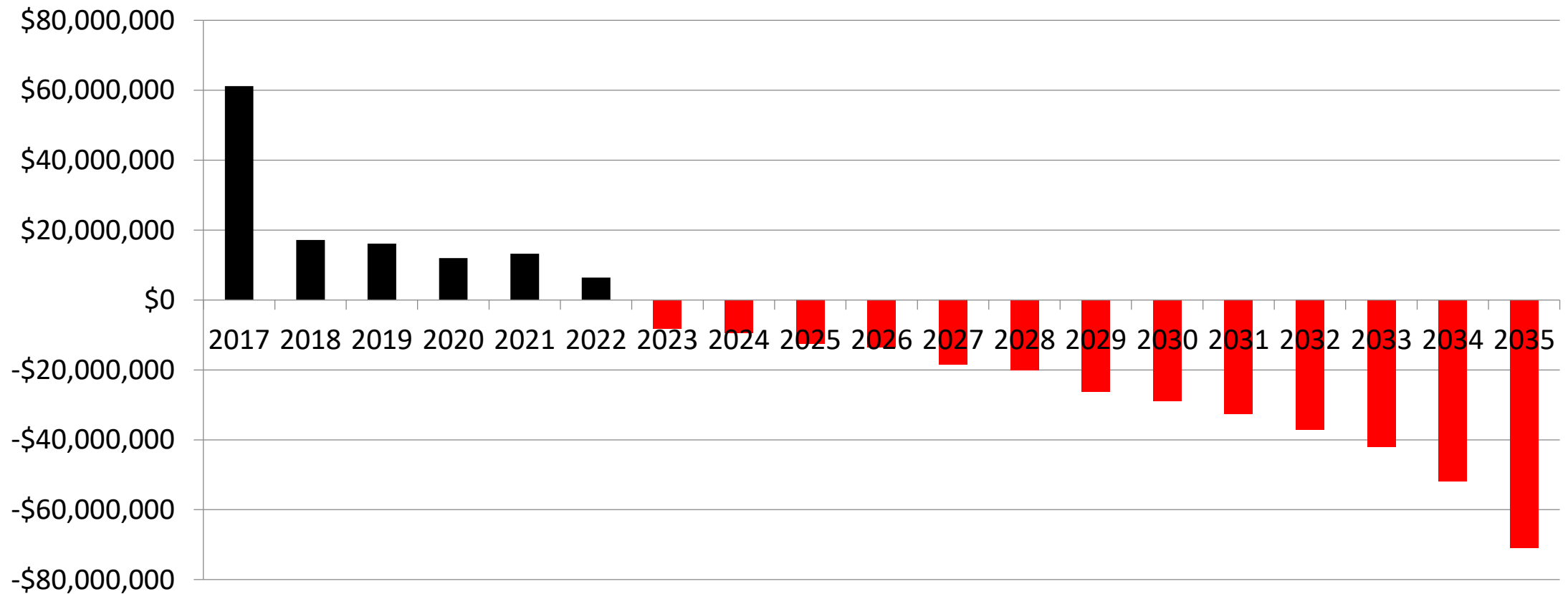
# Challenges to Overcome

- Increasing congestion (100,000 more people expected over next 25 years)
- Declining federal support (used to represent 80% of capital budget)
- Increasing labor costs (healthcare, retirement, additional drivers)



# 2016 Budget Projection

**Ending Cash Balance**  
**Shown with existing .8% sales tax rate**



## Outreach

- Intercept surveys
- Idea boxes
- Social media
- Open houses
- Online survey

## Inputs

- 3,500 participants
- 10,000 comments
- System analysis
- Steering Committee

## Interim Results

- Short-Range plan
- Long-Range options

## Public Review

- Service priorities
- Scenario preference
- Revenue options
- Survey + Polling
- =
- Road Map for Transit!

# Media + Targeted Communications

- FTE Magazine
- IT blast to Road Trip 1.0 list
- Olympian blast to all TC households
- Olympian banner ads with video clip
- IT and Partner Social Media blasts
- Email to all Intercity Transit staff
- IT News article and digital board
- Thurston Talk articles
- Olympian editorial board
- AVA recording
- Bus boards (interior/exterior)
- Commute Trip Reduction/Employee Transportation Coordinators
- Olympia insert (Music in the Park Ad)
- MIXX interview
- Panorama TV

# Events + Outreach

- South Sound Barbecue Festival
- Yelm Prairie Days Parade
- Lacey Fireworks
- Tumwater 4th of July Parade
- Tumwater Fireworks
- Lakefair Parade
- Rotaries
- Jubilee



# Partner Goal Alignment

- Reduces parking demand and cost
- Essential service for lower income populations
- Critical for businesses and higher ed partners
- Needed for new neighborhoods + employment centers
- Comp Plan implementation can't happen without it

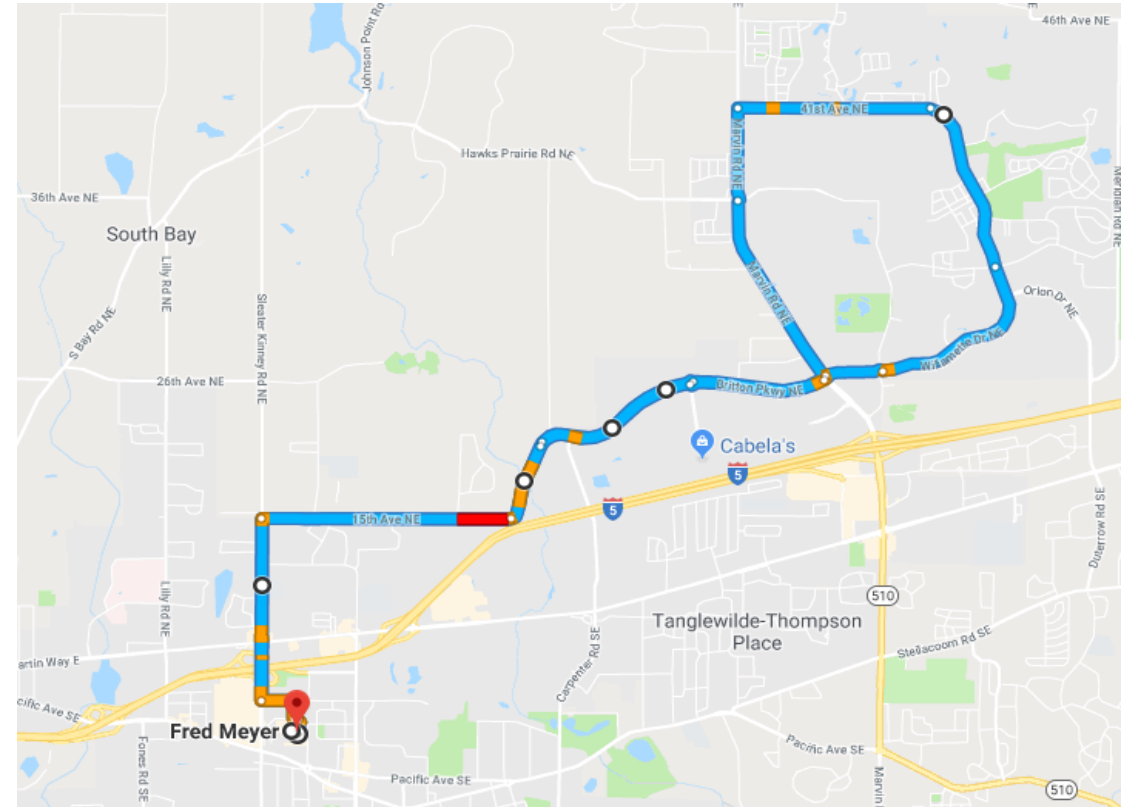


# Proposed Transformational Improvements: Our Nine Promises to the Community

1. **Extended Span of Service** – Service starts earlier, ends later, operates on weekends
2. **Improved Frequency** – Busy routes go to 15-minute service; all others 30-minute
3. **Service to New Areas** – Bus/Dial-A-Lift will be extended to new and growing areas
4. **On-Time Performance** – Put additional buses into service as congestion increases
5. **Enhanced Capital Facilities** – Better bus stops with shelters, benches, and lighting
6. **Bus Rapid Transit** – High-frequency, direct, comfortable and cost-effective service
7. **Night Owl Service** – On-demand, late night service to and from downtown
8. **Enhanced Commuter Service** – Express from Olympia-Lacey to Lakewood-Tacoma.
9. **Fare-Collection Efficiencies** – Easier pay options to reduce delay, simplify access

# Service to New Areas

- Yelm Walmart / Lacey Transit Center Express. 3 trips to Lacey during AM peak and 3 trips from Lacey during PM peak.
- Stand-alone route to connect NE Lacey job center with Lacey Transit Center.



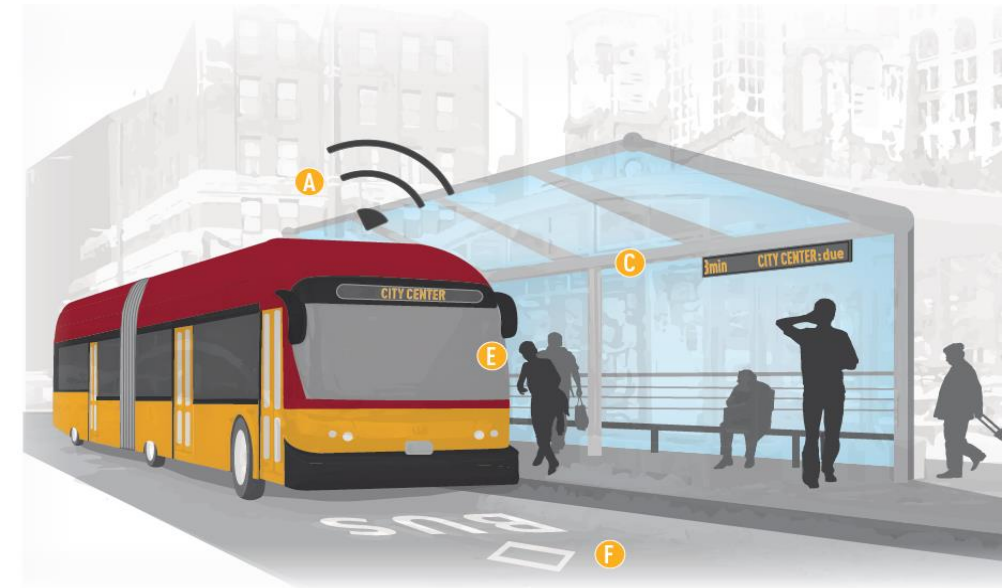
# Bus Rapid Transit

## Recommendations

- Implement on Martin Way across to Capital Mall first
- Unique branding, access premium vehicles, faster

## Benefits

- Increased ridership
- Employment-friendly
- Pre-paid fare
- Faster, more convenient, more comfortable



A. Transit Signal Priority B. BRT Branding C. Enhanced Stations  
D. Enhanced Fare Collection Systems E. Specialized Vehicles F. Dedicated Running Way

# Enhanced Service

Revenue required above and beyond current service levels:

- Annual operating cost increases = **\$14M**
- Capital investments = **\$41.5M**



# Fare Solution: Zero-Fare Transit

- Fares = less than 2% of annual budget
- Eliminated cost for farebox replacement
- No delays associated with fare payment and disputes
- Mitigates regressive sales tax impact/De facto minimum wage hike
- Universal access to employment
- Reduced congestion
- Reduced need for roads and parking
- Not asking individual orgs to subsidize

# Future Transit Scenarios

## **Smaller System** (No new revenue)

Start cutting services now

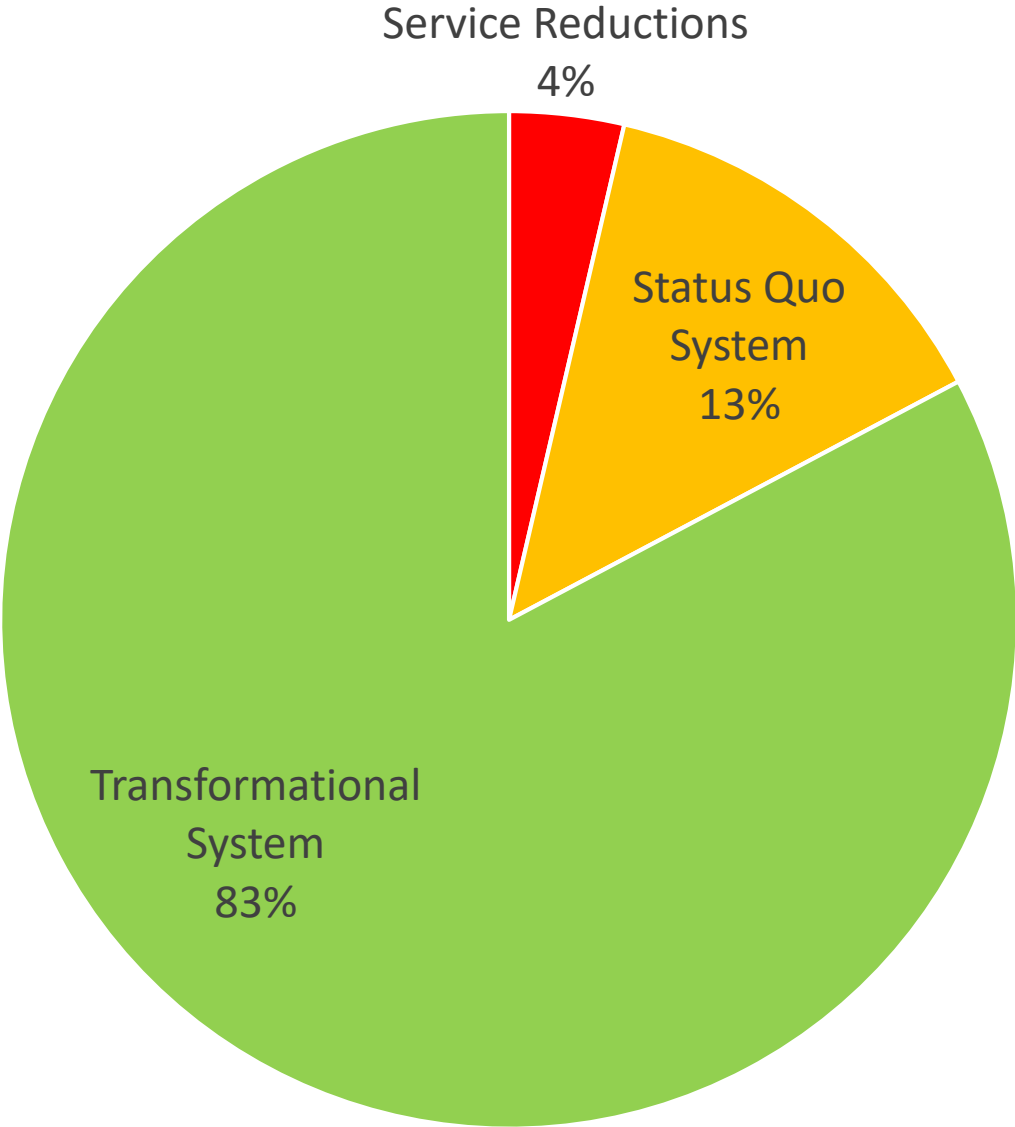
## **Status Quo** (\$8-\$12M in new funding)

Increase revenue enough to keep up with growth and congestion

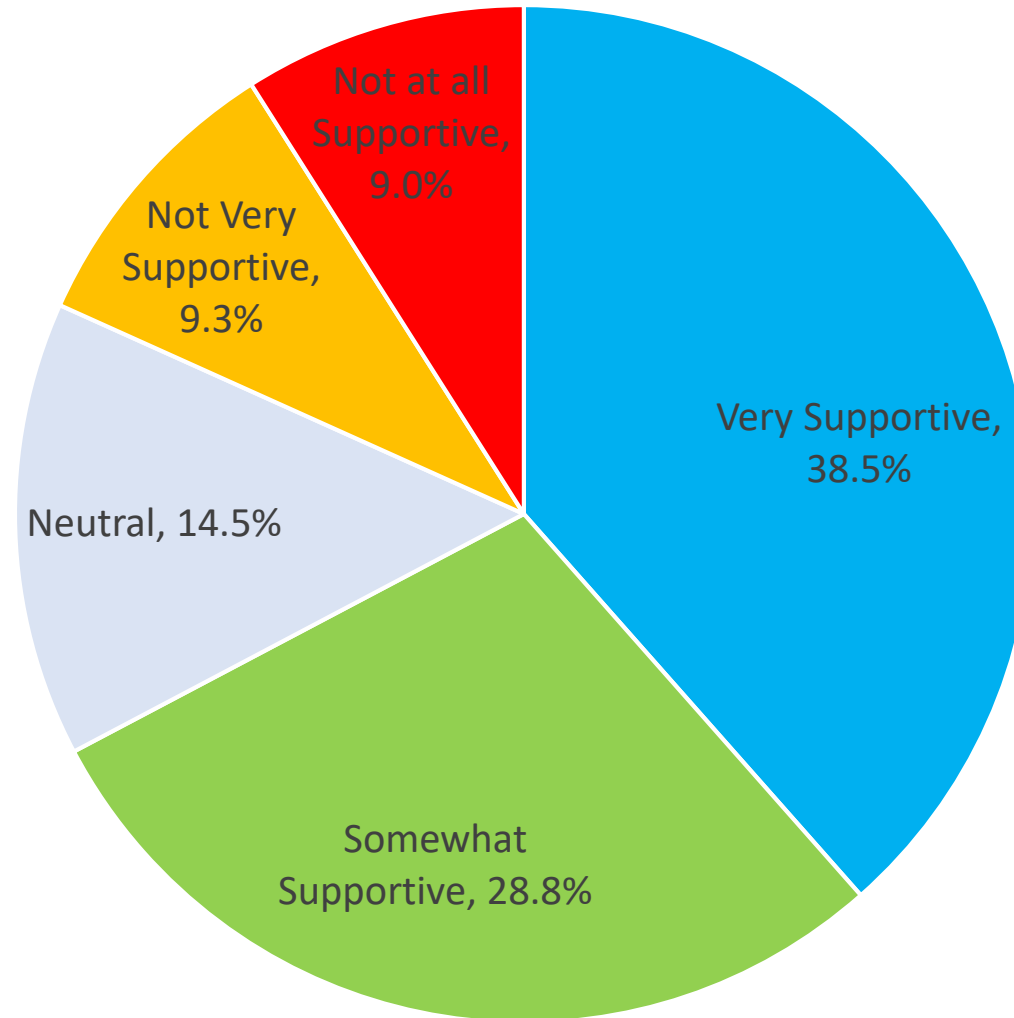
## **Transformational Scenario** (\$16-20M in new funding)

Increase revenue to speed-up service, add coverage to new employment centers and neighborhoods and extend morning/evening/weekend service

Please select your preferred future transit scenario:

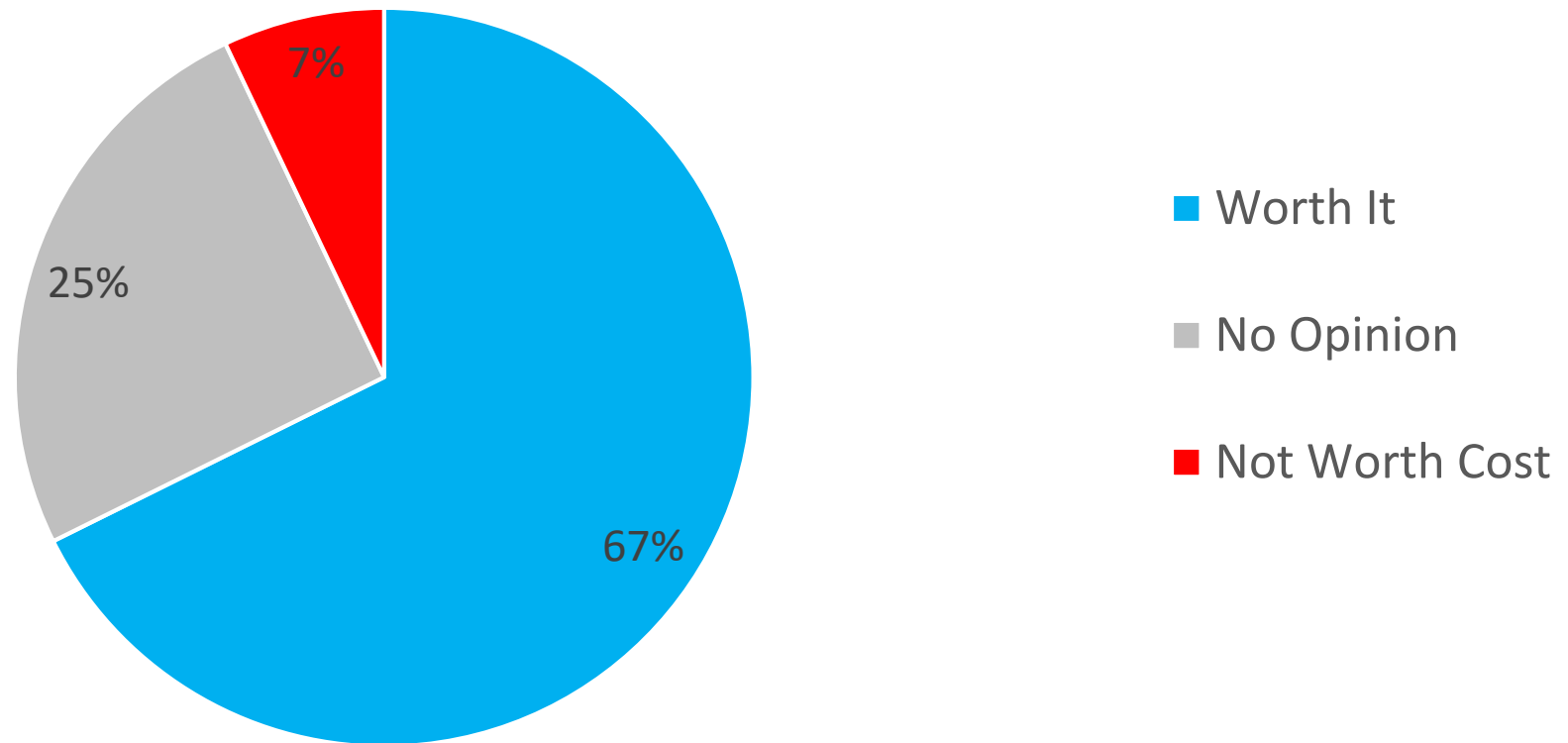


# Informal Poll Results: 67% on board

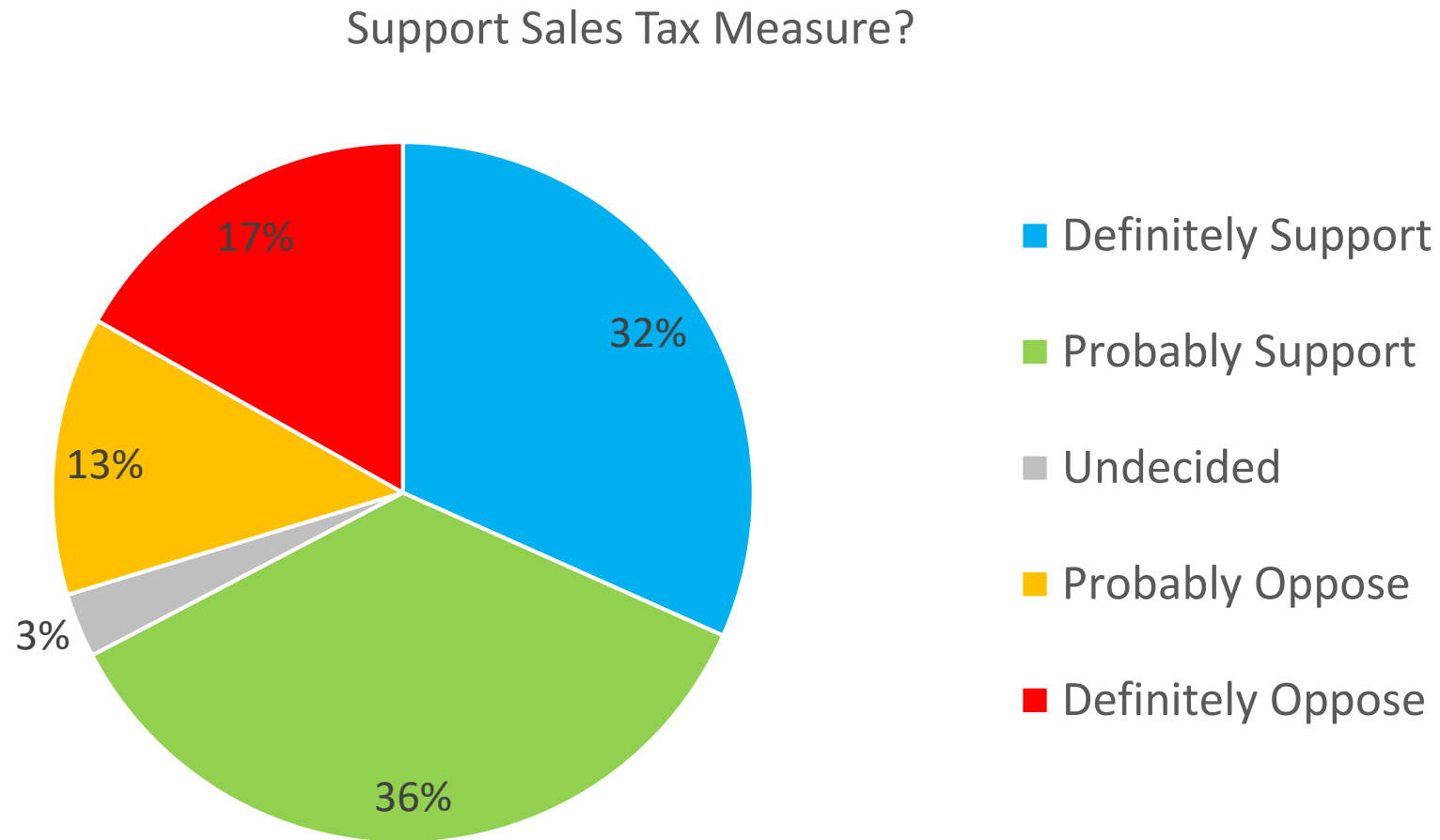


# Elway Poll Cost Increase: 67% on board

Worth \$2-\$5 Per Month to Make All Improvements?



# Elway Poll Sales Tax: 68% on board



# Board Resolution

November 6, 2018, Ballot Measure

## **Proposition 1:**

The Intercity Transit Authority adopted Resolution No. 02-2018, concerning the financing of public transportation. The proposition would increase the sales and use tax within the public transportation benefit area by four-tenths of one percent (0.4%) for the purposes of providing funds to maintain, improve and expand local bus and commuter services for the general public and special transit services for people living with disabilities.

**Results: 66% Supported Prop 1**

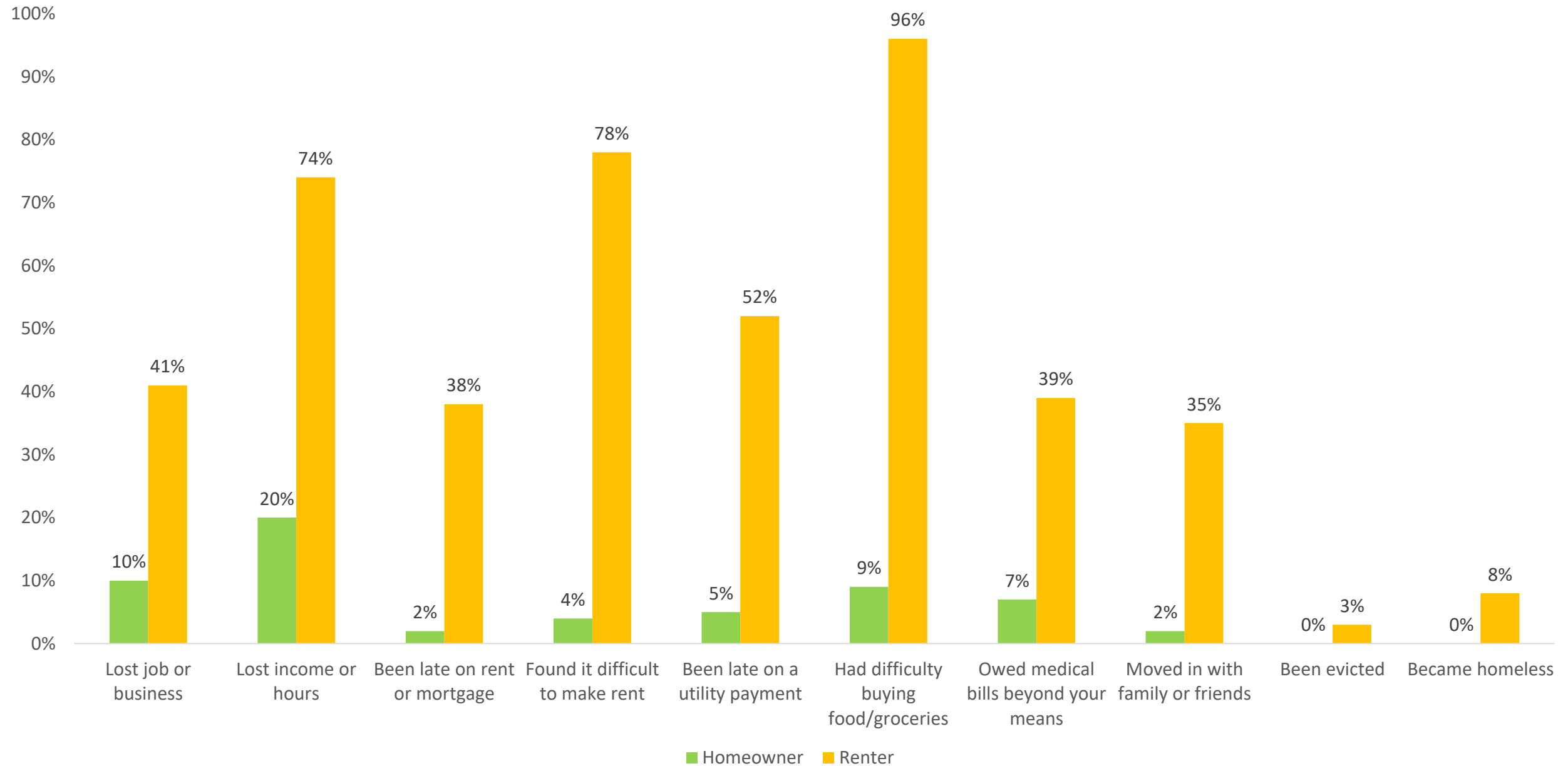
# Current Context

Checklist Before for Getting Back on the Road

# It's STILL Tough Out There

- Near universal labor shortages
- Rapidly-rising rent and cost of living
- Persistent worker/rider trepidation
- Logistics and supply change uncertainty

In the last year, have you or your household experienced any of the following?



# Labor Force Response

What's Underway

STAY IN  
**UNIFORM**



**DRIVE  
IT**

- ✓ Continue to serve
- ✓ Close to home
- ✓ Great benefits

**JOIN**

INTERcity  
TRANSIT

IN UNCERTAIN TIMES  
**YOUR JOB IS SECURE**



**DRIVE  
IT**

- ✓ Fully supported
- ✓ Career growth
- ✓ Great benefits

**JOIN**

INTERcity  
TRANSIT

**CAREER HIT  
THE BRAKES?**



**WE ARE  
HIRING**

INTERcity  
TRANSIT

WHY NOT  
**LOVE YOUR JOB?**



**DRIVE  
IT**

- ✓ Inclusive culture
- ✓ Always supported
- ✓ Serve your community

**JOIN**

INTERcity  
TRANSIT

**DRIVE  
WITH  
US**



**WHY WAIT 4 YEARS  
TO START YOUR CAREER?**



**DRIVE  
IT**

- ✓ No student debt
- ✓ Paid training
- ✓ Career growth

**JOIN**

INTERcity  
TRANSIT

IF I CAN...  
**YOU CAN, TOO!**

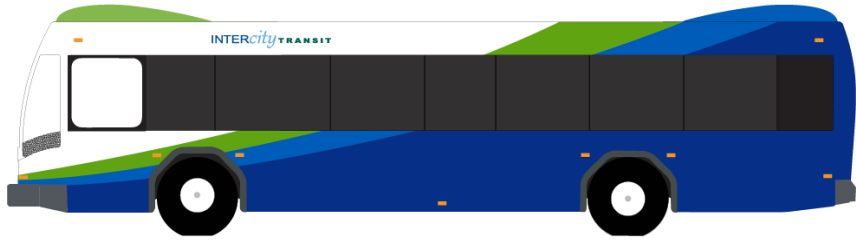


**DRIVE  
IT**

- ✓ Fully supported
- ✓ No experience needed
- ✓ Great benefits

**JOIN**

INTERcity  
TRANSIT



Want a job with great benefits, career advancement, and paid training? Drive IT!

[https://youtu.be/JxL8LuFZ1\\_s](https://youtu.be/JxL8LuFZ1_s)



INTERcity TRANSIT

Don't know where to go? Get the lowdown on the GreenBusway.

GreenBusway

What is it?

Why is it important?

How to use it?

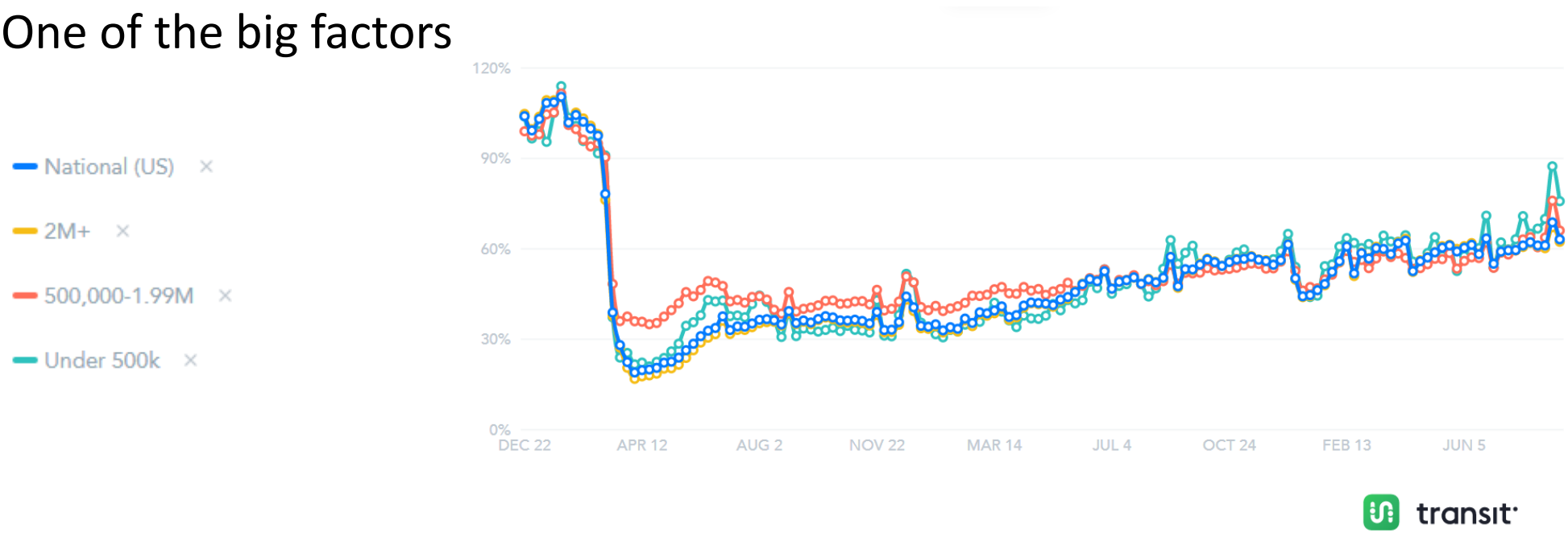
Where to go?

TODAY'S CHALLENGES



# Peer Experiences - Ridership

- Nationwide ridership average for buses is ~60% of pre-covid numbers
- Smaller agencies are closer to pre-covid numbers – driven by a greater incidence of high need riders
- Intercity Transit is at ~60% of pre-pandemic ridership with 74% of pre-covid service
  - One of the big factors



# Peer Experiences - Funding

- CARES funding has helped agencies withstand the fiscal impacts of the pandemic
- As CARES expires, many agencies, particularly larger ones, are forecasting financial shortfalls
- Intercity Transit is well positioned to account for CARES funding going away
  - The Road Map created a sustainable future, even with the pandemic impacts



# Peer Experiences - Remote Work

- In-office five-day workweek is not coming back anytime soon
- Nationwide, commuter routes and commuter rail have had the slowest ridership recovery, even though traffic levels are close to pre-pandemic
- Nationwide, most commuter routes are only 20-30% of pre-pandemic ridership
- Impacts for Intercity Transit
  - State workers represent a market that is only slowly coming back
  - Olympia Express is still significantly underperforming

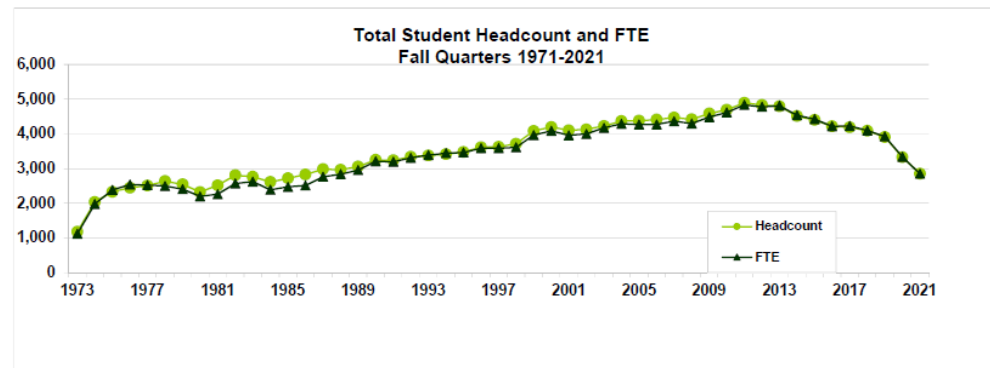
## TRAVEL

### **Commuter study indicates pandemic patterns likely won't change quickly in the Seattle metro area**

A UW study demonstrates that it could be several years before commuting traffic return to pre-pandemic levels.

# Peer Experiences - Post Secondary Education

- Colleges and Universities have been seeing declining enrollment
- Community Colleges have seen even larger declines
- Impacts for Intercity Transit
  - Students have been a huge market
  - Evergreen State College enrollment has dropped from ~5,000 to under 2,000



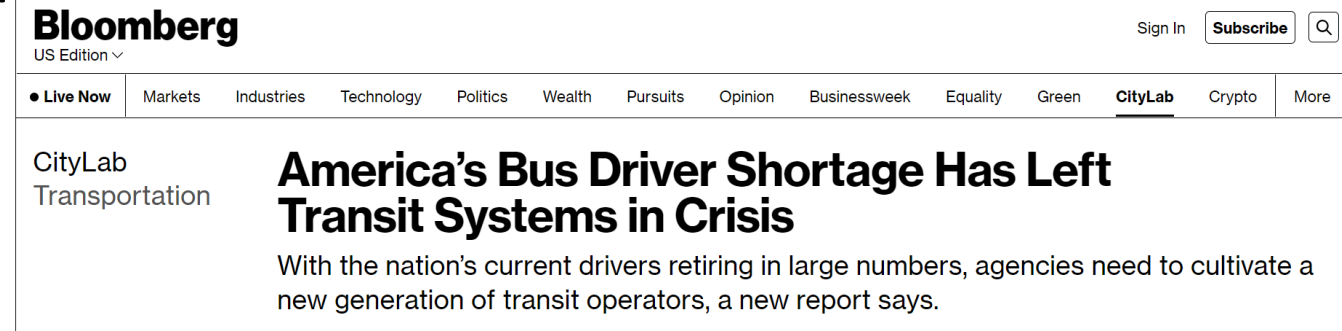
- SPSCC has not seen as large of enrollment declines

# Peer Experiences - Factors inhibiting Ridership Return

- Surveys nationwide show common themes:
  - Fear of getting sick – Will I get Covid on transit?
  - Physical safety fears – Will I get assaulted on transit?
  - Reliability – Will my bus/train show up when it should?
  - Service levels aren't what they used to be (not as frequent, not late, etc.)
  - Desire to not waste time commuting – Why commute when I can work at home?
- Impacts for Intercity Transit
  - IT can control reliability and service levels, but not some of the larger trends/fears

# Peer Experience – Staffing Shortages

- Most systems have an operator shortage and have cut service
- Most systems are not at pre-pandemic service levels



- Impacts for Intercity Transit
  - IT hired over 100 people in 2019 (mostly operators) to expand service 24%
  - Today, IT has been unable to restore service due to operator shortages
  - IT is executing plan to build back up operator numbers
  - All staff have been pressed due to Covid impacts

# Peer Experiences – Ways to address operator Shortages

- Replace/augment commuter routes with vanpool service
  - Lower costs, even if agency gives away a van
  - Challenge – vanpools are less effective with flexible work schedules
- Operate evening service with on-demand
  - Allows for expansion of later service with smaller IT operator pool
  - More flexible service during evening times
  - Not new idea: in the Road Map, late evening service was be on-demand
  - Could be contracted
  - New service type will require set up time to successfully implement

# Peer Experience – Bringing Riders Back

- Things Intercity Transit is doing to bring back riders:
  - Zero-fare
  - Added security personnel and Operations Supervisors to provide a secure environment and act as ambassadors
  - Enhanced cleaning protocols
  - Are about to improved rider information through “myStop” app that is tied to CAD/AVL roll-out
- This reflects a national playbook to bring riders back

# Final Thoughts

- Intercity Transit does not face a funding challenge
- Intercity Transit has a plan to address operator shortages, which is hampering the return to pre-pandemic service levels



# THANK YOU!



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