Short- and Long-Range Plan

Appendix C: Info Sheets

October 2018
Bus Rapid Transit

What is Bus Rapid Transit?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a high-frequency bus-based transit system that delivers fast, direct, comfortable, and cost-effective service. Because BRT contains features similar to rail service. It is much faster, more reliable, and more convenient than regular bus services. With the right features, BRT avoids the causes of delays that typically slow regular bus services, like being stuck in traffic and paying on board.

What are the benefits?

- Faster service that arrives on time
- Buses that come more often, all day long
- Service that supports economic development

What are the costs?

**Martin Way corridor:**

- **$2.5M** Annual operating costs (additional)
- **$23M–$30M** Capital costs

Where are the opportunities?

- Smarter traffic signals
- A distinct look and feel
- Simpler fare payment
- Vehicles with more room
- Comfortable stations
Extended Span of Service

What is an extended span of service?

An extended span of service means more bus routes start earlier in the morning and continue to run later at night, on weekdays and weekends. As a result, extended service helps get you where you need to go, regardless of your schedule. This helps to accommodate early or late work schedules, as well as shopping, visiting friends, or going out at night.

**Number of bus routes that currently run until 11 PM on weekdays**

4

**Number of bus routes that would run until 11 PM with an extended span**

15

What are the benefits?

- Support for irregular and late work schedules
- Span is consistent for multiple routes
- Later service is a community priority

What are the costs?

- $1.6M Annual operating costs (additional)
- 7% Increase in service relative to 2017 levels
- None Capital costs

Where are the opportunities?

Routes that run until 11 PM now:

- 12
- 41
- 62B
- 66

Routes that would run until 11 PM with an extended span of service:

- 13
- 21
- 45
- 47
- 48
- 60
- 62A
- 64
- 67
- 68
- 94
What does improved frequency mean?

Improved frequency means buses come more often, all day. In other words, buses arrive at a stop every 15 or 30 minutes depending on the route.

When buses come more frequently, you don’t need to plan your day around the schedule. For the most frequent routes (13, 41, 62A/B), buses would come every 15 minutes, seven days a week.

What are the benefits?

- Better accommodates your schedule
- More flexibility for off-peak trips
- Bus schedules that are easier to remember

What are the costs?

- $4.5M Annual operating costs (additional)
- 21% Increase in service
- 2 New vehicles required

Which routes would have more frequent service?

- Minimum 30-minute frequency all day
- Three routes with all-day, 15-minute service
- Same frequency all-day, seven-days-a-week
- Simpler bus schedules

- 15-min all day
- 30-min all day
Service to New Areas

What does service to new areas mean?

Service to new areas would include routes to NE Lacey, Yelm, and possibly Innovative Service Zones for other less densely populated areas.

Growth in Thurston County is adding new destinations that are unserved by the current transit network. For NE Lacey, new service would be an all-day, standalone route between the Lacey Transit Center and job centers in NE Lacey. Service to Yelm would be an express route during rush hour to and from Lacey Transit Center. Innovative Service Zones could serve less densely populated areas until they can support bus service. Potential zones could be in Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater, and Yelm.

Potential NE Lacey and Yelm route alignments

What is an Innovative Service Zone?

- Gets you connected into the broader system
- On-demand
- Smaller vehicles

What are the benefits?

- Better access to jobs, schools, appointments, and shopping
- More flexibility for off-peak trips

What are the costs?

- $2.6M Annual operating costs (additional)
- 4 New vehicles required
Night Owl Service is a weekend, on-demand, late night service to and from downtown Olympia. It would include three small buses leaving the Olympia Transit Center hourly. Each bus would make pickups and drop-offs in a different zone that reaches up to three miles away from downtown Olympia. Night Owl service would not replace the existing weekend service to The Evergreen State College.

What are the benefits?
- Supports new trip purposes
- Provides employment transportation during peak “entertainment” times
- Promotes safety for riders and non-riders

What are the costs?
- $400,000
  - Annual operating costs (additional)
- None
  - Capital costs

Where are the opportunities?
What does maintain on-time performance mean?

It’s critical to keep buses running on time despite changes in traffic. This requires setting aside 0.5% of the operating budget to periodically adjust schedules.

Increasing traffic congestion in the future will lead to increasing delays, and increasing costs associated with those delays, for everyone including transit vehicles.

Intercity Transit can plan ahead for slowing travel times by setting aside a specified percentage of the operating budget each year for one-or-two schedule adjustments. This would allow Intercity Transit to put additional buses into service on busy routes and reduce wait times for riders.

What are the benefits?

- Establishes a savings account for on-demand service additions
- Provides flexibility for changing operating conditions

What are the costs?

- 0.5% Annual operating costs
- None Capital costs
What is enhanced commuter service?

Enhanced commuter service means better express service between Olympia, Lacey, Lakewood, and Tacoma. It would make service easier to understand, faster, more comfortable, and more frequent.

Commuter service is fast service over long distances, designed to transport suburban workers to downtown jobs. This is important because Thurston County anticipates approximately 43,000* commuters traveling out of Thurston County to work by 2025, an increase of 22%. Many of these commuters will be going to Pierce and King Counties.

* Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) Countywide Employment and Commute Forecast, January 2018

What are the benefits?

- Avoids delays.
- Provides flexibility for changing operating conditions.
- Reduces congestion on I-5.

What are the costs?

- Annual operating costs (additional): $1M
- Capital costs for new buses: $3.0M
Enhanced Capital Facilities

What are enhanced capital facilities?

Enhanced capital facilities mean better bus stops, with features like shelters, benches, and lighting. Together, these improve the overall customer experience while waiting for the bus.

Intercity Transit would invest in bus stop enhancements throughout its service area. Priority would be given to stops with more ridership.

What are the benefits?

- Better passenger experience
- Attracts and retain riders

What are the costs?

- None
- $260K

INTERcity TRANSIT
Changing the way fares are paid means different things to different people, and can address several challenges identified by the community. There are options and opportunities that, with some additional study, can help meet our shared goals.

Implementing new fare technology and introducing an alternative fare structure are two options which could be considered.

**New Fare Technology**

The existing fare collection system takes cash only and is failing. There are many new technology options to consider. Part of the consideration is the cost associated with purchasing and maintaining a fare collection system, and processing the money collected.

**Alternative Fare Structure**

An alternative fare structure means removing the collection of fares on the bus from individual riders and replacing that fare revenue with funds generated through public/private partnerships. About 10% of transit revenues come from fares. There are several communities, like Chapel Hill NC, Missoula MT, Corvallis OR, and Cache Valley UT, that have implemented a similar alternative fare structure. They have found it:

- **Promotes social equity**: Riders least able to afford fares are currently paying them.
- **Increases ridership**: Systems report an increase of 30–40% ridership.
- **Makes bus service faster**: 3–7% speed improvement without fare collection waiting time.
- **Lowers operating costs**: eliminates costs for fare collection, fare equipment, ticket management, and administration.
- **Removes barriers**: Increases convenience and removes the hassle of finding cash to ride the bus.
- **Reduces traffic congestion**: gets more people riding the bus, leaving fewer cars on the road.
- **Environmentally friendly**: gets more people riding the bus, leaving fewer cars on the road.