Whatcom Transportation Authority

2024-2029 Transit Development Plan

Approved August 1, 2024

WTA Communitydriven
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PLAN ADOPTION, PUBLIC HEARING, AND DISTRIBUTION

Plan Adoption

The Whatcom Transportation Authority Board of Directors discussed the transit Development Plan for 2024-2029 on August 1, 2024.

Public Participation Process

Public Comment period: July 22, 2024 – August 1, 2024
Comments submitted to: customerservice@ridewta.com
Whatcom Transportation Authority
Tim Wilder, Planning Director
4011 Bakerview Spur
Bellingham, WA 98226

Public Hearing: Whatcom Transportation Authority held a public hearing during the regularly scheduled board meeting on the Transit Development Plan on August 1, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.

Notice posted to the website: Whatcom Transportation Authority posted a notice of the hearing on the Transit Development Plan to its website at www.ridewta.com on July 22, 2024.

Digital and Paper Copies: Whatcom Transportation Authority posted the digital copy of the Transit Development Plan on its website on July 22, 2024, at www.ridewta.com/business/reports. Paper copies were available at the main office at 4011 Bakerview Spur, Bellingham, WA 98226 and at the Bellingham Station at 205 E Magnolia, Bellingham, WA 98225.

Notice published in local paper: The Bellingham Herald published a notice of the hearing on the Transit Development Plan on July 21, 2024.

Plan Distribution

On August 19, 2024, Whatcom Transportation Authority distributed the adopted Transit Development Plan to:

- WSDOT Public Transportation Division online grants management system
- The Transportation Improvement Board via:
  - Vaughn Nelson, Finance Manager at vaughnn@tib.wa.gov
  - Chris Workman, Engineering Manager at chrisw@tib.wa.gov
- All cities, counties and regional transportation planning organizations within which Whatcom Transportation Authority operates.

1 INTRODUCTION

Whatcom Transportation Authority's (WTA) Transit Development Plan (TDP) for 2024-2029 is designed to comply with the six-year planning requirements of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) as required by RCW 35.58.2795. This TDP contains the required elements including how WTA intends to meet state and local long-range priorities for public transportation; a description of capital improvements and significant operating changes planned for the transit agency's system; and a financial plan. In addition, this TDP includes information about the agency and its 2023 accomplishments.

The information contained in the plan is based on the WTA 2040 Long Range Plan and is consistent with WTA's 2025-2030 Capital Improvement Plan and adopted 2024 budget.

2 AGENCY

WTA provides public transportation services throughout Whatcom County in Northwest Washington State. Our services include fixed route, ADA paratransit, zone service, a vanpool program, and an on-demand service.

Mission

Figure 1 Mission

Governing Body

WTA is governed by a ten-member board of directors composed of mainly elected officials from jurisdictions located in its service area.

2023 WTA Board Members

Michael Lilliquist
Bellingham City Council
Board Chair

Ali Hawkinson
Ferndale City Council
Board Vice-Chair

Hollie Huthman
Bellingham City Council

Seth Fleetwood
Mayor of Bellingham

Todd Donovan
Whatcom County Council

Satpal Sidhu
Whatcom County Executive

Scott Korthuis
Mayor of Lynden

Eric Davidson
Blaine City Council

Jennifer Lautenbach
Everson City Council
Representing Everson/Nooksack/Sumas

Dan Darwin
Non-Voting Labor Representative
Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 843

Public Processes

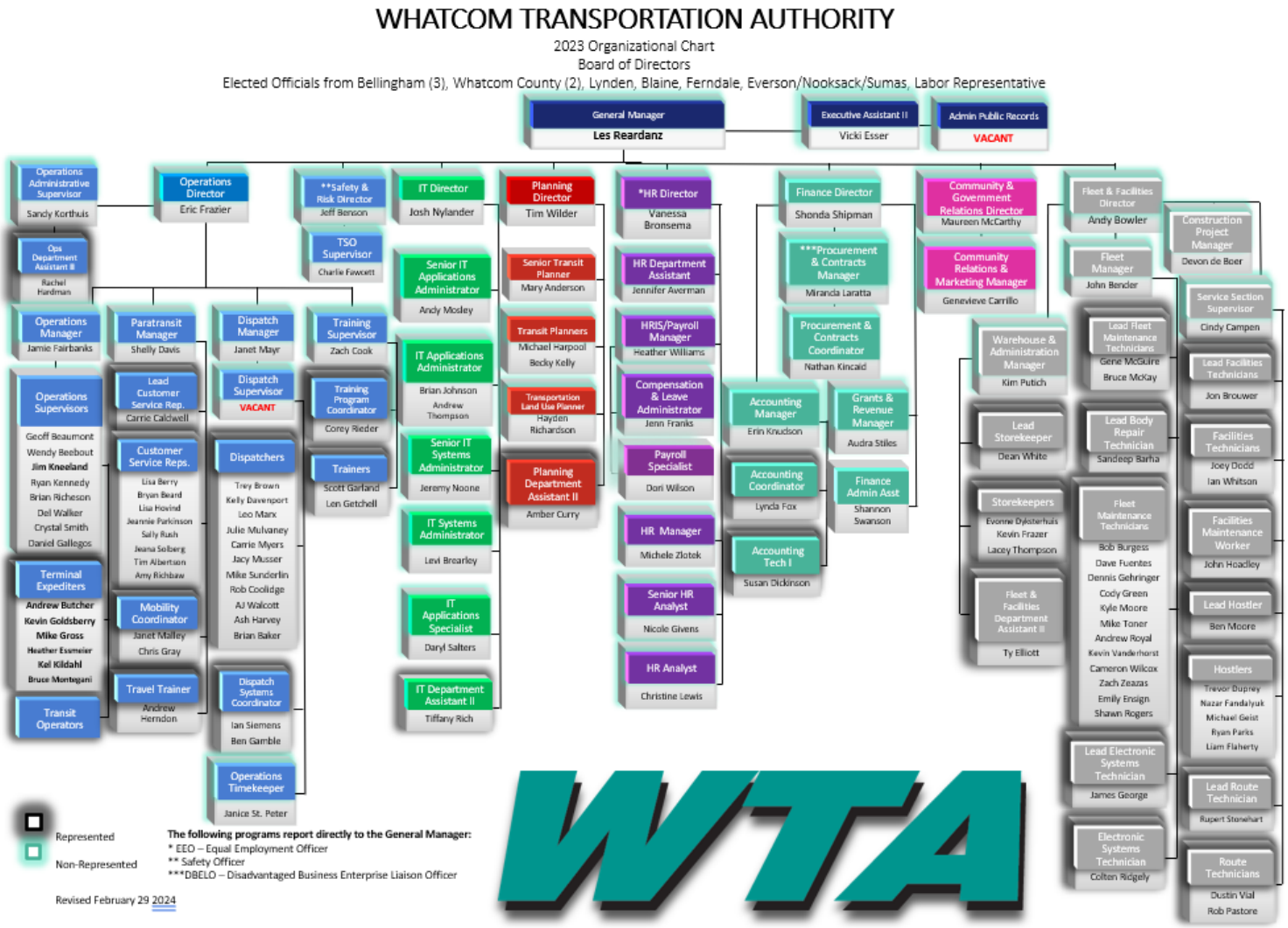
The joint WTA and Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG) Community Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG) consists of members representing a wide range of stakeholders, including citizens, government representatives, neighborhoods, schools, tribes, and social and health services. CTAG meets regularly throughout the year to review and discuss significant service changes, the annual budget and other major agency initiatives.

Agency Structure

Organization Chart

As approved in the 2023 Budget, WTA had the authorization to employ 307 Full time equivalents.

Figure 2 Corporate Organizational Chart



3 FACILITIES

Maintenance, Operations and Administration Building (MOAB) - located at 4011 Bakerview Spur, Bellingham, Washington. Also have adjacent properties called the North Lot that is connected on the North side of the property and the Midway lot which is across the street on Midway Lane.

Bellingham Station (BTS) — located on the corner of Railroad Avenue and Magnolia Street in downtown Bellingham. This facility includes a customer service office, ten passenger loading gates, customer restrooms and waiting area, and operations and administrative space.

Cordata Station (CTS) — located on the corner of Cordata Parkway and Olivine Lane in Bellingham. This facility has bus bays, three passenger loading areas, outdoor customer waiting areas, customer restrooms, and a 70-stall park & ride lot.

Ferndale Station — located at I-5 and Axton Road in Ferndale. This facility has three passenger loading areas and a 131-stall park & ride lot.

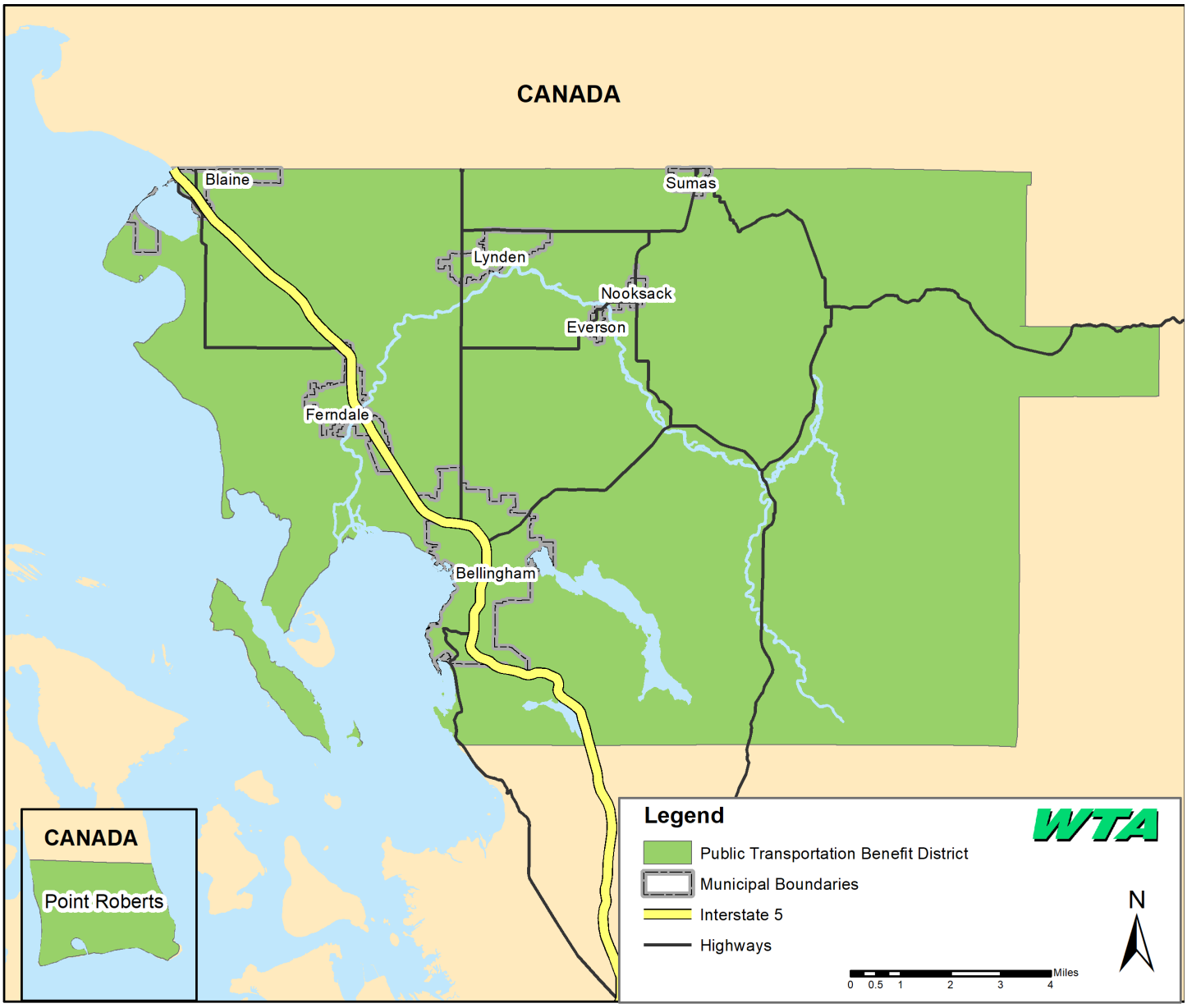
Lynden Station — located at Main Street and 19th Street in Lynden. This facility has two passenger loading areas, an 89-stall park & ride lot, and a commercial building leased by a vendor.

4 SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

Service Area

WTA's service area covers 776 square miles in Northwest Washington adjacent to the Canadian border. It includes almost the entire populated area of Whatcom County including seven incorporated cities and several unincorporated places.

Figure 3 Whatcom Public Transportation Benefit District



Founded in 1983, WTA is a Public Transportation Benefit Area Corporation (PTBA) incorporated under authority of Chapter 36.57A of the Revised Code of Washington. WTA is currently funded through a combination of sales tax revenues (at 0.6 percent of the full 0.9 percent that could be authorized by the electorate), fares and grants, as further detailed in Section 11.

Our services include fixed route bus service (including route deviated “Flex” service), ADA paratransit, zone service throughout the service area, and a vanpool program. In addition, WTA began an agency-operated on-demand service in 2021 as a two-year pilot project. WTA also partners with the Whatcom Council of Governments on Transportation Demand Management services.

Fixed Route Bus Service

WTA provides fixed-route bus service to all incorporated communities in Whatcom County as well as most small unincorporated places. Primary communities include Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine, Everson, Nooksack, Sumas, Birch Bay, Lummi Nation, Sudden Valley, and Kendall. WTA offers 28 fixed routes, including a network of four high-frequency corridors (“Go-Lines”) within Bellingham, small city and rural routes, and a regional service to Skagit County.

Service is provided seven days a week, with limited service on Saturdays, Sundays, and evenings. Generally, WTA operates on the following days and times:

- Weekdays: service is available in most areas from about 6:00 am to 7:30 pm.
- Saturdays: service is available in many areas from about 9:00 am to 6:30 pm.
- Both weekdays and Saturdays: later service is available in a few areas, up to 11:00 pm.
- Sundays: service is available in all but the most rural areas, from about 8:00 am to 9:50 pm.

Four high frequency Go-Lines offer 15-minute service throughout the weekday in support of higher density areas and heavily traveled corridors in Bellingham. They provide a backbone for less frequent local and regional service and typically have higher ridership than other routes.

During the Western Washington University (WWU) school year, WTA operates up to 4 shuttles on existing WWU routes as header or trailer buses to accommodate heavy passenger loads. These are in addition to routes that operate throughout the year to WWU.

Two routes connect people in small cities and rural parts of Whatcom County with Bellingham, and locations along the way. Each route has a designated “Flex” area within which passengers can book a trip in advance, and the bus will travel off its normal route to pick up the passenger. Flex routes include:

Route 71X - Everson/Nooksack/Sumas (no ADA paratransit service)
Route 72X - Kendall via Mt. Baker Highway (no ADA paratransit service)
Route 75 – Blaine/Birch Bay (ADA paratransit service with limited Flex areas)

WTA Service Maps

Figure 4 WTA Service Map

WTA Service Maps Continued

Figure 5 WTA Service Maps Continued

Service Connectors

WTA provides service to all major multi-modal facilities in Whatcom County. WTA provides access to most area public and private transportation providers, as follows:

Skagit Transit: Route 80X connects Whatcom and Skagit counties and is jointly operated by WTA and Skagit Transit. Riders of Route 80X can transfer in Skagit County to routes serving Island and Snohomish counties.

AMTRAK: Access at the Fairhaven Transportation Center

Lummi Nation Transit: Access at various places in the Lummi Nation

Lummi Island Ferry: Access at Gooseberry Point

Bellingham International Airport: Access at the Terminal Building

Regional Bus Carriers (Greyhound, Flixbus, & Sea-Tac Airporter Shuttle): Access at the Fairhaven Transportation Center, WWU and Lincoln Creek Park & Ride

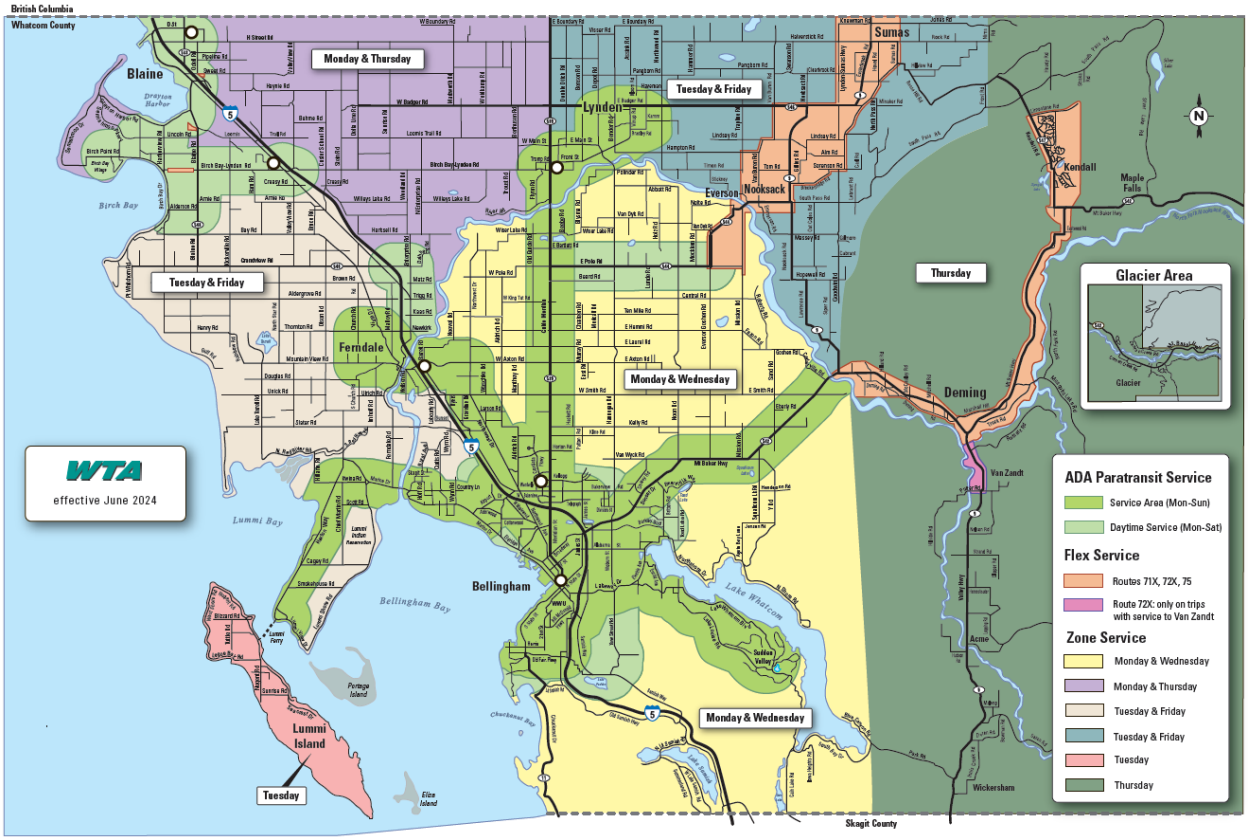
Area Schools: WTA provides services to, or in the vicinity of, most public and many private schools, as well as Western Washington University (WWU), Whatcom Community College (WCC), Bellingham Technical College (BTC), and Northwest Indian College (NWIC). WTA attempts to coordinate schedules with school bell times when those times align with broader service objectives. There are elementary schools in the rural Mt. Baker, Meridian, and Nooksack school districts that do not have scheduled service.

ADA Paratransit Service

WTA's paratransit service provides curb-to-curb (and if needed, door-to-door) transportation to riders whose disability prevents them from riding the fixed route bus system. Paratransit service is designed to be comparable to fixed route service. For this reason, paratransit's hours of operation mirror WTA's fixed route hours. The service area is within ¾ mile of all fixed routes, except for Flex routes and the 80X regional route. Like fixed routes, paratransit is public transportation, so riders will often share their rides with others. Grouping rides efficiently is essential for meeting rider demand, as hundreds of trips are scheduled every day. Riders can book paratransit trips for any type of trip; no trip purpose is more important than another. Everyone who rides paratransit must qualify and be approved before riding.

ADA Paratransit and Zone Service Map

Figure 6 ADA Paratransit and Zone Service Map



Zone Service

Zone service provides limited demand responsive transit service to rural areas of Whatcom County that are not served by a fixed route. There are no eligibility requirements for using zone service and anyone within the designated area can request a ride. Service is only available to each zone on one or two days of the week. Advance reservations are required.

Vanpool Program

WTA's vanpool program allows groups of people to use a WTA-owned van for the purpose of commuting to and from a common worksite. The vanpool group pays a fare, based on a tiered general destination – the further the destination, the higher the rate. Vanpoolers share the cost of commuting and assign a trained driver. Fares cover almost all of the cost to operate the van, including fuel, maintenance, and insurance. In 2023, there were 11 vans in service.

On-Demand Service

Between 2021 - 2024, WTA operated an on-demand service in Lynden as a pilot project called the “Lynden Hop”. The service used agency drivers and, support staff, and a vendor-provided software managed in-house. Passengers hailed a ride anywhere within Lynden, using a mobile app, arranging through the website, or calling customer service. A customized WTA van responded to pick-up and drop-off requests, and most requests were made within 15 minutes. The service was open to everyone, and fares were the same as the overall system. This service was evaluated in 2023 and was discontinued in June 2024 due to concerns over the high cost and support staff challenges. In order to evaluate the feasibility of future flexible service, WTA began work on a microtransit feasibility study in 2023, with recommendations anticipated in the summer of 2024.

Figure 7 Lynden Hop On-Demand Service Area

Transportation Demand Management

WTA supports the region’s Transportation Demand Management Program and Whatcom SmartTrips, administered, and operated by the Whatcom Council of Governments. WTA provides an annual financial contribution of $50,000, in-kind marketing support, and support at educational events with a transit operator and bus.

WTA also offers a Travel Training program for anyone who wants to learn to ride the fixed route bus independently. A Travel Trainer works with people who are new to riding the bus and new to the area, regardless of age and ability.

Fares

Fare Rates for Fixed Route and Lynden Hop:

Cash Fare/Reduced Fare (Single Ride) $1.00/0.50
Route 80X Cash Fare/Reduced Fare (between counties).....2.00/1.00
Day Pass.....3.00
11-Ride Pass.....10.00
31-Day Pass.....30.00
90-Day Pass.....90.00
Select (for Veterans, Seniors, and Riders with Disabilities) 31/92-Day Pass ...15.00/45.00
Youth 31/92-Day Pass ..... FREE
Student 31/92-Day Pass 15.00/45.00
Skagit-Whatcom Day Pass.....6.00
County Connector 31-Day Pass Regular/Student/Select 50.00/25.00

UMO (TouchPass) Stored Value Fare Caps

Once a fare cap amount is reached all subsequent rides in that period are free.

Paratransit Fare Rates

Cash Fare (Single Ride).....$1.00
Paratransit Companion Riders 1.00
Paratransit Riders Youth or 75 & older..... FREE
Paratransit Calendar Month Pass (Pass on File) 13.00
Paratransit Calendar Quarter Pass (Pass on File) 35.00

Zone Service Fare Rates

Cash Fare (Single Ride).....$1.00

Vanpool Fare Rates

Vanpool fares cover most costs to operate the van, including fuel, maintenance, and insurance. The vanpool group pays a fare, based on the van's destination county.

5 2023 ACTIVITIES

Figure 8 2023 Ridership

2023	Fixed Route	Paratransit	Zone	Vanpool	Hop
					
Boardings	3,510,911	171,927	1,506	24,612	15,740
Revenue Hours	155,815	56,990	723	2,844	4,900
Revenue Miles	2,120,805	800,293	16,701	154,090	65,750
Passenger Miles	10,032,081	923,934	25,389	889,918	50,403
Boardings per Hour	22.5	3.0	2.1	8.7	3.2
Passenger Miles per Hour	64.4	16.2	35.1	312.9	10.3
Passenger Miles per Boarding	2.9	5.4	16.9	36.2	3.2

Ridership increased by 21% between 2022 and 2023. While still below 2019 pre-pandemic numbers, ridership has steadily increased each quarter over the previous year. Some factors negatively affecting ridership including work from home trends and remote classes at Whatcom Community College and Western Washinton University, shifts to other modes, and lingering safety concerns. While ridership is the most common way to share data about an agency's performance, using one ridership number does not distinguish between different types of trips and the importance of public transportation to a user and to the community. In addition to ridership, WTA is measuring how well people can use transit to access opportunities – such as grocery stores, jobs, schools, etc. and usefulness to WTA's priority populations. In the future, WTA hopes to measure shifts from single occupant vehicles to transit, which is currently limited by the lack of up-to-date data sources.

Changes to Service and Service Assistance

In 2023, WTA reduced the Flex area around Route 75 to three locations and made some minor realignments. The agency also added paratransit service to Blaine and the Birch Bay area.

WTA continued to assist local partners with non-charter special transportation services. WTA contributed to a countywide extreme heat event by hosting cool water stations at transit hubs for riders and the public. We also partnered with the City of Bellingham in providing warming buses and transportation to and from the cold weather shelter.

Fare Changes and Programs

Small modifications were made to WTA's Fare Rates and Rules in 2023. This included accepting "Free on Fixed Route" cards on All Regional Fixed Routes. WTA continued its social and health pass program in 2023 and distributed 50,000 6-ride tickets to qualified social and health service agencies throughout Whatcom County who service low-income individuals and persons with disabilities.

Fleet

In 2023, WTA took delivery of 6 new gasoline Paratransit buses and 2 Battery Electric 40-ft Buses.

Figure 9 In-Service Revenue Vehicle Fleet by Type, March 2024

Type	Propulsion	Count
35 Foot Bus	Diesel	6
40 Foot Bus	Diesel	45
40 Foot Bus	Hybrid	8
40 Foot Bus	Electric	4
Bus Subtotal		**63**
Paratransit	Gasoline	29
Paratransit	Propane	22
Vanpool	Gasoline	16
On-Demand Van	Gasoline	2
Total Fleet All Types		**132**

Technology Improvements

In 2023, IT Completed the following projects:

- Lynden Station Camera Replacement
- Trapeze v21 Upgrade
- Bellingham Station and Cordata Station Security Improvements
- Maintenance, Operations, and Administrative Base 2nd Floor Remodel
- On-Premises Backup Storage Expansion
- Online Engagement Platform
- Human Resource Portable Networking
- Vista NextGen Upgrade
- Transit Safety Officer Standup
- Computer Replacements
- Signage at Bellingham Station

6 STATE AND AGENCY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

WSDOT requires WTA to demonstrate consistency between the agency's objectives and strategies and the Washington State Transportation system policy goals. The completion of WTA 2040, WTA's long range transit plan, resulted in the identification of three key priorities that will help guide future WTA decisions and investments:

Equity – Focus on providing access to opportunities and service to those who need it the most in the community.
Efficiency – Match the levels and types of service to demand.
Environment – Be a leader in advancing environmental initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The three "E's" help frame WTA's goals and strategies. The following section documents alignment between the goals and key strategies from WTA 2040 and the statewide goals.

Figure 10 Consistency between Agency and State Goals

WTA 2040 Goals and Strategies	
Goal #1: Be Flexible, Nimble, and Innovative Applicable State policy goals: Economic Vitality, Preservation, Safety, Mobility, Environment, Stewardship	
Strategies	**Status**
Form a cross-departmental Collaborative Innovation Team.	On Hold
Generate and pursue new ideas while allowing for calculated risks.	Ongoing
Track emerging transportation technology, assess its potential impact on WTA, and prepare strategies to respond before impacts are felt	Ongoing
Pursue grants and partnerships that allow WTA to experiment with new ways of meeting transportation needs.	Ongoing
Improve customer information tools, management of vehicles on the road, load, and ridership data, and reporting by building on the Smart Bus architecture.	In progress Automatic Passenger Counters to be installed in 2024-2025. Digital signage installed at BTS. Additional signage planned at other stops. Yard management and Automatic Vehicle Management tools also being planned.
Enhance ridership data collection and better integrate data into planning and customer service.	In progress Automatic Passenger Counters to be installed in 2024-2025.

Reduce the time needed to make service-related changes while still providing opportunities for robust community input.	In progress "Tiger Team" initiated to develop Waterfront service.
Keep current with changes in private sector transportation and seek partnership opportunities that enhance options for priority populations.	Ongoing
Continue to monitor autonomous and connected vehicle technology and assess opportunities and impact to WTA.	Ongoing
Goal #2: Serve as a leader and a key partner in improving the equity and efficiency of local transportation Applicable State policy goals: Economic Vitality, Mobility, Environment, Stewardship	Applicable State policy goals: • Economic Vitality • Mobility • Environment Stewardship
Strategies	**Status**
Continue to partner with Whatcom Council of Governments to extend the reach of the Whatcom Smart Trips program. Work with Smart Trips to provide tools and incentives through employers, schools, and community groups to increase walking, biking, and transit trips.	In progress Expansion of Smart Trips funded by state grant administered by WTA.
Work with large employers to identify their needs and tailor programs and services to increase their use of walking, biking, and transit.	Ongoing WTA initiating work with PeaceHealth in 2024.
Support the work of local community partners to establish car share, bike/scooter share and other shared mobility devices, and identify opportunities to accommodate shared vehicles at transit centers or WTA park and rides.	As needed No current progress.
Work with local universities and colleges to promote walking, biking, and transit, and to help manage transportation demand.	Ongoing Continued communication with partner schools.
Plan and construct secure and sheltered bicycle parking at transit stations and install bicycle racks at stops with high bicycle traffic.	In progress City planning on installing secure bicycle shelters at Bellingham Station in 2024.
Support efforts of local jurisdictions to reduce parking demand and manage parking supply.	In progress WTA participating in City of Bellingham parking minimum discussion
Formalize ongoing discussions between WTA and school districts to make transit a more viable option for K-12 students.	Complete Regular meetings being held with school district.
Support efforts to increase the convenience of public transportation service to Skagit County and the greater Puget Sound area.	In progress WTA participating in NSTA regional study.

Goal #3: Improve accessibility and mobility for priority populations Applicable State policy goals: Economic Vitality, Preservation, Safety, Mobility, Environment, Stewardship	
Strategies	**Status**
Partner with institutions, agencies, and municipalities to support low barrier fare policies that decrease transportation barriers for priority populations.	On hold Zero Fare discussion postponed until 2025.
Seek alternative funding sources, such as local, state, and federal grants to build ADA-accessible bus stops and to purchase and install bicycle and pedestrian amenities.	In progress City of Bellingham funding received for bus stop improvements.
Create a “Transit Access” fund to support local projects that improve sidewalks, crossings, and other pedestrian infrastructure at bus stops.	Ongoing Fund created in 2023.
As new resources become available, focus them on areas serving priority populations.	Ongoing
Advocate for land use polices that locate low-income housing and social services near frequent transit service.	In progress New Planner hired in 2024 to implement.
Ensure trip planning materials and other essential communications are accessible to people with disabilities, low literacy, low English proficiency, etc.	Ongoing
Create a community rideshare program and support community groups that provide ridesharing options to priority populations	In progress Point Roberts rideshare support created in 2024
Revise service standards to incorporate equity measures and other adjustments to account for new data sources.	Complete
Goal #4: Serve as stewards of the environment Applicable State policy goals: Mobility, Environment, Stewardship	
Strategies	**Status**
Create a sustainability plan with strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use throughout all facets of our operations.	Complete
Pursue grant funding to support the transition to a zero-emission fleet by 2040.	In progress Funding received for 15 zero emission vehicles and infrastructure.
Evaluate the carbon emission impacts of all planning, procurement, and business decisions.	In progress Included in annual Sustainability Plan reporting.
Support the implementation of the City of Bellingham and Whatcom County Climate Actions Plans. Promote the value of public transportation as a way for individuals to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.	Ongoing

Goal #5: Provide a range of services tailored to the communities we serve Applicable State policy goals: Economic Vitality, Preservation, Safety, Mobility, Environment, Stewardship	
Strategies	**Status**
Focus high frequency transit in areas with land use density that supports frequent service.	In progress Rapid Transit Study Phase 2 underway
Promote transit-oriented development and other transit supportive development to improve the viability and attractiveness of fixed route service.	In progress Initiated transit supportive development at Lynden Station and investigating potential for TOD at expanded Bellingham Station.
Work with developers during the design review process to integrate pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive design in projects along high frequency corridors.	In progress New planner establishing local relationships.
Participate in the planning efforts of partner communities to tailor transit service to community needs and to ensure planned land uses and zoning codes can support the desired level of transit service.	In progress New planner establishing local relationships.
Enhance and expand the transit network based on adopted service standards.	In progress Service planning utilizing new service evaluation guidelines.
Participate in local transportation projects to ensure that projects incorporate transit street design best practices and meet WTA's infrastructure standards and guidelines.	Ongoing WTA staff engaging in review of construction projects.
Continue to assess the feasibility of on-demand service and evaluate replacing fixed route and paratransit in areas deemed appropriate for such service.	In progress Microtransit feasibility study underway.
Goal #6: Provide attractive, efficient, and financially sustainable services Applicable State policy goals: Economic Vitality, Preservation, Mobility, Environment, Stewardship	
Strategies	**Status**
Work with local jurisdictions to implement speed and reliability improvements such as queue jumps and transit signal priority.	In progress WTA working with City staff on grant applications and Rapid Transit Study

Pursue improvements to make boarding faster and easier.	In progress WTA evaluating feasibility of a “pass-free” zone around Western Washington University
Build on the existing Smart Bus infrastructure to support the management of vehicles on the road, to make our service faster and more reliable, and to provide customer information tools that would make our system easier to use.	In progress Digital signage installed at BTS. Additional signage being planned at other stops. Yard management and Automatic Vehicle Management tools also being planned.
Work with Western Washington University to design and construct infrastructure and facilities that provide for more efficient and convenient service on routes traveling to campus.	In progress WTA working on a Rapid Transit Study and WWU service efficiency to identify needed improvements
Continue to make improvements to paratransit service that enhance convenience while maximizing efficiency.	Ongoing
Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of Zone Service and Flex Service and explore new ways of serving outlying areas.	Ongoing Flex improvements made to Route 75 in 2023.
Right-size park and ride facilities for current and future demand and identify potential transit-supportive opportunities with the available assets.	In progress WTA working on a transit supportive development at the Lynden Station

*The State’s six policy goals are:

Economic vitality – To promote and develop transportation systems that stimulate, support, and enhance the movement of people and goods to ensure a prosperous economy.

Preservation – To maintain, preserve, and extend the life and utility of prior investments in transportation systems and services.

Safety – To provide for and improve the safety and security of transportation customers and the transportation system.

Mobility – To improve the predictable movement of goods and people throughout Washington State

Environment – To enhance Washington’s quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.

Stewardship – To continuously improve the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the transportation system.

Local Projects Funded through the Climate Commitment Act

Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funds have been used to create WTA's Transit Access Fund (TAF) which provides local funding for improving bus stop accessibility. The TAF provides financial assistance to local jurisdictions for qualifying infrastructure projects that are located within a quarter mile walking distance of any WTA bus stop. Any non-motorized infrastructure project funded through the TAF must provide safe and comfortable access to WTA facilities and enhance overall conditions for those who secure such access by walking, biking, and/or rolling.

CCA funds will also be used to support key initiatives at WTA, including development of a new downtown transit center, a rapid transit project, and to reduce WTA's carbon footprint through a zero-emission fleet transition and other measures.

The potential repeal of CCA funding in November will have a significant impact on the projects listed above.

7 LOCAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS

WTA just underwent an update to its Fixed Route Evaluation Guidelines for Service in February 2024. We have also added in the new 2024 Safety Performance Targets and our Transit Asset Management Targets.

Existing Service Evaluation

Service Standards

Frequency

Route frequency has a significant impact on the reliability and utility of that service. If route frequencies do not match community travel patterns and ridership demands, transit will not be a feasible transportation option. Riders of less frequent transit services face a high wait time penalty when a bus is missed. Contrarily, riders of high frequency transit services can rely on that next bus arriving within a reasonable time. Riders of less frequent transit services may also feel "stranded" waiting a disruptive amount of time for their return trip. WTA has set target frequencies for each transit service type. The targets are based on observed travel patterns, travel demand, land use patterns, demographics, and employment density.

Route-by-route Evaluation: All routes should provide the frequencies associated with the specific service type.

Service Type	Peak/Midday Frequency (Target)	Evening/Weekend (Target)
Frequent	10 - 15 minutes	15 – 30 minutes
Local Urban	30 – 60 minutes	30 – 60 minutes
Small Cities/Rural	30 – 120 minutes	90 – 120 minutes
Regional	60 – 120 minutes	90 – 120 minutes

Service Span

When setting service span for routes it is important to consider the operational hours of the accessible establishments and services, the potential for transfers and regional commuting, and the possible trip purposes. If the span of service does not align with community need, individuals will not be able to rely on transit to and from work, attend appointments, and access social and health services. WTA has set service span targets for each service type. The targets are based on observed travel patterns, land use type, employment type, and demographics.

Route-by-route Evaluation: Each route should follow the service span targets identified below.

Service Type	Weekday Service Span (Target)	Saturday Service Span (Target)	Sunday Service Span (Target)
Frequent	6am – 11pm	8am – 11pm	8am – 10pm
Local Urban	7am – 10pm	8am – 10pm	8am – 9pm
Small Cities/Rural	6am – 9pm	8am – 8pm	8am – 8pm
Regional	7am – 7pm	9am – 6pm	9am – 6pm

Priority Populations

Providing reliable transit access to priority populations is among WTA's primary objectives. Priority populations are disproportionately dependent on transit services and as such must be at the forefront of our service planning processes. As defined in WTA 2040, priority populations include minority populations, low-income households, and households with no access to a vehicle.

Route-by-route Evaluation: Each WTA route should maintain a Priority Population Index (PPI) greater than or equal to 2/3.

To calculate the PPI staff compares the proportion of priority populations served within each Market Area to the Service Area. For each population group where the share within the Market Area is greater than that in the Service Area, the route will receive a score of 1. For each population group where the opposite is true, the route will receive a score of 0. The final score is the sum of the individual scores, ranging from 0/3 to 3/3.

System Evaluation: The average share of priority populations within a ¼ mile of WTA service should exceed 45%. Please see the example below

Access to Opportunity

Providing transit service within a community will only have a positive impact if they are providing access to social and health services, employment, and other essential destinations. Access to Opportunity is a term WTA uses to measure our transit services ability to connect riders and potential riders with the vast number of opportunities around us. WTA embraces the need to connect community members to opportunities to achieve social, economic, and environmental prosperity at an individual and community level.

Route-by-route Evaluation: Each WTA route should maintain an Access to Opportunity Index (AOI) greater than or equal to 6/10.

To calculate the Access to Opportunity Index, staff compares the employment density within the market area of each route to that of the WTA service area and evaluates the presence of essential destinations within a ¼ mile of a WTA bus stop or station. If the market area employment density is higher than the index requirement, the route will receive a score of 1. If it is lower, the route will receive a score of 0. Each

route will be evaluated for the presence of key destinations – receiving a score of 1 for each destination type within its market area and a score of 0 for each it lacks. The final score is the sum of the individual scores, ranging from 0/9 to 10/9.

System Evaluation: At least 50% of jobs within the WTA service area should be accessible by transit and 25% should be accessible by high frequency transit.

WTA will monitor the proportion of key destinations served by WTA services and WTA high frequency services (GO Lines).

WTA will also monitor the proportion of Priority Population groups with access to routes that serve key destinations and high frequency service. This will allow staff to identify gaps in the network and adjust service to improve access to opportunity. It will also highlight underserved population groups and services within our communities.

Performance Standards

Boardings per Revenue Hour

Boardings per revenue hour is an effective measure for productivity and allows WTA to assess efficiency and return on investment. Revenue hours are impacted by both route distance and frequency. WTA expects boardings per revenue hour to be highest along Frequent urban routes. Despite running more hours, these routes serve higher density areas and more destinations, acquiring higher ridership. It is important to note that vehicle speed, congestion, and other delays can have a significant impact on boardings per revenue hour.

Route-by-route Evaluation: Each route should meet or exceed the appropriate service type target for boardings per revenue hour.

Service Type	Boardings Per Revenue Hour (Target)	Boardings Per Revenue Hour (Threshold)
Frequent	22 BPH	20 BPH
Local Urban	15 BPH	12 BPH
Small Cities/Rural	10 BPH	8 BPH
Regional	5 BPH	4 BPH

System Evaluation Target: System wide performance should not fall below 20 boardings per revenue hour.

Cost Per Boarding

The cost per trip is a calculated average used to represent the financial impact of each ride provided by a specific transit service(s). This productivity measure is associated with boardings per revenue hour

because of the connection between revenue hours and the cost of service; however, the cost per trip allows us to better understand the financial impacts of the various service types.

Route-by-Route Evaluation: The cost per trip for each route should remain below the target assigned to the associated service type.

Service Type	Cost Per Trip (Target)	Cost Per Trip (Threshold)
Frequent	$10.00	$12.00
Local Urban	$15.00	$16.00
Small Cities/Rural	$20.00	$25.00
Regional	$20.00	$25.00

System Evaluation: The cost per trip, when considering all routes together, should not exceed $10.00.

Passenger Miles Per Revenue Hour

Passenger Miles Per Revenue Hour is another productivity measure that is helpful for demonstrating the value of Small Cities/Rural and Regional routes. The trips passengers take on these routes tend to be much longer than those traveling by Local Urban and Frequent routes. While the ridership is generally much lower the services are still considered highly valuable since they are transporting passengers longer distances and in many cases to lower income rural communities.

Route-by-route Evaluation: Each route should provide 30 or more passenger miles per revenue hour and meet or exceed the Service Type Average targets.

Service Type	Passenger Miles Per Revenue Hour (Target)	Passenger Miles Per Revenue Hour (Threshold)
Frequent	75 PMPH	50 PMPH
Local Urban	50 PMPH	30 PMPH
Small Cities/Rural	75 PMPH	70 PMPH
Regional	120 PMPH	100 PMPH

System Evaluation: System wide passenger miles per revenue hour should not fall below 50.

Cost Per Passenger Mile

The cost per passenger mile is a calculated average used to represent the financial impact of the costs associated with transporting a rider one mile. This productivity measure is associated with passenger miles per revenue hour because of the connection between revenue hours and the cost of service; however, the cost per trip allows us to better understand the financial impacts of the various service types. Like with passenger miles

per revenue hour, this metric allows WTA to highlight the benefits of rural and regional routes.

Service Type	Cost Per Passenger Mile (Target)	Cost Per Passenger Mile (Threshold)
Frequent	$3.00	$6.00
Local Urban	$5.00	$6.00
Small Cities/Rural	$3.00	$6.00
Regional	$3.00	$6.00

System Evaluation: The cost per passenger mile, when considering all routes together, should not exceed $4.00.

On-Time Performance

On-time performance is a core element of transit reliability. Buses arriving too early or too late directly impact passengers and decrease ridership. Off-schedule buses can have a serious impact on transit riders' lives, from missing work and doctor appointments to not being able to get home to their family at the end of the day. It is critical that WTA continuously monitors on-time performance to be able to make service adjustments if issues arise.

WTA measures on-time performance as the percent of buses that arrive at a timepoint between one minute early and five minutes late. The first and last timepoints of the trip are not considered when calculating on-time performance. On-time performance is calculated using weekday data from the first week of February, August, and October.

Route-by-route Evaluation: Each route should meet or exceed the associated service type on-time performance target.

Service Type	On-Time Performance (Target)	On-Time Performance (Threshold)
Frequent	90%	85%
Local Urban	85%	80%
Small Cities/Rural	80%	75%
Regional	80%	75%

System Evaluation: System wide on-time performance should not fall below 80%.

New Service Evaluation

Service Standards

Priority Populations

New transit services will be held to the same equity standards as existing services and the proposed stop locations will be utilized for the analysis.

Route Realignment Evaluation: The proposed route should earn a Priority Population Index (PPI) score greater than or equal to 2 and the percent share of any population group should not decrease by more than 5%.

New Route Evaluation: The proposed route should earn a Priority Population Index (PPI) score greater than or equal to 2 and should result in a 2% increase in the average share of priority population groups served by transit.

Route Removal Evaluation: The removal of the proposed route should not result in a >5% decrease in the average share of priority population groups served by transit.

Access to Opportunity

Proposed service changes will be modeled to assess changes in Access to Opportunity within our communities. Ideally, service changes will result in greater access to opportunity, but at the very least they will meet existing service standards.

Route Realignment Evaluation: The proposed route alignment should earn an Access to Opportunity Index (AOI) score greater than or equal to 6/10 and should not have a negative impact on overall access to employment and essential services.

New Route Evaluation: The proposed route should earn an AOI score greater than or equal to 6/10 and should have a positive impact on overall access to employment and essential services.

Route Removal Evaluation: The removal of the proposed route should not result in a decrease in employment access below 55% for all jobs.

Performance Standards

Forecasted Total Boardings

Transit Demand Modeling software will be utilized to estimate boardings for proposed service changes. Boarding forecasts will allow staff to compare current ridership levels to the expected transit trip generation of the new route.

Route Realignment Evaluation: Projected daily boardings for the proposed route alignment should be at least 90% of the current daily boardings.

New Route Evaluations: Projected daily boardings for new routes should meet or exceed the associated service type target.

Service Type	Total Boardings (Target)
Frequent	250% System Average
Local Urban	65% System Average
Small Cities/Rural	25% System Average
Regional	20% System Average

Route Removal Evaluation: Removal of the route should not bring systemwide boardings below 75% of current levels.

Forecasted Boardings per Revenue Hour

Boarding and revenue hour forecasts will be utilized to generate this productivity measure. Revenue hours will be calculated using route schedules, number of daily trips, route distance, travel times, and estimated layovers. This forecast will allow staff to assess potential productivity levels.

Route Realignment Evaluation: Projected boardings per revenue hour for the proposed alignment must be at least 95% of the existing routes ratio.

New Route Evaluation: Projected boardings per revenue hour should meet or exceed the associated service type target.

Service Type	Boardings Per Revenue Hour (Target)
Frequent	22 BPH
Local Urban	15 BPH
Small Cities/Rural	10 BPH
Regional	5 BPH

Route Removal Evaluation: Removal of the route should not result in a system wide ratio of boardings to revenue hours below 20.

Design Standards

Route Design

When designing a new route or realigning an existing route it is important to consider the populations and land uses served (and those left out), route directness, road design, congestion, the presence of other routes, and the presence of WTA infrastructure. These considerations impact the effectiveness of the route and play a key role in customer satisfaction.

Transit Supportive Environments: Population and employment density, land use diversity, urban streetscapes, and parking regulations are key determinants of transit ridership and can directly impact the usefulness of the service. Staff will assess proposed transit corridors using these indicators to identify the appropriate level of service based on potential transit support. Highly transit supportive areas will require more frequent service to manage the higher demand and a larger variety of trip types.

These areas also tend to have larger concentrations of priority populations and low wage jobs; thus, providing higher levels of service in transit supportive environments simultaneously addresses WTA's equity goals. Given the complex nature of transit demand, it is important that these five indicators be considered holistically rather than on their own.

Density: Population and employment density are amongst the key determinants of transit demand. Routes that provide access to areas with higher land use densities tend to see higher ridership – more jobs and people, more trips.

Destination Clustering: In addition to density, the diversity of destination types being served is key to understanding transit demand. Areas with a greater amount of destination types (e.g. retail, services, residential, recreation, and food and beverage) tend to generate higher ridership than areas consisting primarily of a single destination type.

Walkability: Most transit riders in Whatcom County start and end their journey as pedestrians. The absence of safe pedestrian infrastructure between transit stops and the riders' origins and destinations can significantly hinder transit demand. Conversely, safe, cohesive, and attractive pedestrian accessibility can promote transit ridership.

Street Connectivity: The structure of the street grid surrounding a transit service can impact ridership in multiple ways. Dysfunctional street layout can create confusing routes, cause complicated transfers, and make first- and last-mile connections confusing, all of which can deter riders. Operating a route along a simple grid with many north-south and east-west connections can have a positive impact on transit ridership.

Parking Management: Reducing the availability of parking and enforcing parking fees can help encourage individuals to take transit, walk, or bike in lieu of driving alone. Studies have shown that reducing parking requirements for residential and commercial development and increasing public parking regulations can have a positive impact on transit ridership.

Service Type	Density	Walkability	Street Connectivity	Destination Clustering	Parking Management
Frequent (10 - 15 minutes)	>7,000 jobs + pop/sq mi along the route	Operates in areas with high pedestrian accessibility	Street network along the route provides a high number of NS and EW connections	High level of land use mix, high number of demand generators	Enforced parking fees with moderate supply
Local Urban (30 - 60 minutes)	4,000-7,000 jobs + pop/sq mi along the route	Operates in areas with moderate-high pedestrian accessibility	Street network along the route provides a moderate number of NS and EW connections	Moderate level of land use mix, high number of demand generators	Enforced parking fees with moderate supply
Small Cities/Rural (30 - 120 minutes)	2,000-4,000 jobs + pop/sq mi along the route	Operates in areas with moderate pedestrian activity	Street network along route provides a limited number of NS and EW connections	Low-moderate level of land use mix, moderate number of demand generators	Free parking with abundant supply
Regional (60 - 120 minutes)	Not Currently Applicable				

Route Directness: Transit riders tend to prefer a direct route as they are easier to understand and consist of fewer turning movements. Deviations along a route often add to the travel distance, increase the potential for service disruptions, and reduce average travel speed, all of which can burden the passengers. However, there are cases in which deviations may be supported. WTA will consider route deviations to serve schools, hospitals, health and social services, grocers, major shopping centers, employment centers, and areas with high concentrations of priority populations.

Road Design and Congestion: The road network that is available to WTA has a significant impact on route design. Given the length, weight, and turning radius of the transit buses, there many roads upon which WTA cannot operate fixed route buses. WTA aims to concentrate service along main arterials and key corridors, where conducting transit operations is most feasible and safe; however, it is also important to consider congestions levels, as congestion during peak hours can impact schedule adherence, travel times, and customer satisfaction. WTA should avoid operating on residential streets especially those that are narrow. Where important locations cannot be safely and efficiently served directly through a stop, WTA will identify routing options and/or pedestrian improvements to enhance access to other nearby stops.

TSP, Queue Jumps, and Park & Rides: When designing transit routes, it is important to consider the infrastructure in place to support transit service. When possible, WTA routes should take advantage of the existing intersection improvements, including transit signal preemption or signal priority (TSP) and queue jumps to improve schedule adherence, travel times, and safety. Park & Rides should also be considered in route design as they serve as a nexus of multimodal transportation and could generate high ridership with the appropriate connections.

Route Spacing

Duplicative services and tight route spacing can cause competition between routes and have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the transit network. While services within close proximity supports route transfers, it tends to have a negative impact on the ridership potential and limits service outside of that area. Where possible, WTA will avoid route duplication and space routes appropriately with consideration to population and employment density.

Stop Design

Stop design contributes significantly to the levels of comfort and safety of WTA's customers. Stop design can help WTA enhance public perception and attract new riders through branding and aesthetically pleasing infrastructure. Appropriate stop design plays a key role in making sure WTA is in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and all new and improved stops must be brought up to ADA standards. Unless infeasible due to unavoidable constraints, WTA bus stop design must follow the standards outlined in the 'Bus Stop Design and Guidelines' document. With the implementation of high frequency transit, design standards will differ along those routes.

Stop Spacing

Providing the appropriate stop spacing is a balance between convenient access, ADA accessibility, route efficiency, and rider satisfaction. While serving more stops may result in shorter travel distances for customers accessing the route and enhance the market area, additional stops tend to increase travel times which can negatively impact schedule adherence and rider satisfaction. The negative impacts are caused by the delays of bus deacceleration and acceleration, loading and unloading passengers, fare collection, and traffic merging. Stop spacing requires strategic consideration of major destinations, population densities, and safe and accessible boarding areas. Where possible, WTA bus stops should follow the stop spacing targets.

Service Type	**Average Stop Spacing (Target)**
Frequent	0.25 miles
Local Urban	0.25 miles
Small Cities/Rural	0.5 – 1 mile
Regional	>5.0 miles

Safety Performance Targets

2024 Safety Performance Targets														
Mode of Service	Major Events (Total)	Major Event Rate (per 100K VRM)	Collision Rate (per 100K VRM)	Pedestrian Collision Rate (per 100K VRM)	Vehicular Collison Rate (per 100K VRM)	Fatalities (Total)	Fatality Rate (per 100K VRM)	Transit Worker Fatality Rate (per 100K VRM)	Injuries	Injury Rate (per 100K VRM)	Transit Worker Injury Rate (per 100K VRM)	Assaults on Transit Workers	Rate of Assaults on Transit Workers (per 100K VRM)	System Reliability
Fixed Route	1	.04	.04	0	.04	0	0	0	1	.04	.04	4	.19	15,000
Paratransit/ Demand Response	1	.11	.11	0	.11	0	0	0	1	.11	.11	2	.09	54,000
Vanpool	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	155,000

Transit Asset Management Targets

Revenue Vehicles	Target % to not be over ULB	Useful Life Benchmark (ULB)
Bus Vehicles		
Bus	20%	14 Years
Cutaway/Van		
Cutaway	20%	10 Years
Van	50%	8 Years
Service Vehicles		
Automobiles	17%	8 Years
Trucks and other Rubber Tires	30%	14 Years
Facilities		
MOAB	0%	N/A
Passenger Stations	25%	N/A

8 PLAN CONSISTENCY

WTA is a voting member on the Transportation Policy Committee and Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) of the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG).

WTA has entered into a formal agreement with the Whatcom Council of Government (WCOG) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to ensure a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process ("3-C" Process) for the WCOG MPA that involves coordination between and among WCOG, WSDOT, and WTA, known colloquially as the “314 Agreement”. The agreement establishes membership on the WCOG board and committees; coordination with the Unified Planning Work Program; regional data coordination including with the regional model; cooperation between planning efforts and transportation programming; integrated public involvement; and cooperative financial planning, and funding.

WTA 2040 goals are consistent with the goals of the following comprehensive plans: Whatcom County and the cities of Bellingham, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale, Lynden, Nooksack, and Sumas. WTA’s goals are also consistent with Whatcom Council of Governments’ Whatcom Mobility 2040 and the Washington State Public Transportation Plan. The following section lists local comprehensive plan goals applicable to WTA’s services and programs. WTA is working with local jurisdictions to document transit services, define an appropriate level of service for transit, and identify transit needs and opportunities in their comprehensive plan updates in 2024-2025.

Whatcom County:

Goal 6A:	Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods by establishing and maintaining standard levels of service for motor vehicle traffic volumes compared to roadway capacity.
Goal 6D:	Support land use planning efforts in Whatcom County which include land use types and densities that reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles.
Goal 6E	Balance the needs of all users of all modes of transportation when planning and designing transportation facilities.
Goal 6H:	Coordinate with other governmental agencies in planning the County’s transportation system.
Goal 6K:	Reduce the need for costly capacity-increasing roadway construction projects, and minimize emissions from combustion of fossil fuels, through the use of motor vehicle travel demand reduction programs, transit, and intelligent transportation technology.

City of Bellingham:

Goal LU-2	Foster vibrant urban villages.
Goal LU-3	Support a thriving local economy across all employment sectors.
Goal CD-5	Ensure that the design and development of urban villages and transit corridors convey a positive image of the district they are

located within contribute to the economic vitality and perception of the City and improve visual and physical transitions into adjacent neighborhoods.

Goal T-1 Limit urban sprawl by linking land use and transportation planning.
Goal T-2 Provide safe, well-connected, and sustainable mobility options for all users.
Goal T-3 Increase infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrian, and non-single-occupancy vehicle modes of transportation.
Goal T-4 Reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles.
Goal T-5 Maintain and improve streets, trails, and other infrastructure.
Goal EV-7 Maintain good air quality.
Goal EV-8 Reduce contributions to climate change.
Goal CF-1 Deliver safe, inclusive, cost-effective, and accountable public facilities and services.

City of Blaine:

Transportation Element

Goal 2: Intergovernmental Coordination
To coordinate efforts in planning, construction, and operation of transportation facilities with other agencies' programs as appropriate. This coordination will allow City efforts to support and complement the transportation functions of the State, Whatcom Council of Governments, Whatcom County, neighboring cities, Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), and other entities responsible for transportation facilities and services in City.

Goal 3: Transit Coordination
To cooperate with Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) to provide facilities that will enhance and encourage transit use.

Goal 17: Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
The City will implement a TDM system to reduce vehicle trips, as mandated by Washington State law. TDM encourages alternate modes of transportation to reduce the numbers of single-occupancy vehicles.

City of Everson:

Transportation Element

Goal: Coordinate transportation planning and construction with neighboring jurisdictions and with the state.

City of Ferndale:

The City will encourage the use of transportation modes that maximize energy conservation, circulation efficiency, and economy.

City of Lynden:

Transportation Element

Goal 1: Public Participation and Agency Coordination

Encourage public participation and the involvement of other agencies in the city planning process including in the enhancement of the transportation network.

Goal 6: Public Transit and Transportation Demand Management
Encourage transit as viable regional transportation mode through programs and policies.

City of Nooksack:

Transportation Element

Goal 4: Cooperate and coordinate among federal, state, and other local jurisdictions in transportation planning to ensure a seamless, effective system.

City of Sumas:

Transportation Element

Goal: Coordinate transportation planning and construction with neighboring jurisdictions and with the state.

Whatcom Council of Governments:

WTA goals are consistent with the Whatcom Mobility 2040 plan that identifies the following 7 regional goals of Safety; Environmental quality; Efficiency, Effectiveness and System Sustainability; A Multimodal Transportation System; Access and Convenience, Maintenance and Preservation, and Freight.

Washington State Public Transportation Plan:

Goal 1 Thriving Communities
Cultivate thriving communities by supporting health, equity, prosperous economies, energy conservation and a sustainable environment through transportation.

Goal 2 Access
Provide and sustain transportation that allows people of all ages, abilities, and geographic locations to access jobs, goods, services, schools, and community activities.

Goal 3 Adaptive Transportation Capacity
Use new technologies and partnerships to make better use of existing transportation assets and meet changing customer needs.

Goal 4 Customer Experience
Enhance everyone's transportation experience by providing public transportation that is safe, seamless, pleasant, convenient, reliable, relevant, and understandable.

Goal 5 Transportation System Guardianship
Protect, conserve, and manage Washington's transportation assets in a manner that maximizes and sustains their value to the public, public transportation, and the statewide transportation system.

9 2024-2029 PLANNED CAPITAL EXPENSES

In 2023, WTA completed key planning projects to address several large capital needs as identified in WTA 2040.

Zero Emission Fleet Transition Study: Assessed propulsion technology, identified operating impacts, determined facility needs, and developed a timeline and cost estimate for the transition to a zero-emission fleet by 2040. The resulting sequence of procurement and infrastructure improvements is planned be reflected in Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) updates and in this TDP.

Bellingham Station Visioning Process: Engage downtown Bellingham stakeholders to develop a vision and concept design for the Bellingham Station and surrounding area. This work will precede acquisition of a new site, site investigation, programming, station design and construction over the next 5 – 8 years. The CIP and this TDP will be updated to reflect an expanded and enhanced station with additional bays and electric charging infrastructure as a result of this effort. It will also potentially include a Transit Oriented Development project.

Rapid Transit Study: Phase I of the study concluded in 2023. The study identified and evaluated two potential corridors for a bus rapid transit (BRT) line. Also, the study identified "hot spots" impacting speed and reliability where improvements would be needed to maintain reliability and route performance. Phase II is currently underway with an enhanced community engagement process, 15% design and environmental screening, and determining of a locally preferred alternative. No costs are included in the CIP nor the TDP due to significant uncertainty around needed capital improvements.

The figure below outlines WTA's planned capital expenses for 2024-2029.

Figure 11 WTA's Planned Capital Expenses

Year received/ expensed	Type	Preservation/ replacement (quantity)	Expansion/ improvement (quantity)
	Rolling Stock		
2024	Fixed route heavy duty buses	19	
2024	Paratransit minibuses	24	
2024	Rideshare vehicles	14	
2025	Fixed route heavy duty buses	3	5
2025	Service expansion buses	5	
2025	Paratransit minibuses	8	3
2025	Rideshare vehicles	1	3
2025	Non-revenue vehicles	5	
2026	Fixed Route heavy duty buses	8	
2026	Paratransit minibuses	9	
2026	Non-revenue vehicles	4	
2027	Fixed route heavy duty buses	3	
2027	Paratransit minibuses	6	

2027	Rideshare vehicles		2
2027	Non-revenue vehicles	4	
2028	Fixed route heavy duty buses	6	
2028	Paratransit minibuses	12	
2028	Rideshare vehicles	7	
2028	Non-revenue vehicles	4	
2029	Paratransit minibuses	12	
2029	Rideshare vehicles	7	
2029	Rideshare vehicles		2
2029	Non-revenue vehicles	4	
	Equipment		
2024	Automatic Passenger Counters		1
2024	Cordata charging equipment		1
2024	Install bus lift		1
2025	Midway backup generator		1
2025	Midway electrification		1
2025	Automatic passenger counters		1
2025	Greyhawk Replacements	1	
2025	Ops Self-Service		1
2025	MOAB Building Automatic Controls		1
2026	Digital signage		1
2027	Yard management system		1
2028	Zero Emission fleet infrastructure		1
2029	Zero Emission fleet infrastructure		1
	Facilities and Infrastructure		
2024	Telegraph Rd. safety improvements		1
2024	Bus Stop Shelters	16	
2024	ADA bus stop improvements		5
2025	MOAB Mezzanine Remodel		1
2025	MOAB Expansion		1
2025	Bellingham Station Expansion		1
2025	Paint booth construction		1
2026	North Lot swale and site prep		1
2026	ADA bus stop improvements		5
2026	Bellingham Station Expansion		1
2027	ADA bus stop improvements		5
2027	Bus stop shelter increase		5
2027	Bellingham Station Expansion		1
2028	ADA bus stop improvements		5
2028	Bus stop shelter increase		5
2028	Zero Emission Infrastructure		1
2029	Bus stop shelter increase		5
2029	Zero emission infrastructure		1
2029	ADA bus stop improvements		5

*MOAB – Maintenance, Operations and Administrative Base

10 PLANNED OPERATING CHANGES

WTA 2040 outlines a network plan which includes increases in service based on projected revenues under the existing sales tax rate. However, significant uncertainty around service changes remain as no funds have been set aside for service expansion. Depending on evolving public transportation needs, service levels may need to be increased or decreased to address both equity, efficiency, and environmental goals.

Potential service adjustments have been identified based on a variety of factors, such as gaps in service and expressed customer need, the timeframe of development and street construction projects in certain areas, and changes that are linked due to interlinements or service area overlap. Regardless of more substantial network changes, WTA will continue to make schedule adjustments guided by new service evaluation standards. All significant changes will be processed through WTA's biennial service change process and subject to Board approval.

Figure 12 outlines WTA's potential 2024-2029 service changes.

Figure 12 2024-2029 Summary of Approved and Potential Service Changes

Year	Type	Reduction	Expansion	Add'l Vehicles Needed
2024	Board approved: • Modify Route 26 and discontinue the Lynden Hop service • Reduce service on Route 24 • Add hourly service to Bakerview Spur	Reduction in Hop hours		
2025 and beyond	In planning stages: • Increase frequency on Route 50 (Lummi Nation) • Realign and increase service on Route 4 (St. Joseph's Hospital) • Add service to the King Mountain area • Continue service to Maplewood Avenue • Add service to the Waterfront • Efficiency improvements on the Blue Go Line and connecting routes through Western Washington University • Increase frequency on Gold (331) Go-Line • Schedule improvements	To Be Determined	To Be Determined	To Be Determined

11 MULTIYEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

Capital Improvement Plan

WTA's 2025-2030 CIP includes the capital expenses identified in Section 9.

Funds for capital projects are from federal, state, and local funds. The local match for federal and state grants is 15-20 percent for vehicles.

Figure 13 Capital improvement Plan

Category	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Equipment	2,137,538	-	-	-	-	-
Facilities	7,217,500	9,952,500	3,652,500	10,577,500	14,977,500	20,577,500
Technology	676,000	261,000	250,000	-	200,000	-
Vehicles, Non-Revenue	500,000	300,000	300,000	350,000	350,000	350,000
Vehicles, Revenue	8,250,000	11,800,000	5,100,000	10,320,000	2,970,000	1,825,000
Total	**18,781,038**	**22,313,500**	**9,302,500**	**21,247,500**	**18,497,500**	**22,752,500**

*Expense shown in year of expenditure

Washington Transit Support Grant Funding

Transit Support Grant funding will help advance the following initiatives:

- The **Transit Access Fund** provides financial assistance for multimodal or non-motorized infrastructure projects located within a quarter mile of a WTA bus stop. Eligible infrastructure projects include sidewalks, intersection improvements, mid-block crossings, curb cuts, sidewalk ramps, shared use paths, pedestrian crossing signals, bicycle parking, and pedestrian lighting.
- **Transit Supportive Development at Lynden Station.** WTA is partnering with local non-profits, government agencies, and farmworker communities to envision a workforce housing development on the site of an underutilized Park and Ride facility. It is within walking distance to a grocery store and other stores, as well as many employment opportunities. It would also be well served by fixed routes, paratransit, and our on-demand Lynden Hop.
- Planning for **Transit Oriented Development at Bellingham Station.** WTA recently completed a visioning study to inform the redevelopment of our primary transit hub. In addition to more gates and infrastructure for vehicle charging, Transit Support Grants will help us explore the possibility of Transit Oriented Development. This would include housing, childcare, bike and pedestrian improvements, and other needs identified by our community.
- Planning for **Rapid Transit** on one or more corridors in Bellingham.
- Planning for our continued transition to a **zero-emission fleet.**
- Planning to expand **Mobility on Demand** beyond Lynden, to other communities in Whatcom County.
- **Improving Accessibility** by improving bus stops and replacing bus shelters.
- Keeping our fleet and facilities in a **state of good repair.**

- Exploring additional partnerships such as **Farmworkers to Food.** This is a pilot program, in which WTA will partner with a non-profit serving seasonal farmworkers. WTA will provide transportation from farmworker housing sites to a local food bank, once a week during harvest.

Operating Financial Plan

WTA is funded locally through retail sales tax collection as the primary revenue source. We also obtain funding through fares paid to ride the bus, grant funding, advertising, and other miscellaneous revenues.

Figure 14 Operating and Maintenance Financial Plan

Operating Revenues	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Beginning Balance	**$57,508,477**	**$49,485,911**	**$32,729,214**	**$14,923,466**	**$1,465,939**	**($22,165,078)**
Revenues						
Sales Tax	41,280,232	42,105,837	42,947,953	43,806,912	44,683,051	45,576,712
Farebox	1,661,688	1,677,560	1,693,592	1,709,783	1,726,136	1,779,152
Rideshare Income	97,179	100,094	103,097	106,190	109,376	112,657
Transit Support Grants	5,054,238	1,684,747	3,369,433	3,369,433	3,369,433	3,369,433
Operating Grants	505,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	5,000	5,000
Consolidated Grant	91,632	94,381	97,212	100,129	103,133	106,227
Paratransit/Special Needs Grant	4,502,526	1,500,842	3,001,684	3,001,684	3,001,384	3,001,684
Other	251,572	256,603	261,736	266,970	272,310	277,756
Interest Income	2,006,250	1,279,440	984,180	774,315	0	0
Total Revenues	**54,853,695**	**48,779,504**	**52,538,887**	**53,215,416**	**53,269,823**	**52,627,384**
Annual % Change		(11%)	7.7%	1.2%	0%	(1%)
Operating Expenses						
Fixed Route	35,194,190	36,953,899	38,801,594	40,741,674	42,778,758	44,914,695
Paratransit	16,590,032	17,419,534	18,290,510	19,205,036	20,165,288	21,173,552
Rideshare	1,219,076	1,280,030	1,344,031	1,411,233	1,481,794	1,555,884
Depreciation	6,985,152	7,159,781	7,338,775	7,522,245	7,710,301	7,903,058
Total Expense	59,988,450	62,813,244	65,774,910	68,880,188	72,136,141	75,547,189
Add back Depreciation	6,985,152	7,159,781	7,338,775	7,522,245	7,710,301	7,903,058
Total Available	**1,850,397**	**(6,873,959)**	**(5,897,248)**	**(8,112,527)**	**(11,156,017)**	**(30,822,863)**
Grant Revenue						
Federal Capital Grants						
State Capital Grants	633,633	1,810,800	300,000	600,000	0	4,400,000
Paratransit Vehicles	4,442,861	1,870,000	1,530,000	1,020,000	2,040,000	2,040,000
Fixed Route Vehicles	20,114,841	4,887,500	8,500,000	2,262,500	6,375,000	0
Rideshare Vehicles	556,800	255,000	0	0	357,000	484,500
Other Jurisdictions	500,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	0	0
Total Grant Revenue	26,248,135	8,898,300	10,405,000	3,957,500	8,772,000	6,924,500
Capital Expenditures						
Revenue Vehicles	30,362,297	8,250,000	11,800,000	5,100,000	10,320,000	2,970,000
Non-Revenue Vehicles	90,500	500,000	300,000	300,000	350,000	350,000
Facilities	3,160,301	7,217,500	9,952,500	3,652,500	10,577,500	14,977,500
Technology	1,055,000	676,000	261,000	250,000	0	200,000
Equipment	1,453,000	2,137,538	0	0	0	
Total Capital Expenditures	36,121,098	18,781,038	22,313,500	9,302,500	21,247,500	18,497,500
Grant Revenue Less Capital Exp	(9,872,963)	(9,882,738)	(11,908,500)	(5,345,000)	(12,475,500)	(11,573,000)
Ending Balance 12/31	**$49,485,911**	**$32,729,214**	**$14,923,466**	**$1,465,939**	**($22,165,078)**	**($64,560,941)**

Assumptions used in Figure 14:

Revenues:

- 2025-2030 Sales tax revenue - 2% annual increase beginning in 2025.
- 2025-2030 Vanpool income – 3% annual increase beginning in 2025.
- 2025-2030 Paratransit revenue – flat revenue beginning in 2024.
- 2025-2030 fixed route revenue – 1% beginning in 2025. No plans to increase ridership or revenue.
- 2025-2030 investment income – declining as cash balances decline.
- 2025-2030 Operating grants – Assumed Move Ahead Washington funds are retained. Q1 and Q2 2025 funds received in 2024.
- 2025-2030 Consolidated grants – assume travel trainer grant continues with 3% annual increase.

Expenses:

- 2025-2030 – 5% annual increase in operating expenses (less depreciation) beginning in 2024. The impacts of the WTA 2040 plan are included in the projected capital expenses. Including projects with un-identified funding (Transit Access Fund, paint and body bay, North Lot swale and culvert, zero emission infrastructure and completion of Bellingham Station.
- 2025-2030 – 2.5% annual increase in depreciation expense beginning in 2025.

Cash Balances:

- Beginning and ending cash balances include all cash sources (undesignated and all reserves). Reserve balances are not allocated in this document.

12 PROJECTS OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

WTA has submitted the projects to the WCOG for inclusion in the TIP as listed in Figure 15 below. These projects are included in WTA's CIP (Figure 13).

Figure 15 Projects of Regional Significance

Year	2025-2030 TIP Project Description	$
2025	Fixed Route Buses – 2025 (approx. 3 - Hybrid)	3,750,000
2025	Buses – Service Expansion – 2025 (approx. 5)	2,000,000
2025	Paratransit Minibuses – 2025 (approx. 11)	2,200,000
2025	Rideshare Vehicles – 2025 (approx. 7)	525,000
2025	Midway Lot Back Up Power and Utility Improvements	1,887,538
2025	Bellingham Transit Station Expansion and Enhancement	20,750,000
2025	Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs)	537,000
2026	Fixed Route Buses – 2026 (approx. 8 – Hybrid)	10,000,000
2026	Paratransit Minibuses – 2026 (approx. 9)	1,800,000
2026	Paint Booth and Body Bay	7,000,000
2026	North Lot Swale and Site Prep	4,400,000
2027	Fixed Route Buses – 2027 (approx. 3 – Electric)	3,750,000
2027	Paratransit Minibuses – 2027 (approx. 6)	1,200,000
2027	Rideshare Vehicles – 2027 (approx. 2)	150,000
2028	Fixed Route Buses – 2028 (approx. 6 – No/Lo emission)	7,500,000
2028	Paratransit Minibuses – 2028 (approx. 12)	2,400,000
2028	Rideshare Vehicles – 2028 (approx. 7)	420,000
2028	Zero Emission Fleet Infrastructure	30,000,000
2029	Paratransit Minibuses – 2029 (approx. 12)	2,400,000
2029	Rideshare Vehicles – 2029 (approx. 9)	570,000
2030	Paratransit Minibuses – 2030 (approx. 8)	1,600,000
2030	Rideshare Vehicles – 2030 (approx. 3)	225,000
	TOTALS	**105,064,538**