

WSDOT Frequent transit service study

Technical advisory group meeting 2 summary
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., July 26, 2022

Attendees

TAG members

- Lisa Ballard (WSDOT)
- Brian Lee (PSRC)
- Justin Leighton (Washington State Transit Association)
- Steffani Lillie (Kitsap Transit)
- Lindsey Sehmel (Pierce Transit)

Project staff

- Thomas Craig (WSDOT)
- Emma Dorazio (PRR)
- Lauren Foster (PRR)
- Monica Gosh (WSDOT)
- Kate Gunby (PRR)
- Stan Suchan (WSDOT)

Discussion

Slide numbers included in this meeting summary refer to the [TAG meeting 2 presentation](#) saved on engage.wsdot.wa.gov/frequent-transit-service-study.

Slides 1 and 2 – Monica Gosh

Monica introduced herself and the project team to the TAG and led the TAG members in a round of introductions.

Slide 3 – Monica Gosh

Review of the meeting agenda:

- Review accessibility data sources researched by WSDOT
- Review project approach
- Discuss definitions of “frequent transit”
- Discuss next steps

Slide 4 – Kate Gunby

Kate referred the TAG to the data inventory that they had been sent previous to the meeting. The data inventory listed the data sources and considerations or issues with each data source. Among other data sources, the project team reviewed the Route Directness Index, the National Walkability Index, and Streetlight data or other commercial mobility data and concluded that none of them presents new data regarding the presence of sidewalk infrastructure that would be necessary to specify if a particular one-half mile walk is possible.

The TAG did not have additional comments or questions.

Slide 5 – Monica Gosh

Monica reviewed the specific project description in the proviso language and reiterated that, given the gaps in the data, the project team cannot identify accessible walking routes to

frequent fixed-route transit stops. The team can estimate how many people live within a half mile of a frequent fixed-route transit stop.

Slide 6 – Monica Gosh

Monica shared the following project approach:

- 1) **define** frequent fixed route transit and accessible frequent fixed route transit,
- 2) **document** gaps to frequent transit, particularly for certain demographics, using currently available data (census data, General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data), including proxy data for walkability information. The project team will research and work with the PAG to identify the appropriate proxy data to use to estimate the number of people within census tracts containing or near frequent transit stops.
- 3) **develop** a recommendation to the legislature as to how the project team could *get* the walkability data needed to answer these questions more accurately and precisely.

The TAG agreed that this approach was reasonable.

Slides 7 – Thomas Craig

Thomas turned the conversation to frequency and the levers in the GTFS data that can be used to define where there is frequent fixed-route transit service. These include headway, span, days, and whether multiple routes are served.

Thomas also told the group that later in the meeting he would ask them to think about how many levels of frequency the project team should consider analyzing.

Slide 8 – Thomas Craig

Thomas asked the group their thoughts on how to define “headway.”

Multiple TAG members noted that geographic context, the cost to deliver service, and density were important considerations when thinking about headway.

One TAG member asked if it would be possible to consider multiple definitions of frequency that would take that local context into account. Thomas explained that one outcome of this conversation, and the approach that WSDOT is leaning toward, could be the approach that is being suggested. Thomas suggested that the TAG have that conversation at this point in the meeting, rather than waiting until later.

The TAG members agreed.

Slides 15-21 – Thomas Craig and Kate Gunby

Thomas then discussed how many frequencies the project team could measure. There are three different ways to answer that question.

- Come to a consensus on a single description of frequent fixed-route transit and analyze the presence of that service across the state
- Define different levels of frequency for different parts of the state, or for different days, or times of days
- Define multiple levels of frequency and analyze where all of those frequencies exist statewide

WSDOT recommends this third approach - showing different levels of frequency throughout the state. This would show the contours of service around the state and let each community focus on goals that are valuable to them locally.

The TAG discussed whether it was more important to emphasize the current state of service in the deliverable or the gap between that level of service and any proposed goals. One TAG member was very supportive of WSDOT's recommended approach, while other TAG members voiced concern that that approach would make it look like all areas in the state were already providing an acceptable level of fixed-route transit service. They stressed that the goal of the study was to let the legislature know the level of need so that they could provide funding to improve transit service throughout the state.

Thomas asked if it would work to define different levels of frequency, such as gold, silver and bronze. The analysis would show where these different levels of service exist and where those levels of service are the goal.

The TAG agreed to move forward with this approach.

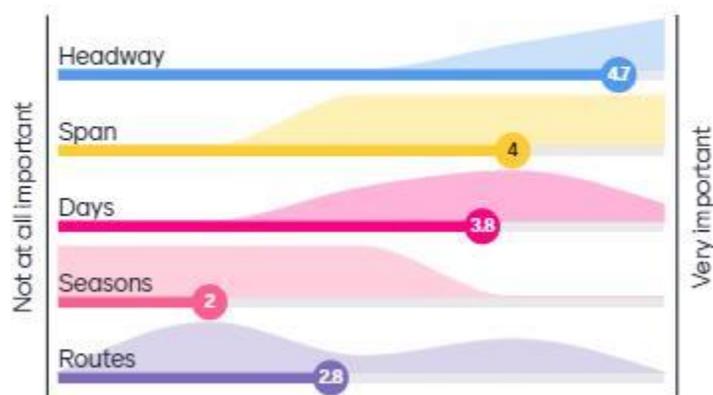
Slides 9 - 14 – Thomas Craig

Thomas brought the discussion back to the different levers and levers to affect frequency available in the GTFIS. The first level is headway itself. Other levers that the project team might consider include span, days, seasons and routes. We have the options to pull these secondary levers.

On slide 13, Thomas shared possible representations of “frequent transit” that consider span, days, seasons, and routes differently.

Thomas asked the TAG to take part in a mentimeter poll asking them “how important is each lever previously discussed? The results of the poll are below:

How important is each lever?



The TAG discussed how the analysis would distinguish between frequency on routes and frequency at stops. If a stop is served by multiple routes, it could give the appearance of offering frequent service, when perhaps each route only comes by a few times a day.

Slides 22 and 23 – Monica Gosh

Monica thanked the group for their feedback, time and participation and shared that next week, the policy group will meet and have an opportunity to share their feedback and thoughts. The project team will continue the discussion of frequency and begin background data work on definitions of frequency and identifying underserved populations.