

Frequent transit service study: Phase 2 gaps, disparities, and funding

WSDOT Public Transportation Division

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Question

What's your favorite early spring flower?

Why we're here today

- Discuss and develop a common understanding of what level of support exists for proposed goals to identify gaps in access to fixed route transit
- Discuss and arrive at a level of support for cost estimate methodology
- Discuss final report's approach to costs and essential elements
- Discuss next steps

Project description

15(a) \$250,000 of the multimodal transportation account-state appropriation is provided solely for the department, in consultation with the joint transportation committee, to conduct a study of statewide transit service benchmarks. Elements of the study include:

- (i) Development of definitions of frequent fixed route transit and accessible frequent fixed route transit; and
- (ii) Identification of, to the extent possible using existing data, current gaps in frequent fixed route transit and accessible walking routes to frequent fixed route transit stops.

(b) An initial report is due by December 15, 2022, that proposes a definition of frequent transit and documents how many people in Washington live within one half mile walk of frequent transit. **A final report is due by June 30, 2023, that identifies gaps in accessible frequent transit, analyzed for disparities in race, age, and disability, and develops funding scenarios to address the identified gaps.**

Source: ESSB 5689

Review: How we're identifying gaps

To address legislative request to identify gaps in accessible frequent transit we will do the following

- Calculate the number of people who have access to each level of frequent fixed-route transit. ***The results will serve as the current statewide benchmarks of fixed route transit access***
- Develop and select goals for each benchmark
- Define gaps to accessible frequent fixed route transit as the difference between the benchmark and goal
- Discuss disparities through a narrative section in the report which will supplement and clarify the statewide goals and gaps work
- Calculate the overall cost estimates to address the gaps in frequent fixed route transit

Draft goals

Frequency level	Current total population	Current % of total	2033 total population	2033 goal total
Level 1	530,000	7%	2,250,000	30%
Level 2	1,520,000	20%	3,000,000	40%
Level 3	3,040,000	39%	4,130,000	55%
Level 4	4,390,000	57%	4,580,000	61%
Level 5	4,610,000	60%	4,730,000	63%
Level 6	4,720,000	61%	4,880,000	65%
<i>24 hour</i>	<i>690,000</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>2,630,000</i>	<i>35%</i>

Addressing those with no access to fixed route transit

Currently, 35% people in Washington have no access to fixed route transit. The table on the previous slide includes only fixed-route transit, which due to geographic constraints is not necessarily the best way to increase transit access for areas not served by any transit today.

The project team proposes an additional goal to be studied in a separate report on increasing access to demand-response public transit such that 90% of all people in the state have access to either fixed-route or demand-response transit.

Frequency Levels

Frequency level	Day Time (9am-5pm)	Extended hours (6am-9am; 5pm-10pm)	Weekend (9am-5pm)	Days of Service (minimum)	Number of stops	Population Estimate
Level 1	<=12 minutes	<=15 minutes	<=15 minutes	7 days	455	530,000 (7%)
Level 2	<=15 minutes	<=30 minutes	<=30 minutes	7 days	2,917	1,520,000 (20%)
Level 3	<= 30 minutes	<= 60 minutes	<= 60 minutes	7 days	9,477	3,040,000 (39%)
Level 4	<= 60 minutes			5 days	18,243	4,390,000 (57%)
Level 5	6 trips per day any time			5 days	20,856	4,610,000 (60%)
Level 6	2 trips per day any time			5 days	22,295	4,720,000 (61%)
24 hour	<i>1 trip every 2 hours through every night</i>			7 days	660	690,000 (9%)

What we heard (summarizing main themes)

- Most said that they could live with draft goals, with caveats
- Most said that they supported significant increases in public transportation (i.e., fixed route and other modes for all people in Washington)
- Most said that the 10-year time frame was unachievable in the current environment
- Most said that project staff needed to explain why they chose the goals
- Most said that population and land use are strongly related to fixed-route transit availability and frequency and that these issues should be discussed together
- Most said that they had questions or concerns about where money would come from to fund goal implementation
- Many said that they were okay with focusing the biggest increases in fixed-route transit on levels 1-3
- Many said that they were okay with smaller increases of fixed-route transit at levels 4-6 and the use of demand response or other forms of public transportation to address gaps
- All interviewees said that the draft goals would be expensive to achieve and implement, estimating the cost in the billions of dollars

Changes made due to feedback

Both options

- Adjusted time frame from 10 years to 15 years
- Revised format from table to bulleted list. Better allows the proposal to be interpreted at high level. because there is a limited level of precision involved this type of statewide analysis

Option 1

- Option 1 is a visual refinement of the draft goals shared during interviews, understood to be equivalent

Option 2

- Option 2 is a new alternative that differs from Option 1 as follows:
 - The increase in Level 1 and 24-hour service is 200% instead of 300% in Option 1
 - The increase in Level 2 service is 150% instead of the 100% in Option 1

Revised goals to identify the gaps (Option 1)

Over the next 15 years:

- Increase access to Level 1 and 24-hour transit in the state by 300%, based on the % of people with access
- Increase access to Level 2 transit in the state by 100%, based on the % of people with access
- Increase level of access by one level for people covered by levels 4 through 6
- Provide level 5 or 6 service to 10% of the people with no access to fixed-route transit today
- Provide an on-demand service to 90% of the people with no access to fixed-route transit today

Revised goals to identify the gaps (Option 2)

Over the next 15 years:

- Increase access to Level 1 and 24-hour transit in the state by 200%, based on the % of people with access
- Increase access to Level 2 transit in the state by 150%, based on the % of people with access
- Increase level of access by one level for people covered by levels 4 through 6
- Provide level 5 or 6 service to 10% of the people with no access to fixed-route transit today
- Provide an on-demand service to 90% of the people with no access to fixed-route transit today

Questions about proposed goals

What do you think? Can you live with these goals? Which option do you prefer? If not, what needs to change?

Cost estimation methodology

Estimation methods being considered:

1. Estimate cost per person served
2. Estimate cost per route mile, and map route miles to measure persons served
3. Estimate cost per stop, and map stops to measure persons served

Each method has a unit of account:

- Person served
- Route mile
- Stop

Each method must consider costs for the following:

- Operational expenses
- Capital investments
- Service expansion versus ongoing service
- Paratransit costs

Final report will include

- Estimates to achieve goals, calculated using two different methods
- Estimates presented as a feasible range
- Descriptions of the level of confidence in the estimates
- Discussion of key changes which need to occur to achieve goals, such as land use modifications, to create enough population density to successfully run more fixed route transit

Framing costs and other essential elements in the report

Given high cost and nature of cost estimates, how should we frame costs in the report?

How should we talk about the policy and other changes which need to be made in the report?

Next steps (tentative)

- Project team will develop cost estimates for goals
- Project team will develop draft of the report which will contextualize cost with other elements and areas for discussion which will help achieve goals
- Final goals and cost estimates will be presented for discussion, feedback, and consent at a meeting in early April

Thank you!

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